

November 2017 Director's Report

Hi, everyone! When I last wrote ISU was playing Kansas in the rain and I was getting ready to head to the packet pickup for the Des Moines Marathon. I'm happy to report that the marathon was a success (much better than the Quad Cities Marathon – it's a great race and great location, but temps in the 40s are much better than temps in the 90s – after the Quad Cities I came close to heat exhaustion, after Des Moines I literally drank coffee in a hot shower), but I also need to report that Tina Greenfield-Huitt (who's our road weather information system coordinator in the Office of Maintenance) is much faster than you might guess – every time I thought I was past her I would look up to find her in front of me. (Actually, she was there on her bike to cheer her husband on, but it was fun to see a friendly face throughout the course.) And October finished strong with an ISU win over TCU and Halloween. Erin managed to combine both by celebrating



These are the pumpkins we carved. Yes, that's a hatchet through the eye of the one on the left. Probably had something to do with watching "The Walking Dead" before I carved it. I went Rick Grimes on that baby.

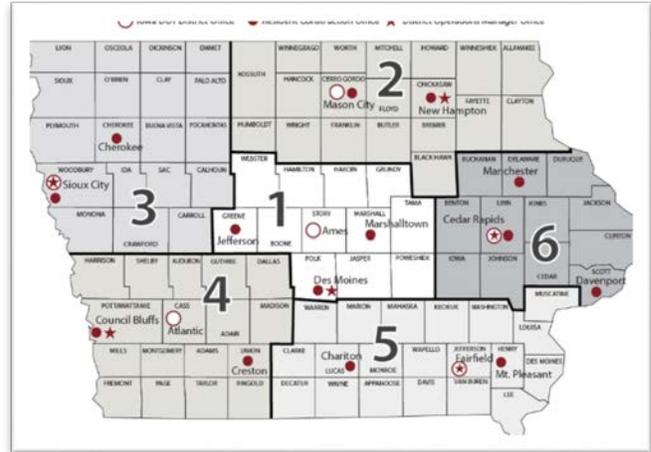
the win with a "dilly dilly" pumpkin (she did the crown and I did the words for her), and was thrilled when she tweeted out a picture of it that garnered a "like" from former Cyclone basketball great Georges Niang and Bud Light. (If you're not sure what "Dilly Dilly" is all about, Google the Bud Light commercial – somehow this has become an ISU catch phrase. The main point for me is that 16 is not too old for Halloween pumpkins.)



With Erin Lowe after the Cyclones big win over TCU. Unfortunately, the smiles weren't quite so big after the OSU game.

Like last month, however, I thought some of my best time was spent out in the field. We (Highway Division Director Mitch Dillavou, Projects Delivery Bureau Director Charlie Purcell and me) continued our highway district visits and visited districts 3 (northwest), 4 (southwest), and 6 (east). It would take way too much space to write about everything we learned and saw on these visits, but it's safe to say that each visit impressed upon me the breadth, scope, and complexity of the work we do, and the number of dedicated, smart, and diversely talented people it takes to do it. Examples include:

- In District 3 all of the coordination and focus being exerted to finish the final segments of four-lane on US 20 before the end of 2018 and the smart execution needed to deliver reconstruction of I-29 in the narrow and high-volume corridor between the Missouri River, the rail lines, and the bluffs in Sioux City;
- In District 4 the complexity of coordinating all of the facets of the Council Bluffs Interstate System (CBIS) improvement program, including a smart and creative strategy to fully close portions of the interstate during phase 4 to actually speed project delivery and reduce overall congestion and delay during construction, as well as a demonstration of the complexity of winter operations and smart strategies we are pursuing to improve the effectiveness of snow blade performance and brine production; and

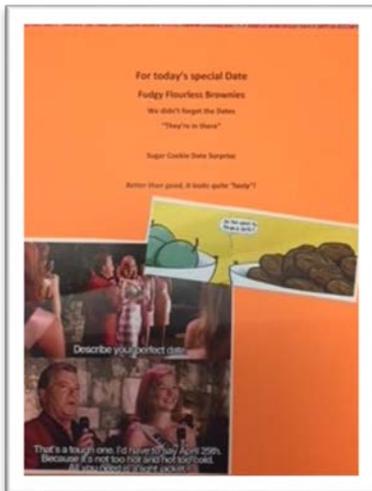


Our Highway District map. It occurred to me that (like me) not everyone has it memorized and would benefit from the reference.

