

Hi, everyone! I was looking back at last month's report and saw that I was talking about what a perfect day it was as I was writing this – not quite so much this month – cold, gray, and rainy, which seems to be the theme of the month so far. But a perfect day to stay inside, watch some football and eat chili, so I'm still calling it a good day. (Especially because Iowa State's winning right now; we'll have to see how I feel by the time we get to the end.) It's also a good day because I get to look forward to seeing the Iowa State Cyclone Football "Varsity" Marching Band (and my kids) perform at Valley High School's marching band festival, Valley Fest, tonight.



*With Matt's girlfriend Alanna Maxwell, Matt, and Mary before the ISUCF"V"MB performance at Valley Fest.*

If you're a person that pays attention to detail, you may notice a slight difference in the title of this month's report – Director-s-apostrophe rather than Director-apostrophe-s. Our division directors and I talked about it, and we think it's important that this report come from all of us, rather than just me (hence the plural possessive). Each of our six divisions – **Highway; Planning, Programming & Modal; Motor Vehicle; Strategic Performance; Administrative Services; and Information Technology** – are essential contributors and collaborators in the delivery of our work, and it's equally important that we know those leaders, hear their voices, and understand better the work and contributions of those divisions. We're starting small this month but in months to come you will see more "bylines" from our division directors and their teams.

## #Engage update – survey starting soon

Over the last couple of months, we've been talking about **#Engage**, our program to build and sustain a culture of engagement – a culture that helps us all be involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to our work, that drives productivity and innovation, and that makes our workplaces energizing, fulfilling, and good places to be. We've taken several steps forward since last month:

- **Many of you generously responded to our call for champions, and we now have a group of 25 champions (see list at the end of this month's report) confirmed that will go through training October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.** A sincere thank you to everyone that responded. We were worried we might not have enough people but, in the end, we had a surplus, and had to make some very difficult decisions to get to 25. If you responded and were not selected, don't be disappointed – there are many ways to positively contribute, and we're looking for ways to involve everyone that responded. The fact that we have this problem is a promising sign for our success.
- **We've confirmed a schedule for manager, supervisor and team lead training that will start in December and continue into January.** We're still confirming some details on locations, but scheduling for those training sessions will start relatively soon.
- **Most importantly to everyone, we will be starting the Gallup Q12 surveys later this month.** We'll send out more specific information when we start the surveys, but as a reminder it will be

web-based and can be completed on multiple devices, is easy to complete, and will be completely anonymous. We really hope you participate when we make the survey live – we can't improve if we don't know where we are.

## Skip the Trip test program released



*Melissa Spiegel, Motor Vehicle Division Director*

I am excited to share that we recently announced the launch of a very cool program called *Skip the Trip*. You probably remember when you took the knowledge test before getting your driver's instruction permit (or remember taking your kids to do the same). The Skip the Trip program is a partnership that we are offering to schools and agencies so they can proctor the same knowledge test at their school location via a web-based system. This is beneficial for many reasons and provides parents and students convenience, choice, and control of their testing. First, it saves parents and students the time and expense of missing school or work to make the trip to one of our service centers to take the test, and it eliminates multiple trips for those who do not pass on the first try. Additionally, it offers students a familiar and comfortable environment for them to take their test and assures that more students will

have access to testing when they're ready. This also has the added benefit of reducing congestion in our service centers.

After passing their test, the student's test results are emailed to the student and are also sent directly to our records system. The test score can be immediately retrieved by any issuance staff, and any county or state location in Iowa that issues driver's licenses will be able to access the scores and issue the instruction permit to the student. Once the student has passed their test, they can get their instruction permit at any driver's license service center by providing their identification documents and parental consent.

We have successfully piloted the program in several locations, and there are currently nine schools offering the program. You can check the list of participating schools at:  
<https://iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense/skip-the-trip>.

Since our announcement last week, we have been happy to see that several additional schools have expressed interest in joining the program! Our team is working to onboard additional schools and train their proctors so that this convenient option is available to more students throughout the state.

If you or someone you know wants more information on our Skip the Trip program, they can send an email to [skipthetrip.support@iowadot.us](mailto:skipthetrip.support@iowadot.us).

