

Director's Board Report

December 2017

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

This is the ninth time I have had the pleasure of sharing the department's many accomplishments in my Annual Year-End Report to the Board.

This year's report contains an amazing amount of achievement and success, which I will present to you in five categories.

- Funding
- Outreach
- Performance
- Awards
- And our focus areas for 2018

In the funding category, last January the Idaho Legislature approved ITD's spending authority for \$11 million in 2016 General Fund Surplus.

We invested the money on seven bridge-replacement projects in Districts 1, 2, 5, and 6.

At the beginning of the 2017 legislative session, road funding was not a top priority for many Idaho lawmakers.

But when they saw what was happening to our highway system due to the severe winter weather, the legislature quickly understood the need to invest in Idaho's roads and bridges.

And they took action by developing a funding package for state and local transportation.

Senate Bill 1206 became law, providing four revenue streams for transportation funding.

First, it authorized the Idaho Transportation department to borrow \$300 million in GARVEE bonds.

Second, it extended the General Fund Surplus Eliminator for two years, providing 50 percent of the surplus for transportation.

The other two revenue streams include one percent of sales tax and a portion of the cigarette tax going to a Congestion Mitigation Fund, which could be around \$15 to \$20 million per year in ongoing funding.

In his letter of transmittal allowing Senate Bill 1206 to become law, Governor Otter said, and I quote:

"The Idaho Transportation Department has never been more efficient, effective, or motivated to succeed."

The additional funding provided by Senate Bill 1206 is another step forward toward reducing Idaho's transportation funding backlog.

Two days after my 2017 budget presentation to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee, the Washington Post printed an article about the Trump Administration's plans for infrastructure improvement.

The article quoted Wyoming Senator John Barrasso, chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, who said at a hearing, and I quote:

“Funding solutions that involve public-private partnerships, as have been discussed by administration officials, may be innovative solutions for crumbling inner cities, but do not work for rural areas.”

Idaho helped develop the testimony on rural states that Senator Barrasso was referring to.

During her Senate confirmation hearing, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, stated the administration would ensure equal access to transportation opportunities for rural and urban areas.

The next category of my presentation addresses Outreach.

And in 2017, our outreach efforts were highly successful.

In February, District 2 participated in the University of Idaho’s Career Fair in Moscow.

District Engineer Dave Kuisti said that because of the wave of retirees, the district had been working hard to fill several vacant positions.

In their efforts to fill these vacancies, the district saw an opportunity to get a large group of qualified candidates at the University of Idaho to look into starting a career at ITD, and they took the initiative to make it happen.

District 2's recruiting outreach efforts also include local high schools and county fairs.

The Division of Aeronautics hosted the **2017 ACE Academy**, providing an interactive summer experience for students between the ages of 14 and 18.

It introduced the students to aerospace career opportunities by giving them aviation-themed tours and provided presentations by people who work in the aerospace industry.

This year's four-day academy included a special day for school teachers focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

The teachers who participate in the ACE academy will be able to bring STEM concepts to life in their classrooms using practical examples from the world of aviation.

In April, a bunch of employees at headquarters wore orange to show their support for the ITD employees who work in the Danger Zone, maintaining and repairing Idaho's roads and bridges.

It was called **GO ORANGE Day**.

Here is a video of the event that was posted on ITD's social media sites.

Go Orange Day was a big success.

And the video helps remind drivers that when they see orange near a work zone, they need to slow down and drive cautiously.

The quality of the work our employees do is well known around the country.

That includes our neighboring state of Utah.

This summer, six representatives from the Utah Department of Transportation traveled to Boise to meet with members of our staff at headquarters.

They were interested in learning more about our Innovate ITD program.

Including:

- The Innovate ITD process
- Who the Innovation Stewards are, and what they do
- How ideas are collected and processed
- Success stories
- The Lessons we have learned along the way
- And how to improve employee involvement

They also visited a district office on their way back to Utah to find out more about how we:

- encourage innovation
- engage the innovation stewards
- and encourage staff to develop and submit innovations that save time and money.

The Utah DOT was also represented at ITD's 2017 Leadership Summit.

On the day before the 4th of July, ITD hosted a ceremony to unveil new signs identifying Interstate 84 as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway.

Approximately 36 percent of the veterans now living in Idaho served in Vietnam.

Many of them came to see the new signs unveiled on the day before the 4th of July.

