

**Director's End-of-Year Board Report
January 2017**

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

The new year is off to a good start, and I am pleased to present my first board report for 2017.

Governor Otter presented his state-of the state address last week, and the Idaho Legislature is now in session.

On Friday, the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee convened to address our two Fiscal Year 2017 Supplemental Requests.

One request was for spending authority for **\$11 million** of FY16 General Fund surplus funds.

The **\$11 million** is the final of two transfers from the General Fund Surplus, due to the sunset clause enacted by the legislature in 2015.

We will use the funds on seven bridge-replacement projects in Districts 1, 2, 5, and 6.

The other appropriation request was for spending authority for **\$7 million** in federal redistribution funds from other states, and **\$6.8 million** for a federal FASTLANE Grant to improve signalization on U.S. 95 between I-90 and Idaho 53.

The committee passed both appropriation requests.

In late December, 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's Innovation Initiative committee will work with ITD to showcase our program to other state transportation departments.

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

To date, ITD's innovation program has produced:

- **567** innovations
- **\$2.2 million** in savings and efficiencies
- **75,000** employee and contractor hours saved
- **190** customer-service improvements

This marks the second year in a row that an ITD program was selected in AASHTO's nationwide search.

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

On January 6th, we held an awards ceremony funded by WASHTO to honor the employees whose outstanding efforts helped the department earn 30 national awards in 2016.

The keynote speaker was General Richy from from the Idaho Office of Emergency Management.

General Richy is also the Director of the Joint Staff at the Idaho National Guard.

Seven teams were honored that day, with each team member receiving a Golden Achievement Award, or as we call them, "**Goldies.**"

They were honored for their work on the following projects that earned national recognition in 2016:

- ITD's Online Driver's Record Dashboard
- The Alive at 25 Program
- The GARVEE Program
- The South Valley Connector
- The Division of Aeronautic's ACE Academy

And

- The Osprey Nesting Platforms in District 2

The final Goldie Award presented at the ceremony was received on behalf of all 1,600 ITD employees by Chief Administrative Officer Char McArthur.

This award was for making ITD one of three finalists in Idaho's Innovative Company of the Year competition.

Everyone in Idaho, from drivers to taxpayers to legislative leaders, benefit from the innovations developed by ITD employees at all levels of the organization.

I would like to thank Tabitha Smith for working with a team from the Office of Communication to put the awards ceremony together.

While we are on the subject of awards, I have a special announcement this morning about some individual awards.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has honored several ITD employees with a **Meritorious Service Award**.

It is now my honor to ask the following people to step forward and receive their **AASHTO Meritorious Service Award** and lapel pins.

If you hear your name, please step forward to receive your award.

- Nestor Fernandez

- Alan Frew
- Devin Rigby
- Blake Rindlisbacher
- And Scott Stokes

Through the efforts of innovative and award-winning employees in all areas of the department, ITD continues to set the bar higher and higher.

And has become a model that is being copied by other transportation departments across the country.

Last Tuesday, we closed a westbound section Interstate 84 from the west end of Nampa to Caldwell.

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

Amy Revis and her District 3 staff responded immediately and were able to temporarily patch the potholes with quick-setting asphalt and reopen the Interstate prior to that evening's rush hour.

We had excellent communication with the media and the public during the shutdown.

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 damaged pavement.

Crews will continue working to repair the damaged pavement over the next several months.

And as you heard in the video, our five-year plan had projects scheduled for Fiscal Years 18 and 19, which will be advanced to the upcoming construction season.

On a more positive note, and after much anticipation, District 4 is now using their new tow plows on Interstate 84 and Interstate 86.

The had to make some initial adjustments to the electronics to get everything working the way they wanted, and after completing their training in live traffic, they began plowing snow on the fourth of January.

As you may remember from the District Four board tour in September, the tow plows articulate to the right, and can clear two full lanes, while at the same time distributing salt and sand the full width of the plow.

District 4 believes that two trucks outfitted with tow plows may be able to complete the work of four trucks.

This would maintain or increase the level of service to travelers while reducing labor costs by 50 percent.

Tow plows cost \$139,000 each, which is about the cost of a new, fully-outfitted truck with a plow and sanding unit.

We have some new tow plow video from District 4.

This is what they look like in action.

Our winter maintenance crews are doing an amazing job keeping up with the winter storms this year.

The Idaho Statesman reported that since December first, Boise has received more snow than any time in recorded history.

Regardless of which part of Idaho you live in, it is truly a winter to remember.

Highway 12 is one of the areas of the state that receives the most snowfall in the winter, and driving along the Clearwater River on the way to the Continental Divide at Lolo Pass can be challenging during a storm.

We received a letter from a lady named Katrina Lucier about just such a drive.

She wrote, and I quote:

"I want to send out a special Thank You to all the ITD employees.

My husband and I drove over 400 miles from Boise to Missoula going over Lolo Pass on Highway 12 on Tuesday, December 27th, which was a wicked day for winter advisories.

Along with us we had our 2 year old and our 1 year old.

The trip took us about 10 hours.

It was not smooth sailing.

However, we made it home safe and sound and all thanks to the heroic efforts of the ITD.

For those of you that do not know, Highway 12 east going from Kooskia to Lolo Pass is a long, curvy climb gaining about 3,000 feet in elevation.

*There is a sign stating "**winding roads next 99 miles**" soon after entering this point.*

To top it off, there is no cell phone reception and no real town to speak of.

At least not one where you could easily find help or shelter.

Our only line of defense was the ITD.

As we passed downed tree after downed tree, and all during the very beginning of this trek, we realized the very real possibility of not making it home.

It was after the sun was completely down and the snow was falling hard that we got completely stopped by a pine tree that had fallen and was blocking the Highway in both directions.

I could see the silhouette of man hacking at the tree with what looked like a hatchet.

Both my little ones were crying and getting frustrated with still being restrained in their car seats.

This was going to be a long night.

Suddenly, an ITD snowplow employee went walking past us with a chain saw in his hand.

We were saved!!

In no time our hero had cut up that huge behemoth of a tree and cleared the road.

Only 75 more miles to the pass.

As we continued our journey we witnessed several accidents and semi's that got buried in a snowbank or rolled over against the mountain side.

Every time, I saw an ITD plowman there to the rescue or on their way to help.

*That's when it dawned on me - this was just another **crazy** night of work for them. Wow.*

What I saw as a scary drive was for them just their normal work routine.

My heart goes out to all those truckers who got caught in the storm.

Without them we wouldn't get the supplies we need and our economy would shut down.

But without our transportation departments like that of the ITD, our truckers would not be able to make it over those deadly mountain passes.

Thank you again snowplow employees of the ITD!

*You are our **Unsung Hero's of Winter's Nights.**"*

End quote.

Our employees work night and day, in some of the worst weather conditions our state has to offer.

Whether it be rain, snow, ice, or a full-blown blizzard, their dedication to keeping people safe from winter's wrath knows no bounds.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my portion of the Director's report.

I would now like to show a short video before introducing Chief Administrative Officer Char McArthur, for her January Report.

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