

INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2005



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From my view

Mark F. Wandro, P.E., L.S.



VR&T success

Sometimes great successes can occur with little or no fanfare. I want to make sure one recent DOT success gets the accolades it deserves.

Last month in INSIDE you read about the technology behind the new Vehicle Registration and Titling (VR&T) system that was implemented over New Years weekend. Watch next month to see how the system works and how it will impact Iowans in a positive way. What I would like to do is recognize the tremendous efforts that went into making the project a reality.

I know everyone involved was very motivated to update the 22-year old registration system. This transformation was a multi-year, multi-jurisdictional undertaking. Employees in the Office of Vehicle Services, Information Technology Division, all county treasurers' offices and county information technology employees, and the vendor, Archon Technology, came together to develop the VR&T system that works for the DOT as well as each specific county. It's very rewarding when a successful system can be developed with a single end goal in mind.

Mark Lumsden, head of the Application Technology team, says the majority of employees in his area contributed to this project in some way, including: the server administrators who built the original system and now monitor and provide disaster recovery for the servers of critical data for the application; the network administrators in charge of building and now monitoring the network connections to all stakeholders (county courthouses, other state agencies and airports) in terms of availability and performance; the database administrators involved in building, monitoring and tuning the databases used by this application; the mainframe system administrators who ensured mainframe availability during the critical conversion of data to the new application; and the data center operators who helped monitor the conversion of data for the new application and now provide daily monitoring of scheduled tasks as they relate to the new application.

From the Motor Vehicle Division, Tina Hargis, director of the Office of Vehicle Services (OVS), points to the following employees for the success of this project: Shirley Andre, Motor Vehicle Division director; Andy Lewis, Office of Vehicle Services assistant director; Lavonne Short, Cindy Deere, Shelly Lefleur-Ostrum and Margaret Howe.

According to Hargis, the conversion process started after the close of business on Dec. 30, 2004, and was completed about 11 p.m. Dec. 31. She credits her staff with working on the certification process until the wee hours of the morning.

- Jan. 1, 2005 - OVS employees, Archon staff and the motor vehicle support team returned to work in the freezing rain to further certify the environment and assist the seven-county user acceptance testing teams that came in and completed a live sampling of work on the new system to ensure everything was passing certification from beginning to ending process.

- Jan. 2 - The phone tree was completed to the 99 county treasurers letting them know that the system was ready to go live. The command center was staffed with OVS, motor vehicle support team and Archon Technology staff to assist the 99 county treasurers in start-up procedures and process questions.

- Jan. 3 - Several county treasurer offices were open for business, although some opted to close to the public that first day and complete backroom/mail-in processing only.

The command center staff provided Saturday service the first two weeks and stayed open on Martin Luther King Jr. holiday because 83 counties remained open. This resource continues to provide support to the 99 county treasurers during normal business hours.

The cooperative effort to complete such a massive conversion and implementation of the vehicle registration and titling system was exemplary. All entities have had daily status calls to celebrate successes and address any concerns. Everyone involved in this project should be commended for their effort in completing the implementation of the system and conversion of five million vehicle records in one weekend. Iowa literally went from the horse and buggy, green screen/dumb terminal system to a spaceship relational database in one weekend. Iowa is a leader in the nation.

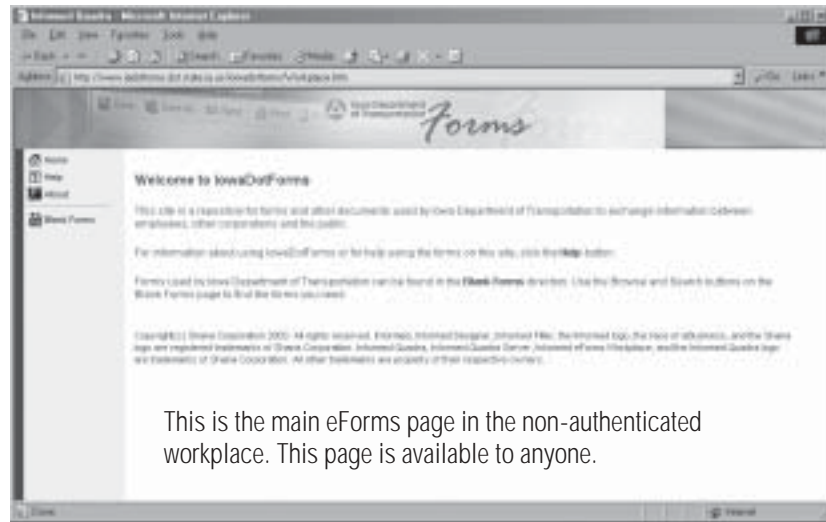
Thank you to all employees who played a part in this effort.

eForms up and running at DOT

The electronic age has changed so many of the basic tasks we perform every day. From computers that automatically operate functions in our cars to the scanner at the grocery store to on-line shopping, we're all affected by the electronic revolution. As an agency, the DOT has been entering the electronic era in several ways for many years. From the first punch card computers more than 30 years ago to today's electronic forms (eForms) with self-populating databases, electronic media plays an ever-increasing role in making what we do more efficient and effective.

The DOT's foray into eForms began in 2001 with the goal of making the completion of necessary DOT documents quick and easy for end users, as well as decreasing the processing time for DOT employees. Although the end product may appear simple to users, the process of moving from a paper to electronic format has been carefully planned and executed with employees from every division involved in the planning.

Diane Lange of the Office of Document Services forms management section is heading up this innovative undertaking. To begin the project, Lange worked with DOTers from all divisions to select a software package that could handle the DOT's diverse selection of forms. Lange said, "Because of the potential size of this project, it took some time to identify a vendor that could support our needs. As part of the process, 50 test forms were targeted that the group thought could be completed more effectively online. This software



This is the main eForms page in the non-authenticated workplace. This page is available to anyone.

package worked for us to create the basic design elements, which then enabled our programmers to take the design a step further and begin integrating the data into our existing systems. Because the design was completed using the prepackaged software, the programmers could concentrate their efforts on developing the databases to which the forms would be submitted."