Chief Operations Officer Travis McGrath, Board Member Julie DeLorenzo, and General Manning also attended.

We hosted the event at the rest area one mile east of the Snake River Bridge outside of Ontario.

It was well attended by members of the military, Vietnam veterans, and the media.

The Office of Communications produced an In-Motion video for the public addressing the weather-related issues our maintenance crews were facing across the state.

We launched a new public outreach campaign this year to address distracted driving.

It is called SHIFT, and is designed to build on Idahoans beliefs in personal values and personal liberties.

Basically, the campaign is saying **“lets work together to make our communities and roads safer.”**

I showed you one of the SHIFT videos in an earlier board report featuring a logger in Horseshoe Bend.

Here is a different version, showing a different role model, a young mother.

ITD secured federal grants that funded a program to train people to operate heavy equipment.

The purpose is to help construction companies find highly qualified employees to operate heavy equipment, such as excavators, graders, and bulldozers.

Our pre-planning for the Star Card rollout has been very successful.

Other states, including Montana, are now using ITD's public-information campaign as a model for their own rollouts of the Real ID.

Idaho Star Cards will be available in early 2018.

Please play the video.

The next category I will address is Performance.

I will start at the national level, where ITD's performance is getting a lot of attention.

So much so that in August I was summoned to the Whitehouse.

They wanted to find out how our agency has become so effective and efficient with taxpayer dollars.

And how we accomplish our strategic goals and continue to earn major national acclaim even with 10 percent fewer employees.

I explained how and what we are doing.

And that our improved performance and credibility with the public allowed us to get two revenue increases in three years, in one of the most conservative and fiscally responsible states in the nation.

What they ended up being the most interested in was how our employees are able to develop so many innovative solutions that save both time and money.

The Whitehouse staff is very impressed with the direction and customer-focused success of the Idaho

Transportation Department, but they are not the only ones.

While it did not “technically” occur in 2017, a few days before Christmas last year the **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials** selected our employee-driven innovation program for use by other states wanting to duplicate ITD's success.

AASHTO is showcasing our program and sharing it with other state transportation departments.

In a letter we received just before Christmas, AASHTO called our program a “**best-in-class process.**”

This was the second year in a row that AASHTO selected an ITD program in their nationwide search for best-in-class processes.

In 2015, they selected a bridge-repair innovation in north-central Idaho as a model for other states.

In January, as a result of what is now universally referred across Idaho as Snowmageddon, District 3

closed a westbound section Interstate 84 from Nampa to Caldwell.

Severe weather conditions caused significant pothole damage that was too dangerous for vehicles to travel over.

District 3 staff responded immediately and temporarily patched the potholes with quick-setting asphalt and reopened the Interstate prior to that evening's rush hour.

Here is a video showing the repair work that afternoon.

This was just a temporary fix, and the lanes were closed again for more work on the interstate.

Crews continued working to repair the damaged pavement over the next several months, and were able to complete the final project on time and with much acclaim from the public for how well and quick the work was accomplished.

They completed the \$9.6 million paving project on one of Idaho's most heavily traveled sections of interstate in just four weekends.

A project of this scale would normally take months to complete.

And the crews would have had to work alongside heavy traffic.

District 3 came up with a better solution.

And one that was much safer.

Rather than requiring repair crews to work alongside traffic, they used a crossover to route traffic to the other side of the highway.

During the work week, all lanes of the highway were kept open.

But on the weekends the crossover allowed the crews to route all traffic to one side of Interstate 84 so they could work around the clock on the other side of the highway, away from traffic.

This was a good solution to a difficult problem.

It kept traffic flowing even on the weekends, and allowed the project to be completed quicker, and with much greater safety.

In August, I commended everyone who works for District 3, the Idaho Association of General Contractors, and Idaho Materials and Construction, for completing the major repairs to Interstate 84 in such a short time frame, and with minimal disruption for the public.

This is the kind of outstanding project that continues to inspire confidence in ITD, and our partners in the contracting industry.

Snowmageddon was a statewide event.

One avalanche covered several hundred feet of Idaho 21 with snow 40 feet deep.

Acting proactively before the big snows arrived, the Office of Communication implemented a

comprehensive public-outreach winter driving campaign.

It was very popular with the public and the media.

And allowed us to communicate directly to thousands of Idahoans using Facebook and Twitter.

Three separate Facebook posts reporting avalanches, flooding, and pothole hazards reached over **110,000 people** each.

