

SEPTEMBER 2008

# INSIDE



## What's INSIDE

Iowa DOT unveils updated strategic plan • 3

Sending your child off to war • 4

Younie's support of military service honored • 5

Urban Youth Corps • 6 | Midwest Planning Conference • 7

Southwest Iowa goes green(er) • 8 | Data-related lunch-n-learn • 9

My wake-up call • 10 | Charlie's trip to Burma • 16



## ONE 2 ONE

WITH DIRECTOR NANCY RICHARDSON

I have been asked to share some thoughts with you about the DOT's recently updated strategic plan. I am not so naïve – or stupid – as to think that all 3,200 of us feel really connected and committed to the agency's strategic plan. I have held positions at all levels – entry, middle and top – over my 35-year career with two state government agencies. I fully understand that it is often difficult to see much of a link between what you do in your daily job routine and some document created by senior management.

But, I think a strategic plan matters and I would like to share with you my thoughts of why it matters to the DOT and to me, and why – and how – it can matter to you.

First of all, a strategic plan matters because of what it is – a plan of action for Iowa DOT. Typically when we are planning to go somewhere, we determine how best to get there. We pull out a map, ask for directions or do an Internet search for a route. Then we try our best to follow the directions. We sometimes still make a wrong turn, but generally by following the directions we get to our destination in a reasonable amount of time. Without directions, the trip may take longer, cost more, or we may never even get to where we were headed.

Planning the direction of an organization like DOT is very much like planning a trip. We need to know where we want to end up, look for the best way we can get there, and then try to follow our directions. That's what the strategic plan helps DOT do. The strategic planning process forces us to think about what kind of agency we want DOT to be (vision), what our real purpose is (mission), how we want to do our work (philosophy), the specific things we want to accomplish (goals), and how we are going to accomplish them (strategies and action plans). It is very healthy - and important to success – both as individuals and as organizations to determine what is important and how you are going to achieve what you want. Good things usually don't just happen without planning and execution.

But is there anything specific in this strategic plan that matters to each of you? I think so. To me, the plan is like a buffet, with something for everyone. Let me explain. First let's look at our vision – what we would like to be. Our vision is to make a difference in the lives of Iowans. We want to do

that by delivering high quality transportation services (our mission). Who among us does not want to have the work we do matter and make a difference? Studies show that is the highest motivator for most of us. I believe we all want our work to matter so it seems we can all rally around this vision.

Where I really think we can each find a connection is in the philosophy, or core values and principles, the plan identifies for the way we do our work. Having integrity in the way we treat others; doing things in an open, understandable way (transparency); always striving to do things better; and having an inviting, productive work environment – no matter what our job is at DOT, I know these are qualities that we all want to bring to our work.

The rest of the strategic plan gets into specific goals, strategies and action plans by which we will measure our progress. A plan must be focused in order to make and demonstrate progress; therefore, not every strategy and action gets included in the document. As a result, you may not see a specific action that relates directly to your particular work. That

does not mean that what you do isn't important and crucial to our overall success. I believe that everything each of us does reflects on us collectively as an agency. I am reminded of that every time someone sends me a compliment or complaint about something we have done somewhere.

So, I ask you to think about always applying the guiding principles of integrity, transparency, outstanding service and quality work culture to all that you do here at DOT. If we all "live" those principles in our work, we will achieve the agency goals of a safer, higher quality transportation system; exceptional customer service; and an effective workplace environment. I am convinced that the result will be not only that we make a difference in the lives of Iowans, but our own lives will be enriched as well.

# Iowa DOT unveils updated strategic plan

**T**he Iowa DOT produces awesome road maps. We also do a pretty darn good job with the airport directory, barge terminal directory and a number of other tools to help people find information to get where they need to go. But, as an agency, where are we going and how do we get there?

That's the question the Iowa DOT's management team has been contemplating over the last several months in developing an updated strategic plan. The agency has had some version of a strategic plan for years. Director Richardson's goal is to develop a strategic plan that employees can understand, use and see how each individual can contribute to the overall success of the agency. The first step in the process was to revisit the vision and mission of the agency.

**Vision:** Making a difference in the lives of Iowans through stewardship, service and innovation.

**Mission:** The Department of Transportation advocates and delivers transportation services that support the economic, environmental and social vitality of Iowa.

The group agreed early on the Iowa DOT's greatest strength is its people. The guiding principles of the agency reflect the quality of the individuals supporting them.

**Integrity:** Our dealings with each other, our partners and our customers are conducted to the highest ethical standards.

**Transparency:** Our decisions, actions and processes are open, accessible and understandable – both internally and externally.

**Outstanding Service:** We provide excellent service by: 1) continually developing our skills, tools and expertise; 2) forming internal and external partnerships; 3) finding innovative methods of doing things better; and 4) adapting rapidly to opportunities and challenges.

**Quality Work Culture:** Our employees are safe, respected and treated equitably; diversity is promoted to enrich and strengthen the workforce; and employees are given opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The management team held several open conversations on what we do well as an organization, and what weaknesses and strengths we have, both internally and externally. The majority of strengths tie back to our workforce. Having a motivated, skilled and responsive group of employees with a commitment to good customer service, partnership building and high performance standards is listed in the document.

Internal weaknesses identified include: inadequate integration and utilization of information for decision-making and monitoring progress toward our vision and mission; out-of-date policies and procedures; insufficient employee education necessary for increased awareness; and inconsistent use and/or lack of measurements that describe the impact of transportation on the state's economy and lives of Iowans.

Externally, the challenges are numerous and include: increased public expectation regarding use and modernization of transportation systems; high expectations of quality, efficiency and responsiveness from state agencies; decreasing funding levels and increasing costs; and the competition for recruiting and retaining skilled employees.

