

## December 2017 Director's Report

Hi, everyone! I hope you all had a good Thanksgiving and are happily preparing for the holidays. I'm excited – my too-quiet house will soon be filled with returning college kids – Mary and Matt will be back from ISU by the next weekend and Dan and his girlfriend Petey (short for Pevitra) will join us December 19 from Utah State. (I enjoy seeing them together – Dan is well over 6'4" and Petey just makes 5'0".) I've mentioned in the past that Mary and Matt are both in the ISU marching band (officially, the Iowa State University Cyclone Football Varsity Marching Band® – it makes for a very wide t-shirt), and I was worried that they would be traveling for ISU's bowl game over Christmas, but luckily they don't leave until after Christmas. They're both also in the men's basketball pep band, and I like that better because I get to see them much more up-close on TV sometimes. During basketball games when they pan the crowd Erin and I chant "Show the band! Show the band!" and then cheer when they do. You kind of have to be there.



*Stuart Nielsen's cow painting. Keep reading!*

I get a lot of opportunities to speak to groups of people about the Iowa DOT, and last week I had a very enjoyable one when I visited an ISU engineering class taught by our very own Stuart Nielsen. Stuart is a bridge engineer in the Office of Bridges and Structures, and he's been teaching engineering classes at ISU for the last 19 years. He was nice enough to invite me to visit his class, and I had a great time talking to his very bright students about professional roles, the Iowa DOT, and the future of the DOT and transportation. I put a focus on our role as a mobility and accessibility company, both from a position of physical movement and identity management, as well as how data and information are becoming a part of our transportation infrastructure to enhance mobility, accessibility, and capacity. We also put in a plug for our internship program and the diversity of careers we have here at the DOT.

A really cool side benefit was that I got to know Stuart better. In addition to being a bridge engineer and a professor, Stuart is an artist, illustrator and author. He gave me this picture of a cow that he painted as a thank you for visiting his class, and as well as a t-shirt that memorializes his books about bridge building robots (check them out at [www.bridgerobots.com](http://www.bridgerobots.com)), and I shared with Stuart my own meager work as an author and illustrator. (A Christmas story called "Santa Stew" that I wrote for my now 26-year-old but then 7-year-old nephew; I converted it to a Prezi last year for my overseas nephews and you can check it out here: [http://prezi.com/amv2k2agcnqe/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/amv2k2agcnqe/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy). It's one of those few Christmas stories that has brief yet tasteful nudity. ☺)



*A racy scene from "Santa Stew."*

talents, interests and activities among us, and we benefit personally and professionally when we know more about each other. Thanks for sharing who you are, Stuart!

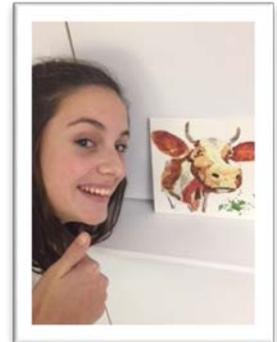
### Governor's budget presentation

As I mentioned last month, we presented our fiscal year 2019 budget to Governor Reynolds, Lt. Governor Gregg, and the Department of Management on November 20, 2017. Again, we start developing the budget in late summer/early fall, in consultation with the Department of Management, and this presentation to the Governor is a formal presentation, covered by media, that is the first public discussion of the proposed budget. (The Governor receives formal presentations from all of the state's executive agencies, this is not limited to just our budget.) Assuming there are no changes (which we don't anticipate at this point) the budget presented becomes part of the budget the Governor presents to the legislature for its approval during the next session.

**Accomplishments.** One thing we do during the budget presentation is share some of our accomplishments. This year we talked about our role as a mobility and accessibility provider, consistent with our mission of getting you there, and our ability to deliver smart solutions and smart execution. As I told the Governor, we really think that is our brand – getting you there with smart execution – and the accomplishments we walked about bore that out. We included all of the following:

- Adopting the new **state long range transportation plan**, "Iowa in Motion 2045." (You can find the plan at <https://iowadot.gov/iowainmotion>.)
- Starting the **I-74 river bridge project** in the Quad Cities.
- Staying on track to complete the **US Highway 20 four-lane project** by the end of calendar year 2018.
- Completing the award-winning **Council Bluffs interstate system rail relocation project**.

