

JANUARY 2014

INSIDE

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Exploring new ways to tell our story

“Transportation Matters for Iowa” blog now online



Amazing things are being accomplished each and every day at the Iowa DOT. Whether we’re developing a new way to track material use in the field, planning a safer intersection option, or finding innovations in driver licensing, the work you do matters to every person who lives, works, or travels through Iowa.

So, with all this great stuff going on, shouldn’t we do a better job of telling people about what’s going on in the Iowa DOT? “Absolutely,” said Paul Trombino III, director of the Iowa DOT. “I want to find more ways to let the citizens of Iowa know how the transportation system impacts them every day and what we are doing as an agency to manage that system.”

To help tell the Iowa DOT’s story, the agency is launching a blog in mid-January called “Transportation Matters for Iowa.” The blog can be accessed online at www.transportationmatters.iowadot.gov. The plan is to post stories about what the Iowa DOT is doing to manage and improve the transportation system in the state. Andrea Henry, director of the Iowa DOT’s Office of Strategic Communications, said, “Initially, we plan to post one or two stories each week to the blog. At first, those posts will come from staff in Strategic Communications, but over time, we hope to empower any employee to become a DOT reporter to tell their own stories on the blog.”

Trombino added, “The blog will also be another way to have a conversation with our customers. People can post comments and have discussions about transportation.”

Henry says this communication format can provide a number of benefits. “The blog will be an information resource for both employees and our external customers. Using a blog can tell our story using a variety of media formats. Along with traditional text and limited photos we currently use in INSIDE or in our news releases, we can include video and entire photo galleries on the blog. Photos and video can be captured by employees on the fly from any enabled mobile device. The stories can be short or long, whatever is needed to share with the public and employees what we’re doing and why we do the things we do.”

Henry says she envisions the blog also becoming a resource for the media, allowing the Iowa DOT to send fewer news releases. She said, “With the blog we’ll be able to reach the media and anyone in the public who wants to hear their news directly from us. Anyone can access the blog anytime from the Iowa DOT’s home page (www.iowadot.gov) and, each time a new blog entry is posted, an email will be sent to

the mailing list of people who have signed up for the blog. Over the next few weeks, emails will be sent to every DOT employee with the details on how to sign up for the blog.”

The blog will include the same types of stories currently seen in INSIDE. Since all employees have access to the blog, the printed and online versions of the employee newsletter are being phased out. Tracey Bramble from the Office of Strategic Communications is the editor of INSIDE and will be providing the initial content for the blog. She said, “We will still produce INSIDE through April or May while we transition to the blog. All the information currently in INSIDE and more will be on the blog, divided into categories. The stories will be grouped into categories, allowing people a quick way to see the type of information they choose. Instead of having to thumb through the pages of INSIDE to find the story you want, the blog will help you easily find stories that interest you.”

She said, “The blog will also allow us to post more stories in a timely manner. Because of time and space constraints of INSIDE, time-sensitive information is often not included. Using the blog format, we’ll be able to post relevant information as soon as it is available, without having to wait for a monthly publication date. Now that every employee has email access, this will speed up the process of getting the news out to our people.”

Another benefit of the blog format, it’s portable. Because the blog is Internet-based, it can be accessed from any computer or mobile device that can get Web service. “I know that change can be difficult, but I truly believe this new tool will improve communication with both our employees and our external customers,” said Henry.

You can help shape our internal communication strategy

Please take a few minutes to give us your opinion. Every employee will receive an email with a link to a brief survey about internal communication at the Iowa DOT. Please complete the survey by Feb. 7

Thank you!

Iowa DOT employees use Yammer to collaborate, communicate more effectively

Over the past year, you might have received an email from another DOTer inviting you to join Yammer. If you took advantage of the invitation, you found an internal social media platform with many opportunities for employees to share ideas and information.

The Iowa DOT has a “network” on Yammer. To belong, you simply need an Iowa DOT email address. Within the network, employees can form “groups” to explore topics of interest to them.

Most of the districts, several Iowa DOT offices and committees have Yammer groups set up to communicate internally. Groups can be set up as “public” meaning anyone in the network can join, or “private” meaning an employee has to be invited into the group by a current group member. For those who are familiar with Facebook, Yammer functions in a similar manner. The site offers instant messaging, file sharing, and other communications options. Some public groups currently using Yammer are employees interested in Excel use, wellness, GIS information, RMS users, and design ideas, just to name a few.