The next step is developing goals, measures and strategies to meet the challenges utilizing our strengths. The management team decided that to make the strategic plan manageable, they should focus on four goals in the 2008-2012 plan.

- 1) Improve the safety of Iowa's transportation system.
- 2) Improve the quality of Iowa's transportation systems and what they provide.
- 3) Improve internal and external customer service.
- 4) Improve the effectiveness of our workplace.

The measures for the first goal include tracking fatalities and injuries on Iowa highways and rail crossings. Strategies for the first goal were set utilizing the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan and the needs identified in the federal report on the top five percent of locations warranting safety initiatives, based on safety data.

The second goal will be measured using data currently collected for sufficiency ratings, the pavement condition index and a number of other indicators of quality in the transportation system. The strategies include securing sufficient funding, developing a passenger rail program, maximizing processes for efficient and prudent decision-making, and developing a transportation system and services performance management program.

*Strategic plan update  
continued on page 9*

# Sending your child off to war

**R**emember the anxiety the first day you sent your child off to kindergarten? Seemingly in the blink of an eye, you could be compounding that anxiety a hundred-fold by sending that child off to war.

Such was the case for Russ Cornelius, mechanic in the Carroll garage, and his wife, Barb. The couple's oldest son, Kenneth, 28, joined the Iowa Army National Guard in high school, nearly 10 years ago. He spent 2005 and 2006 in Afghanistan, and is currently working full-time for the Guard as a readiness, non-commissioned officer out of Iowa City and Newton.

A father's guidance can go only so far, and Cornelius says he's grateful for his elder son's leadership, as Kenneth has set a great example for the Corneliuses' younger son, Kyle, 23. Kyle Cornelius recently returned from a tour in Iraq and is awaiting his orders for a full-time job with the Guard as a recruiter.

While the Corneliuses' sons were deployed, dad Russ says weekly contact was critical to relieve fears. "Just to be able to talk to them, to hear their voices, was great," said Russ. "You can't hear a mood or tone as well in a letter. When you can actually hear their voices, it's easier to tell how things are really going and how they are doing, even when their words don't tell the whole story. And," he added, "you don't watch too much television news."

"While the support for the war may not be as strong, we've always felt the support for the troops," said the elder Cornelius. "When Kyle came home April 30, there were people in every town from Ames to Denison lining the route cheering for the troops. Some towns even let out school so the kids could come watch the caravan. Kyle had wanted his Harley Davidson in Denison so he could ride home. I was honored to lead the way on that Harley, along



*(from left) Kyle, Russ, Barb and Kenneth Cornelius at Kyle's send off in June 2005*



*(lower photo) Kyle Cornelius, seated on his Harley, was happy to see his bike (and his dad (far right)) when his unit returned from Iraq.*

with the Patriot Guard Riders, as we brought our boys home."

As a former military man, Russ has confidence that his sons are well trained, but he still appreciates the stateside missions, rather than overseas deployment. "Both of my sons were on sandbag duty during the floods. Their units were in Des Moines, Iowa City and Burlington. I was as proud of their work in the recovery effort, as I have been in every other mission they've completed."

Being the father of soldiers during war time is difficult, especially with Kenneth scheduled to deploy again in 2010, but Cornelius is quick to compliment the sense of duty, honor, dedication, and discipline the military lifestyle has instilled in his sons. He said, "I support them all the way. And it's great to see the support coming from everywhere in the communities they serve."

## Younie's support of military service honored

There are many different levels of support when it comes to employees taking a leave of absence from the DOT to fulfill a military commitment. At a minimum, policy 220.06 states, "Upon return, the employee shall have the right to be returned to a vacant position in the class held prior to the leave or to a class in the same pay grade for which the employee qualifies."

Prior to the first Gulf War in 1990, it was fairly easy for an employer to support a reservist's military service, partly because that duty usually consisted of only two weeks of training every summer. Accommodating that time off was rarely a strain on a work unit. With many longer term deployments of reservists and National Guard troops since 1990, giving up that valuable employee for an extended period is bound to put a strain on a work unit.

Norm Hockett, construction technician supervisor in the Marshalltown construction office, has served our country's military beginning in 1969



Younie

when he was sent to Vietnam. After several missions around the world and a few breaks from the reserves, Hockett came out of military retirement in 2001 and was deployed to Qatar and then Afghanistan. Hockett says the support provided by his DOT supervisors, including Bob Younie, Ron DeBock, Vicki Dumdei, Sandra Larson, John Heggen, and Doug McDonald, made his commitment to our country much easier.

Hockett submitted Younie's name to the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and

Reserve. Because of Hockett's request, Younie was named a "Patriotic Employer" by the group.

While Younie was named in the award, he's quick to point out the agency as a



whole provides the support for supervisors. "I know not every work unit has the staff to cover for an employee so that employee's job can be held while on active duty," said Bob Younie, director of the Office of Maintenance, "But I think every DOT supervisor does whatever can be done to accommodate an employee who is willing to put their own life on hold to serve our country."

*"The patriot volunteer, fighting for country and his rights, makes the most reliable soldier on earth."*

*Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson*

## What's new in the Office of Document Services?

The Office of Document Services is planning an open house this fall to showcase the services available to DOT offices. Did you know



DOCUMENT SERVICES

that printing services are now completely digital? Come to the open house to see samples of various finishing options and be introduced

to the new print work system called Avanti. Have your questions answered about changes in the mail center and get a glimpse of the scanners that can scan various types of media, including microfiche, aerial film and paper documents from the electronic records management systems section. Document Services staff will be on hand to answer questions about records and forms management. Look for an upcoming E-mail with details about the date and time of the open house.