- In District 6 the complexity of and ingenuity needed in delivering multiple large projects in our most populous and urbanized district, including the Highway 100 extension near Cedar Rapids and the reconstruction of the I-74 bridge in the Quad Cities.

Thank you to our District Engineers Tony Lazarowicz (District 3), Scott Schram (District 4), and Jim Schnoebelen (District 6) and their staffs for their time, effort and gracious attention.

I should also mention that the date references continue! District 6 kept up the theme with date-filled “Fudgy Flourless Brownies” and “Sugar Cookie Date Surprise.” (Both of which were fantastic.) They helped my return to eating dates (at least dates baked into treats), and District 6 secretary Holy Boebel added a flourish with a date-themed flier that she collaborated on with some very creative District 6 staff. (It take real teamwork to pull together a date-themed cartoon and “Miss Congeniality” movie reference in one flier.) Thank you again for bringing a sense of fun and humor to our work!



The date-themed flier from District 6. In case you can’t see it, the cartoon shows two flies sitting next to a bowl of dates, and one fly says to the other, “Want to go on a date?”

2018 legislative session is approaching!

It's hard to believe but the 2018 legislative session is almost upon us. The 2018 session will open January 8, but our preparation for it has been ongoing since this past July. There are two key things that we develop for each legislative session – one is our package of proposed legislative fixes or initiatives, and the other is our budget for the next fiscal year. Both require coordination with and approval by the Governor's office (as well as the Department of Management in the case of our budget) and we start developing both in late summer/early fall with the goal of having them finalized by November. All of our divisions contribute to the development of each, with the input of each division coordinated through the respective division director.

Legislative proposals. The Governor's office last week approved our legislative proposals and we will now start working with the Legislative Services Agency to develop the formal bills that will be submitted as agency bills in 2018. As we did last year, we will share the specific details of and explanation for each proposal with you, but I thought it would be helpful to give you an initial outline of the proposals we will submit this year. Our proposals will include all of the following:

- **Motor Vehicle Enforcement (MVE) officer authority.** Last session we were successful in securing legislation that clarified and confirmed the authority of our MVE officers to intervene with operators of non-commercial motor vehicle operators and engage in other non-commercial motor vehicle enforcement when necessary for public safety, by making explicit that they have the same powers as all other peace officers in the state. That legislation included a "sunset" provision that makes the legislation expire June 30, 2018, apparently to give the legislature the opportunity to revisit the legislation to assure we did not significantly change our enforcement stance or lose our focus on commercial motor vehicle enforcement (something that unequivocally has not happened). We will pursue legislation this session that eliminates the sunset and make the 2017 legislation permanent.
- **Third-party commercial driver's license (CDL) skills testing by Iowa motor carriers.** In 2014 the legislature passed a bill that allowed Iowa-based motor carriers (or their subsidiaries) that operate a CDL training program to conduct the skills (driving) tests a driver must pass to get a CDL at their premises and using their own examiners, provided we train and certify those examiners and audit their performance as required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. This legislation also includes a sunset provision that repealed the legislation on May 14, 2019, in this instance to give the legislature the opportunity to review the program and discontinue it if it was not working well. The program has been working well and not only helps carriers safely and effectively bring new drivers to commercial driving, but also adds to our own testing capacity by reducing the number of drivers we have to test at our service centers. We will pursue legislation this session that likewise eliminates this sunset and makes the original legislation permanent.

