

Director's Board Report
May 2017

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

Good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

I would like to thank Ed Bala and the District 5 employees for hosting the Director visit this week in Pocatello.

I would like to begin with a brief update on the landslides in District 1.

The slide on Idaho 3 is continuing to slowly move.

Crews removed the plant mix and replaced it with base material.

This solution is working well.

Both lanes are open to traffic, with the speed reduced to 25 miles per hour.

Crews are grading the base as needed to keep it smooth for drivers.

The temporary road around the slide on Idaho 5 is working well.

The district plans to remove enough of the failed material to install a rock buttress on the slope.

The slide at milepost two on Idaho 57 has not moved in the last two weeks.

The plan is to remove the pavement and ballast and rebuild the failed section, which is about 40 feet long.

Material is still falling onto Idaho 97 at two areas about a mile and a half apart.

Crews are monitoring the slides and removing material from the highway on a daily basis.

At milepost 67 the district reduced traffic to one stop-controlled lane to reduce the risk of accidents.

On U.S. 95, the slide at milepost 498 is still active.

The crew is using a distance meter to measure a dozen locations on the slope for movement.

Some locations are moving around two feet per day, so the northbound lane remains closed.

U.S. 95 has a new slide, about 200 feet long.

The shoulder has cracked right at the concrete barrier and is sloughing off.

The maintenance crew placed sandbags to try to keep water from running into the crack.

They will continue to monitor this slide to see if it continues to move, and how large the repair job will be.

There are more major slides in District 1 than I can cover in one board report.

This map does not show the smaller slides, of which there are many.

It only shows the slides that are interrupting traffic or have damaged a highway.

The major slides that I have not addressed on this map involve active movement, running water, slope and shoulder failures, and other issues.

Including one where a house and a shed are in danger of sliding down onto a highway.

The crews in District 1 have their hands full this year with all the highway damage.

They are doing a great job of addressing the issues as they occur, and implementing temporary solutions to keep traffic flowing safely.

Once the slides settle down and the full extent of the damage is known, they will develop plans for long-term repairs.

They are going to have a busy summer.

The Office of Communications produced a new In Motion video addressing the weather-related issues our maintenance crews are facing across the state.

Please play the video.

We are moving quickly to implement the new GARVEE program, following the board's approval of the first project on Interstate 84 west of Nampa.

We began open recruiting for the GARVEE Program Manager position early this month.

The application period ended on Saturday.

The position was open to all ITD employees, and we will move as quickly as possible to select the best applicant to manage the program.

The new GARVEE manager will work out of the headquarters office, in close coordination with the district teams involved.

We are excited to see the new GARVEE Program beginning to take shape.

But there are other exciting activities going on as well.

U.S. Senator Oren Hatch is developing a six-year pilot program in which three states would receive consolidated transportation funding.

The goal is to eventually transform the federal-aid highway program into one that is performance- and outcome-based.

Idaho is under consideration to be one of the three states in the pilot program because of our successful performance-management system, and our ability to produce measureable results using outcome-based investment decisions.

The basic premise is that federal aid will be provided to states in one pot, and the states will use their performance-management systems to determine how to spend the funding to achieve the best return on investment.

We do not yet know if the federal pilot program will be approved, but it is an honor for ITD to be considered as one of three states to participate.

Six months ago we held a **Rapid Innovation Event** in Boise to develop leadership skills and solve 10 important issues facing the department.

Ten volunteer teams worked on solutions for several months, then reported their recommendations at the summit in late October.

Now those teams are reporting on the measurable results their solutions have produced in the first six months of implementation.

One of the teams helped redesign and improve the ITD website.

It now has fewer pages and a much cleaner look.

The new design is much easier for the public to use and navigate.

The rapid-innovation team reports that the average time spent on the ITD website has been reduced from three minutes to one minute.

The public seems to like the improvements.

In the first six months after launching the new website, DMV online transactions increased by around 10 percent.

The Hawaii Department of Transportation has contacted us about the new site.

They like its user-friendly design, asked for guidance that will help them develop a similar website.

Another rapid-innovation team developed a new way to order parts in maintenance sheds.

Their streamlined ordering process is now in use, and will save an estimated 4,000 to 8,000 hours each year.

These are just two of the many success stories from last year's innovation event.

It gave participants an opportunity to work with a wide range of people with different perspectives and backgrounds.

The event was so successful that we are planning another Rapid Innovation Event this year.

Every ITD employee can apply to participate in the 2017 event.

Their applications will go through a process to select people for each team.

This year, teams will be given new problems to solve by collaborating with co-workers throughout the department.

Knowing the innovative spirit of our employees, I am sure I will be back before you later this year with a report on the problems they tackle, and the solutions they develop.

On May 4th, District 4 held an open house meeting for the public to review and comment on replacement of the **I-84/I-86 interchange** east of Burley.

The public was able to see and comment on preliminary designs, project illustrations, and proposed traffic-controls.

Representatives from ITD and Stanley Consultants were on hand to answer questions and collect public comments prior to final design.

