

INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006

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ONE 2 ONE

WITH DIRECTOR NANCY RICHARDSON

Like many of you, I grew up in small town Iowa where everybody seemed pretty much the same as my family. Yet, as I reflect on my childhood, one of my fondest memories is of the guests, frequently strangers to me, who often graced our dinner table, particularly at various holiday times.

Whether it was the elderly brothers who had no relatives nearby, the middle-aged man in town who did odd jobs and lived in a room at the old hotel, the man from somewhere in Asia that somehow ended up in our small town working with my Dad, or the lonely resident of the “County Farm,” over time we enjoyed an eclectic group of dinner guests.

As I think about it now, I realize my parents never talked about this with us kids; it just happened as a very natural part of our lives. Set an extra place at the table, make them feel welcome and enjoy their company...those were the unspoken expectations of my parents...and not a bad motto for life!

Two occurrences in January cause me to reflect on these childhood memories. First is the national celebration of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., a man who worked all his life to increase tolerance among people. The second, and on a much more personal level, is the anniversary of my mother’s death on MLK holiday back in 1997. While I never met Dr. King, I very much admired him and his message of tolerance. And, in her small way, my mother brought a similar message of tolerance to life for me. Treat everyone with tolerance and respect. In fact, don’t just tolerate differences, but enjoy them, learn from them and celebrate them!

So, what does all this have to do with us DOTers? We hear about welcoming diversity in the workplace, having a productive workplace environment, and fostering good working relationships among coworkers. I believe it all starts with tolerance of others, in whatever ways they are similar to or different than us.

But the best workplace is one where employees go beyond tolerance to embracing and celebrating the uniqueness of each other and what we each have to offer. We see our differences—whether in gender, race, nationality, age, personality style, or whatever—as opportunities. Opportunities to learn, grow, understand a different perspective, consider a different solution, and, in the end, to be happier and more productive.

So, my challenge for myself and all of you as my DOT coworkers is to be more open, accepting and tolerant in our workplace. I believe it will pay dividends for us personally and professionally; I know it has for me. So, as my mother taught me by example...set an extra place, make co-workers feel welcome and enjoy and appreciate their company! I believe that will truly lead to a better DOT for all of us.

Nancy

Talkin' the talk

Because of the wide array of responsibilities assigned to the DOT, it's inevitable, even in relatively homogeneous Iowa, that some of the people we serve don't speak or understand English.

Since driver's license stations serve a large segment of Iowa's population, they have the greatest opportunity to come in contact with customers with limited English proficiency (LEP). To best serve these customers, the DL stations have materials available in several different languages.

"We have our automated testing in both English and Spanish and have written tests in eight different languages," said Kim Snook, field manager for Driver Services. "Occasionally we have an LEP customer who needs an interpreter. The key to making this work is for the local office to know what language resources are available in their area," said Snook. "We've found community colleges are great resources for interpreters."

Many of the interpreters used by the DOT, including those from community colleges, charge for their services and may not be readily available. As a result, a survey sent to all employees identified several of our own people who have some ability to interpret a language besides English and are willing to volunteer their time. Ed Kasper of the Office of Contracts, where this program originated, said, "We learned there are several people at the DOT who would be willing to help in this way. We've been able to prepare a list of the volunteer interpreters and have that available on DOTNET."

One recent incident noted by Kasper was a Spanish-speaking person who called the DOT needing assistance finding the pay scale for a certain project. After consulting the list, an interpreter was found just down the hall to help the gentleman.

The newest tool to assist LEP customers is the "I Speak" information sheet that will soon be distributed for placement in all DOT vehicles and offices. The information sheet can help LEP customers quickly identify the language they speak, which will assist DOT employees in finding the correct interpreter.

"This information sheet will bridge that first communication gap of identifying what language someone speaks," said Kasper. "The next step will be to identify who to call for assistance, whether that's someone on the volunteer list, at a local community college or refugee services office."



Parla Italiano?

Parlez vous Frances

¿Se Habla Español?

Sprechen sie Deutch?

Spreekt u Nederlands?

Why do we need these programs?

Most DOT programs to assist LEP customers stem primarily from our desire to serve our customers in a timely and effective manner. Secondly, a Presidential Executive Order signed in 2000 states the goal of the order is "...to provide an array of services that can be made available to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language."

