

INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2004



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From my view

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



Providing a complete transportation system includes so much more than most people outside the DOT realize. In this column I would like to recognize the accomplishments of those DOT employees involved in assuring Iowans that the non-highway modes of

transportation are addressed in the most appropriate manner. Although this is a condensed version of the accomplishments of these offices, I want every Modal Division employee to know the work they do is greatly appreciated.

Over the past year office staff have been working with transit managers to review the distribution formula for state and federal funds. This ongoing process aims to ensure fair and equitable distribution of funding to each of Iowa's 35 designated transit agencies.

Two additional studies geared to assist transit agencies are in the planning stages. The first is a statewide transit facility needs study, which will help local transit systems and the state anticipate future capital funding requirements. The second is an urban transit intelligent transportation systems (ITS) study to look at how each urbanized area can integrate technology into Iowa's rural ITS network, which is currently underway.

New information tools, including an updated Web site (see page 6) and an overhaul of the way inventories are kept, are also in the implementation phase. Watch upcoming issues of INSIDE for more details on the efforts to automate much of the inventory work done by this office.

Modal Division

Office of Public Transit

Building relationships defines a great deal of the work done in the Office of Public Transit. Office staff work closely with the Iowa Public Transit Association (IPTA), a group made up of transit agency managers and others interested in transit, on a number of projects geared to improve the image of public transit in Iowa, and to make the operation of the state's transit agencies more efficient and effective.

Enhancing the image of public transit in Iowa has been the main focus of the Office of Public Transit's marketing efforts this past year. One of the first steps to increase public awareness was to educate the public on the availability of public transit in Iowa and the important role public transit plays in connecting people to communities and services.

To this end, information from a consumer survey was used to put together brochures, news releases, television commercials, newspaper advertising, children's activity books, and a mobile information booth.

Teaming up again with IPTA, office staff were involved in a number of training sessions in 2003 including classes on personnel policies, management, train-the-trainer passenger assistance techniques (mobility aid securement, passenger restraint, sensitivity training, and risk of operator injury), Braun lift maintenance, and vehicle air conditioning repair.

Office of Rail Transportation

Looking toward the future and increasing customer focus have been the emphasis of the Office of Rail Transportation in 2003. Office staff have worked with the railroads and rail shippers to identify how rail will fit into the future transportation system of Iowa. This effort will result in an updated Rail System Plan to guide future department investments in the rail system. The office has expanded public awareness of the importance of rail transportation through presentations to groups such as Kiwanis, League of Cities, Iowa Association of Counties, and the Professional Developers of Iowa. A redesigned Web site (see page 6) now allows for all application materials to be available online.

Several projects have been completed through the office's track improvement programs. No state General Fund money has been appropriated for track improvement, but federal loan repayments and reallocated money have allowed the office to fund five economic development projects and two track improvement projects. Staff continues to monitor existing projects and focus on track improvements that allow the railroads to haul heavier cars.

Office staff are also actively involved in track inspection of the Iowa rail system and preparation of agreements for the highway division, where highway construction projects involve railroad right-of-way. The office has also conducted process reviews of the federal grade crossing safety and state surface repair programs. The Office provided funding for 25 safety

projects, such as installation of new or improved signals, and 70 surface repair projects.

Each of the completed projects has provided improved rail transportation service for the motoring public, cities and counties, and manufacturers and producers.

Office of Aviation

Although funding for aviation programs remained very tight in 2003, the Office of Aviation, working with state and federal agencies, was able to accomplish a number of goals.

In 2003, \$1.6 million in state infrastructure grants were distributed to all commercial and 22 general aviation airports for FY 2004 hangar, terminal and fuel facilities. In addition, the Aviation Weather Observing System program continues to be maintained and data transmitted for pilots and others to use. The runway marking and emergency equipment programs may be reinstated pending release of funding.

Forty-eight Iowa airports, including 41 general aviation airports, received grants for more than \$33 million in federal Airport Improvement Program funds during federal fiscal year 2003. General aviation (GA) airports received \$17.3 million, a substantial increase from the \$5.2 million received in fiscal year 2002.