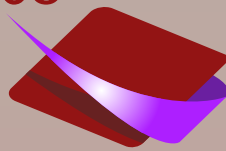
*Taylor, a 16-year-old UYC participant from Oskaloosa, helps kids identify animal pelts at the Mahaska County Fair.*

## Urban Youth Corps 2008

If you have a teenager, chances are at some point this summer you heard, "I'm bored." Parents of teens working in the Urban Youth Corps (UYC) program were much more likely to hear, "Guess what we did today!" One day the attention may be focused on basic first aid, because safety comes first. The next might include a team effort to paint a shed at a county recreational facility. On the third day, identifying native plant species at a state park while clearing a nature trail might be on the agenda. Nearly three dozen Iowa youth involved in the Iowa DOT-administered UYC program experience a wide variety of activities, and learn what a sense of accomplishment and earning a paycheck are all about.

The federal program was established to: offer meaningful full-time or productive summer work for individuals from the ages of 16 to 21 in transportation settings; give participants a mix of work experience and on-the-job training that includes a minimum of five hours per week of the participant's time for basic life skills, education, training, and safety; and provide youth an opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their communities.

Iowa is in its 12th year of administering UYC. This summer's projects supported many outdoor activities, including flood recovery efforts in eastern Iowa. Five agencies hired at-risk



## Urban Youth Corps



young people through the program that aims to complete transportation-related projects, mostly on recreational trails and county park facilities, that would not ordinarily be accomplished within the budgets of the sponsoring agencies. In addition to accomplishing much-needed work, the programs strive to teach the youth problem solving in real-world situations.

Each UYC project is designed to provide a transportation-related service to citizens, including: providing facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; landscaping and scenic beautification within highway rights-of-way or in proximity to transportation facilities; preservation or rehabilitation of historic markers, buildings, structures or facilities having significance to transportation; and preservation of abandoned railway corridors. Each successful applicant project must provide local matching funds of at least 30 percent of the project cost.

Three agencies returned to the program this year, while two new groups, Trees Forever in Marion and the Dubuque County Conservation Board, received funding for the first time. The

three returning agencies were the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, working on the Wabash Trace Nature Trail in Page, Fremont, Mills, and Pottawattamie counties; Mahaska County Conservation Board, with projects at various locations throughout the county; and the Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program in Iowa City.

In Mahaska County, three crew members were involved with work in the park system. Mike Gipple, director of the Mahaska County Conservation Board (MCCB), knows the value of the program, as this group has participated with UYC for the past 11 years and one of the current MCCB full-time employees, Carrie Bond, began her career as a UYC participant. Bond likes having the UYC participants around, too. "We can send them to do the smaller projects that we might not get to otherwise," she said. "They're great with brush control, mowing, trail projects, and plantings. This year we've also had quite a bit of work repairing flood damage, mainly clearing silt and brush from park shelters, and repairing a bridge."

Cody, a 16-year old from New Sharon, says the UYC program suits him. "Eventually I'd like to be a mechanic because I like to tinker with stuff," he said. "I've been able to learn a lot this summer."

Another UYC participant, Taylor, 16, from Oskaloosa, says she likes working outside and helping people. She especially likes animals and aspires to be a zoologist one day. Working the MCCB booth at the Mahaska County Fair, Taylor was in her element helping kids identify animal pelts and keeping a watchful eye as children were allowed to hold a small turtle. "I really like what we've been doing. There's something different all the time," she said with a smile.

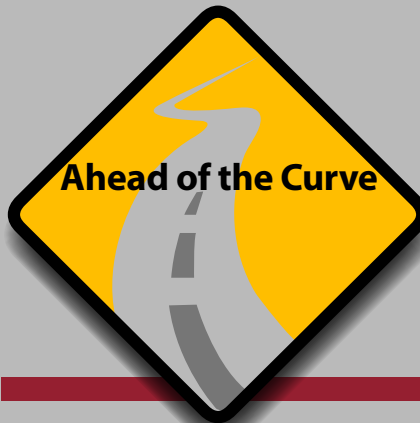
# Midwest planning conference

**S**tate to state to state, traveling our country is as easy as hopping on just about any road out of town. The national highway system, increasing interest in passenger rail, regional recreational trails development, and cooperative corridor planning between states keep us all moving where we want to go. Planning for the future and addressing current regional transportation issues brought 175 planners from 10 states together in Iowa City for the Midwest Transportation Planning Conference June 4-6.

Stan Peterson from the Iowa DOT's Office of Systems Planning led the conference organization team. From safety to funding to the next big thing in technology, sessions caught the attention of conference goers. Peterson said, "We were able to bring in excellent speakers, many of them from our own organization, surrounding state DOTs and our contracting partners. The point of the conference was to come together and share ideas and solutions for common issues. The comments we received were very positive."

"This group of state planners has been meeting since the early 1990s," said Peterson. "Every-other year the conference moves to a different host state. It is one of the premier events for Midwest transportation planners each year because of the consistent quality of the presentations."

Transportation planning involves more than highways. Discussions on passenger rail, non-traditional partnerships, boosting recreational trail planning efforts and trail land acquisition by private easement purchase rather than condemnation were well attended. Common issues concerning river freight movement allowed participants to share ideas at roundtable discussions.



*"We were able to bring in excellent speakers, many of them from our own organization, surrounding state DOTs and our contracting partners. The point of the conference was to come together and share ideas and solutions for common issues. The comments we received were very positive."*



**Stan Peterson**  
Office of Systems Planning

When discussions turn to infrastructure planning, the human element rises to the top as a key factor in why roads, trails, transit, and other transportation systems are

put in place. Whether the focus is on planning for the efficient mobility of urban residents to reduce congestion, working with local governments to plan safety improvements on their systems, recognizing the changes needed to ensure the safe mobility of our aging population or protecting our environment through innovative planning and construction methods, the focus should be on how the infrastructure impacts users.