- **Charges for operating a commercial motor vehicle while texting or while using a handheld mobile device.** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) prohibit a person from texting or using a hand-held mobile device (for instance a mobile phone) while driving a commercial motor vehicle, unless the device is being used to make a call and is within the immediate reach of the driver and can be activated by a single touch. (These provisions are more restrictive than Iowa's general texting-while-driving law, which does not prohibit or regulate the use of mobile devices to make calls.) We adopted these regulations through section 321.449 of the Iowa Code, which generally adopts the FMCSRs, and have been enforcing them for a number of years, but the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has verbally advised us that we are nonetheless not in compliance with their regulations because a driver cited for either of these violation is cited under section 321.449, as opposed to a citation specific to texting while driving or using a hand-held mobile device. This matters to FMCSA because these are considered serious violations that in combination with other offenses may result in disqualification of a driver's CDL, but they can't be tracked on a driver's record if they are cited under a general adoption section. To correct this, we are pursuing legislation that will separately adopt these violations of the FMCSRs and allow them to be specifically identified and tracked on the driver's record. This won't result in new restrictions on commercial operators but will only ensure proper record keeping under restrictions that already exist and are being enforced.
- **Transportation Commission terms.** Members of our Transportation Commission are appointed by the Governor to serve four year terms, subject to approval by the Iowa Senate. They are currently subject to the same start and end dates for their term as all other board and commission members appointed by the Governor – under section 69.19 their term begins May 1 in the year of their appointment, and ends April 30 in the year their term expires. One of the Transportation Commission's primary responsibilities is to develop and approve the five-year program of highway projects, and this term makes it difficult for new Transportation Commission members to participate in that process – they are in the difficult position of coming in well after we start development of the program and just as it's being finalized. To avoid this in the future, we are proposing legislation that will change their terms to begin July 1 in their year of appointment and June 30 in the year their term expires, with implementation language that will extend the terms of existing commissioners to June 30 in the year their term expires to avoid any gaps in membership.
- **Blue/white lights on snow plows.** In 2015 the legislature authorized us to initiate a pilot program to equip our plow trucks with rear facing white and blue lights, in an effort to avoid side-swipe and rear-end collisions during winter storms. (Legislation was necessary because the Iowa Code limited our plows to amber lights and restricted the use of white and blue lights to certain vehicles that did not include plow trucks.) As I shared in the July Director's Report, we started the pilot program in late 2015, and by November 2015, all 170 plows in Highway District 1 (the central 12 counties, which includes the regions of Ft. Dodge, Ames, Marshalltown, and Des Moines) were equipped with rear-facing blue and

white lights, in addition to the usual amber warning lights. We also equipped some trucks in other regions of the state with blue and white lights to improve safety in high-crash regions and to spread experience and driver recognition of blue/white/amber plow lights.

Since implementation, the results have been very positive. In the winter of 2014-2015, before we implemented the blue and white lights, District 1 plows were sideswiped or hit from the rear on average once every 2,801 hours of winter operation. In the next two winter seasons the crash rate for those type of crashes dramatically decreased, to one for every 8,321 hours of winter operation in 2015-2016 and one for every 8,813 hours of winter operation in 2016-2017.

The pilot program approved by the legislature was to be conducted over a period of time that ended in July 2019. Because of the dramatic results we experienced, we are proposing legislation that will end the pilot period and permanently authorize the use of blue and white lights on our plow trucks. There are approximately 670 Iowa DOT plows not already equipped with blue and white lights; we estimate the cost of the upgrade to be \$500 each for a total cost of \$335,000, which we would pay within operational funds. We expect the initial investment will be quickly offset by the benefit of less damage and repair to vehicles, less downtime for vehicles, and better safety for the traveling public.

- **Special event signing.** Sections 306C.10(8) and section 306C.23 of the Iowa Code define and limit the placement of signs that display messages concerning noncommercial special events for local communities such as fairs, centennials, and festivals. These code sections include limitations that restrict the time during which the signs can be placed, as well as the size of the signs. We have found, however, that these restrictions are not necessary and are potentially problematic legally – they are not required by any federal law, including the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, and they run the risk of challenge on First Amendment “free speech” grounds. To remedy this, we are proposing legislation that would repeal these provisions. This will shift governance of these signs to “official signs” under section 306C.11(4) of the Iowa Code, which is implemented in our administrative rules through 761 Iowa Administrative Code 117.1, and which is originally derived from and aligns with federal regulations established under 23 CFR 750.153(n)). The provisions governing official signs do not restrict size or time of placement and are content neutral in regard to speech.