### A rose for Skip the Trip.

Skip the Trip has been really well received and gotten some great press coverage. In fact, we even received a "rose" from the Des Moines Register's editorial board. Here's part of what they had to say:

*"Making the trip for teens to get a driver's permit is a task that busy families can easily put off. But young drivers need as much practice as possible with an adult before formal driver's education and hitting the road on their own. The new program may help them get an earlier start on supervised training."*

You can read the entire editorial [here](#).

## A few more people to thank on the Sabula project

Last month we were happy to report that the Sabula overflow bridge opened before Labor Day and included a long list of people that deserved thanks for helping the people of Sabula and her sister Illinois city, Savannah, maintain critical mobility throughout the summer. Much as I feared, we missed a few people. **Danielle Alvarez**, our I-74 project manager, reminded us that we missed **Cedric Wilkinson**, Engineering Tech Sr., who assisted **Mark Brandl**, Davenport Resident Construction Engineer, with administration of all of construction contracts. Cedric then reminded me that we missed **Curtis Carter**, Transportation Engineer Specialist in the Office of Construction & Materials, who worked with Cedric on a weekly basis (including Saturdays and Sundays) to come up with ideas to expedite construction and review any submittals from the contractor; **Kyle Frame**, Transportation Engineer Manager in the Office of Construction & Materials, who reviewed construction reports quickly for a fast turnaround; and **Wes Musgrove**, Director of the Office of Construction & Materials, who expedited approvals for substantial work orders to keep the construction moving and make sure other resources were available.

Thank you again to everyone – it's always true that it takes a team and that leadership is the work of many, as this so ably represents. And thank you to everyone who so kindly recognized others – that's such a terrific virtue in an organization.

## Color dynamic message signs update

As we discussed in the December 2017 report, we installed two full-matrix, color overhead dynamic message signs as part of the Council Bluffs Interstate System improvement program – one on I-29 northbound at US 275 in Council Bluffs, and one on I-80 westbound at the South Expressway in Council Bluffs. These signs are now live.

The impetus to use these signs came from the design of this part of the interstate. The final lane configuration of the concurrent section of I-29/I-80 through Council Bluffs will include six or seven lanes in each direction, with the center three “express” lanes in each direction separated from the outside lanes by a raised concrete barrier. This design will provide a smoother flow of traffic, but also requires some innovation when it comes to giving drivers clear and useful information when there are traffic impacts such as incidents, maintenance or construction. After considering several options, the design team settled on the use of color overhead dynamic message signs. Our standard amber-only dynamic message signs only offer text messages that drivers must decipher, but color dynamic message signs are much more flexible – they let the Traffic



Management Center in Ankeny, which controls the display of these signs statewide, include symbols or graphics that convey more complex information and that drivers can recognize and act on more quickly and consistently. They really give life to the “dynamic” part of dynamic message sign.

Because color dynamic message signs messages are still relatively new, we had several hurdles to overcome. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices has not caught up to this innovation, so we collaborated with other states that are using color dynamic message signs to improve our knowledge about effective implementation and use. The software we used to deploy messages to our dynamic message signs was designed to send text-only messages, so we upgraded it to create and manage color graphics. Our offices of Traffic & Safety, Traffic Operations, and consultant team have also been working together to develop and design message content and templates. All good reminders that we can't make positive change unless we are willing to push beyond convention and be willing to change ourselves and the way we work.

These first two signs are just the beginning. The final design in Council Bluffs will include nine color overhead dynamic message signs and four side-mount color dynamic message signs, located along or near interstate entrance ramps. The next three color dynamic message signs are in various stages of installation and integration and will be operational later this year. To steal freely from Skittles advertising, drive the rainbow!

## Motor Vehicle Enforcement officers participate in National Night Out

Here's one that we're a little late in sharing, but as the adage goes, better late than never! This past August our Motor Vehicle Enforcement officers took part in National Night Out, which is an annual community building event that started in August 1984 in Philadelphia. Today, millions of neighbors take part in National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August. Neighborhoods and cities alike host block parties, festivals,



*Officer Luke Feld and Captain Chris Moline in Webster City.*



*Officer Fred Claycamp and two young visitors in Sioux City.*

parades, picnics and other community events to include safety demonstrations, youth events, law enforcement exhibits and much more. The intent of National Night Out is to promote law enforcement-community partnerships and neighborhood relationships, by creating opportunities for personal, face-to-face interaction.

