

## July 2018 Director's Report

Hi, everyone! I apologize for the casualness and shortness (and lateness) of this month's report, but the confluence of work and personal left me a little short on time this month. Earlier this month my family and I took a family vacation to Leech Lake (despite its name, a spectacular lake) area of Minnesota, and I'm writing this (with the help of several kind contributors) from my iPhone at the Denison library, where I'm taking a brief respite from the sun on the first day of RAGBRAI. I'm savoring the opportunity to see Iowa this way and to see, in such an up-close way, the transportation network that connects our communities. I'm also savoring the downhill, tailwinds, and ice cream.

### Transportation Commission changes

Congratulations to Kathy Fehrman of Des Moines and Tom Rielly of Oskaloosa, who were elected as chair and vice-chair of the Commission, and thank you to John Putney of Gladbrook for his year plus as Chair. John has imbued a collegial approach to effective debate, deliberation, and action that I know Kathy and Tom will continue to foster, and collectively they have all been advocates for an engaged and informed Commission that serves the State and the Iowa DOT well. Congratulations also to Kraig Paulsen of Kelly, who joined us as a new Commissioner in July. More about Kraig next month.

### Workday update

Many of you may have heard the term "Workday," but you may still wonder what it is. Workday is the new ERP (enterprise resource planning) system I talked about earlier this year; we're in the process of implementing it and expect to begin using it by the end of 2018/early 2019 to help us better track and manage several functions related to Human Resources and finance. In this first phase of implementation we will be using the system for a variety of HR functions, including to track our time and expenses, and to request time off. Finance functions will be a second phase of implementation.

The promise of a new system always seems vague until you see it, but we do think this is a great system that will improve the way we work. We have a Workday group who is actively exploring its functionality so we can help you understand how it will work and affect your work, and answer questions you may have. This Workday group



*With Erin, Matt and Mary at Lake Itasca and the Mississippi headwaters.*

is planning to share more in the next couple of weeks, including a website that will be a great central resource as we travel along the Workday journey together. To help you identify communications related to this new initiative they have set up an email address that all Workday correspondence will be coming from. Look for emails coming from [DOT.Workday@iowadot.us](mailto:DOT.Workday@iowadot.us) and take the time to read the information they provide — this will be good stuff, not spam! (Although I rode today with someone that swears Spam is delicious. It was right after they gave us a handful of free bacon at Farmland.) I'm excited to make this transition and invite you to take the opportunity to learn more about it as we work toward the go-live date.

## **2019 – 2023 Iowa Transportation Improvement Program approved**

Last month after many months of careful consideration and discussion, the Commission approved the 2019-2023 Iowa Transportation Improvement Program. The Program represents a major commitment to the Iowa DOT's mission of safe mobility – of getting you there safely, efficiently, and conveniently. It is published to inform everyone of planned investments to support our state's multimodal transportation system, including aviation, public transit, railroads, trails, rivers, and highways. A major component of the Program is the highway program that documents upcoming projects on the Primary Highway System for the next five years. For FY 2019-2023, approximately \$3.4 billion is forecast to be available for highway right of way and construction.

Sustainability is a word that is often used to describe a healthy transportation system. One of the Commission's primary investment objectives is stewardship of our existing system, and this year's Program incorporates asset management principles to ensure that we will continue to maintain what we have. The Program includes more than \$1 billion of investments in Iowa's state-owned bridges. Over the last few years, the number of structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system has been reduced from 256 in 2006 to 51 in 2017. The percentage of highway funding going to stewardship of the existing system for all types of highway work has also been increasing over the last few years, from 50 percent in 2016 to a projected 83 percent in 2023. This is good news for the continued sustainability of Iowa's highways.

The highway program doesn't just come together overnight. It's the culmination of work throughout the Iowa DOT that often represents years of careful study, planning, and deliberation, and it guides and sets in motion work that improves and transforms our state. Thank you to everyone that contributes to this; you should be proud of your work and know that your work is important to us.

## **Lock and Dam Summit**

On June 8th, I had the opportunity to participate with others from the Iowa DOT in a summit with other public and private stakeholders from across the Upper Mississippi River region to discuss issues on this critical waterway. Topics included a discussion of key issues and priorities and alternative financing options for addressing growing infrastructure needs (summit discussion materials can be found [here](#)).

In summary, the Upper Mississippi River is critical to the state of Iowa, as it provides low cost connections to domestic and international markets, particularly for our agricultural commodities. However, recent studies and

shipping data show that use is increasing, placing heavy pressure on lock and dam infrastructure that was largely built in the 1930s. This is leading to costly delays and congestion (see Figure 1), which could impact the surface transportation system that most of us are more familiar with - our roads and rail lines. As Figure 2 suggests, it's in Iowa's best interest to ensure that the lock and dam system continues to move our bulk commodities efficiently and reliably.

Under the FAST Act, state DOTs now have access to a more flexible source of federal funds under the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP). A portion of these NHFP funds—10 percent of our annual apportionment or about \$1.3 million per year—can be used for multimodal off-roadway freight projects. The Iowa Transportation Commission has taken advantage of this flexibility by establishing the [Linking Iowa's Freight Transportation System \(LIFTS\) Program](#). In the future, these funds could provide an opportunity for the state of Iowa to move beyond advocacy and participate more directly in addressing critical Upper Mississippi River infrastructure needs.