Budget. I will present our proposed budget for FY2019 to the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Department of Management on Monday, November 20. Once I have done that I will give you all a more detailed discussion of the proposed budget in the December Director's Report, but I do think it is safe to say that we are proposing and expecting stable staffing levels in the next fiscal year, meaning that we expect to have the same number of permanent full time equivalents (FTE's; one FTE is equal to one full time permanent position) in the coming fiscal year as this year (2,632), and don't expect any staff reductions in the next fiscal year. As I will explain in more detail next month, the presentation will show reductions of FTEs in some divisions that could be mistaken for

staff reductions, but those are just shifts of positions from one division to another to account for organizational realignments we have been discussing – specifically moving Motor Vehicle Enforcement from the Motor Vehicle Division to the Systems Operations Bureau in the Highway Division and moving policy positions from the Administrative Services Division to Strategic Communications & Policy in the Strategic Performance Division. The same number shown as reductions in the divisions they are moving from show up as additions in the divisions they are moving to, and the net result is no change in total FTEs.

DOT Leadership conference – moving forward together

On October 17th and 18th our management team hosted our annual leadership conference at the Gateway Center in Ames. This year's conference was titled "Momentum: Moving Forward Together." It was attended by more than 400 supervisors, managers, program, and service leaders from throughout the Iowa DOT, and featured speakers and presentations from people both inside and outside the agency, including:

- An **update from the management team on key agency projects and initiatives** that covered the new ERP system (see below for more on this), implementation of the federal aid swap, progress on the mobile driver's license project, and traffic systems management and operations (TSMO);
- A keynote **presentation by Donna Tweeten, HyVee Vice President and Chief Marketing and Customer Officer, titled "Living the Brand,"** that helped us understand how customers see an organization's brand and how we can choose our brand;
- **Six break out sessions** (attendees picked three of the six to rotate through) that covered the following topics:
 - **Enhancing Transportation Through Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones) and Virtual Reality.** This session was presented by Tim McClung, planning and outreach manager for the Office of Aviation and our resident unmanned aircraft expert, and Kimball Olson, aesthetic bridge specialist, and Annette Jeffers, automation engineer, both of the Office of Bridges and Structures and leaders of our 3D design, animation, visualization, and implementation efforts.
 - **Automated Vehicles: What are We Doing? Where are We Going?** This session was presented by Sinclair Stolle, traffic management systems engineer in Traffic Operations; Omar Ahmad, deputy director of the National Advanced Driving Simulator; and Brad Hofer, assistant Office of Locations & Environment director and location engineer.
 - **Ensuring Safe Mobility Through Enhanced System Management.** This session on TSMO was presented by Neil Hawkins, associate director for InTrans at Iowa State University; Todd Szymkowski, traffic systems and management operations manager, Gannett Fleming; and Jim Armstrong, District 5 Engineer.
 - **Tips for Successfully Managing Media Requests.** This session was presented by Andrea Henry, Strategic Communications & Policy Director, and Courtney Maxwell Greene, former newscaster and communications director and current Iowa Workforce Development bureau director.

- **Surviving Change Using Principles of Crucial Conversation.** This session was presented by Rod Bagley, chair of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at Iowa State University, and faculty director of the Emerging Leaders Academy at Iowa State.
- **Leading from the Middle.** This session was presented by Larry Ebbers, university professor emeritus at Iowa State University.
- **A question and answer session with the management team.**
- A closing keynote **presentation by professional speaker Karen McCullough titled, “Beyond the Brand – Living the Brand”** that reminded us that how we live our vision and mission – how we build our brand – will depend on the culture we build for ourselves, and encouraged us to build a culture in which everyone feels connected, protected and respected.