Stuart's cow picture was well received in our house – Erin quickly adopted it to go alongside a pig picture that's the centerpiece of her room, and Mary celebrated it as a companion to Henry the Color-Changing-Christmas Cow, celebrated by the piccolo section of the ISU-CFVMB as a source of good fortune and cheer. And as much as I enjoy the cow, what I really enjoy is the reminder of how important it is to know each other as people and not just as jobs, positions, and titles. We have so many



*Erin Lowe gives it her seal of approval.*



*Henry the Color-Changing Christmas Cow*



*The piccolos revering Henry before a game.*

- Continuing to implement **transportation systems management and operations (TSMO)** principles throughout the DOT. In this area we noted ISU's study of the Highway Helper program, which showed a 10:1 benefit to cost ratio and an estimated \$30M in savings in the form of secondary crashes and travel delay avoided.
- Helping to make the state "AV-ready" by collaborating in the **autonomous vehicle proving grounds project** along the I-380 corridor and initiating a pilot of our "living map" app with approximately 400 drivers in the corridor.
- Piloting use of an **unmanned aerial system (drone)** to assess flood impacts, document airport assets, and assess road and bridge conditions.
- Developing an **interactive commercial driver's license test preparation app** to help CDL applicants develop competency and prepare for license examinations.
- Developing an **electronic registration and title system** (to go live this January) that will let auto dealers electronically submit registration and title applications to county treasurers and pay all fees electronically.
- Promoting the culture, history, and beauty of Iowa by adding the **Covered Bridges Scenic Byway, the Jefferson Highway Heritage Byway, and the White Pole Road Scenic Byway** to our byways program.

**Budget.** As most of you know our funding comes from the Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF), but we can't just dip into that as we choose – our funding must be specifically allocated and approved by the legislature through the budget approval process. That includes the total operational funding we receive, the number of FTEs (full time equivalents – each FTE is equal to a full time position) we are allocated, and the salary funding we are allocated to support those FTEs. The RUTF by statute is split between the state, cities, and counties, with 48.5% of the RUTF allocated to the state as the primary road fund. About 87% of our budget comes from the primary road fund, and covers activities that are devoted primarily to the primary road system that were responsible for. The remaining 13% is allocated directly from the RUTF, and covers activities that benefit the state more generally (primarily Motor Vehicle Division and Motor Vehicle Enforcement functions). Funds in the primary road fund that are not allocated to our operational budget are available for programming for road and bridge projects in the five-year highway program.

Our proposed overall budget for FY2019 is presented below; as you can see the total budget is \$378,116,000, with a total operational budget of \$346,556,000 and a steady allocation of 2,722 FTEs. Again, we are not expecting to reduce any FTEs going into the next fiscal year.

BUDGET SUMMARY (\$000 Omitted)				
Item	FY 2018		Adjustments	FY 2019
	Budget			Request
Operations	\$ 345,646		\$ 910	\$ 346,556
Special Purpose	24,699		196	25,770
Capital	16,278		(10,488)	5,790
Grand Total	\$ 386,624		\$ (9,382)	\$ 378,116
FTEs :		2,722	0	2,722

The following table shows the breakdown of operations by division; the highlighted column shows shifts of FTEs that reflect the changes we made this year to move seven policy positions from the Operations & Finance Division (now the Administrative Services Division) and the Planning, Programming & Modal Division to the Performance & Technology Division (now the Strategic Performance Division) to form Strategic Communications & Policy, and to move 106 positions from the Motor Vehicle Division to the Highway Division to move Motor Vehicle Enforcement into the Systems Operations Bureau. The adjustments reflect only the move of the positions from one division to another; again the total number of positions remain the same.

OPERATIONS (\$000 Omitted)						
Budget Unit/Division	FY 2018				FY 2019	
	Budget		Adjustments		Request	
	FTEs	\$	FTEs	\$	FTEs	\$
Operations	256	\$ 48,469	(6)	\$ (770)	250	\$ 47,699
Planning, Programming & Modal	95	9,070	(1)	(113)	94	8,957
Motor Vehicle	388	37,704	(106)	(10,556)	281	27,148
Highway	1,949	246,491	106	11,466	2,056	257,956
Performance & Technology	34	3,912	7	882	41	4,795
Total Operations	2,722	\$ 345,646	0	\$ 910	2,722	\$ 346,556

*Note that the total number of positions that will be moved from Motor Vehicle Division will be 107. The original presentation inadvertently omitted one position that will be corrected when the budget is submitted to the legislature.*

The special purpose funding shown in the first table is specific funding that is appropriated to us, either by the legislature through the budget process or by statutory allocations specifically set in the Iowa Code, and covers things like driver's license and identification card production costs, county treasurer support for driver and identification and vehicle registration services, worker's compensation and unemployment compensation, and other costs that have specific funding allocations. Changes of note in this area include an appropriation of \$242,000 for production of state transportation maps, which we produce every other year, and continued appropriations for replacement equipment to shift replacement of our medium and heavy duty trucks from a 15 year replacement schedule to a 12 year replacement schedule, which over time will reduce the number of vehicles in our medium and heavy-duty fleet that are beyond their end-of-life, reduce maintenance expenses, and reduce down time for these vehicles.

