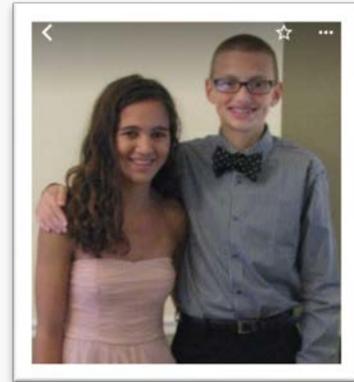


Hi everyone! We've come to the end of another month and as usual it raced by, both personally and professionally. On the personal side I've been happily doing my usual summer things of running, riding, and swimming, including a fun tour of the Raccoon River Valley trail during the Baccoon Ride, which offers the happy experience of mixing long distance riding with bacon – by the time I rode from my house through the route and back I logged 106 miles, 11 pieces of bacon, one maple/bacon iced donut, something called bacon brittle, a corn dog, a porkchop, and “Elvis” ice cream (bacon, banana and peanut butter ice cream). Much to Linda’s dismay I was still hungry when I got back. All good practice for RAGBRAI, and on that front I’m happy to report that I have my RAGBRAI packet and new tires, chain, cassette (the back gear set) and one-man tent, so I feel set.

The big personal news, however, came from third child Matt Lowe. Matt, who has been working in the Grand Canyon this summer, proposed to his girl-friend Alanna Maxwell while on a hiking/camping trip to the bottom of the canyon. We (and Alanna’s parents, who are good friends of ours) all knew he was going to propose but had a long day waiting for them to get back to the land/level of connectivity to find out the result. We are all very excited for them, and as the parents of a daughter who’s getting married in January, also excited that they anticipate a long engagement. I also admit that Linda and I shared a laugh over the idea that despite working diligently throughout their childhood to demonstrate that marriage was an iffy proposition at best, our kids seem anxious to be married. (Insert winking emoji here.)



Matt and Alanna in 8th grade.



Matt and Alanna post proposal.



(L to R) Commissioners Linda Juckette, Charese Yanney, Kathy Fehrman, David Rose, Nancy Maher and John Putney with Doug Hoelscher (third from left) in the Eisenhower Executive Building’s Secretary of War Suite.

On the professional side I had a terrific trip to Washington DC with our Transportation Commission, where we advocated for federal infrastructure funding and transportation policy issues. Our trip included visits to the office of every member of our federal congressional delegation (Senators Grassley and Ernst, and Representatives Axne, Finkenauer, Loeb sack, and King), as well as to the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO), where they shared insight on the status of federal infrastructure funding, the Transportation Research Board, where we learned more about the research work they lead and discussed key issues affecting transportation in the future, and with Doug Hoelscher, Deputy

Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, who shared insights on infrastructure strategies/positions within the White House. Our Commission members did a terrific job articulating a range of issues important to Iowa, including the urgency of implementing a new surface transportation authorization act to assure federal funding for roads, bridges, transit and other modes of transportation continues when the current federal authorization (the FAST Act) expires September 30, 2020; the need to address shortfalls in federal highway and transportation funding via the Highway Trust Fund caused by reliance on a federal gas tax that has not been raised since 1993; the need for increases in passenger facility charge fees to support airport infrastructure expansion; pilot shortages, and commercial driver shortages. As is often the case with federal legislation, movement is incremental, but the persistence of their efforts is helping to focus federal awareness and set the stage for action. We very much appreciate their hard work for the state.

Commissioner David Rose culminates eight years of service on the Transportation Commission



Commissioner David Rose

It's with both regret and deep appreciation that we report **Commissioner David Rose** is leaving our Transportation Commission after eight years of dedicated service. As many of you know, our Transportation Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and affirmed by the Iowa Senate, and serve four-year terms. Commissioner Rose was twice appointed by Governor Branstad, first in 2011 and again in 2015. He has actually given us more months of service than he anticipated, as he joined us when commission terms started in May and ended in April of the fourth year of service, but held over until the end of June to accommodate the legislative change that shifted Commissioners' terms to a four-year term starting in July and ending in June of the fourth year of service. (This change allows new Commissioners to start at the beginning of a program year, rather than at the end of the year when the program is being finalized.) Commissioner Rose will be succeeded by **Rich Arnold** of Russell, Iowa, and we will introduce him in next month's report.

