

INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

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From my view

Mark F. Wandro, P.E., L.S.



In my INSIDE column in April I talked about my philosophy that communication is a key to creating a positive work environment. Communication only works if all parties involved buy into the process. At their meeting in May, managers and supervisors were given several tools to improve communication and the work environment. I found an article on a Web site, HumanNatureAtWork.com, that reinforces and adds to the tools supervisors and managers already have. This article is one in a series that have been adapted to fit our needs. I hope you find it helpful. The complete set of articles can be found on HumanNatureAtWork.com.

Ideas you can use to improve morale

As a manager or supervisor, increasing your awareness of how you impact your staff's morale, and taking the time to learn more about the factors that impact morale, you will dramatically improve your effectiveness. You will not only increase your ability to cultivate high morale, but also high productivity and high employee engagement.

Focus on what you can control, not on what you can't

Your first step in examining how to improve morale is to get clear on this point. Gallup's landmark research has shown that an employee's direct supervisor affects his/her performance and loyalty far more than the outlook of upper level managers or the overall organizational climate. Research shows that you as a manager or supervisor can make a huge difference. The key to both your effectiveness and job satisfaction is to focus on the things you can control and influence, and practice letting go of those things totally out of your control.

You have control over whether you take the time to learn what factors and practices affect morale. You have control over whether you make a conscious effort to do the things that make a difference, and whether you engage in professional development to improve your supervisory skills. You also have control over whether you study how to become more influential, so that you can increase the odds that others will do their part to improve morale.

Do "The Big Three"

If you were to do only the following three things, and nothing else, you would still make a significant improvement in morale. These three action steps are

based on research revealing what factors make the biggest difference in morale and engagement. They are also the antidotes to three of the most common complaints heard in employee focus groups and seminars.

#1 Practice noticing when your people do something well. Then tell them about it. Unfortunately, noticing good things doesn't come naturally. Noticing what's wrong is actually hard-wired into the human brain. Our survival was more closely linked to noticing what's wrong – i.e. potential danger ("Avoid that poisonous snake.") than to noticing what is right ("Oh, look at that pretty bird."). Thus, it takes conscious attention and discipline to offset this hard-wired tendency.

#2 Don't just talk at employees; listen to them.

Listen to their ideas about process improvements. Listen to their concerns. Listen to their opinions. This doesn't mean you agree, nor does it mean you have to act on every recommendation you hear. It does mean that you respect them as intelligent adults. Few things damage morale --- and an employee's respect for management --- more effectively than a know-it-all boss who doesn't value the ideas of the people in the trenches. Not listening to concerns also creates a "Why should I care about you, if you don't care about me?" attitude in employees.

Conversely, managers who listen engender engagement and loyalty. Listening also cultivates respect, because front line employees know that it's just commonsense that the people doing the job might have a few good ideas about how to do that job better. Managers who don't get this, lose the respect of their people.

WB Lifesavers add to DL manual

This is the story of a remarkable group of seventh graders. If you've ever had middle school kids hanging around your house, you could probably relate to discussions of sports or maybe who is "going out" with whom. Did your middle schoolers ever put serious thought into tackling a tough safety issue and then present their ideas in front of a group of state officials or talk in front of a panel of judges in Washington, D.C.?

A national competition called eCYBERMISSION, sponsored by the U.S. Army, caught the eye of West Branch seventh grade science teacher Hector Ibarra. This Web-based science, math and technology competition allows students in grades six through nine to compete for regional and national awards, while working to solve problems in their community. Ibarra's students Cassidy White, Becca Hoy, Alex Leith and Curtis Walker formed the West Branch Lifesavers, and took on the eCYBERMISSION challenge of educating drivers about hazards on rural roadways after several fatal crashes on rural roads near their community.

The team researched the issues by talking to safety officials and exploring several federal and state safety Web sites for statistics and guidance. While the young people didn't even have learner's permits, they used go-carts and golf carts to get a "feel" for the driving experience.

An interesting finding in the research was discovered when the WB Lifesavers surveyed their own classmates about the possibility of involvement in a crash before age 21. National statistics show 85 percent of young people will be involved in a crash by age 21, that's a dramatic difference from what their classmates predicted. Only 14 percent of WB seventh graders thought they would be involved in a crash before age 21.