Security was one of the first issues to be addressed. Lange said the forms are located on a Web page called a "workplace." This workplace is "authenticated," meaning it is secure because users must be assigned an identification code and password to access the forms. This "authenticated workplace" satisfies both the DOT and user requirements for security.

"Information that doesn't need to be secure can be put on a non-authenticated page and accessible to anyone," said Lange. "That could be information about how to sign up for an account or it could have printable forms in

Word or another program that are not sent through the authenticated workplace to our databases. There are a lot of options available."

The Office of Local Systems was the first to use a live eForm last summer. Tammi Bell of Local Systems said, "We started with the street finance form that has to be completed every year for each of Iowa's 949 cities. Initially it was a little frustrating getting the bugs worked out, but now more than two-thirds of the cities have on-line accounts and completed the form electronically in 2004. Because many of the calculations were pre-programmed in the form, the error rate was much lower and it was easier for cities to get these in on time. At first only 300 cities signed up for training and an online account. By the end of the summer more than 600 were using the electronic version of this form."

eForms,
continued on page 7

Barrier gets thumbs up after first year

Last year the DOT installed a new technology in traffic barriers on I-35 near Ankeny. The 3.5-mile stretch of high-tension cable barrier made by Brifen USA, an Oklahoma company, has proven very successful.

Ed Mahoney, highway maintenance supervisor at the Des Moines-north shop is in charge of maintenance of this stretch of I-35 and is impressed with the safety aspects of the barrier. "We've had 15 hits since the barrier was installed," he said. "Of those hits we had at least one that would have probably crossed over into oncoming traffic and could have been very serious."

Will Stein from the Office of Design said, "There is some risk associated with striking any type of barrier at high speeds. However, a barrier of this type offers a more forgiving impact and vehicles also tend to remain more stable upon impact, with less climbing and rolling. We are encouraged by the performance of

the barrier so far. According to reports from law enforcement, the barrier has prevented all vehicles from crossing the median into oncoming traffic, and there have been no fatalities, major injuries or minor injuries."

Prevention of crossover crashes was the initial reason to test this type of barrier, according to Stein. But many other benefits have also been realized.

Mahoney says maintenance of the barrier is easy and inexpensive. "In nice weather this is a breeze to work on, even in bad weather it just takes a little planning," he said. One person can replace damaged posts and reposition the cables without closing lanes of traffic or using heavy equipment. Mahoney cited other maintenance benefits. He said, "Snow blows right through this barrier, unlike concrete barriers where snow tends to pile up. Because of where the barrier sits in the median, we don't have to mow around it."

Because the barrier has proven effective at the I-35 site, Stein and District 2 employees proposed its use at a location along the Avenue of the Saints, Iowa 27/58 in Cedar Falls. This 3.5-mile section from U.S. 20 to University Avenue has seen its share of fatalities in recent years, including several cross-median crashes. Installation is scheduled for this spring.

In addition to longer runs to prevent cross-median crashes, shorter runs of the barrier have also been adopted as the standard method for shielding median obstacles such as bridge piers. Stein says the benefits seen on installations to prevent cross-median crashes, are applicable to shielding fixed objects in the median. "In addition to the safety benefits, we see this as more cost effective and easier to maintain than some of the other methods that were considered. It will be easier to mow around and minimize snow drifting." The first installation in Iowa to shield median obstacles was on Iowa 60 in Sioux County. Several other states, including Minnesota, Wisconsin and Connecticut, have expressed interest in this method, and requested CADD drawings and additional information.

Although Stein says there is only one company that currently manufactures high-tension cable barrier that meets Iowa DOT requirements, similar technologies are in the works with other manufacturers that should give the DOT additional options in the future. "We're happy with the safety performance and maintainability so far," said Stein. "This system gives us another tool we can use to increase safety on Iowa's highways in the years to come."



On Iowa 60 in Sioux County, the new barrier technology is being used for shielding median piers.

Taking root

Slowly, but surely, living snowfences are taking root along highways in Iowa. For several years the DOT has been working with the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as well as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, to encourage Iowa farmers to plant living snowfence on property adjacent to roadways to minimize blowing and drifting snow.

For almost 20 years the DOT has advocated a program to provide set-aside funds for farmers who planted rows of trees and/or shrubs approximately 100 feet from fencerows that ran alongside highways. Some farmers were reluctant to plant the living snowfence because the crop area between the trees or shrubs and fencerow often became damp and difficult to cultivate.

A change this year will allow farmers to set aside not only the acres dedicated to trees and shrubs, but to plant a snow catch area of native grasses from the shrub or tree line to the fencerow, eliminating the need to cultivate that part of the field.

Randy Barnhardt, equipment operator senior in the Pocahontas shop, has been a proponent of these plantings for years. Five years ago his northwest Iowa area was the first to test native grasses as snow catch areas in two locations.

"We have one area near Gilmore City that was the worst for blowing and drifting," said Barnhardt. "I was up there a few weeks ago and it's just amazing how well these areas work. The wind had come from the northeast, the drifts were nearly five feet deep in the snow catch area and there was almost no snow in the right-of-way. Besides the blowing and drifting these native grasses and flowers prevent, the golden color just looks so much better in the winter compared to bare ground. We have several comments from the public about the change they've noticed in blowing and drifting snow in these areas since the living snowfence was put in."