Rhonda Pecenka of the Office of Construction and Materials, set up one of the first Yammer groups. “I use Excel quite a bit in my job and I know other people do, too. Because I don’t know everyone who is a power user, I thought Yammer would be a great way to connect people so we could ask questions or share tips and tricks with others in the agency.”

For emergency communications, Yammer has become a very valuable tool for the field, Traffic Operations and Strategic Communications groups to connect.

Andrea Henry, director of the Office of Strategic Communications, said, “Using Yammer instead of email during emergencies provides a direct channel for field employees to instantly share what is happening on the roads with other DOT employees who need the information to do their jobs.”

The platform allows everyone in the group to be a part of the conversation, without having to specifically email each person. Yammer also allows users to group conversations based on topics, making it easier to stay on topic. Henry said, “Field employees can share information and photos directly from the Yammer app on their phones and, for our group, this makes it more efficient to get information out to the public more quickly and accurately.”

Any Iowa DOT employee can join the agency’s Yammer network. To log on to the Iowa DOT’s Yammer network, go to www.yammer.com. To set up a Yammer account, use your Iowa DOT email address (all employees now have access to Iowa DOT email) and enter a password of your own choosing. Once you have established your account, you can access the Iowa DOT’s main group (called All Company) and join or set up other groups for employees who may want to share information on this platform.

The Office of Strategic Communications has developed a recorded webinar on the use of Yammer

If you would like to view the webinar, go to:
<http://portal/PT/SI/SitePages/Webinars.aspx>



This is not your teenager's social media

Over the past two years, the Iowa DOT's use of social media has steadily developed into one of our most popular communication tools. The agency currently has nearly 1,600 Facebook users who "like" our primary page and nearly 18,000 "followers" on the Iowa DOT's Twitter account.

"For the Iowa DOT, using social media is a great way to have a conversation with customers," said Andrea Henry, director of the Office of Strategic Communications, the office in charge of the DOT's social media platforms. "Using social media also provides a way to interact with customers and answer their questions or concerns quickly. The public has come to expect quick responses to their questions. For some information, it works better to put our message out directly in our own words on Twitter or Facebook rather than send a news release to the media and wait for them to develop their own story from the information."

Recently, social media access has been opened up for all DOT employees on state-owned equipment. Barb Espeland, director of the Information Technology Division, said, "With so much of the agency's communications coming via social media channels, there is a business need for employees to be able to access these websites."

The key to opening up social media access for all employees is the business need. The updated Internet usage policy, 030.09, clearly says the Internet is provided for business use for employees to accomplish their assigned job duties and responsibilities. Supervisors do have the discretion to restrict Internet access if there is not a business need.

"Social media is immediate access to information," said Henry. "This is especially important during emergency situations. Allowing our employees to have the same access as the public to the information keeps everybody on the same page."

Networking and sharing information are two key uses of social media. Following Twitter or Facebook pages of other agencies or groups related to transportation allows the opportunity to share best practices and develop relationships with those with an interest in transportation.

For those who have not dived deeply into the pool of social media channels, here is a list of what the Iowa DOT currently uses and the purpose of each.

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com>



The Iowa DOT has used Facebook since April 2012. This social media channel allows us to share text, photos, infographics, and videos of interest to our customers. Job postings and traffic are popular posts to the main Facebook page.

Targeted road condition information resides on the Iowa 511 system's statewide feed and on separate pages for each region.

Sinclair Stolle from the Office of Traffic Operations, said, "We have a system in place now that posts alerts and incidents from the 511 system directly to Facebook and Twitter, allowing us to reach our followers with the information they need to know to make informed decisions about their travels. They don't have to go look for the information, it is fed directly to their computers or mobile devices."

The department has also developed project-related Facebook pages as a way to get targeted information to customers. Offices such as aviation and transit are using Facebook pages to interact with modal enthusiasts.

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Social Media

Social media, continued from page 4

Twitter

www.twitter.com



Twitter is the fastest growing social media channel used by the Iowa DOT. The number of followers on the Iowa DOT's primary page are increasing by approximately 50 people per day.