Changing technology needs and uses were highlighted at sessions on methods of geographic information systems (GIS) analysis for transportation, including the use of Google™ Earth and maps to assist in making business decisions and easily disseminate information to the public. The GIS technologies were also highlighted as problem solving and regional crash analysis tools. Because many of the states have already invested in the technology, this and other conference sessions focused on ways to better utilize GIS capabilities.

"I think the conference was so successful because of the variety of issues we were able to bring forward," said Peterson. "I think every person attending was able to take something away from the meetings."

Peterson credits much of the conference's success to the Iowa DOT team involved in planning the sessions and producing the materials used at the conference. These individuals include: Amanda Martin, Tara Narotam, Craig O'Riley, Jay Larson, and Cindy Shearer from the Office of Systems Planning; Mark James and Jolene Bersch from the Information Technology Division; Nola Barger, Cherice Ogg and Christina Andersen from the Office of Media and Marketing Services; and Patty Valline and Dale Larrew from the Office of Document Services.

## Ten different garages + thousands of seeds = one beautiful stretch of roadside

by *Christina Andersen*

After experiencing a lack of success with several contracted re-vegetation projects in their district, District 4 maintenance employees decided to run a pilot project to determine what factors may be problematic. Jim Bane, District 4 public service executive and one of the project pioneers, wanted to evaluate all variables of the specifications for roadside re-vegetation provided in the three-year contract. "I wanted to determine if the problems were resulting from the seed mixes in use or how the mixes are being applied," said Bane.

The site selected for the project was a 5.2-mile stretch of U.S. 34 from Stanton east to U.S. 71. This site was selected to compare to the results of a contract-let project 5.5 miles west of Stanton on U.S. 34 to Red Oak. The project was initiated in spring 2006. The Landscaping Project Fund provided the herbicide and

native grass and wildflower seed. Evelyn O'Loughlin, roadside development specialist 2, assisted with the location layout.

The biggest challenge for project leaders to overcome was staffing. The project was more work and time-consuming than what could be handled by employees from one garage, and it was imperative that the project be done according to stringent contract specifications to provide a valid test. In true Iowa DOT fashion, employees from neighboring garages volunteered in numbers. A total of 27 employees from 10 different garages and one employee from the Council Bluffs District Operations Management office volunteered.

The volunteer staff worked three to six people at a time, spraying herbicide, drilling seed and mowing. As specified in the contract, each phase of re-vegetation was completed in a week.

"The commitment from staff to make this project a success was incredible. Everyone really pulled together to meet the challenge," said Bane.

As the contract wraps up this year, the results speak for themselves. Bane and others discovered that, when followed, the existing contract can produce spectacular results, even in a climate that tends to be a little drier than other areas of the state.

The success of the project has been recognized by several others. A Red Oak citizen called the DOT to pass along his appreciation of the plantings on U.S. 34, east of Stanton, stating they turned out very well. In addition to the numerous positive comments received from the public, Pheasants Forever and area contractors have examined the site to determine how their practices can be improved to produce the same results.

### Thanks to those involved:

**Council Bluffs maintenance:** *Ken Heitman (retired)*

**Adair garage:** *Rick Burr, Don Eggen (retired) and Rex Peterson*

**Atlantic garage:** *Jeff Kirchoff, Rick McDermott and Scott Steffens*

**Avoca garage:** *Wayne Allen, Randy Lund and Herchel Wilber (retired, deceased)*

**Corning garage:** *Dave Lundquist and Jim Oshel*

**Creston garage:** *Hollis Dodge*

**Greenfield garage:** *Jimmy Christensen, Aaron Dahl, Ron Lauer, Gene Purdy (retired), and Dave Swanson*

**Pacific Junction garage:** *Tony Arrick, Roger Bendt, LeVerne Rohrberg (retired), and Jim Schoening*

**Red Oak garage:** *Don Herdliska, Tim Mathis and Jason Sallach*

**Shenandoah garage:** *Mike Dukes*

**Sidney garage:** *Blaine Bengston and Andy Sheldon*





# Data-related lunch-n-learn session set for fall

**W**hat is spatial data? How could your office benefit from using spatial data? The Planning, Programming and Modal support team is offering lunch-n-learn sessions covering various spatial data topics. Sessions will be 20 to 30 minutes of presentation, and 30 to 40 minutes for questions and discussion.



*Each session will run from 11 a.m. to noon. Conference rooms are designated below.*

**Sept. 10 How to analyze geospatial data using attribute and spatial queries, joins and functional attributes**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

**Sept. 17 How to geocode data with GeoMedia™ tools**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

**Oct. 1 What is Iowa's linear referencing system (LRS) and its use?**

*Administration building - 1st floor (north) conference room*

**Oct. 8 How to use and maintain metadata - working with GeoMedia catalogs**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

**Oct. 15 Working with GeoMedia layout windows and batch-plotting of data sets in layout window**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

**Oct. 22 How to export data to shape and design files and keyhole mark-up language**

*Administration building - 1st floor (south) conference room*

**Oct. 29 How to use data with Google™ Maps and service layers  
What is eSpatial?**

*Administration building - 1st floor (north) conference room*

**Nov. 5 What are the various Iowa DOT spatial data projects?**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

**Nov. 12 Quarterly wrap-up - open forum on geospatial data topics**

*Administration building - 2nd floor conference room*

Please see <http://dotnet/gis/lunchnlearn.htm> for more details or contact Eric Abrams at 515-239-1949, Scott Weiler at 515-239-1944 or Tom Samson at 515-239-1920.

