

Director's Board Report

June 2017

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

Good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

I would like to thank Amy Revis and the District 3 employees for hosting the Director visit this week.

(Ad lib about the visit . . .)

On Wednesday of last week, I attended an Interim JFAC Meeting in Coeur d'Alene, along with Chief Human Resource Officer Brenda Williams and Chief Deputy Scott Stokes.

We made a brief presentation on three topics that the committee requested we address:

- Innovative Workforce Planning, including Horizontal Career Paths
- Salary Savings
- And the GARVEE Program

The meeting was well attended and gave us an opportunity to explain horizontal career paths in detail and show how they are a fundamental piece of our personnel management.

The committee members appreciated our efforts to manage positions and people in a new and innovative way, rather than using a government-as-usual approach.

And they now have a deeper understanding of the benefits of the program.

We also briefed the JFAC members on the current status of the GARVEE Program.

But at the time of the meeting, we had not yet selected the GARVEE Program Manager.

That changed on Friday, when we officially announced that Amy Schroeder has accepted the position and will lead the GARVEE Program as it moves forward.

Amy's leadership of the previous GARVEE Program led to it being awarded the nation's top transportation honor, the **AASHTO President's Award for Performance Excellence**.

Under her leadership, the department delivered the \$857 million dollar project on time and under budget.

Amy has a proven ability to manage complex projects and develop innovations and solutions that shorten construction times and reduce costs.

And we are excited that she will once again be bringing her expertise to the GARVEE Program.

At the May board meeting in Pocatello, I discussed the six-year pilot program U.S. Senator Oren Hatch is developing.

I also mentioned that Idaho is under consideration to be one of the three states in the pilot program that will receive all federal transportation funding in one pot.

The pilot states will use their performance-management systems to determine how to spend the funding to achieve the best return on investment.

We now know that if the program is approved by congress, Idaho will likely be one of the three pilot states.

That is because of the process ITD uses to measure its performance and prioritize construction projects.

When I was being interviewed for the position of ITD Director, Board Member Gagner stressed the importance of performance measurement.

We are now seeing the results and benefits of his efforts to move the department toward a performance-based culture.

It is because of that culture, and the success it drives, that we may be one of the three states in the pilot project.

Our ability to produce measureable results using outcome-based investment decisions has placed ITD on the national stage at an exciting time for transportation funding.

I will continue to keep the board up to date on the pilot program as it works toward receiving congressional approval.

The Division of Aeronautics hosted the **2017 ACE Academy** last week.

The academy provides an interactive summer experience for students between the ages of 14 and 18.

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

They get to fly drones, use virtual reality, and actually fly in a real airplane.

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

The ACE Academy's Living Lab gave the teachers a chance to participate alongside the students in a project-based activity at Boise State University.

This included a tour of the BSU wind tunnel.

The purpose of the STEM lab is to improve the scientific literacy of participants in aviation.

Students gain the knowledge to make informed decisions about potential careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

But they also learn about careers in the aerospace industry.

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.

And they also earn in-service credits.

Matt Moore from the ITD Office of Governmental Affairs has a son named Roger who participated in this year's ACE Academy.

Matt says his son came home full of new ideas about careers in aviation, made some new friends, and really liked how his career interests matched opportunities in the aviation field.

Roger told his dad, quote:

“I like how I can see computers and science being used in aviation.

Drones and airplane repair and computer tracking are great!”

End quote.

Speaking of great things, ITD crossed an exciting milestone on May 15.

Four employees from DMV submitted the 1,000th idea to the Innovate ITD portal.

Barry Takeuchi, Chris Fisher, Jeanne (**Jee-Nee**) Purcell, and Jeff Oien (**Oy yen**), who is not shown in the photo on screen, submitted an innovation that allows title lien notifications to be processed more efficiently.

The fact that the 1,000th innovation came from the Division of Motor Vehicles is not a surprise.

In fact, employees from DMV submitted three other innovations on the same day.

The number of time and money-saving innovations submitted continues to increase, with submissions coming from all area of the department.