The team gathered the crash data from the DOT and Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau and came up with recommendations for the DOT to change the Iowa Driver's License Manual to include a section about driving on gravel roads.

The team presented its findings at the Capitol in Des Moines to State Representative Jeff Kaufmann, Terry Dillinger, director of the Office of Driver Services, and other DOT officials. Kaufmann



Photo courtesy West Branch Times

The WB Lifesavers (from left) Curtis Walker, Alex Leith, Cassidy White and Becca Hoy

said, "They sold themselves to every person I introduced them to. Their dedication and sincerity was apparent to us all. As a former junior high teacher, it's easy for me to tell when students are committed to their own work, and it was very clear that these kids knew their topic inside and out and had worked very hard on the presentation. Their PowerPoint discussion was one of the best this entire legislative session."

The presentation obviously impressed Dillinger as well. "They not only presented their ideas, they told us exactly what we could do to support them. It was very impressive," said Dillinger.

In response to and with the help of the WB Lifesavers, Office of Driver Services staff developed a new section about driving on rural roads for the recently released version of the Iowa Driver's License Manual.

Cassidy White, one of the WB Lifesavers said, "It was nerve racking to present to the DOT because they were the first group to see our presentation. But we were really happy that they listened and asked questions. It made us realize that you don't have to be a certain age to get things done."

The DOT wasn't the only group listening to the WB Lifesavers. The four West Branch kids recently returned from the eCYBERMISSION competition in Washington, D.C. as the seventh

"Their PowerPoint discussion was one of the best this entire legislative session."

**State Representative
Jeff Kaufmann**

WB, continued on page 7

Operators voice opinions on equipment

Here's a novel idea for you --- when you want to find out information about DOT equipment, ask the people who use it every day. Last spring the Winter Equipment Committee, comprised of equipment operators, supervisors and mechanics from each of the six districts, sent surveys to the DOT's 977 equipment operators (the number employed at that time) to help the group focus on the actual needs of employees. Since this is the first time the committee has attempted to survey equipment operators, they weren't sure what to expect.

"Within days we had hundreds of surveys back," said Jim Dowd of the Office of Maintenance. "We ended up having 875 surveys returned, which is just a phenomenal return rate. More than half of the responses had very constructive written comments, in addition to the multiple choice questions. Right now we're going over all of those. About a third of the operators included contact names and phone numbers, so we may be calling some of them for more information. This survey gives us a great starting point and a lot to work with."

Dennis Burkheimer, winter operations administrator, said, "We really appreciated the equipment operators taking the time to tell us what they want to see the winter equipment committee focus on. We also want to thank the district maintenance managers and shop supervisors for allowing the operators time to complete the surveys."

Information gathered from the questionnaires includes details on specific pieces of equipment including the front plow, underbody plow, spreader, wings, dump box, liquid systems, anti-ice trailer, and cab environment. Training issues were also addressed.

"In the past I don't think the communication about equipment needs between the field and central office was as good as it could have been," said Larry Shriver, mechanic in the Neola garage. Shriver says that this type of communication has improved some over the years, but he says this survey is the first time input has been gathered from a large group of equipment operators in a constructive, quantifiable way.

David Putz from the Director's Staff Division helped the committee shape the survey so responses could be easily analyzed. "Without Dave's guidance in designing the survey, we would have been lost," said Burkheimer. "He was able to help us organize the format of the questions to get the most meaningful responses." Barb Coon in the Office of Maintenance also played a large part in collecting the surveys and recording the data so the committee could have fast and accurate results to work with.

Overall, cab environment, liquid systems and front plow issues emerged as the top areas in need of improvement based on initial survey results. Additional analysis revealed that many of the cab environment problems disappear when data from trucks purchased after 1999 was ana-

lyzed. This would seem to indicate that many of the cab environment issues have been resolved with newer truck models, but the committee has much more analysis to do before declaring that all cab environment issues have been corrected.

"The survey indicates that we seem to be going in the right direction in buying new equipment. Many of the improvements seen in the newer equipment have come from suggestions obtained from the field operators," said Dowd.