Currently office staff is working with a consultant to update the State Aviation System Plan, sponsored with a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration. Goals and performance measures have been established, and data gathering has begun. Progress through the year-long process can be viewed on the office Web page iawings.com. Input on any portion of the system plan activities is encouraged.

Another FAA grant allowed the office to update the Pavement Management Program for airports. Pavement condition inspections were done at 35 airports in November and analysis is underway. Next year another third of the airports will be completed.

To better serve the aviation community and gain a better understanding of types of activity at Iowa's general aviation airports, office staff established a General Aviation Activity Log program. Activity log sheets can be found at general aviation terminals, pilot lounges and transition areas at airports around the state. Pilots are urged to fill out an activity log sheet each time they use an Iowa airport. The Office of Aviation will compile the information and share with the airports. The information will be used to get a better understanding of who is using the airports. In addition, pilots are given the opportunity to provide

comments on services and conditions. The log sheets will be collected through next September. This initiative has caught the attention of a national aviation publication and interest in other states' aviation offices.

Security has become an ever-increasing emphasis area for the aviation community. The Office of Aviation formed a partnership with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Moline hub this fall in an effort to strengthen communication between the Iowa DOT, TSA and GA airports to cooperatively gain a better understanding of GA security issues and needs. Staff from the Office of Aviation and TSA's Moline hub visited all 34 eastern Iowa GA airports under the Moline hub's territory. Through this initiative staff was able to collectively identify the security issues and provide input to TSA as they work to develop security guidelines. Staff look forward to expanding this initiative to the central region through the Des Moines TSA hub, and also on a national basis. They have forwarded this information to TSA officials in Washington, D.C., and the National Association of State Aviation Officials to share on a national level.

Marketing efforts have increased, partially due to this year being the "Centennial of Flight." The governor signed two aviation-related proclamations. The first proclaimed December 2002 as the "Kickoff Month for the Year-Long Celebration of the Centennial of Flight." The second proclaimed June 23, 2003, as "50 Flags to Kitty Hawk Day." Shane Van de Voort of Pella was chosen by the Experimental Aircraft Association to be the pilot to fly an official Iowa flag and proclamation to Kitty Hawk, N.C., that will become a permanent part of the Wright Brothers Memorial.

Office of Aviation staff continues to work with the entire aviation community to increase the awareness of programs and economic opportunities provided to Iowans through their local airports.

River Transportation

Modal Division employees serve in a liaison role with the Army Corps of Engineers on matters dealing with the Upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers. As a member of both the Missouri and Upper Mississippi River Basin associations, staff works with other groups and industry tied to river transportation to resolve issues.

New solutions to blowing and drifting snow

Snow and ice removal in the form of new chemical compounds on roadways and other breakthroughs in technology have increased the efficiency of our crews during the winter, but one very low-tech innovation, snowfence, has become a valuable ally to reduce blowing and drifting problems.

In the past, equipment operators spent hundreds of hours installing temporary plastic or wood lathe snow fence beside roadways where snow is known to drift during winter storms.

"Installing the temporary snow fence is very labor-intensive and has to be installed before the snow flies," said Dennis Burkheimer, winter operations administrator. "With the recent change in duties of the field forces, many of the equipment operators are working on construction projects until winter weather begins. That doesn't leave much time to install temporary snow fence."

Although Burkheimer says temporary snow fence is still used on more than 80 miles of roadway each year, other less labor-intensive snowfence options have emerged over the last few years.

In the late 1980s garages in northwest and north central Iowa

experimented with a few local areas to see if leaving a few rows of corn in the field after harvest would help reduce blowing and drifting problems.

The DOT pays the farmers 50 cents per bushel above market value to leave standing corn in strategic positions to serve as snow fence. This year more than 34 miles of roadway at 110 standing corn sites were utilized. The Iowa Highway Research Board is testing different configurations of standing corn fence to come up with even more options.