The presentations were really terrific and I can't thank everyone enough for all of the time, effort, and talent they extended. I also thank (profusely) Lori Pflughaupt for her terrific work in organizing every detail of the conference. For my part of the conference, I'll share a bit of what I shared in my presentation. As I told everyone that attended, I chose the title "Momentum" because that's what we have been striving for. Momentum defeats complacency and drives forward, even accelerates an organization, and from my perspective momentum is a product of mission, vision, and culture. As I have said before, people have questioned whether we would change course when Paul Trombino left and I became director, but my goal is not to change direction but only to accelerate. The right mission and vision, which I believe we have, should transcend changes in leadership, and I expect our mission and vision to continue on long after I am gone. That's why our goal should not be to change them, but only to understand them more deeply and live them more fully. One of the key questions Donna Tweeten of HyVee asked us was what brand can we own – what thing will people truly know and trust us for – and I think that brand is "getting you there." We get people there – it's what we've done, it's what we're known for, it's what we're good at and it's what we will always do. And it's a mission we can all believe in and get excited about. I asked everyone there to help the people they work with see their connection and importance to it, and if you can't, I ask you to ask someone help you see it. Seeing and knowing it drives engagement, and engagement builds momentum.



The CBIS team may be onto something – check out how they branded the project as “getting you there.”

Still not sure the Iowa DOT is something to be excited about? Check out this video that Mark Lane and the Strategic Communications & Policy Team created for our opening session!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXfzUqeUz0A&feature=youtu.be>

Driver & Identification Services gets on the mobility bus

Driver & Identification Services hosted its 3rd annual statewide conference at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines on October 12th. This conference brought together over 500 driver and identification professionals from across the state, covering all 17 of our service centers, the 83 counties that offer driver and identification services, and Driver & Identification Services central office staff, as well as staff from the Bureau of Investigation & Identity Protection and Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services. This year's theme was customer appreciation, and it opened with an absolutely fantastic video that featured staff from the across the state discussing their customer service tips and experiences (replete with a blooper reel at the end); a presentation by Motor Vehicle Division Director Melissa Spiegel about the power of being you – bringing your own personality and style – to your work, a panel discussion on public service that included Driver & Identification Services Director Darcy Doty, Strategic Communications & Policy Director Andrea Henry, and former TV newscaster and current Iowa Workforce Development bureau director Courtney Maxwell Greene; a professional guest speaker that spoke about “Life in the Espresso Lane” and entertainingly showed us the good things that happen when we extend ourselves to others; and a presentation by me on the power of an answer (short version – is an answer a product that can be customer driven? Yes!)

The Driver & Identification Services conference also included a presentation by Kristin Haar, Compliance & Training Officer, and Jeremy Johnson-Miller, Transit Programs Administrator and Statewide Mobility Coordinator, both of our Office of Public Transit, on public transit programs and options throughout the state. Now, you may ask yourself, “What does transit have to do with driver and identification services?” I’ll give you my answer – *everything*. As I liked to say when I was in the Motor Vehicle Division, we’re not the Iowa Department of *Driving*, we’re the Iowa Department of *Transportation*. That distinction is what drives our mission of getting you there, of safe mobility, and it means that we don’t just look at people as “drivers” or “not drivers,”¹ but people that need to get there, even when they can’t drive. So it’s only natural that we should start infusing knowledge of transit options within our Driver & Identification Services staff – it’s a step that recognizes their role not just as driving professionals but as mobility professionals, and that recognizes our obligation to our customers is to enhance their mobility, even when they can’t drive. Terrific vision and collaboration by everyone involved!

¹ Remember that “Dinosaurs” TV show that was on ABC in the early ‘90s? The baby was somewhat famous for calling the mom “mama” and the dad “not the mama.” But that’s not us.

Fall Maintenance Conference brings together seasoned professionals and august speakers to discuss winter operations and urge attendees to *spring* into action

(Sorry! I promise to never do that again. But that was fun for me.) I was pleased to have the opportunity to be the opening speaker at this year's Fall Maintenance Conference, which was held October 3rd and 4th in Ames.