Commissioner Rose, a Republican, grew up on a farm in Clinton County. He is a graduate of Northeast High School in Goose Lake and the University of Northern Iowa with a Bachelor of Science in education degree.

Commissioner Rose is a proud and valued member of the Clinton community. He was a teacher before owning and operating a retail business and manufacturing business in Clinton., where he now operates a real estate business and trucking company. Commissioner Rose is married to Suzanne, a retired teacher. They are the parents of three children, Kara of Long Grove, Kirsten of Cedar Rapids and Lance of Eagle, Colorado, and have five grandchildren.

Commissioner Rose has been involved in local governmental affairs in Clinton throughout his life, serving on several boards, including the Clinton Community School Board, Clinton Regional Development Corporation, Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Iowa/Illinois Highway Partnership. He has been very involved in promoting economic development and transportation projects in the Clinton area, making numerous trips to Des Moines and Washington, D.C. His impact,

however, extends far beyond the Clinton area, as it is evident that he is known, respected and trusted as an advocate for infrastructure and development not just in Clinton, Clinton County, or even eastern Iowa but throughout the state.

One of the things many people don't know about Commissioner Rose is that he is an expert skier and ski instructor, for many years operating what many consider the foremost ski instruction school in Aspen, Colorado, where he still maintains a home. The energy, daring, and execution he displays on the slopes translates in his professional work on the Commission, where he has been well known and appreciated for his energy, inquisitiveness and ideas. (As evidence of both his energy and dedication, he missed only one meeting as a Commissioner, and that was for the kind gesture of hosting a fellow Commissioner at his home in Aspen.) He has been a strong advocate for corridor development and economic development throughout the state, and his impact will continue far beyond his tenure, as we continue projects and initiatives that reflect his interests and sensibilities about the needs of Iowa.

Please join us in congratulating and thanking Commissioner Rose for his many years of service and the many contributions he has made to the Iowa DOT and the State of Iowa!

Iowa DOT helps start Women in Transportation chapter in Iowa

Last September I was at the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway & Transportation) fall meeting and saw a presentation about WTS, which stands for **Women in Transportation Seminar**. WTS, is a 40+ year-old international organization whose mission is to attract, sustain, connect, and advance women's careers to strengthen the transportation industry, and whose vision is equity and access for women in transportation. One of the things I quickly learned was that Iowa was one of the states that didn't have a chapter.

Happily, those days will soon be over! I got some preliminary information on how to start a chapter from the WTS representatives and bounced it off **Tammy Nicholson, Director of our Location & Environment Bureau**. Tammy quickly enlisted **Angie Poole, Safety Data Analyst in our Traffic & Safety Bureau**, who had expressed the need for more support for female employees at the Iowa DOT. From there, the rest, as they say, is history.

Angie and Tammy took the ball and ran, reaching out to women in both the public and private sectors to create a core group of people to help make the WTS Iowa Chapter a reality. This core group includes Angie, Tammy, and **Darcy Doty, Director of our Driver & Identification Services Bureau**, Shauna Hallmark, Director of Iowa State University's Institute for Transportation (InTrans), Stacy Woodson and Megan Anderson from HR Green, Brenda Durbahn from HG Consult, Laura Lutz-Zimmerman from HDR,

and Anna Smith from Terracon. This small group of professionals has been working hard to establish the chapter, developing goals, managing logistics, and for most of them, taking a crash course in event planning.

