

# INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2005



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## From my view

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



Whether it's a phone call during dinner soliciting funds for your alma mater, or various fund-raising drives at work, church or assorted civic groups, I don't think any of us is lacking opportunities to help others. One of those opportunities that may not be first on your list, but is worth your consideration, is the

donation of vacation time to a fellow employee requesting catastrophic leave.

If you think about it for a minute and imagine yourself in a position where you or a close family member has been diagnosed with a serious medical condition, what would you do? Would you have enough sick leave and vacation to cover necessary time away from work?

Whenever an employee makes an application and is approved, everyone with a DOT E-mail account receives a notice that the applicant has been granted the opportunity to receive catastrophic leave donations. The program allows other DOT employees to donate vacation, compensatory time and holiday compensatory time to the employee in need. According to the Office of Employee Services, many of you respond to these requests. It's very easy to do as the form you need is attached to the notice.

On one level, I think donating leave might actually be easier than requesting it. By donating there is a sense of accomplishment in helping someone. In requesting catastrophic leave, you're opening yourself up and letting the whole DOT know you or a family member has a medical issue that will be keeping you from your job for an extended period of time. For many, that sort of exposure is difficult, but oftentimes necessary.

I strongly urge employees who are in need and meet the criteria to take advantage of this benefit program. In the box to the right is a short summary of how the program works. Remember, if you choose to apply, you may be assured that all details about your personal and medical conditions will be kept strictly confidential. Other employees will only know that you have met the program criteria, not the nature of your personal situation nor any details. Even if they choose to donate, they will not be given

any additional information. Only you have the right to decide with whom to share that information.

Anyone can have a serious condition develop at any time. Whether you need it yourself, or you feel you can help someone else, I urge you to consider participation in this important program.

### Program criteria

According to the Iowa Department of Administrative Services that oversees the process, to receive donated leave for a catastrophic illness an employee must have a physical or mental illness or injury, as certified by a licensed physician, that will result in the inability of the employee to fulfill job duties for more than 30 work days on a consecutive or intermittent basis.

#### The employee must:

- have exhausted all paid leave;
- not supplement workers' compensation to the extent that it exceeds more than 100 percent of the employee's pay for his or her regularly scheduled work hours on a pay period-by-pay period basis;
- not receive long-term disability (LTD) benefits while receiving catastrophic leave donations;
- be approved for and using or have exhausted Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave hours if eligible; and
- be on approved leave without pay for medical reasons during any hours for which he or she will receive donated leave.

Each catastrophic leave request is evaluated individually according to this set of criteria. If you want to find out more, look at [http://das.hre.iowa.gov/benefits\\_leave.html](http://das.hre.iowa.gov/benefits_leave.html). This site has more detail on specifics of this program. At DOT, this program is coordinated by Tiffany Slagg. You can contact Tiffany in the Office of Employee Services for more information or assistance at 515-239-1239.

## Heidke rescues motorist

It's not unusual for an equipment operator on a snow run late on a January night to spot a deer carcass beside the road. Grimes Equipment Operator Doug Heidke saw just that at about 1:30 a.m. on Jan. 20. He also saw a set of tire tracks in the snow that had not been there on his previous run.

"I saw the deer first," said Heidke. "Then I saw the tracks. I knew I had to stop and check it out."

What Heidke found was 21-year-old Kevin Tiernan of Granger. Tiernan had been driving his black Chevy Monte Carlo headed from Des Moines on Iowa 141. Near Beaver Run Golf Course, Tiernan's vehicle went off the road and apparently rolled several times down a steep ditch, coming to rest near a pond on the golf course property.

"The car was hard to see at first because it was black and the lights were off," said Heidke. "I was standing on the shoulder with my flashlight looking at the vehicle. It appeared empty. I started scanning the ditch with my flashlight and noticed a person laying about 30 feet from the vehicle. I went down to investigate and saw that the individual was dazed and bloody. I assured him that help would be on the way."

Heidke went back to his truck and radioed Claude Frazier, the garage operations assistant, who called the authorities. At the scene, Heidke used his coveralls to try and keep the driver warm until help arrived.