The project will have a new traffic-control plan, realign the junction of Interstate 84 and Interstate 86, and replace two aging bridges that were built in the 1960s.

Both of the bridges are functionally obsolete and width restricted.

District 4 plans to advertise bids in October of this year, begin construction in early winter, and complete the project in the fall of 2019.

The new design will improve mobility and increase safety on the primary route linking Salt Lake City with Boise, Portland, and Seattle.

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

This major customer service improvement was developed by:

- Lewiston Port of Entry Senior Inspector **Mike Rice**
- Former department trainer **CarinJoy Condon**, and
Over-Legal Permit Writers **Lance Green** and
Charlie Bussey.

Calculating legal weights used to involve a complicated procedure with many manual steps, often requiring 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 200 to 400 hours per year when fully deployed.

The new tool quickly determines if a permit can be issued, and the maximum weights allowed.

By allowing decisions to be made closer to where the work is being done, employees in the Division of Motor Vehicles are continually finding innovative ways to improve customer service.

The new tool is currently deployed in the Over-Legal Permits Unit.

It is undergoing final testing and development before full implementation at DMV's Ports of Entry.

The Division of Motor Vehicles is staffed by a talented and motivated crew who are constantly looking for ways to improve their operations and the services they provide to the public.

That is especially true of DMV Modernization Manager Ed Pemble.

And I am pleased to report that he is one of the nominees for a lifetime achievement award from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, also known as AAMVA.

AAMVA bestows the prestigious **Martha Irwin Award for Lifetime Achievement** annually to an individual whose distinguished career is directly associated with highway and traffic-safety efforts.

Ed Pemble has played a role in almost every major safety and technology improvement made in the Division of Motor Vehicles over the past 35 years.

Here are a just few of the highlights of his career:

- A database that helps law enforcement remove repeat offenders from the road, and keep them off the road.
- The Driver Record Dashboard that allows businesses to check and monitor the safety and medical records of their drivers.
- A streamlined system for commercial drivers that helps them meet medical reporting requirements and reduce trips to the DMV
- Driver's licenses and ID cards that comply with federal REAL ID requirements.

Ed worked extensively with the Department of Homeland Security to obtain extensions to the federal deadline and keep Idaho in compliance with federal law.

He graduated from California State University at Long Beach in 1979 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration-Management, and began working for ITD about three years later.

In 2004, while working as DMV's Drivers Services Manager, Ed attended an intensive, three-week course at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government for Senior Executives.

He was one of two people selected to attend by AAMVA, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

AAMVA provided a scholarship that paid for all of Ed's tuition, travel, and expenses.

He has been a driving force in the Division of Motor Vehicles for 35 years, and has announced that he may retire later this summer.

His career is filled with achievements that have made a positive difference in the lives of his fellow Idahoans.

If they own a vehicle or have an Idaho driver's license, they owe a debt of gratitude for the many ways Ed has improved the services they receive from the DMV, and the safety enhancements he has helped make possible.

Please join me in congratulating Ed Pemble and his nomination for AAMVA's **Martha Irwin Award for Lifetime Achievement**, and for 35 years of outstanding service at ITD.

The department hosted its annual Highway Safety Summit at the Boise Centre on the Grove last month in Boise.

That is Highway Safety Manager John Tomlinson you see on the left side of the screen.

This is Idaho's largest statewide conference dedicated to eliminating the number of fatalities and injuries on Idaho roads.

The participants included local leaders, police officers, first responders, and healthcare professionals.

They attended workshops and presentations on:

- Overall highway safety
- Distracted driving
- Impaired driving
- Passenger safety
- Emergency response, and much more.

The safety conference allowed our partners from across the state to meet in one location to see what is working, and where they can make improvements.

Each presentation showcased tools that can be used right now to improve safety for everyone traveling on Idaho roads.

Those tools can be used to save lives, especially as we approach the **100 Deadliest Days of Summer** when people tend to drive more than other times of year.

As we look ahead to the summer months, there is one event happening in August that may eclipse all the others.

Idaho is in the Path of Totality for the first total solar eclipse in the lower 48 since 1979.

The event will begin late in the morning on August 21 in western Idaho, and end in the early afternoon in eastern Idaho.

The yellow line you see on screen is the exact center, where it will be dark the longest.

The total eclipse will only last a couple of minutes at any fixed location.

If you want to see the next total eclipse in Idaho, you will have to wait for 152 years.

That makes this eclipse a major event, and it will happen right at the height of the summer vacation season.

There are two reasons Idaho is a prime viewing location.

One is that we are in the Path of Totality.

And the other is that Idaho's typically sunny August weather means there is a good chance there will be few if any clouds in the sky when the eclipse occurs.

If you had to bet which state would have the sunniest skies in August, meaning the best view of a solar eclipse, Idaho would likely be right at the top of the list.

There are several prime viewing areas in Idaho that will be near the center of moon's shadow as it passes over the state, including:

- Weiser
- Stanley
- Mackay

- Rigby
- Rexburg
- Driggs, and Victor

In preparation for the event, ITD is coordinating with local officials at monthly planning meetings.

