

# Board Report

## August 2018

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

I would like to thank the District 1 staff for an excellent board tour yesterday.

And for meeting with me last week during the Director Visit.

There are exciting things going on in District offices across the state.

Districts 4, 5, and 6 worked together to save the department nearly \$5 million dollars.

They combined 17 individual bridge-replacement projects into one large project, saving more than \$3 million in construction costs. . .

And about \$1.7 million in design costs.

Combining the projects also saved years of construction time.

Under normal circumstances, the 17 bridge-replacement projects would have had 17 different points of contact.

But by grouping projects across district lines and working together, they were able to narrow it down to only one point of contact.

Each of the 17 bridges were beyond their 50-year design life and needed to be replaced.

The new bridges will be wider, and in most cases longer, to better accommodate constantly changing waterways.

This project is so outstanding that it is being considered for an AASHTO President's Award for planning.

And it is a great example of how our district crews are continuing to find ways to save money and improve the way we do business.

Two employees at headquarters found a way to save money on the decals we put on new vehicles.

The department was paying an outside vendor about \$75 an hour to install the decals.

The process required two employees to shuttle the vehicles back and forth from Garden City to headquarters.

Mason Grubb and Paul Hart both work in the ITD sign shop.

And they suggested that they could do the same work in less time.

And save the department some money.

Both of them had experience in the commercial sign industry before coming to work for ITD.

They thought outsourcing the work was a waste of time and money.

Because they had all of the software and equipment needed to do the work on site.

So, in March, Mason and Paul began installing the graphics on our new trucks.

To date, they have worked on 40 vehicles, and saved the department more than \$5,000.

Here in North Idaho, several employees had to jump into action quickly after a wide load traveling on US-95 struck one support leg of a 13,000 pound overhead sign.

The bolts that attach the sign to the Kootenai River Bridge were sheared off.

The sign remained upright after the collision.

But only one leg was still attached.

The Bonners Ferry crew recognized the threat to public safety and acted quickly to close the highway.

They had a private contractor bring a 63,000 pound crane to remove the damaged structure.

Within an hour and a half, the damaged sign was gone, and US-95 over the Kootenai River Bridge was reopened to traffic.

District Operations Engineer Jerry Willson said the team was able to organize and safely remove the damaged structure with minimal impact to the U.S. 95 traffic.

This is a great example of the skill and dedication of our operations crews.

And their focus on safety as priority one.

As a part of ITD's ***Year of the Employee***, we are working on several ways to improve safety on the highways and in the workplace.

On July 18, as part of the District 3 board tour, you were able to see a portion of the active-shooter exercise we held involving ITD employees, the Idaho State Police, Boise City Police, and the FBI.

Here is a video showing how it all played out, and some of the lessons learned.

Last year at about this same time, we were only a week away from the Great Eclipse.

And as you probably remember, we started planning for the event many months in advance.

That advance work paid off in two great ways.

First, our employees and partners in other agencies across the state were prepared and ready for the event.

And second, it earned ITD the 2018 APEX Award of Excellence.

APEX hosts an annual competition for the world's best printed and electronic communications.

This year, there were 1,400 national and international entries from the United States, Canada, Taiwan, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and the United Kingdom.

There are 12 categories of APEX awards, and ITD's Eclipse preparations earned the **Award of Excellence for Campaigns, Programs, and Plans**.

This was the result our department's outstanding public-outreach program.

We created a very popular Eclipse website to keep the media and public informed.

We created specific plans and talking points for each district office.

And we posted a series of eclipse-related topics on the website and social media.

In the week leading up to the event, we provided live website updates with traffic volumes on primary routes.

This allowed drivers to adjust their travel times and routes to avoid the crush.

We suspended construction statewide for the four days around the eclipse date.

And used flaggers to control traffic at the busiest intersections.

We reached a quarter of a million people via Facebook.

And had 160,000 people visit the 511 site.

All of this gained the attention of APEX, and led to ITD receiving the 2018 **Award of Excellence for Campaigns, Programs, and Plans**.

With international recognition like this, we might want to think about changing our vision from being the best transportation department in the **country**, to being the best transportation department in the **world**.

The Office of Communication has a new In Motion video that I would like to share with you.

These videos are made for the public and ITD employees, who do not always get to see everything that you as board members get to see.

The first two items contain short clips from two of the videos I shared with you at the July board meeting.

Please play the video.

District 4 Senior Transportation Planner Trey Mink recently gave an engineering and bridge presentation to some school children in Gooding.

He encouraged the students to design and build their own bridge.

They had two instructions:

- Use 250 toothpicks and a small bottle of Elmer's glue.
- And see how strong of a bridge you can build.

The students had two weeks to make their bridges, and then they put them to the test.

Here is a fast-motion video showing the winner finding out how exactly many pounds of sand his bridge could hold.

Trey Mink says he has seen some interesting designs over the years, and is often surprised at the innovation and craftsmanship the students bring to the table.

As you saw in the video, this year's winner built a bridge that held 46 pounds before breaking.

Imagine what a talented person like that could do with an engineering degree.

Showing Idaho students practical examples of how science and engineering can be put to use is only one of the ways we are working in the schools.

Another way is sharing safe-driving information with high school students.

Here is a portion of a letter I received from Shawn Scott.

He is President of the Idaho School Resource Officer's Association.

He wrote, and I quote:

**“We recently held our statewide school resource officer’s conference in Boise.**

**Ken Corder recently attended and presented during one of our sessions.**

**We learned about ITD’s focus on positive driving habits.**

**And inspiring youth to implement these positive changes.**

**We also had a large group of youth that attended a couple of sessions.**

**These youth were a part of Ken's program.**

**They were intelligent and insightful.**

**We are glad to see Ken's excitement when working with the youth of Idaho.**

**Ken sets an amazing example for resource officers who also work to mentor children in their communities.**

**We are grateful for Ken's willingness to provide to us his valuable time and talents.**

**Especially when we know those youth were benefiting from his time as well.**

**The association wanted to inform you of the amazing job Ken and the staff at ITD have done.**

**We enjoyed his presentation and hope he will be available in the future!"**

Carlos Braceros is the Executive Director of the Utah Department of Transportation.

He sent me a letter that he received from a participant in the WASHTO Emerging Leaders Program.

The letter says, and I quote:

**"I'm not sure how to start or what to say besides thank you.**

**The WASHTO Emerging Leaders program has been by far my most rewarding and challenging leadership training and I hope it stays afloat.**

**So you know, I didn't see myself as a leader before this training.**

**I was building roads or designing roads.**

**And now, after having gone through the program, I feel as if I can not only build roads, but also build people.**

**In short, thanks for investing in me.**

**With Appreciation,**

**Sam Grimshaw, Project Manager**

**Region 4, Utah Department of Transportation"**

End Quote

The training WASHTO Emerging Leaders receive is developed and presented by ITD's Human Resources personnel.

And they are doing an outstanding job.

They are also working on an emerging leaders program for ITD that is patterned after the WASHTO version.

The WASHTO program they developed has been so successful that AASHTO, the national organization, has expressed interest in creating a similar program for the other regions of the country.

That says a lot about the quality of the program, and the quality of our Human Resources people.

They are truly leading the way for the rest of the country.

Mr. Chairman and members of the board.

This concludes my August Director's Report.