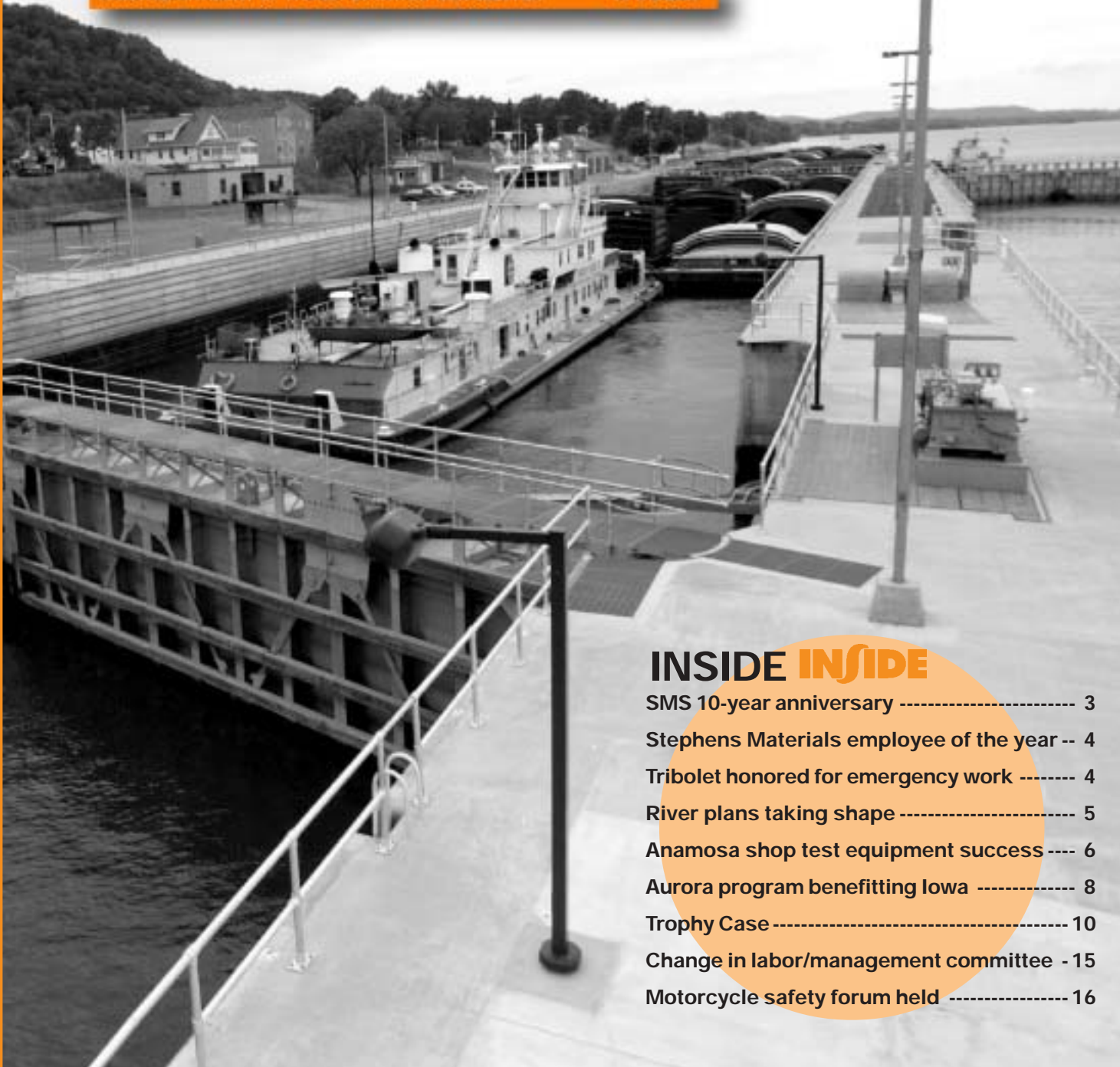


INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2006



INSIDE **INSIDE**

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From my view

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



Who do you hold responsible for morale in your work unit?

Not every DOT workplace environment is the same. Some are much more upbeat and positive than others. There's a shop you'll read about later in INSIDE that seems to be a very positive work environment.

Why is that? In the Anamosa shop employees welcome challenges and find ways to make new ideas come to life, which encourages them down the road. The employees in this shop give all the credit to their coworkers, supervisor and district staff for creating the kind of environment where communication and experimentation with new ideas is welcomed, and every experience is used to promote continued learning. When you read this article you'll see how a "can do" attitude enhances the workplace for everyone.

Working together to improve your workplace might put the participants in an uncomfortable position at first, especially if you're not accustomed to this type of dialog. Open, honest communication — not a gripe session, but a discussion of ideas and solutions — can benefit every employee in the work unit for years to come.

Even great work situations can be improved. The question is, whose responsibility is it to make adjustments? I feel strongly both employees and supervisors are responsible to do whatever it takes to improve the work environment.

Here are some tips I found on a Web site called Fast Company that might help you engage employees and involve everyone in the process of improving morale. This approach may work for you, or it may not, but I think we can all learn from this advice.

Whatever method you choose, improving morale isn't easy or quick, but with a little effort from every employee we can improve the overall work environment for all of us.

