

**Director's Board Report
May 2016**

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

I would like to thank Ed Bala and the employees in District 5 for hosting the second of the 2016 Director visits this week.

We began the visits in Montpelier.

After visiting with the crew to discuss ITD issues and the innovations developed by District 5 employees.

They instructed me in the use of a high-pressure culvert cleaner on U.S. 89.

We set up the equipment and cleaned a drop-and-drain culvert on a railroad overpass.

The next visit was in Soda Springs, where Resident Engineer James Orner, Staff Engineer Aaron Baird, and Project Manager Lori Targett showed me a project on U.S. 30, from Soda Springs to the Bear Lake county line.

The Soda Springs maintenance crew then took me to a curve-widening project on State Highway 34.

After a small amount of training, they put me in a front-end loader with an Asphalt Zipper attachment on front.

My job was to pulverize the broken edge of an asphalt shoulder.

The goal is to prepare the shoulder so it can be widened and repaved to increase safety.

Attention to detail and accuracy with the pulverizer are the keys to doing this job well.

The crew said that if this director thing does not turn out, that I could come back to Soda Springs and apply for a job as a Transportation Technician, and they would hire me.

It's always good to have options and a Plan B.

When we schedule these director visits, we ask attendees to focus on innovative ideas they want to share across the department, and across the state.

The goal is to listen to their stories and share their successes and innovations with other districts, legislators, and external stakeholders.

Here are some examples of the innovations District 5 staff want to share with the rest of the state.

Anthony Richards and Troy Despain discussed the cost difference between kiln salt and road salt.

They realized that by switching to road salt, their district could cut the price per ton almost in half.

This innovation saved District 5 almost \$83,000 this year, and other districts are now looking to see if this will work in their districts.

Eric Staats highlighted the district's practice of rotating what they call "acting managers."

After hearing a presentation by Tony Rigby, a maintenance foreman in District 4, District 5 decided to appoint maintenance staff members as acting managers for two weeks at a time.

They are given full control and responsibility of a project, from scheduling equipment and materials, to assigning personnel and their duties.

This gives everyone on the crew hands-on experience with what it takes to perform all aspects of the foreman position.

Gil Wright, Maintenance Foreman for the Soda Springs area, says it gives each member of the crew more responsibility and accountability for the team's performance.

Gil says this opportunity for growth keeps crew members more engaged and helps them perform at a higher level.

He shared a story that shows how his crew has grown over the last year thanks to the "acting manager" program.

On the way home from a recent trip to Oklahoma, he realized he hadn't received a single phone call from his crew.

He said it was because they are learning how to make confident decisions due to their actual experience working as a manager.

The rotating manager program has been successfully expanded to several District 5 maintenance crews over the past year.

We believe this approach is translatable to all of ITD, and should not be confined only to the maintenance crews.

The cost savings on salt, and the rotating Acting Manager program are just two of the innovations shared by the employees in District 5.

They show how valuable it is for ITD to put decision making closer to where the work is done, and empower employees to make decisions.

Doing so improves ITD's operations, and saves taxpayer dollars.

Last month in the April Board Meeting I told you about the Broadway Interchange receiving the American Council of Engineering Companies **First Place Award** in the **Engineering Excellence, Transportation** category.

This month I am pleased to report that a similar interchange about 10 miles west on Interstate 84 has also received an award.

The Southern Idaho Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, also known as **ASCE**, honored the Meridian Road Interchange project with their **Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award** for projects costing more than \$10 million.

The Meridian Interchange Team completed the state's final GARVEE project on time and on budget.

The \$51 million project began in April 2014 was completed near the end of 2015.

It replaced the old Meridian Interchange with a Single-Point Urban Interchange and improved Interstate 84 between Meridian and Five Mile roads.

This included widening the freeway to four lanes in each direction under the interchange, adding a third lane over the top on Meridian Road, and installing sidewalks and a bike lane.

The new Meridian Interchange is the largest in the Treasure Valley.

It was designed to improve safety and mobility, and to address the Treasure Valley's future growth and transportation needs.

When the original interchange was built in 1965, it handled approximately 15,000 vehicles per day.

Today, it handles more than 133,000 vehicles per day.

And if the growth predictions for the Treasure Valley are true, that number will continue to climb.

On screen right now is a fast-motion video filmed from July to December 2015, showing the Phase 2 construction of Pocatello's new South Valley Connector.

On April 21st, the Intermountain Chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers honored the connector with its second **Project of the Year** award.

It had previously been named **Project of the Year** by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Public Works Association.

This connector was first envisioned in the summer of 1968, and nearly five decades later, just two days before Christmas, it opened to the public as South Valley Road.

The \$16.6 million project was built in two phases by W.W. Clyde and Company of Springville, Utah, providing a long-anticipated connection from Bannock Highway to the south valley area of Pocatello.

The road begins at Bannock Highway in the west, crosses east across a former floodplain and sewage lagoon until it reaches the Portneuf River levee.

There it becomes a 423-foot, two-span bridge, crossing the Portneuf and associated levees, six Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and South Second Avenue.

The road then crosses beneath two overpass bridges on Interstate 15 and connects to South Fifth Avenue at a new traffic signal one-half mile south of the nearest I-15 interchange.

The connector has two travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and a 10-foot-wide multi-use pathway separated from the road.

The project also funded the purchase of additional right of way for future widening.

ITD Project Engineer Scott Redding said, and I quote:

"This project is a great example of the kind of outstanding product that results when there is strong collaboration between ITD and the communities we serve."

End Quote

The Intermountain Chapter of the **Institute of Transportation Engineers, also known as ITE**, will present the **Project of the Year Award** for the South Valley Connector later this week at their annual meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Large projects like this can generate thousands of pages of documents which including everything from site plans to field reports.

