



JANUARY 2008

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## ONE 2 ONE

WITH DIRECTOR NANCY RICHARDSON

I am writing this column as we embark on the New Year. It is a time when we take time for some R&R...not rest and relaxation, but reflection and resolution. We reflect on the past year and resolve to do or accomplish certain things.

For some people, this process is pretty formal and results in the proverbial list of New Year's resolutions. For others of us, the process is less structured and more internal...a process where we focus our thoughts and create a mental "things to do list."

It is out of the reflection of the past that our resolve for future action grows. That is what makes occasionally stopping for some "R&R" so critical – not the actual recognition of our successes and struggles themselves as much as the direction and energy for the future that grows out of such reflection.

As I took stock of the past year at DOT, I realized we accomplished some impressive things. Our work is often so incremental – small piece by small piece – that we lose track of the "big" things we do, like:

- Finished four-lane construction on Iowa 60 from Sioux City to the Minnesota border, the fifth of six large priority corridor projects begun over a decade ago.
- Finished I-235 in Des Moines, our first major urban interstate reconstruction project.
- "Weathered" some of the worst winter weather in decades clearing snow and treating roadways, rescuing stranded motorists, aiding other rescue efforts, keeping the public informed, and generally assisting each other, other jurisdictions and the public.
- Implemented a new automated driver's license issuance system, as a result of thorough development, testing, training and planning, with relatively few "hiccups" and very little customer disruption.
- Relocated our Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) administrative offices, including the state's largest driver's license station and only commercial carrier permit center, from Des Moines to a new facility in Ankeny, with minimal disruption to our customers.
- Implemented the new highway technician class, formalizing the "marriage" of construction, materials and maintenance activities into a single shared worker class series.

- Helped facilitate the passage of the TIME-21 policy bill, setting the stage for 2008 legislative consideration of increased road funding.
- Realigned the five-year transportation program development process to a fiscal year schedule from a calendar year one.
- Provided needed public information and assurance of system safety in the aftermath of the Minnesota bridge collapse.

And these are just some of the big things! The true measure of our success is in the day-to-day accomplishments, many of which are behind-the-scenes or receive little notice, that make DOT work...vehicles licensed; buildings cleaned and repaired; telephones and computers that work; materials, equipment and supplies available; press releases issued; public meetings held; customer questions answered; maps produced; projects designed; parcels purchased; materials tested; grant applications reviewed; lettings held; contracts executed and monitored; environmental assessments completed; signs manufactured; contractors, vendors and employees paid; hazardous carriers taken off the road; and on and on.

On a more personal note, I committed to 2007 being the year of the field visit for me. DOT employees report to work at

approximately 200 locations, and I managed formal visits to 31 locations plus 3 conferences. I formally visited 16 garages, 4 field engineering offices, 3 field materials labs, 2 motor vehicle enforcement scales, 4 driver's license stations, and 2 Ames/Des Moines complex offices, in addition to speaking with staff at 3 conferences. That is about 15 percent completion; at this rate I will need to stay around six more years to get everywhere! Chief among my 2008 goals is to stay the course on field visits by visiting a minimum of another 30 locations...so be on the alert for a wandering DOT director! I have really enjoyed and learned from all the visits and appreciate the warm welcomes.

The results of my R&R helped me appreciate how much we accomplish in a year. It may seem the more we do, the more we have left to do, but please take a moment as we begin a new year to collectively recognize what we accomplished in 2007 and to individually assess your own progress. We have a lot to be proud of and another full plate to work on in 2008. Thanks to each of you for your role, whatever it might be, in making 2007 so productive. Let's go get 'em again in 2008! I hope we all have a great new year.

(P.S. I want to thank the gang from the Washington and Mount Pleasant garages, especially Duane from Washington. In a move

**ONE 2 ONE,  
continued on page 15**

# Wetland project a win-win for all partners



*Blanding's turtle is just one species that could benefit from the new wetland created on the U.S. 63 project in Bremer County.*

**T**he fact is every road construction project disrupts the area's natural surroundings to some extent. One of the decisions highway planners and engineers weigh is the benefit to motorists versus the disruption, and how the disruption can be mitigated.

Seasonal flooding of the Wapsipinicon River near U.S. 63 at the Bremer/Chickasaw county line necessitated the reconstruction of 7.5 miles of roadway to widen it and raise the grade. Two 90-degree turns on the roadway were a safety issues to be addressed as well. However, the planned reconstruction was set to disrupt a wetland area and endangered species in Bremer County. To resolve the issues, Iowa DOT engineers spent five months forging partnerships and working to find solutions that would create a 40-acre wetland and, eventually, a construction cost savings of 20 percent.

Flooding has long been a problem along the Wapsipinicon River in northern Bremer County. Over the years, many farmers received disaster

payments for flooding on their land. In 2002, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), under the authority of the Emergency Watershed Protection/Flood Plain Easement Act (EWP/FPE), bought a floodplain easement on 252.2 acres of land south of U.S. 63 owned by the Heffernan family. The easement left the title of the land to the Heffernans, but NRCS purchased a land-use restriction so this section of floodplain could no longer be used for agricultural crop production. The Heffernans kept what was anticipated to be the right-of-way for the new U.S. 63 construction that would cut through the NRCS easement.

A wetland was planned for the easement site and a sign announcing the wetland went up, but construction funds to make a functioning wetland out of that floodplain were not available. The land remained as it had been enrolled under a previous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract - a minimal mix of native grasses.

In November 2003, the Iowa DOT bought the highway right-of-way

and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) bought the residual land rights with the permanent NRCS floodplain easement attached. NRCS kept the EWP/FPE floodplain easement. DNR's purchase opened the land up for public use. That meant the land originally owned by one family is now owned or controlled by three public agencies: Iowa DOT, DNR and NRCS.

In 2006, a number of highway construction contracts were let to reconstruct and widen a portion of U.S. 63. C.J. Moyna and Sons Construction was awarded a contract to move 500,000 cubic yards of earth from a borrow area onto the construction site to raise the roadbed.

The original plan had Moyna taking the 500,000 cubic yards of fill dirt from a farm the DOT had purchased to provide material for that purpose. To use fill dirt from that farm, the soil would be stripped, making parts of it unsuitable for crop production. It would also require 12 to 15 side-dump tractor trailers to make continual eight-mile round trips on U.S. 63 between the borrow and construction sites. This heavy volume of slow-moving truck traffic would add to traffic safety concerns, and the trucks would muddy up the highway, adding to travel woes and slippery conditions, while burning a lot of fuel.

John Moyna, of C.J. Moyna and Sons, had a better idea. Next to the highway construction site, he saw a highway sign announcing a wetland on the former Heffernan site. He talked to the agency partners and got an enthusiastic reception to using that site for fill, at the same time, creating a wetland.