"Each situation and location is different. The standing corn works very well," said Burkheimer, "but since most farmers rotate that crop with soybeans, we can only use the standing corn every other year. Our field folks continue to work with area farmers to identify areas that might benefit from standing corn snow fence."

For particularly tough areas where fighting drifts is a constant winter task, the DOT has developed and installed its own version of a permanent snow fence referred to as the Iowa Snow Fence.

The original wood and plastic permanent fence was developed in Wyoming and aptly named "Wyoming Fence." For the Iowa Fence the framework was modified so the fence would take up less room in the field and reduced the size to a six-foot fence. Burkheimer explained, "The Wyoming Fence has supports that stick out quite a ways into the field. Our version uses a vertical support system that takes up much less room and allows the farmer to plant a crop closer to the fence."

The DOT writes 10-year contracts with farmers for permanent fence and pays 50 cents per

linear foot to allow installation of the fence in areas where the snow has been historically difficult to manage. According to maintenance records, there is just over six-and-one-half miles of permanent fence installed this year.

But using these tried and true snow fence methods doesn't mean the DOT isn't looking for innovative ways to deal with particularly difficult spots. On U.S. 20 near Waterloo, Highway Maintenance Supervisor Russ Frisch had problems with drifting snow at a U.S. 20 interchange.

A small army of tetrapods now stands on the slope, ready to break up drifts as they blow across the landscape. Each tetrapod consists of four two-by-four inch boards cut in four-foot lengths and secured together by a metal rod.

"We haven't had enough snow yet this year to get a good idea of whether these are beneficial or not," said Bev Rust, garage operations assistant in Waterloo. "But we're excited about trying new ways to manage the snow in this area."

Another innovation in the works for testing on this slope at I-380 and U.S. 20 is a contraption called a vortex generator. Burkheimer says the device is designed to spin in the wind, creating greater wind velocity to keep the snow moving across the roadway. "It's our only technology not aimed at containing the snow, but instead driving it across the roadway."

From the old stand-by slat snowfence to the funky looking tetrapods and vortex generators, the Iowa DOT continues to work towards making winter driving on Iowa roadways safer for all motorists.

Tetrapods on U.S. 20 near Waterloo



Are you part of the problem?

In the past couple of months you've read in INSIDE about initiatives by the federal and state government to reduce the number of highway crash fatalities. The change in funding priority to those areas most susceptible to fatal crashes and emphasis on engineering changes are great first steps. "But without a change in driver behavior, the goal of one fatality per million miles traveled is nothing but a pipe dream," said Tom Welch, DOT safety engineer and chair of the Iowa Safety Management System.

One of the most important steps you can take to safeguard your life and that of your family members begins with a simple click. Fastening your seat belt and assuring that all passengers, including small children in appropriate safety seats, are properly secured would go a long way to reducing crash fatalities. According to Scott Falb of the Office of Driver Services, more than 85 percent of Iowans do buckle up. "But that 15 percent who do not wear seat belts represent more than 55 percent of crash fatalities," he said.

Distractions are another major area where drivers have a choice to make. We've heard a lot lately about the dangers of driving while holding a mobile phone. Many new "hands-free" devices are now on the market, but Falb said it's not necessarily the holding of the telephone that causes the distraction.

"Whether a person is using a hands-free phone or holding a cell phone, the main distraction is the mental involvement with carrying

"Although I think most people realize these are unsafe behaviors, it doesn't hit some people just how deadly they can be."

Scott Falb, Office of Driver Services



on a telephone conversation," he explained. "Although gripping the phone can cause physical limitations when driving, it's not necessarily the physical action that distracts the driver."

Cell phones are just the newest in a long line of distractions for drivers. Safety officials have long held that activities such as eating, tuning the radio or holding intense conversations with passengers can distract a driver. *Prevention Magazine* noted a Spanish study that found a 30 percent chance of not seeing hazards on the roadway if your hands are on the wheel, but your mind is engaged in a task besides driving.