**Strategic plan update**

*continued from page 3*

The first two goals, and their associated measurements and strategies, are pretty straightforward. The second two are much more dependent on all of us working together. Improving customer service will be measured tracking the average number of days to issue access permits, average time to near normal for A and B roads after a storm, the time from grant application deadline to Commission approval, and from Commission approval to construction/completion. The strategies are to improve communication with customers, maximize process efficiency and effectiveness, develop a performance-based customer service program, and provide a survey to grant recipients to assess effectiveness in managing grant programs.

The fourth goal relates directly to improving the culture at the Iowa DOT. Measures include: proportion of protected classes in DOT workforce; number of workers compensation injuries; vehicle crashes; days away from work; employee rating of workplace satisfaction; and employee rating of openness and trust. The strategies set for implementation include development of a comprehensive employee safety program, gathering and sharing of organizational information, and developing a workforce management plan.

For comments from Director Nancy Richardson on the development process for the strategic plan, please read her column on page 2 of this edition of INSIDE. Contact your division director for questions or comments concerning the Iowa DOT's strategic plan. A copy of the plan will be on DOTNET, and printed copies will be made available to all employees.

# My wake-up call

by **Chuck Levy**

If you had asked me five years ago about diabetes, I would have told you, "Yeah, that's the disease you get when your body can't handle sugar. I knew a guy in high school with that." I was aware of the disease, but it didn't have anything to do with me, did it? How naive I turned out to be.

With more than 300 million people in this country, it is staggering to note that approximately 23 million have some form of this disease. That's 1 in 13 Americans. About 6 million of those 23 million aren't even aware they have the disease. How can this be?

Maybe those uninformed millions are just like I was. Until September 2004, I never gave diabetes a passing thought. It was during that month when my mother passed away due to complications from the disease — at age 55. In my mind, she should have had many years to enjoy life. It was shocking that something I considered minor could kill you. But my doctor would tell me if there was something wrong, wouldn't he? After what happened with my mom, I was determined to find out.

After my mom's funeral, I visited my doctor. And did he ever set me straight. I was overweight, had high blood pressure, and didn't have a very good diet or exercise program. I had pre-diabetes and I am not alone. Nearly 57 million other Americans show early signs of the disease, just like me. I told myself I could turn this thing around, at least I did on that day. My resolve lasted a few weeks, but eventually I didn't take the warnings seriously enough. Now I know how wrong I was. In May 2006, I was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

Having the disease isn't the end of my life. It didn't have to be the end of my mother's. She just left it untreated and ignored for many years. That is not going to be me. I want to be around as



Chuck Levy

## Major types of diabetes

### Type 1 diabetes

Results from the body's failure to produce insulin, the hormone that "unlocks" the cells of the body, allowing glucose to enter and fuel them. It is estimated that 5-10 percent of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have Type 1 diabetes.

### Type 2 diabetes

Results from insulin resistance (a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin), combined with relative insulin deficiency. Most Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes.

### Gestational diabetes

Pregnant women who have never had diabetes before, but who have high blood sugar (glucose) levels during pregnancy are said to have gestational diabetes. Immediately after pregnancy, 5 to 10 percent of women with gestational diabetes develop another form of diabetes, usually, Type 2.

### Pre-diabetes

Pre-diabetes is a condition that occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. There are 57 million Americans who have pre-diabetes, in addition to the 23.6 million with diabetes.

long as possible for my wife and four children. I want to be able to see and play with my grandchildren.

The medical profession may not have a cure yet, but they are working towards it. That is why I am riding in the Bikers Against Diabetes (BAD) ride in Des Moines on Sept. 27 and why I am asking for your support. Please join me in fighting this disease that affects 1 in 13 of us. If you count those with pre-diabetes, that gives this disease the capability of affecting 1 in every 4

people in the United States. Help me help the American Diabetes Association pass the word and find a cure.

**Visit <http://main.diabetes.org/goto/CharlesLevy> to become involved.**

The Bikers Against Diabetes (BAD) Ride was started in southern California by Rip Rose, a biker and photojournalist for "Easyriders," who wanted to bring the biker nation together in the fight against diabetes. Today, that dream is a reality.

# Family happenings

## Operations and Finance

*Sheri Anderson*



Ashley Smelser, architectural technician 2, and her husband, Andy, welcomed baby Cameron July 28 at 4:15 p.m. He weighed 7 pounds, 13 ounces and was 20 ½ inches long with medium brown hair. Cameron was welcomed home by big sister, Isabelle, 2. Congratulations to the Smelsers!

## Location and Environment

*Jean Jesse*



First-time parents Lisa Biggs, transportation engineer intern, and her husband, Erick, are the proud parents of a little boy born Tuesday, July 29, at 9:20 p.m. Cael Payton Biggs weighed in at 7 pounds, 3 ounces. Lisa said all went well and the Biggs are very happy. Congratulations Lisa and Erick!

## District 2

*Lu Mohorne*



Tom Brunscheon, engineering technician senior in the District 2 Office, recently portrayed Sister Mary Hubert as he appeared in the musical comedy entitled "Nunsense A-Men" at the Charles City Theatre. Proceeds from the production were donated to The Learning Center of Charles City.



***It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.***

***W. Somerset Maugham  
(1874 - 1965)***

## Thank you

Thank you to all who donated leave while I was off work with a broken leg. Your help was very much appreciated.

Scott Geer, electrician  
Facilities Support

The fourth annual District 2 golf outing and picnic took place July 28 at West Hills Golf Course in Nora Springs. Everyone had a great time (photo below).