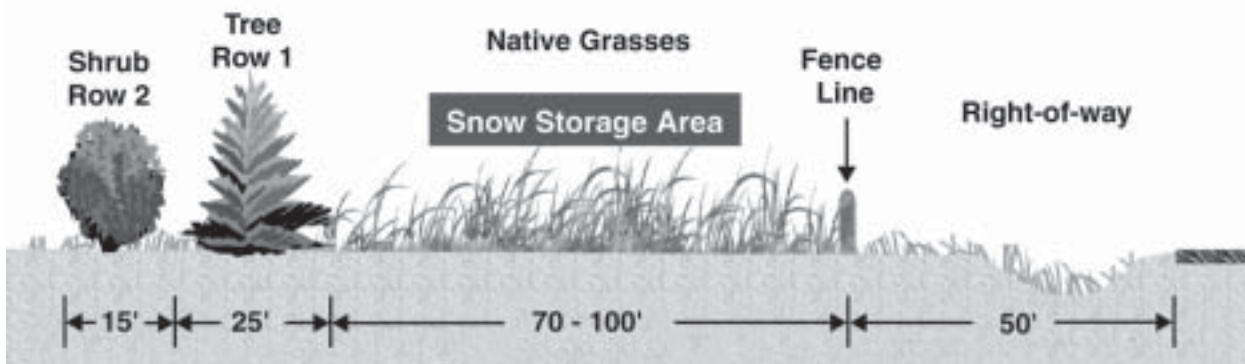
Working with the local NRCS office, FSA employees and later the Iowa DNR, Barnhardt and Dennis Burkheimer from the Office of Maintenance developed a plan to include native grasses in the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

"The inclusion of the snow catch area will be of great benefit to farmers who have hesitated to plant windbreaks because soils in the downwind area remain wet and cold in the spring, making them difficult to farm," said Lyle Asell, the DNR coordinator for agricultural programs. "This area will catch blowing and drifting snow, and provide much needed winter habitat for wildlife."

"This is really a win-win situation for all parties," said Tim Peterson, highway maintenance supervisor in Iowa Falls. "The farmer gets a 10- or 15-year set-aside contract and we get a reduction in snow in our right-of-way. The traveling public will benefit because there will be less blowing and drifting in those areas."

Iowa landowners with property on the north or west sides of lanes, roads, railroads, and public facilities, and that had land cropped or considered cropped four of the six years from 1996 to 2001, are being invited to participate in the program.

Taking root,
continued on page 6



Governor visits DOT shop

To show his appreciation for the efforts of DOT employees during the snow event Jan. 5-6, Governor Tom Vilsack visited the Des Moines-north shop late in the afternoon of Jan. 5. While touring the shop with Garage Operations Assistant Gary McDaniel, the governor thanked employees.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to the hard working men and women of the Department of Transportation who take to the roads each winter risking their own lives to protect those of others," Vilsack said. "These hard working state employees spend time away from their families so that Iowans can get home safely to theirs. We must not take for granted the critical service they provide."

According to Office of Maintenance records, during the period from Jan. 1-6, 2005, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, sleet, snow, rain, and fog covered the state. DOT shops used 56,168 tons of salt (that's equivalent to nearly 562 rail cars or 2,808 semi-tractor trailer loads of salt), 1,742,461 gallons of salt brine, 26,617 gallons of calcium chloride, and 3,939 tons of sand to combat Mother Nature's fury and keep Iowa motorists safe.

In that six-day period where nearly 900 plows were in operation, typically on a 24-hour schedule, only 20 minor snowplow crashes were reported with no serious injuries.

Taking root, continued from page 5

The continuous CRP provides annual payments to landowners who qualify. Minimum living snowfence requirements include a catch area of approximately 100 feet long planted to native grasses downwind of a windbreak. There are several options for the windbreak: either one row of conifers, one row of shrubs and one row of conifers, or two rows of conifers.

Asell added that the program might also improve access to farmsteads and rural areas, increasing the incentive for landowners to participate, especially in the northern half of Iowa where the living snowfences can provide essential cover and food for wildlife.

"Except in the Iowa River valley, the land in Hamilton and Hardin counties is pretty flat," said Peterson. "I think we're going to see a great benefit in blowing and drifting snow reduction when farmers sign up for this program."

"To take advantage of the program, landowners must sign up at their county USDA-FSA office," said Mike Musel, chief of the FSA conservation and compliance program. "USDA provides annual rental payments for the 10 to 15 years of the CRP contract, plus it assists landowners with establishment of the practice by providing 50 percent cost share and a 40 percent practice incentive payment. An additional sign-up bonus of \$100 to \$150 per acre is also available," he added.

Specialists at USDA-NRCS will provide technical help in designing snow fence and selecting plant materials. DNR wildlife biologists and foresters will also be available to assist in choosing native grass and flower species suitable for each site.

For more information, check the DOT Web site at www.dot.state.ia.us/maintenance/snowfence/crplivingsnowfence.pdf.

eForms, continued from page 3

“With paper forms a user would type or write the information and then a DOT employee would enter the information into a database once the paper form was received in the mail,” explained Lange. “With this eForm, we programmed exactly the type of information that could be accepted in each field and that information goes directly to a database once the form is completed and submitted. We can program automatic calculations and drop-down menus to help users input information in the correct format.”

Because this was the DOT’s first eForm, Bell still wanted to check over each eForm before the entries were entered into the database, so the form was programmed to be sent directly to her E-mail address, and then she was the only one who could submit these to the database.

“All in all it worked very well, and we’re already working on revisions to the form to save even more time next year,” said Bell. “Although it took a lot of effort up-front to get this going, it’s going to save so much time for me and for the city employees who have to complete the form. We’ve already had a lot of compliments on it and we’re looking forward to improvements for next year.”

“We’re hoping the success of the Local Systems form will encourage other offices to look at eForms,” said Lange. “Some people are a little hesitant to invest the time in development. But once we can show them the benefits of a well-designed eForm and answer their questions, I think even the skeptics will see that electronic media can improve our business processes. With these forms we should be able to cut down a lot on staff time, and there’s a lot of value in that.”

Does that mean all paper forms will be going by the wayside? “We’re taking a look at most forms,” said Lange. “But the switch to an eForm will depend on the document and its usefulness. This is large project that could potentially impact every division in our organization.”



The 2004 central complex Toys For Tots campaign raised more than \$5,311 and distributed 370 toys to needy central Iowa kids. Once again the DOT led all other state agencies in dollars and toys donated.

Totals for this year were:

Bake sale	\$322.32
Ornament sale	\$288.00
Cinnamon/caramel rolls	\$254.30
Soup lunch	\$206.90
Auction	\$2,426.00
Right-of-Way events	\$913.91
Cash donations	\$899.75

Last year, parking spot donations to the auction added more than \$1,800 to the Toys For Tots campaign. A decision was made to allow parking spots to be available only for the DOT Food Drive, so the total 2004 Toys For Tots cash donation was \$5,311.18, compared to \$6,441.33 in 2003.