Distractions can be a greater danger for younger drivers. Their lack of experience behind the wheel shows in crash statistics. The group of drivers most likely to be involved in a crash are those 16-19 years old. Recent strides in making driver education more uniform across the state and the restrictions imposed by Iowa's graduated driver licensing systems have come a long way in the last two years to limit the distractions of less experienced drivers until they've gained the experience they need to handle certain driving situations safely. "Parents can take this one step further by limiting the number of passengers in the vehicle with a less experienced driver," said Falb.

The group with the second highest crash rate are drivers over 70 years. Diminished mental capacity and physical changes of

aging have some older drivers at higher risk of involvement and less risk of survival in a crash. There are few things more difficult for family members to deal with than seeing a parent or grandparent unable to drive, especially when the older person doesn't realize he or she poses a danger behind the wheel.

Great strides in licensing have been achieved recently that allow limited driving privileges to older drivers, such as daytime and mileage limitations, but maintain a greater level of safety. The hard fact is most of us will reach a point where it is no longer safe to drive. Dealing with that loss of independence will be a struggle for every generation, but Falb says getting involved with your older driver is very important. "Ride along with your older driver to assess his or her skill level. If the driver needs more support, suggest a 55-Alive driving course. If that driver is unsafe, it may be necessary to take the keys or disable the vehicle."

For drivers with years of experience and no physical or mental limitations, other factors can contribute to crashes. The influence of drugs and alcohol, speeding or aggressive driving are leading causes of fatalities. "These are all very common causes of preventable fatal crashes," said Falb. "Although I think most people realize these are unsafe behaviors, it doesn't hit some people just how deadly they can be."

Modal offices spread the word on the Web

Whether you're booking an airline ticket, ordering a gift basket for your aunt or researching the Mayan ruins, it seems everything you ever wanted to buy or learn about can be accessed through the Internet.

The Iowa DOT has been on the Internet information bandwagon since October 1996 when the agency's first Web page was uploaded. Now the DOT's main site has several hundred pages and many associated links.

Three of those links are iawings.com, iowarail.com and iatransit.com. These contractor-produced sites contain information relevant to our offices of Aviation, Rail Transportation and Public Transit.

Since each office has a unique customer base, the sites offer quite different information for each transportation mode. The Office of Rail Transportation's main focus is information on office programs, rules and associated

forms. Office Director Peggy Baer says, "We want to provide everything a person would need to know to apply for our programs. This cuts down on paperwork and processing time by our staff and can expedite the application process."

Baer says she is encouraging her staff to think about the duties they perform and how their work can become more automated. "It's a different way of thinking," said Baer, "But one we're getting very comfortable with."

Other information on the iowarail.com site includes emergency telephone numbers for rail crossing malfunctions. "The railroads are private companies, so we are very careful about the information we supply on our site," explained Baer. "We do link our sites to the railroad companies' sites and other public agencies dealing with rail transportation."

On iawings.com, the aviation community can find contact information for DOT staff, aerial photos and detailed airport information on every public use airport in Iowa, a history of aviation in Iowa, and information on current office programs.

Michelle McEnany, director of both the offices of Transit and Aviation, says, "The aviation Web site audience is mainly the aviation community, but some civic planners also hit the site. We have pilots and fixed-base operators accessing information, but we also see visits from city decision makers and economic development groups. It's a great communication tool for us."

The recently revamped iatransit.com has added more interactive material to the basic information it has provided since the fall of 2001. "We've geared this site to be a time-saver both for our staff and the transit agencies," said McEnany. "There are several databases we maintain in our office with information supplied by the transit agencies. In the past the information was received on paper from the transit agencies and then input manually. Now those agencies can input their data right on the Web site and it automatically feeds the database. We still edit the information submitted, but the automation cuts down on input errors and saves staff time, not to mention the postage saved by each transit agency."

Another functional upgrade to the transit site is the search feature. The entire site is now searchable and contains a glossary and hover function over all the acronyms. The glossary and hover function is only available on the Transit Managers' Handbook portion of the Web site.