Because of survey input, the committee is already working on improvements to the front plows and liquid systems. Mike Hagen, equipment operator senior in Hanlontown and a committee member, said, "There is so much information to go through, but I think the equipment operators will appreciate this once they see some results. We want them to know we will try to use as much of the information as we can."

According to Dowd, a full report will be compiled explaining the results and distributed to each field location by Sept. 1. Watch INSIDE for results once the report is complete.

Getting in sync

City, county or state transportation projects--- the dilemma for many, many years has been getting all the groups' urban design standards and specifications in sync. Since the 1990s, engineers and planners from many jurisdictions around the state have been involved in developing urban design and specification manuals.

In 2001 the Statewide Urban Designs and Specifications (SUDAS) Corporation was formed to organize input from the jurisdictions including the DOT, regional planning affiliates (RPAs), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), transportation management areas (TMAs), and other stakeholders, and make sure the work continues in this non-profit organization. According to SUDAS research information, Iowa is one of a few states with available border-to-border, uniform urban design standards and specifications developed by stakeholders.

The Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) at Iowa State University is working to develop Iowa's SUDAS manuals for public transportation infrastructure improvements. The manuals include design and construction details that are unique to urban jurisdictions across the state. They also address conditions like materials availability and soil characteristics that may vary among the six Iowa DOT districts.

As a non-profit corporation tasked with a challenge as large as the one facing SUDAS, hundreds of volunteers were needed to make the vision a reality. More than 300 engineers around the state have stepped up to dedicate significant time and effort to the program, including membership on the

board of directors, executive committee, six district committees, and 14 technical committees.

These groups, with guidance from CTRE, have developed statewide standards that are expected to save Iowa taxpayers between 4 and 7 percent on construction projects. Even with a 4 percent savings, that would mean \$16 million annual savings -- a benefit-to-cost ratio of 44 to 1. To pay for the effort, Iowa's local communities are working together to cover more than 60 percent of development costs through monies from metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning affiliations, and transportation management agencies. The Iowa DOT is supporting the balance.

Some examples of possible savings include improved project plans and more clear communication with contractors to improve bidding; since the standards are uniform, more contractors are now bidding on projects making the process more competitive; with standardized specifications, contractors won't have to change equipment and methods to meet varying criteria saving time and money that should be passed on to



the taxpayer. CTRE keeps the statewide manuals up to date. This relieves individual communities of that expense, while ensuring they are informed about new products and procedures.

Electronic versions can be downloaded from the SUDAS Web site www.iowasudas.org. Printed manuals with accompanying CDs can be ordered from Beth Richards, SUDAS Program Coordinator, at 515-294-2869 or E-mail brich@iastate.edu. The SUDAS specifications may also be viewed and printed using the Iowa DOT's Electronic Reference Library.



Construction on 31st Street in Des Moines

Working it out

Polk County License Reinstatement Program

Driving without a valid license can mean up to a six-year suspension every time you're caught. Those suspensions can add up quickly to the point some people are facing 18 or more years until they can reinstate driving privileges. "About 90 percent of the people who are suspended have unpaid fines," said Sandi Weik of the Office of Driver Services. "We started working with the Polk County Attorney's Office and Polk County Court to come up with a solution for offenders who have outstanding fines. Getting the hurdle of the fines out of the way makes many of them eligible for either full privileges or work permits, depending on the offenses."

The combined effort developed into Polk County's License Reinstatement Program (LRP). Weik said, "Several counties in Iowa already have what is referred to as 'Rocket Docket' where Driver Services 'records experts' sit in on traffic court to help speed

the judicial process by explaining driving records and helping the person and the court understand and resolve issues. Rocket Docket started in Linn County and proved so successful that other courts are adopting this approach. The LRP is an added element in Polk County so that a payment plan can be worked out for fines and that person can be made eligible for a valid license quicker. These tickets usually keep people from being eligible for work permits. By clearing them up, it takes one more hurdle out of the way."