Communicate to assess the issues

Communication is key. The manager or employee should ask for a one-on-one meeting to talk honestly about what each of you has or hasn't done recently to improve your workplace environment. Talk about actions each of you could take to increase workplace satisfaction. Here are a few "yes" or no questions an employee can ask to get the process started.

- I've carefully evaluated and listed (in detail) what I love about work and what I don't.
- I've looked at my latest performance review and identified a step I could take to improve.
- I've clearly evaluated my role in a workplace dilemma or dissatisfaction.
- I've identified what is possible and what isn't, given this organization's culture, leadership or work rules.
- I've taken a risk and talked to people who might be able to help me.
- I've tried something new.

Help employees ask for what they want

Countless employees say they would rather quit their jobs than ask for what they want. What if a supervisor could give them a handy guide to asking? Maybe then they would ask, rather than leave when they're not getting what they want and need. Here are a few "asking" tips supervisors and managers can share with employees.

- Consider who, when and how you'll ask. Is it the boss who holds the key to your request? Is Friday afternoon a good time to ask? Is it best to ask in person, by E-mail or phone?
- Identify the barriers and think about the "work-arounds." What's in the way of your getting what you want? Create a list of possible ways to overcome those barriers.
- Find a WIIFT (What's In It For Them?). Do not go asking until you can think of at least one benefit for your request grantor. Will you be more productive or engaged if he or she says yes? Will customers or team members benefit? Will you save time or money? You get the idea.

If supervisors and managers fail to encourage it, many of our good people will fail to ask. They will simply move on. *(Adapted with permission from www.fastcompany.com.)*

A decade of dedication

In the early 1990s, highway safety programs were run by various offices within the DOT, by the Iowa Department of Public Safety through the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, and other community and regional groups, but there was not a centralized point of attack to reduce the number of Iowans killed on our roadways each year.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) mandated that each state develop a safety management system (SMS). The legislation was visionary, but seriously lacking directives for the states. By mid-1994 Iowa DOT employees Fred Walker and Walt McDonald had gathered a group together to begin crash-related data analysis and find a starting point for Iowa's initial safety coalition. This group included Mike Laski, director of the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) and other safety professionals. Primary staff support for SMS for the first five years was provided by Joyce Emery and Tim Simodynes from the DOT with assistance from Bob Thompson of GTSB.

By 1996 the federal mandate from ISTEA had been removed and many states' safety coalitions dissolved. Because the Iowa group remained committed to highway safety, they decided to continue this multidisciplinary, multi-jurisdictional group of leaders interested in highway safety under the banner of the Iowa Safety Management System. At that time the group realized that expanding the success of the collaborative initiative that was begun years earlier would hinge on the collection and analysis of all types of safety data.

During the development of SMS, several other partners were

brought in to enhance the vision of the group. The Federal Highway Administration, the Iowa departments of Public Health, Education, Elder Affairs, additional offices in the departments of Transportation and Public Safety, AARP, several law enforcement groups and others participate in identifying and pursuing the group's safety goals.

In 2001 SMS members compiled the Iowa SMS Toolbox of Highway Safety Strategies to identify, implement and evaluate opportunities for highway safety improvement. This very practical book was endorsed by Iowa's governor and 11 other state and federal agency leaders, and has since been used nationwide as a model for similar efforts.

The group has also facilitated several forums and public education efforts to address specific highway safety issues such as older drivers, younger drivers and motorcycle safety.

Diverse projects funded by the group include a speed limit task force, deer crash coalition, school bus video camera pilot, bicycle education, crash characteristics/location analysis, and an Emergency Response Information System (ERIS), pilot among other initiatives.

Tom Welch, SMS committee chairman and the DOT's state traffic engineer from the Office of Traffic and Safety, said, "As a group we weren't accomplishing as much as we thought we needed to because SMS was something we all did above and beyond our regular jobs. It was a commitment we all made, but not a job responsibility. With the workloads piling up, sometimes there just wasn't enough time to focus on SMS."

The group got a huge boost in 1999 when a full-time SMS program manager was hired at the



Former DOT employees Ian MacGillivray (left) and Harold Schiel (right) talk about the early days of SMS at a meeting Feb. 17.

DOT. Mary Stahlhut has been the heart and soul of SMS ever since. "Mary has done remarkable things with the group since she started managing it in 1999," said Welch. "I don't think any of us dreamed we could have accomplished so much and serve as a role model nationally."

Jim Green with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Kansas City office says, "When someone asks me who they should call about safety data and strategies, I tell them to call Iowa. This is the most mature and well-respected group of its kind in the country."

Welch says, as much as they've accomplished, there's still much to be done. "We really have to take this to the next level and involve more local agencies since 50 percent of the fatal crashes in Iowa are on secondary and local roads."



Ron Stephens

Materials employee of the year

“I thought they were joking,” said Ron Stephens, materials technician 3 in the special investigations section. As it turns out, Stephens’ coworkers were very serious as they named him Materials employee of the year.

Stephens, a 19-year veteran of the Office of Materials, began his career in the special investigations section. He then transferred to soils and the machine shop before returning to special investigations in 2002.

During those 19 years in Materials, Stephens says he’s learned a lot from some great people. “When I was first in this section in 1986, I’d watch the older guys and learn how to fix things,” he said. “Once I left and the older guys retired, the newer people didn’t know as much about the equipment and how to keep it running. Even when I was in the machine shop, I’d come back over here and help out.”

His knowledge of the very specialized, one-of-a-kind equipment in the special investigations unit earned Stephens the employee of the year honor for 2004.