Event donations increased more than \$711 from last year’s totals, but cash donations were down \$40 and the 370 toys donated in 2004 was just one less than last year.

Rhonda Meeker from the Office of Construction was this year’s chairperson for the drive. “All-in-all the Toys For Tots committee is very pleased by the level of dedication DOT employees have shown to the children of central Iowa. Thanks to everyone who took time to work at events, and those who donated money and items to the auction and other events.”

Improved emergency response to DOT central complex

With the implementation of the new phone system in the Ames offices, the emergency response protocol has also been updated to decrease response times and increase the level of service provided by Ames emergency response teams.

Anyone at the DOT can now directly call 911 from any complex phone. The phone number, DOT building location and name of the person assigned to that phone will automatically register with the city of Ames emergency services dispatcher. In addition to the city of Ames emergency dispatcher, all 911 calls also register with the DOT operator. The operator will immediately page the DOT first responders providing them the caller's name, work location and

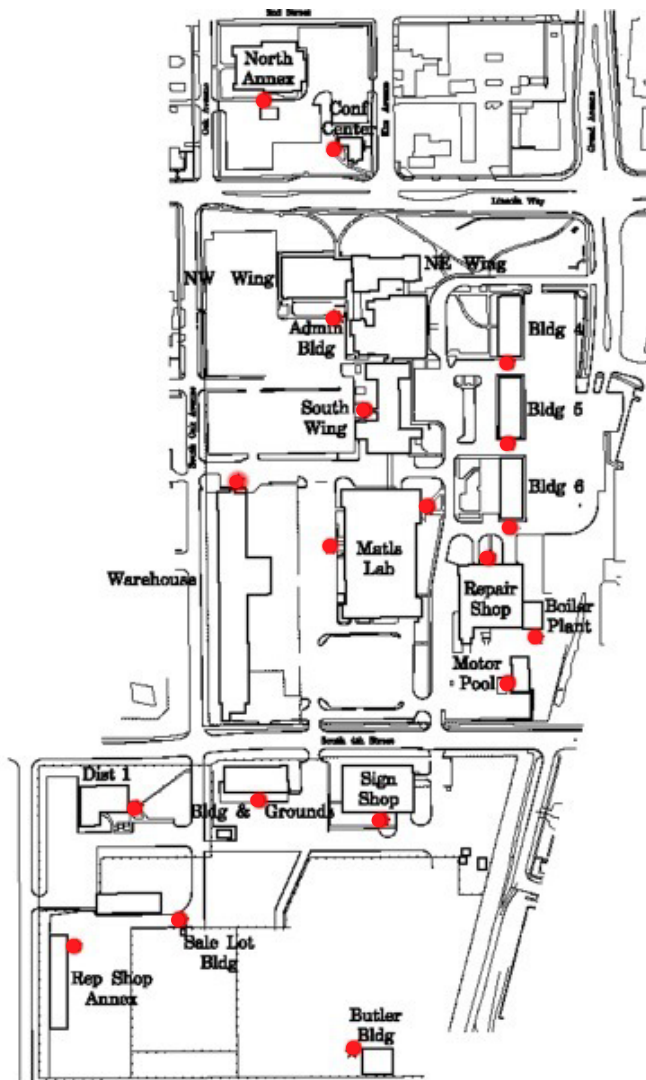
phone number. Once an employee calls 911 and answers the dispatcher's questions, the emergency services professionals and DOT first responders will take over. That employee does not need to do anything else.

DOT employees worked with Ames emergency services to determine 19 designated response locations for the complex. With the additional caller identification information now available to the dispatcher, service needs can more quickly and accurately be assessed and emergency crews sent directly to the nearest designated entrance. In the past, DOT first responders would meet Ames emergency crews at the front entrance for all emergencies and then go to the location where assistance was needed. With the change in the phone system, emergency squad members will continue to assist their co-workers by meeting the Ames response units, but will do so at the designated response locations, which should be very near the location from which the initial emergency call was made. Additional DOT staff members are also equipped with radios to assist with emergencies and false alarms.

While the new phone system is expected to increase emergency response effectiveness, the initial calls have been mostly false alarms. "There is definitely a learning curve with the new phones," said Barb Mallon of the Office of Employee Services. The DOT operator has logged dozens of unintentional 911 calls since the new phones were installed in mid-December. "Since the digit to dial out of the complex is 9 and many of the five-digit phone numbers inside the complex begin with two ones, we've had lots of misdialed 911 calls," said Mallon.

The best way to decrease the number of misdialed 911 calls is to dial the number before the handset is picked up. Once the correct phone number is verified on the screen, complete the call by picking up the handset. If you do dial 911 by mistake, stay on the line and tell the dispatcher that you misdialed. Also, have a co-worker call the DOT operator so DOT first responders can be notified.

Mallon says, "This is a critical service and we're pleased the new phone system allows for an increase in our service level. Now more than ever, employees are urged to call 911 if there is a problem. Don't transport yourself or a co-worker on your own. The minutes you save by calling 911 can save someone's life."





Trophy Case

Recent DOT Awards

Steffes' technical achievement noted



Bob Steffes, left, accepts his award from ACPA board member Rick Sniegowski.

Bob Steffes, who retired from the DOT last year and now works for Iowa State University's Center for Transportation Research and Education, was recently presented the Marlin J. Knutson Award

for Technical Achievement at the American Concrete Paving Association awards banquet on Marco Island, Fla.

In his nomination form, John Cunningham, Iowa Concrete Paving Association vice president, said, "During his tenure at the DOT and now during his employment at CTRE, Steffes has a history of providing innovations that have helped to perpetuate quality improvements in concrete paving, while also reducing costs. His latest development may be his greatest and may change our industry nearly as much as that of another Iowa DOT engineer named Jimmy Johnson, the developer of the slipform paving machine. Forming the longitudinal joint may improve quality, aesthetics and construction time, while reducing costs and future maintenance. Plus, one of the larger costs for thin overlays (i.e. UTW) has come from extensive sawing because of the greater number of joints that are required. Therefore, forming the longitudinal joints has an even more dramatic impact on thin overlays."