"We couldn't do this without the DOT," said Mary Belieu, LRP coordinator for the Polk County Attorney's Office. "We were so fortunate when we started working with this issue because there are innovative thinkers from all three groups. Everybody worked together and we tap into the individual expertise area to get more drivers licensed sooner and increase the revenue coming in to the county at the same time."

Because the time of suspension can snowball very quickly, adding up to six years of suspension for every violation of driving while suspended, it's easy for many of these drivers to get frustrated. Weik says not only the time element, but the \$500 or \$1,000 in fines is a huge amount to most of them. The mounting costs are extremely intimidating. "Some of these people are faced with the choice of feeding their kids or paying their fine. If we can set up a payment program and get them eligible for a valid license, that snowball effect doesn't happen."

Since LRP began last September, approximately 20 percent of the people scheduled through the court system have used the payment program. "We've seen a significant increase in revenue coming into the system," said Belieu. "We've also seen a wonderful change for some of the people involved. We had one man who had been in prison. He lost his license at age 16 for not paying a fine for squealing his tires. That was 29 years ago. With LRP he was able to get a license, and the change in his outlook on life is just amazing."

"That's one of the most satisfying parts of my job," said Weik. "We can make a real difference in people's lives. Getting a valid license is a positive step that can open so many doors for them and improve other aspects of their lives. It changes where they can work, where they can live and their overall quality of life. They come to understand that driving is a privilege they don't take lightly anymore."

Polk County Courthouse



From my view, continued from page 2

#3 Practice showing more appreciation. A number of landmark studies over the last several decades have shown that appreciation is the number one motivator for employees. Managers who don't express appreciation not only miss out on this powerful motivator, they also sow the seeds of discontent and disengagement. Few things alienate workers more than when hard work, going the extra mile, and showing initiative are taken for granted. Therefore, practice noticing when your workers do these things and then letting them know you appreciate their efforts.

Conclusion

Regardless of where you are in the DOT hierarchy, you have tremendous influence on your staff's morale and productivity. If you engage in the above actions, you will improve both. To make these efforts more than just another "flavor of the month" fad in the eyes of your workers, they need to become an integral part of your managerial style and actions.

Adapted from an article by David Lee posted on HumanNatureAtWork.com

WB, continued from page 3

grade national champions. The four-grade level competition included 1,151 teams submitting projects with 4,184 kids from around the country involved.

"The fact they won this competition didn't really surprise any of us," said Elizabeth Baird, DOT legislative liaison. "Since we first met these young people at their statehouse presentation through the process of developing the manual section, we knew they were something special."

New faces on I-235



New faces have appeared along the I-235 construction zone in Des Moines. The DOT has replaced the billboards at both the east and west ends of the urban freeway in support of the message "Safe Driving is Your Business."

Like the previous billboards, erected in 2002 to promote the I-235 construction Web site, the new signs were assembled at the DOT's sign shop and sit on DOT property. The previous signs also used DOT-supplied materials only. The design of the new billboards required outside assistance from Beeline Graphics to produce the images of the faces at a cost of \$1,330. The remainder of the 8-foot x 24-foot signs was produced using standard DOT sign materials. The new billboards were installed on the exiting sign structures which cost \$3,333 in materials in 2002.

The signs have been part of the I-235 communications plan since the beginning of the project, but cost limitations caused the team working on outreach to formulate an internal strategy. The Office of Traffic and Safety consulted on sign policy, structure and materials. Cherice Ogg of the Office of Document Services developed the artwork, Kent Hagen and the employees in the sign shop produced the signs, and the Des Moines area maintenance garages installed the billboards.

Because the signs are on DOT-owned property, erected on frames built by the agency by our own employees, the savings of not renting billboard space is significant. Dena Gray-Fisher, director of the Office of Media and Marketing Services, says renting the space for the four-year life of the signs near their current locations would have cost more than \$127,000.

Bill Lusher, field services coordinator for the Des Moines area, says the signs are a useful tool. "Both the signs, the one at 73rd Street on the west side and at Hull on the east side are very visible to traffic. We hope the message comes through to motorists that they have a responsibility to drive safely in the work zone."