Fall Maintenance Conference attendees

One hundred sixty-eight maintenance professionals attended this year's conference, which was themed "Maintenance Operations: Excellence in Action!". The conference included an equipment display outside the hotel, and eighteen different vendors attended to demonstrate various products. Attendees enjoyed updates on winter operations, the maintenance portal, equipment calibration issues, new temperature sensors being installed on the snowplow trucks, new IP cameras for the Plow Cam program that will be installed in 600 trucks across the state and updates on the Skyhawk Global Positioning System/Automatic Vehicle Location (GPS/AVL) system. The National Weather Service provided information on new winter weather tools that are available on their website and the ever-speedy Tina Greenfield-Huitt provided updates on changes to our contracted weather service provider's forecast website. Winter Maintenance professionals from Kansas and Utah DOTs provided information on "Best Practices" from their respective states to the group and our IT Division showed the group the many applications for Skype for Business. Craig Bargfrede, Winter Operations Administrator, opened with a call to leadership, and the conference concluded with a guest speaker, Kevin Kush, who gave a presentation titled, "A Piece of the Puzzle – 8 Traits of a Quality Teammate." I was really happy to see so many people engaged in such a dynamic part of our mission of "getting you there," and also really pleased to see so many topics that touched on smart, data-driven solutions. And most of all I appreciated the attention given to explaining "why." Thank you to everyone that led this and everyone that participated!

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Equipment on display outside the Fall Maintenance Conference.

Project Delivery Bureau scares up a great conference too

The Project Delivery Bureau in the Highway Division celebrated Halloween with its 4th annual conference at the Scheman Building in Ames. Approximately 240 Bureau staff attended this half-day session that included a “state of the bureau address” by Charlie Purcell, various reports by each of the offices on hot topics or innovative uses of technology, and a question and answer session with Charlie, Highway Division Director Mitch Dillavou, and me.

The purpose of the conference was to recognize significant accomplishments, acknowledge setbacks, cast a vision for the future, and provide an opportunity for more communication and interaction. What stood out

was the genuine appreciation expressed by the Bureau leaders for their staff and their commitment to an open and engaging culture. They have a very innovative, hardworking, and experienced crew that have successfully tackled some very, large challenging projects, such as the I-74 bridge and interstate reconstruction in the Quad Cities, as well as delivering countless smaller projects that are also critical to our mission of “getting you there safely, efficiently and conveniently”.

I also appreciated the fact that this group knows how to have fun. Because the conference happened to fall on Halloween, several staff came in costume. (I took questions from a nun, Flo from Progressive, a Star Trek commander, and, perhaps most shockingly, long-time Iowa fan Mike Kennerly dressed head-to-toe in Cyclone gear. I think he scared himself the most. Someone also gave me a clip-on bumble bee.) Attendees voted for their favorite costumes in variety of categories, and held an “awards ceremony” at the conclusion of the conference. Copies of all the presentations, video of the Q&A session, and pictures of costume winners are available on the conference [SharePoint site](#).



The conference planning team: Front row – Mary Kay Solberg, Hollie Richey, Adriana Schnoebelen, Stacey Huston, Joe Cuva; back row – Mark Harle, Steven Schroder, Mark Lowe, John Dostart, Kristine Brinkman, Charlie Purcell; not pictured – Kate Murphy. If you look close you can see the bee on my lapel; Mother Nature (I think you can guess who that is) gave it to me.

ERP! (Not just something you say when you've had too much Halloween candy)

I'm happy to announce that we at the Iowa DOT, no strangers to acronyms, can add a new acronym to our lexicon of acronyms –ERP, which stands for Enterprise Resource Planning system. Over the last several years we worked with a consultant known as eVision to help us develop a sustainable long term plan for our core IT systems. One decision was that we should transition our aging human relations and financial systems, part of which were still based on the mainframe, to an ERP system. You can spend hours reading about ERP systems, but a very basic explanation is that an ERP system refers to the systems and software packages used by organizations to manage day-to-day business activities, such as accounting, procurement, project management and human resources. ERP systems link business processes and allow data to flow between them, which helps create real-time data visibility (think dashboards, not multitudes of spreadsheets) that can help improve business insights, enhance collaboration, and increase efficiency.

Our Administrative Services and IT teams spent quite a bit of time researching ERP system providers and eventually landed on Workday, which has already successfully implemented an ERP system for Iowa State University and counts among its clients Netflix, Hewlett-Packard, TomTom, and The Ohio State University (I've never gotten that "The Ohio State University" thing, but I think I'm going to start calling us "The Iowa DOT.") In late September we finalized a statement of work with Workday, leveraging their contract with Iowa State University, to help us implement an ERP system here that will update and manage our human resources and financial systems.