Many of our social media posts direct users to ITD's 511 Traveler Information System as a resource.

Here are two news reports showing some of the issues we faced last winter.

I shared our success at dealing with winter storms with the House and Senate Transportation Committee in January, and the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee in February.

I explained that we had increased the time highways are clear of snow and ice during storms from 28 percent in 2010 to 73 percent in 2017.

And that was with 10 percent fewer people during one of the most severe winters in 30 years.

Communication Manager Vince Trimboli appeared on KTVB Television's Viewpoint segment to discuss the impact of weather and flooding on Idaho's roads and bridges.

Here is a portion of that interview.

In October, we reported to you that ITD's Project Design staff had delivered 99 percent of highway projects on time this year.

This was a major accomplishment, given the funding increases for additional projects over the last two years, and the result of a lot of hard work on their part.

Four employees in DMV developed an innovative, on-screen tool that increased the speed and accuracy of calculating legal weights for trucks on Idaho's highways.

Calculating legal weights used to take 10 minutes or longer to complete.

Now, in less than 15 seconds, ITD's permit writers can enter a truck's axle configuration and calculate the weight a truck can haul on a highway or bridge.

This will save an estimated 400 hours per year.

The Idaho Legislature approved a budget that included a compensation increase for state employees in 2017.

And I commended the Division of Human Resources for finding an innovative way to provide the compensation increase early, which was very popular with the employees.

In 2017, the department launched two new Horizontal Career Paths.

One for the Transportation Technician Engineering employees, known as TTEs.

They provide assistance with project engineering, and also provide design and construction support.

The other new Horizontal Career Path is for Transportation Engineering Services Leads.

They are professional engineers and engineers in training.

Rather than compensating employees based on time on the job and the number people directly reporting to them, Horizontal Career Paths promote outcome-based team performance.

This promotes innovative behavior, increases safety, and develops highly-motivated employees who are paid for performance, not the number of people they supervise.

In 2017, four employees from DMV submitted the 1,000th idea to the Innovate ITD portal.

This innovation allows title lien notifications to be processed more efficiently.

The number of innovations submitted continues to increase, with submissions coming from all area of the department.

As of the end of October, employee-driven innovations have saved more than \$5.1 million and more than 170,000 hours.

The next category I will address is awards.

I will start with the 2017 awards for outstanding project design.

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho gave the Broadway Bridge Project their **2016 Leadership in Government Award**.

The Precast / Pre-stressed Concrete Institute awarded the Payette River Bridge Project north of Cascade the **2016 Design Award** for bridges between 76 and 149 feet in length.

They also awarded the bridge an honorable mention for **ALL** precast concrete structures, regardless of length.

The bridge it replaced was 65-years old and heavily corroded.

The project was advanced from 2017 and completed during a single construction season to reduce impact to the public.

It is a bridge to be proud of, and Matt Farrar, ITD's State Bridge Engineer, traveled to Cleveland in March to accept the award.

Another project to be proud of is the result of a successful collaboration with Keller Associates, Boise City, COMPASS, and the Ada County Highway District.

We worked with them on a \$3.7 million project to add a new section to the Boise River Greenbelt.

The project was so successful that the American Council of Engineering Companies of Idaho awarded it their **Engineering Excellence Award**.

Before I complete the awards category of my board report, I would like to share an In-Motion video showcasing some of the highlights of 2017.

As you saw in the video, the Thornton Interchange earned national acclaim by winning AASHTO's **People's Choice Award**, competing against much larger states like New York, Florida, and California.

What the video did not mention is that the Thornton Interchange also won the **2017 AASHTO President's Award for Highway Safety**.

Thornton was the last of seven new interchanges built along a 34-mile stretch of U.S. 20 between Idaho Falls and Sugar City.

Despite traffic volumes doubling during that time, the improvements reduced serious-injury crashes by 75%.

And reduced fatalities to less than one per year.

The new Thornton Interchange greatly improves safety and mobility in Eastern Idaho, and is saving lives.

Winning both the **2017 AASHTO People's Choice Award** and the **2017 AASHTO President's Award** shows ITD is recognized as national leader in transportation, and an

agency that places the focus on serving our citizens, not ourselves.

The Thornton Interchanges national acclaim was not limited to national awards.

The project was also highlighted in major national and international publications.

Government Technology Magazine published an article on the Thornton Interchange's innovative and time-saving use of 3D development.

