

**Director's Board Report
January 2018**

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

The new year is off to a strong start, and I am pleased to present my first board report for 2018.

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

The Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee will address three of ITD's six Fiscal Year 2018 Supplemental Requests tomorrow.

Our six supplemental requests total **\$59.2 million**.

The three requests that will be addressed tomorrow total **\$46.9 million**.

We do not yet know the date the JFAC Committee will address the remaining **\$12.3 million** in supplemental requests.

Idaho's annual transportation revenue shortfall for highway maintenance alone is currently \$156.4 million.

The total shortfall, including expansion, is \$417 million.

Every dollar of transportation revenue that we can stretch or save is important as we seek ways to address Idaho's rapid growth, and the corresponding increase in traffic on our roads.

Here is a news report from KTVB discussing the impact of Idaho's rapid growth.

The annual transportation-funding shortfall mentioned in the news story is one of the main reasons ITD employees are always looking for new ways to stretch our dollars.

Here is a recent example.

Engineers in District 6 found a way to save \$700,000 on a bridge project over the Owsley Canal near Mud Lake.

They originally thought they would have to replace the existing 120-foot bridge with a similar product, costing about \$1.5 million.

But after studying the canal's water flow with 3D modeling, engineers determined that a culvert structure would work just as well, saving Idaho taxpayers \$700,000.

District 6 employees worked closely with the Mud Lake Water and Sewer Company and the Owsley Canal Company to design a project that would address everyone's needs.

The design has several side benefits.

It will reduce traffic impact during the four-month project starting next fall after water leaves the canal.

Grading the roadway instead of installing guardrail will enable farmers to move large farm equipment across the new bridge.

And the culvert design will eliminate the sight-distance problems of the old bridge, which was built in 1954.

The Office of Communication's new Public Information Specialist for Districts 1 and 2, Megan Sausser, produced a 30-second video addressing driving under the influence.

The video played on social media during the Christmas and New Year's holiday season.

Two weeks ago the Office of Communication and District 2's maintenance and operations crew held a live facebook event.

They answered live questions from the public about how best to prepare their vehicles for winter weather.

This is the second event like this that we have held on Facebook.

And in the future I expect we will see similar events in other districts.

District 4 is working on a project this winter to improve and upgrade 30 traffic signals in Twin Falls and replace 69 traffic signals in the Magic Valley.

The improvements will bring the signals up to current standards and improve traffic flow by:

- Installing new or upgraded vehicle-detection systems
- Upgrading signal cabinets, control panels, and electronic components,
- And replacing several left-turn signals with flashing yellow arrow signals.

Cache Valley Electric, of Salt Lake City, is the contractor for the \$800,000 project.

District 1 is working on a partnership with Syringa Networks and Fatbeam LLC to install 56 miles of fiber-optic cable along Interstate 90 and state highways.

Before this partnership, District 1 only had about seven and a half miles of cable along highways.

However, last year they started installing conduit along state highways in association with other projects.

Their foresight is beginning to bear fruit.

As they are now able to fill that conduit with fiber-optic cable.

Which will allow the district to connect signals, interchanges, cameras, traffic counters, dynamic messaging signs, and maintenance sheds.

Connecting the entire district via fiber optics will enable engineers to observe traffic flow.

And to remotely adjust the timing of signals, which will eliminate the need for electricians to be on site.

Traffic engineers can also scan for crashes and coordinate with other agencies through fiber optics to improve response times.

The ITD fiber backbone also has the potential to serve a regional traffic center.

Installing the fiber-optic cable has allowed the district to increase internet connectivity in the Coeur 'd Alene metro area.

Fatbeam, one of our partners in the project, is now able to offer high-speed internet to rural schools along US-95 and Idaho Highway 54.

And Syringa Networks is now providing service to the Idaho Department of Labor and the DMV office in Post Falls along I-90.

With the help of ITD, both providers have improved the area's economic opportunity by offering essential services that were not previously available to local businesses.

At the opposite end of the state, District 5 has been busy working on the Interstate 15 Corridor south of Pocatello.

The number of projects they were able to complete in one construction season is impressive.

Please play the video.

I received a phone call from a very happy traveler the day after Christmas.

He was traveling across the panhandle, and told me the Montana roads were **really bad!**

He actually used a more colorful description that I probably should not share.

But he did say that when he got to Idaho it was **"smoooooth sailing."**

He said he rated our agency an **A + + +.**

He also said he is a very low grader, and would never rate a government agency any higher than a C or D.

He told me he was very happy and felt very safe on our highway.

And I can understand why.

Our winter performance metrics this year are outstanding.

The latest report shows that week nine of our winter season had an impressive 84 percent mobility rating, during storms.

Performance like that gets noticed by the public, and generates the phone calls and letters we receive from grateful citizens.

Here is another example.

Sharon Duncan, The Bureau Chief of Operations at the Idaho Division of Human Resources, sent me e-mail to me about our Incident Response Team.

She wrote, and I quote:

“I wanted to send you a quick thank you for the transportation services you provide to the public, specifically the incident response team.

On our way to work yesterday, we had a flat tire on east bound I-84.

We pulled over to the side of the freeway near the Eagle Road overpass and attempted to contact AAA.

As you probably know, the roads were icy and treacherous.

A member of your incident response team, Jim Cherry, pulled up behind us and asked if we needed help.

I informed him that we had a flat tire and I had AAA on the phone, but their response time was over 2 hours due to road condition related incidents.

Jim said he would be happy to change the tire in order for us to get to work.

He did an outstanding job and had us back on the road within 30 minutes.

Jim provided an extremely appreciated service, in a timely, professional, and courteous manner.”

End Quote.

State Representative Caroline Troy, who represents Latah and Benewah Counties, sent a letter to me that I would like to share.

She wrote, and I quote,

“Sincere regrets for missing your legislative update.

It is my favorite of the year!

I was attending a Western Legislative Academy, learning better ways to do my job.

Perhaps a better approach would be to duplicate the great work done by ITD.”

End quote.

On December 18, Compass, the Community Planning Organization of Southwest Idaho, gave ITD a couple of early Christmas presents.

They honored District 3 with two **Leadership in Motion Awards**.

The awards recognize individuals and projects that demonstrate leadership in supporting the **Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan** for Ada and Canyon County.

Compass honored the 2017 Interstate 84 rehabilitation Project between Nampa and Caldwell with a **Leadership in Government Award**.

And they honored Idaho Transportation Board Member Julie DeLorenzo with a **Leadership by Example Award**.

She earned the honor for her role in helping COMPASS address transportation challenges on Interstate 84, U.S. 20/26, and State Highway 44.

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