

Hi, everyone! I hope you had a fun and happy holiday season. We had an unusual but fun one in the Lowe family. Mary and Matt were both home for Christmas from ISU (Dan just graduated from Utah State but stayed there to work at a local ski resort; we will see him and celebrate that milestone when he comes home in April), and then we all headed off to San Antonio to see Iowa State play in the Alamo Bowl. Mary and Matt left by bus with the marching band on Christmas Day, and we (Linda, Erin, and I) followed with some friends in a 15-passenger van (affectionately dubbed the church van for the duration of the trip) the following day.

We were of course bummed Iowa State didn't pull out the win, but it was a great trip nonetheless – the weather was terrific; San Antonio and its Riverwalk area ~~was~~ were full of fans, fun, and food; and we stayed at the same hotel as the marching band and got to spend time with the kids and see them perform and have fun. The highlights of the trip for me were watching our marching band perform their street show as they marched into the Alamo Dome, and learning some of Erin Lowe's dance moves as we listened to music during the timeouts. (I'm pretty sure Erin was glad we were in the upper deck and far away from the "fan cams" broadcasting on the big screens.) I did have a dad moment of melancholy when I realized I was seeing Mary's last halftime show though.

Hard to believe this is the last report for 2018, but as usual there are plenty of great things to talk about and much more to look forward to in 2019.



*Top: A little small but if you look closely to the right you will see Mary and Matt playing the ISU fight song while boating through the San Antonio Riverwalk (backed by the band's famous halftime dinosaurs.) Bottom: Matt and Mary in a Texas selfie*

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## 2019 Legislative proposals

The 2019 legislative session will open January 14<sup>th</sup>. Last month we detailed our budget proposal, and this month we're sharing the legislative proposals we are sponsoring as an agency. These have all been drafted by the Legislative Services Agency and posted publicly on the General Assembly's website; the links below will take you to the posted bill draft. (Note that they don't yet have bill numbers assigned. That will happen as the House and Senate take the bills up and assign them for consideration.)

- [Aircraft Registration Certificates, Elimination of Paper Requirement.](#) Our Office of Aviation manages the registration of aircraft in Iowa. Several years ago aircraft registration was moved to an electronic process, which eliminated the need for aircraft owners to carry paper registrations in their aircraft. In 2015 the Iowa Legislature aligned Iowa law by repealing section 328.28 of the Iowa Code, which had required paper certificates to be displayed in an aircraft. However, a few references to paper certificates were left behind in the Iowa Code. This bill is a technical clean up that removes references to physical or paper certificates to allow the registration process and system to be fully electronic. (The bill specifically amends sections 328.24 and 328.43 to eliminate the requirement that paper certificates be "returned" and instead allows an owner to give us electronic notice when the aircraft is destroyed or removed from the state or when ownership of the aircraft is transferred to another person.)
- [Commercial Driver's License, Federal Compliance Updates.](#) This bill keeps Iowa up to date with two federal changes that will affect commercial driver's licensing in 2020. The first is a requirement that we check the National Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse (a database operated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) which identifies violators of FMCSA's drug and alcohol testing program for commercial driver's license (CDL)-holders) before we issue a CDL. FMCSA regulations require we begin doing that by January 6, 2020. The second is a requirement that CDL applicants complete entry-level driver training certified by the FMCSA before applying for a CDL (this could best be described as requiring driver education for CDL drivers). FMCSA regulations require we begin doing that by February 7, 2020. We are running these proposals this year to make sure the legal authority is in place before the required implementation dates. In both instances about \$36M in federal highway funding is conditioned compliance with these federal requirements.
- [Salvage Vehicles from Out-of-State Insurers.](#) One of the ways Iowa law protects consumers is by requiring that vehicles that have been assigned from an owner to an insurer as a total loss must be titled as a salvage vehicle when the insurer then sells or assigns the vehicle to another person. This gives the next owner notice that the vehicle has been significantly damaged and may be of inferior quality or condition – it helps them avoid unanticipated problems and helps them avoid paying more than they should for the vehicle. However, the law that imposed this requirement (section 321.52 of the Iowa Code) was written in such a way as to apply only to vehicles assigned to Iowa insurers. This allowed dealers and others to purchase total loss vehicles from out-of-state insurers and bring them into the state on a regular title rather than a salvage title. This proposal closes that loophole and provides that a salvage title is required for any total-loss vehicle acquired from an insurer, regardless of whether the insurer is an Iowa or out-of-state insurer.