*(front row, from left) Steve Van Arsdale, Jason Mohorne, Paige Merrill, Nikki Hjelmstad, Val Wright; (second row, from left) Clyde Mohorne, Anita Wiebke, Tim Merrill, Pete Hjelmstad, Stan Wright; (third row, from left) Lu Mohorne, Dean Wiebke, Dan Chipera, Vicki Dumdei; (fourth row, from left) Krista Rostad, Matt Little, Justin Heimer; (fifth row, from left) Chris Suntken, Ken Rostad, Ron Loecher, Layton Zbornik, Lisa Wood; (sixth row, from left) Dave Little, Andrew Little, Laura Little, Craig Wood, Barb Wood. Missing from the picture is Jim Hemberger.*



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
**TROPHY CASE**



### The next Tiger Woods?

Six-year old Kolby Shackelford, son of Kurt Shackelford, District 1 traffic technician, placed third at the statewide Pee Wee Golf tournament June 30 in Grinnell. Tournament participants, ages five through eight, played a five-hole format. Kolby shot a 31, the winner shot a 28 and second place winner scored 30. Last year, Kolby placed second at the 2007 Lake Panorama National Pee Wee Championship. Maybe Kolby will be the next Tiger Woods?

### Duane Nie, the hay toss guy



Duane Nie, design technician in the District 2 Office, won the Maynard Days hay bale throwing contest June 28 with a toss of 41 feet, 1 inch.

### Iowa Games

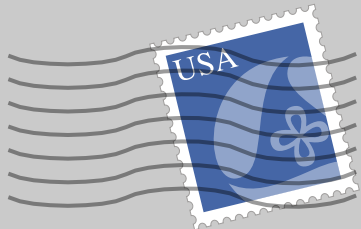
Greg Moyle, design technician in the Office of Design's soils section, took home six individual gold medals and one relay gold from the swimming competition at the 2008 Summer Iowa Games held July 19 and 20 in Ames. He swam in the 1000-, 500-, 200-, 100-, and 50-meter freestyle races and 50-meter butterfly relay. The relay gold was from the 200-meter mixed freestyle.

Ole Skaar, roadside development specialist 2 in the Office of Design's roadside development section, took home a bronze medal in the disc golf competition at the 2008 Summer Iowa Games in the intermediate grand master group.

### Ortiz takes the cake



Milly Ortiz, transportation planner 2 in the Office of Systems Planning, received second place (red ribbon) for her entry in the Amateur Decorated Cakes Division, Class: Tiered Cakes at the Iowa State Fair.



## Kudos!

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

To: Tony Lazarowicz, District 3 engineer  
From: Larry Jeddeloh, president, Jeddeloh Ford Chevy Buick

Our dealership was affected by the Iowa 60 bypass entrance road. It involved not having a road going past our business for 80-plus days before it was reopened. Through this difficult time, Construction Technician Kirk A. Johnson from the Cherokee construction office did an excellent job representing the Iowa DOT. Whatever he told us would happen, did happen. He was very good about keeping us up to date with the construction and what to expect next. Whenever we had a concern, he made sure he talked to us about it and tried to come up with a resolution that worked for both of us. The Iowa DOT should be very proud and pleased with the job he is doing for them. Dealing with Kirk was a very positive experience.

To: Scott Dockstader, District 1 engineer  
From: Bruce, West Side Family Restaurant, Grinnell

Just a note to let you know that I appreciate all your help on getting the road fixed in front of our restaurant. Your concern for small town business is very much appreciated.

*(Editor's note: The West Side Family Restaurant is located on U.S. 6 in Grinnell. The Iowa DOT completed an asphalt overlay project on this roadway earlier this summer. The Marshalltown construction office worked with this business owner to minimize impacts on the restaurant during construction.)*

To: Steven McMenamin, rest area administrator  
From: Terri Little, Seattle, Washington

I would like to thank you for your very well maintained rest areas. They were probably the cleanest I have ever seen. I also really like the free Internet at the rest areas. I used it to e-mail my children along the way and make motel reservations in Iowa.

To: Scott Dockstader, District 1 engineer  
From: Mellissa Ballard, Des Moines

I wanted to let someone know how thankful I am for the Highway Helper service that is offered. I was fortunate enough to have this service available one morning as I found myself with a flat tire that would've taken me a lot longer to change and much more cumbersome for me had Dick not shown up. He was truly my hero for the day, and I appreciate the service and Dick's helpful attitude and service to me in my time of need. THANK YOU!

*(Editor's note: Dick Crawley is a highway technician associate with the Highway Helper program in District 1.)*

To: Scott Dockstader, District 1 engineer  
From Craig Berry, mayor of Jefferson

As mayor of Jefferson, the citizens and I want to offer you and your staff, along with the outstanding work done by the men of the Jefferson garage, our sincere thank you for a job well done on Monday when my community hosted RAGBRAI as it passed through Greene County. The effort of the District 1 people was tremendous!

*(Editor's note: During RAGBRAI, District 1 provided changeable message signs to direct riders near Jefferson. Mayor Craig Berry is also a materials technician 3 in District 1 materials.)*

To: Kim Snook, Driver Services  
From: Barbara Edmondson, Washington County attorney

I am writing to express my appreciation for Wanda Phares' assistance. We developed training for retailers who sell alcohol to prevent selling to persons under legal age. I asked Wanda if she would be willing to come and speak to the retailers about what to look for when they examine a driver's license or identification card and tips on spotting fake IDs. She graciously agreed to assist us. Our training sessions are once per month with special training for the larger retailers. By far, employees and managers who attend these sessions say that Wanda's information is the most helpful to them. We have trained more than 50 employees and managers, and we appreciate the time that Wanda has given up to help us.

