



Riding from Ames to Newton with a family friend (that's me on the left in the high viz jersey.)

Hi, everyone! Hope your summer continues to go well – hard to believe we are back in August and getting close to school. This continues to be one of the more unusual summers I have had – last month I was writing this from libraries as I made my way across the state during RAGBRAI (where I ran into fellow biking DOT-ers **John Selmer, Kayla Burkett, and Chris Crow, and rode one day with Mike Harvey and Lori Burgmaier**), and this month I began writing it somewhere over the Pacific Ocean as I returned from speaking at a digital identity conference in Australia's capital city, Canberra. (The main part of the flight was between Sydney and Dallas and was about 17 hours, so I ran out of battery before I ran out of flight time.)

Being in Australia was very interesting – I had a chance to meet with their transport minister and found a lot of issues of common interest. I got the

chance to engage with international leaders and visionaries on the topic of digital identities, as well as automated vehicles. It was gratifying to know that the work we are doing on mobile driver's licenses (mDL – more to come on mDL next month) is generating interest not just nationally but internationally, and that our vision for it is well aligned with the recommendations of leading international experts.

On the personal side, I had to adjust to being back in winter for four days (I had several cold, sleety/rainy runs, which are a real departure from my usual August runs), and I also had to adjust to vehicles driving on the left side of the road (despite Linda warning me to not step in front of a bus, I looked the wrong way and literally almost stepped out in front of a bus). I also learned that while we deal with deer crossing our roads, they literally deal with kangaroos crossing their roads. I met a woman who works with an animal rescue organization and raises kangaroos that have been orphaned by vehicle strikes. She's currently raising four and says they need to reach about two years in age before they are ready to be released to the wild. I could go on and on (and usually do), but in the interest of battery life I'll just end by saying that it was a terrific trip and opportunity, and I would love to go back and really explore this fascinating continent and country.



Australian road sign. I think the one in the middle is a wombat.

#Engage

Here's something I'm really excited about, and I hope you all will be as well – we're starting an engagement initiative at the Iowa DOT. You're going to start learning more about this in the next few weeks, but I thought it would be good to give you a heads up before we start and let you know why we think it's so important.

When we're engaged it means we're involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to our work and workplace. I think it's vitally important that we all have the opportunity to be engaged in our work – it drives results, it drives productivity, and it drives innovation, but perhaps most importantly, it makes work a better place for each one of us. It will always be true that we spend more time (and probably more energy) at work than any other place, so shouldn't we want our work to be energizing and fulfilling? Building a *culture* of engagement gives us the opportunity to have that.

I emphasize the word culture because culture is critical. We can say anything we want, but it's all just platitudes until we make it a part of us. That's why this initiative is going to focus on helping us build a culture of engagement over time. It's based on something called the Gallup Q12, which is a set of 12 simple survey questions that help organizations measure how engaged their workforce is. (If you're not familiar with Gallup, they're an internationally recognized research and organizational improvement company based in Omaha. We picked their program because it's well-researched with millions of participants over 30 years, and is focused on building skills and improving results, not just measuring to measure). The questions generally help us answer whether we have given ourselves the tools and resources we need to do our jobs well, whether we have created an environment that encourages people to do and give their best, whether we have a workplace that people want to belong to and feel like they belong, and whether we have opportunities to grow.

Now, at this point, I know what you're thinking – not another survey! And if you're thinking a survey doesn't do anything, you're right – a survey itself does nothing. But the Gallup program is much more than a survey – what's important in the Gallup program is what happens between surveys. The point of the survey is only to give us a measurement of where we are. If we want to use that information to improve our work and workplace (which as an aside is the textbook definition of performance management) we need take that information and translate it into action. The Gallup program focuses us on doing that by giving us results not just for the agency, but for every business unit; by helping individual supervisors and managers interpret their business unit's results and giving them tools and strategies to improve them over time; by building coaches (called "champions") that will help managers and supervisors sustain the effort over time; and by consistently repeating the survey and action process to drive change and improvement over time. I know it can be easy to be skeptical and to think of this as just the latest "flavor," but I ask you to check your skepticism and give it a chance – real change happens when we give something our good faith, collectively commit to action, and hold ourselves accountable for it - and that's what we intend to do here.

You're going to get more information about this in the coming weeks, but at a high level you can expect the following (with some variance for scheduling):

- **In late-September to early-October** we will conduct our first survey.
- **In November or so** we will get our results back and Gallup will give the management team an agency overview.
- **In December and January** managers and supervisors will participate in Gallup training and coaching, and will have the results for their business unit so the training can be more specific for them.
- **Next summer** we'll repeat the survey and continue to do so one or more times each year so that we keep focusing on our results and keep working on improving in between. We committed to a four-year program to assure this is not a "one-and-done" thing.