Three nominations for this award listed Stephens as the most deserving recipient. One says that Stephens, “embodies the ideals of this award, exceptional work, positive attitude, respect among his peers, and knowledge of his field.”

The other two nominations list Stephens’ work that has saved the department thousands of dollars that would have been spent to repair equipment if he had not had the knowledge to complete the work in-house. One nomination states, “By our computations, he has saved this lab almost \$40,000 in work and repairs to equipment. If you removed only Ron from the special investigations unit, none of those repairs would have been done in-house. His work, time, effort, and vast mechanical ability has proven invaluable to this section on many occasions and should be acknowledged by the whole lab.”

Stephens was acknowledged by the entire lab at an awards lunch Jan. 24. He credits the new challenges of working on this unique equipment as a reason he still likes his job after 19 years. “That is my favorite part,” he commented with a smile.

Janet Tribolet

Honored for exceptional service



Phil Barnes, FHWA Division administrator, and Kevin Mahoney, DOT Highway Division director, congratulate Janet Tribolet on a job well done.

Nearly every year Iowans suffer natural disasters that often cause considerable damage to roads in the state. Although the floods of 1993 often come to mind, floods and tornados cause damage in some Iowa county every year. The federal government often supplies disaster relief funding for federal-aid roads. Tracking those projects and the funds allocated to them is a huge task, and one that was not accomplished in the most efficient manner until last year.

Janet Tribolet, accountant 2 in Finance, was charged with tracking the federal dollars coming through the DOT to pay for disaster aid. Tribolet developed a database to track the dollars and individual project sites. The information she gathers goes far beyond her needs and has become an invaluable tool for Federal Highway Administration employees, DOTers in the offices of Maintenance and Local Systems, and others needing information on disaster-relief efforts.

Mississippi and Missouri River updates

Iowa is blessed to have two “coasts,” the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. These two coasts are an economic and environmental resource of enormous proportion for our state.

Nearly 500 miles of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers along Iowa’s borders are open for commercial navigation and provide safe, efficient and effective transportation for more than nine million tons of Iowa products, primarily agriculture production. These river gateways provide access to the extensive United States’ 12,000-mile inland waterway system, with ports throughout the country and ultimately the world. More than 70 percent of U.S. corn and soybean exports move on the river system through the Gulf of Mexico and on to foreign markets.

There are 69 barge terminals along Iowa’s coasts, 61 on the Mississippi and eight along the Missouri. These ports and terminals provide jobs and support Iowa communities and industries dependent on river transportation.

Iowa’s two coasts are also a growing recreational revenue resource. On the Upper Mississippi River system alone, an estimated \$1 billion is spent annually for recreational activities. The two rivers are home to countless fish and birds, and are major waterfowl flyways. The rivers are not only a major attraction for wildlife, but also for people. Tourism along the Upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers is a growing component of the economy.

Over the years, river states like Iowa have come to realize that protection of the resource, for both environmental and economic purposes, needs to be a major focus for both rivers. Both rivers have had extensive study over the past decade and stakeholders are working to compromise on the best system-wide programs to ensure a successful future for the Mississippi and Missouri.

Mississippi River Plan

The Rock Island District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently completed a system-wide study of the navigation facilities on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway. The result of the study is a “dual purpose integrated plan” to guide management of the Upper Mississippi River over the next 50 years. The plan calls for investing \$2.4 billion in navigation improvements, including five new locks on the Mississippi and a \$5.3 billion plan for ecosystem restoration. Management of the system is to be through an integrated, collaborative and adaptive approach by all involved.

2003 Waterborne Commerce – Iowa

Commodity	Total Tons (Shipped and received)	% of total
Coal	1,616,187	11
Grain	8,376,540	55
Fert/Chem	749,899	5
Other	4,433,480	29
TOTAL	15,176,106	

Implementation of the plan will require Congressional authorization and funding. The study report has been presented to the Bush Administration and Congress with a request for authorization and funding, but to date no legislation has been acted upon.

Missouri River Plan

The Missouri River mainstem reservoir system consists of six dams and reservoirs that can hold a maximum of 74.3 million acre-feet (MAF) of water. This system is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the authorized purposes of navigation, flood control, irrigation, hydropower, water supply, water quality, recreation, and fish and wildlife management. Operation of the system is through the storage and then the release of water based on guidelines established in a Master Water Control Manual. Each year an operating plan is developed using the master manual guidelines and forecasts of system inflows. After many years of study and debate, the Master Water Control Manual was updated.

However, a drought has persisted for the past six years in the basin and storage in the reservoir system is at the lowest levels since the project was constructed, at 35 MAF. As such, major water supply and control issues developed between the upstream and downstream states, and between various water users. Upstream states need water for irrigation, recreation, and fisheries management, and want more

Making it work



Anamosa shop employees from left: Al Oberbroeckling, Joe Seeley, Ron Stuzel (District 6 mechanic), Brien Keltner, Jeff Switzer, John Tasker, Russ Brown, Dave Janssen and Bill Schmidt. Not pictured are Mike English, Lloyd Henderson and Cindy Patchinger.

Better, faster, cheaper --- when these buzzwords are used to describe a new way of performing a task, the thought on the minds of many skeptics is --- prove it.

The proof for two pieces of experimental equipment is coming from work done over the winter in the Anamosa garage.