The very first WTS Iowa Chapter event, sponsored by InTrans, was held on Thursday, June 13th at Iowa State

University's Alumni Center. Over 120 people from all across the state – male and female, Iowa DOT and non-Iowa DOT, public and private – attended. The event was an opportunity to introduce WTS and have discussions on how an Iowa chapter can benefit Iowa's transportation industry. Maggie Walsh, chair of WTS International's board of directors, was the keynote speaker and I joined Maggie, Shauna Hallmark, and Barb Wells, a WTS chapter director from Kansas on a panel discussing our views on and experiences with WTS.

A consistent theme thought the event is that the best attribute and benefit of WTS is its spirit of community, inclusiveness, and mutual support for all genders. It takes the growth and awareness of all individuals in transportation to achieve WTS' mission. Therefore, membership in WTS, whether in Iowa or anywhere in the country is not restricted to women. All transportation professionals are encouraged to join and attend the events.

The Iowa chapter will encourage membership from all transportation disciplines including those that support transportation, from both the public and private sectors. Activities will focus on four foundational goals:

- a. Professional Development
- b. Work/Life Balance
- c. Networking
- d. Mentorship



Ange Poole speaks at the first WTS Iowa event as Maggie Walsh, Mark Lowe, Shauna Hallmark and Barb Wells look on.

The chapter plans to hold at least four large events each year and move them around the central part of the state. Event topics will align with the chapter's goals listed above and include things like:

- a. Local Transportation Initiatives/innovations
- b. Stress/time management strategies and education on improving mental and physical health
- c. Social activities such as meet and greets, fundraisers, and professional book clubs
- d. Student scholarships and new employee mentorships

How can you get involved?

State departments of transportation have been important partners in WTS chapters in other states, and we think that's true here in Iowa as well. To that end, we recognize WTS as a valid professional organization and encourage interested employees to participate in WTS and attend WTS events to strengthen their professional development and leadership skills. Although we can't pay membership or annual dues in professional organizations, we can authorize attending professional organization events, including WTS events, that are related to training and development on work time and cover eligible travel and registration expenses for those events. Like any training and development opportunities, you just need to obtain the approval of your supervisor and follow our usual policies for in and out of state training and development events. If you or your supervisor have any questions about whether a particular event is an eligible work event, just contact our Employee Services Bureau.

If you want to become a member of the WTS Iowa Chapter, you can sign up [here](#). (I have already!) Be sure to choose the public sector option, as the membership fees for public sector employees are reduced. Because the Iowa Chapter is still being formed, please choose the Southwest Ohio chapter. This will help the membership coordinator find our members and move them to the Iowa Chapter once the Iowa chapter is fully formed.

For more info, see the "More About WTS" box on the following page. I hope you consider joining – as I said at the first WTS event, we need many people with many different skills to be successful in our mission of mobility, which means we don't have the luxury of not being accessible to everyone. This is why I support organizations and activities that promote inclusiveness and equity in access. Many thanks to everyone that has worked so hard to bring WTS to Iowa and the Iowa DOT!

MORE ABOUT WTS

WTS helps its members find opportunity and recognition in the transportation industry through its professional activities, networking opportunities, and access to industry and government leaders. It has over 8500 members and 80 chapters across the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom with ten more chapters in the formation stages.

WTS is dedicated to the professional advancement of women in the transportation industry with a spirit of community, inclusiveness and mutual support among both men and women. Both men and women are encouraged to become active members.

The acronym stands for Women in Transportation Seminar. They included the word "seminar" in the title when it was founded in 1977 because at that time women couldn't get subsidized for professional activities unless they were educational.

For more in-depth information visit [the WTS website](#). Interested men may find their [WTS Men page](#) informative.