The platform limits tweets to 140 characters, allowing staff in the Office of Strategic Communications to post short bursts of information several times per day. Much of the information posted to Twitter coordinates with information posted to Facebook, including photos, and infographics.

The Iowa DOT has set up separate 511 Twitter feeds for each region of Iowa, six metro areas, and a statewide feed. And, like Facebook, these Twitter feeds are automatically populated by the 511 system and manual posts can also be made.

Pinterest

www.pinterest.com/iowadot



This platform allows the agency to create pin boards to tell transportation stories in a more visual way. Topics include safety, history, transportation-inspired crafts, wacky facts, and images.

Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iowadot>



This platform is used to give the public and news media easy access to photos from major events. Several of the galleries from the Iowa DOT's Flickr site are linked directly from pages on the Iowa DOT's website.

YouTube

www.youtube.com/user/iowaDOT



Videos created by the Iowa DOT are housed on our YouTube channel. The Iowa DOT's YouTube videos are linked both to social media posts and to the agency's website. Utilizing YouTube allows the Iowa DOT to cost-effectively caption videos,

making them accessible for people with disabilities.

You can follow the Iowa DOT on any of these social media platforms by searching for Iowa Department of Transportation or by clicking their icon at the bottom of the Iowa DOT's home page. Android and iPhone users can download the "myIowaDOT" app from their app store. myIowaDOT includes quick links to the department's main Facebook and Twitter pages.

Any office or group interested in developing a social media presence, should contact the Office of Strategic Communications for more information.

Follow the Iowa DOT's legislative proposals online

www.iowadot.gov/legis

With the 2014 state legislative session beginning Monday, Jan. 13, here is a great way to stay in touch with our DOT-sponsored policy bills. Check out our website at www.iowadot.gov/legis for information on the bills under "current legislation."

As always, if you have any questions, please contact Mikel Derby, Iowa DOT legislative liaison or Renee Jerman, legislative analyst.

Personnel updates

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Oct. 25 to Dec. 5, 2013.

New hires

Scott Bergman, highway technician associate, Fort Dodge garage; **Scott Boyle**, materials fabrication inspector 1, District 2 materials; **Jennifer Brey**, driver's license clerk senior, Council Bluffs DL station; **Andrew Hansen**, highway technician associate, Iowa Falls garage; **William DeJong**, highway technician associate, Grimes garage; **Dusty Genkinger**, mechanic, Coralville garage; **Patricia King**, public service executive 3, Finance; **Anthony Klein**, transportation engineer specialist, District 5 Office; **Kristopher Klop**, transportation planner 1, Aviation; **Mark McGinty**, highway technician associate, Rockwell City garage; **Mark Nel**, highway technician associate, Mason City garage; **Craig Peterson**, mechanic, Storm Lake garage; **Shawn Stewart**, mechanic, Martensdale garage; **Dusty Tracy**, highway technician associate, Martensdale garage; **Eric Weyen**, highway technician associate, Rock Valley garage; **Jordan Wilkens**, highway technician, Donnellson garage; **Michael Wood**, driver's license clerk senior, Des Moines DL station; **Quinn Woods**, secretary 1, Storm Lake maintenance; **Forrest Yoshida**, highway technician, Council Bluffs-north garage

Promotions

Bonnie Castillo, from executive officer 2 to executive officer 3, Traffic Operations; **Bryce Feldhoff**, from information technology specialist 4 to information technology specialist 5, Information Technology Division; **Andrew Frey**, from information technology specialist 4 to information technology specialist 5, Information Technology Division; **Bradley Garside**, from highway technician, Adair garage to highway technician senior, District 4 bridge crew; **Marty Goedken**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Dubuque garage; **Todd Mennenga**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Mason City garage; **Denise Said**, from driver's license supervisor 2 to public service executive 2, Driver Services; **John Svendsen**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, West Union garage; **Bradley Tegtmeyer**, from highway technician associate to highway technician, Algona garage; **Jeffrey Tjaden**, from public service executive 2, Cedar Rapids maintenance to public service executive 4, District 6 Office

Transfers

Pamela Cook, clerk specialist, from Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services to Driver Services; **James Deppe**, right-of-way agent 3, within Right of Way; **Karla Graham**, clerk specialist, within Driver Services; **Richard Johnson**, from District 4 paint crew to Red Oak garage; **Joseph Guckert**, right-of-way agent 2, Right of Way

Retirements

David Adkins, highway technician associate, Donnellson garage; **Rodney Clark**, highway technician associate, De Soto garage; **Rebecca Goodman**, highway technician associate, Martensdale garage; **Jimmy Lemonds**, highway technician associate, Ottumwa garage; **David Thompson**, highway technician associate, Sigourney garage; **David Younie**, right-of-way agent 4, Right of Way

Service awards

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for January 2014.