Since the program began in 2014, employee-driven innovations have saved nearly \$5 million and more than 160,000 hours.

As Chief Administrative Officer Char McCarthur said in a recent Transporter article, it is inspiring to see how a single shared idea can blossom and grow into something much bigger than originally conceived.

Some of the innovations submitted by ITD employees save time, some save money, and some may even save lives.

Trek Pallister, a senior transportation technician, created a safety railing to keep employees safe while filling a 1,000-gallon water tank during friction testing and keep them from falling when they are doing maintenance on the equipment.

Operations employees use a highly specialized friction-testing unit, also known as the Skid Truck, to test the roughness of pavement surfaces on the state highway system.

Crews pull the trailer down the road and lock up one of the tires for a couple of seconds while applying water right in front of the tire to simulate wet road conditions.

Pavement engineers use the data collected during these skid tests to calculate surface friction.

Trek Pallister noticed a possible safety concern on the skid truck and immediately began looking for a way to reduce potential accidents by keeping employees from falling off the skid truck.

He and Jack Long, Caleb Lakey, and Randy Danner decided that a permanent safety railing would be the best solution.

Trek designed a railing around the perimeter of the truck bed, an innovation that has the potential to save significant money for the department.

He says, and I quote:

"It just takes one fall or one injury to make the headlines.

My thought was to prevent the fall before it happened."

End quote.

According to a National Safety Council study, a work-related injury results in an average loss of approximately \$38,000.

That includes wages, productivity loss, and medical expenses, in addition to another \$1,000 in training, equipment, and operation expenses.

The department's primary goal is to keep everyone safe.

That includes our employees AND the public, especially during the 100 deadliest days.

Please play the video.

Summer is here, the construction season is well underway, and projects are progressing in all six districts.

Because we are meeting at District 3 this month, I will highlight one of their bridge projects on U.S. 95.

The district is replacing the structurally deficient Little Salmon River Bridge, which was built in 1957.

It is located about 20 miles north of New Meadows, and carries more than 2,500 vehicles per day.

Work began on the project in April, and on screen you can see the size of the girders used in the new bridge.

During construction, traffic is down to one lane so the bridge can be built one side at a time.

The single lane of traffic is being controlled by temporary traffic signals at each end of the project.

Highway and bridge work along the Little Salmon River is always challenging because of the environmental constraints associated with endangered fish species in the river, including salmon, steelhead and bull trout.

Normal bridge projects in waters containing these species are limited to a restrictive construction window of August through October.

To get around these restrictions, the engineers designed the bridge so that very little work has to be done in the water.

This allowed the project to begin earlier in the spring and proceed without delay while the fish are in the river.

The out-of-the-water design used for this bridge allows the project to be completed in a much shorter time period.

Everything is on schedule and the contractor, **Braun-Jensen**, will complete the \$2.5 million project later this winter.

The Idaho Press Club held the “**Best of 2016**” awards banquet in Boise on May 6, and once again, employees in the ITD Office of Communication received numerous awards.

Bruce King, Public Information Specialist for District 6, won first place for the **6 Bits Newsletter**.

This is the third year in a row Bruce has won first place in this category.

Other winners from ITD include:

- Reed Hollinshead

- Vince Trimboli
- Rik Hinton
- Jared Tuttle, and
- Jennifer Gonzales, who won two awards.

The Office of Communication has won 49 press club awards in the last five years.

The reason they keep winning awards may be due to the fact that there are a lot of great things happening at ITD to write about.

Reed Hollinshead recently wrote an article about an incident that occurred 40 years ago.

The article was so good that the Coeur d'Alene Press asked for permission to reprint it in their June 12th issue.

I will read just the first sentence, then explain the story.

Reed's article begins, and I quote:

"With a throaty growl, the big diesel engine of the road grader sprang to life on that early Friday morning of May 20, 1977, putting into motion a series of events that culminated with a pickup pitching headlong into the cold waters of Beauty Bay."

End quote.