The Federal Highway Administration also determined that language barriers are covered under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

The volunteer interpreter program is now managed in the Office of Employee Services by Val Anderson at 515-239-1277 and Kris Oelmann at 515-233-7718. Visit the "Employee Resources and Information" pull-down on DOTNET for more information, or contact Anderson or Oelmann if you would like to be added to the list.

To receive a copy of the "I speak" information sheet, contact Ed Kasper at 515-239-1414.

Molsberry returns from Iraq



Kevin Molsberry (left) and friend Lt. Col. Mike Murray from the Indiana National Guard (right) pose for a photo in front of Saddam Hussein's military reviewing stand in Baghdad.

Training law enforcement officers to catch bad guys took on a whole new look for DOT MVE Investigator Kevin Molsberry as he was deployed to Iraq with the 330th Military Police Detachment.

While in Iraq from March 2004 to February 2005, Major Molsberry, the senior officer for the 330th Military Police Detachment, was the Law and Order Officer (Provost Marshal). The unit's main focus was being assigned to two police academies in Mosul. One academy was a three-week course for current Iraqi police officers and the other was an eight-week course for new recruits. Molsberry's unit was also tasked to provide identification cards to Iraqi police officers and complete force-protection assess-

ments assigned by the task force commander. Molsberry's unit also provided law enforcement coverage on two Army bases in the Mosul area. He said, "We covered everything from traffic to thefts and assaults."

In his academy work in Mosul, Molsberry and his unit schooled approximately 2,500 Iraqis and sent another 1,200 to Jordan for training. "There were some 'bad guys' who would try to infiltrate the academies. But for the most part the trainees were well-meaning Iraqis. Each recruit had to go through a screening process, so most of the insurgents were weeded out," said Molsberry. During the time I was there we were recognized for having the best training academies in Iraq. The recruits were trained on

things like basic investigation, report writing and Iraqi law."

To communicate with the recruits and Iraqi officials, Molsberry and his unit used interpreters. There were three main interpreters that were used daily. Two ended up quitting when one of their interpreter friends was beheaded. The last was moved on base so they could protect him. He was the only Iraqi living on base. "We tried to get others to work, but it was just too dangerous for most to risk," he said. Molsberry also said one interpreter was fired due to his sympathy toward the insurgents.

A few Iraqis were allowed to set up small shops on the base. They were searched every day before they entered or left the base area. When troops were in the area in 2003, a patrol of U.S. forces could stop downtown and buy gifts and move fairly freely around the area. "A year later it was far too dangerous to go into the market area," said Molsberry. "By allowing shop owners on base this helped with the Iraqi economy, but by December 2004, all the shops on base were closed since many of the shop owners were beheaded and the others were scared off."

Molsberry said training the Iraqis in a time of war was challenging. "There were some who would stay and fight," he explained. "But if you have 40 guys and 30 of them run at the first sign of trouble, it doesn't make sense for the last 10 to stay when they are outnumbered."

In November 2004 the training academy was destroyed by insurgents. Molsberry said the

Molsberry, go to next page

Brekke is ROW employee of 2004

Tom Brekke, design technician specialist, has been selected as the 2004 Right of Way Employee of the Year. There were many reasons given for Brekke receiving this award, one of them was his great interest in going above and beyond the usual scope of his job description to assist others with resolving a design issue that may make acquisition and other right of way tasks move along more smoothly.

Brekke, an avid Green Bay Packer fan, says the award came as a big surprise to him. "I was totally shocked," he said. "I had no idea until I heard a comment about the winner being a Packer fan. I was speechless for probably the first time in my life."

The 29-year DOT veteran began his employment as a design technician in the Office of Design on Oct. 31, 1977. He transferred to the Office of Right of Way in August 1983, and was promoted to his current position in December 1994.

"I don't think I've done anything outstanding," said Brekke. "I just like to help people whenever I can. I think there are a lot of people more deserving than me of this award."

This is not Brekke's first honor. In 1980, he was named the State of Iowa Handicap Employee of the Year. He said his Right of Way award means just as



much to him. "And I don't have to get dressed up and talk to the governor," he joked.

Outside the office Brekke enjoys bowling and last year won the singles category in the Ames City Bowling Tournament. He also lends his time to the Iowa State University

men's basketball team as a keeper of statistics during home games. Brekke and his wife, Susan, an employee in the DOT's Office of Procurement and Distribution, live in Ames and have two children, Shawn, a recent graduate of ISU, and Lisa, a senior at Ames High School.

The selection process for Right of Way Employee of the Year consists of the last three winners forming a committee to go over nominations from each of the six Office of Right of Way sections. The committee then chooses a winner. Brekke's selection was announced at the annual Right of Way meeting held Oct. 10, 2005.

