

Director's Board Report
March 2019

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

And good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board. For the benefit of our two new board members, I would like to provide some background on my Director's Reports. Every month, I give the Idaho Transportation Board a report on the department's activities and major accomplishments.

I keep the Director's Reports at a high level, primarily focusing on major events, and the accomplishments of our employees. They are the ones working on the front lines, day in and day out, helping ITD accomplish our vision of becoming the best transportation department in the country, and it is our job to provide them with the tools and resources they need to meet the needs of the public, and of the fastest-growing state in the nation.

I would like to begin this month's Director's Report with a video showing our two new board members what ITD is all about.

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On March 13, the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee held its budget-setting meeting for ITD. The committee voted unanimously to approve a budget of \$727.6 million for the Idaho Transportation Department in Fiscal Year 2020.

There are several transportation-related bills working their way through the legislature that we are tracking. Governmental Affairs Manager **Mollie McCarty** will provide you with an update those bills and the Legislative Session later this morning.

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Since the last board meeting in February, most areas of the state have received heavy snowfall. A series of strong winter storms has kept our maintenance crews busy clearing roads and keeping drivers safe.

They have dealt with heavy snow, low visibility, the threat of avalanches, actual avalanches, and conditions so severe that major highways had to be closed for days at a time.

The image on screen from our 511 page tells the story—a multitude of alerts, weather advisories, and road closures.

Through it all, our road crews have been doing an outstanding job. Their hard work and professionalism were on public display, and the media took notice. Here are some clips from various new stories that aired around the state.

I think this photo will give you an idea of what the maintenance crews have been dealing with. It shows Highway 21 between Lowman and Stanley—under 40 to 60 feet of snow, depending on where you are standing. In the last week of February, a storm dropped five feet of snow on the highway, triggering 32 avalanches.

This was a historic weather event, and, as you will see in this news report, “Avalanche Alley” certainly lives up to its name.

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Snow storms and avalanches have been major topics in the news for several weeks. But another ITD topic has also been receiving interest from the news media—Idaho’s Real ID, also known as the STAR Card.

We hosted a major media event at the Boise Airport in February that produced several news stories. This month Governor Little is helping to raise awareness about the importance of Idaho citizens getting a STAR Card. We have a message from him cued up on the computer. Let’s take a look.

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The STAR Card is only one of several initiatives the DMV is currently working on. For example, they held a statewide planning meeting to kick off the third phase of the GEM Program.

The first phase moved disability placard data from the 1980s mainframe onto a modern, new system. The second phase removed driver's license and identification card data from the mainframe. Phase three, which is just getting underway, will do the same for vehicle registration data. The new system is more stable, and improves data security.

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The Office of Highway Safety is also working on some new initiatives and projects. Here is a 30-second video they produced inviting law enforcement officers and highway safety professionals from around the state to attend the **2019 Highway Safety Summit** in Lewiston.

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The Division of Highways is gearing up for construction season, which will include major improvements to Interstate 84 in Canyon County. They produced the following video to help prepare the public for the upcoming construction, and explain the benefits of the planned improvements.

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While the districts have been busy clearing the roads of snow and ice and preparing for the construction season, a hiring team at headquarters was busy interviewing candidates to fill the vacant administrator position for the Division of Engineering Products and Plans.

The position was formerly held by Kimbol Allen, and I am pleased to announce that **Dave Kuisti** has been selected as the new Division Administrator. Dave began working for ITD as a temporary employee in 1990. He worked for about three months, then returned as a temporary employee in 1991, and quickly worked his way up to full-time status. He has been the District 2 Engineer for the last five years, and officially began in his new role as Division Administrator on March 10th.

And I am sure we will see some exciting things coming out of the Division of Engineering Products and Plans under his leadership. Please join me in congratulating him on his new position.

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We received a few letters that I would like to share with you. The first came from the owners of **Precision-Craft**.

They manufacture log and timber homes. When the owners filled out a form and mailed it to the DMV, they included the following message thanking Motor Carrier Services Specialist Rita Gallagher for her help and outstanding customer service.

Quote:

“Miss Gallagher is amazing.

We have the pleasure of working with her every year.

She is the best!

Thank you,”

End quote.

Their message was accompanied by a \$100 bill for Rita, which leads me to believe they were very satisfied customers! And, despite the rumors, I have been assured that Mundo did the right thing with the tip. It was deposited as an overpayment and returned to the customers.

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The second letter was sent to ITD and to Ada County Sherriff Steve Bartlett. It was written by Ada County Highway District Director Bruce Wong. He wrote, and I quote:

“Gents, just a short note to thank all of you for the great experience I had today at the DMV. I made an appointment a while back, got checked in on arrival, and was at the counter within two minutes. Absolutely fantastic!”

Sheriff Bartlett . . . the professional at window 18 at 10 a.m. did an excellent job. I do think she was slightly taken aback by my very aged and fraying birth certificate for my Star license, but she soldiered on!

Again, a great example of customer service.”

End Quote.

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The next letter shows the value of good phone etiquette, and great customer service, because you never know who might be on the other end of the line.

DMV employee Jeff Oien answered a call from a customer asking when her husband's new driver's license would arrive. After Jeff helped her, she wrote the following email to Governmental Affairs Manager Mollie McCarty.

Quote"

"Hi Mollie, I wanted to let you know I just got off of the phone with Jeff Oien, asking about how much longer before my husband's driver's license would arrive in our mail. He took the time to explain to me how the licenses are sent off in batches, and take much longer because of the features on the licenses.

I was curious on the timing, because our mailbox, which is locked, is 13 miles from our house. I do not get our mail every day, so I was trying to narrow down the days to watch for it.

He was extremely helpful. And, at the end of my phone call, I told him I was a state legislator, and was very impressed with his helpfulness. I just wanted to let you know: *Fantastic Service!*"

End quote.

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