Frazier called the Iowa State Patrol and went to the scene. Grimes Fire and Rescue arrived shortly after Frazier and began their work to save Tiernan's life.



Doug Heidke

Tom Clark, the Iowa State Patrol's investigating officer, said that Tiernan was very lucky Heidke had a sharp eye. Officer Clark advised, "If the DOT driver hadn't seen Tiernan, he may have died lying in the snow all night with wet clothes."

Although the police report makes no mention of Tiernan hitting the deer, Heidke says he believes that's what might have happened.

Tiernan was taken to a Des Moines hospital with head and shoulder injuries. He had shoulder surgery Jan. 28 and was back attending classes at Iowa State University Monday, Jan. 31.



## Design employee of the year

# Chad Hightshoe

**C**had Hightshoe, design technician specialist in the automation section, has been named the 2004 Design Employee of the Year. Hightshoe, a 10-year DOT employee was nominated by his supervisor, Wayne Mander. In his nomination Mander says, "There are many reasons why I am nominating Chad Hightshoe for the Design Employee of the Year award. But above any other reason, is the extremely high level of concern and caring that Chad has for the product that is put out by the Office of Design, and the people that create this product. Regardless of the particular section within Design that Chad is working with, he is always looking for ways to improve their products and processes, while at the same time, looking for ways that the employees can save valuable time in our increasingly demanding work environment."

Mander continues to say that Hightshoe's previous experience in the Creston construction office and in the soils design section of Design allows him to look at the automation processes from "outside of the box" to bring valuable insight into our work methods. Mander cites Hightshoe's development of original problem solving to reduce the section's development time, and give customers the information that is most important to them in the most beneficial format possible.

Hightshoe's work has been held in high regard by his co-workers for years and he has been nominated for Design employee of the year in the past, although he admitted winning the award this year was an unexpected



Design employee  
of the year

honor. Hightshoe said, "It's really nice to win, but I just look at this as part of my job. I just do what is needed."

Three specific examples of Hightshoe's work were noted to have led to a great improvement in the overall productivity of the Office of Design:

### 1. Earthwork Improvements

- Hightshoe has been directly responsible for developing a new method of calculating and displaying earthwork information on design projects. This simplified method is easier for designers and construction staff to understand, as it eliminates redundancies that have existed for years due to our previous, non-automated method of drawing cross section information.

### 2. Criteria Improvements -

With changes that have been made to our civil design software (Geopak), designers have been given more flexibility than ever to create cross sections that are as accurate as possible, while at the same time, take a minimum amount of time to create and require a minimum amount of hand-edits to complete. Hightshoe

campaigned for office interest in a new criteria library, gathered information from our designers on the improvements they desired, and worked hand-in-hand with staff at Geopak to make sure the criteria performed exactly as expected.

### 3. Implementing

**Geotechnical Tools** - For years soils design employees have wanted to automate the process of drawing soils information into our plans. While Geopak has had different versions of geotechnical tools throughout the years, these tools, as they are delivered by Geopak, have never worked very well with the specific way that our soils design section performs its work. Hightshoe, with his prior knowledge of how the section works, developed a custom program for integrating various soils databases, as well as custom preference files that allow the soils design staff to use the tools contained within Geopak to greatly automate the work they perform.

Mike Kennerly, director of the Office of Design, said, "The thing that stands out about Chad is his passion and his commitment to meeting the needs of his customers. A lot of people wait for someone to bring them a problem before they start working on a solution; Chad seeks them out. His background and experience in Design means he is familiar with the needs of our staff and he is willing to take the initiative to meet those needs. I know that willingness is appreciated by his peers and is one of the reasons they voted him Design Employee of the Year."

Hightshoe and his wife, Nikki, live in Boone with their two-year-old daughter, Zoey.



# tripGuide™

## Keeping an eye on Des Moines metro traffic

The DOT's latest intelligent transportation system, tripGuide, was launched Jan. 12. Over the past few years DOT employees have been working diligently to integrate several components of this very complex system geared toward reducing congestion by increasing the traffic management capabilities of the DOT, as well as increasing safety by allowing emergency personnel to better assess traffic incidents.