**Wetlands project, continued on page 4**

*It sounds strange, but it is true. Taxpayers will save around \$500,000 on a road reconstruction project in Bremer County and get a wetland that will reduce flooding on the Wapsipinicon River, clean the water, and protect threatened and endangered species.*

## Wetlands project, continued from page 3

Getting the details worked out was another matter. Because of the agencies' different missions and focuses, it took five months of negotiations between the four parties to work out a memorandum of agreement all could endorse. Finally, Moyna's proposal calling for taking fill dirt from the former Heffernan farm, instead of the DOT's farm site, was approved. Moyna started taking fill dirt from the Heffernan site and constructing a wetland to NRCS and DNR specifications.

This action and others could end up saving approximately \$500,000 by the project's completion in 2009 for the combined efforts of the DOT, DNR and NRCS. Besides avoiding the cost of transporting the fill material, the DOT will earn rental income from the 307 acres of cropland that would otherwise have been taken out of production and seeded to control weeds. The farm will eventually be sold.

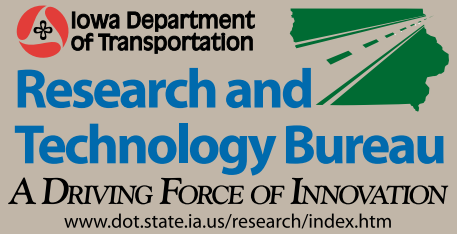
"With this project there are also environmental benefits for both humans and animals," said Mike Webster, NRCS natural resource specialist. "Thanks to this amazing win-win situation and great cooperation, we are all getting a well-designed and constructed wetland that will reduce flooding for the people downstream, filter out nutrients, recharge groundwater, and keep sediment from going into the Wapsipinicon River. It will also provide habitat for many birds and animals, including otters, ducks, geese, cranes, and a number of threatened and endangered species."

NRCS biologist Jennifer Anderson-Cruz studies wetlands and their impacts on wildlife populations. "Biodiversity is very important," said Anderson-Cruz. "Moyna's construction company is building turtle basking and nesting structures on the site using materials excavated, but not suitable for road construction. In addition to providing habitat, these structures will provide islands of high-ground refuge for wildlife during future flooding events, a habitat attribute found to be very important to the eastern Massasauga rattle snake, a state and federal endangered species act candidate species."



*This U.S. 63 sign, seen by John Moyna, third from the left, president of earth moving contractor C. J. Moyna and Sons, triggered five months of negotiations that formed a partnership between his company and three government agencies allowing a wetland to be built that will clean water, prevent flooding, protect endangered species, and save taxpayers \$500,000. Pictured with Moyna left to right are John Shimek, Iowa DOT construction technician; Doug Chafa, Iowa DNR biologist at the Sweets Marsh wildlife unit; Moyna; Laura Wilden, Bremer County NRCS district conservationist; Mike Webster, NRCS wetland specialist; and Al Ehley, NRCS assistant state conservationist for field operations. (NRCS Photo by Dick Tremain)*

*Information provided by Dick Tremain, public affairs specialist with United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service*



## 2008 research project list

The Research and Technology Bureau has recently published the following project final reports.

- **TR-474**, "Validation of the Mix Design Process for Cold In-Place Rehabilitation Using Foamed Asphalt – Phase II"
- **TR-502**, "Evaluation of Long Term Field Performance of Cold-in-Place Recycled Roads"
- **TR-507**, "Thin Maintenance Surfaces – Phase III"
- **TR-531**, "Effective Shoulder Design and Maintenance"
- **TR-534**, "Design Procedures and Field Monitoring of Submerged Barbs for Streambank Protection"
- **TR-547**, "Investigation of Electromagnetic Gauges for Determination of In-Place Density of HMA Pavements"

For copies of the final reports or technical summaries, visit the Research and Technology's Web page at <http://www.operationsresearch.dot.state.ia.us/reports/reports.html> or contact Mary Starr at 515-239-1590 or [mary.starr@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:mary.starr@dot.iowa.gov).

## Protecting your portal

**A**lthough it is great to have a constant Internet connection, whether through a cable modem, DSL or T-1 line, many people forget that with a connection that is always on, there is a possibility of someone hacking or cracking into your machine. If you are like most Americans, that could mean your financial and other sensitive information is up for grabs to whoever is smart enough to get through the security measures, if any, installed on your PC.

### How can you protect yourself?

- Install reputable anti-spam and anti-virus software. Today's reputable anti-spam software programs are typically programmed to identify known viruses, which could also contain Trojan horses as well. Many threats are delivered by E-mail, specifically by spam. A good anti-spam program will help reduce your risk of inadvertently opening an E-mail containing a threat.
- Keep your anti-virus and firewall software updated. Best practice: set your computer to update the Windows system automatically for critical updates. This procedure can be set to run during the night or whenever you please. Set antivirus software to update daily, so when it scans (either scheduled scan or real-time scan) it is running with the most recent virus information. Do NOT let your antivirus subscription expire.
- Be certain of the source and content of each file you download. Don't download an executable program just to "check it out." Remember that a virus or Trojan horse might cause your friend's computer to automatically send you the questionable file. When in doubt, ask the sender first before opening the attached file.
- Check the file extensions. Windows, by default, hides the last name extension of a file; the innocuous-looking picture file, "susie.jpg," might really be "susie.jpg.exe," an executable Trojan. To avoid being tricked, unhide those pesky extensions, so you can see them. This is an option selected in Windows Explorer under Tools\Folder Options\View. Make sure to "Apply to all folders." That way the final extension will show in all programs.
- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security just because you ran anti-virus software. Many anti-virus programs do not protect against all viruses and Trojans, even when fully up-to-date. You need both virus protection and firewall programs to be fully protected against hackers and intruders.
- If you are an online gamer, do not publish your I.P.



address on Web sites or newsgroups, unless you are very sure you are fully protected. You would be much wiser logging into others' game servers, instead of inviting others to log onto your game server at a precise I.P. address.

- Back up your system. One of the best ways to protect yourself in the event of a virus attack is to have a clean set of backup disks/tapes/CDs that will fully restore your system (without the virus) and the applications you are using. Too often, home computer users fail to protect themselves in this manner. With CD burners and accompanying software being relatively inexpensive, a full-system backup can quickly restore your computer in the event your hard drive has to be reformatted. If you have the ability, backup drives now available for about \$200 come with backup software. This is a more convenient method of getting good backups and can be scheduled automatically do a new backup on a regular schedule, such as weekly.
- Turn off your computer when not in use. If you are not connected to the Internet, because your computer is off, you cannot be infected, hacked or hijacked.
- Use common sense. When in doubt, assume any unknown attachment is a virus.

# Winter driving and rail crossing safety

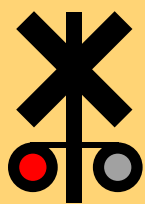


**W**inter driving requires motorists and pedestrians to be alert to dangerous conditions. The Iowa DOT and the safety education group Iowa Operation Lifesaver say common sense goes a long way toward preventing collisions, injuries and fatalities.