Here are some important things to know about the survey:

- **It's quick and easy.** You'll be able to complete it in a matter of minutes, and you can complete it on multiple devices – workstations, laptops, or mobile devices.
- **It's completely anonymous.** Your answers will never be tracked to or associated with you, and all results will be reported at the business unit level (for instance, agency, division, bureau, office, etc.) and not at the individual level.
- **It's voluntary.** We're never going to make you complete the survey (but we really hope you will).
- **The results will never be used for performance reviews or evaluations.** This is about working together positively to improve our work and workplace, not beating people over the head.

At the moment, there's not a lot for you to do, other than be aware that there's more to come. I hope you'll be open to it when it does. I really encourage you to read and listen to the information and to help us get a good baseline (and a great start) by taking the survey. Engage in engagement!

Recovery in Marshalltown

We've been tracking all the relief efforts we have undertaken since the tornado in Marshalltown last month, and I think it's important to recognize the work we have done. As **Operations Bureau Director Scott Marler** reported to Governor Reynolds, we've been very active in the relief efforts, with work and assistance that includes the following:

- We removed 1,175 loads of vegetation and construction debris, and had heavy equipment on site that included loaders, dump trucks, a trackhoe, and a skidloader. Twenty-three members of our staff supported these efforts, which just wrapped up.
-

- To help the Marshall County Treasurer's office resume services after their office was closed due to damage and flooding at the courthouse, we quickly deployed the DOT2GO vehicle. We helped them provide vehicle registration service remotely from that vehicle until we could establish temporary offices for them at our driver and identification service center in Marshalltown. Due to the extensive damage at the courthouse this will likely continue for several months.

We also had a host of MVE officers pour into the Marshalltown area to help with the immediate aftermath of the storm. A local official was so impressed with the response that he remarked he had no idea we had so many officers.

Thank you to everyone that has responded and extended their time and effort, including our MVE officers, our DOT2Go team, our service center and garage staff, our IT staff, and everyone else who has responded on the scene or assisted the response in Marshalltown (as well as other areas like Pella and Indianola). Your work demonstrates a true commitment to service and safety that rightly ignores borders and bureaucracy and places the best interests of the public first. Well done!

Our State Fair (booth) was a great State Fair (booth)

Sweltering heat and the sweet perfume of corn dogs (just a dab or two behind each ear and you'll attract untold followers clutching tiny cups of ketchup and mustard) wafting through the air can only mean one thing – the Iowa State Fair is in full-swing. For the last several years, we've had a booth at the fair and this year is no exception. I always enjoy the chance for us to get out among our customers and showcase some of the cool things we do to impact transportation in Iowa. It not only helps people learn more about our work, but it humanizes us by showing them the wonderful, helpful, and very real people that make up the Iowa DOT. Thank you to everyone who worked at our fair booth this year and to everyone who worked behind the scenes to make it possible – we really appreciate the extra time and effort and the work you've done to build relationships, trust, and reputation with our customers.



Renee Balvanz, IT OPM Support Team; Ann Reinhardt, IT Project Management; and Capt. Robert Johnson, MVE help visitors with the VR presentations as a crowd watches.

As I mentioned in my June report, this year we used virtual reality to promote safety. Visitors to our booth had the opportunity to engage in two virtual reality visualizations built by our partners at the



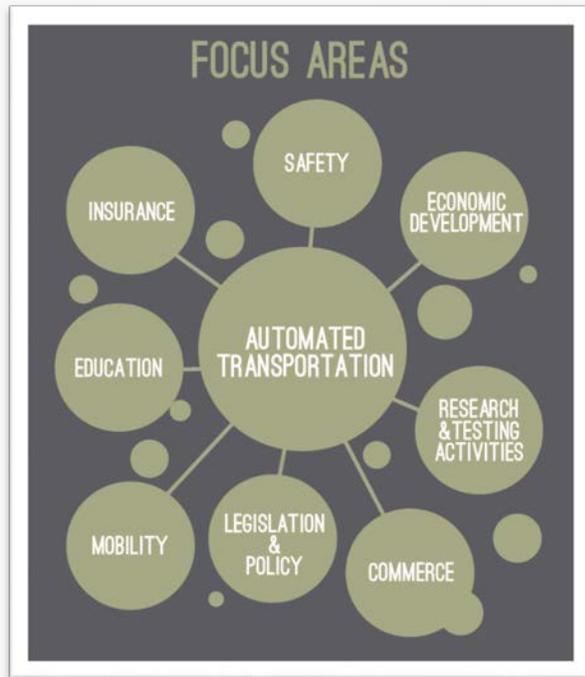
MVE Captain Chris Moline joins in the VR experience as Administrative Services Director Lee Wilkinson helps a visitor.