We are developing an incident response plan, identifying locations that may become bottlenecks, and developing traffic-control plans.

With Salt Lake City being the closest major airport to eastern Idaho, we expect traffic to increase dramatically on Interstate 15.

It carries an average of 30,000 vehicles per day between Idaho Falls and Pocatello.

Traffic models for the eclipse vary, but generally show anywhere from 500,000 to two million vehicles converging on eastern Idaho in the days around the eclipse.

That does not include the prime viewing destinations in Western and southern Idaho.

Our goal will be to keep highways open and traffic flowing freely across the state.

We will suspend construction and maintenance projects wherever possible.

And place dynamic message signs instructing drivers not to stop on the roadside or park in turn-out lanes to view the eclipse.

The Idaho State Police will be bringing officers from northern Idaho to help out with traffic control and enforcement.

Porta-potties will be placed at numerous locations on the state highway system.

Most motels and campgrounds in eastern Idaho are already fully booked.

To make up for a lack of lodging and keep from turning tourists away, cities like Rexburg have relaxed their regulations.

They are allowing people to rent bedrooms or their entire homes on a short-term basis.

Actions like these will increase the positive economic benefits of the eclipse on our state.

They will also increase the number of vehicles on our roads.

We will develop proactive messages asking drivers to be patient, drive defensively, and expect congestion during the days before, during, and after the eclipse as traffic levels rapidly increase and then slowly return to normal.

Our plans are still a work in progress, and need to be developed in coordination with other state and local agencies.

We will keep the board up to date through the summer as we finalize plans to address the impact of the eclipse, reduce impact to motorists, and keep everyone safe on our highways.

Because Idaho is considered one of the best viewing locations in the nation, this is likely going to be a major event for our state.

And we want to make sure we can provide the excellent level of service expected of ITD.

The eclipse is almost as exciting as the new transportation funding increase.

I say "**almost**," because in addition to the revenue increase, the Idaho Legislature also provided an increase in employee compensation.

And our employees are excited about it.

The increase is scheduled to go into effect at the beginning of the new fiscal year, on July 1.

But by using the salary savings made possible by hard-working ITD employees, we were able to implement the increase for them on the 5th of May, rather than waiting until July.

One of the strategies we are using to becoming the best transportation department in the country is to invest in our employees.

It is important that we continue to use salary savings to move employees closer to competitive rates.

Doing so helps us retain our employees in an increasingly competitive job market, and reduces turnover costs.

On behalf of ITD's nearly 1,700 employees, I thank the Idaho Transportation Board for supporting the early implementation.

I also thank the Idaho Legislature and the Governor's Office for making the compensation increase possible.

And I thank ITD's employees, who continue to find innovative ways to do their jobs faster and more efficiently.

The Division of Human Resources found an innovative way to provide the compensation increase early.

Chief Human Resources Officer Brenda Williams led the effort, as she has done with other major innovations in the past.

This has led to her innovative spirit and professionalism being noticed at the national level.

Last week, while she was attending the **2017 AASHTO Personnel and Human Resources Conference** in Connecticut, she gave a presentation on ITD's innovative ways of doing business.

Showing them that a little state is doing big things.

They must have liked what they heard, because they named her Vice Chair of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Personnel and Human Resources.

I can say with great confidence that she will serve AASHTO well, and that they will quickly learn to appreciate her energy and expertise.

Brenda's appointment as Vice Chair of an important AASHTO committee is a reminder that we have some of the most talented people in the country working for ITD.

Their professionalism and excellent work gets noticed.

A lot.

ITD employees care about what they do, and they are very, very good at getting the job done.

That is even more true when the going gets tough.

According to the National Weather Service, Stanley Idaho received their highest snowfall total since records have been kept.

A record 14 feet of snow.

The winter maintenance crew for the Hailey and Stanley area were probably just as surprised as everyone else when the snow just kept falling and piling up.

But they were well trained, and they were ready for the challenge.

Their success at clearing snow from the two routes that enter the Stanley Basin were noticed and appreciated by the United States Forest Service.

So much so that they presented a special framed certificate to the maintenance crew, thanking them for keeping the roads plowed and providing extra support for special events and recreational activities.

The entire crew went above and beyond their normal duties to keep the roads open and safe.

The staff from the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, which is part of the Sawtooth National Forest, presented the certificate at a special meeting held at the Stanley Ranger Station.

The certificate reads:

"Awarded to the ITD Road Maintenance Crew for Hailey and Stanley.

For your Skill and dedication in keeping State Highways 75 and 21 safe through one of the biggest winters in memory.

And your willingness to help out the Sawtooth National Recreation Area any time we asked.

We appreciate all of you."

It was signed by Kirk Flannigan, the Area Ranger.

It was a record winter for the Stanley area, and a record performance by the Hailey / Stanley Maintenance Crew.

I would now like to Introduce Chief Deputy, Scott Stokes, for his May report.

* * * * *

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