*(Editor's note: Wanda Phares is a driver's license supervisor 2 in Driver Services.)*

To: Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services  
From: Pat Merrick, Albia

I am writing to you because two Iowa DOT employees came to my aid above and beyond the ordinary. Here is what happened. In late March 2008, I was really in a pickle. I was driving back to Albia from Corydon via Chariton when my back tire shredded. In the car were my almost 97-year-old mother-in-law and sister from Illinois. We were taking my mother-in-law to her son's visitation, so it was already a sad day.

The car was new to me, and I didn't even know where to begin to change the tire. As I was standing there forlorn, a large Iowa DOT truck pulled up behind us. Jeff Wesley and Leo Stevenson got out and surveyed the damage. They wrestled the damaged tire off, put the donut on and cautioned us to keep the speed to 35 mph. They refused payment and only reluctantly gave me their names. I was so grateful. It was a bright spot of kindness in a completely bleak day. Thanks to Leo and Jeff.

*(Editor's note: Jeff Wesley is a highway technician and Leo Stevenson is a highway technician associate, both in the Chariton shop.)*

## Personnel Updates

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for June 13 to July 10, 2008

### New hires

**Megan Belew**, driver's license clerk, Sioux City DL station; **Jenna Carlson**, human resources technician assistant, Employee Services; **Chad Curnes**, highway technician associate, Grimes garage; **Brandon Case**, driver's license clerk senior, Des Moines DL station; **Ashley Doyle**, accounting clerk 2, Des Moines DL station; **Randall Dykstra**, highway technician associate, Grimes garage; **Robert Emerson**, right of way agent 2, Right of Way; **Kimberly Eylers**, driver's license clerk, Waterloo DL station; **Bruce Flippin**, transportation engineer intern, Council Bluffs construction; **Deborah Grant**, driver's license clerk, Des Moines DL station; **Patrick Kelly**, right of way agent 2, Right of Way; **Michael Raab**, compliance officer 2, Policy and Legislative Services; **Scott Schram**, transportation engineer intern, Materials; **Christopher Suntken**, engineer technician senior, District 2 Office; **Kent Van Ervelde**, highway technician associate, Newton garage; **Bertina Vonstein**, driver's license clerk, Des Moines DL station

### Promotions

**Rufus Brown**, from materials technician 3 to materials technician 4, Materials; **Sharon Chase**, from secretary 1 to construction technician, Manchester construction; **Joseph Cihacek**, from highway technician, Missouri Valley garage to highway technician senior, Council Bluffs construction; **Heather Gugler**, from construction technician, Cedar Rapids construction to engineering technician senior, District 6 Office; **Shawn Havick**, from equipment operator senior to garage operations assistant, Avoca garage; **Yanxiao Jia**, from transportation engineer to transportation engineer manager, Design; **Corey Lorenz**, from information technology specialist 4 to information technology specialist 5, Information Technology Division; **Monica McCroskey**, from mail clerk 2 to clerk specialist, Driver Services; **Dale Miller**, from information technology specialist 3 to information technology specialist 4, Information Technology Division; **Jack Winther**, from highway technician associate, Council Bluffs-north garage to highway technician senior, Council Bluffs construction

### Transfers

**Forrest Gochenour**, highway technician, from Council Bluffs-south garage to Missouri Valley garage; **Karmella Heuer**, from driver's license supervisor 2 to public service supervisor 3, within Driver Services; **Tracey Kingsley**, materials technician 3, within Materials

### Retirements

**Keith Anderson**, design technician, Design; **Peggy Baer**, public service executive 4, Rail Transportation; **Bruce Chrystal**, engineering operations technician, Dyersville field staff; **Ronald Hildreth**, equipment operator senior, Storm Lake garage; **Carol Hogue**, compliance officer 2, Policy and Legislative Services; **Conrad James**, highway technician associate, De Soto garage; **Kerry Kirkpatrick**, motor vehicle commander, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Rodney Larsen**, transportation planner 4, District 2 Office; **Thomas McKay**, construction technician senior, Mount Pleasant construction; **Robert Miller**, highway technician associate, Adair garage; **Ronald Schwebke**, highway technician associate, Highway Helper; **Dennis Smith**, transportation engineer manager, Design; **Dennis Svoboda**, construction technician, Cedar Rapids construction; **Barbara Wahl**, highway technician associate, Grinnell garage

Correction: In the August edition of *INSIDE*, the following transfers were listed incorrectly. **Russell Helle**, mechanic, Waterloo garage to highway technician, Manchester garage; **Kenneth Peterson**, mechanic, Martensdale garage to highway technician, Osceola garage

## Service Awards

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for September 2008

### 45 Years

**Edward Soucek**, Design

### 40 Years

**Rodney Halverson**, Local Systems; **Daniel Kopplin**, New Hampton construction

### 35 Years

**Connie Page**, Director's Office; **Duane Prange**, Allison garage; **Steven White**, Davenport construction; **James Yanak**, Sioux City materials

### 30 Years

**Russell Abbott**, Davenport garage; **Susan Brekke**, Equipment Services; **Steven Furness**, Hanlontown garage; **Zoeann Kramer**, Rail Transportation; **Steven Peters**, Dubuque garage; **Hayder Salehoglu**, Cedar Rapids materials; **Beth Schroder**, District 4 maintenance; **Rhonda Wernecke**, Driver Services; **Steve Wood**, Washington garage

### 25 Years

**Jimmie Andrews**, Urbana garage; **Timothy Kohler**, Waterloo garage; **Lavonne Mahin**, District 3 paint crew; **Armin Martin**, Maintenance; **Brian Miller**, Waterloo garage; **Kenneth Morrow**, District 5 Office; **William Pusateri**, Location and Environment; **Tom Wells**, Information Technology Division