That was when a 25-year-old Idaho Transportation Department employee named Tim Turrell leapt into action to save the lives of Jim and Rosa Stowe, owners of the local lumber mill.

Tim was working on the ITD crew installing guardrail on Idaho 97 saw their vehicle plunge off the 50-foot embankment and sink into the cold waters of Coeur d'Alene lake.

He tore off his hat, glasses, vest and boots and leapt into the icy waters to save Jim first, then went under water to retrieve Rosa, who was still stuck in the cab.

In the article, Tim Turrell said neither of them could swim a lick.

A nearby fisherman arrived in a boat and took Jim and Rosa to the hospital, accompanied by another ITD employee who was an emergency medical technician.

Tim Turrell saved two lives that day.

He retired from ITD in 2007 after more than three decades of service.

The Stowes, married 40 years at the time of the incident, gave Tim a nice watch, which he still has.

He was also recognized for his heroism by then-District Engineer Merle Harding, Department Director Darrell Manning, and Board Chairman Dean Tisdale.

Governor John Evans also congratulated Tim on his heroism.

Director Harding summed up the feelings of the district and department when he stated, and I quote:

"It is with a great deal of pride that the district commends Tim Turrell for the immediate action taken to rescue Mr. and Mrs. Stowe.

This is an example of the highest order of conduct by an Idaho Division of Highways' employee in serving the highway user."

End quote.

At the end of the article, Tim Turrell, who was a bit uncomfortable with the accolades, said:

"It wasn't all about me. I was just in the right place at the right time."

End quote.

Reed Hollinshead did a wonderful job writing about that eventful day in 1977 when a young ITD employee saved two lives.

With stories like that to write about, it's no wonder the Office of Communication continues to win awards.

Their job is to let the public know about the great things ITD employees are doing across the state.

And when those stories get republished in one of the largest newspapers in the state, you know they are well written and appreciated.

Here is another item from the Office of Communication that shows the quality of work they produce.

It is announcing an upcoming event that is generating excitement across the department.

Please play the video.

This year's leadership summit will have 13 teams that will each address a major issue facing the department.

The summit is the next step in ITD's journey to be the best by developing our employees and creating innovative business practices.

Rapid innovations like the Leadership Summit develop leadership skills, and teach employees how to work with people from widely varied backgrounds.

This improves their ability to work closely with people from within ITD, and with our partners in other agencies.

On May 31, Governor Otter announced the retirement of one of the Idaho Transportation Department's closest partners.

The Director of the Idaho State Police, Colonel Ralph Powell, will retire on July 2nd, after 34 years with the agency.

He joined the Idaho State Police in 1983 as a trooper.

By 2012, he had risen to the position of deputy director.

Governor Otter appointed him director with the rank of colonel in March 2013.

Governor Otter is appointing Deputy Director Kedrick Wills, the agency's second-in-command, to be the new director.

I have another retirement to announce, one that is a lot closer to home.

Alan Frew has announced he will retire from his position as Division of Motor Vehicles Administrator at the end of this month.

He began working for the department in 1985, 32 years ago, as a Port of Entry Inspector in District 6.

Alan transferred to Boise in 1990 as a Port of Entry Operations Officer.

He was promoted again in 1994 to Port of Entry Manager, where he managed the installation of Idaho's first weigh-in-motion system.

In 2006 Alan was promoted to Division of Motor Vehicles Administrator, a position he has held ever since.

Alan received a national AASHTO meritorious service award for a lifetime of work at the highest levels last year.

In January he was named the Man of the Year by the Women Transportation Seminars in Boise.

Throughout his career, his primary emphasis has been customer service.

The Transporter article about Alan's retirement quoted Chief Deputy Scott Stokes saying:

"If you've ever worked with Alan, you will know how much he cares about people, starting with every DMV employee and including every DMV customer across the state."

End quote.

Reymundo Rodriguez, DMV's Compliance Program Manager, has worked with Alan Frew for more than 30 years.