"This system of cameras, side-firing radar-type sensors and other elements that can feed to a Web site didn't exist as a unit before," said Mike Jackson of the Research and Technology Bureau. "Our technicians researched the several technologies and spent countless hours trying to get each element to work with the others in a useful way. TripGuide was not a product we just bought off the shelf and plugged in, it is specific to the Iowa DOT. A great deal of effort went into getting this system up and running."

Once all the elements were in place and thoroughly tested, the service was introduced to the public with images accessible on the Internet by local broadcast television stations. "The top two news stations in the Des Moines area have purchased a feed from our tripGuide cameras," said Jackson. "They use the images to show commuters exactly what the roadway at a specific location looks like at any given moment."

The elements under the tripGuide umbrella include:

- 44 **closed circuit television cameras** with connections to several city-owned cameras. The images are used by traffic management operators and available to the public via the i235.com Web site.
- 68 side-firing, radar-type **traffic sensors** that collect and transmit data about the presence, volume, lane occupancy and speed of vehicles on area highways. The information is used to create a traffic flow map, also available on i235.com, which indicates if traffic is flowing freely and normally, slower than normal or is congested or impeded.
- Two types of **dynamic message signs** including six permanent interstate signs and several portable roadside signs. Computer-generated text messages can be electronically transmitted to these signs from the traffic management center.
- **Highway Helper** has been a service provided in the Des Moines area since 2001. In addition to their regular duties assisting motorists, these DOT employees will now be using their radio communications equipment to alert the traffic management center of incidents.
- Travel information can be accessed by dialing **511** or visiting i235.com or 511ia.org. 511, a service began more than a year ago, continues to be available to alert motorists to incident and construction updates in all parts of the state, and this service has been added to the technologies under the tripGuide umbrella in the Des Moines area.
- The system also includes a **cellular incident alert system**. When traffic incidents occur or travel is impeded, local governmental agencies will be alerted via cell phone so appropriate actions can be taken 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- To assist in location of highway incidents, **tenth-mile route markers** were installed on the Des Moines freeway system a few years ago. These markers help to accurately pinpoint the location of incidents and get help to crash scenes quickly.

The technology used for tripGuide is tied together through a complex communications network. Using a combination of new and existing communication resources such as wireless and fiber optics, this network allows data and images to flow freely from and to the various technologies.

"Now that tripGuide is in place in the Des Moines area, we are looking at implementing similar systems in other Iowa metro areas in the future," said Jackson. "With major work planned for the I-29 corridor in Council Bluffs, a similar system may prove to be very useful there as well."

## Playing catch-up with technology

# The new vehicle registration and titling system

A transformation took place in every county in Iowa over New Year's weekend. As you've read in past issues of INSIDE, the Vehicle Registration and Titling (VR&T) system was activated and approximately five million records transferred from the mid-1980s mainframe system into a new Microsoft Windows™-based and intelligent PC-supported system.

With the VR&T system, Iowa county treasurer offices said goodbye to typewriters, terminals and a 20-year old mainframe computer system. "This was a huge change that we've been planning for since 2001," said Tina Hargis, director of the Office of Vehicle Services. "We worked together with the consultant, Archon Technologies, county treasurers and their employees, and many DOT staff members to accomplish this task. This is an excellent example

Black Hawk County Treasurer's employee Claudia Vokoun assists a customer using the VR&T system.



of what can be accomplished with multi-jurisdictional cooperation. It truly took everyone working together, giving 100 percent to make this happen."

The highly sophisticated, fully integrated business-oriented system will replace a patchwork of software programs first released two decades ago. Stefano Esposito, executive vice president of Archon Technologies, said his company has had past success with this type of system change. "What we provided was a proven infrastructure that the DOT and counties could build on," he said. "We began our part of the process in 2002 with representatives from the DOT and county treasurers being very involved to make sure this system serves the needs of Iowans. It's been a very collaborative effort."

During July through December 2004, the consultants and employees from 17 counties were involved in refinement of the system; 700 county employees received basic VR&T training. Advance level training was given to 250 of those employees.