Capital funding, which is also shown in the first table, is appropriations that go to specific facility improvement projects, and this area can fluctuate up and down from year to year depending on specific facility needs. In this fiscal year we have only one capital project, which is a rebuild/remodel of the Waterloo maintenance facility. This project is consistent with our overall strategy for facilities, which is to reduce operating expense by consolidating our overall physical footprint by consolidating certain facilities and extending the life of facilities that are well-positioned. In this case the investment is expected to extend the life of the Waterloo maintenance facility by 25 years.

I was pleased to present this budget to the Governor and I have to say that it was easy to be proud of our accomplishments and humbling to be able to present them on behalf of everyone. I'm also optimistic this will give us a second year of operational stability. I get that budget details can be confusing, so if you have any questions let me know!

**WATERLOO MAINTENANCE FACILITY**  
Built in 1972

Replace radiant heat | Add mechanics bay  
Upgrade electrical system | Improve drainage in truck bays  
Replace garage roof | Remodel restrooms for ADA compliance

**Will extend life of facility by 25 years**

DECEMBER 12, 2017

The slide features two photographs of the Waterloo Maintenance Facility, a long, single-story brick building with multiple white garage doors. Below the photos are six orange circular icons, each representing a different improvement project: a flame for radiant heat, a wrench and screwdriver for a mechanics bay, a plug and lightning bolt for the electrical system, a water drop and pipe for drainage, a house roof for the garage roof, and a wheelchair for ADA-compliant restrooms. The slide has a white background with a red and grey footer.

*Improvements expected under the capital appropriation to rebuild and remodel the Waterloo maintenance facility.*

## **Scott Marler appointed as director of the Systems Operations Bureau**

I'm happy to announce that Scott Marler was appointed as the director of the Systems Operations Bureau in the Highway Division, which now includes Traffic Operations, Traffic & Safety, Maintenance, Construction & Materials, and Motor Vehicle Enforcement, effective December 1<sup>st</sup>. Scott is well known to us, serving in the Iowa DOT for more than 20 years. He has most recently been director of Traffic Operations Office (since January 2015), and prior to that worked in the Location and Environment office. Scott, who is a botanist by training, has applied his scientific method and approach to great effect on our behalf, becoming a well-known and valued leader throughout the DOT and the state in traffic incident management (TIM) and transportation systems management and operations (TSMO). Please join me in congratulating Scott!

## **Motor Vehicle Enforcement moves to Systems Operations Bureau**

As the entries above reflect, we made an organizational realignment to move Motor Vehicle Enforcement (MVE) to the Systems Operations Bureau, also effective December 1<sup>st</sup>. For many years MVE has for many years been an office within our Motor Vehicle Division, which also includes Driver & Identification Services, Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services, and the Bureau of Investigation & Identity Protection. However, this year we organizationally moved supervision of MVE from the Motor Vehicle Division to our Systems Operations Bureau in our Highway Division, which again includes the offices of Maintenance, Traffic & Safety, Traffic Operations (which includes our Traffic Management Center), and now Construction & Materials. This move will better align our operational resources and help us more effectively implement transportation system management and operations (TSMO) principles, as well as more strategically and effectively guide MVE's work, by better aligning MVE with operational decisions and data involving commercial motor vehicles. This move will also improve coordination with the Iowa State Patrol, as we continue to build joint operations protocols with ISP through our Systems Operations Bureau and Traffic Operations.

This move is organizational only – MVE will remain headquartered at the Motor Vehicle Division building in Ankeny (which also houses the Traffic Management Center) where it will continue to interact with the Motor Vehicle Division on matters such as commercial driver's license requirements, commercial driver fitness and capability, movement of oversize and overweight loads, and motor carrier operating authority. No physical relocation of staff or offices and no expenditure of funds was necessary to complete this organizational move.

This move is detailed in MVE's first annual report, which we submitted to the legislature on November 30<sup>th</sup>. The report includes a history of MVE and an overview of its organization, workforce, facilities, activities and budget. If you would like to learn more about MVE, check out the report here:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/DF/865317.pdf>.