The Flow Boy

The first piece of equipment, a Flow Boy trailer designed to increase capacity of both liquid and dry materials, is being tested with new dispersment tools, including zero-velocity spray nozzles and a conveyor belt for more accurate delivery of dry materials. This Flow Boy is also being tested to increase rock-hauling capacity for edge rutting.

“With this test, we wanted to use parts we already had to avoid renting equipment, and we used a lot of pieces off other equipment to keep the cost down,” said Brien Keltner, Anamosa’s mechanic and a member of the statewide Winter Equipment Committee. “The committee came up with the idea of using the Flow Boy. Back at the shop, we took that idea and kept adding features from there. We’re

using a 1988 tractor to pull it, and we put a refurbished plow and lightweight wing on the truck.”

Budget was a major concern for Highway Maintenance Supervisor Russell Brown. “We had \$30,000 to work with. For that, we now have a piece of equipment I think we can use in 95 percent of our winter storms and then in five minutes switch it over and use it for edge rutting. It’s going to be a year-round tool for us, but we’ll have to prove its worth before we look at getting a new truck to pull it.”

The Flow Boy testing examined lowering brake maintenance costs associated with damage from material when it is dispersed between the truck and trailer. The material gets into the brakes of the trailer decreasing their effective life. The Flow Boy releases snow- and ice-fighting liquids and granular material from the rear of the trailer, which significantly reduces the amount of residual that collects in the trailer brakes.

Another successful addition to the trailer is the brine tank designed by Milo Nelson from the repair shop in Ames. Keltner says the tank is easy to slip in and out of the trailer and increases liquid

capacity to 2,000 gallons. Modifications in the tank are expected this summer that will increase the liquid capacity to approximately 2,700 gallons and, when combined with approximately 15 tons of salt, the trailer will be able to cover many miles of roadway without a refill.

Adequate facilities are important to the success of the project. Brown said, “One of our equipment operators, Bill Schmidt, has the brine mixing station set up so that loading the trailer is efficient and easy. That’s one of the keys for this to work. We can load liquid and granular material at the same time. Our facility also has a two-inch water line for faster brine production. That also helps decrease liquid load times since brine can be produced quickly. Our facility is set up to handle this very well.”

Feb. 8 was the first run for the fully equipped Flow Boy. “Many people lost bets that night,” said Keltner, who was the first to drive the vehicle in winter operations. “Some people were just sure it was going straight into the ditch, but it actually worked pretty well. Nothing works 100 percent right off-the-bat, but I trusted it enough to go out alone on a four-lane.”

The trailer has since been used in every snow operation this winter. Jeff Switzer, who has driven the unit in four or five storms, says, “It is a little different, but it’s not a hazard. It always

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Making it work

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takes a little more effort when you're pulling a trailer."

With spring coming, the Anamosa shop employees are looking forward to edge rutting with the Flow Boy. "With job sharing we go down to four operators in the summer," said Brown. "This trailer will triple the capacity of our other trucks and help the operators we have be much more efficient."

High-speed truck

A second vehicle was also tested this winter in Anamosa. An extra-heavy-duty truck was fitted with a 12-foot down-pressure plow, a Monroe zero velocity spreader, a high-speed underbody, and a new design in winter tailgate that incorporates the brine tank. Behind the truck is a 2,700-gallon tank pulled on a trailer built at the Anamosa shop. The truck is designed to run at speeds of up to 42 miles per hour (mph), much faster than a normal speed of 20-30 mph for a snowplow engaged in winter operations.

"Most crashes with snowplows are rear-end collisions because motorists don't realize how slow a snowplow moves," said Brown.

"The ability to travel at higher speeds should reduce the number of motorists running into us."

Attitude is everything

Ron Stutzel, District 6 mechanic, supplied many of the additions to the test equipment. "I know if I bring something here to be tested, the operators are willing to do what it takes to conduct thorough tests. Not every new idea works, but if something fails, I know it wasn't for lack of effort."

"We're not afraid to try new things," said Schmidt, who usually operates the high-speed test vehicle. "Russ allows us to do this, Brien supports the projects and Ron is very good at documenting the testing."

"We like to stay ahead of the game in District 6," Stutzel added. "The district staff, Gretchen Gresslin and Ed McDermott in



The rear of this Flow Boy trailer has been outfitted with experimental dispersement equipment.

particular, allow us the time we need to do this right. They understand it could benefit everyone in the long run."

Making it work
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The Winter Equipment Committee has representatives from each district with the mission to review all current equipment and equipment practices used by the Iowa Department of Transportation in snow and ice operations. They also investigate and evaluate new equipment/practices and develop custom equipment to remove snow and ice effectively, efficiently and safely.

The test equipment on this truck will allow it to perform winter operations at up to 42 miles per hour.



We're in this together

In an effort to find more effective ways to tackle common roadway maintenance issues during harsh winter weather, snowfighters across the United States, Canada and Sweden banded together in 1996 to form Aurora.

This international group shares information and researches new technologies surrounding roadway weather information systems (RWIS) and weather forecasting for surface transportation. Iowa DOT current and former employees have been instrumental in the success of this program from the beginning. Leland Smithson, formerly with the DOT and now working with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), was a founding member. In recent years Dennis Burkheimer, winter operations administrator, has been involved with the group, and now Tina Greenfield, a recent addition to the Office of Maintenance, has begun working with Aurora projects.

