

Director's Board Report January 2019

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 2019.

Governor Little presented his first state-of-the-state address last week, and the Idaho Legislature is now in session. The Governor recommended our FY19 supplemental request with no changes. His recommended Fiscal Year 20 budget for ITD is **\$793.8 million**, which includes GARVEE Debt Service. This is a **4.8 percent** increase over last year's total program funding.

We have 19 line items this year, totaling **\$71.9 million**. The Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee will address our line items on February 1st. They have a target date of March 11 to complete budget settings for Fiscal Year 20. On January 24, I will be making a presentation to the Joint Germane Committees.

Governmental Affairs Manager Mollie McCarty will be making a presentation to you later today to provide more information on legislative activities.

ITD will be working closely with members of the House and Senate during the legislative session. Strong partnerships like this help ITD be far more successful than we would be on our own. That is why I am so pleased to announce that the **Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium**, also known as **PacTrans**, named ITD its **2018 Partner of the Year**. The award honors ITD's collaboration and support of regional transportation research. PacTrans is a coalition of transportation professionals and educators from Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

They work to improve pavement performance, help us better understand freight movement, and to develop safety messages to Idaho students. Board Chairman Jerry Whitehead, and ITD Research Program Manager Ned Parrish serve on the PacTrans External Advisory Board, providing them with valuable input on ITD's research and workforce-development needs. PacTrans is currently working on a project to see if communication between automated vehicles and traffic-signal controllers might be able to improve traffic flow and safety in Ada County. This specific project is designed to improve traffic flow, but improvements at ITD come in many forms.

up with a better way to clean their trucks. Transportation technician Gary Haynes took the lead on the project. He and his crew went through the scrap pile at their shed and salvaged some parts they thought might work. They spent \$70 on the project, which took one day to complete.

What they developed is a simple but effective high pressure sprinkler system that slides underneath the trucks. The goal is to keep the trucks cleaner and reduce corrosion, which should allow them to spend more time on the road.

Here is a video showing how it works.

The Idaho State Police were involved in a high-speed chase on U.S.95 as they tried to capture a suspect driving a stolen vehicle. District 1 Transportation Technician **Dave Freeman** just happened to be tuned into ISP's radio channel that morning and heard what was happening.

Knowing that traffic control would likely be needed at some point, he positioned himself in the area and kept listening. When ISP called for help from other law enforcement agencies to close down intersections along U.S.95, Dave was able to see where they were active, and found one intersection that had not been closed.

He moved in to block the intersection, and was able to keep drivers from pulling out in front of the speeding fugitive, who, even though officers had blown his tires with spike strips, was driving the stolen car on its rims and running red lights at nearly 90 miles per hour.

Dave Freeman has been with the department for eight or nine years, and knows that it pays to develop relationships with law enforcement. He said, and I quote:

“We work together a lot, and in the past, we’ve always worked to help each other out when there aren’t enough resources.”

End quote.

After reopening the intersection, Dave stopped by the O’Reilly’s Auto Parts store in Hayden where officers had finally captured the suspect, who was also wanted for kidnapping and robbery charges. It is a small world, because, as it turns out, the car had been stolen from the son of District 1 employee **Shad Flores**, who works in Supply. Dave’s quick action to block the intersection and protect drivers is a prime example of ITD employees going above and beyond their normal duties to serve their local communities.

The Boise community recently had some excitement of their own. But in a more productive way. In December, a demolition crew tore down the damaged Cloverdale Overpass on Interstate 84. It will be replaced with a new, modern structure designed to meet the needs of the public long into the future.

Over 27,000 people watched the demolition video on the ITD Facebook site. It was the most-viewed post in our Twitter site, and KTVB aired the video on their evening news broadcast. Videos like this help us engage and inform the public about impacts of our transportation investments, and establishes ITD as **THE** trusted source for highway information.

Please play the video:

The Cherry Lane Bridge in Nez Perce County received a build-grant award for **\$15.7 million** from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The existing one-lane bridge was built 100 years ago in 1919.

Large trucks, including emergency vehicles, are unable to cross the bridge from U.S. 12 to get to the City of Lenore, and when two vehicles meet on the bridge, one has to back up for the other to cross.

We are replacing the old structure with a new two-lane bridge that will increase connectivity for local residents and the Nez Perce Reservation. It will improve safety and the movement of goods and people to and from this economically distressed area. The new bridge will also have lanes on each side for cyclists and pedestrians.

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary **Elaine Chao** announced the winners of the grants on December 11. The Cherry Lane Bridge was one of 91 projects to receive the federal grants. There were 851 eligible applications from all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia, which is nearly double the applications received in 2017.

The U.S. DOT selection criteria included safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, environmental protection, and state of repair. They prioritized projects that addressed rural infrastructure needs.

Secretary Chao said the Build Grants are, and I quote:

“Major investments in road, rail, transit, and port projects that serve as a down payment on this administration’s commitment to America’s infrastructure.”

End Quote.

The Idaho Transportation Department recently earned a North American Excellence award for its Historical Photo Library archive. Knowing that Idaho’s transportation history is an important asset, ITD began digitizing tens of thousands of historical photos in 2016 so they could be provided to the public online, without charge. We launched the photo-retrieval service last May.

The website gives Idahoans Idaho highway history from an archive of more than 30,000 historical images. The photo library is the result of an idea first proposed by **Jeff Stratten**.