University of Iowa and Iowa State University. One focused on the potential dangers of driving without a seat belt, and the other focused on the dangers of navigating through a work zone. Although we kept the graphic nature of the simulations suitable for a wide-audience, the visualizations were still quite powerful and captured visitors' attention. We hope they will stick with the people that experience them and influence them to change their own driving behavior and to encourage others to do so as well.

We want to keep using the simulations after the fair for education and outreach opportunities, so if you have an idea of an event that might be a good fit for the virtual reality simulations contact [Andrea Henry](#) in Strategic Communications. But in the meantime, have a real corn dog.

Leading an AV-ready state

If you recall my earlier discussions about [Transportation Systems Management & Operations](#) (TSMO) and the way we are permeating TSMO concepts throughout the DOT, we have a [TSMO strategic plan](#) that has eight service layers that provide more detailed recommendations and actions for service areas that tactically advance operations and our mission of mobility. Included is a service layer that specifically focuses on making Iowa "AV" ready –ready to safely accept and advance automated vehicles as their use grows and becomes more common. It's a concept that promotes many of the attributes we use to define mobility including safety, flow, and accessibility, because vehicle automation promises to reduce crashes and improve safety, enhance the movement of people and goods, and increase access to the transportation system for people that might otherwise be unable to drive. As part of our strategic effort to be AV-ready, we recently formed and convened a statewide Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation (the Council) to help us advance and focus these efforts. We worked with our partners at University of Iowa and Iowa State University to structure and purpose the Council. Under



Advisory Council areas of focus.

the structure developed, the Council includes a core membership supported by several subcommittees. We will lead and govern the Council, and the University of Iowa will serve as a co-chair for management and logistics, while also providing expertise in vehicle safety, policy, and education around AV technologies. Iowa State University will lend expertise in transportation infrastructure and operations.

We drew members that cross state and local government and public and private entities to assure a broad cross section of interests were represented. The initial membership on the Council includes leaders from the Iowa DOT, the Department of Public Safety and Iowa State Patrol, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Technology Association of Iowa, the Iowa Insurance Commission, the Iowa Motor Trucking Association, our Freight Advisory Council, the Iowa League of

Cities, the Iowa State Association of Counties, and the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

Although this membership will provide direction and guidance for the work of the council, we expect much of the work will be completed by subcommittees dedicated to specific focus areas, as shown in the graphic.

We convened the Council for the first time on July 17th at the Capitol. I had the opportunity to attend and thought it went very well. We had terrific participation and collectively learned more about what vehicle automation is and where it is headed, and also briefed everyone on the draft vision for and purpose of the Council as well as solicited input on how we advance the work of the Council in the future.

Based on the participation and input, I think we are well-positioned to do some very good and collaborative work in this area. I think in the past we have tended to focus more on how we allow testing and innovation to happen here, but this approach broadens our view and more effectively balances positioning Iowa for innovation, technological advances, and economic development with continued roadway and citizen safety. It also draws in the many entities and areas that are affected by or influence this area and gives us better opportunities to work in an aligned and collaborative way. As we go forward, I see the role of the Council not as making policy decisions for the state, but leading, sharpening, and focusing the policy discussions that need to happen to develop resources policy-makers will use to safely make us AV-ready. If you want more information on the Council, please contact **Operations Bureau Director Scott Marler**, by phone at 515.239.1205 or by email at scott.marler@iowadot.us.

Thank you to everyone who has worked to make this happen (especially **Donna Matulac**, who quickly and cheerfully filled in for Scott at the first meeting when he got stuck out-of-state). You're helping to lead a significant transformation in transportation and mobility.

Recruiting gets a new Face(book)

Recruitment and hiring are always important activities for us – our ability to deliver our products and services always depends on our ability to attract and retain new employees. That becomes more pronounced, and more challenging, as we enter periods of increased retirements and times of low unemployment. (For a discussion of how it's affecting DOTs across the country, see this [article in the AASHTO Journal](#)). To compete with other employers, it's important that we not just post our positions, but actively think about how we recruit for our positions and engage potential employees in ways that reach them. We have a lot to offer in terms of important, interesting, and compelling work opportunities, but we can't share our story if people don't know we have openings.

With so many of us regularly engaging in social media, it has become an important tool for employers to recruit talent. In recognition of that, we have long had a [careers web page](#) and promoted positions regularly through the greater DOT social media channels. But recently, we decided it's time to up our social recruiting game, by launching the [Iowa DOT Careers Facebook page](#). This page is dedicated to people considering a career with us, and gives us a more direct, efficient, and engaging way to share and advertise our career opportunities and tell our story.