Aurora's members include transportation agencies in 10 U.S. states, two Canadian provinces and the Swedish Road Administration. By pooling funds from all 13 members, research projects are conducted to enhance the effectiveness of all groups. Three times

a year, Aurora members meet to set the agenda for RWIS research. Selected initiatives are led by member agencies and managed by committees of Aurora members.

When Aurora was formed, the following goals were established:

- to provide and/or improve RWIS information dissemination to both transportation providers and end users
- to improve the efficiency of maintenance operations, primarily costly winter maintenance activities
- to support and enhance information dissemination activities in the rural environment
- to reduce traffic congestion delays in urban areas due to adverse weather-related conditions
- to aid in the development of seamless maintenance operations and information dissemination RWIS programs
- to develop initiatives which assist public agencies in deploying road and weather information systems technologies
- to encourage greater cooperation and information exchange between transportation agencies and the meteorological community
- to support development of alternative uses of RWIS

Greenfield's emphasis has been on two Aurora projects. The first deals with a new hot plate snow gauge that provides more accurate measurements of snowfall. Greenfield's second project involves laser road surface sensors that use infrared technology to distinguish different types of precipitation on the roadway surface. As a meteorologist, Greenfield's scientific background brings a new element of expertise to Aurora and the DOT.

For the Iowa DOT, Greenfield is now also charged with maintaining our 53 RWIS sites and providing weather services to support the department's winter operations program. The RWIS sites feed into a computer database that can be viewed in a graphic format on www.dotweatherview.com. While this is our specific RWIS application, the general RWIS-sharing from Aurora extends into other areas beyond our current information collection system, as evidenced by the Iowa DOT leading the research on two Aurora projects.

Through quarterly meetings and monthly teleconferences, members keep informed about progress on Aurora initiatives and other RWIS-related activities around the world, share their agencies' accomplishments, and learn solutions for common in-the-field problems. Because current members include international leaders in RWIS research, technology and deployment, many of whom are also affiliated with AASHTO's Snow and Ice Cooperative Program (SICOP) and other RWIS-related programs, the breadth and quality of information exchanged at these meetings is invaluable.

Inputs to these models would include information from stationary and mobile sensors and current state-of-the art meso-scale modeling techniques.

Information Dissemination Technologies

An important outcome of implementing RWIS is providing weather and road condition information to the public so informed traveling decisions can be made. Aurora partners are investigating current Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) traveler information efforts and identifying those by which weather and road condition information could be shared with the traveling public, as well as maintenance agencies.

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Equipment Evaluations

Aurora serves as an information exchange forum for program members to share results of evaluations of newly developed RWIS technologies. Economies of scale result as individual agencies test RWIS components on behalf of all program members.

Road Condition Monitoring

This area involves investigating technologies for the purposes of improved roadway monitoring. Data obtained from these sources is being utilized to improve the accuracy of road condition models, as well as for information dissemination purposes.

The Aurora Web site, aurora-program.org, lists the following areas of emphasis for the group.

Decision Support Systems

Within this area, Aurora partners are working to design and implement decision support systems that will transform weather and road condition data into easily understandable formats, such as color-coded graphical displays, to allow for informed decision-making capabilities.

Meso-scale Modeling

Activities in the area are targeted towards applying techniques developed at Environment Canada, the University of North Dakota, National Weather Service Forecast Systems Laboratory, and other partner agencies to support detailed weather situation assessment and short-term forecasts on particular highway links.

Standards and Architecture

This interest area involves complementing current activities being undertaken by member agencies in the development and promotion of standardized RWIS system specifications, protocols and architectures. Common design structures will reduce or eliminate proprietary systems, thus allowing for increased competition, reduced system cost and improved data transferability between state agencies. Specific architecture components that may be addressed include open communication standards and open hardware platforms.

Small-scale Modeling and Analysis

Activities in this area will determine the scope for further detailing of road / weather modeling to cover road sections of as little as 5 or 10 miles.

Making it work

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Schmidt said, "We see the benefits already. We have comments all the time from truckers about the effectiveness of this equipment."

"This is the type of equipment that could become very useful all over the state, but someone has to be willing to put a little extra effort into designing and testing it," said Brown. "Over in eastern Iowa, we have a good mix of four-lane and two-lane roads with both hilly and flat sections. It's the perfect testing ground. Our shop is a drive-through with doors on each side, which makes hooking up the trailers much easier. If we had a stacked shop, I don't think these would work half as well. We also have operators who are willing to put in that extra work backed by strong support from the District 6 staff and staff in Ames. Without all those things, I don't think these test projects would work as well as they do."

Keltner adds, "Especially for the Flow Boy, it's been a district-wide effort. We have great support from Ron Stutzel, the district mechanic, and Trent Sorgenfrey, the mechanic in Tipton, has helped out a lot. The other shops in our district have to pick up the slack for us when we are busy with the test equipment. We need their support to succeed."

Schmidt commented, "Others may think we're crazy," he said, "but we understand that keeping citizens safe is our responsibility and we see the benefits."

"Snow removal is our primary task," said Brown. "We need to accomplish that the best we can."

Keltner summed up the thoughts of the group in Anamosa, "It would be really easy to make this not work. But we all wanted it to work, so we made it work."