Federal Railroad Administration reports show that 1,361 Americans were killed or injured in vehicle-train collisions in 2006. There were also more than 996 pedestrian-rail trespass deaths and injuries nationwide. This means that approximately every two hours a person or vehicle is struck on the tracks in America.

**Tips for safe winter driving near railroad crossings**

1. Slow down. Speed kills. It takes longer to stop and start on snow covered roads. Driving too fast on ice and snow is dangerous and possibly deadly. At a railroad crossing, watch for the advanced warning sign (a round yellow sign with the letters RXR) and be prepared to stop before crossing the track(s).
2. Always stop at least 15 feet before the railroad crossing. Be careful on icy roads to make sure you will not slide onto the tracks.
3. Make visibility a priority. Clean off all snow and ice that might block your vision, including snow on the roof and hood that can slide or blow onto the windshield of your car or the cars behind you.
4. When approaching a railroad crossing, listen carefully for an oncoming train. Snow can muffle the sound of an approaching train. Crack the window, and turn down the volume on the radio.
5. Accelerate slowly to avoid spinning the tires and fishtailing. If the rails on the crossing are slick, a slow, steady momentum will help avoid slipping and sliding.
6. Pay attention to the signals and/or signs at railroad crossings. If the lights or gates appear to be malfunctioning, call the 1-800 number listed at or near the crossing to notify the railroad or contact the local law enforcement agency.
7. If your vehicle gets stuck at a railroad crossing, get out quickly and move away from the track. Your car or truck can be replaced, but a life is priceless. Call the local law enforcement agency or the railroad and report your vehicle's location.
8. Before making travel plans, check multiple sources, like the Iowa DOT's Web site at 511ia.org or local news on TV, for information, especially in winter weather when travel might become hazardous.



**OPERATION  
LIFESAVER®**  
**Rail Safety Education**

Iowa Operation Lifesaver (Iowa OL) is a non-profit safety education group whose goal is to eliminate deaths and injuries at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way. While the number of fatalities has been reduced significantly in the 33 years Operation Lifesaver has been making safety presentations across America, there is still work to be done.

Iowa OL's certified presenters are trained to give free safety talks to community groups, schools, school bus drivers, truck drivers, and other organizations to raise awareness of the need for caution around railroad tracks and trains. More information can be found at Iowa OL's Web site [iowaoperationlifesaver.org](http://iowaoperationlifesaver.org).

For more information regarding Iowa OL, or to schedule a free presentation, contact the Iowa OL state coordinator at [iowa4ol@mchsi.com](mailto:iowa4ol@mchsi.com) or 515-291-2492.

# Updated RWIS digs deep for subsurface temps

**P**redicting the weather, even with all the sophisticated technology available to meteorologists today, can be a tricky business. Trying to gauge how the incoming weather will affect road conditions can be even more challenging.

For several years, the Iowa DOT has collected data from roadway weather information system (RWIS) sites around the state. Currently, 58 RWIS stations collect air temperature, subsurface temperature, dew point, relative humidity, average wind speed, wind gust speed, wind direction, precipitation, and surface temperature from at least one location per station.

While all this data is helpful to highway maintenance supervisors in the decision-making process of what treatment is necessary to keep the roads safe, more information on subsurface temperatures would enhance the system. At the current RWIS sites, one probe is placed 18 inches into the ground as the only subsurface temperature reading. When installed late this season, three new RWIS sites at Plainfield on U.S. 218, south of Denison on U.S. 59, and near Cantril on Iowa 2 will have six-foot subsurface probes to measure temperatures every three inches down to 18 inches, and then every six inches for the remainder of the six-foot sensor.

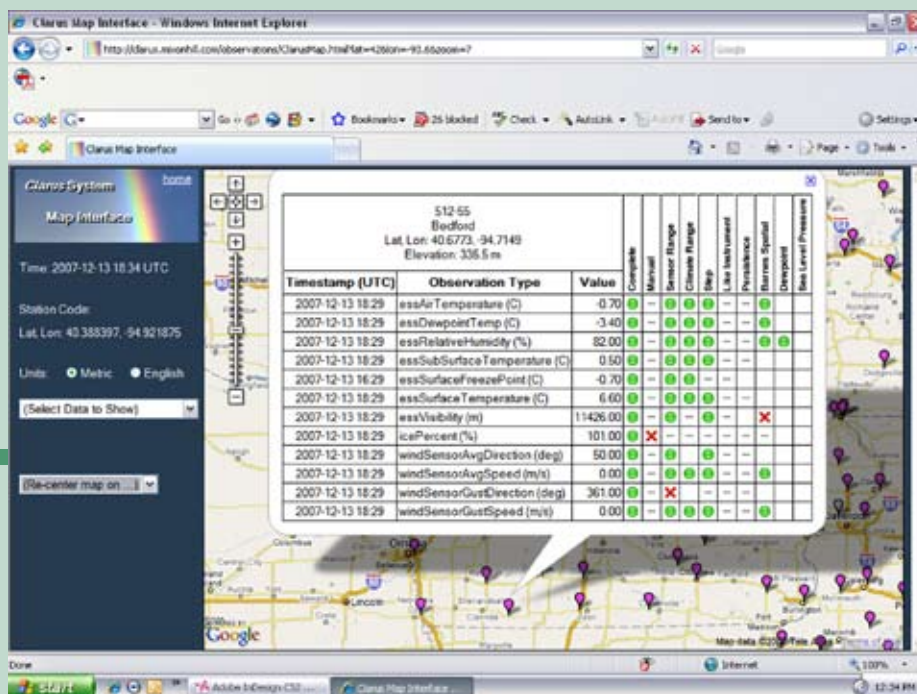
Tina Greenfield of the Iowa DOT's Office of Maintenance says more temperature profiles will help supervisors predict future

pavement temperatures and be able to plan for ice or frost applications. "The heat stored at various depths in the subsurface will affect the pavement surface temperature. Since the effectiveness of many of the treatments available to the maintenance forces depends on the pavement temperature, more data can lead to better decisions for roadway treatment," Greenfield said.

This data is not only helpful to highway maintenance supervisors, but motorists who understand the effect of pavement and subsurface temperatures on the roadway can also benefit from the information when used in their decision-making processes. "For years we've shared RWIS data with the public on our Weatherview Web site, dotweatherview.com," said Greenfield. "There are some states that shy away from sharing data, but our view has always been that we want to share the information with travelers to help them make better travel decisions based on current weather conditions."