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local people looted the parts that were not destroyed. "It had been one of the best police training facilities in Iraq," he added. "I don't know if they have rebuilt the training academy or not." Law enforcement duties were turned over to the Air Force in February 2005, just before Molsberry's unit left Iraq.

Molsberry was called away from his duties in Mosul to serve four and a half months at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. "I helped with the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team, a multinational force of civilian security contractors, all four U.S. Armed Services branches and British military." The group was tasked with overseeing the training of all security forces under the Ministry of Interior since all police report to this Ministry. Molsberry set up a three-week training program for one section, the Facility Protection Service (FPS), and also insured the FPS received all the equipment that was ordered for the program. He also helped make sure all 200,000 security officers under this ministry were

paid, and worked with American contractors who set up the Iraqi banking system to make sure funds were available.

During the year in Iraq, Molsberry's unit dealt with many obstacles, but he says injuries were the most difficult. Nearly 25 percent of the soldiers in his unit received Purple Hearts, two well-respected sergeants were killed and three other soldiers were sent home because of severe injuries. Even through the challenges, Molsberry said his unit held together, "As the senior officer it was difficult keeping the younger soldiers focused during these stressful times, but these young men and women did a great job."

After surgery from an injury received in Iraq, Molsberry has returned to work with Motor Vehicle Enforcement. He is based in Algona where he lives with his wife, Lisa, and their two daughters, Rachel, 14, and Rebecca, 12.

Planning is complete, but funding is slow to come for the Interstate Highway System

After nearly three years of work, a plan was set for a system of 33,900 miles of interregional roadways, plus an additional 5,000 miles of auxiliary urban routes. The plan, developed by the National Interregional Highway Committee, which was appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and headed by Thomas H. MacDonald, commissioner of the federal Bureau of Public Roads, was detailed in a January 1944 report to Congress.

Later that year in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, Congress acted on MacDonald and company's recommendations. The act called for designation of a National System of Interstate Highways to include up to 40,000 miles "...so

located, as to connect by routes, direct as practical, the principal metropolitan areas, cities and industrial centers, to serve the National Defense and connect at suitable points, routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico."

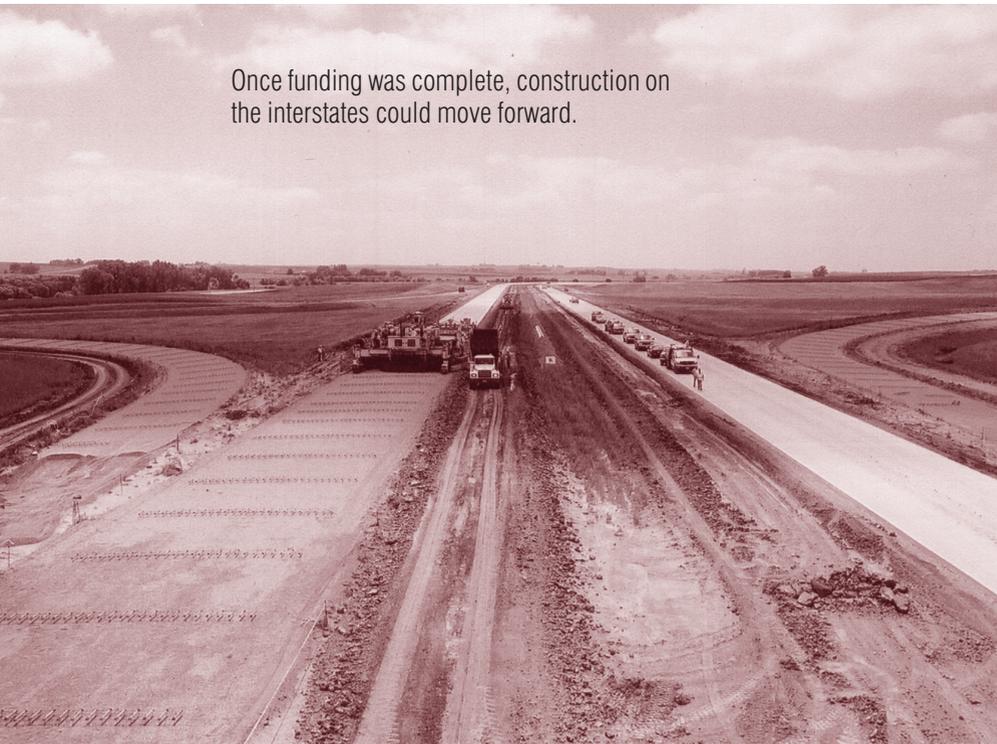
When the first 37,700 miles of roadway were announced by MacDonald and Philip B. Fleming, Federal Works administrator, hopes were high, but progress was slow since no funds were authorized to build the system.