Trophy Case

Recent DOT Awards



Leopold Award to Bob Rye

Bob Rye, District 1 field services coordinator, recently received the Leopold Award from the Iowa Association of Naturalists and Iowa Conservation Education Council. The two groups are composed of professionals dedicated to promoting high quality conservation and environmental programs in Iowa.

Rye received the award for 37 years of working with Iowa conservation initiatives. From the early days as the first manager of the Springbrook Conservation Education Center to his position at the DOT directing the Urban Youth Corps program (which is administered by the agency), Rye's contributions to conservation education are known statewide.

The award was presented Jan. 15 at the Iowa Conservation Education Council's annual winter solstice workshop, which Rye has been attending since 1977.

The Iowa Concrete Paving Association held its annual meeting Feb. 3 in Des Moines. Four Iowa DOT projects were noted as "Blue Ribbon Award" winners.

The Manchester construction office won the State Roads category with a project on Iowa 151. The contractor on the project was Flynn Company, Inc.



(Front row, from left) Mark Gorton, Flynn Co.; **Bill Kirk**, (retired) District 6 materials; Jeff Flynn, Flynn Co. (Back row, from left) Mike Flynn, Flynn Co.; **Charlie Seeland**, Manchester constructor; Gary Hoffman, Flynn Co.

Des Moines construction was a winner in two separate categories, Traffic Management and Interstate Highways, for I-235 projects. The contractor for the project was Reilly Construction Co. and the subcontractor was Manatts, Inc.



(Front row, from left) Roger Ochs and Curt Manatt, Manatts, Inc.; (back row, from left) **Brian Burr**, District 1 materials; and Mark Adair, Manatts, Inc.

In the Divided Highway category, Sioux City construction took top honors for a project on Iowa 60. The contractor was Cedar Valley Corp.



(Front row from left) **Baron Hannah**, District 3 materials; Craig Hughes, Cedar Valley Corp.; **Darwin Bishop**, Sioux City construction; (Back row from left) **Shane Tymkowicz**, District 3 office; Todd Burch and Jim Heiserman, Cedar Valley Corp.; **Jeff Shelton**, Sioux City construction.

For the Large Industrial/Commercial Parking Lot category, the Britt construction office took home top honors for the Dows rest area building and parking. The engineering duties for this project were shared with Yaggy Colby Associates and the contractor was Allied Construction Co., Inc.



(Front row, from left) Mike Danburg, Yaggy Colby; Kevin Hurd, Rich Tynan and Brad LaBarge, Allied Construction Co. (Back row, from left) Kurt Rindels, Terry Luloff and Jeff Yost, Allied Construction Co.

Office of Materials awards annual Bravo Zulu and James Johnson prizes. Eight worthy recipients were honored with Bravo Zulu awards at a recent lunch ceremony.

The annual Bravo Zulu award winners are nominated by coworkers. Nominations can be for completing office projects or going above and beyond normal work duties. A committee of Materials employees then votes on the winners.



Ed Engle's efforts on the activity committee were noted.



Mohammad Mujeeb's dedication to the activity committee also earned him an award.



Bob Dawson was honored for his efforts to rewrite and improve aggregate specifications.



Bret Denekas' efforts on repairing and calibrating flexural strength test units, as well as learning and operating the Laser Lux traffic paint retroreflectometer to assist the Office of Maintenance, were noted in his award.



Dan Redmond accepted his award for working on the I-235 project, helping in the special investigations section and working with hot mix asphalt initiatives.



Kevin Shirley was honored for his efforts on the transition to the new sign sheeting retroreflectometer and the portable weigh scale calibrations.



John Kinney (left) and **Keith Sampson** (below left) were both awarded Bravo Zulu for making the lab a better place to work. They were specifically honored for helping with receiving, painting and cleaning.



Two James Johnson awards were given.

James Johnson awards are given to the Material employees who offered innovative suggestions or ideas that have been implemented into new programs.



Chris Anderson accepted her award for developing a first-class technical training program.



Mike Heitzman was honored for his efforts to develop and utilize foamed asphalt as an alternative rehabilitation strategy for Iowa.

Family Happenings

Driver Services Melanie Mathes



Grace, Hannah and Gavin Honkomp

Barbara Honkomp, driver's license clerk senior in the Spencer DL station, and her husband, Damion, are the proud parents of twins! Grace weighed in at 6 lbs. 6 ozs. and was 19.5 inches long. Brother Gavin weighed 5 lbs. 11 ozs. and was 19.2 inches long. The babies' big sister Hannah, 1 ½, is very excited!



Jamie Kilker, DL clerk in the Davenport DL station, and her husband, Steve, are new parents. Camden Steven arrived March 7 weighing 8 pounds. He was 20 inches long. Congratulations to the Kilkers!

Design Judy Lensing



Parker and Ty Choate

Jason Choate, design technician in photogrammetry, and his wife, Erika, are the proud parents of their second son. Ty Michael was born March 7 weighing 7 lbs. 8 ozs. and was 19.5 inches long. Ty joins big brother, Parker, 3 ½, at home. The boys' grandma, Sandie Choate, custodial worker, is very proud of her grandsons. Congratulations to the Choates!

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who donated time to me so I could recover from my surgery. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Pam Cook
Motor Carrier Services

In Memory

Gary James Chilton, 67, of Sioux City died Monday, Jan. 3, at a Sioux City hospital after being stricken at his home. Chilton worked as a maintenance management assistant in District 3



for almost 35 year before retiring in 2001. He was probably best known for his beard. In November 2003, he was invited to the World Championship Beard Contest in Carson City, Nev. He won the competition for the longest

beard. Chilton was a five-time champion at the Iowa State Fair in the longest beard category. In his last competition in 2004, his beard measured 45 inches. Chilton will be missed by his family and former coworkers at the DOT.