While some states are still not sharing RWIS data, others are on board with Iowa's philosophy. These states have banded together to begin a national RWIS Web site called Clarus. Clarus collects, quality checks, and displays RWIS information from several states, from Ohio to the Pacific coast and up to Alaska, as well as some areas of Canada. "This site will be especially helpful to those people who live near a state border or who travel across state lines regularly. It is just in the testing phase right now, so it is still a bit clunky," said Greenfield. "When the site is fully operational, it will be more reliable, and the data will be simple and easy to understand." Greenfield says the site is being designed so that it will eventually be part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) data that is available to all weather providers.

If you would like to see the demonstration site for Clarus, log on to <http://clarus.mixonhill.com>.



A sample page from the Clarus Web site

## Life could be great in 2008

**J**anuary challenges us to work toward a better lifestyle. It gives us a starting point for making changes that will help us feel better about our lives. What changes do you want to make this year? Are you planning to lose weight, quit smoking or drinking, or get control of your finances? You can do it! Here are some tips to help you keep your resolve.

Write down your goal and the reasons behind it. Word it in a positive way. Example — "I will change my eating habits and lose some weight so I can look and feel better," rather than "I will go on a diet because I hate looking like a bowling pin."

Write down what you need to do to achieve your goal. Will you need to put away your ash trays, lighters and things that make you think about

cigarettes? What support do you need from other people? How will you ask for help when you need it?

Outline incremental steps to reach your goal. Set a reasonable time limit for each subgoal. Give yourself some flexibility in your goal standards. Example — You resolve to pay an extra \$200 a month on your loan payment. However, if you can only handle an extra \$100 or even \$50 extra some months, you will still feel pretty good about it.

Keep track of your progress and reward yourself each time you reach a subgoal. Allow yourself to feel a sense of satisfaction when you have any increment of success. Look at what you have accomplished and then focus on how good it will feel when you reach the next subgoal. Don't sabotage your motivation by always looking at how far you have to go to reach your end-goal.

Review your goal, your motives, your list of needs to achieve your goal, and your progress on a regular basis. It's easy to get sidetracked by life's day-to-day twists and turns. Reviewing your goals will help keep you inspired.

Some resolutions are harder than others to achieve. Breaking the bonds of addiction, eating disorders, or obsessive compulsive behavior, for example, require serious commitment and determination.

If you or someone you know needs extra help to reach a life changing goal, call the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for information about human service programs that can help.

### Getting control of your cravings

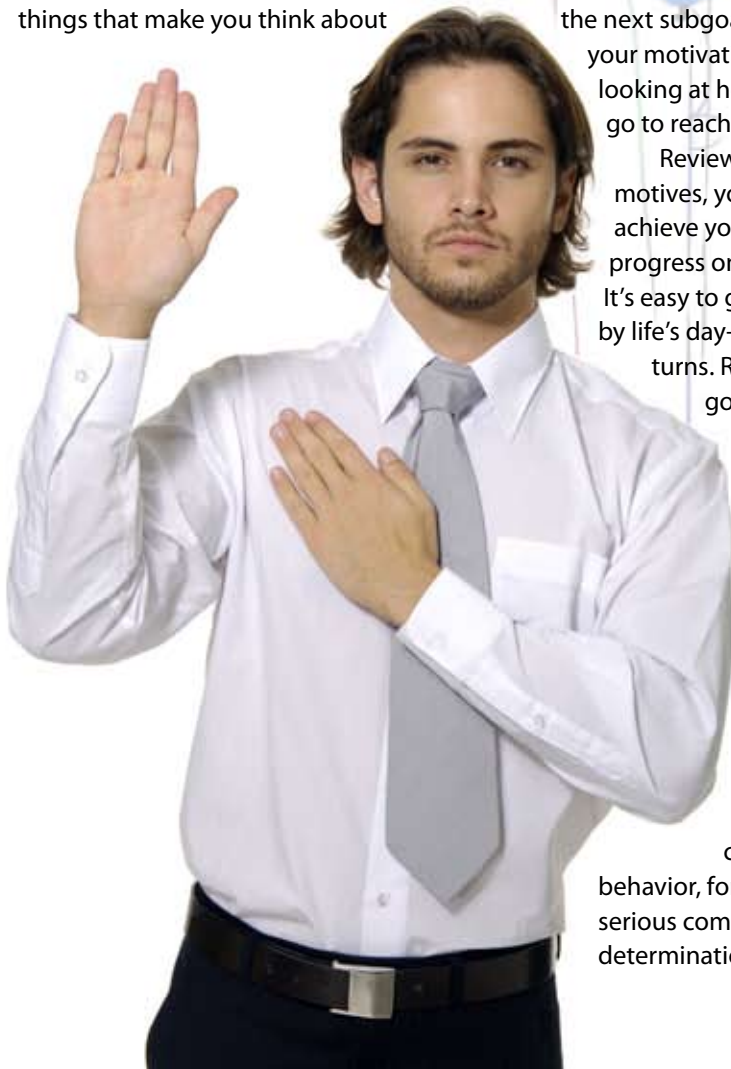
**You don't have to be victim to your cravings. Whether you give in is up to you, not the food, the tobacco or the chemical that you crave.**

Practice the five D's for disarming cravings.

- **DELAY** awhile to make sure your indulgence is conscious rather than impulsive. Try a second delay.
- **DISTRACT** yourself by doing something that requires concentration.
- **DISTANCE** yourself from the problem.
- **DETERMINE** how important it is that you have what you crave.
- **DECIDE** what amount, if any, is reasonable and appropriate. If you decide that no amount is worth the risk of indulgence, start the five D's again.

Concerns? An EAP counselor can help you evaluate and work through concerns so you can begin to move toward solutions. Contacts with EAP are confidential and available to employees and their family members 24 hours a day, at no cost to you. Call 515-244-6090, toll free 800-327-4692 or TTY 877-542-6488.

*(Information for this article adapted from the Iowa DOT's EAP service provider newsletter.)*







## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TROPHY CASE



From left: Scott Marler, Scott Gustafson and Mark Lumsden recently completed the certified public manager course offered by Drake University.

Three DOT employees recently completed the certified public manager course offered by Drake University. Mark Lumsden, information technology administrator 2 in the Information Technology Division; Scott Marler, environmental program supervisor in the Office of Location and Environment; and Scott Gustafson, facilities engineer 1 in the Office of Facilities Support, graduated in November 2007 after 18 months of study. The content of the course covered broad areas such as leadership, budgeting, human resource management, diversity, and developing public policy. Other DOTers who have completed this course include Cheryl Williams, public service executive 2 in the Office of Finance; Michelle Mc Enany, director of the offices of Public Transit and Aviation; and retired DOTer Bill Rhoads.



Matt Donovan, historical preservation specialist in the Office of Location and Environment, was recently awarded his Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA) certification. Donovan also recently completed his master's degree in history, with a focus on archaeology, at Iowa State University. As part

of the degree process, Donovan submitted his vita (resume) regarding archaeological studies he has completed in Boone and Hardin counties. Based on this vita, he was awarded the RPA designation, which means Donovan is considered an archaeologist by his professional peers.