The first funding set aside specifically for construction of the interstate came in 1952, but only a token amount of \$25 million a year for fiscal years (FY) 1954 and 1955 was appropriated. Legislation in 1954 authorized an additional \$175 million annually for FY 1956 and 1957.

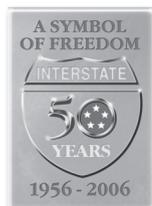
On June 29, 1956, it was official. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 to provide more federal funding for road building in the coming four years than in the previous 40. Title II of the Act, called the Highway Revenue Act of 1956, created the Highway Trust Fund as a dedicated funding source for the Interstate Highway System. Revenue from gas and other motor-vehicle related user taxes was credited to the Highway Trust Fund to pay the federal share of the interstate and all other federal-aid highway projects. Also new with the Highway Trust Fund was the 90 percent federal funding share of interstate construction.

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Once funding was complete, construction on the interstates could move forward.



PART SIX IN A SERIES



The beginning of construction on the Interstate Highway System celebrates 50 years in 2006. Each month until the 50th Anniversary Celebration in June, INSIDE will highlight the history of this system of roads. Information for this article was derived from the Federal Highway Administration's Web site. The next article will focus on public policy, at both the state and federal levels, in building this national system of roads.

In Memory



Ronald Chapman, 70, lost his battle with cancer Dec. 18, 2005. Chapman retired in 1997 as resident construction engineer in Chariton. He had 40 years of service with the DOT. He began his DOT career as an inspector in the Des Moines office in 1957. In

1959 Chapman took educational leave to complete his civil engineering degree at the University of Iowa. Following graduation and successful testing for his professional engineer's license, Chapman became assistant resident engineer in Chariton in 1961 and was promoted to resident engineer in 1965. His employees wrote, "For those who worked with Ron, his retirement was a great loss. As far as bosses go, he was one in a million. His door was always open for anyone who had a problem. He trusted his employees' judgment and encouraged them to make decisions, which he then supported. He shared his knowledge and expertise and had a very special talent for dealing with people. He was open-minded, fair and used common sense. He was more than just a boss to many of us who worked for him. He became an advisor, teacher, leader, but most of all a very dear friend." Chapman is survived by his wife, Sue; sons Mike of Indianola and Bill of Chariton; one grandson; and several other relatives.

Donald Eugene (Bud) Jones, 78, former supervisor at the Leon maintenance garage, died Dec. 22, 2005, at Westview Acres in Leon.

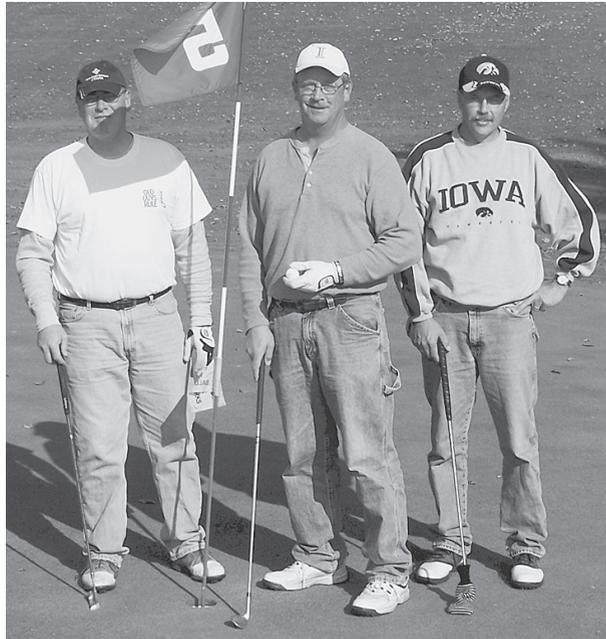
In 1951 Jones started working for the Iowa Highway Commission. In 1962 he was transferred to Leon as the supervisor for the Leon garage. He retired from the DOT in 1988.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Shirlie; two brothers, Gerald and Dwain; and his parents.

