

Director's Board Report
April 2016

Thank you Chairman Whitehead. And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

On April 11, The American Council of Engineering Companies of Idaho, also known as ACEC, held a luncheon to present ITD's recently completed Broadway Interchange project with the first place award in the **Engineering Excellence, Transportation** category.

This project replaced the old interchange with a SPUI, which stands for **Single Point Urban Interchange**.

SPUIs are able to move large amounts of traffic more efficiently than standard interchanges.

They take up less space than a traditional clover-leaf interchange design, and are controlled by one traffic signal.

In addition to replacing the old Broadway interchange with the Treasure Valley's third SPUI, the project also widened the freeway between Broadway Avenue and Gowen Road to three lanes, and replaced the railroad bridges leading to Gowen Road.

Horrocks Engineers designed the \$26 million project, and the prime contractor was Concrete Placing Company, of Boise.

The project began in February 2014 and was completed in December 2015.

On April 20th, Alex McDonald, Public Education and Public Relations Director for **Intermountain Donor Services**, presented ITD with the 2016 Tear of Life Award.

Division of Motor Vehicles Administrator Alan Frew received the award for the department.

Intermountain Donor Services presented the award to ITD in appreciation for all the hard work and support we provide in making people aware of the organ donor program and all the good that comes from becoming a part of this lifesaving process.

Idaho has always been in the top 15 states for the percentage of people registered to be organ, eye, and tissue donors.

62% of Idahoans 18 or older are currently registered as organ, eye, and tissue donors. And that information is printed right on their driver's license.

Earlier this week we kicked off the annual **Director Visits with Employees**.

I would like to thank Dave Kuisti and his staff for hosting the first of the 2016 visits on Tuesday in District 2.

We are in the process of scheduling Director Visits in each of the other districts and at headquarters.

This year we are asking supervisors and managers to each bring one employee from their teams to ask questions and share their success stories and innovations from the past year.

We tested the concept at a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team last month, and some minor changes and adjustments were recommended, which we have incorporated.

Attendees are asked to focus on innovative ideas they want to share across the department, and across the state.

The goal of these meetings is not just to listen to their stories, but to share their successes and innovations with other districts, legislators, and external stakeholders.

Here are three examples to give you an idea of the type of innovations District 2 shared with me during my visit.

One is to insert a square metal tube under one side of the tote containing striping paint.

This enables the last couple gallons of paint to flow to the outlet hose and results in less waste.

Another innovation is to use a cell phone and signal booster to create a wireless hotspot in remote locations, allowing the District to transmit data to key team members.

They also set up a webcam on a remote transportation project to monitor progress, adjust signal timing during higher traffic times, and manage personnel more efficiently.

These are the kinds of ideas District 2 will be sharing with other districts across the state. And those districts will be sharing their own innovations.

In addition to learning about innovations and success stories, the district meetings also provide me with an opportunity to discuss where we have been, where we are going, and to share the department's new five-year vision with the employees.

The meetings allow me to answer any questions they might have about where we are taking the department, and the steps we are taking to accomplish our goals and become the best transportation department in the country.

They also provide a chance for district staff to teach the director new skills.

As you can see in the video showing on screen, the District 2 crew thought it might be a good idea to let me try out one of their striping trucks.

Winter weather and plow trucks take their toll on pavement markings, so I was glad to do my part helping out with Idaho's annual spring striping season.

Spring is the traditional beginning of Idaho's construction season, and we have projects starting all across the state, which means work zone safety is once again a major concern.

The Federal Highway Administration schedules the **National Work Zone Safety Week** to coincide with the beginning of construction season, and this year's campaign theme is "**Don't be that Driver!**"

The primary message is for drivers to be constantly alert and prepared for dynamic changes in and around work zones.

We have had more than 2,000 crashes in Idaho work zones over the last five years, and we urge drivers to use extreme caution and pay attention when driving through construction areas.

Nationwide in 2014, speeding was a factor in **29 percent** of fatal crashes in work zones, and distracted driving was a factor in **16 percent**.

So we are asking drivers **not** to take their eyes off the road.

Not to take their hands off the wheel.

Not to take their mind off what they are doing.

And, as the campaign says, "***not to be that driver!***"

Nearly all work-zone fatalities are drivers or their passengers.

We have road and bridge projects scheduled across the state in 2016, and will continue promoting work zone safety throughout the construction season.

Whether they are driving through construction zones for the:

- Pavement-reconstruction project on Interstate 90 between Mulan and the Montana State line
- The Thorncreek to Moscow project on U.S. 95
- The Snake River Bridge replacement project in Marsing
- The new Big Wood River Bridge on U.S. 20
- The Shelley to York Road project on U.S. 91, or
- The 18 bridges being repaired on Interstate 15 and U.S. 20, we want drivers to get home safely, and we want the same for construction workers.

In District 2, cleanup of the landslide on Idaho 14 west of Elk City is proceeding on schedule.

And we have been able to improve travel times for people driving to and from Elk City.

During the week, traffic is now only restricted between seven a.m. and noon, and from one to 5:30 p.m.

Weekend travel is open from 5:30 p.m. Friday until seven a.m. Monday morning.