Friends cheered recently as Kelly R. Sharp, mail clerk 2 for the Office of Driver Services, won his second Special Olympics gold medal in bowling with a score of 213 for two games. Sharp has already signed up to be on a three-on-three basketball team next year. He then plans to attempt



something new in track and field, trying out for the shot-put.

Sharp not only participated in Special Olympics events, he's also a fundraiser, collecting \$760 dollars in November's Polar Plunge. As well as taking the plunge with his fellow employees, he provided a motivational speech to the group for the second year. Sharp has come a long way in his quest of bringing the message about Special Olympics to others. While at the Polar Plunge, Sharp won a prize for an original costume, dressing up as the "Super Plunger."

Sharp has signed up to once again complete the Global Messenger Workshop so he can be a messenger to others, helping them achieve their goals in Special Olympics. From playing sports to being a Global Messenger to volunteering for fundraisers, Sharp has achieved success in whatever he sets his mind to. He fulfills his dreams to be the best that he can be. He said, "Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to become a winner in everybody's eyes and to reach for the stars."

# Family happenings

## Bridges and Structures

*July Whitney*

On Nov. 8 the Office of Bridges and Structures held a lunch following the quarterly office meeting to honor Joel Bryan for putting his life on hold and in danger, leaving his family, and serving his country in Iraq. Employees from the Ames office and the five inspection teams from around the state joined in thanking him for fighting for our freedom. Bryan was given a cake with a picture of him in uniform and congratulations for a job well done from Norman McDonald, office director and Mitch Dillavou, director of the Engineering Bureau. Thanks again for your service, Joel.

## District 5

*Brenda Hadley*

On April 16, 2005, Mount Pleasant equipment operator Bob Briggs was injured while on active duty in Iraq. Here is Briggs' latest update from his wife, Michelle.

As many of you know, Bob is officially retired from the DOT. That day was the hardest on him yet, so I try to keep him occupied on other things. The last few months have been busy. Bob and I have been learning to golf with the help of the Iowa City Veteran's Affairs (VA) staff and many Iowa Professional Golfer's Association members through a program to help veterans continue with recreational activities after injury. I think Bob plays better one handed and with one eye than most people without these issues.

The family flew to San Francisco for a returning military retreat called the Coming Home Project. The organization helps returning military and their families learn new ways to cope with the many issues upon returning home from a combat zone.

This particular retreat has been the most beneficial for our family yet, and we hope to continue with this organization.

A couple days after returning from California, Bob went to Alabama to deer hunt (yes, he left Iowa to hunt deer). This trip was with the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes special division Operation Return to the Wild that takes severely injured veterans on hunts throughout the US. Bob actually shot a button buck and a bobcat (yes, I said a bobcat). Mr. Bobcat is in the process of being mounted and will be delivered soon.

After a nice Thanksgiving with family and friends, Bob and I flew with our two kids, Ashlea, 7, and Cody, 3, to Walt Disney World for the Road To Recovery Conference that was put on by the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. The conference helps severely injured veterans receive much needed support emotionally, spiritually, and in education and work placement. Bob signed up to help the Coalition's Operation Return to the Wild. He'll be going to a two-week course in Colorado led by a severely burned Vietnam vet to learn motivational speaking and many other things.

Bob has also been helping me with the family business and even received a "gator" with a snowplow. It may not be the right color (you know orange is his favorite), but at least he can play in the snow. In April, we are going to Colorado so Bob can try skiing, snowmobiling (heaven help us), shooting, and scuba diving with the VA winter sports clinic. This event is held in Aspen every year for injured veterans.

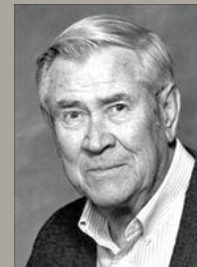
As you can see, we try to keep Bob as busy as we can. He continues to improve physically. Mentally he is about the same (crazy as usual). Thank you for your continued support; it truly means a lot.

## In memory



Ruth Ann Gertsen, 68, of Story City, died Thursday, Nov. 8, 2007, at her home. Gertsen was born June 8, 1939, in Boone, to

George and Gertrude (Woolheiser) Kokemiller. She worked for more than 40 years in the Office of Finance, retiring in 2001. She is survived by one daughter, Kim (Paul) Mott, of Story City; two grandchildren, P.J. and Danielle; and one brother, Fred (Shirley) Kokemiller, of Madrid. She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother, David Kokemiller; and one sister, Gretchen Alvestad.



Richard Rahto, 75, of Jewell, died Sunday, Nov. 11, 2007. Rahto was employed by the Iowa DOT in the communications

shop, until he retired Jan. 30, 1998, after 23 years of service. He enjoyed touring on his motorcycle, spending time in his shop and working the family farm. He is survived by his wife, Mary Rahto, of Ames; one daughter, Susie (Scott) Hertzke, of Bolívar, Mo.; three grandchildren, Tim and Sara Hertzke and Isaac Rahto; one brother, Jim (Sylvia) Rahto, of Overland Park, Kan.; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Kenny; and one brother, Jack.

## Snowstorms saves DOTer from jail

Claude Frazier, highway maintenance supervisor in Carlisle, got out of jail early Dec. 6 because of a snowstorm. He said it was like an early release for good behavior, but he would have rather stayed in jail.

Frazier's "incarceration" was part of this year's Muscular Dystrophy Association's (MDA) Jingle Bail Lock-up to help Jerry's kids®. The fundraiser's premise is for people to donate money to MDA as "bail" for a friend or coworker. Frazier says



he's raised part of his \$1,950 goal, but not all. While he didn't have to stay behind bars because the snowstorm demanded his presence at work, Frazier did receive a warrant for his arrest and was able to have a quick photo taken behind bars.

Donations to MDA support

the continued fight against muscular dystrophy. MDA serves people in the community with neuromuscular disease by providing clinics, support groups, assistance with the purchase and repair of wheelchairs, braces and communication devices, and summer camp for kids. MDA also funds research grants to help find treatments and cures for some 43 neuromuscular diseases that affect people of all ages.

For more information on how to donate to this cause, visit [mdausa.org](http://mdausa.org).

## Noe's tacos



Villarreal with his awards

It was dark and cold outside, but a little nip in the air couldn't stop

Noe Villarreal, his family and friends from serving more than 1,450 tacos to raise money for underprivileged kids in north Iowa. Villarreal's wife, Monica; his sister,

Sandra, from Texas; his pastor and his wife from the Baptist Church in Swea City; and many other volunteers spent the day chopping tomatoes, cooking 250 pounds of taco meat, setting tables and making sure every detail was covered for the event that draws people from all over north Iowa.

Villarreal's 20th Tacos for Tots was held Nov. 19 at the First United Methodist Church in Algona. Assisting



A cake in the shape of a taco graced the dessert table at Tacos for Tots

Villarreal in his quest to provide Christmas cheer to kids were the Morwens Kiwanians, Kossuth County Child Assistance Resource Education (C.A.R.E.) team members, Thul Business Center (Whittemore), and the Kemna Motor Company (Algona).