He is survived by his son, Kenneth Jones and wife Paula of Washington, Ind.; daughters, Paula Kelley and her husband David of Taylor Ridge, Ill., and Kimberley Houf and her husband Jim of Westerville, Ohio; eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; and a sister, LaVon Newhouse of Arizona.

Family Happenings

District 2 Lu Mohorne



Bob Beckman (center), construction technician senior in New Hampton construction, had his first hole-in-one last summer. Beckman hit a pitching wedge on the 135-yard fifth hole at Raleigh Hills Golf Course near Ionia. Witness to the shot included Danny Steenhard (right), also from New Hampton construction. Pete Larkin, a friend and part of a regular foursome is pictured at left. Not pictured is the fourth member of the group for the day, George Feazell from New Hampton construction.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone for their support, concern and prayers at the time of my daughter Michelle's accident. They all helped in her recovery! Also, I would like to thank my co-workers who donated time for the catastrophic leave. It was wonderful of all of you. I could concentrate on Michelle and not worry about anything else. Michelle is making improvements everyday and at this time is in an inpatient rehabilitation center called Quality Living, Inc. in Omaha. We hope to have her home soon! Thanks again!

Pat Vonnahme
Driver Services

Three projects lead winter equipment research

During this snow season three research projects geared toward making our operations more effective and efficient are being carried out around the state.

Wedge-shaped brine tanks



Increased capacity for both liquid and dry materials in the bed of a truck is the goal of the wedge-shaped brine tank research project. This project began in 1997 using stainless steel tanks built in Sigourney and Waterloo, which began to crack over time. The department purchased other private, vendor-made systems to test, but found similar problems with each version. After a six-month development process, 24 polyethylene plastic tanks were designed by the winter equipment committee and produced by Henderson Manufacturing in Manchester.

Jim Dowd of the Office of Maintenance said, "We hope to use the wedge-shaped tanks to get away from having tanks hang from the lift gate or positioning large tanks in the front of the dump box. Those old tanks cause stress to the lift gate and can be a safety issue with operators. The wedge-shaped tanks are placed on the floor of the dump box and secured to each side of the truck bed walls to more evenly distribute the weight of the liquid and allow

for salt capacity in the truck at the same time. We hope using these tanks will give operators the flexibility they've been asking for."

Jon Allen, highway maintenance supervisor in Onawa, says the tanks are working well. "We have one set in one of our tandem trucks on Iowa 175. Bobby Hansen and Glenn Hansen have performed the majority of the applications with this unit. The tanks hold about 900 gallons between the two of them. We can still get six tons of salt in the bed between the tanks. This is four tons less than we could carry without the tanks. On this particular run the lower salt amount doesn't make a difference, since we can still make a full run and place the normal amounts of salt without running out."

Allen says Candice Phipps in the District 3 materials office has been assisting with data collection, while experimenting with the tanks. So far they have found that because the application of the liquid is gravity-fed to a two-foot bar directly behind the left or inside set of tandems, there is an immediate wet pavement for the inside wheel track, and the snow and ice on the rest of the slab melts quicker than that on the test section beside it that is treated using traditional methods.

"We still have several other trials we would like to try, but have not had the opportunity yet," said Allen. "The pavement temperatures so far have been around 20 degrees Fahrenheit. I would like to see what happens when the temperatures fall below 15 degrees. We would also like to do more testing in windy conditions. We have determined that if we are traveling at 20 miles per hour and placing 30 gallons per lane mile with our liquid, we can get the same or better results with about 50 pounds less rock salt than we get with just rock salt in the control side of the test section."

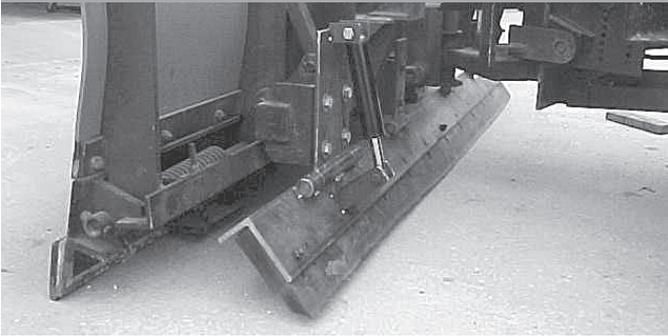
So far the only negative aspect has come in cleaning the truck box. Allen says, "The salt does get worked between the side of the box and the tanks, and it's very hard to get it all rinsed out. The tanks are not a quick or simple thing to take out to clean the box after every storm."