## And so does Construction & Materials!

As part of the continued shift of focus on operations and TSMO, we also moved Construction & Materials from the Project Delivery Bureau to the Systems Operations Bureau. In the operation of the system there are two major types of delay – planned and unplanned. Movement of traffic through work zones is one of the primary types of planned delay that we have a lot of control over. Through the careful and deliberate design of work zones, traffic control during construction, and the study of movement through the area (both during smooth traffic flows and after incidents occur) we can help control not only the delay but also the safety our customers are experiencing in the work zones. By moving Construction and Materials to the operations bureau we're helping facilitate more efficient collaboration between the design of the work zone and subsequent movement of traffic through it.

## Mikel Derby takes on federal liaison role; Susan Fenton joins us as state liaison

**Federal liaison.** As many of you know, Mikel Derby has been our legislative liaison for the past five years, focusing primarily on state legislative relations and priorities but also helping with federal legislative relations and issues, especially after Dan Franklin retired. There are critical policy and funding issues at the federal level that require consistent attention, communication, and interaction. It has been roughly a year and a half since Dan's retirement and we've found it difficult to give those issues the full attention necessary with one person serving dual roles. Therefore, we asked Mikel, who has significant federal experience and excellent knowledge of and working relationship with our federal delegation, to take on the role of federal legislative liaison.

I think this is particularly important at this critical juncture of infrastructure and highway funding. We also think Mikel can help us strengthen our relationships with key federal agencies (such as the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Army Corps of Engineers) and have asked Mikel to become involved in federal/national policy discussions and efforts through participation in organizations such as TRB (the Transportation Research Board) and AASHTO (the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials).

I'm very appreciative to Mikel for taking on this role and for all he has done as our state legislative liaison. As I said by email when we first announced this change, the state legislative sessions are often fast-paced, fast-changing, and long-running, and Mikel every year marshalled us through a host of issues -- both large and small, but all important to the people involved and often critical to us as an agency -- with terrific energy, urgency, and effectiveness. Again, I can't thank him enough for all that he has done for us as an agency and for me personally, and we really appreciate his willingness to take on this new focus and have great confidence that his energy, expertise, and personal effectiveness will have a similar impact at the federal level.

**State liaison.** Making this shift meant that we needed to appoint a new state legislative liaison, and I'm pleased to report that Susan Fenton has joined us in that role on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Susan has over 25 years of experience working directly with the Iowa legislature in a variety of roles, including research analyst and chief of staff

positions for three different leaders within the Iowa House of Representatives. She also served as the legislative liaison for Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey, and most recently has worked as a private lobbyist. Susan received her Bachelor degree in Political Science from Drake University. In 2017, she was inducted into the 130-year-old Iowa Pioneer Lawmakers Association.

Consistent with the changes we made earlier this year to establish Strategic Communications & Policy within the Strategic Performance Division, both Mikel and Susan will remain part of that team and will report to Andrea Henry, director of Strategic Communications & Policy. However, because of the unique (and sometimes urgent) role these positions play, both will have frequent and direct contact with me and with our management team, much as Andrea does. Also, Renee Jerman will continue to assist with our state legislative issues and will remain an important point of coordination, communication, and guidance with Susan.

### **Driver & Identification service centers keep getting cooler**

For the past couple of years, our teams in Driver & Identification Services (DIS) have been working to redefine their customer services centers – wringing out “old” government and promoting an environment that’s clean,

clear, calm, convenient, consistent, safe, and secure, for us and for our customers. Key changes include adopting a common color scheme based on the colors used in the DOT logo, making sure our backs are never to the customers as we greet them, letting customers sit rather than stand so we can more personally interact with them during their visit, getting rid of unnecessary equipment and clutter to eliminate excessive customer and staff movement, removing visual obstacles, and streamlining customer flow. In a previous director's report I talked about how the Davenport service center brought music into their workspace to make it more energetic and engaging. Additionally, to engage customers while they wait, we offer free Wi-Fi in all 17 of our DOT service centers and also installed TV

monitors in all of them to run something called the Motor Vehicle Network that displays helpful and interesting service and safety information.