Congratulations to Bob Steffes on this award and to his continued commitment to transportation issues in Iowa.

Kirk honored for outstanding service



Pat and Bill Kirk

Bill Kirk, District 6 materials technician who retired last summer, was recently named Outstanding Government/Public Official at the American Concrete Paving Association awards ceremony on Marco Island, Fla. In the nomination form, John Cunningham, Iowa

Concrete Paving Association (ICPA) vice president, said, "For nearly 35 years Bill Kirk has been dedicated to improving PCC paving in Iowa. Bill has been involved in many changes over the years: implementing the certified plant inspector program; contractor mix design; fly ash usage; and maturity testing; to name a few. Bill has been involved in training for the Iowa DOT certified technician program for nearly his entire career. He was also involved in the SWAT team, a group that traveled around the state training contractors and agency personnel in ways to improve production and placement of PCC pavement. Bill was the "go-to" man if there is a problem on a project. He has been all over the state troubleshooting problems. If he runs into a problem that he can't solve, he sinks his teeth into it and won't let up until he has an answer. Bill is not afraid to admit he doesn't know the answer to a question (a rare quality), but you can be sure that he'll find the solution no matter how much effort is required. His experience and willingness to learn make him an invaluable asset to the state's paving industry."

Gordon L. Smith, P.E., president of the ICPA said, "Bill Kirk is one of those individuals who, while working on behalf of the Iowa DOT, has contributed significantly to the advancement of the concrete paving industry. Bill has led the way in helping contractors embrace the move from a method specification to a specification that better assures pavement performance through contractor participation in mix design and verification."

Congratulations to Bill Kirk on this prestigious award and thanks for your many years of excellent service to the DOT.

Family Happenings

Driver Services Melanie Mathes



Shanna Willey, driver's license clerk senior at the Iowa City DL station, and **Korey Kaufmann** are proud new parents of **Alexander Ross Kaufmann**. The baby was born Nov. 23 at 5:32 p.m. weighing 7 lbs. 10 ozs and was 20.5 inches long. He joins big sister, **Hailey Marie**, 2, at home. Congratulations to Shanna and her family!



Phou Baccam, a driver's license examiner at the Des Moines DL station, and his wife, **Xeuay**, are the proud parents of **Bailey**. She was born Dec. 9 weighing 5 lbs. 13 ozs. and was 19.25 inches long. Big sister **Asianna** is very proud! Congratulations to the **Baccams**!

Design Judy Lensing



Ryan Miller, transportation engineer intern working at the I-235 office, and his wife, **Kristy**, are first-time parents! **Caden Isaac Miller** was born Dec. 19 weighing 5 lbs. 15 ozs. and was 19.5 inches long. Congratulations to the **Millers**!

Planning and Programming Mary Kay Reimers

Katy Taylor, secretary 1 in Systems Planning, was sent packing on Dec. 1. Many co-workers attended a farewell party to wish Katy and her husband, **Steven**, luck as they begin a new phase in their lives and start a new business in the Seattle, Washington area. Best wishes to the **Taylors**, and we'll miss you, **Katy**!

District 5 Brenda Hadley

Kathy Ramsey, secretary 1 at the Fairfield maintenance office, received a very special Christmas present. She and **David Seat**, a senior technician at Cargill in Eddyville became engaged. No wedding date has been set. Congratulations, **Kathy**!

Location and Environment Jean Jesse



David Stember, historic preservation specialist in the cultural resources management section, and his wife, **Genevieve**, are new parents! **Samuel Ryker Stember** was born Dec. 10 at 7:36 p.m. weighing 8 lbs. 5 ozs. and was 22 inches long. Although he gave his mom a bit of trouble coming into the world, mom and baby are doing great. Congratulations to the **Stembers**!

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who donated time during my recent surgery. It is nice to work with such generous and caring people. Thank you very much. I greatly appreciate everything you have done for me.

Amy Tinken
Office of Design

(Editor's note: These two Family Happenings are being reprinted from the January edition of INSIDE because the photos were inadvertently switched in the previous printing.)

District 1

Lori Morris



Kevin Hockett, construction technician senior in Marshalltown, and his wife, **Sandra Hockett**, formerly of the Office of Motor Carrier Services, are the proud parents of Alexandra Lois Hockett. Baby Alexandra was born Oct. 17 weighing 5 lbs. 12.5 ozs. and was 18.5 inches long. Uncles are **Paul Hockett** of the Office of Materials and **Norman Hockett**, construction technician supervisor in Marshalltown, who is currently serving in the military in the Middle East.

Materials

Dawne Berner



Shane Fetters, materials technician 3, and his wife, Shannon, are the proud parents of Drake Edwards Fetters. Baby Drake was born Sept. 23 weighing 8 lbs. 5 ozs. Congratulations to the first-time parents!

In Memory



Tom Sever, 51, of Norwalk, a motor vehicle captain in the Office of Motor Vehicle Enforcement, lost his brief battle with cancer Jan. 11. Sever began his DOT career in September 1985 in Cedar Rapids. He was promoted to captain of the hazardous materials program and moved to Des Moines in October 1992.

Sever was well-known and respected in the law enforcement community and hazardous materials industry, and was active in international commercial vehicle enforcement and motor carrier industry organizations, as well as being appointed by Governor Vilsack to serve on the State Emergency Response Commission. He also represented Motor Vehicle Enforcement in many Iowa Homeland Security programs and committees.

Although Sever was a private person, his family was extremely important to him. He is survived by his wife of more than 30 years, Sue; sons Tybee of Indianola and Jason of Des Moines; daughter Shelby at home; grandchildren, Hayley and Jayden; his father, two sisters, two nieces and a nephew.

Sever had a wonderful dry sense of humor that he continually shared with co-workers. He was notorious for walking toward one of his fellow employees and intentionally and dramatically trip to make anyone in his presence think he was going to fall. He liked giving out sealed Christmas cards filled with confetti to co-workers—so that once someone opens it, the confetti would fall out all over—the messier the better. MVE employees say they will miss Sever's wisdom and friendship, and that he will always hold a special place in their hearts.