We expect the Workday solution to offer a number of advantages, such as managing processes like payroll and financial tracking in real time, in a single system, again with better visibility, insight, analysis and collaboration. Because the solution is cloud-based, it means we can access it anywhere and from multiple devices, and not just sitting at our desks (think approving time-sheets from your mobile device) and because it's software as a service we can expect regular updates and can turn valuable IT resources that were dedicated to keeping up the mainframe to other functions that add to our capacity.

This of course will not happen overnight. We estimate this will take 18-24 months to deliver, and will be accomplished in two phases. The first phase will cover human resources and payroll functions. We have already started working on that and it should be available for our use in early 2019. The second phase will cover financials; that phase will start at the beginning of 2018 and should be implemented in mid-2019. If you're moving through the halls of the main complex you may already see signs (literally) that this work has started – there are signs posted there pointing the direction to the "Workday Collaboration Center." It will take a lot of collaboration to implement this system, so we used the former library area to create a shared office space for Workday and Iowa DOT staff responsible for implementing the ERP system.

We will send you updates as we progress from a dedicated workday@iowadot.us email address. We're also developing a central location for information and a training and communication plan to assure that everyone is comfortable with the product once we get closer to implementation.

There will be much more to come on this, but one thing that's important to mention now is this – new systems and efficiencies can naturally cause us to worry that we are going to shed positions or jobs. But that's not why we pursue them – we pursue them because we want to be better; because we want to attain a higher return on investment with the resources we're given. When we get better we don't shed, we do something different and more, which is how we get that higher return on investment. Thank you to everyone whose helping us pursue that with this critical system implementation!

One Gift keeps giving!

I've always been impressed by the generosity of DOT employees, and I was reminded of that a couple of days ago when I received an email from accounting reporting that 56 of our employees graciously donated \$19,859 to Iowa's One Gift Program. If you aren't familiar, the One Gift Program lets State of Iowa employees contribute to a group of charitable organizations by deducting it from their payroll. Currently, the One Gift Program serves over [400 agencies](#) by offering assistance to Iowans throughout the state who are in need. All money from the program stays in Iowa where it is helping our friends, neighbors, and local communities. The program also allows you to designate which charities you would like your donation to go to. If you would like to learn more about the One Gift program, you can do so [here](#). In the meantime, thank you for your generosity and your commitment to help the communities in which you live and work!

Song of the month

This month's song is the Steve Miller Band's 1973 classic, "The Joker." You might not initially see the connection to this report, but you would if you saw Doug Heeren, Engineering Technician Senior from District 6 on Halloween – he dressed as the Space Cowboy. (Remember the opening line? "Some people call me the space cowboy . . ." Maybe next year Doug will come as the Gangster of Love. Or Maurice. But I digress.) The interesting thing is that the Steve Miller Band has an actual song titled "The Space Cowboy." It was released in 1969, but is not nearly as well-known as this one. I'm not really sure what his (Steve Miller's) fascination with Space Cowboys is, but 1969 was the year we put a man on the moon. Anyway, great costume Doug! Love the light-up cowboy hat!



Doug Heeren – Space Cowboy

Wellness tip

Here's one of my favorite ones – make sure you eat breakfast, and don't skip any other meals throughout the day. Regularly skipping breakfast or other meals has all sorts of bad consequences, including making you more likely to overeat later, slowing your metabolism (which causes you to gain weight instead of lose weight – your body goes into starvation mode and stores more of the calories you do eat as fat and increases your weight), and decreasing

your blood sugar, which leaves you feeling tired and sluggish. Some health experts advocate eating regularly throughout the day (as much as eight to ten times) – given the same amount of calories (and a healthy mix of complex carbs, proteins, fruits and vegetables) through the day, eating at more regular intervals will increase your metabolism and make you a more efficient fat burner. My wife claims I've been following this for years, but in truth I never learned this until recently; I've just never stopped eating. 😊

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Well, my friends, we have reached the close of another month and another report. How quickly they go by! Winter is nearly upon us – my next adventure will be the Living History Farms Off-Road Race, which typically (and let's be honest, hopefully) offers icy stream crossings. Stay warm and healthy, and as always stay safe in all you do.

Mark