On top of this training, there was a test site provided where county employees could try out the new system. The test site, called a 'sandbox,' gave any county treasurer's employee access to the pre-production version of the system. Shirley Andre, director of the Motor Vehicle Division, said, "Counties who made practicing in the sandbox a priority were extremely successful with the new system. Most notable is Black Hawk County. Treasurer Barb Freet, Deputy Treasurer Monica Schmitz and Motor Vehicle Supervisor Dave McCullough required each of their employees to practice at least one hour every day. Our monitoring of all counties after implementation showed that Black Hawk County Treasurer employees were doing almost twice the number of transactions as the next most productive county."

VR&T continued on page 7

**"Everyone involved with this project needs to be commended for their dedicated effort and commitment to success."**

**Tina Hargis**  
director of the Office of Vehicle Services



VR&T continued from page 6

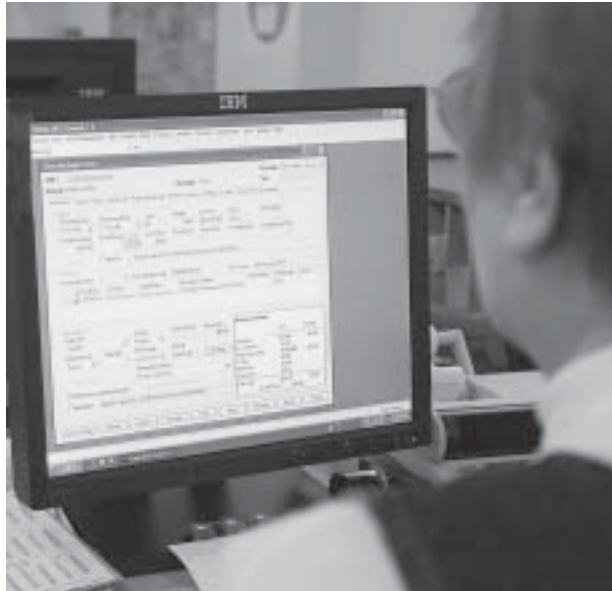
Counties with little or no “sandbox” practice time were given the opportunity to come to a “command center” in Des Moines for one-on-one training. This provided several important benefits. First, by bringing in backlogs of their own work, they were able to get caught up. Second, according to Frank Denson, the primary Archon trainer, the employees were able to retain much more of what they learned because the environment was more relaxed without customers standing across the counter. On-site visits to deliver additional training in a few larger counties were also made.

During the first week of operation with the new system, county treasurer offices incrementally phased in service to the public. Some offices were closed for a day or so to prepare for the public launch. Jana Corkrean from the Madison County Treasurer’s Office said, “It’s been a little stressful for us, but mostly because we were in the stone ages with everything. Right now we only have two PCs, so we’re dealing with some longer lines than we’d like to see. That should be resolved when we get additional equipment.”

A number of other counties, including Polk, will be upgrading their computers as well.

“While there were some delays in some counties at first, eventually this new system will drastically improve our ability to provide prompt, efficient service to Iowa residents,” stated Jeff Garrett, president of the Iowa State County Treasurers Association. “Everyone involved should be extremely proud of this new system.”

An important new aspect of the system is an integrated module that tracks financial transactions. Manuel Moreno from Archon Technologies said, “The cash drawer portion of the system will be new to everyone. I think each county handled their financial transactions separate from the registration and titling. The new system combines these to eliminate manual data entry, redundant reconciliations, dissemination of hard copy paperwork, and postage costs. It’s going to take a little while to get used to reconciling the financial aspects in the system, but in the end we think it will be much more accurate and efficient.” His observation has proven to be correct. Eric Stierman, Dubuque County Treasurer, was even working the county satellite office by himself and getting along just fine.



The new VR&T system uses updated computer technology to replace the green-screen terminals used for more than 20 years.

A command center at Park Fair Mall continues to be operational through March 11 to assist county employees. Archon Technologies, Office of Vehicle Services and Motor Vehicle Support Team staff the command center to resolve issues and answer questions. Nancy Goecke, IT project manager for VR&T, said, “There are so many individuals who went the extra mile, put in long hours on short notice, worked over holidays and weekends in order for this project to be successful. For their support and cooperation, I am thankful.”