*Brandie McCuen with our vision and mission statement in a DIS service center.*

Another way we're engaging and guiding customers is by adding large fathead style graphics. The graphics include our mission and vision, and a welcoming message that answers the number one question we hear in our service centers – "why can't I smile in my photo?" (Answer: actually, you can!) These are big, bold, graphics that look like they are painted right on the walls of our service centers, and we think that's important – they we display helps to set the tone for a customer's visit and their experience. Small, 8 ½ x 11 inch pieces of paper taped to a wall don't add a lot of value as



*New DIS service center "Welcome" messages. Bigger + bolder = better!*

customers rarely read (and can barely see) the information -- it tends to scream "old government", which is not the brand we're going for. Big, bold and compelling imagery, on the other hand, tells people we care about reaching them and care about giving them a positive, engaging experience.

These changes are catching our customers' attention, but they're also catching the attention of people across the country. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) recognized our service center improvements at the AAMVA Region III conference in Oak Brook, Illinois in October, where the Motor Vehicle Division was awarded the "Improvement through Efficiencies" award for our driver's license service center reconfigurations. A special thank you goes to Brandie McCuen, Performance Manager for the Motor Vehicle Division, who has shown personal commitment and leadership by driving the charge to make our customer service centers a pleasant, welcoming, and effective place to work and visit. (She gets a special service star for spending a Sunday with Danean Johnson and me painting the River Place service center with our new signature colors when we kicked this off long ago. That's commitment!)

Our work in this initiative isn't done -- we have two more service centers to reconfigure (Ankeny and Cedar Rapids), and so far, only a couple of locations have had the "fathead" style decals installed, but we'll be installing the rest very soon, and we also recognize it's an ongoing effort to keep these service center standards up. I appreciate the care our supervisors and teams take to keep the momentum, and congratulate Brandie, our service center supervisors, and all our service centers teams for the improvements they've made.

Have ideas for other messages we should share with our driver's license and identification card customers? Let us know – the Motor Vehicle Division is open for suggestions!

## But this was NOT cool

I mentioned above that we still need to reconfigure our driver & identification service center in Cedar Rapids, but this is NOT the way we want to do it – on November 27<sup>th</sup> a van crashed through the front of our Cedar Rapids service center. The driver apparently confused the brake and accelerator and accelerated over the sidewalk, entering our break room and nearly missing one of our Cedar Rapids team members. We were very fortunate no one was hurt, and I'm grateful for that.

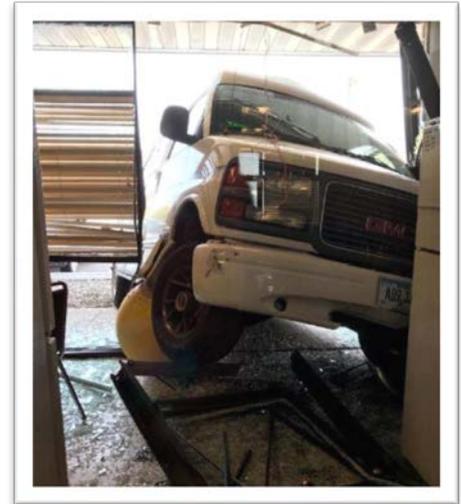
This event bothered me personally, because it's not the first time this has happened in Cedar Rapids. A vehicle went through the break room



*Side view of the van that hit the Cedar Rapids service center.*

a few years ago, and while we were in the process of securing and installing concrete

bollards to protect against that happening again, another one went through the window outside the customer seating area. We were eventually able to install the bollards, but because the landlord was concerned about aesthetics the bollards that were installed were large round balls (like the ones you sometimes see outside Target) that were not permanently mounted. We thought they would be sufficient to prevent something like this from happening again, but clearly they were not, and that's not acceptable – if we're going to commit to being safe and secure in our workplaces it has to mean something.



*Looking out from the break room in the Cedar Rapids service center.*

To immediately protect the service center while we work on a more permanent solution, we placed jersey barriers across the front of the service center (jersey barriers are the tapered concrete barriers we use to keep cars out of work zones). A special thank you to Highway Division Director Mitch Dillavou, District Engineer Jim Schnoebelen and the District 6 team for quickly and swiftly doing this for us. We see collaboration between our divisions all the time, but it is especially reassuring to know that we can call on each other this quickly.

Long term we are going to insist on permanently mounted and countersunk bollards that are fully capable of preventing a vehicle from crossing the sidewalk and striking the building (as we have installed in all other service center locations that have head-in parking), and if our landlord is not amenable to that we'll be looking for new

space. Cedar Rapids team, I'm really sorry you had to experience this again and we're going to get this right for you.