Family Happenings

Right-of-Way

Linda Kreigel



Nikki Cuva, design technician associate, and her husband, Joe, are the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl. Abigail Katelyn was born April 22 weighing 7 lbs. 11 ozs. and was 20 ½ inches long. Congratulations to the first-time parents!



Ingrid Ruddy married Randy Teboe May 15 at their Mount Pleasant home. Many friends and family members attended to wish the Teboes a long and happy life together. Ingrid is the District 5 field services coordinator and Randy is an over-the-road driver for Laris Shelman and Sons of Winfield, Iowa.

Update on Bob Briggs

Bob Briggs, equipment operator in the Mount Pleasant shop, was injured while on active duty in Iraq April 16. After treatment in Germany and then Washington, D.C., Briggs is currently recovering at a veteran's administration hospital in Minnesota. Doctors anticipate he'll continue his recovery in Minnesota for at least five more months, and then have to return to the East Coast for more surgery.

Briggs, 37, and his wife, Michelle, have two small children, Ashlea, 5, and Cody, 13 months. The military no longer provides financial assistance to the family for their frequent trips from southern Iowa to Minnesota. Friends and co-workers have been helping, but any additional assistance would be appreciated.

A raffle of numerous items will held at the park in Salem, Iowa, Aug. 13. Contact Bonnie Ford at the District 5 Office (641-472-4171 or bonnie.ford@dot.iowa.gov) for details.

Thank you

I would like to thank all those who donated leave for my recent illness. I can't even express how grateful I am for your precious gifts of love and time. We work in a very special place and I'm so happy to be a part of this organization. Thank you all again and I hope to see you soon!