- [Automobile Transporters, Length Requirements](#). Auto transporters (sometimes called car haulers) are the trailers you sometimes see carrying a load of other vehicles. Iowa law (section 321.457 of the Iowa Code) currently allows these vehicles to be a maximum length of 75 feet with a three-foot extension beyond the front bumper and a four-foot extension beyond the rear bumper. The federal FAST Act increased the maximum length of these vehicles to 80 feet, with a four-foot front extension and a six-foot rear extension. This proposal will bring Iowa into compliance with the new federal standards and promote seamless and harmonized interstate transportation for this type of freight.

As many of you may recall, we have in the last two sessions had proposals that clarified the authority of our Motor Vehicle Enforcement officers. The first legislation was passed in 2017 and included a sunset clause that expired July 1, 2018; in 2018 the legislature extended the sunset provision to July 1, 2019. We are still pursuing and supporting a full elimination of the sunset provision but have not made this a department bill only because legislative leadership have indicated they intend to take this up as a legislatively initiated bill, which we think is a preferable course.

## Special delivery in Motor Vehicle Division

Congratulations to **Motor Vehicle Division Director Melissa Spiegel**, who gave birth to her second son, Rylan Carl Gillette, last month! Rylan was born on December 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:28 PM, weighing 8 pounds 15 ounces and measuring 21.25 inches long. Rylan joins big brother Jase and Dad Aaron, who are both said to be very excited and proud.



*Rylan takes a little snooze.*

## Accessibility for new Iowans is an award-winning idea



**Melissa Spiegel, Motor Vehicle Division Director**

I am pleased to share that we recently received a “customer convenience” award from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) for reducing barriers for new Iowans, specifically, reducing barriers for refugees who relocated to our state last year. The process of issuing a license or ID to a refugee requires several checks and validations before we can complete the issuance transaction and can sometimes be confusing and intimidating to these individuals. Staff in our Motor Vehicle Division, led by our **Community Outreach Coordinator, Mindi Nguyen**, partnered with the refugee resettlement agencies in Iowa to acknowledge the challenges these new Iowans face. They worked closely with these agencies to help refugees gather their required documentation in advance, reviewed and validated their documents, and arranged time to issue credentials to refugees in groups, which eliminated confusion and the need for refugees to make

multiple trips to our service centers (a benefit to the customers and to our staff as well). When a refugee first arrives to Iowa, they are on a fast track to meet with many non-profit, private, and public-sector agencies as they typically have a short 60-90 days to fulfill many requirements. Our agency is one of the first government agencies a newly arrived lowan visits as establishing their identity is key to being successful in Iowa and the United States and is essential to functioning within our society. Thank you to Mindi and the Motor Vehicle Division for being customer-driven by anticipating these obstacles and working proactively to make it a smoother process for everyone!

*Mark's note:* This is a terrific example of how identity contributes to mobility. Identity creates access to things like services, benefits, housing, health care, employment and financial services, which create both social and physical mobility. That's why identity and access to identity services is an important part of our mission of getting you there.

## Doc Express delivers efficiency



**Charlie Purcell, Project Delivery Bureau Director**

Doc Express is a paperless document management software that we have put in place to implement fully electronic contracts and contract execution for highway construction projects. The program allows contract documents to be accessed, approved, and executed by us and by FHWA (the Federal Highway Administration), contractors, cities, counties, and others. It creates a secure digital filing cabinet for the documents exchanged during the construction project and allows for digital and electronic signatures.

Using the Doc Express program, we have been requiring digital signatures on all Iowa DOT-administered contracts since the August 16, 2016, project letting with great success and support from the contracting industry. Our Office of Local Systems and Office of Contracts began working towards requiring digital signatures on local public agency (LPA) contracts in the summer of 2017, which when implemented would require all projects we let be digitally signed. Pilot projects were tested during the June through September 2018 lettings and included county, city, and county conservation Board contracts.

Iowa law has slight differences between the requirements of DOT contracts and LPA contracts. This required slightly different workflows and caused some difficulties in implementing the digital signature with the LPAs; but through teamwork and persistence by **Mary Thompson, Office of Contracts**, and **Tammi Bell, Office of Local Systems**, the pilot projects were successful, and we're continuing to work with cities and counties to smooth off the rough edges and resolve the legal differences. Full implementation of all contracts we let was effective with the October 16, 2018, letting. The Office of Contracts signed the last paper contract on October 1, 2018, this contract was from the August 21, 2018 letting.

Some of the benefits of moving to digital signed contracts are:

- **Consistency.** All contracts and contract documents are created and processed the same by our Office of Contracts and all contractors.
- **Efficiency.** The digital process is estimated to provide a time savings of up to two weeks just in avoiding printing and mailing alone. Project contracts can be executed in a matter of days, instead of the weeks it took with the paper process. Additionally, there is a cost savings to us in printing and mailing costs.
- **Transparency.** As with all Doc Express documents, the contract cannot be lost in the mail and it is available for the next level's signature in seconds. All parties can see exactly where the contract is in the process at any time.

