

# Director's Board Report

## October 2017

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

I would like to begin by welcoming ITD's new manager for the Office of Public Transportation.

Her name is **Kim McGourty**.

She began working for ITD as an intern in 2015, and was quickly promoted to a Grants Officer.

In that capacity, she streamlined funding programs and internal processes, and developed relationships with transit providers and partners around the state.

Kim lead a number of Public Transportation initiatives, including Idaho's **Workforce Transportation Initiative**.

And she was recently elected to serve on AASHTO's **Multi-States Technical Assistance Program** as a steering committee member, representing ITD and Idaho as a whole.

Kim started her new position in September, and is already working to advance public transportation programs in Idaho.

She will continue to be a great asset for the department.

Last month's Transporter had a fun question:

**What do pizza cones, deep-fried Oreo burgers, and the DMV have in common?**

The answer is, **A Lot!**

Because more than 4,500 visitors stopped by the DMV booth at the Western Idaho Fair in August to ask questions.

And to give input on DMV activities while they were enjoying all the culinary delights the fair has to offer.

This year, the DMV booth focused on informing the public about organ donation, the importance of keeping your address up-to-date, and the upcoming Star Card, also known as the Real ID.

The DMV employees who worked at the booth answered a variety of questions ranging from "what is the process to get my child a driver's license?" to "how do I take away my parent's driver's license?"

The fair provides an opportunity for the public to learn more about the DMV.

But it is also a learning experience for the DMV staff as well.

The face-to-face interaction gives them a better understanding of the questions people have.

And how well DMV's website and brochures meet the needs of the public.

This is the 16th consecutive year the DMV has staffed a booth at the Western Idaho Fair, and as always, it drew quite a crowd.

Much of the work in DMV centers around drivers and vehicle registration.

But a large part of their work also includes the ports of entry.

Because of their work on the state's major highways, DMV's Port of Entry officers are sometimes the first responders to incidents on Idaho Highways.

In August, Port of Entry inspectors from the East and West Boise Ports on Interstate 84 quickly jumped into action to put out a car fire.

Inspector Kyle Perkins spotted a car on fire just past the East Boise Port of Entry, and alerted Port of Entry inspectors on the westbound side.

At that point, things got hectic.

Devin Dascenzo (**Duh Senz Oh**) and Jeff Butler each grabbed a fire extinguisher and ran up the westbound ramp to try to put out the fire.

While they were running toward the fire, April Jordan closed down the westbound port.

By the time Devin and Jeff arrived, Scott Conrad had already used up two fire extinguishers from his port of entry car.

Two truck drivers stopped and added their own fire extinguishers to fight the flames.

Jeff and Devin placed orange cones to keep interstate traffic away from the shoulder without closing down a lane of traffic.

And then they helped the driver gather as many of his personal items from the car as possible.

When it was all over and the fire department had left the scene, POE employees made sure a tow truck was in route to remove the vehicle for the driver.

The quick reaction of the POE staff as first responders helped prevent injury to the driver, stopped a potential wildfire at the height of fire season, and kept traffic safely moving.

I congratulate them on a job well done.

Here is another job that deserves congratulations and statewide recognition.

Several beaver dams on Tin Cup Creek in District 5 were causing water to back up onto Idaho Highway 34 and threatening to undermine the road.

The rising water was also keeping bridge inspectors from being able to perform inspections on a culvert underneath the highway.

So the district came up with a plan that worked out well for the department, the bridge inspectors, and for the beavers.

District 5 removed three beaver dams downstream of the culvert to lower the water level at the crossing.

They also removed one dam upstream of the culvert.

Then they put two dams in place upstream of the affected roadway to add to and improve ongoing efforts by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to improve wildlife habitat in the area.

In collaboration with the Caribou-Targhee (Tar Gee - Hard "G") National Forest, ITD crews also repaired and improved the streambed.

The project stabilized the channel, protected the culvert, and permanently raised the creek bottom.

And it improved habitat for fish and all wildlife living in the area.

The project also allowed employees at the Pocatello Maintenance shed to gain experience in stream restoration work, adding to their skill set.

This cooperative effort between ITD, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the Caribou-Targhee (Tar Gee) National Forest shows that ITD projects can not only improve and protect infrastructure, they can also improve recreational opportunities and the environment.

Operations crewmember Mark Porter said the fish were already moving into the dams and claiming territory as they were cleaning up and leaving the project.

The beavers and the District 5 crew aren't the only ones who have been busy.

The Office of Communication has produced two new videos for the public I think you will enjoy.

Our pre-planning for the Star Card rollout has been very successful.

So much so, that other states, including Montana, are now using ITD's public-information campaign as a model for their own rollouts of the Real ID.

Idaho Star Cards will be available in early 2018.

Moving to more national issues, last Thursday, the United States **Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works** held a confirmation hearing for Paul Trombino.

He was nominated by President Trump to be the new Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

Paul has served as Director of the Iowa DOT and as President of AASHTO.