For his efforts, Villarreal, a highway technician associate in the Swea City shop, received

the "Giving Your Best" award from Mason City television station KIMT. The award is given monthly recognizing an individual who gives back to the community.

Villarreal says he is very honored by the award, but still wishes he was a millionaire so he could do more for the kids.

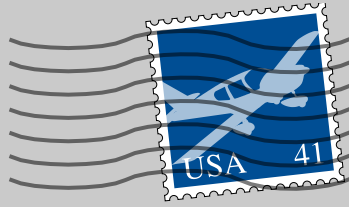


**"Never answer an anonymous letter."**

Yogi Berra

## 2008 Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 21
Memorial Day	May 26
Fourth of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 1
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 27
Day after Thanksgiving	November 28
Christmas	December 25



## Kudos!

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

To: Nancy Richardson  
From: Steve Young, director, Iowa Veterans' Cemetery

I've been remiss in not contacting you sooner about the outstanding support provided to the Iowa Veterans' Cemetery by John Selmer, Mark Masteller and your department. Executive Director Palmersheim and I wish to express our gratitude.

As the project manager overseeing construction, I'm always looking for support to make this project a success. The Iowa DOT, through John and Mark, stepped to the plate on two significant projects. Through John's expert guidance, we were able to transfer right-of-way land for use in a timely manner and at a nominal fee to construct the Interstate 80 wall announcing the cemetery's presence to travelers. We have already pulled an electrical line to the location and concluded our groundwork for the wall. It is our hope to have the wall constructed (fundraising permitting) before the dedication ceremony around Memorial Day 2008. John is also coordinating placement of the brown interstate sign. The Dallas County Board of Supervisors has already renamed the county road running west of our property from "R" Avenue to "Veterans' Memorial Drive." Both efforts prominently mark the Iowa Veterans' Cemetery.

Mark also jumped into the project upon a referral made by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. An article he published about incorporating Iowa grasses was seen by our counterparts at the federal level. I was asked to contact Mark. Mark and I visited the site to talk about landscaping. He had some great ideas. Mark has been provided the site plans with landscaping specifications. He and another Iowa DOT person were seen visiting the site on Friday afternoon. We are hoping to be able to access some Iowa DOT grant money to incorporate many of Mark's ideas on the state property and right of way.

John and Mark have been great to work with. None of this would have happened without your willingness to encourage Iowa DOT initiative to make this state project something very special.

You have reason to be proud of John and Mark and those who have supported them on these projects. Kudos to one and all.

(Editor's note: John Selmer is the District 4 engineer and Mark Masteller is the Iowa DOT's chief landscape architect.)

To: Iowa DOT  
From: Mary

After several weeks on the road in a rather too-big motor home, we were so glad to cross back into Iowa. Compared to other states, our rest areas are the best... fairly evenly spaced, usually enough spots for trucks and large motor homes, much-welcomed Internet access, and the OK to park overnight instead of just a few short hours. I suspect all of that is even more important to the truckers than it is to travelers like us.

To: Andy Lewis, Office of Vehicle Services  
From: Judy Glasegan, Central Bank

I want you to be aware of the exceptional service that we have received from your employee, Erika Eckstein. We were appointed executors of an estate that holds a collection of De Soto automobiles. Since we were an unrelated party to the deceased, we were unaware that titles and/or registrations did not exist. Erika was very helpful and took the extra steps to help us get the documentation we needed to get bonded titles for these vehicles. We are very appreciative of her time and efforts.

(Editor's note: Erika Eckstein is a word processor 2 in the Office of Vehicle Services.)

To: Office of Driver Services  
From: Melissa Crawford

I just wanted to let you know how impressed I was when updating my license a few weeks ago at the Ankeny driver's license station. Everyone that I encountered was very friendly and things moved much quicker than I expected. I wanted to let you know that you guys are doing a fabulous job.

To: Larry Jackson  
From: Shelly Amos

At times, we feel like little people without a voice, concerned that our complaints are not being heard. Thanks to you, I was heard. I am very grateful to you for getting my comment to the right people.

(Editor's note: Ms. Amos wrote to the "contact us" section on the Iowa DOT's Web site requesting signage near Fruitland. The note was forwarded to Larry Jackson, then District 5 engineer. Jackson contacted Keith White, Muscatine County engineer, and the signage was put into place.)

To: Nancy Richardson, DOT director  
From: Nancy Lacy, Office of Vehicle Services

I have thought of sending an E-mail to you many times, but get busy and forget. I want to let you know that our road crews are doing an awesome job! I live in Van Meter and from Ankeny to home can be a very long ride on nights when there is bad weather. The crews are out and doing the best they can with the conditions. When I came to work the day after a storm, the interstates were clear! It is so nice to travel and not have to worry about snow-covered roads or icy conditions. I feel very proud to work for such a great organization!

To: Tina Hargis, director, Office of Vehicle Services  
From: Steve Turner

I have just applied for a personalized license plate and Mike Littlejohn is the person who helped me. In today's world, everyone is busy and customer service seems to have disappeared. Mike went out of his way to help me and took the extra time to verify the name I was looking for on my personalized plate was available. I was dreading having to go through the process of getting a personalized license plate. I figured I would be transferred and put on hold and spend half my day being frustrated. It was truly refreshing to talk to someone that had a genuine concern to help the customer. He should be commended for a great job!

(Editor's note: Mike Littlejohn is an information technology support worker 2 in the Office of Vehicle Services.)

To: Iowa DOT  
From: Carolyn Martin, Cedar Falls

Thank you! I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated the DOT's work Wednesday, Nov. 21, during the snow event. My daughters and I left Cedar Falls just before 10 a.m. headed to the Kansas City area. By the time we reached I-35 on U.S. 20, the trucks were already out preparing the roads. All along, my mom kept calling asking how the roads were. Each time I was able to tell her that the roads were fine, but you guys were not doing much for the visibility! We arrived in Kansas City later than expected, but safely ...thanks in large part to the work of the crews on duty that day. I hope this message will get to each of those responsible for maintaining I-35 from U.S. 20 to Osceola. You did a great job!

(Editor's note: The shops responsible for I-35 from U.S. 20 south to Missouri are Williams, Ames, Martensdale, and Osceola.)

To: Iowa DOT  
From: Beth Little, Brandon

Please pass on a huge THANK YOU to the DOT snowplow crew at the I-380/Urbana shop. They did a great job the first week in December. I left my city council meeting in Marion to head home to Brandon about 8:30 at night. Two plows were heading north between Urbana and Brandon. They must have worked most of the night. When I got back on the interstate at 6:45 the next morning, the roads were totally clear. They do such a great job!