Using technology to make information more accessible saves staff time and reduces errors – that is a strategy that seems to be working for these DOT offices.



Origin of the American kestrel interstate nest box program

For more than 20 years the DOT has been working with Iowa Department of Natural Resources staff and others to increase habitat for American kestrels by installing nest boxes along state-managed highways. Because of increased agriculture and other invasive land uses begun in the mid-1800s, these majestic falcons lost valuable nesting areas. The DOT and DNR have been diligently working to mitigate the effects of a land use trend that started more than 150 years ago.

Even when hunting habitat and prey are available, the lack of a nest site can be the major reason for the non-productivity of an American kestrel species in a given area. Although the American kestrel remains fairly common, shrinking habitats, clearing of dead trees, and the invasion of European starlings have left many falcons struggling to find suitable nesting cavities and forage areas. Because cavity-nesting raptors such as the American kestrel do not build nests of their own, they rely on natural sites or those created by other birds or animals, including humans.

Whenever possible, Iowans should try to preserve the kestrel's natural habitat from further depletion or become involved in reforestation programs. Where sites do not currently exist, or have been destroyed, kestrels will gladly accept "pre-fab" homes such as the nest boxes.

In 1983 DNR staff worked with the DOT to attach 20 nest boxes to the backs of information signs along the interstate rights-of-way. Of the 20 nest boxes placed on I-35 in northern Iowa, eight were used by kestrels.

Nest boxes now occur nearly every mile of I-35 from Missouri to Minnesota. This corridor represents the nation's first statewide kestrel trail along an interstate system.

These efforts in Iowa have been coordinated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Diversity Program and implemented at the local level by state wildlife diversity personnel, county conservation board staff, and a host of volunteers. Since the program was started, hundreds of nest boxes have been attached to highway signs elsewhere in Iowa.

Many other states, including Rhode Island, Nebraska and Idaho, have adopted the kestrel box program.



Photo courtesy of Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The DOT continues to support the American kestrel nest box program and encourages new installations along other state-maintained roadways. The program is currently administered by the district offices, with assistance from maintenance staff. For more information on the American kestrel nest box program, go to www.enviro-explorers.com/kestrel_web_pages.

LMC forms

Recently the DOT's Labor Management Committees (LMC) have implemented a form on DOTNET that allows employees to submit agenda items to any one of the LMCs throughout the state. Employees are encouraged to use the form. It can be accessed in one of two ways:

- Choose the 'Labor Management Agenda Item Submission Form' option on the 'EMPLOYEE SERVICES/INFORMATION' drop-down menu on the DOTNET home page; or
- Choose the 'Labor Management Committee Agenda Submission Form' link on the top of the Labor Management Meeting Minutes page on DOTNET.

The form will automatically be e-mailed to the co-chairs for the selected LMC when the "submit" button is clicked.

Family Happenings

District 2

Pam Cox



Craig Greer, equipment operator in the Mason City shop, has been on active duty in Kuwait with the national guard for several months. In October Greer was able to get home to see the newest addition to his family, Wesley

Allen Michael Greer, born Oct. 11 weighing 7 lbs. 11 ozs. Although Craig wasn't able to attend the birth, he was very happy to be able to spend some time at home with his wife and new son. Congratulations to the Greers and thanks to Craig for his selfless military service.

Traffic and Safety

Linda McBride

After 42 years of service **Fred Tjarks** finally called it quits Sept. 30. The office hosted an open house coffee with many friends and co-workers attending. Fred was presented with a clock/photo frame retirement plaque for his years of service. Fred plans to spend his new-found free time traveling, going to flea markets and garage sales. Best of luck to Fred!

Driver Services

Melanie Mathes



There's a new grandbaby to brag about in the Council Bluffs DL station. **Lisa Leftridge**, driver license clerk, became a grandma to Haleigh Ann LeMaster on Nov. 30. Baby Haleigh weighed 7 pounds and was 20 inches long. Congratulations, Grandma!