## Dynamic messaging boards get colorful

Our Message Mondays are known for their sometimes edgy messages, but were not talking about colorful language, we're talking about color displays – the walls of our service centers are not the only things getting a splash of color and bold, easy-to-read messages. As part of the Council Bluffs Interstate System improvement program, we have installed two full-matrix, color



*Compare the information color DMS (top) can display versus usual amber display (bottom).*

dynamic message signs (DMS) – one on I-29 northbound at US 275 in Council Bluffs, and one on I-80 westbound at the South Expressway in Council Bluffs. As construction continues over the next few years we will be installing more, perhaps as many as eight.

Full color DMS are more than just colorful, though – they offer significant operational advantages over traditional amber DMS.

- **Full color DMS offer more flexibility in the design of messages and offer messages that are more quickly understood.** The color DMS can replicate the color, shape, and size of standard MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) highway signs. The MUTCD sign images can convey immediate information and meaning without requiring drivers to read and comprehend a word-based message. (As they<sup>1</sup> say, a picture is worth a thousand words!) The MUTCD sign images are signs drivers are familiar with and can provide the same message as the words, but in a more concise and simple manner for the drivers to comprehend.
- **The full color DMS are wider and taller.** The color DMS in Council Bluffs will be wider than our normal amber DMS (three lanes wide vs. two lanes wide) and also 30% taller. This will allow us to run messages specific to each lane, rather than a single message covering both lanes, and the larger surface area increases visibility and message options.

<sup>1</sup> Not sure who "they" are? According to David Letterman, the "they" in "they say" is the Van Patten family. (Dick Van Patten was the dad on "Eight is Enough," and he had three sons that were actors. But you have to have watched TV in the 70s and 80s to know any of this. Although I feel like you everyone should still know who David Letterman is.)

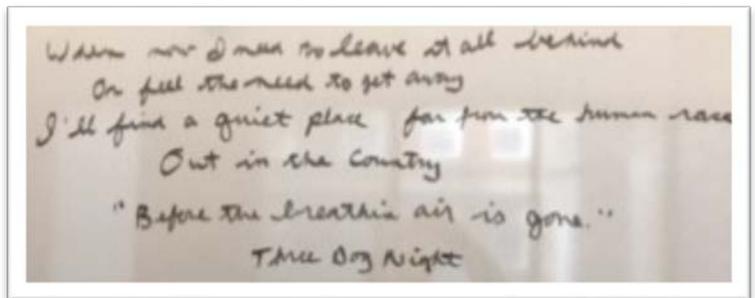
This is a great example of how we can use smart execution to help our road customers get the information they need to make good and safe operational decisions, and it's an example of our vision and mission in action – smarter, simpler, customer driven solutions help people get there, safely securely, and efficiently. Great work!

### **Smoother sailing on U.S. 52 in Decorah brings national award to Iowa DOT**

On Nov. 30, the American Concrete Pavement Association honored an Iowa project as its top concrete restoration. This project innovatively improved a very rough road by using much of the existing pavement on 4.2 miles of U.S. 52 in Decorah while addressing rough pavement joints. We worked closely with our construction partners, Wicks Construction, Iowa Civil Contracting, Inc., and WHKS & Co. to address the extensive deterioration and additional patching at the joints. The end result is a very smooth road and safer mobility for the traveling public. Congratulations to everyone involved!

### **Song of the month**

This month's song goes out to Joe Pitts, a long-time listener and first time caller who works in Ames as a facilities maintenance coordinator. Joe helped set up a white board in my office, and he left this message for me, which is the lyrics from the 1970 Three Dog Night hit "Out in the Country." Thanks for the message, Joe! I had "One," "Mama Told Me (Not to Come)," "Never Been to Spain," "Joy to the World," and "Shambala" in my library, but this was a new one! For you guitar enthusiasts, it opens with an Am and then goes to a Bm.



### **Wellness tip**

Wellness doesn't have to be extraordinarily difficult or time-consuming – small, but steady commitments to movement and exercise can pay big dividends. A study in the Journal of American College of Cardiology found that running five minutes a day increases health and lifespan almost as much as running 150 minutes a week, and other research found that walking two to three minutes every hour (even in the office) has as many health benefits as an hour in the gym after work. Make it something you can do and stick to and you will see results!

\* \* \* \* \*

Alright, my friends, it's time for me to bring another report to a close. Bed and the promise of a dark, cold, early run tomorrow morning beckon. (Thank goodness for hot coffee and hot showers, preferably at the same time!) Stay warm, healthy, and safe, and have a wonderful holiday season with family and friends!

*Mark*