To: Dena Gray-Fisher, director,  
Office of Media and Marketing Services  
From: Jim Boyd, news director, WHO-Iowa Radio Network

I just wanted to pass on a word of thanks and kudos for cooperation to Ed Mahoney of the DOT's maintenance garage here in Des Moines. On Dec. 1 when the sleet and ice were falling and Dec. 2 when it was snowing to beat the band, Ed took the time to join me on the radio and update central Iowa on snow-fighting efforts, what the next several hours were going to look like, and even a perspective on conditions elsewhere in central and western Iowa. His responses were clear, concise and informative; and it provided a very clear picture of what was going on in a media that doesn't have pictures.

(Editor's note: Ed Mahoney is the highway maintenance supervisor in the Des Moines-north shop.)

To: Highway Helper Program  
From: Karla Barkema

I just wanted to say thank you for the Highway Helper Program. I felt like an angel came out of nowhere and rescued me this morning. It was unbelievable. He was so very kind and helpful. I wished I could have paid him, but he said he was unable to accept money. Since I was unable to offer money, I at least wanted to express my gratitude.

(Editor's note: The Highway Helper who helped Ms. Barkema on Interstate 35/80 was Kevin Huss.)

# Personnel Updates

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Oct. 19 to Nov. 15, 2007

## New hires

**Annette Green**, clerk advanced, Motor Carrier Services; **Mark Harle**, transportation engineer intern, Bridges and Structures; **Steven Henry**, reproduction equipment operator 2, Document Services; **Lance Letellier**, transportation engineer specialist, District 6 Office; **David McNeill**, driver's license examiner, Des Moines DL station; **Lasha Rascon**, driver's license clerk, Cedar Rapids DL station; **David Smelser**, information technology specialist 2, Information Technology Division; **Libby Wielenga**, historical preservation specialist, Location and Environment; **Scott Zalaznik**, personnel management specialist, Employee Services

## Promotions

**Dennis Ackerman**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Boone garage; **Bruce Barr**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Waukon garage; **Vernon Benson**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Iowa Falls garage; **Todd Blum**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Avoca garage; **Jill Bossard**, driver's license clerk to driver's license clerk senior, Ottumwa DL station; **Mike Burton**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Williams garage; **Steven Carpenter**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Sidney garage; **Sharon Christensen**, driver's license clerk senior to driver's license examiner, Des Moines DL station; **Joseph Cihacek**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Missouri Valley garage; **Rodney Floerchinger**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Neola garage; **David Fox**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Grimes garage; **Steve Gibson**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Fort Dodge; **Forrest Gochenour**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Richard Grace**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Williams garage; **Steven Haxton**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Mason City garage; **Mark Hilger** from highway technician associate to highway technician, Sidney garage; **Marvin Hodapp**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Raymond Jackson**, from highway technician associate, Des Moines-north garage to highway technician, Carlisle garage; **Rodney Kennedy**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Neola garage; **Michael Kern**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Des Moines-north garage; **Julia Lucas**, from highway technician associate, Des Moines-north garage to highway technician, Carlisle garage; **Lowell Martin**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Williamsburg garage; **Martin Merical** from highway technician associate to highway technician, Grimes garage; **Randall Meyer**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Waverly garage; **Gregory Moyle**, from design technician associate to design technician, Design; **Jeffrey Novotny**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Marshalltown garage; **Larry Osborn**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Des Moines-north garage; **Nicholas Paardekooper**, from highway

technician associate to highway technician, De Soto garage; **Duane Parizek**, from highway associate to equipment operator senior, Tama garage; **Cindy Pauley**, from driver's license clerk to driver's license clerk senior, Burlington DL station; **David Peterson**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Avoca garage; **Stephen Rauch** from highway technician associate to highway technician, Oakdale garage; **Daniel Redmond**, from transportation engineer, Chariton construction to transportation engineer manager, District 4 Office; **Chad Rumbaugh**, from highway technician associate, Boone garage to highway technician, Ames garage; **Carie Sager**, driver's license clerk to driver's license clerk senior, Waterloo DL station; **Frederick Schmidt**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Council Bluffs-north garage; **Jay Schrock**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Oakdale garage; **Larry Schropp**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Williamsburg garage; **Charles Shipley**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Red Oak garage; **William Shuler**, equipment operator senior, Bedford garage to garage operations assistant, District 4 paint crew; **Stacey Sodders**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Missouri Valley garage; **Jim Strabala**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Oakdale garage; **Barry Thede**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Grundy Center garage; **Charles Thompson**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Altoona garage; **William Tinkle**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Grinnell garage; **Joyce Tuel**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Fort Dodge garage; **Darrell Ver Heul**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Newton garage; **Dennis Wilson**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Tama garage; **Danny Zeimen**, transportation engineer intern, District 1 materials to transportation engineer, Des Moines construction

## Transfers

**Elvie Laudencia**, management analyst 3, from Finance to Employee Services; **Brian Smith**, transportation engineer specialist, from District 1 field staff to Design; **Dennis Witte**, highway technician associate, from Malcom garage to Newton garage

## Retirements

**Gary Bowlin**, garage operations assistant, Martensdale garage; **William Buchanan**, construction technician senior, Marshalltown construction; **Marcia Fischer**, driver's license hearing officer, Driver Services

## Service Awards

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for January 2008

### 40 Years

Karen Lidman, Contracts

### 35 Years

None

### 30 Years

**James Carpenter**, Design; **Douglas Glanz**, District 6 paint crew; **Jody Johnson**, Vehicle Services; **Evan Johnston**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Arlene Mc Cumber**, New Hampton construction; **Richard Moraine**, District 4 field staff; **Keith Norris**, District 2 Office; **Freedra Reaves**, Davenport DL station

### 25 Years

**Randy Bates**, Garner garage; **Fran Frazier**, Employee Services; **Lee Lawson**, Document Services

### 20 Years

**Nancy Bishop**, Jefferson construction; **Steven Chapman**, Right of Way; **Mike Kempf**, Perry garage; **Walter Morz**, Right of Way; **Michael Uhlenhopp**, Latimer garage; **Jeff Vander Zwaag**, Boone garage; **Randy Wheatley**, Adair garage

### 15 Years

**Michael Hatting**, Ashton garage; **Lisa Ann Luko**, Mount Pleasant construction

### 10 Years

**Harry Adam**, Wapello garage; **Donald Gomez**, Sioux City-Hamilton garage; **Timothy Grell**, Sioux City-Leeds garage; **Larry Johnson**, Fairfield garage; **Christine Jones**, Information Technology Division; **Lowell Larson**, Sloan garage; **Richard Narmi**, Council Bluffs-south garage; **David Nickell**, Leon garage; **Kay Scott**, Cherokee construction; **Jason Strum**, Design; **Robbie White**, Carlisle garage

### 5 Years

**Kie Ahrens**, Sioux City-Leeds garage; **Michael Frank**, Hanlontown garage; **Vanessa Goetz**, Materials; **David Hellickson**, Traffic and Safety; **Jon Makovec**, Finance; **Gregory Moyle**, Design; **Darren Reid**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Trent Sorgenfrey**, Tipton garage; **Jim Van Holland**, Rock Valley garage; **Ryan Wyllie**, Transportation Data

### ONE 2 ONE, continued from page 2

of either boldness or stupidity, according to his co-workers, Duane called and invited me to their holiday potluck. Seeing as how it was the only invitation I got, I went!