And **Pacific Builder and Engineer Magazine** featured a cover article about the project.

Traffic Technology International Magazine, in Britain, published an article on ITD's use of intelligent technology to develop and manage Idaho's transportation system.

Award-winning projects like those I have shared with you this morning are the result of good planning and great engineering.

They also illustrate the department's progress toward achieving our goal of becoming the best transportation department in the country.

Since 2010 when we set that goal, ITD has earned 102 national honors, including awards for the department and honors for individuals.

Many of those honors, if not most, were the nation's highest transportation honors.

2017 was filled with an amazing amount of achievement and success, and it is a year we can be proud of.

Now I will share a preview of where ITD is going in 2018.

We will be concentrating our efforts in four areas.

Each of the four areas is focused directly on our employees.

The first is Employee Safety.

When I attended this year's WASHTO Conference in Alaska, there was a very somber moment when a video was shown about the employees who lost their lives while working for WASHTO member agencies in the last year.

There were 11 in the 18 western states.

Two of them were ITD employees.

Doug Freeman, a transportation Technician in District 2, and Byran Bidegain, a transportation Technician in District 3.

Mike Tooley, the Director of the Montana Department of Transportation, spoke about how the concept of Zero Deaths starts at work and at home.

And he is absolutely right.

As you know, ITD has placed a major emphasis for several years on a public-outreach program called Zero Deaths.

That program is focused externally, targeting Idaho drivers.

It is not focused on our employees.

We are going to change that.

We are now implementing a Zero Deaths Program focused internally, on the employees of the Idaho Transportation Department.

The goal is to never again have to show a video of ITD's fallen workers.

The second focus area is Respectful Workplace Training.

If you have been watching the news in the last few months, you are all too familiar with the sexual harassment allegations against Bill Cosby, Bill O'Reilly, Representative John Conyers, Senator Al Franken, and many others.

We want to make sure this kind of activity does not happen at ITD.

Ever.

Several weeks ago Chief Human Resources Officer Brenda Williams and I decided to get ahead of the game, and filmed the following video that will be shown to all ITD employees.

This is a very serious topic, and, as Brenda said in the video, **“we want every employee to know they can work in an environment at ITD that is free from harassment.”**

The third focus area for 2018 is called “Communicating the Why.”

In my Director Visits this year, the most common request or comment had to do with employees wanting to know more about WHY we make certain decisions.

This makes sense, because over the last few years, we have spent a lot of time communicating WHAT we are doing, and HOW we are going to accomplish our goals.

But for the people on the front lines actually doing the work, it is important that they also understand WHY we are doing those things.

So, in 2018, we will improve the ways we share the why with ITD employees.

When motivated people fully understand WHY they are working toward a goal, they are more likely to figure out ways to achieve it quicker, or even exceed our mission.

Sharing the WHY with employees shows that their efforts and involvement are vital to achieving our goals.

By knowing more about WHY we want to accomplish something, it will be much easier for them to figure out what needs to be done.

And how to do it.

It gives them a compelling reason to develop the innovations and time-saving methods needed take the department where we want to go.

Improving how we communicate the Why to all employees represents another major step toward achieving the department's communication goals.

The final focus area for 2018 is the culture survey.

These surveys help us monitor our progress toward becoming a more constructive agency.

That means an agency where employees focus on achievement, and accomplishing clearly defined goals.

I took this picture while I was on a tour of Boise State's athletic facilities.

It is the Boise State Basketball Team Ethos, and it defines a constructive culture in very simple terms.

Paraphrased, it says **accomplish your mission.**

Take care of your people.

Hold each other to high standards.

Demand high standards of those you work with.

And **help them attain the high standards** they seek.

That is the kind of agency we are building at ITD right now.

We support and help each other as we focus on the needs of our customers.

We measure our culture every two years, and this will be our fourth survey of the department.

We expect that to have the final report on this year's survey in late April or May.

2017 has been a great year for ITD, and I appreciate the opportunity to share the department's accomplishments.

It has become a tradition that I close my end-of-the-year reports with the primary focus areas for the upcoming year.

In past years, most of them were externally focused.

This is the first year when every focus area is about our employees.

I have increased the focus on our employees, because they are the people who will accomplish our goal of making ITD the best transportation department in the country.

Mr. Chairman and members of the board, this concludes my **Directors End-of-the-Year Report for 2017.**