Two locations in each district are now testing the use of these tanks. Additional feedback will be gathered at the end of the season and a decision made as to any design changes and the continued use of the new style tanks.

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Slush blades



Another continuing project from last year is the use of rubber slush blades in the Boone, Neola and Bedford shops. The three systems are all a little bit different, but work under the premise that the rubber blade placed slightly behind and lower than the metal plow blade will help clear slush and other buildup on the roadway left by the main plow that might otherwise require a second pass by the operator to remove, if it could be removed at all. Cleaning the roadway down to the pavement would allow de-icing chemicals to work on snow and ice falling from the sky, rather than working on the snow and ice left by the plow. This may help reduce the amount of de-icing chemicals used in the future and number of passes a plow operator needs to make to return the roadway to normal conditions.

Dowd said Mike Hagen in Hanlontown built the first slush blade system, and the three being tested this year were soon to follow. Of the three current test slush blade systems, one was built by Larry Shriver in Neola, another by Bill Shuler in Bedford and the third by Milo Nelson of the repair shop. Nelson's slush blade is being tested in Boone.

In the configuration used in Neola, Shriver says the slush blade operates with the same controls used to manipulate the plow blade. "We really like our setup," said Shriver. "It works really well on the last round of a storm when you're just cleaning up slush. The only thing you have to watch out for is that the slush blade acts as a squeegee, so if there is salt from a previous run on the road, the blade works so well it will scrape off the salt along with any slush or snow."

Since the systems are part of a research project supported by the winter equipment committee, the committee funds construction of these systems.

Blade wear study



With carbide and steel prices increasing nearly 40 percent over the last year, the winter equipment committee was interested in researching ways to make plow blades last longer. The carbide blades we currently use have a channel milled into them and one-inch sections of carbide are inserted and brazed into the channel. The carbide inserts are much harder than the steel, allowing the steel blade to last longer. However, it tends to crack using the current configuration. Once one piece cracks, it tends to send a fissure down the channel and several pieces at once may start to crack and eventually fall out. Dowd said replacing a set of the current carbides used to cost \$220, but now cost \$310 per set. "That is about a \$135,000 statewide increase in the cost of replacing snow plow blades from last season, as determined by warehouse usage totals. The costs of mounting accessories, such as 11-foot drag blades and plow bolts, have also risen," he said. "We need to find a way to increase blade life since the cost of steel and carbide doesn't appear to be going down any time soon."

The accelerated-wear test planned for February will test cylindrical shaped carbide pieces that are set into holes in the steel blade. These blades are manufactured by Kennametal, our current blade supplier, and are known as ICE (isolated carbide edge) blades. The test will consist of operators from Corning running the blades on bare concrete and recording wear every 25 miles at a test site near Atlantic. They will wear down two or three sets of each type, the new and old configuration of carbide blades, and see if one holds up better than the other. Dowd said, "This will be more realistic than a lab test because we'll be running the blade over an actual concrete road and not a simulated one. It's not a "real world" test, but it's closer than what is currently being done to measure wear and will allow us to get results faster than running them over multiple winter seasons to find the best product for our operations."

PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Dec. 2 to Dec. 29, 2005

New Hires

James Albers, equipment operator, Ida Grove garage; **Randy Boekelman**, equipment operator, Swea City garage; **William Brown**, equipment operator, Des Moines-north garage; **Steve Gaulke**, construction technician assistant, Design; **Christopher Gebel**, mechanic, Charles City garage; **Cheryl Hunter**, equipment operator, Ames garage; **Angela Meyer**, engineering office assistant 1, Storm Lake maintenance; **William Mitchell**, equipment operator, Swea City garage; **Jeff Titus**, equipment operator, Ames garage; **Gabriel Zittergruen**, equipment operator, Elkader garage.

Promotions

Claude Frazier, from garage operations assistant, Grimes garage to highway maintenance supervisor, Carlisle garage; **Traci Keel**, from driver's license clerk to driver's license clerk senior, Davenport DL station.

Transfers

None.

Retirements

Edward Black, mechanic, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Joyce Davis**, field auditor, Finance; **Glen Miller**, transportation engineer administrator, District 4 Office; **Craig Tillman**, equipment operator, Pacific Junction garage.

SERVICE AWARDS

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for February 2006

40 Years

Max Cannon, Right of Way; **Jerry Davis**, Fairfield materials; **Frank T. Reyna Sr.**, Atlantic materials.

35 Years

Barbara Faust Sparks, Right of Way; **James Oshel**, Creston garage.