He is a good friend of mine, and I tuned in to watch his confirmation hearing to see how it went, and to see how he addressed the needs of rural states.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee that held the hearing is John Barrasso.

He is from Wyoming, which is a WASHTO state.

And he is a long-time advocate for improving transportation funding for rural states.

So is Paul Trombino.

He too comes from a rural state.

And I am pleased to report that rural issues were well represented on the senate committee.

In fact, the majority of the questions Paul was asked during the hearing dealt with rural transportation issues and funding.

The second-most-discussed topic was streamlining federal regulations to reduce project-development times and give states more flexibility in the way they develop and fund projects.

Paul told the committee members that all tools and all mechanisms do not work in every state.

And that each state is different.

In his closing remarks, he made a commitment to work for more flexibility for state transportation departments.

Paul Trombino is an excellent choice to head the Federal Highway Administration, and if confirmed, he will be a strong advocate for rural states.

That is good news for Idaho.

And for Idaho's transportation system.

The quality of the road and bridge projects that make up Idaho's transportation system are time and time again recognized as some of the best in the nation.

That is something we can all be proud of.

But there is something else I think we can also be just as proud of.

I want to congratulate everyone involved in project design for delivering 99 percent of our highway projects on time this year.

It is a major accomplishment and the result of a lot of hard work on their part.

Chief Operations Officer Travis McGrath will talk more about this in a few minutes.

I received a unique and interesting letter in September that highlights two ITD employees whose hard work and dedication made a big impression on one of their customers.

Their names are April Davis and Brandy Ferris.

This letter shows the value of empowering our employees to make quick decisions closest to where the work is done.

They truly went the extra mile.

And that mile extends all the way to Southern France.

The letter says, and I quote:

**First, April and Brandy.**

**I cannot thank you enough for your heroic efforts on my behalf.**

**You have literally saved a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to follow my research on Rome's suppression of Gaul.**

**The base for several chapters I am writing on modern counterterrorism.**

**The driver's license actually reached the address before we did.**

**I am enclosing a photo, and the room it arrived to, built in the second or third century, in a tiny frontier outpost at one time.**

**At the edge of the empire near Cevennes (Sev Enn), the site of numerous battles.**

**The village of Saint Bauzille De patois (Bow Zill De PatWah) is so small it does not show up on my car gps.**

**But my license did!**

**Second, Brian.**

**You are so fortunate to be able to retain employees with the level of professionalism represented by these two women within.**

**Your allowing them the initiative to overcome challenging situations speaks volumes toward your supervision.**

**I first read the DMV mission statement and guffawed at the language.**

**Especially after my frustration at Blaine County.**

**I now believe there are employees within the DMV who are not only committed to it, but apply it.**

**This took great effort and perseverance on their part.**

**It also required excellent communication.**

**I can't thank them, or you, enough.**

**Signed,**

**Frank M Andrews, PhD**

**Diplomate and Fellow, American College of Forensic Psychology (retired)**

**And Freelance journalist**

End Quote.

Receiving glowing accounts like this of the excellent service ITD employees consistently provide to the public is good news.

But it is not the only good news I have to share with you today.

I am pleased to report the Thornton Interchange project on U.S. 20 recently earned the nation's two highest transportation honors.

Both awards were announced at the AASHTO Annual Conference on Sept. 27 in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Thornton Interchange won the **America's Transportation "People's Choice" Award.**

And it won the **AASHTO President's Award for Highway Traffic Safety.**

For the People's Choice award, it was competing against a record 92 entries from 40 states.

From those 92 projects, 12 were selected as the best of the best and sent out for a nationwide public vote.

This is the fourth time an Idaho project has made it to the final 12 since 2013.

Each of the four Idaho projects finished no lower than third in the national voting.

That is a pretty good sign that ITD has become a national leader in infrastructure design and construction.

The People's Choice Award is joint effort between AASHTO, the AAA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Winning it is a major honor for the department, and for everyone in District 6.

The other award earned by the Thornton Interchange at the AASHTO conference was the **President's Award for Highway Traffic Safety**.

This is the 11th President's Award earned by ITD since 2010.

The award honors the amazing safety improvements the project provided for the public.

Including a 75-percent reduction in serious injury crashes.

But it is important to note that employee-driven innovations on the project also saved ITD almost \$450,000.

Providing the contractor with a 3-D model for the Interchange and requiring the use of automated grade control significantly shortened the required construction time.

And reduced the impact to the public during the busiest part of the summer.

The President's award comes with a \$10,000 check, which we donated to the **Idaho/Utah Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation** on Tuesday.

The Americas Transportation Award, the 2017 Presidents Award, and all of the other honors we have received over the last few years are all employee driven.

They are the result of empowering our employees and teams to make decisions closer to where the work is being done and the operations are taking place.

I would like to thank the board for providing the support and guidance that made that possible.

The innovative spirit of our employees has made us a better organization.

Mr. Chairman, I would now like to introduce Chief Deputy Scott Stokes for his October Report.

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