“I’m very proud of the way DOT staff has pulled together to work on this project,” said Hargis. “Everyone involved with this project needs to be commended for their dedicated effort and commitment to success. Thanks to the entire Office of Vehicle Services, Information Technology Division’s motor vehicle support team and application technology section and also to Archon Technologies. Special thanks to Nancy Goecke, IT project leader; Marcus Ryan, data steward; and Deb Shafer, motor vehicle support team manager. I’m pleased with what we’ve been able to accomplish.”



# Forever Families

## The Andersons



Lucinda, Nathaniel and Joe Anderson

When Nathaniel Glen Lewis Anderson was born last June 29, his parents weren't in the delivery room, or even in the hospital. Little Nathaniel didn't meet his daddy and mommy, Joe and Lucinda Anderson, until he was two days old. "Because we were a licensed foster family, we were able to receive Nathaniel into our home right away. Later on, while the process of terminating the rights of both birth parents was working its way through court, we were granted legal guardianship of Nathaniel," explained Joe, an eight-year DOT employee in the appraisal section of Right-of-Way.

Joe and Lucinda, a second-grade teacher in Ankeny, had been in the process of adopting a child since April 2003. After taking classes and becoming licensed as a foster home (see "The process"), the Andersons hosted one baby for 12 days. "We went into the program with the goal of adopting," explained Joe. "Being approved as a foster family is a step toward that goal. We knew we were taking a risk being a foster family."

The Andersons faced that risk when the first baby that came to stay with them was returned to her birth mother. The Andersons tried to be optimistic about the next placement. "When the first baby left, it was tough," said Joe. "She was only six days old when we got her, but we knew we wanted to keep trying."

The next placement for the Andersons was a three-year-old boy. "We felt we had a strong chance to adopt him," said Joe. "During the three months we had him is when we also got Nathaniel. Since it was summer and my wife is a teacher, she was home and able to care for both boys."

But the adoption of the older boy was not to be, and the Andersons say they were just happy to be in a position to help when that child needed them most. "At that time, after having to say goodbye to two children we had hoped to adopt, the thought of losing Nathaniel was almost unbearable."

But Nathaniel's adoption is complete and he's now an "official" Anderson. "It's great to know he's ours forever," said Joe.

## The Skartvedts

"Forever family is one of the terms you hear a lot when you're going through training to become an adoptive family," said Lisa Skartvedt, information technology specialist 2 in the Information Technology Division. "I always knew I wanted to adopt, I just didn't now how to go about it. One day I found a Web site, kidsake.com, that answered a lot of my questions."

Lisa's husband Brian, an equipment operator in the Ames garage, has three girls from a previous marriage: Alison, 13; Emilie, 9; and Anelise, 7. "I have a great relationship with my step-daughters," said Lisa, "But Brian and I decided we wanted to have more kids, and to have them, we wanted to adopt."

Forever Families continued on page 9



**Forever Families** continued from page 8

The Skartvedts started the process of becoming a pre-adoptive foster family in December 2002. It wasn't long before they had a placement. Kyle was two when he entered foster care and four when he landed at the Skartvedt's acreage outside Roland. "Kyle was from Iowa, which made sense to us because we could have visits and time to transition through the process," said Lisa. "It took Kyle a little while to adjust. Brian has a large, close-knit family. That was all new to Kyle, but after about a year he was a totally new kid."

Then Kyle started on his mission for a little brother. "Once we had Kyle, we went to a 'meet your worker' night. Social workers hold meetings to introduce prospective adoptive parents to kids," said Lisa, "We took Kyle with us. When we met Austin, things just clicked. We knew he was supposed to be part of our family."

Once the Skartvedts had met Austin, he came to visit their home. "After that first visit," said Lisa, "something was missing in our home when Austin wasn't there."

During the process of adoption, Lisa said they never lost sight of the relationship their boys had with the foster families each child had lived with since age 2. "Neither of those families were looking to adopt," said Lisa. "But they care very deeply about our boys and we want to keep that connection for our sons. Kids don't have to lose the foster connection once they are adopted."