Thanks to the hard work and innovative vision of our team members leading this project, Iowa is now considered a leader in the nation for paperless construction contracts. If you have a paper, legacy process that requires multiple-party acceptance and approval, check out Doc Express and consider whether you can apply a similar solution to your process.

## Innovative relocation efforts protect eagles

Our highway work crosses many environments, and to be responsible stewards we have to work hard to avoid, minimize, or mitigate as much as possible negative environmental impacts. Our staff in the **Office of Location & Environment** recently had an opportunity to do this in a very creative, innovative way.



*Image from the YouTube video documenting relocation of the eagle's nest.*

Our US 20/Swiss Valley Road interchange project required relocation of the Dubuque landfill access road. A bald eagle nest was discovered on the alignment and it was determined the nest was in a tree on what would be the shoulder area of the new road. To protect the eagle residing there, we secured a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the nest and relocate it to a new tree. With the help of

CJ Moyna & Sons Construction, Wiezorek Timber Co., Splinter Crane Service, and Stantec the nest was moved October 25, 2018. Special thanks to **Ron Stephens** in Construction & Materials for fabricating some nesting platforms that served as a back-up should the nest have started to fall apart during the move.

To document this innovative approach, **Derek Peck** and **Mary Kay Solberg** in the Office of Location & Environment collaborated to create a video that you can find on YouTube [here](#). Take a few minutes to check it out; it's very interesting and documents the terrific dedication they bring to their work.

## MVE Chief David Lorenzen appointed to U.S. DOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking



*MVE Chief David Lorenzen*

We've talked before about the important work and leadership our Motor Vehicle Enforcement (MVE) has done to combat human trafficking, and that work has been honored and recognized by the appointment of MVE Chief David Lorenzen to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT's) new Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking.

The committee, required by the federal Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act, consists of stakeholders from trafficking advocacy organizations; law enforcement; and trucking, bus, rail, aviation, maritime, and port sectors, including industry and labor.

The committee will submit recommendations to U.S. DOT Secretary Elaine Chao by July 3, 2019, that include:

- Strategies for identifying and reporting instances of human trafficking.
- Recommendations for administrative or legislative changes to use programs, properties, or other resources owned, operated, or funded by the Department to combat human trafficking.
- Best practices for state and local transportation stakeholders based on multidisciplinary research and promising evidence-based models and programs, including sample training materials and strategies to identify victims.

Chief Lorenzen is one of 15 members of the committee (which has an impressive membership that you can see [here](#)). Secretary Chao, who appointed the members, said, "Members of this committee have extensive experience in combatting human trafficking, and the Department looks forward to receiving their recommendations and reports." The committee builds upon the Department's work with transportation stakeholders across all modes of transportation to

Our work in human trafficking is a good example of how safety is an important element of safety. Just as it's important that we avoid accident, injury, and harm in our trips to make mobility effective for everyone, it's also important that our trips not be used as a means to harm people. Mobility should be safe for everyone.

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prevent human trafficking through the Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking initiative.

You can read more about the work of this committee and its first meeting [here](#). In the meantime, please join me in congratulating Chief Lorenzen and all of MVE for their dedicated work and recognition as national leaders in this area.

## Song of the month

To commemorate the ISUCF"V"MB's<sup>1</sup> outstanding performance outside the Alamo Dome (as well as Mary's last performance as an official member), I'm going with my favorite band song from this year, **"Wings" by Little Mix**. Listen to the drums and you'll understand why this song translates so well to a marching band (at least one that knows how to bring the energy and swagger).

## Wellness tip

We often talk about movement and exercise when we talk about wellness, but this month I wanted to come back to something important to wellness that doesn't require you to break a sweat at all – sleep. I've talked about sleep before, but it's a good reminder that a good night's sleep is good not just for your body but your brain – it helps lock in memories, improves the ability to develop new skills, and can reduce the risk of cognitive decline as we age. Interestingly, however, too much can be as bad as too little – researchers recommend we aim for the recommended amount of sleep for our age – seven to nine hours every night for adults ages 26 to 64 and seven to eight hours for people 65 and older. You can read more about the positive benefits of sleep [here](#).

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Well, my friends, we have once again reached the end of the report. Thank you to everyone that contributed and for all that you do, and a special thanks to everyone who spent extra time away from family and friends during the holiday season keeping us all safe. Stay safe!

Best,

*Mark*

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<sup>1</sup> The Iowa State University Cyclone Football "Varsity" Marching Band.