30 Years

Roger Ritter, Des Moines-north garage.

25 Years

Garry Gengler, Le Mars garage; **Russell Lutjen**, Materials; **Randy Patterson**, Transportation Data; **Cindy Shearer**, Systems Planning; **Debra Thompson**, Information Technology Division.

20 Years

Larry Fisher, Swea City garage; **Marlene Jensen**, District 4 Office.

15 Years

Sharon Christensen, Des Moines DL station; **Jeffrey Dietrich**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Cliff Fuhrmeister**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Loran Hackman**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Robert Morgan**, Information Technology Division; **Gene Page Jr.**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **William Piper**, Creston construction; **Thomas Prine**, Des Moines-north garage; **Donald Tebben**, Program Management.

10 Years

Robert Krause, Modal Division; **Rodney Larsen**, District 2 Office; **Mike Malchow**, District 3 Office.

5 Years

Alan Atwood, District 6 Office; **Mike Burton**, Williams garage; **Christina Butler**, Cedar Rapids DL station; **Heather Gugler**, Cedar Rapids construction; **Mark Hilger**, Sidney garage; **Marvin Hodapp**, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Jay Hovick**, Information Technology Division; **Phillip Jensen**, Facilities Support; **Jimmy Lemonds**, Ottumwa garage; **Kenneth McLaughlin**, Sigourney garage; **Jason Oathoudt**, Corning garage; **Craig Ruppelt**, Hanlontown garage; **Douglas Swan**, Washington garage; **Lucas Weigel**, Design.

35 YEARS

Iowa Department
of Transportation



Barbara Faust Sparks
Right of Way



James Oshel
Creston garage

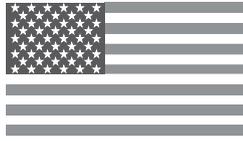
Interstate from page 6

As he signed the legislation, Eisenhower emphasized the need for the use of photogrammetry, modern management practices and standard designs to efficiently implement such a large program.

The 1956 act provided for an extended network of more than 41,000 miles and nationwide design standards. The standards included a minimum of two, 12-foot lanes in each direction, ten-foot paved right shoulders and design speeds of 50-70 miles per hour.

At its November 1956 meeting, the American Association of State Highway Officials' outgoing president, Rex Whitton of Missouri, noted that studies of cost estimates, maximum sizes and weights, policies for reimbursing for highways already on the interstate system, and a study on the costs of different classes of highways were critical to the future of the highway program. At that meeting John Volpe, Federal Highway Administrator, also warned of the temptation to overbuild due to the 90 percent funding level provided by the federal government.

During the meeting, discussion centered on highway improvements in urban areas as more than half the funds planned for the system would be spent there due to the extremely high cost per mile of constructing an urban facility. The benefits discussed included the roadway's service to transit, as well as personal vehicles, and using properly placed infrastructure to encourage good urban development.



More DOTers on active duty

Keith Wieland, design technician in the Office of Traffic and Safety, has been on active duty with the Army at Fort Riley, Kan., since November 2004. His orders were recently extended for an additional year. It appears he will be in Kansas until November 2006.

Roger Larsen, a Transportation Engineer in the Office of Location and Environment, was deployed to Iraq in mid-July 2005. He is a major in the 132nd Fighter Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron based in Des Moines. He is currently serving with the Air Force's 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron at Ali (Tallil) Base located near Al Nasiriyah, approximately 200 miles southeast of Baghdad in southern Iraq. He is involved with the planning, design, programming, and construction management for base development projects. Additionally, he is the project officer for an asphalt paving project on the main supply route north of the Ali Base. His tour is scheduled to end in early February and he will return home mid-February.

This information has been gathered from supervisors of those DOT employees serving in our Armed Services. If you have information about a DOT employee now serving our country, please contact Tracey Bramble at 515-239-1314 or tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov.



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.

Nancy Richardson, Iowa DOT Director

Tracey Bramble, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Editor
Lynn Purcell, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Desktop Publisher
J. Cory Heintz, Office of Media and Marketing Services, Photographer
Printing Staff, Office of Document Services, Printing



800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010 • 515-239-1372.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS ISSUE

On the cover: Construction continues on U.S. 34 and U.S. 63 near Ottumwa.