Because she knew more about the process and was more comfortable taking a few liberties, the court appearance to finalize Austin's adoption was very festive. "We brought in balloons and decorated the courtroom," said Lisa. "We adopted Kyle in Polk County because we thought we had to. The people there were very nice and it all went well. But when we adopted Austin, we went through Hamilton County where we live. The judges in adoption cases are so great because I think these are some of the happiest proceedings they get involved with."

The boys are almost exactly a year apart, Kyle is now 6 and Austin is 5. "While I knew I wanted to adopt," said Lisa, "I was scared to take the risk with a baby. I didn't think I could handle it emotionally. Then when I went to the KidSake Web site and found out there are more than 150 kids waiting to be adopted in Iowa, I couldn't believe it."

The Skartvedts say, while they are done adopting children, they want to become advocates for the process. Lisa said, "Our children have brought so much joy to our lives. Adoption has been a wonderful experience for us and well worth the wait. It's such a relief, both for us and for the children, once the process is complete and we will be a family forever."

## The Cains

Sue Cain, construction technician senior in Contracts, and her husband, Mike, lead a pretty quiet life. Combined, they had five kids; the youngest of those is 26. "We definitely had an empty nest," said Sue.

Life changed on Aug. 6, 2002. Mike was estranged from his stepbrother Michael, but knew he and his wife, Lisa, had three kids, alleged drug use and a lifestyle that didn't mesh with his own. On that



Alex, Zachary and Hunter Cain

**Forever Families** continued on page 10

**Forever Families** continued from page 9

day Lisa died in her home and the children were taken from the residence by the Department of Human Services. Sue and Mike had not been considering welcoming children into their home, but they felt strongly these three boys needed them.

Because it was an emergency situation, the boys, then ages 10, 7 and 3, were placed in the Cain's home. "They were shuffled around between an aunt and a grandmother before we got them Aug. 20," said Sue. "They were headed for foster care because no blood relative could take them permanently. We didn't want them in foster care, since they would most likely have been split up into separate foster homes."

The Cains began to take classes to become licensed foster care providers and also began the adoption process. Since they were family members, the boys were allowed to remain with the Cains, even though they were not yet a licensed foster home (see *The process*).

Sue said at first the transition was challenging. All three boys had behavioral issues, and had problems focusing in school and at home. They have since been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

"But they are all so smart," said Sue. "Since they have had a stable home environment, they've all come so far. It's still a struggle sometimes, but we're committed to our children. What they really needed was stability, love and attention. They'd never had that before."

Sue said the adjustment has been tough for her and Mike as well. "It's a such a change for us to have to worry about things like babysitters and scheduling for the kids. Just to get some time alone now takes much more effort than we're used to."

On Aug. 23, 2004, all three adoptions were finalized. "It was such a relief to have that part done," said Sue. "I'm really lucky that I could take time off work to deal with the issues and that Mike and I work opposite shifts so one of us can usually be with the boys. We also have an awesome daycare provider who understands the situation and is a huge help."

Zachary, 12, Alex, 9, and Hunter, 6, have settled into the Cain home and are at school in the Southeast Warren district. "When Mike and I built our house, it was designed for just the two of us," said Sue. "But now, with a room added in the basement, it's just perfect for our family."

## The process

All three families agree that opening your home to a child is a life-changing experience, and they also agree the process is intrusive and time-consuming.

Each prospective parent must attend classes and learn about the psychological aspects of foster and adoptive families, as well as other issues pertinent to the situation.

Once the parents pass the classes, a home study is conducted to determine the appropriateness of the family for foster or adoptive placement. This process includes interviews with the parents and family members; completion of a physician's report on each family member; and a set of references. These references are contacted and asked a long list of questions about the prospective parents. "It's a really intense process," said Cain. "They get very personal in the questions that are asked of the parents and of the references. But would it be effective any other way? The process is necessary to make sure the foster or adoptive home is going to be a good place for these kids to be."