Administrative Services Updates



*Lee Wilkinson,
Administrative
Services Director*

Linda Anderson appointed as Employee Services Bureau Director

Please join me in welcoming **Linda Anderson** as the new **Director for the Employee Services Bureau** within the **Administrative Services Division**. Linda was previously the Assistant Director for the Employee Services Bureau (ESB) and has been with the Iowa DOT and ESB for 11 years. She brings to the position over 30 years of experience in the Human Resources field including in the areas of employee relations, recruitment, hiring, training, benefits, and safety. Linda has a passion for the work she does, has

empathy for her customers, and a desire to partner with her customers to move the department forward. I look forward to working with Linda as we help the department to attract and retain a world class workforce and to prepare that workforce for the future.

A little information about Linda to help you get to know her better. She is married and has five kids and six



*Linda Anderson, new Director of the
Employee Services Bureau*

grandchildren. The seventh grandchild is on the way and will be here in November. Linda is both an Iowa State Cyclones and Chicago Bears fan and believes this will be a good year for both. I think she will have better luck with the Cyclones. Linda enjoys spending time with her family and golfing. Recently, Linda and her husband hit the barbecue competition circuit by entering their first competition at the State Center Rose festival. There were thirty-one competitors and they held their own amongst the stiff competition. Again, we are glad to have Linda in her new role.

Workday update

As you are aware, we have now been live with our new human capital and payroll systems within Workday. We have two pay periods under our belt and are working on the third. We very much want to thank all the staff who have put in countless hours, worked nights and weekends to make this happen. You have done an amazing job. This project has involved folks from all corners of the department and without the tireless effort you put in we would not have been successful.

Most definitely there have been many changes for folks as we transitioned to Workday; after all our old system dated back to the 1980s. As with any new system, there are always kinks to be worked out, and staff are working hard to make this system better for all users. Please be patient as we work through this, and certainly ask if you have any questions.

There are many benefits to making this transition and hopefully, you have been able to experience some of them. For me those benefits include:

- 24/7 access to our information securely via the Internet and allow mobile approval of pay and expenses.
- Since this is a Software as a Service (SaaS) product, we will eliminate the need for the DOT to manage and maintain expensive and energy-consuming computer hardware.
- This system is updated twice a year, so we will get the latest technical and functional improvement.
- Employees and supervisors have easy access to information.
- We get real-time data, and dashboard reporting, which is a change from today's static reports, allowing us to make better and faster decisions.

Mark's note: I'm really excited about this new system. At the outset, it's given me the opportunity to put many tasks in the palm of my hand and to quickly complete them whenever and wherever I need. As Lee points out, like every major change there will be issues to address, but I urge everyone to exercise **patience, persistence and flexibility** as we do – it's what we need every time we make a major change: the **patience** to realize there will be issues and to not give up the moment we encounter one, the **persistence** to work through them to achieve your vision and the desired change, and the **flexibility** to adjust where needed to achieve success. Thanks to everyone who has worked so tirelessly to make this happen, and to everyone in the Iowa DOT for working through the changes with us. You're helping us blaze a path in state government!

What happened to vacation buyout this year?

As many of you know, in many years we offer a vacation “buy out” to our staff at the end of the state fiscal year (in June). The buy-out allows eligible employees (typically those that have 160 or more hours of unused vacation time) to be reimbursed for up to 40 hours of unused vacation time. It’s a nice option for employees that would rather have the financial equivalent of that time, and it’s a useful budgeting option for the Iowa DOT and other agencies because it lets us manage future obligations with existing budget and at current rates.

We don’t completely control the decision to offer a vacation buy out in a given year. The authority to offer a vacation buy out comes from the Iowa Department of Management (DOM), who makes that decision in consultation with the Governor’s office. As in years past, this year DOM again authorized agencies the could afford to do so to offer eligible employees a vacation buy-out.