He was also quoted in the Transported article, saying:

"Alan not only talked the talk, but also walked the walk, in that his goal each day was to ensure that customers were taken care of and satisfied with their service.

His ability to make people laugh and enjoy being in the moment also was a great asset, and I will miss that."

End quote.

We wish Alan Frew the very best in his retirement, and since he is on an Alaskan cruise ship right now, we will give him a good sendoff at his retirement party after he returns.

He has certainly earned it with his long and distinguished career.

Announcing the retirement of a long-time employee like Alan is a bitter/sweet experience.

We are excited to see him ready to enjoy retired life, but we are also saddened to see him go.

Anyone who has known Alan very long knows he has an active sense of humor, and I think he would approve of me sharing something to lighten our mood.

District 6 received a heartwarming letter from a third grader at Tiebreaker Elementary School in Idaho Falls.

She wrote, and I quote:

"To whom it may concern:

Hi!

I'm Julia.

I'm a 3rd grade student at Tiebreaker.

Thank you for making our state clean.

In the winter you made it easier to drive on.

Tell your boss to give you a raise.

Someday I want to see to see your work.

I like that you get off Fridays so I can see you more.

You're really good at your job.

Thank you for making our roads safe and clean.

Sincerely,

Julia B."

End quote.

If Julia is already writing enthusiastic letters like that in the third grade, imagine what she will be doing as an adult.

Who knows, she may turn out to be a future governor or U.S. Senator.

She is already off to a good start.

Two weeks ago I received a letter from a car enthusiast named Vickie Tokita.

She wanted to express her appreciation for ITD's 511 website and some great customer service she received from employees in three different districts across the state.

She wrote, and I quote:

"Director Ness,

I wanted to share with you a very positive experience that I had with ITD employees today.

Last year, my husband and I joined over 100 vintage cars and drove to Rapid City, South Dakota.

The return trip was through Yellowstone and southeast Idaho where we ran into a chip-seal project.

The organizer did not check these roads, and damage was incurred by many cars.

This year, we are driving to Missoula and I volunteered to check the road conditions to prevent a similar occurrence.

The 511 website is a great resource.

However, speaking with Jennifer Gonzalez, Bob Schumacher, Scott Malone, and Justin Price was even more beneficial.

They were helpful and provided specific information on road conditions, and offered alternative routes.

Thank you Jennifer, Bob, Scott, and Justin for providing such great service to a very appreciative Idaho citizen and her Idaho friends.

The State and the department is fortunate to have such great employees.

Regards,

Vicki Tokita''

End Quote.

As Vicki mentioned, we do have great employees, and I commend Bob Schumacher in District 2, Scott Malone, and Justin Price in District 4, and Jennifer Gonzalez here in District 3 for their outstanding customer service in helping Vicki and her fellow vintage-car enthusiasts plan a fun and scenic route through the state.

While on the subject of outstanding service, you will remember that at the April board meeting, I congratulated Chairman Whitehead for being named an Idaho CEO of Influence.

But he is not the only member of the Idaho Transportation Board who has received a major honor this year.

District 3 board member Julie DeLorenzo was recently nominated by the Idaho Business Review as one of Idaho's **2017 Women of the Year**.

Ten selection committees evaluated the nominees, rating them from 1 to 5 in several categories, including:

- Professional achievements
- Leadership
- Providing mentorship to other women
- Community service work, and
- Community leadership.

The 50 women with the highest scores are this year's honorees, representing women across the state.

For Member DeLorenzo to be named an Idaho Woman of the Year should come as no surprise to those who know her.

As one of five founding members of Keller Williams Realty Boise, she has helped the company grow from five agents in 1999 to more than to 560 today.

She has been Idaho Realtor of the Year.

And she has served as past president of the Idaho Realtors Association.

In addition to her many accomplishments in real estate, she has made it a priority to help others in her community.

Which is why she has served on the board of the **Women's and Children's Alliance** in Boise for nearly a decade.

Please join me in congratulating one of Idaho's Women of the Year, Board Member Julie Delorenzo!

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

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