### 20 Years

**Jon Holland**, Design; **Troy Strum**, Information Technology Division; **Jeffrey Utter**, Manchester construction

### 15 Years

**Mark Funnell**, Transportation Data; **David Harms**, Marshalltown garage; **Jana Moreland**, Finance; **Mark Rosenbeck**, Adair garage

### 10 Years

**Ronald Harris**, Burlington garage; **Charles Luvaas**, Document Services; **Amanda Martin**, Systems Planning; **Patrick O'Donnell**, Mason City garage; **Dawn Parker**, Mount Pleasant construction; **Brian Smith**, Design

### 5 Years

**Anthony Hildreth**, District 1 Office; **Michael Lang**, Procurement and Distribution; **Jana Pettinger**, Fort Dodge DL station; **Hale Strasser**, Information Technology Division

## Bob on wheels

**F**ormer Iowa DOT equipment operator Bob Briggs was injured while on active duty in Iraq in April 2005. Bob retired from the DOT, but he and his wife, Michelle, and their kids, Ashlea and Cody, keep the folks in southeast Iowa updated. Here's the latest from the Briggs family.

In May 2008, Bob rode 43 miles in the Faces of America Bike ride to raise money for injured veterans and their families. He met Tim Dale, who rode beside Bob, helping him along the way. Tim was so blown away by Bob's dedication to his recovery that Tim decided to purchase a specially adaptive trike so Bob could enjoy freedom away from his limitations.

While Bob isn't strong enough for RAGBRAI quite yet, he loves his new trike. He says he's training for next year's statewide ride. "I'm going to be riding every day," said Bob.



(top photo) Bob Briggs (left trike) on his new ride.

(bottom photo) Tim Dale (upper right) gives Bob Briggs a little assistance on a recent bike ride.



# 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, at 515-239-1314 or e-mail [tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov).

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District 4	<b>Marlene Jensen</b> , Atlantic	712-243-3355
District 5	<b>Brenda Hadley</b> , Fairfield	641-472-6142
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**On the cover:** September is a great time to get out and enjoy the beautiful Iowa weather on one of our many recreational trails.

# Charlie's trip to Burma

**O**n a good day, the citizens of Yangon, Myanmar, might have electrical power for a few hours. After Cyclone Nargis hit the small country May 2, life became even more difficult for the 55 million citizens of this desperately poor country.

Myanmar, still known to most Westerners by its original name of Burma, is home to a majority population claiming to be Buddhists. But the Christian population is growing, and Charlie Purcell, assistant director of the Office of Local Systems, recently visited Burma to help train pastors.



*Charlie Purcell, third from the right, traveled to Burma to help train pastors.*

Purcell, a first-time traveler to Burma, accompanied Steve Larson, an investment counselor from Ames who has been making several trips to the country each year for nearly 20 years to teach pastors and deliver Bibles and other supplies to Burma's churches.

On their way to Burma, Purcell and Larson had stopped in Tokyo, when Cyclone Nargis struck Burma, killing approximately 130,000 people, mainly from the country's southeastern Irrawaddy Delta region. Purcell said, "Although the cyclone devastated parts of the country, most of the Asho Chin (a Burmese tribal group) pastors we were scheduled to train had already traveled from their homes to Yangon, and they wanted to continue with the training. It is very difficult for these people to travel. They do not have much in the

way of financial resources and the country's leaders watch the people's movements very carefully. It would have been disappointing to them if we had not continued with our trip, so Steve and I went on to Burma."

When Purcell and Larson reached Burma, the cyclone damage was being addressed with machetes and hand saws. "We did notice a few chain saws," said Purcell, "But most of the clearing was being done by hand. These are people very accustomed to not having power and being resourceful in finding supplies they need to survive. There is a mix of conditions in Yangon. You might see a thatched roof hut with a satellite dish or an ox cart driver talking on a cell phone. It's a very strange sight. In Yangon, the damage was not critical like it was in the Delta region, but the inability to get materials to make repairs is very difficult since there is no insurance and most people are desperately poor."

After a week of training 25 Asho Chin church leaders in Yangon, Purcell and Larson traveled north to a compound built by the churches to help men addicted to opium. Purcell said, "Opium addiction is a huge issue because about 70 percent of men use the drug. The program is voluntary, but fairly successful."

Other areas where the churches are helping are preschools and meals for poor children. "The kids are taught English and fed every day," said Purcell. There aren't many public schools available to them, and many of them may not have the resources to eat everyday, so having the church-sponsored schools is a great benefit."

While the government-supported religion of Burma is Buddhism, the ruling military junta allows Christians some freedoms, but monitors professed Christians carefully and persecutes them regularly. Purcell explained, "They are not against the doctrines of Christianity, but the politics



*Burmese road construction*

of the region call for complete control by the military leaders, none of whom are Christian. It is very difficult to be a Christian in Burma."

While traveling the roads of Burma, Purcell was able to observe some of the primitive road construction techniques used in the country. For example, much of the subbase and aggregates are produced on the construction site using nothing more than small hammers or sledges. Sometimes political prisoners are used to perform the work. Work zone traffic control devices and other safety features are almost non-existent. "Driver beware" seems to sum up the country's approach to roadway safety. In general, the quality of roads is very poor. Even the major cross-country roads are usually only about 20 feet wide and constructed of compacted aggregate with a seal coat of asphaltic material. Most of the country's infrastructure was constructed by the British during World War II, and little improvements have been made since.

Following their successful trip to the northern regions of the country, Purcell and Larson set off on the two-day trip back to the U.S. After the long trip, they were exhausted but otherwise arrived in good health and spirits. Purcell may accompany Larson on future trips to continue the work of further establishing the churches in Burma.

*Background: The U Bein Bridge over Lake Taungthaman, the longest (1.2 km) teak span in the world.*