District 4

Marlene Jensen



Rusty Fithen and Tamie Beery

It was a night of lights in Clarinda Nov. 28. Shenandoah equipment operators **Tamie Beery** and **Rusty Fithen** lit up a new DOT tandem truck to show the hearty folks of southwest Iowa in Clarinda's annual lighted Christmas Parade.

District 6

Jeanne Heeren



Dawn Hansen, secretary 1 in Cedar Rapids maintenance, and her husband, Mark, are the proud parents of Eli Gilbert Hansen. Baby Eli was born Sept. 3 weighing 9 lbs. 7 ozs., and was 21 1/2 inches long. Eli joins big brothers Bart, 12, and Jack, 3, at home. Congratulations to the Hansens!

Thank you

I would like to thank everyone who sent cards, gifts and had me in their thoughts and prayers during my recent surgery. It really touches my heart to know that so many people really care.

Jeff Huston
Transportation Data

I want to express my sincerest gratitude to those who donated time to my account while I was on medical leave. Your contribution was not only a much needed blessing, but also a humbling reminder of the true spirit of giving embodied at the DOT.

Kathryn Merkle
Office of Driver Services



Trophy Case



Ray and Jackson Ringgenberg

Ray Ringgenberg, design technician specialist in Traffic and Safety, and his son, Jackson, entered two rib recipes in the 2003 Barn Burner Cook-Out in Des Moines held Oct. 11.

They placed first and third out of 21 entries. The third place recipe used a modified BRITU Rub with Blues Hog BBQ sauce. The winning ribs had the same rub but a different sauce, a half-and-half mixture of

Famous Dave's Texas Pit BBQ sauce and Head Country Original BBQ sauce. Congratulations to Ray and Jackson!



Ron and Lisa Loecher

Some of us think daily life is a marathon, especially this time of year. But **Ron Loecher** from the New Hampton construction office and his wife, Lisa, know all about real marathons.

The couple ran with 35,000 others in the New York City Marathon Nov. 2. Ron says that because of the enormous number of participants,

runners are staged at the beginning point (Staten Island) and proceed through the other four boroughs, (Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, and Manhattan) finishing at Central Park. The course is lined with more than two million spectators providing words of encouragement and support, which Ron says provides the runners with a continuous boost of adrenaline. "What a great way to tour the city," he said.

Although Lisa completed the marathon with a better time than Ron, Ron promises that if a future marathon lies ahead, the reverse will be true.

A new vendor for the central complex cafe

Each day many central complex employees make the short trip across the parking lot to take a break or have lunch at HyVee. Beginning Jan. 5, all employees and guests working at or visiting the Ames central complex will be able to enjoy HyVee fare right here.

"It will be much easier to take a 15-minute coffee break or a 30-minute lunch break if you don't have to leave the grounds," said Lee Hammer, Director of Facilities Support. "Hy-Vee will be providing breakfast and lunch, a variety of coffees including espresso and cappuccino, as well as vending machines placed around the complex. They expect to operate in the café from 7 a.m. to around 10 a.m., and then close briefly to reset for lunch. They'll offer lunch from around 11:30 a.m. to about 1 p.m."

Hammer says that employees who are accustomed to eating at HyVee will not only recognize their favorite entrees, but the prices are expected to be the same as they would be in the store. As in the past, the menus and pricing will be available on DOTNET.

Although it's not possible for the folks at HyVee to bring their entire menu to the complex, Hammer says a variety of choices will be made available. "The food will be prepared at Hy-Vee and then brought here. Freshness is a priority for this vendor. They seem genuinely excited to be working with us, and we're looking forward to this new venture as well. It's our hope that more people will take advantage of this employee benefit so that the café remains viable and HyVee becomes a long-term partner."



35 YEARS

Iowa Department
of Transportation



Steven Botos
Sioux City-Leeds garage

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Nov. 7 to Nov. 20.

