

Director's Board Report January 2016

Thank you Chairman Whitehead.

Good morning members of the Idaho Transportation Board.

The new year is well underway, and I am pleased to present my first board report for 2016.

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

(play drone video of capitol building here ...)

Last Thursday I appeared before the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee to present the

governor's recommended budget of almost **\$708 million** for Fiscal Year 2017.

I also presented the governor's recommendation of **\$160 million** in additional spending authority for Fiscal Year 2016.

This request included spending authority for:

- The federal reauthorization Bill, known as **FAST**
- The new revenue from the 2015 user-fee increases
- And 50 percent of the General Fund surplus.

The following day the JFAC Committee held a budget-setting meeting and approved additional spending

authority for the new funding provided by the user-fee increases and the General Fund surplus.

We will move forward with the projects approved by the board as soon as spending authority is approved by the House and Senate and signed by the governor.

They will hold another budget-setting meeting later in the session to address the other items included in the Governor's spending authority recommendation.

On January 4th, we closed the Broadway Bridge on Highway 20/26 in downtown Boise.

[\(play bridge-demolition video here, 53 seconds . . .\)](#)

The bridge will be closed for approximately nine months while crews demolish the old bridge, which was built in 1956, and construct a new bridge over the Boise River.

District 3 staff began conducting public outreach meetings in 2012, and have done an excellent job of keeping the public and local businesses up to date on all aspects of the \$20.2 million project.

The district held one-on-one meetings with local businesses, including Boise State, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and St. Luke's Hospital.

Staff went on walking tours with the Chamber of Commerce to visit local businesses, and provided

kiosks and display boards at nearby grocery stores, hospital lobbies, and other businesses.

They created signs to help businesses notify customers that they are remaining open during construction.

(Show Bridge Flyer here ...)

Staff made presentations to many community organizations and groups, and worked with local media to get the story out about the Broadway Bridge project.

District 3 conducted a full-court press in getting the word out. They even have a camera set up on the

Internet that monitors construction and updates every 10 minutes.

Basically, the only way to live in the Treasure Valley and not know about the Broadway Bridge project is to have been under a rock in the Boise River.

Here is just one of the many news story produced by local media. This is from KIVI Channel 6:

(Pause while video plays here . . .)

(Show Logo)

The Broadway bridge is not the only major project we have underway. As Chief Operations Officer Jim Carpenter reported last month, work on the

Thornton Interchange on U.S. 20 between Idaho Falls and Sugar City will begin in March.

In the year 2000, the traffic on this section of U.S. 20 was approximately 10,000 cars per day. It had 18 intersections and an average of 80 serious injury crashes and two fatalities per year.

District 6 staff came up with a plan to change that.

They wanted to build six modern interchanges and remove the 18 at-grade intersections to reduce injuries and fatal accidents.

To date, they have removed 15 of the at-grade intersections, replacing them with safer elevated interchanges. This reduced the average number of

serious injuries from 80 per year to only 38, and reduced the fatality rate from two per year to zero between 2010 and 2014.

There were three fatalities in 2015, one of them was at the Thornton Interchange.

(drone video plays here)

What you see on screen is the existing Thornton Interchange. It will be replaced by an elevated interchange that is much safer for drivers and pedestrians.

Western Construction from Boise was the winning bidder at \$11.2 million dollars.

ITD has built six modern interchanges on a 34-mile section of U.S. 20 since the year 2000, allowing the department to close 13 outdated intersections along the 34-mile stretch of the route.

The Thornton Bridge project will improve safety by allowing ITD to close the remaining five at-grade intersections on Highway 20 between Idaho Falls and Sugar City.

This will make the route a full access-controlled divided highway, and improve safety, mobility and economic opportunity for the traveling public.

I have some more good news from District 6, but I first need to give you some background information to set the stage.

(Show Storm-Ready Logo here)

The National Weather Service has program called Storm Ready.

It is designed to help communities reduce their vulnerability to extreme weather and water events.

(Show Storm-Ready Poster here)

Each year, Americans cope with an average of:

100,000 thunderstorms

10,000 severe thunderstorms

and 5,000 floods or flash floods

This dangerous weather is in addition to winter storms, high winds, wild fires, and other deadly weather events.

98% of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$15 billion in damage.

The National Weather Service's **Storm Ready Program** helps arm communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property—before, during, and after extreme weather events.

No area can be completely storm proof, but being **Storm-Ready** can help communities save lives

through advanced planning, education, and awareness.

(Show Storm-Ready Sign here)

I am pleased to report that on January 7th, our District 6 office earned the Storm-Ready designation from the **National Weather Service**.

District 4 earned this designation in 2012.

And District 5 earned it a few months ago in 2015.

It is important to note that ITD is the **only transportation department in the country** to earn this certification from the National Weather Service.

This is a major accomplishment, and I commend Districts 4, 5, and 6 for their hard work and commitment to improving safety in their local communities.

Public safety is always the department's highest priority.

Here in District 3, KBOI TV ran the following news story in early December showing how ITD improves safety by removing rock slides after rain storms.

(Pause while KBOI video plays here)

(Show ITD Logo ...)

Having a flat tire on a highway is never fun. District 3's Amy Revis received a phone call from a lady regarding just such an incident.

She was driving on the Interstate when her car had a flat tire. Jim Cherry from the District 3 Incident Response team helped her and fixed the flat.