We are continuing to pursue opportunities to increase investment in this system and our Planning, Program, & Modal Division has demonstrated exceptional leadership and vision in this endeavor, both at the state and national level. Thank you for the excellent work — it's work that reminds us that transportation is truly multi-modal, and that to effectively deliver mobility we have to see and think beyond our borders.

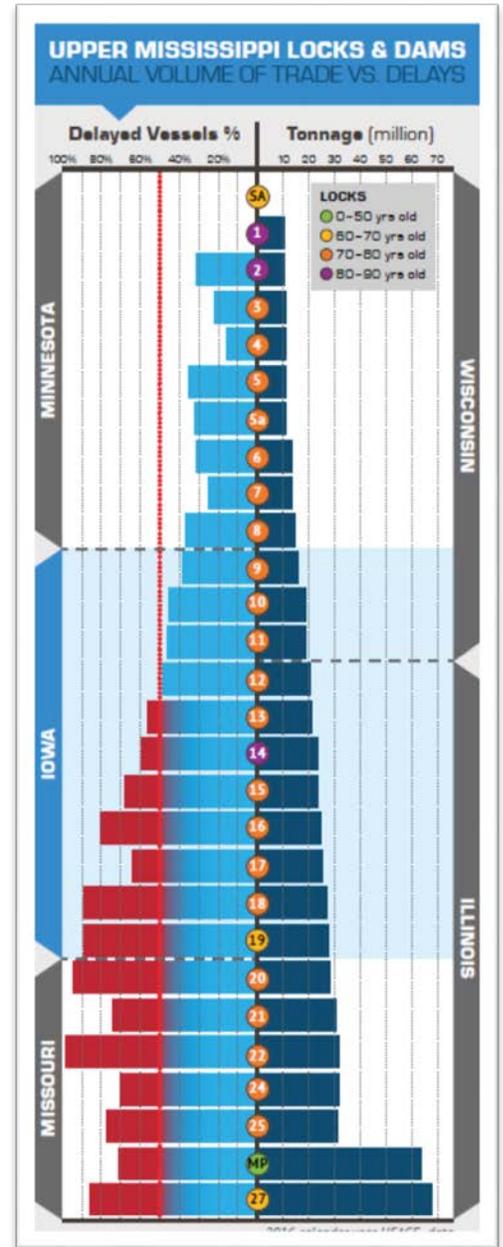


Figure 1

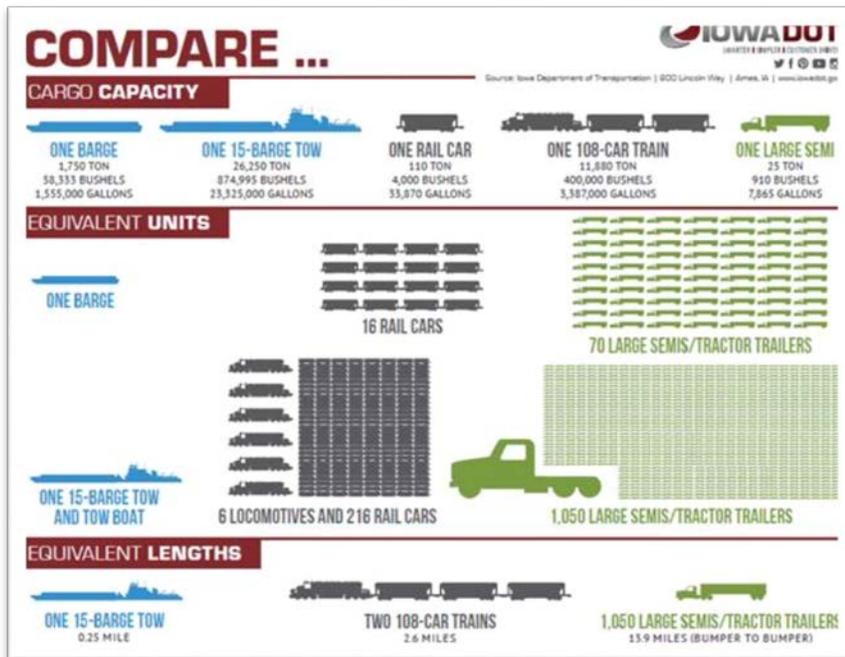


Figure 2

## Song of the month

Without my usual elaboration, and I think for obvious reasons, this month I'm going with "Bicycle Race" by Queen. I am starting to wonder how many songs I have suggested that originated in the late 70s and early 80s.

## Wellness tip

Also for obvious reasons, consider taking up bike riding — it's fun, it's accessible, and even at recreational levels it fends off aging. Check out this [NPR article](#) that discusses a study showing the anti-aging benefits of cycling (and likely any other form of regular exercise). Keep moving!

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Well, my friends, I started this at the Denison library and finished it at the Jefferson library. Time to find my son and a root beer. Hope you are all finding time to enjoy your summer, friends and family and staying safe while doing so!

*Mark*