40 years

Mary Jo Key, Rail Transportation; **Gary Novey**, Bridges and Structures

35 years

Mark Ambrosy, Maquoketa garage; **Michael Jackson**, Traffic Operations; **Wayne Sunday**, Construction and Materials

30 years

Troy Carlson, Information Technology Division; **Marcus Lamoreux**, District 1 materials; **Gene Pavelka**, Britt construction

25 years

Christie Anderson, Construction and Materials; **Rodney Graven**, Construction and Materials; **Lambert Struzynski**, Coralville garage; **Joyce Tuel**, Fort Dodge garage; **Dennis Ward**, Jefferson construction

20 years

Jennifer Bell, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Thomas Curtis**, Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services; **Orest Lechnowsky**, District 4 field staff; **Chad McClain**, Carlisle garage; **Veda Molina**, Des Moines DL station; **DeeAnn Newell**, Location and Environment

15 years

Anthony Clabaugh, Williams garage; **Darrel Hansen**, Sioux City-Hamilton garage; **Mark Holm**, Right of Way; **Derek Knowler**, Waterloo garage; **Cathy Mather**, Rail Transportation; **James Nelson**, Bridges and Structures; **Jeffrey Novotny**, Marshalltown garage; **Randall Seehusen**, Grundy Center garage; **Steve Snow**, Latimer garage; **Loyce Staker**, Tama garage

10 years

Matthew Haubrich, Performance and Technology Division; **Stephen Megivern**, Design; **Jeffrey Roll**, Iowa Falls garage

5 years

Joe Brennan, Tipton garage; **Brandon Brimm**, De Soto garage; **Jason Dighton**, Allison garage; **Shawn Lawson**, Fort Dodge garage; **Verlin Miller**, Ottumwa garage; **Martin Scharff**, Ottumwa garage; **Luke Shelton**, Davenport garage; **Rick Sieck**, Urbana garage; **Ross Wood**, Denison garage; **Michael Young**, Information Technology Division

Family happenings

Motor Vehicle Division

Diann McMillen



It's a girl for **Nicole Smalley**, driver's license clerk in the Des Moines DL station, and her husband, Michael. Oaklee Lynn was born Aug. 29 weighing 7.2 pounds and measuring 20.5 inches. Congratulations to the Smalley family!

District 2

Paige Merrill



District 2 materials staff organized a food drive in November benefitting the Hawkeye Harvest Food Bank in Mason City. Other offices participating included the District 2 Office, district annex, Mason City garage, and driver's license station. As part of the drive, a pancake breakfast was held Nov. 20. Employees and local DOT retirees were invited to bring a donation in exchange for breakfast. A total of 204 food items (225 pounds) and \$415 was donated. Thank you to District 2 employees for your generosity.

District 3

MaryBeth Banta



Ralph Hansohn, highway technician associate in the Denison garage, retired Sept. 26 after 33 years with the Iowa DOT. Ralph worked his entire career in the Denison shop, where he was always willing to help out his co-workers. Ralph is an avid deer and turkey hunter. He generously shares the bounty from his huge garden with others every summer. A party was held on Ralph's last day to wish him a happy retirement.

INSIDE

INSIDE is developed to help keep all Iowa DOT employees informed about critical issues affecting them, recognize DOT employees for their excellent service and share interesting aspects in the lives of our co-workers. For more information, contact Tracey Bramble, Office of Strategic Communications, at 515-239-1314 or email tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov.

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On the cover: Wintry travel on Iowa's highways

January I-Spy clue: Winter weather in Iowa can be a "bear"

December I-Spy solution: wrapped present on back of tow plow

Mobile WOPR helps field forces battle winter weather

Technology changes quickly, and keeping up with it is no small task, but it is necessary to maintain the most efficient operation. In keeping up with the deployment of iPads to each highway maintenance supervisor, a new mobile version of the Winter Operations and Portal Reporting (WOPR) is now under development for those employees.