To help simplify the paperwork process for contractors, ITD implemented a new online service in April called the **Customer Gateway**.

It provides online access to **SiteManager**, a software program created by AASHTO that automates and streamlines highway construction management by eliminating repetitive data-entry tasks.

ITD uses SiteManager to manage all of its construction projects across the state.

It allows our staff to spend less time on paperwork and more time monitoring progress and quality at project sites.

The state transportation departments that have implemented similar automated systems predict they will save millions of dollars each year through improved productivity.

Our **Customer Gateway** allows contractors to also use SiteManager anytime and anywhere they have an Internet connection.

It will reduce paperwork and should also provide them with faster turnaround on payments and change orders.

On April 30, Employees from Governmental Affairs and the Office of Communication earned a record-breaking 13 Idaho Press Club awards.

The Office of Communication is no stranger to winning media awards. In the last five years, they have won a total of 45 awards from the Idaho Press Club.

This includes recognition for

- news releases
- feature writing
- newsletters
- media campaigns
- public service campaigns
- media kits
- online public involvement efforts
- special-purpose websites
- script writing
- social media
- annual reports
- and brand-management initiatives.

This year, the Idaho Press Club presented awards to:

- Steve Grant,
- Reed Hollinshead,
- Vince Trimboli,
- Rik Hinton,
- Tony Garcia,
- Mark Hall,
- Pauline Davis,
- Dave Tuttle,
- Adam Rush,
- Jennifer Gonzalez from District 3,
- and Bruce King from District 6.

Approximately 160 news media and public-relations professionals from across the state gathered for the awards presentation in Boise, and I congratulate our excellent staff for winning so many awards.

It shows their skills and talents are being recognized by communication peers and the media.

You see many examples of their work in newspapers and on television, and in public service announcements, billboards, and advertisements.

You also hear it in radio ads and news broadcasts.

Here is an example of one of their more recent efforts.

This week ITD began participating in a statewide seat belt education and enforcement campaign that will run from May 16 to May 30.

The Office of Communication worked with students at the College of Idaho to produce a video, radio ads, social media outreach, and billboards.

The voices you are about to hear are the students who also starred in the video.

This is part of a national campaign that encourages all law enforcement agencies to participate in saving lives by increasing seat belt use.

Law-enforcement agencies across Idaho will participate in the high-visibility mobilization effort.

Officers are dedicating extra hours to educate citizens and to strictly enforce the state's safety restraint law during the 14-day period that includes Memorial Day.

Buckling up is the single most effective thing people can do to protect themselves in a crash.

State law requires all vehicle occupants to be properly restrained, no matter where they are seated.

Fines for violating Idaho's safety restraint laws range from \$10 to \$69.

Last year 93 unrestrained people, including children, were killed in Idaho traffic crashes.

They are not just numbers. They are family members who never made it home.

That is why our employees work so hard to make Idaho highways safe. And their efforts are making a difference that is being noticed.

For example, The Plummer Maintenance Crew in District 1 received the following letter about snow removal and deicing from Jody Cuthbert, Fire Chief for the Gateway Fire Protection District in Plummer.

The letter was signed by the members of his crew. He wrote, and I quote,

"We at the Gateway Fire District would like to acknowledge the efforts and long hours dedicated to keeping the roadways clear in our district.

These efforts are often unappreciated and go unnoticed.

During this last winter our district has had zero medical transports due to weather related crashes, and significantly fewer calls to accidents.

The few accidents we responded to were either minor or non-injury.

This figure is outstanding and in large part due to the efforts of the ITD crew assigned to this area.

The hard work resulted in safer road conditions throughout our district.

Thank You for your dedication to our community's safety."

End Quote

Sharon Griffin, Registrations and Special Plates Supervisor in the Division of Motor Vehicles, received the following letter about the level of customer service received by a lady from Arizona.

She wrote, and I quote:

"Dear Ms. Griffin,

My name is Peggy Secaur from Phoenix, Arizona. I have been in conversations over the last several weeks with Sharon Neumann regarding an Idaho boat and trailer registration that is quite complicated and emotional for me.

This note is to tell you that in this world of nearly no "customer service" anywhere ---Sharon has changed that for me - she is ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS – in fact, she should run training classes for the DMV here in Arizona.

Arizona DMV couldn't care less.

I just can't say enough about her. She is caring, well-versed AND has helped me get through this horrible time.

I don't know how the boat/trailer thing is going to turn out, BUT I DO know that I will sing the praises of your department – and Sharon Neumann for a long time.

What a treasure you have."

End quote.

While visiting with employees here in District 5, I had the pleasure of meeting Terry Jacobson and discussing his 57-year career with ITD.

When Terry started with ITD on April 14, 1959, calculators were unheard of, so all they had were slide rules.

He started on slope-staking crews from Inkom to Downey, Malad to the Utah Line, Fort Hall to the Bonneville Line, and from American Falls to Raft River.

He says he has seen so many changes and advancements over the years that it boggles his mind to think about them.

For instance, the soil and Plantmix tests he ran in the District 5 lab in the mid-1980s are now both obsolete.

The old tests have been replaced by the **Superpave Gyrocompactor**.

And the old dial presses for breaking concrete cylinders have been replaced by a state-of-the-art computerized cylinder press.

District Engineer Ed Bala said that in the late 1980s, he was a resident engineer in Rigby and they sent all of their paving samples to Terry for analysis.

He can remember many times when Terry went the extra mile, working on weekends to get the results in a timely fashion so they could keep projects moving.

He said it is a tremendous example of customer service, that Terry still works like that.

Terry, can you please stand up so we can thank you for your decades of service.

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 May.