The North American Excellence awards are part of a global implementation of Excellence Awards for that includes Africa, The Asian Pacific, Latin America, and Europe. ITD’s award for the Historical Archive was presented on December 6th in Dublin, Ireland.

The awards do not stop there. Two ITD engineers were recently honored by the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, also known as COMPASS, during their annual Leadership in Motion awards. They gave District 3 Engineer **Amy Revis** and GARVEE Program Manager **Amy Schroeder** awards for Leadership in Practice.

The awards recognize businesses, individuals, and projects that demonstrate leadership in supporting the Treasure Valley’s regional long-range plan. The awards were presented at the annual COMPASS/Valley Regional Transit Board of Directors' holiday luncheon at the Nampa Civic Center.

The Office of Communications has produced a new video in collaboration with AAA Idaho.

It provides some great winter driving tips.

Let’s take a look.

We have received several letters about our department and our employees that I would like to share with you.

The first is from **John Culligan**, Territory Manager for Nutrien Solutions, a unit of Nutrien LTD, the world’s largest agricultural inputs company.

They manufacture fertilizers and chemicals, supply seeds, and assist with precision agriculture. Mr. Culligan wrote, and I quote:

“Just wanted you to know how much I appreciate the snow plow crew’s performance in District 5 and across the state.

I spend a lot of time traveling over four states now, attending meetings and conducting sales.

I travel in some pretty bad weather from time to time.

I now see firsthand the difference Between ITD and the surrounding states regarding winter performance.

Gentlemen it's not even close.

It is very comforting during a storm to know that I will be crossing the Idaho border and finding safe driving conditions.

Please pass this on to your Crews.

My deep appreciation of a job well done.

I know firsthand the sacrifices they make so the traveling public can have safe roads to travel on."

End quote.

D. J. Buthe, an engineer in Minnehaha County South Dakota, send a letter saying, and I quote:

"Today I reviewed your 2018 Annual Report.

Near the bottom it asks for feedback and includes a link for this web page.

The report is excellent, and has enough information to be usable but does not include so much detail that loses people when reading through it.

Great job!"

End Quote.

Mark Schuster in District 2, shared the following story that I found most interesting. Quote:

"I had a visit from a lady with the first name of Nan today at the Kooskia shed.

She was travelling back from Missoula and stopped by to thank the plow driver who assisted here this week in an unusual way.

There were actually two drivers involved and here is what happened.

Bill Fowler was at Powell this week filling in for another employee who wanted Christmas off because his son is home for the holiday from the service.

Bill's normal job is an auditor in District 2, but he worked maintenance many years ago, and has kept his CDL current and is on our Relief Snow drivers list.

Anyway, he is at Powell staying in the bunkhouse and he went down to the Lodge which is about one mile away for supper one night.

There he met a lady who was having dinner also and found out she had forgotten her purse at a restaurant clear down at Kooskia about 90 miles away.

She is about 60 to 70 years young, and I would say even though in excellent health it was not a good idea for her to retrace her steps.

Also, her plan I believe was to go on to Missoula to be with family the next morning.

Anyway, in conversation with Bill he said he may have a way to get her purse to her that night.

Bill called me about 5 p.m. knowing we would have the night guys coming on at 6 p.m. and if they could go get her purse from the Kooskia restaurant then they could ferry it up river to them.

I got ahold of Ed Glover and told him of the situation and he promptly went down and retrieved her purse and took it with him up to Bald Mountain in his normal run that night.

From there he met up with Bill or left the purse at the Bald Mountain loader shed.

Anyway ,Bill gets the purse and takes it to the Powell Lodge and knocks on her door about midnight to give it to her.

She was so overjoyed that she hugged him and repeatedly thanked him for that kind effort.

She was able to go on to her destination the next day and stay in Missoula as planned.

Nan was returning yesterday when she stopped to thank the other plow driver, Ed, for his kind efforts in her behalf.

He was not here, but I told her I would relay her thanks.

After that story she went on to say how she makes several trips a year to Missoula and appreciates the hard work done on the roadway especially in the Winter.

She said on this trip the Idaho side was beautiful and the Montana side not so much.

She encountered slick roadways and even showed me where her car had been stuck by another rig while she was parked in Missoula.

That rig had come down a hill and could not get stopped until it struck her parked car.

Anyway, she went on to say how beautiful Lolo Pass looked as she came over it.

The road was free from snow unlike the Montana side and the mountains were breathtaking .

The wing had been up and made a very clean bench and it all looked so well cared for to her.

She could not say enough about how nice a drive it was and how much she appreciated the snow plow drivers.

I thanked her and she went on her way.

So nice to have such a positive visit with her today and thought it needed to be shared with the crew.

Thank You crew.

Your efforts are probably appreciated more than you realize at times.”

End quote.

There is one final item I would like to share with you today.

I have a letter from Debbie King, Mayor of the City of Nampa, addressed to Chairman Whitehead and the Idaho Transportation Board. I will read just a short section of the letter. Mayor King wrote, and I quote:

“On behalf of the City of Nampa, I want to express our thanks and appreciation for the Idaho Transportation Department for your excellent work in the I-84B Northside Boulevard to Grant Street Project.

The city recognizes the Idaho Transportation Department’s efforts in planning, allocation of funding, design, and construction management resulting in a job well done.

The I-84B project is another critical investment toward both the Idaho Transportation Department and the City of Nampa to provide a safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that responds to the current and future goals of our state and community.”

End Quote.

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