Kay Gillam, Office of Finance

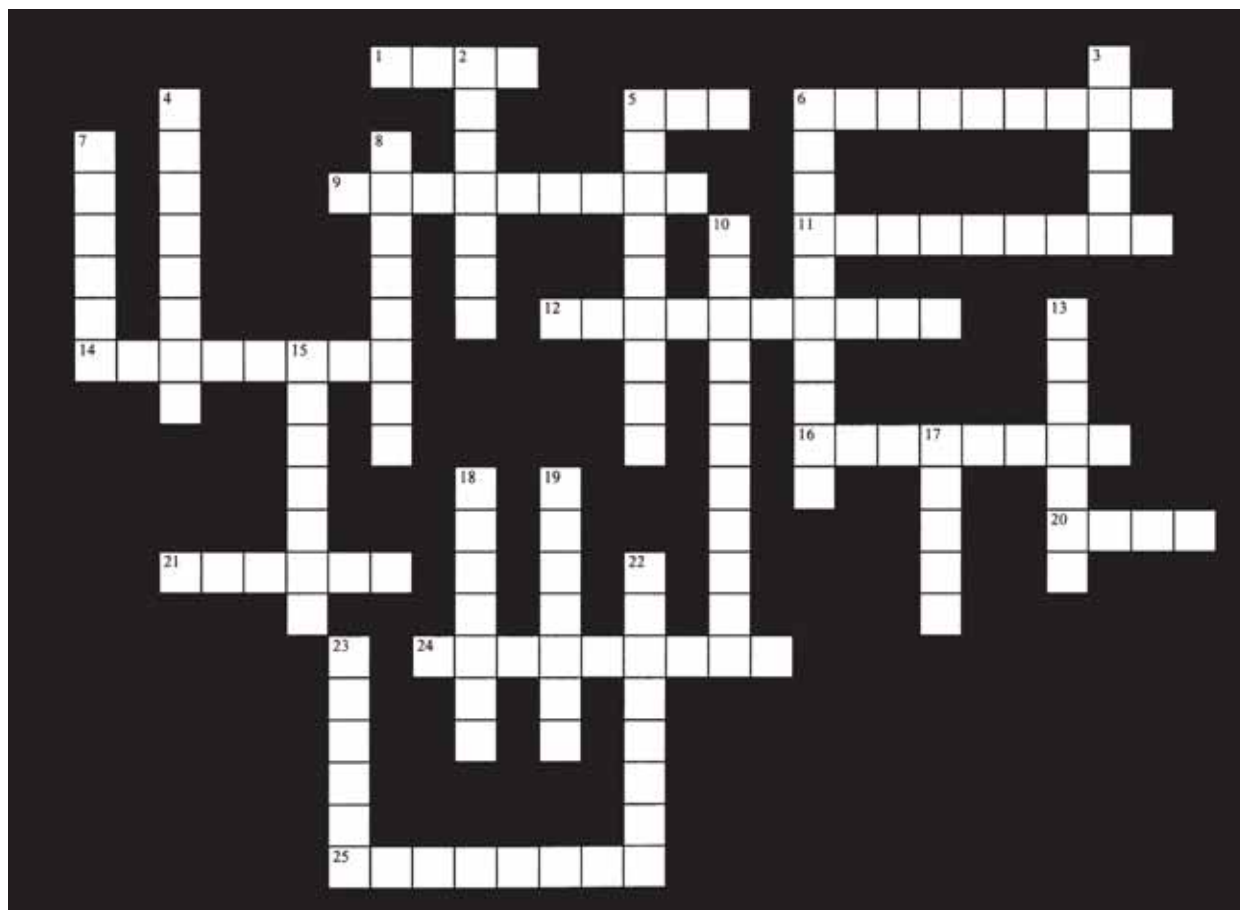
In Memory

Terry Dean Iverson, Sr., 57, died June 19 after a courageous battle with Parkinson's Disease. Iverson retired as an equipment operator in the Altoona shop. He is survived by his wife, Shelley; his children, Shannon Iverson, Terry Iverson, Jr., and Dan (Carolyn) Oscarson; his three grandchildren, Brenden, Deven, and Bethany; and many other loving relatives.



Ed Thornton, 69, of Des Moines, died June 27 at his home. Thornton, a 42-year DOT veteran, was the highway maintenance supervisor in the Des Moines area garages until his retirement in 1996. Thornton worked his way up from highway worker to crawler operator and then became the supervisor at the old Holcumb shop. When the Des Moines-west shop was built, Thornton became the first supervisor for I-235. He moved to the Des Moines-north shop in 1991 and finished his career there. A second generation DOT employee, Thornton loved fishing at his cabin in Clear Lake. He also loved to take his wife and bowling friends to Prairie Meadows. He treated the secretaries by making sure their desks were stocked with candy. He will be remembered by many as a thoughtful and caring leader.

Back to School



Across

- 1 General term for manipulating numbers
- 5 Where kids go for PE
- 6 Individual school administrator
- 9 Mystery meat served here
- 11 Science of substance composition
- 12 Where the swings are
- 14 Could be English, French, Spanish
- 16 Math related to points, lines and angles
- 20 What you do to words on a page
- 21 Generic term for soccer, football, softball
- 24 Study of groups of people
- 25 What learners are sometimes called

Down

- 2 Bring an apple for this person
- 3 Reams of this are written on
- 4 Elementary kids study these words every week
- 5 Subject where you'll learn states' locations
- 6 Class where behavior is studied
- 7 Lead-filled instrument used for writing
- 8 General courses that include entrepreneurship
- 10 Fields include civil, construction, aeronautical
- 13 Where the books live
- 15 Type of math where letters represent numbers
- 17 Singing and playing of instruments
- 18 Class where you might dissect a frog
- 19 Putting pen to paper
- 22 Engineers study it - differential or integral
- 23 Most important time for grade schoolers

Problem Solved

The solution to this crossword is located on page 13. Can't find page 13? Go to DOTNET!
(or wait until next month's printed copy)

SERVICE AWARDS

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for August 2005.

40 Years

Edward Fletcher, District 4 field staff; **Gerald Jerman**, District 1 Office; **Robert Jimerson**, Creston construction.

35 Years

Roger Boettger, Cherokee construction; **Sam George** Moussalli, Materials; **Ronald J. Thompson**, District 5 Office.

30 Years

Beverly Abels, Employee Services

25 Years

Kathy Matthews, Spencer DL station; **Michael Rummelhart**, Design; **Jean Teasdale**, Facilities Support; **Cynthia Turner**, Mason City DL station.