New Hires

David Hunt, automotive mechanic, Repair Shop; **Peter McDermott**, equipment operator, Onawa garage; **Troy Siefert**, transportation planner 1, Systems Planning.

Promotions

Diane McCauley, management analyst 2, Modal Division.

Transfers

Gary Letze, equipment operator, Altoona garage; **Darlene Ries**, driver license clerk, Dubuque DL station.

SERVICE AWARDS

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for January 2004.

40 Years

James R. Bailey, Materials.

35 Years

Steven Botos, Sioux City-Leeds garage; **Dwight Jenkins**, Sioux City construction.

30 Years

Gerald Ambrosion, Research and Technology Bureau; **Reginald Burch**, Information Technology Division; **Charles Dighton**, Manchester garage; **Lloyd Gruis**, Rock Rapids garage; **Gregory Gust**, Atlantic garage; **Mary Jo Key**, Rail Transportation; **Gary Novey**, Bridges and Structures.

25 Years

Mark Ambrosy, Maquoketa garage; **Gloria Aswegan**, Driver Services; **Michael Jackson**, Research and Technology Bureau; **Jennifer Miller**, Iowa City DL station; **Robert Miller**, Adair garage; **Edward Nelson**, Sloan garage; **Phyllis Padgett**, Driver Services; **Ole Skaar Jr.**, Design; **Wayne Sunday**, Construction; **Jay Thornton**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

20 Years

Troy Carlson, Information Technology Division; **Peter Hallock**, Public Transit; **Marcus Lamoreux**, Materials; **David Leon Martin**, Jefferson construction; **Marlan Meyer**, Latimer garage; **Georgina Miskimins**, District 5 paint crew; **Gene Pavelka**, Britt construction; **Gregory Sorensen**, Altoona garage.

15 Years

Christie Anderson, Materials; **Rodney Graven**, Materials; **Verna Housman**, Contracts; **Ted Johnson**, Knoxville garage; **Lambert Struzynski**, Oakdale garage; **Kathryn Tiensvold**, Transportation Data; **Joyce Tuel**, Fort Dodge garage; **Dennis Ward**, Jefferson construction; **Edwin Weihs**, Council Bluffs-north garage; **William York**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

10 Years

Jennifer Bell, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Thomas Curtis**, Finance; **Bradford Edaburn**, District 6 paint crew; **Veda Gosch**, Des Moines DL station; **Orest Lechnowsky**, Council Bluffs construction; **Chad McClain**, Carlisle garage; **DeeAnn Newell**, Location and Environment; **Danny Wical**, Grundy Center garage.

5 Years

Marilyn Bunch, Traffic and Safety; **Anthony Clabaugh**, Williams garage; **Darrel Hansen**, Sioux City-Hamilton garage; **Mark Holm**, Right-of-Way; **Derek Knowler**, Iowa Falls garage; **Roy Leeper**, Williams garage; **Cathy Mather**, Director's Staff; **James Nelson**, Bridges and Structures; **Jeffrey Novotny**, Marshalltown garage; **Robert Reed**, Bridges and Structures; **Randall Seehusen**, Grundy Center garage; **Steve Snow**, Latimer garage; **Loyce Staker**, Tama garage.

Cub Scout visit to I-235

In some, the urge to build is strong, even as children. Recently the Raccoon Valley Cub Scout Pack #50, their leader and some parents met with Des Moines Field Services Coordinator Bill Lusher and Jefferson Resident Construction Engineer John Heggen to learn how a bridge is built.

To earn their engineering badge, the four Cub Scouts were to achieve at least five of 10 activities listed for this award. They passed at least two of the requirements with flying colors as they visited the Polk Boulevard bridges now under construction as a part of the I-235 reconstruction project. They also talked with Heggen, a registered professional engineer. Although it wasn't on the list of items for the badge, the kids agreed they enjoyed wearing hard hats and vests very much.

Lusher said, "It is heartwarming to know these young people might be the future engineers that will be responsible for designing and constructing our transportation system."