Iowa's coasts continued from page 5 of the water to be retained in the reservoirs for these uses. The downstream states, Iowa included, want water to flow to support navigation, recreation and fisheries downstream. Clouding these issues is the need to protect three endangered and threatened species and their habitat in and along the Missouri River. The Corps of Engineers has a difficult task at best in managing the system for all concerns.

Last year navigation on the Missouri was limited because of the uncertainty of water flows. The next two years may be similar and, unless the drought breaks, navigation may be precluded because of low water supply. The system could experience severe and significant negative impacts not only to navigation, but to the many other uses for the water.

For each of Iowa's coasts, continued dialog with upstream and downstream states and the federal agencies involved, is necessary to keep Iowa commodities and recreational activities flowing.



Income tax check-off

For the third year the DOT is supporting Keep Iowa Beautiful's tax check-off program. The DOT administers the funds made available for this program. For the 2003 tax year, \$67,423 in check-off funding was received. Approximately 70 percent of that money was awarded to 16 local projects. The remaining 30 percent will be used by Keep Iowa Beautiful for statewide programs.

DOT Program Administrator Kathy Ridnour said, "The Keep Iowa Beautiful initiative has received generous support from Iowa taxpayers over the past three years. As projects are completed, it becomes clear these generous contributions provide significant returns on the initial investment."

Local projects funded from the 2003 tax check-off are:

- Kiwanis Clubs of Ames;
- City of Cleghorn;
- Cleghorn Lions Club;
- River Action, Inc. (Davenport);
- Keep Scott County Beautiful;
- Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department;
- Iowa Recycling Association (Des Moines);
- Fairfield Beautification Commission;
- Spalding Catholic Middle/High School (Granville);
- Greenfield Chamber of Commerce/Main Street;
- Guttenberg River Front Development Task Force;
- Lansing Lions Club;
- Linn Grove – Wonders of Nature;
- Long Grove Park Board;
- Marshalltown Central Business District; and
- Mount Pleasant Treatment Center.

To support future Keep Iowa Beautiful projects, look for the check-off on your 2004 tax forms.

March crossword solution

Due to an abundance of articles this month, there will not be an April crossword puzzle.



PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Jan. 29 through Feb. 24, 2005.

New Hires

Leslie Blanchard, communications technician 2, Information Technology Division; **Rodney Weber**, driver's license clerk, Cedar Rapids DL station; **Lu Wilson**, secretary 2, District 2 Office.

Promotions

Kevin Bennigsdorf, from construction technician to construction technician senior, Cherokee construction; **Dale Harris**, from equipment operator, Allison garage, to materials technician 3, District 2 materials; **Joel Moret**, from equipment operator, Alton garage, to construction technician, Sioux City construction; **Shane Powers**, from equipment operator, Urbana garage, to equipment operator senior, Newhall garage; **Jared Raymer**, from equipment operator, Sioux City-Leeds garage, to construction technician, Sioux City construction; **Scott Robinson**, from equipment operator to equipment operator senior, Ames garage; **Esther Toms**, from construction technician to construction technician senior, Jefferson construction; **Zhaia Wineinger**, from clerk-advanced, Equipment Support, to secretary 1, Information Technology Division.

Transfers

None

Retirements

Jerome Tibbs, construction technician, Council Bluffs construction.

SERVICE AWARDS

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

40 Years

Clifford Dalbey, Materials.

35 Years

Roger Elliott, Fairfield garage; **Douglas Foster**, Davenport construction; **Gary Hood**, Location and Environment.

30 Years

Harold Busby II, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Debra Harris**, Motor Carrier Services; **Richard Hinderks**, Cedar Rapids garage; **Gerald Johnson**, Charles City garage; **Evelyn Mitchell**, Driver Services; **Kimberly Sheehy**, Manchester garage; **Dorothea Trotter**, Driver Services; **Mary Wheelock**, Employee Services.

25 Years

Lynn Berrier, Des Moines DL station; **Craig Eckhart**, Hanlontown garage; **Jeffrey Leyda**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

20 Years

Kirk Authier, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Lana Bruning**, Council Bluffs maintenance; **Linda Dilocker**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Michael Holl**, Equipment Support; **Jim Kelly II**, Contracts; **Greg Mize**, District 3 bridge crew; **Russell Pyle**, Newton interstate garage; **Robert Thelen**, Carroll garage; **Fred Theide**, Davenport interstate garage; **Richard Uherka**, Creston construction; **Linda Wild**, De Soto garage; **Roger Workman**, Information Technology Division; **Ronald Yarkosky**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

15 Years

None

10 Years

Donald Beine, Waverly garage; **Joshua Greenfield**, Information Technology Division; **Jason Holland**, Facilities Support; **Terri Hull**, Facilities Support; **Roger Maaland**, Emmetsburg garage; **Leverne Rohrberg**, Pacific Junction garage; **Dale Thompson**, Procurement and Distribution; **Tod Myron Wulff**, Charles City garage.