Cute story...the person who answered Duane's call told me a guy from Washington state DOT was on the telephone to invite me to their holiday party. I said it must be the garage. No, I was told, it's either Washington state or Washington, D.C. I think maybe Duane said he was from Washington DOT, leading to the confusion, or else it's just that he sounds so darn important!

You will be glad to know that they made me work for my lunch – I had to answer questions for 30 minutes. I am thinking it wasn't the Qs and As that mattered as much as we got to extend the eating. Great food, great conversation and great fun! By the way, I know it was neither boldness nor stupidity, but good old-fashioned kindness that led Duane to invite me. Well, it was either that or the other guys daring him to do it!

*Nancy*

# 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.

**Nancy J. Richardson**, Director

**Tracey Bramble**, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Editor  
**Lynn Purcell**, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Desktop Publisher  
**Christina Andersen**, Media and Marketing Services, Staff Writer  
**Keven Arrowsmith**, 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**

**On the cover:** Snowfighting has been a full-time business for many DOT shops this winter season.

Service Area	Correspondent	Phone
District 1 .....	<b>Kay Ridgway</b> , Des Moines .....	515-986-5729
District 2 .....	<b>Lu Mohorne</b> , Mason City .....	641-423-7584
District 3 .....	<b>Mary Beth Banta</b> , Sioux City .....	712-276-1451
District 4 .....	<b>Marlene Jensen</b> , Atlantic .....	712-243-3355
District 5 .....	<b>Brenda Hadley</b> , Fairfield .....	641-472-6142
District 6 .....	<b>Sandi Byers</b> , Cedar Rapids .....	319-364-0235
Bridges and Structures .....	<b>Judy Whitney</b> , Ames .....	515-233-7917
Construction .....	<b>Nancy McMenamin</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1043
Contracts .....	<b>Peg Muxfeldt</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1422
Design .....	<b>Judy Lensing</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1469
Driver Services .....	<b>Noralee Warrick</b> , Ankeny .....	515-237-3253
General Counsel .....	<b>Chris Crow</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1509
Information Technology Division .....	<b>Colette Simpson</b> , Ames .....	515-233-7228
Local Systems .....	<b>Kathy LaRue</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1081
Location and Environment .....	<b>Jean Jesse</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1225
Maintenance .....	<b>Cindy Shipley</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1971
Materials .....	<b>Brian Squier</b> , Ames .....	515-233-7915
Planning, Programming and Modal Division .....	<b>Mary Kay Reimers</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1661
Motor Carrier Services .....	<b>Diann McMillen</b> , Ankeny .....	515-237-3250
Motor Vehicle Enforcement .....	<b>Kerry Kirkpatrick</b> , Ankeny .....	515-237-3260
Operations and Finance Division .....	<b>Sheri Anderson</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1340
Research and Technology Bureau .....	<b>Phyllis Geer</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1646
Right-of-Way .....	<b>Linda Kriegel</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1135
Traffic and Safety .....	<b>Linda McBride</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1557
Vehicle Services .....	<b>Thelma Huffman</b> , Ankeny .....	515-237-3182

## Transportation Toastmasters

*The learn-by-doing workshop allows participants to hone their speaking and leadership skills in a friendly atmosphere. Participants learn skills related to use of humor, gestures, eye contact, speech organization, and overall delivery.*

**D**oes the thought of speaking in front of a group send you running the opposite direction? While the fear of public speaking is a leading cause of panic in people, one group is reaching out to calm fears and build confidence.

Toastmasters International (TI) began at a California YMCA in 1924. In the past 84 years, TI has grown to nearly 220,000 members in 11,300 clubs in 90 countries. Ames sports four Toastmasters clubs, including a group of intrepid souls, the Transportation Toastmasters, that meets every Tuesday at noon in the Iowa DOT's Systems Planning conference room in Ames.

The Transportation Toastmasters Club was chartered in March 1974 by several DOT leaders to help DOT employees develop better communication and leadership skills. They understood that DOT leaders must be able to listen well, be comfortable with presentations, and respond to public challenges constructively. In addition, many DOTers need to be able to conduct meetings effectively. Over the years, the group began to include non-DOTers in the one-hour weekly meetings.

At each meeting, approximately a dozen people practice and learn skills by filling a meeting role, ranging from giving a prepared speech or an impromptu one, to serving as timer or evaluator. There is no instructor; instead, each speech is critiqued by a member in a positive manner, focusing on what was done right and what could be improved.

At a recent Transportation Toastmasters meeting, Lifeng Zhang from Iowa State University (ISU), completed a speech about the benefits of Toastmasters. In his presentation he pointed out that members build relationships outside their regular activities, improve their speaking skills and make friends from different cultures.



*(Front row, from left) Noel Hindt, DOJ, TI sergeant-at-arms; Bob Strahan, ISU; Joe Reutter, DOT, TI vice president - public relations; Lifeng Zhang, ISU, TI secretary; Sangkwon Na, ISU; (Back row, from left) Henry Chen, ISU, TI vice president - education; Mark Wright, ISU, TI vice president - membership; Yawen Wei, ISU; Linda Anderson, ISU, TI treasurer; Mardy Baenziger, ISU; Kueier Chung, ISU, TI president. Members not pictured: Marilyn Loupee, DOT; Stan Peterson, DOT; Lyle Hammes, city of Ames; Karen Cruise, Ames Youth Shelter; Yong Huang, ISU; Penny Madsen, ISU.*

The non-profit organization does charge a \$4.50 per month fee, but that includes a copy of TI's monthly *Toastmaster Magazine* and other materials. The learn-by-doing workshop allows participants to hone their speaking and leadership skills in a friendly atmosphere. Members learn communication skills by working in the *Competent Communication* manual, a series of 10 self-paced speaking assignments designed to instill a basic foundation in public speaking. Participants learn skills related to use of humor, gestures, eye contact, speech organization, and overall delivery. When finished with this manual, members can choose from 15 advanced manuals to learn skills related to specific interests.

Members also learn leadership skills by taking on various meeting roles and serving as officers at the club and district levels, and by working in the *Competent Leadership* manual and the *High Performance Leadership* program. In the learn-by-doing approach, members are not lectured about leadership skills. They are given responsibilities and asked to practice what they've learned.

For more information about Transportation Toastmasters, contact Joe Reutter at 515-233-7947.