The Cub Scouts from Raccoon Valley Pack #50 explore the fascinating world of bridge building.



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.state.ia.us.

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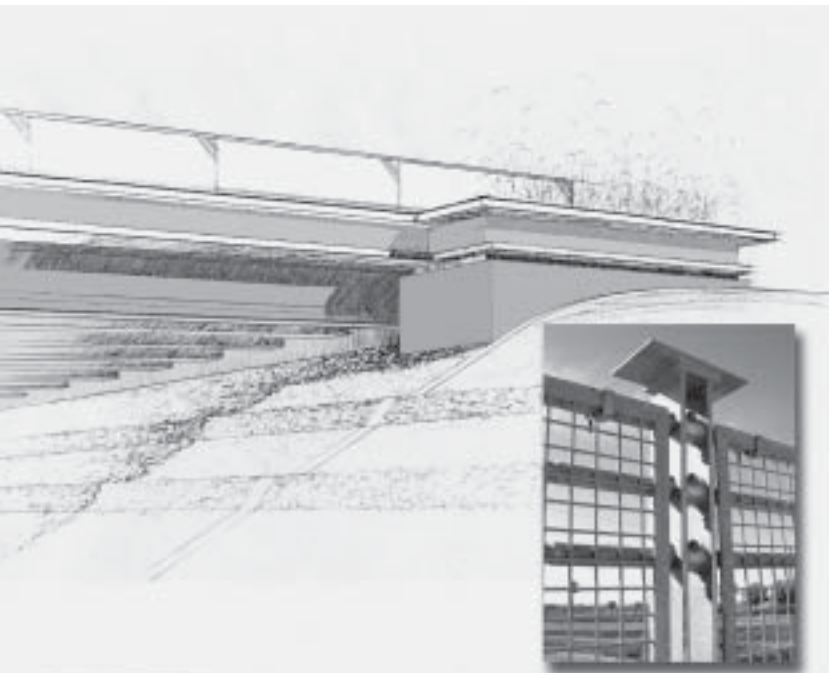
On the cover: Iowa's recreational trails provide opportunities to get outside in any season.

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District 5	Brenda Hadley , Fairfield	641-472-6142
District 6	Jeanne Heeren , Cedar Rapids	319-364-0235
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I-29's Prairie Bridge



Officials cut the ribbon Nov. 14 to open the I-29 interchange leading to Sergeant Bluff and the Sioux Gateway Airport.



The new gateway to Sioux City, dubbed the “Prairie Bridge” by designers, now allows traffic to exit off Interstate 29 east into Sergeant Bluff or west to the Sioux Gateway Airport.

The new \$12 million interchange solves several transportation dilemmas for the area. The new structure provides a viaduct over the Union Pacific railroad line, which will end vehicular delays to reach the airport. The increased capacity from two to four traffic lanes will provide better economical/industrial growth opportunities for area traffic.

The upgraded connection to Sergeant Bluff is seen by local officials as a boost to economic development. Sioux City’s Mayor Pro Tem Marty Dougherty called the corridor the “main street of Siouxland.”

And what a unique main street it is. Located along the Lewis and Clark Trail, the area is steeped in prairie history and lore. Many area architectural motivations have come from this prairie influence and what is known as the “Prairie School” style, the new bridge among them.

Kimball Olson, DOT aesthetic bridge specialist, says the regional characteristics had a strong influence on the styling of the bridge design. The bold Prairie School horizontal detail was easily the favorite of the local committee that selected the final design.

Different color finishes in warm tans and sandy yellows blend the bridge into the surrounding bluffs, which flank the Missouri River basin. Anchoring the bridge landings are carefully proportioned concrete planters integrated into the abutments. These will be filled with tall prairie and ornamental grasses, in keeping with the structure’s theme. A dramatic cantilevered “shelf” feature is used at the planters, parapet and even the pier, lending the project a flair and stylistic consistency from end to end.

State, regional and local officials gathered for the interchange modification ribbon cutting Nov. 14.