She said that was above and beyond the call of duty especially since it was snowing.

Little did she know that snow is no deterrent for our incident-response teams, they are there to help motorists in all weather conditions.

Here is Jim Cherry explaining how the Incident Response teams work to keep motorists safe.

(Pause while Jim Cherry Video plays ...)

(Show ITD Logo ...)

Jim Cherry and his co-workers have a bit in common with a phrase you may be familiar with. It is associated with mail carriers, but applies equally well to our incident-response teams.

“Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night, stays them from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

They often go beyond the call of duty, as do many of our employees.

One example is our District 5 Port of Entry office. They received the following letter from Rod Teeter at Pacific Steel in Pocatello.

They normally use 45-foot trailers, but in December purchased their first 53-foot quad-axle trailer. None of their drivers were familiar with it.

They called the Inkom Port of Entry and asked if an inspector could come take a look at the trailer to make sure it was legal and ready for the road.

Randall Woolridge and Jason Morgan from the Inkom Roving Port of Entry went to the Pacific Steel facility and inspected the trailer.

(Show Pacific Steel Web Page)

Here is a portion of the thank-you letter Pacific Steel sent us.

“They took nine different bridge measurements of the trailer, drew them out, and gave a full detailed explanation, then took the time to help us with load placement. They also helped us to update our current permits to cover our new needs.

After this was complete, they then worked with us at the South bound scale helping us get the scales on our trailer properly adjusted and set. They then figured out and explained to us our off-track. All in all, these gentlemen were with us between our facility and your scales for five and 1/2 hours.

I would like to say how much we appreciate all their time and expertise in getting our trailer up and running for us.

Because of them, we were able to make our first run with this trailer on December 9th, with confidence that we're in compliance and it gave us a more comfortable feel on how this trailer worked.

These gentlemen, in my opinion, went above and beyond for us. I would like to say thank you once again for all their help and time."

End Quote

(Show ITD Logo ...)

Some would see Port of Entry employees only as regulators who wear badges and write tickets.

But this letter shows that to them, safety and cooperation are more important than regulation.

Their primary focus is to ensure the safety and preservation of the highway system.

And by helping Pacific Steel make sure their new trailer was both safe and legal, they accomplished far more than they ever could have by simply writing a ticket.

This is an example of customer service at its best!

Chairman Whitehead received a letter from Jaycee Holman, a clerk for the City of Meridian that I would like to share with the entire board.

Here is what she wrote:

“I wanted to let someone know about my experience with the Idaho Transportation Department because I feel that often in this day and age, we don't take enough time to recognize those people who are really doing their jobs right.

I am the City Clerk of Meridian and in charge of all vehicle titles for the City. We sold a vehicle through Musick and Sons Auction that apparently we never received a title for . . . back in 2002.

My first visit was to the Meridian DMV where they did their best to help me but they were as stumped as I was. After dealing with Lithia Ford who tried not to laugh when I asked if they still had records from 2002, I made another trip back to DMV.

Fortunately, they had the good sense to hand me Adrian Lindsay's card. He is a Motor Vehicle Investigator with DMV. Initially, I inwardly groaned because I expected to spend a bunch of time with yet another person who was probably going to point me in another direction. Boy, was I wrong.

(Show Adrian's Photo)

From my first phone call to Adrian, it was clear

that I was not only dealing with the correct person, but with someone who took their job seriously and honestly knows what customer service is about.

He told me exactly what I needed to provide to him so that he could initiate a duplicate title. As soon as I had the information for him, we set a date and time for me to stop by. When I walked in the door, he was standing at the counter, ready with all of the paperwork and methodically walked me through everything I was signing.

He answered in detail any questions that I had and made sure that I walked out the door happy. I don't often get that level of service in private or public sector interactions and thought,

"You know, I need to make sure someone knows about that."

Adrian is an excellent representative for ITD and hopefully you will let him know how much his customers appreciate it."

End Quote

(Show ITD Logo ...)

I think you all know my assistant, Carla Anderson. She received a phone call shortly after the holidays Asking her to extend a **"Thank You"** to all the maintenance workers who work every day to keep our roads clear and safe.

(Show snow plow photo or video)

The caller commutes from Emmett every day to his job with ACHD, and appreciates the diligence of the workers that take the extra time to make his commute to work safe.

He said he recognizes just how much the valley depends on the reliability of each and every person working on a holiday and knows that we don't hear that often enough.

It is always a pleasure receiving this kind of phone call.

Devin Rigby received a letter from David Stellers, the

Assistant Chief of Police for the Hailey Police
Department.

(Show David Stellers' photo)

He wrote:

“I would like to just take the time and commend the entire ITD staff, from the Director on down, about how much I appreciate how well ITD performs its job.

From the web site, to road reports, to the interactive phone app, and especially the hard working crews who plow our highways, ITD really seems to know what they are doing.

I know your staff numbers are not that large and your budget probably seems smaller, but it seems that these plow drivers are always working!

Anyway, I wanted to say that there are many that appreciate the work that you do, so thank you and have a safe New Year.”

End Quote

(Show ITD Logo ...)

A news story from my district in Michigan caught my eye this weekend. Please play the video.

(Pause while gas-price video plays . . .)

(Show ITD Logo . . .)

Just like in Idaho, when you raise gas taxes in Michigan, you drive prices down.

I will now ask Chief Operations Officer Jim Carpenter to come forward for his presentation.

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