20 Years

Charles Belgarde, District 5 field staff; **Carl Brus**, Davenport interstate garage; **Ronald Caudle**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Brian Cudworth**, Ottumwa garage; **Rebecca Goodman**, Martensdale garage; **Leland Gritton**, Tipton interstate garage; **Scott Hanson**, Contracts; **Dale Harmon**, Mount Pleasant garage; **Tom Jungers**, Sheldon garage; **Paul Lynam**, Creston construction; **Todd Moline**, New Hampton construction; **Mark Plueger**, Le Mars garage; **David Ramirez**, District 6 field staff; **Wesley Riley**, Missouri Valley garage; **Kirk Romsey**, Design; **Charles Seeland**, Manchester construction; **David K. Smith**, Leon garage; **Patricia Sullivan**, District 5 paint crew; **Glenn Uglum**, New Hampton garage; **Brian Wiedenhoft**, Davenport interstate garage; **Bradford Yoder**, Oakdale garage.

15 Years

John Drilling, Sac City garage; **Steve Gent**, Traffic and Safety; **Kurt Harvey**, Contracts; **Peggy Phipps**, Traffic and Safety; **William Schmidt**, Anamosa garage.

10 Years

Steve Baer, Council Bluffs construction; **Aaron Dahl**, Greenfield garage; **Dianne Eppert**, Director's Staff; **Mike Huffman**, Marion garage; **Brian Iles**, Mount Pleasant garage; **Allen Lehman**, Bridges and Structures; **Vickie Munyon**, Motor Carrier Services; **Milo Nelson**, Repair Shop; **Brian Westergaard**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement.

5 Years

Vicki Brown, District 4 Office; **Robert Kesselring**, Iowa City DL station; **Kris Riesenber**, Location and Environment; **Heather Sheehan**, Information Technology Division.

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for June 3 to June 30, 2005.

New Hires

Shannon Anderson, secretary 1, District 1 Office; **Scott Blanchard**, equipment operator, Burlington garage; **Jennifer Bute**, driver's license clerk senior, Des Moines DL station; **Nickolas Humpal**, transportation engineer intern, Design; **Nicholas Meurer**, program planner 1, Transportation Data; **Gerald Sydn**, electrician, Facilities Support.

Promotions

William Bartelson, from driver's license supervisor 1, Des Moines DL station to driver's license supervisor 2, Driver Services; **Todd Moline**, from construction technician, New Hampton construction to engineering technician senior, District 1 Office; **Susan Reding**, from word processor 2 to information technology support worker 2, Vehicle Services.

Transfers

Gerry Ambrosion, executive officer 2, from Research and Technology Bureau to Local Systems; **Kevin Cary**, construction technician, from Sioux City construction to Cherokee construction; **Danny Zeimen**, transportation engineer intern, from Design to District 1 materials.

Retirements

Edward Fletcher, engineering operations technician, District 4 field staff; **Leon McCombs**, equipment operator senior, Oskaloosa garage; **Eugene Sande**, equipment operator senior, Decorah garage; **Deanna Steveson**, driver's license clerk, Marshalltown DL station; **Bert Ulrich**, executive officer 1, District 3 maintenance.

35 YEARS
Iowa Department
of Transportation



Richard Kautz
District 6 Office
(from June)

(Due to scheduling conflicts, photos of 35-year employees from July, August and September will appear in the September issue of INSIDE.)



Trophy Case

Recent Awards



Darrian Schwenke



Dillon Suhr

Four children or grandchildren of District 4 employees competed at the Iowa State AAU Wrestling Championships April 2-3 in Cedar Rapids. Of the 1,500 wrestlers who qualified for this event, only 58 champions were crowned in three age brackets (class A – 3rd/4th grade; B – 5th/6th grade and C – 7th/8th grade). **Darrian Schwenke**, son of **Dean Schwenke**, equipment operator in Atlantic, was crowned Class A

champion in the 55-pound weight category. **Dillon Suhr**, son of **Scott Suhr**, District 4 transportation planner, won the Class A 175-pound title with a pin in .17 seconds. His opening round was won by a pin in .08 seconds. **Michael and Gabriel Moreno**, grandsons of **Miguel Moreno**, Pacific Junction equipment operator, placed first and second, respectively, in their weight classes. Michael won the Class C 135-pound title and Gabriel was runner-up in the Class B, 80-pound bracket. Congratulations to the wrestlers, parents and grandparents.