Supervisors have been using a desktop version of WOPR for the past few years. The portal integrates data coming from automatic vehicle location (AVL), DOT sensor data from RWIS, Iowa State University weather data, and local geospatial data like cameras. The agency has equipped most snowplow trucks with sensors and cellular communication devices that allow supervisors or other DOT employees to monitor a variety of elements on each truck. The AVL technology is linked to a global positioning system (GPS) receiver to allow the unit to collect data about the truck's spreader controller, plow position, engine status, pavement temperature, and vehicle location and speed.

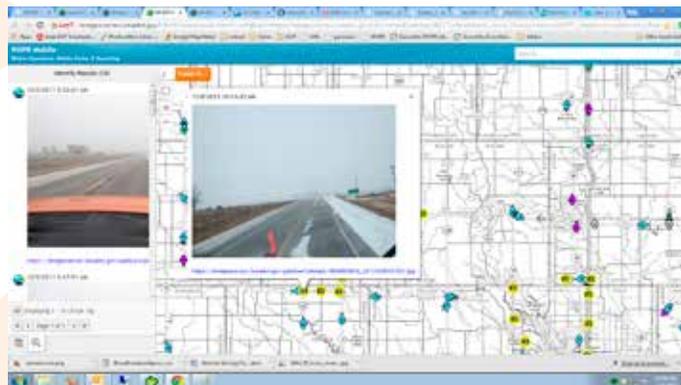
The mountain of data being collected is only useful if it can be put in a framework where employees can analyze it in a meaningful way. That's where WOPR comes in. Eric Abrams, the agency's geographic information systems (GIS) manager, coordinated the various databases fed by the GPS/AVL equipment on the snowplows into a Web-based application using a map background and dashboard. He said, "We worked closely with the field people to make sure the data we collect is valuable to them. Then we tried to make it as easy as possible to show the data on a map through a Web-based service. Users can turn layers off and on to view different elements individually or layered together. The data is updated every two minutes and has proven to be very accurate."

A group of employees tested two different mobile versions in late 2013. Abrams said, "Both versions that were tested used leverage cloud technology, making data instantly available to the supervisors on their mobile devices."

The mobile version that was chosen and is now being implemented to all highway maintenance supervisors looks very similar to the desktop version, making the use of the mobile website even more comfortable for the supervisors. The functions are the same as the desktop version, plus the supervisors can search by specific truck number to see all the details on that piece of equipment.

"One feature of the mobile version allows the supervisor to draw a box on the map and all the information for equipment within that box will pop up," said Abrams.

Brad Steinhart, highway maintenance supervisor in the Oskaloosa garage, has been testing the mobile version on his iPhone for the past several months. "I think it's pretty user friendly. If I'm off work and a storm comes in that wasn't



predicted, I can just check my phone and see which trucks are out and what they are putting down. Being able to access the traffic cameras on my phone is great because I can look to the west of us to see what is coming. I have most of the information I need right in my pocket."

In addition to the Iowa DOT's uses of the data being collected, Iowa State University is collecting data from 20 to 25 different truck sensors and using it for research. Abrams said, "ISU researchers will use the data to analyze weather events and come up with different ways to predict weather and help us improve Iowa DOT's winter operations."

Basic snowplow map available to the public



Some of the data used for WOPR is now being made available to the public. The public-facing snowplow map will show the location of snowplows in operation on a map. When you click on one

of the snowplow icons, a box appears listing information including the date and time when the data was collected, the direction of travel, and air temperature. Weather information and camera images can also be viewed on this page.

The map is available on the new "Winter driving" section of the Iowa DOT's website at <http://www.iowadot.gov/travel.html#winterdriving>. You can get to the map from the Iowa DOT's homepage, <http://www.iowadot.gov>, and then click on "Plan Ahead" and then "Winter driving."

"This will be great information for the public to know when they are contemplating traveling during a winter storm," said Andrea Henry, director of the Office of Strategic Communications. "It is just one more tool that we can use to help customers make better travel decisions and increase safety to reach our goal of zero fatalities on Iowa highways."