Fred J. Thies, 54, died Sunday, Dec 26, at his West Des Moines home after a long bout with cancer. Thies joined the DOT in 1998 as the resident construction engineer in Red Oak. The next year he transferred to Des Moines as the staff maintenance engineer. From his career as a city engineer and public works employee in various Missouri cities, Thies brought a wealth of engineering knowledge to the DOT. His most current position was transportation engineer specialist in the District 1 field staff.

He was a member of Wakonda Christian Church, enjoyed gourmet cooking and loved his family. He is survived by his wife, Susan of West Des Moines; daughters, Sara of Des Moines and Rachel and Lydia of West Des Moines; son, Samuel of West Des Moines; parents, Anthony and Aileen of Glasgow, Mo.; sister, Flora Emmerich of Atlanta, Ga.; and brothers, Robert of Tucson, Ariz., James of Glasgow, Mo., and Dale of Manhattan, Kan. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Naomi.

Virgil Robert Raymond, 81, of Ames, died of congestive heart failure Dec. 9. Raymond served as the director of accounting and later of purchasing for the DOT from 1949 until his retirement in 1986. Raymond's interests included farming, soil conservation, the development and protection of animal habitat, and the Iowa Hawkeyes. He is survived by two sons and their families.



Hats Off

These are letters that have been submitted to the editor. They may have been edited for length and continuity.

To: **John Selmer**, District 4 Engineer
From: Sylvia Angel, Omaha

I just want to compliment all the hard working people out there clearing the interstates. I had to travel with a sick 3-year-old child today and, in a combination of worry, inattention and stupidity, ran out of gas. (First and hopefully last time in my life!) Luckily, we made it to a rest stop. The Iowa DOT gentleman running the snowplow stopped what he was doing, listened to my problem and called a friend to help me solve it. In a fairly short time, I had a few gallons of gas and their good wishes to speed me on my way. Neither one of them would even accept compensation for their time or the gas. They both looked so tired. Clearly these two have been working 12-hour days since sometime Sunday. Yet they still took the time to help a stranger. I don't know what company policy might be, but those men's compassion changed our whole day. My son has respiratory trouble and was headed to Omaha for a breathing treatment. He got what he needed in time and we avoided a visit to the hospital. When my son and I said his prayers that night, I reminded him that sometimes angels wear coveralls and orange vests. Thank you to all of you!

(Editor's note: Repeated efforts to identify these employees has not been successful. Whoever you are, thanks for very positively representing the DOT!)

To: **Terry Dillinger**, Director, Office of Driver Services
From: Michael Prindle

This letter is to tell you how pleased I am with the helpful performance, competence, and friendliness of **Toni Kerkove**. Toni has helped me on many occasions, as well as other motorcycle rider coaches. She always knows the answers or researches the issues immediately and furnishes the results promptly. And she always returns calls immediately, which I feel is exceptional since rumor has it that she "wears several hats" and often spends time in the field. I was impressed that all her notifications, registration letters, and other correspondence are accurate and complete, with maps, housing accommodations, special rates, etc. It is a great pleasure working with her. I hope she is as highly regarded by her management team as she is by her rider coaches.

*(Editor's note: **Toni Kerkove** is responsible for administration of the Motorcycle Rider Education program for the Office of Driver Services.)*

(Editor's note: Several E-mail messages have been sent to the DOT's generic in-box on our Web site. Here are just a sample of the "Thank you" notes sent for the work done during the snow event in early January.)

From: Dianne
Thank you to every one of the DOT employees doing such a wonderful job this week. I travel from Indianola to Des Moines. U.S. 65/69 can be pretty scary, with the hills (they sometimes seem like mountains) and curves, but you have been doing a nice job trying to make it as driveable as possible.

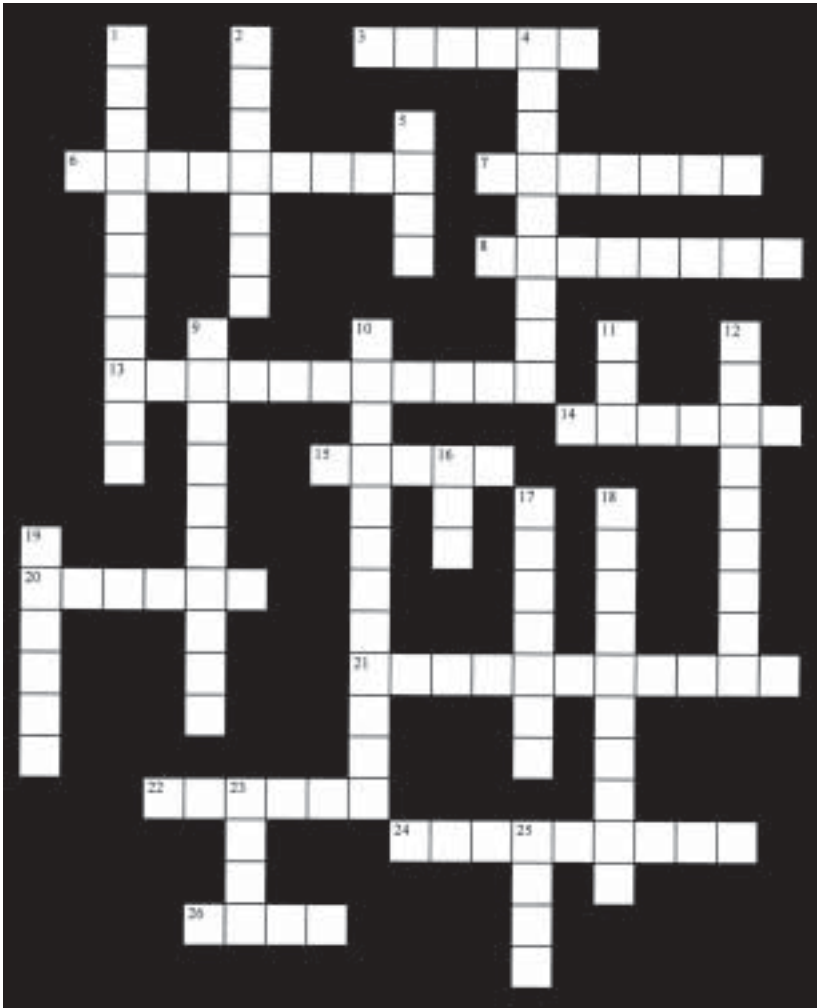
From: Matt Mosset, Des Moines
I would like to thank all of the hardworking plow drivers that were out cleaning the roads over these few bad days. I appreciate all the hard work and long hours that they put in to keep the roads as clear as possible. They did an excellent job and should be recognized for it. They made my job a lot more safe and tolerable. Again, thank you for all your efforts and keep up the great work.