5 Years

Danielle Griggs, Construction; **Amy Hill**, Sioux City DL station; **Renee Jerman**, Policy and Legislative Services; **Randy Jones**, Repair Shop; **Michael Littlejohn**, Vehicle Services; **Sherri Naeve**, Clinton DL station.

35 YEARS
Iowa Department of Transportation



(Clockwise from above)
Gary Hood, Location and Environment;
Roger Elliott, Fairfield garage; **Douglas Foster**, Davenport construction.

Labor/management change

Three members of the central complex labor/management committee (LMC) changed. Management members Kevin Jones, Materials; and Lee Hammer, Facilities Support; and labor member Ted Daub, Repair Shop; have been replaced by Dena Gray-Fisher, Media and Marketing Services; and Mike Kennerly, Design; from management and Larry Moore, Repair Shop; from labor.

Jones and Hammer were presented with certificates of appreciation at the Feb. 15 meeting. Daub was absent, but received his certificate later. Sonjia Amensen, committee co-chair said of the retiring members, "All three have been valuable members to the committee and their past contributions are appreciated."



Lee Hammer, left, and Kevin Jones recently finished serving on the central complex labor/management committee.

Effective March 15 the central complex LMC committee roster is as follows:

Labor

Peggy Phipps (co-chair), Harry Fortney, Len Hill, Larry Moore, Dennis Olson and Tammy Warden-Lang

Management

Sonjia Amensen (co-chair), Dena Gray-Fisher, Mike Kennerly, Peggi Knight, Ron Otto and Lee Wilkinson

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 coworkers. For more information, contact Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services, 515-239-1314 or e-mail tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov.

Mark F. Wandro, Iowa DOT Director

Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Editor
 Lynn Purcell, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Desktop Publisher
 J. Cory Heintz, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Photographer
 Printing Staff, Office of Document Services, Printing



800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010 • 515-239-1372.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS ISSUE

Service Area	Correspondent	Phone
District 1	Lori Morris, Ames	515-239-1635
District 2	Lu Wilson, Mason City	641-423-7584
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

On the cover: The lock and dam at Bellevue are vital to Iowa's river transportation system.

Motorcycle safety forum

An Iowa motorcycle operator is six times as likely to die compared to other motorists involved in a crash, according to the Iowa Safety Management System (SMS). Motorcycle fatalities are on the rise nationally, while other vehicle-related fatalities are declining. The largest increases for fatal motorcycle crashes has been among motorcycle riders 40 and older.

Along with representatives of SMS lead agencies, including the Iowa departments of Transportation and Public Safety and the Federal Highway Administration, nearly 100 people from motorcycle rider and education groups, law enforcement and emergency services professionals gathered March 3 in West Des Moines to discuss the specifics of rider safety.

A sense of freedom and fellowship were noted by Kenneth Owen, a motorcycle rider and trainer, as reasons people are willing to take the risk of barreling down a roadway at 55 miles per hour with little between their bodies and the pavement. When it comes to motorcycles on the roadway, the very characteristics that make motorcycles fun to ride may be those that increase their crash risk.

Motorcycles are smaller and respond more quickly to roadway conditions or the operator's intent to change speed or direction. Other motorists don't consider how agile and vulnerable motorcycles can be or even notice motorcycles in traffic. Many in the group noted that they feel drivers are not cautious enough when it comes to watching for motorcycles. Several riders in the audience talked about close calls with motorists, especially those turning left who didn't pay close attention to who was sharing the road.

Jerry Roche of the FHWA (left) and another conference attendee examine the modulating headlamp on Iowa Gold Wing Rider Joe Pirillo's bike

Increasing driver awareness was discussed as a remedy. Jerry Roche of the FHWA explained ways engineers try to improve safety for motorists. Roche said, "Both new and experienced drivers need to train themselves to stay alert and notice important clues in traffic including seeing small motorcycles and judging their speed and actions."

Increasing motorcycle visibility is another strategy for improving motorcycle safety. Modulation alternates high and low beams in headlamps to help other motorists recognize motorcycles in a cluttered driving environment, and are legal for daytime use in Iowa. Roche commented, "We need to remind all drivers to watch for motorcycles, especially during Iowa's warmer seasons."

Toni Kerkove, Iowa Motorcycle Rider Education (MRE) program administrator, reported that Iowa's "rider coaches" train about 3,000 Iowa motorcyclists each year. "Motorcycle rider education for beginning and experienced riders is a great way for motorcyclists to enjoy the most fun and safety from their riding experience. With more of our 'baby boomer' generation coming back into motorcycle ridership and buying more powerful cycles, there is a new group of riders who can benefit from tips and skill-building in these classes." Program information is available at IowaMRE.com.

Riders also agreed that driver behavior isn't likely to change quickly, so they need to take responsibility for their own safety. Iowa statistics show that 50 percent of **fatal** motorcycle crashes do not involve another vehicle. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics, almost half of the motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2003 had a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher.

Forum attendees agreed that raising drinking and riding awareness, updating beginner driver education, getting more riders to take the experienced rider course, training emergency responders in rider first-aid, promoting the use of helmets and other protective riding gear, and increasing rider visibility were all important efforts to ensure safer motorcycle travel.

"The most effective way to provide a safer roadway environment for drivers and motorcyclists is to work together," said Mary Stahlhut, the DOT's SMS project manager. "When we get groups like this together in one room to discuss the issues, the conversations go a long way to foster an understanding of what needs to be done and what can be accomplished when we all do our part to improve motorcycle safety."