Of course, the power in social media is being social, and we can't do it alone. Our best sales point and referral will always be all of you, the terrific and talented people that are already here and make this a great place to be. If you use Facebook, help recruit our future workforce work by **liking, following,** and most importantly **sharing** the [Iowa DOT Careers Facebook page](#) and posts with friends, family, and people that you know may be looking, and asking them to do the same. Not on Facebook? You can still tell people to check us out on Facebook and on our web page and to sign up for alerts when positions are available.

Meet new Commissioner Kraig Paulsen



As many of you know, we have the great benefit of a Transportation Commission that leads and guides several important areas of our work, including development of our long-range transportation plan; our \$3.5B five-year transportation program (including the five-year program of road and bridge projects); a variety of transportation grant programs, including the RISE (Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy) program; and review and approval of all of our administrative rules. The Transportation Commission is established and authorized by the legislature in the Iowa Code. By the terms of the authorizing statutes the Commission consists of seven members that serve four-year terms. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Iowa Senate.

As I have said in the past, one of the great things about our Commission is the diversity and depth of experience, talents, and perspectives our Commission members bring to their work, and that is well-represented by our new Commissioner, Kraig Paulsen.

Kraig was born in Monticello, Iowa and grew up in Cedar Rapids. He graduated from Cedar Rapids Kennedy High School in 1983 and went on to graduate from Iowa State University in 1987 with a Bachelor of Business Administration. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 1994 and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa in 2003. He is also in the Aspen Institute Rodel Fellowship Class of 2013.

Kraig is currently the Director of Supply Chain Initiatives and Director of Business Analytics Initiatives in the Debbie and Jerry Ivy College of Business at Iowa State University, where he's charged with strengthening relationships between business and industry and the college. The objectives are to increase college impact regarding effective and efficient supply chain and analytics operations.

Kraig served 14 years in the Iowa General Assembly. He served in several roles including House Judiciary Committee Chair, House Minority Leader, and as Speaker of the House for five years. He concluded his service in the General Assembly in 2016.

Kraig also honorably served our country in the United States Air Force (USAF) where, among other duties, he served as a Missile Combat Crew Commander, an Operations Group Senior Weapon System Instructor, Flight Commander, and as a Squadron Director of Operations.

While in the USAF Kraig was awarded various medals and awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the USAF Commendation Medal, the USAF Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Readiness Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal. He has been twice recognized as a member of the Best Operations Crew in the Air Force in his assigned weapon system and as Air Force Space Command's Maintenance Junior Officer Manager of the Year.

Additionally, Kraig has worked as a production supervisor in a manufacturing plant, was in the private practice of law, and as corporate counsel in a transportation firm.

Kraig and his wife Cathy have been married 33 years; they have four children and three grandchildren, and reside in rural Story County.

Kraig began his term as a Commissioner on July 1 and will serve in that term through June 30, 2022. Welcome, Kraig, we're very fortunate to have you join us!

Song of the month

In a nod to my trip down under, I was all set to go with a medley of Australian-act songs this time (*Men at Work's* 1981 "Down Under," *AC/DC's* 1975 "It's a Long Way to the Top," the *Bee Gees* 1975 "Jive Talkin'," Olivia Newton John's 1975 "Have You Never Been Mellow" [can you tell what year I started paying attention to music?] and *Jet's* 2003 "Are You Gonna Be My Girl" (the song that inspired untold iPod purchases, including my first and cherished iPod mini). But with the sad news of Aretha Franklin passing, I'm making a late switch to the Queen of Soul's "Chain of Fools." Is there any song that has a cooler, more soulful groove?

Wellness tip

As much as we focus on exercise and exertion when we talk about health and wellness, it's also important to talk about rest, recovery, and relaxation. Constant exertion and overexertion can lead to exhaustion, chronic fatigue, and even illness and injury. Give your body time to rest, recover, and grow, whether by taking a day off, cross training, and choosing lighter workouts (for instance walking instead of running). When choosing workout plans look for plans that balance work with recovery.zocus on long term, sustainable results, and avoid plans that promise fast, extreme results (most of us really don't need washboard abs in six weeks – how many of us are washing clothes on our abs anyway?). And remember that relaxation in all its forms – reading, visiting with friends, listening to music, or whatever you like – can be just as effective as reducing stress and promoting wellness as more formal stress reduction techniques like mediation.

* * * * *

As always, my friends, we have reached the end of another report. Summer is winding down but we have much to look forward to with the approach of Autumn; I always say that it's one of the best times to live in Iowa. Until we talk again, be safe and well in all you do, and thank you for everything you do for us.

Best,

Mark