From: Laura Strong, Nevada
I just wanted to commend you on the work you have done during this snowstorm to keep the roads clean and my family safe. Well done and thank you.

To: **Nancy Richardson**, Director,
Operations and Finance Division
From: Stan Peterson, Systems Planning

We had a complex rush printing job recently. **Patty Valline, Ron Olson** and several others in the print shop were extremely helpful, professional and worked well above expected customer service. The job was not easy as the electronic files were messed up. Patty and others kept me calm, came up with alternative solutions and completed these jobs quickly. Your division and the Iowa DOT are lucky to have employees who are as outstanding and giving as these people.

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ACROSS

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- 7 Can be used for living snowfence
- 8 The month this edition of INSIDE was published
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DOWN

- 1 Where the new communication lines run
- 2 Governor of Iowa
- 4 Why you call 911
- 5 Acronym for Natural Resources Conservation Service
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- 11 Acronym for Farm Service Agency
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- 16 Acronym for Information Technology Division
- 17 Received Marlin J. Knutson Award
- 18 Where Brifen barrier will be installed this spring
- 19 Director of the Office of Vehicle Services
- 23 Acronym for Iowa Concrete Paving Association
- 25 Received outstanding government official award

January solution



Need a hint to complete the February crossword?

Check out page 17 of the February INSIDE on DOTNET.

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Nov. 19 to Dec. 30, 2004.

New hires

Randy Beaver, equipment operator, Sioux City – Leeds garage; **Brook Burford**, clerk advanced, Motor Carrier Services; **Joseph Bush**, equipment operator, Storm Lake garage; **Bonnie Castillo**, engineering office assistant 1, Storm Lake maintenance; **Phillip Davis**, equipment operator, Highway Helper; **Alvin Hartgers**, equipment operator, Altoona garage; **Larry Kleinmeyer**, equipment operator, Oakdale garage; **Larry Mason**, equipment operator, Des Moines-north garage; **Jerry Melcher**, equipment operator, Grundy Center garage; **Zackery Miller**, equipment operator, Boone garage; **Todd Netley**, equipment operator, Martensdale garage; **Matthew Olson**, equipment operator, Davenport interstate garage; **Scott Reed**, equipment operator, Grimes garage; **Denise Rehder**, driver's license clerk, Davenport DL station; **Suzanne Schoenrock**, driver's license clerk, Ames DL station; **Aaron Shearn**, equipment operator senior, District 3 paint crew; **Angela Sires**, program planner 1, Transportation Data; **Nicholas Spotten**, equipment operator, Ida Grove garage; **Rob Thies**, equipment operator, Highway Helper; **Patricia Thoreson**, equipment operator, Onawa garage; **Jason Warren**, equipment operator, Onawa garage; **Scott Wilson**, equipment operator, Martensdale garage; **Lynn Zook**, secretary 2, Public Transit.

SERVICE AWARDS

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for February 2005.

35 Years

Alan Jay Whitmore, Missouri Valley garage.

30 Years

Julia Fitzgerald, Policy and Legislative Services; **David Roeber**, District 2 Office; **Richard Voss**, Newhall garage.

25 Years

Tami Bailiff, I-235 office; **Steven Cambier**, Alton garage; **George Fezell**, New Hampton construction; **Danny Harvey**, Knoxville garage; **Larry Lee**, Elkader garage; **Robert Soenen**, Emmetsburg garage; **Thomas Tibbott**, Manchester garage.

20 Years

Amad Abu-Hawash, Bridges and Structures; **Roger Balke**, Fort Dodge garage; **Blaine Bengtson**, Sidney garage; **Daniel Huck**, Waterloo garage; **Jean Jesse**, Location and Environment; **Randy Walter**, Grimes garage; **Jeff Wilson**, Adair garage.

Transfers

Virginia Cummings, equipment operator, from Osceola garage to Leon garage; **Jerry Farquhar**, equipment operator, from Oskaloosa garage to Spencer garage; **Cynthia Perry**, driver's license clerk, from Davenport DL station to Clinton DL station; **Brian Pribyl**, equipment operator from Ames garage to Osceola garage; **Russell Smeltzer**, engineering technician senior, District 5 Office.

Promotions

John Chester, from soils party chief to soils party supervisor, Design; **Pamela Cox**, from secretary 2, District 2 Office to engineering office assistant 1, Mason City maintenance; **Lynn Deaton**, from equipment operator senior to garage operations assistant, Ames garage; **Eric Diedrich**, design technician to design technician specialist, Design; **Leland Gritton**, equipment operator to garage operations assistant, Tipton interstate garage; **Daniel Harness**, transportation engineer intern, Design to transportation engineer specialist, Specifications; **Susan Schaudt**, from information technology specialist 3 to information technology specialist 4, Information Technology Division; **Brian Skartvedt**, custodial worker, Facilities Support to equipment operator, Ames garage.

Retirements

Norma Ball, driver's license clerk senior, Des Moines DL station; **Shyamal (Sam) Basu**, transportation engineer specialist, Traffic and Safety; **Gerald Madison**, soils party chief, Design.