Lunch-time traffic is guided by a pair of pilot cars, and in the evenings and on weekends we are using flaggers at each end of the slide area as crews continue to remove 200,000 tons of debris.

Just hearing about 200,000 tons of rock and mud that needs to be removed does not quite do it justice. Here is what the landslide looked like as it occurred.

It was filmed by District 2 employee Bret Edwards, who was in the right place at perhaps the wrong time.

Things get rather dramatic toward the end.

Not all of our projects are quite that exciting. But they are all important.

Even the smaller less expensive ones, such as the \$313,000 project installing a message sign on U.S. 93, which began on March 28.

This project will provide a permanent dynamic message sign for traffic heading south from Interstate 84 toward Twin Falls.

The sign will warn drivers when wind speeds reach 40 miles per hour or more at the Perrine Bridge.

Several commercial vehicles have overturned on the bridge during high-wind conditions.

And Twin Falls residents requested that ITD provide wind-speed information as a public service to reduce the number of overturned vehicles and improve safety.

If wind speeds are too high, drivers will see a warning message on the sign and be able to make a U-turn to find an alternate route.

This dynamic message sign is one of the 27 projects funded by last year's user-fee increases.

It is scheduled to be up and running by the end of this week, weather permitting.

Last month I reported on the new Osprey nesting platforms we installed on a bridge over Dworshak Reservoir in District 2.

Because of the location of the board report, I was not able to show you photos or video of the project.

Since this month's board report is here in the auditorium, I thought you might enjoy seeing what the project looks like, and how it turned out.

As I reported last month, inspectors needed to check the 45-year-old bridge, but could not inspect the top of the towers because of the nesting osprey.

They were building their nests over the saddles and obstructing the inspections of the bridge, which must be performed every two years.

So, while the osprey were wintering in Central and South America, we removed the nests and installed four new platforms three feet above the current nesting areas, at the bridge's crown, about 125 feet above the bridge's driving surface.

Each platform is approximately five feet wide by five feet long, and is engineered to hold up to 1,000 lbs.

We placed a small amount of the old nesting material to encourage the birds to start building their nests on the new platforms.

At the time of last month's board report, we did not yet know if the Osprey would use the new platforms for nesting sites when they returned from Central and South America or not.

But a month has passed, spring is in the air, and the Osprey have returned to Dworshak Reservoir.

Let's take a look at this video to see how things went.

The osprey nests are one of the many ideas that have been submitted to the Innovate ITD Program.

We have another program that is also producing excellent results, and that is the ITD Leadership Program.

Last week the department began taking applications for the 2016 ITD Leadership Summit.

Candidates selected to participate in the summit will be notified by the end of May.

They will be selected based on:

- **Leadership potential**
- **Interest in participation**
- **On-the-job performance, and**
- **Demonstration of constructive behaviors**

Those who are selected to attend will:

Develop leadership and problem-solving skills

Collaborate with people from across the state

Learn new tools and about other aspects of ITD

And **Achieve** by creating solutions to real issues at the department.

The 2016 Summit will be a **Rapid Innovation Event**.

During the coming months, 10 teams will prepare and train for the summit.

Each team will be assigned an actual ITD problem from a list of 10 priority issues that we have identified.

The problems address issues such as:

- Streamlining manual cash-receipts processing in DMV
- Streamlining the process for buying supplies in the districts, and
- Standardizing tool organization for maintenance sheds and mechanic shops

Summit participants will work with their teammates to resolve the problem assigned to their team, and report on their solution at the summit, in late October.

This will be an exciting leadership event, and it is the next step in ITD's journey to become the best.

As that journey continues, we will track and report our progress.

One way of doing that is by sharing comments from the public with the board.

Here is a recent example, and it shows that we are continuing to make progress toward becoming the best transportation department in the country.

Mitch Stachowski, a Transportation Technician on District 2's Powell Maintenance crew, received the letter from Idaho Fish and Game Department Senior Conservation Officer Pat Hylton:

"I am the Fish and Game Officer in Powell and I want to let you know what a great job the crew responsible for Highway 12 East does, and say thank you.

I have traveled extensively throughout the West for both work and play during winter conditions.

Considering the road surface, climate, elevation change, etc., that this crew faces keeping Lolo Pass and Highway 12 drivable, they do an outstanding job.

I haven't seen any other highway maintained this well facing these hurdles or conditions.

So, I feel like this crew looks at this stretch of road as their personal highway, or that their family commutes over it every day.

Again I would like to say thank you for a job well done.

Please share this with the whole crew and pass it up the supervisory chain so they know you are appreciated out here."

End Quote.

This letter highlights the new culture we are building at ITD.

A culture of excellence, that focuses on outstanding customer service, and our mission of **your safety, your mobility, and your economic opportunity.**

I know, based on my conversations with our maintenance personnel across the state, that they **DO** treat the roads as if their families commute on them every day.

I asked them why they offered to give up their weekends for the Swarm the Storm program.

They told me that whether it is their families or their neighbors' families, they know we all have people we love on Idaho's highways, and they want everyone to get home safely.

And it is gratifying to receive letters like this showing that their commitment to safety and care for the road is being noticed.

I would now like to introduce Chief Deputy Scott Stokes for his April report . . .

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Mr. Chairman and members of the board, this concludes my Director's report for April.