In most years we have eagerly offered the buy-out when authorized to do so, as we think the option is a benefit to both eligible employees and the agency. However, there have been times when we could not afford to do so, and unfortunately this was one of those years. Our ability to complete one depends on how much capacity we have in our budget at the end of the year, meaning whether we will end the year under budget and by how much. That’s something that’s often determined by what kind of winter we have had. This year, the very hard winter followed by flooding made our margins thin, and then we also had to think about the cash flow in the highway program – funds that we don’t spend in the current fiscal year are returned to the primary road fund and are available for use in the road and bridge program in the next fiscal year. Facing narrow budget margins, a year in which we had to request a supplemental budget appropriation to purchase salt to replenish our salt stores after the hard winter season, and very tight cash flow projections in the FY2020 program, we came to the difficult conclusion that it was not fiscally responsible to participate in the vacation buy-out this year.

I speak with great sincerity when I say that it was a difficult decision. As a management team we looked long and hard at the numbers, and debated long and hard, before we made the decision. It was not a decision we were happy to make but one we felt was necessary this year. We will have to go through a similar evaluation if authority for a vacation buy-out is extended next year, but I can assure you we will approach it with the same bias for offering it if we can.

Good news for Iowa transit services



*Stu Anderson, Planning,
Programming & Modal
Division Director*

Federal transit grant will fund new buses

New buses will soon be coming to public transit agencies across Iowa thanks to a \$7.0 million grant recently announced by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Iowa DOT was awarded the competitive grant through the FTA's [Bus and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program](#), and will be available for Commission consideration to replace 91 transit vehicles at 18 rural and small urban public transit systems. This represents an opportunity to modernize our statewide fleet and improve service delivery. Replacing aging vehicles impacts the performance of rural transit agencies by reducing breakdowns and operating costs and improving bus on-time performance. That's important because transit offers mobility and accessibility options to Iowans that for economic or personal reasons can't, or prefer not to, use personal transportation. This could include elderly residents, low-income residents, college students, disabled residents, youth, and others that choose not to drive for economic, practical, or environmental reasons. In 2018, Iowa's 35 public transit systems provided 24.8 million trips while operating 29.2 million revenue miles of service in all 99 of Iowa's counties.

Buses now on Google Maps

Improving bus infrastructure is important, because more people than ever can now find their next bus thanks to a project that integrates fixed-route public transit buses with Google Maps. Anyone who needs help planning a bus route on twenty of Iowa's 35 public transit systems can now go to Google Maps and view public transit options for their next trip. This makes Iowa's public transit system more accessible and is a great asset to both current and prospective passengers. Our **Public Transit Bureau** recently completed this project, which focused on making the fixed route public transit agency schedules available in Google Transit. For some agencies, this was the first time their transit network had been made available in a geospatial system. This project has made it possible to investigate other important aspects of transit service, such as a project that assessed the ADA compliance of more than 800 public transit bus stops. Today anyone who needs help planning a bus route in twenty of Iowa's 35 public transit systems, can now find the next bus at their fingertips.

Song of the month

I thought it would be good to shake things up this month and depart from the usual stream of pop rock selections, and instead suggest something classical. So, this month I'm going with **Claude Debussy's "Claire de Lune."** (There are many versions of this but one I listen to often is performed by the London Philharmonic. Many of you may remember this from the Bellagio water show scene at the end of the movie "Ocean's 11.") The English translation of this title is "moonlight" or "by the light of the moon," and it has the dreamy feel of listening to an impressionist painting (if that makes sense). Perfect backdrop for a moonlit summer evening.

Wellness tip

Here's a quick one that speaks in favor of carbs. Although low carb, high protein diets remain in vogue, don't cut all carbs out. You need carbohydrates to maintain your glycogen levels, and without them you can feel sluggish and lack the energy needed to sustain exercise and other healthy activities. Simple carbohydrates (think pop and candy) will spike your blood sugar but quickly dissipate and leave you hungry, but complex carbohydrates (think oatmeal) will burn slowly and give you sustained energy. And, complex carbs offer something many foods don't – a discount rate – up to 25% of the calories consumed when you eat complex carbs will be burned in the digestive process.

* * * * *

Well, my friends, we have reached the end of another report. As always, stay safe and well in all that you do, whether at work or home.

Best,

Mark