15 Years

Neal Bowman, Sigourney garage; **Cleighton Davis**, De Soto garage; **Karen Eischen**, Transportation Data; **Gary Harris**, Location and Environment; **Robert Johnson**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Janice Menefee**, Spencer DL station; **Judy Recker**, Manchester garage; **Randall Rice**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Diana Ryan**, Ottumwa DL station.

10 Years

Joseph Farnsworth, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Mary Ford**, Iowa City DL station; **Chad Hightshoe**, Design; **Nora Lind**, Ottumwa construction; **Kert Smith**, Ottumwa construction.

5 Years

Cory Anderson, Traffic and Safety; **Paul Brandenburg**, New Hampton garage; **Debra Brass**, Mason City DL station; **Kenneth Dunker**, Bridges and Structures; **Pamela Last**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Brad Lauderman**, District 5 Office; **Kent Liebe**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Terry Meimann**, Procurement and Distribution; **Pamela Neuhaus**, Cedar Rapids DL station; **Darlene Ries**, Dubuque DL station; **Joel Sivinski**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Keith Truog**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

35 YEARS

Iowa Department of Transportation



Nadine Kelley
Finance



Alan Jay Whitmore
Missouri Valley garage



Larry McGrane
New Hampton construction

Burlington boys visit DL station



DL clerk Celeste Hall showcases her job for the boys from Wolf Den Troop #3

The Burlington driver's license station became a classroom of sorts for three members of Wolf Den Troop #3. On Dec. 3 DL employees showed the boys how the office is run, the issuance process, how photos are taken, the records station operation, and administration process for written tests. During the demonstrations, two of the boys were very excited to receive ID cards. Once the tour was finished the boys were given goody bags filled with coloring books, crayons, crackers, gum, pen, pencil and book-mark. Johnnie Peek, DL examiner, said, "It was fun for us to show the boys our station. They seemed to learn a lot and have great time."

INSIDE

INSIDE is developed to help keep all Iowa DOT employees informed about critical issues affecting them, recognize DOT employees for their excellent service, and share interesting aspects in the lives of our co-workers. For more information, contact Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services, 515-239-1314 or e-mail tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov.

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PLEASE RECYCLE THIS ISSUE

On the cover: Living snow fence protects roadways and the environment.

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District 3	Mary Beth Banta, Sioux City	712-276-1451
District 4	Marlene Jensen, Atlantic	712-243-3355
District 5	Brenda Hadley, Fairfield	641-472-6142
District 6	Jeanne Heeren, Cedar Rapids	319-364-0235
Bridges and Structures	Judy Whitney, Ames	515-239-1564
Construction	Nancy McMenamin, Ames	515-239-1043
Contracts	Peg Muxfeldt, Ames	515-239-1422
Design	Judy Lensing, Ames	515-239-1469
Director's Staff Division	Lynn Purcell, Ames	515-239-1730
Driver Services	Melanie Mathes, Des Moines	515-237-3153
General Counsel	Sheri Anderson, Ames	515-239-1509
Information Technology Division	Colette Simpson, Ames	515-233-7728
Local Systems	Kathy LaRue, Ames	515-239-1081
Location and Environment	Jean Jesse, Ames	515-239-1225
Maintenance	Cindy Shipley, Ames	515-239-1824
Materials	Dawne Berner, Ames	515-239-1919
Modal and Planning & Programming Divisions ...	Mary Kay Reimers, Ames	515-239-1661
Motor Carrier Services	Diann McMillen, Des Moines	515-237-3250
Motor Vehicle Enforcement	Val Hunter, Des Moines	515-237-3218
Operations and Finance Division	Janet Kout-Samson, Ames	515-239-1340
Research and Technology Bureau	Phyllis Geer, Ames	515-239-1646
Right-of-Way	Linda Kriegel, Ames	515-239-1135
Traffic and Safety	Linda McBride, Ames	515-239-1557
Vehicle Services	Thelma Huffman, Des Moines	515-237-3182



Jerry Sabin

Comfy covers ease ailments

Lasting relationships are built on mutual respect and satisfaction. The fruits of a nearly 20-year-old relationship between Sheila and Jerry Sabin, a mechanic in the motor pool, and the people at the Ronald McDonald House in Des Moines are evident on both sides.

Sabin says he and Sheila began making quilts in 1986 for families with ill children who were staying at Ronald McDonald house in Des Moines. In that time they've pieced together more than 1,000 comforting quilts, mostly for babies and children.

"We started off making marriage quilts for our kids and nieces and nephews," explained Sabin. "We really enjoyed making quilts and Sheila found the idea in a magazine to donate them. We did a few full-sized quilts for Ronald McDonald House and then switched to baby quilts."

The quilts are pieced, fabric-painted, appliquéd, or machine embroidered in a variety of colorful patterns, which is Sabin's specialty. "A few years ago I bought an embroidery machine that allows me to sew blocks with Disney characters on them," he said. "The kids love those."

Sheila assembles the quilt blocks and does the hand-quilting. The couple also includes a stuffed animal, book or toy to match each quilt.

"The people at Ronald McDonald House are great. It's a great organization to work with and it makes us feel good to be involved, to be able to help," said Sabin. "We get many thank you letters from families and even keep in touch with some. We just got a Christmas card from a family in Algona with a 16-year-old son who has one of our quilts from when he was a child. We hear from them, and some of the others, every year."

Quilts aren't all the Sabins donate to Ronald McDonald House. "We help with fundraisers every year," said Sabin. "The biggest is probably the golf tournament at Beaver Run in May. There are some big name sponsors and I help out by putting up and taking down about 90 sponsor signs over the 27-hole course. That's a lot of fun."

When he isn't quilting or helping at golf tournaments, Sabin, who lives in Nevada, says he likes woodworking, fishing and cooking. He's even made a quilt rack for one of their creations that serves as a wall hanging at Ronald McDonald House.

Sheila, who is retired from the Story County Recorder's office, spends her time sewing and caring for the couple's grandchildren. The Sabins have two grown kids, David and his wife, Amy, live in Green Bay, Wisc., with their two sons, ages 12 and 9. Their daughter Connie and her husband, Jim Ball, live in Nevada with their two sons, ages 3 and almost 2.

February Crossword solution