Victoria Shriver, daughter of **Craig Shriver**, design technician in District 4, was one of two Iowa students to win the Iowa Youth Character Award for 13 to 15-year-olds presented by the Institute for Character Development. She was one of five students nominated from her school in Atlantic. The awards were held April 7 and included a welcome from former Governor Robert D. Ray. Included were awards to two kids in each of three age groups: ages 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18. Other winners were from Des Moines, Ankeny and Greenfield.

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 coworkers. For more information, contact Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services, 515-239-1314 or e-mail tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov.

Mark F. Wandro, Iowa DOT Director

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Motor Vehicle Enforcement	Val Hunter, Des Moines	515-237-3218
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Right-of-Way	Linda Kriegel, Ames	515-239-1135
Traffic and Safety	Linda McBride, Ames	515-239-1557
Vehicle Services	Thelma Huffman, Des Moines	515-237-3182

Tenth-mile markers



“We can get there, get the job done, and get out.” Waterloo Fire Chief Ned DeBerg says timing is everything for his Waterloo fire and rescue squads. To make locating and responding to crashes quicker, the DOT has recently installed tenth-mile markers, technically called enhanced reference markers, on all fully access-controlled roadways in the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area.

Although some states had begun using these markers several years ago, installation in Iowa began in Council Bluffs and Des Moines in the late 1990s. The new signs included a shield with the highway designation and the highway mile location pinpointed to a tenth of a mile along a specific route.

In Scott County, members of an organization known as the Community Awareness of Roadway Safety (CARS) group, which includes representatives from the state, county and city law enforcement, other emergency services such as fire departments, the local ambulance service, and county health department; engineers from the state, county and cities and other’s interested in traffic safety, saw the Des Moines signs and suggested using a similar

“The faster we can respond, the safer it is for our emergency personnel and those involved in the incident.”

**Waterloo Fire Chief
Ned DeBerg**

version on a five-mile stretch of I-74. Doug Rick, District 6’s Davenport area engineer and member of CARS, said, “There are so many interchanges in this area that when a motorist called in an emergency, they weren’t able to be very precise on the location. Dispatchers would send law enforcement and ambulance services to the wrong exit or head them in the wrong direction because of inaccurate information. In the Quad Cities we also have Iowa and Illinois sections of the highway that can be confusing, especially at night or during a snowstorm. We know now that if the motorist can tell the dispatcher that they see these signs, they’re on the Iowa side. We have had a lot of support from law enforcement and the first responders. Although I don’t know that any studies have been done, the signs seem to have made a big difference in response time.”

In the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area, some roadways have multiple highway designations and some interchanges have complicated systems of entrance and exit ramps. The new tenth-mile-marker

signs, which are larger than the ones placed in Des Moines or Scott County, were installed over the fall and winter last year. The signs include the dominant highway designation and mile marker to a tenth of a mile.

“The faster we can respond, the safer it is for our emergency personnel and those involved in the incident,” said DeBerg. “During the winter months these calls can be especially dangerous if our crews have to search slick roads for crashes.”

For Sioux City motorists on I-29, the signs are spaced a bit differently at every two-tenths of a mile, but they serve the same purpose. Dwight Rorholm, District 3 Maintenance Manager, said, “Our corridor is very tight and the mile post markers were placed to help locate the accident scene for information providers reporting crashes, responders trying to find the site, and law enforcement to complete accident reports. We just needed a way for people to more precisely identify where they were when calling for emergency services.”

Tim Crouch of the Office of Traffic and Safety says placement of the signs in each metropolitan area has been tailored to the needs of that area. Some are placed in the median and others on the shoulder. “Safety is really the goal with any of these signs. The more quickly a stranded motorist can identify a location, the more quickly they can be helped and traffic can get back to normal,” said Crouch.

Whether the signs are large or small, placed in the median or on the shoulder, every tenth of a mile or two-tenths, these markers are providing valuable information to motorists when they need it most.

August Crossword Puzzle Solution