Thank you to all the Motor Vehicle Enforcement staff that participated in the National Night Out events around the state this year. It was a great opportunity to connect with the communities we serve and are a part of. It also reflects and gives life to the “Blue Courage” training that

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Motor Vehicle Enforcement officers take, which emphasizes a commitment to community service. We're hoping even more officers will be able to participate next year and encourage anyone who is interested to contact **Captain Chris Moline**. And thank you to Captain Moline for leading our participation this year!

## Song of the month

Given the forecast, this month I'm going with "Who'll Stop the Rain," written by John Fogerty and released by Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1970. There's a bit of myth surrounding this song, as many believe Fogerty performed it during the rain at Woodstock in 1969. Fogerty dispelled the myth in 2007 when he explained he wrote it *after* being at Woodstock and seeing a half million people caught in the rain and covered in mud. For the sake of everyone, let's hope it does stop and that we avoid damage to homes, businesses, infrastructure and crops.

## Wellness tip

Perhaps a bit early to pull this one out, but as the temperatures get cooler (and after I spent a Saturday morning biking and running through the cold and rain in preparation for a "wilderness" triathlon later this month) my mind went to the virtues of getting outside through the year (despite my fondness for football and chili on cool days). Our ability to keep moving through the cold months can help set the stage for year-round fitness, and our ability to get fresh air and light, and not feel like mushrooms stuck in the dark, can improve our mood and sense of well-being through the colder, darker months. We can stay active through the colder months, it just takes a bit of preparation – dress in layers, choose wicking materials that carry moisture away from your body and avoid "rotten cotton" that traps moisture and makes you more cold, pick mittens over gloves to keep your fingers warmer, choose wool socks and insulated shoes with more rugged soles to keep your feet warm and your steps safe, and you can enjoy outdoor activity safely and comfortably throughout the year. And remember to keep hydrating, even when it's cold – you're still expelling moisture, not just in what gets wicked away but through your exhalations.

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Good news, my friends! We have reached the end, and I'm still feeling good – Cyclones 48, Oklahoma State 42, and the ISUCF"V"MB rocked the house! Hope your favorite teams also won. In the meantime, be safe and well!

Best,

*Mark*

## Engagement Champions

Here's the list of people who will go through training to serve as our initial engagement champions. Remember that champions will work across divisions and offices and won't necessarily be limited to just assisting their division or work area.

Name	Title	Work Division/Area
Jean Fernandez	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Amy Sturm	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Floyd Perrine	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Nicole Hale	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Kathy Robinson	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Jenny Veale	Workforce Coordinator	Administrative Services
Lori Burgmaier	Exec Off 2	Director's Office
Emily Newton	Human Res Professional 1	Administrative Services
Emily Whaley	Training Specialist 2	Highway (Construction)
Shawn Blaesing	Exec Off 2	Highway (Maintenance)
Gary Harris	Trans Eng Specialist	Highway (Location & Environment)
Sandy Sells	ROW Agent 3	Highway (Right of Way)
Clayton Burke	Trans Eng Asst	Highway (District 1)
Pete Hjelmstad	Exec Off 2	Highway (District 2)
Jennifer Macklem	Exec Off 1	Highway (District 3)
Amy Maes	Sec 1	Highway (District 4)
Diana Upton	Sec 1	Highway (District 5)
Sam Shea	Transportation Planner 4	Highway (District 6)
Jason Miller	Management Analyst 3	Information Technology
Julie Johnson	Public Service Mgr 1	Motor Vehicle
Kala Shipley	Exec Off 2	Motor Vehicle
Christopher Roundy	DL Supv 2	Motor Vehicle
Angela Poole	Transportation Planner 2	Planning, Programming & Modal
Sam Hiscocks	Transportation Planner 2	Planning, Programming & Modal
Charlie Purcell	Public Service Executive	Highway (Project Delivery)