Service Area	Correspondent	Phone
District 1	Kay Ridgway, Des Moines	515-986-5729
District 2	Lu Mohorne, Mason City	641-423-7584
District 3	Mary Beth Banta, Sioux City	712-276-1451
District 4	Marlene Jensen, Atlantic	712-243-3355
District 5	Brenda Hadley, Fairfield	641-472-6142
District 6	Jeanne Heeren, Cedar Rapids	319-364-0235
Bridges and Structures	Judy Whitney, Ames	515-239-1564
Construction	Nancy McMenamin, Ames	515-239-1043
Contracts	Peg Muxfeldt, Ames	515-239-1422
Design	Judy Lensing, Ames	515-239-1469
Director's Staff Division	Lynn Purcell, Ames	515-239-1730
Driver Services	Noralee Warrick, Des Moines	515-237-3153
General Counsel	Sheri Anderson, Ames	515-239-1509
Information Technology Division	Colette Simpson, Ames	515-233-7728
Local Systems	Kathy LaRue, Ames	515-239-1081
Location and Environment	Jean Jesse, Ames	515-239-1225
Maintenance	Cindy Shipley, Ames	515-239-1824
Materials	Dawne Berner, Ames	515-239-1919
Modal and Planning & Programming Divisions	Mary Kay Reimers, Ames	515-239-1661
Motor Carrier Services	Diann McMillen, Des Moines	515-237-3250
Motor Vehicle Enforcement	Val Hunter, Des Moines	515-237-3218
Operations and Finance Division	Janet Kout-Samson, Ames	515-239-1340
Research and Technology Bureau	Phyllis Geer, Ames	515-239-1646
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

Trains for Kids

Joe Wallace loves listening for the sound of an approaching train and coming up with ideas on how to help less fortunate kids get involved with his hobby of model railroading.

Joe, the 13-year-old son of Susan Wallace of the Office of Policy and Legislative Services, has been a train-lover his whole life. Susan says Joe's first smile came at one month old when his grandparents brought him a snap-together plastic train. His first moving train was a wooden "Thomas the Tank Engine" set when he was two or three. From there the love of trains blossomed to the point Joe spends many hours at home with model trains and also sits beside the tracks watching the real thing, video taping passing trains and listening to a radio scanner of railroad communications.

Before Christmas last year, Joe got an idea to help other kids develop a passion for railroading. Joe explained his motives, "In the old days, toy trains were made for kids. But now they are just too expensive for most kids. I wanted to get kids back into this wonderful hobby with trains that are designed to be toys. If we can get a kid the basic set, it's not that expensive to keep it up."



"I wanted to get kids back into this wonderful hobby with trains that are designed to be toys."

Joe Wallace



He composed an E-mail to the Lionel Company asking for donated trains to give to needy families. When Lionel came through with two sets valued at \$200 each, Joe contacted Youth and Shelter Services (YSS) in Ames to help find families for the sets. YSS contacted the local newspaper and, once an article was written about the program, cash donations started coming in. Joe worked with Hobby Town in Ames to buy sets, at significant discounts, for younger kids. The "Trains for Kids" program was rolling down the tracks.

Christmas 2005 was a good one for more than 30 central Iowa families as their children received train sets from the Trains for Kids program, now getting ready to expand to birthdays and other special occasions. Marge Becker of YSS is helping Joe coordinate the program. "In a little over a month we collected more than \$2,000 in donations and trains," she said. "Some of those donations were made by parents in honor of adult children who fondly remember their child's youthful joy at receiving a train set. It's wonderful that this program is catching on. Joe has already had such a positive impact on so many families. My fondest hope is that Joe starts his own nonprofit organization and this program spreads nationally or even internationally."

Becker explains how the program works. "We receive requests from social workers for families who would enjoy a set. We have a basic questionnaire about the family that Joe looks over. Based on the age of the child and other factors, Joe decides which train set is best for that child." Becker says younger children are given wooden "Thomas the Tank Engine" sets like the one Joe had as a toddler. Older kids may receive basic powered Lionel train sets.

Since December, Trains for Kids has appeared in two articles in the Ames Tribune and Joe has been interviewed on WHO-TV and WOI radio. Becker said, "The media attention Joe has created has really helped get the program going."

With Christmas now past, Joe and Becker are working toward expansion of the program, and they may not be working on a small scale for long. Thanks to the support of others in Ames who have heard about the project, corporate and local officials from the Union Pacific Railroad are meeting with the pair to see if UP can help them in some way.

"I'm really pleased with the way this is working out," said Joe. "I've met a lot of neat people."

To donate money or new train sets to the program, contact Marge Becker at mbecker@yss.ames.ia.us or call 515-233-3141.