When the home study is completed, the Department of Human Services either approves or denies the application for a license to become a foster or adoptive home. If the license is approved, the family can begin to receive placements.

## Quote for the day

*Choose a job you love,  
and you will never have to  
work a day in your life.*

**Confucius**

# Family Happenings

## Information

### Technology Division

Colette Simpson



**Bruce Jarvis**, second shift computer operator, and his wife, Jennifer, welcomed a new baby boy Dec. 29, 2004. Joseph Emery Jarvis weighed 7 lbs. 11 ozs. He joins big sisters MacKenzie and Selena at home. Daddy says they've been wonderful help keeping little Joe happy. The kids' grandma is Roma Jarvis, retired DOT employee. Congratulations to the Jarvis family.



**Joshua Greenfield**, information technology specialist 3 in the Information Technology Division, and his wife, Kristin, welcomed a new baby Dec. 14, 2004. Benjamin Lawrence Greenfield arrived five weeks early, weighing 5 lbs. 12.5 ozs. and was 19 inches long. Benjamin joins twin big brothers, Carter and Collin, 4 1/2, and big sister, Megan, almost 2. We're sure there's never a dull moment at the Greenfield home.

## Tactfully correct a staffer's mistake

One of the most important-and least pleasant-management chores is correcting employees when they make mistakes.

Use these techniques to effectively coach an employee who's made an error:

**Understand the requirements** of the employee's job. You can't determine how the error occurred if you don't know the process for completing the task.

**Take into account environmental factors.** Noise, fatigue, poor lighting, and other distractions can contribute to employee mistakes.

**Approach the employee** with the intent of gaining insight. Nobody has a better understanding of what occurred than the person who committed the error.

**Be careful not to ask threatening questions. To ensure that the tone of your questioning is correct, write questions down in advance and review them carefully.**

For example, don't say, "Why did you foul up this order?" Instead, say, "What was happening when you processed this order that might have contributed to these errors?"

**Listen to the employee's responses** with an open mind. Even if you think you know the cause of the problem, seek the employee's views and listen.

**Allow the employee to come up with a solution** to the problem. Urge the employee to take ownership of the problem and the solution. By letting the person find ways to correct and prevent mistakes, you demonstrate your respect for the employee and your confidence that the person can do a good job.

*Adapted from "Counseling in Business," Lincoln Bittner, [www.suite101.com](http://www.suite101.com). Reprinted with permission from Communications Briefings, Jan. 2005 (703) 518-2343, [www.briefings.com](http://www.briefings.com).*

## In Memory

Al Buchholz, 86, of Cedar Rapids, died Jan. 7, 2005. Buchholz retired in 1981 as soils field supervisor in the Office of Design. He had 36 years of service at his retirement. He is survived by his wife, Mary.





## Hats Off

*These are letters that have been submitted to the editor. They may have been edited for length and continuity.*

To: **Mark Wandro**

From: Bernard Nesbit, Harvey

I just wanted to thank your employee who stopped and asked if I was alright this morning on Iowa 163. Although I don't know his name, he was a great representative of your staff. My car had broken down and I was sitting on the side of the road halfway between Monroe and Pella.

I had used my cell phone to call AAA road assistance and had dropped off into a nap when I awoke to your employee tapping on my car window and asking if I was Okay. He said he wanted to make sure I wasn't getting too cold with my car not running.

I greatly appreciate his effort and wanted to let you know you have some fine employees working for you.

*(Editor's note: Jim Almond and Jay Carolus, equipment operators from the Oskaloosa shop, stopped to help Mr. Nesbit.)*

To: **Krista Rostad**, District 2 Planner  
From: Dr. Gail Moorman Behrens

I was traveling to Des Moines for a meeting Jan. 31. The roads were slick, and on U.S. 20 between the Winthrop exit and the Independence exit I slipped and fishtailed quite a bit, landing in the ditch. Earlier I had passed a snowplow pulled over to check on another driver in the ditch. That same DOT driver came upon me, pulled over and asked if I needed assistance. He called a tow truck for me, and just made me feel better because he stopped.

*(Editor's note: The employee involved is Equipment Operator Ben Straw from the Independence shop.)*

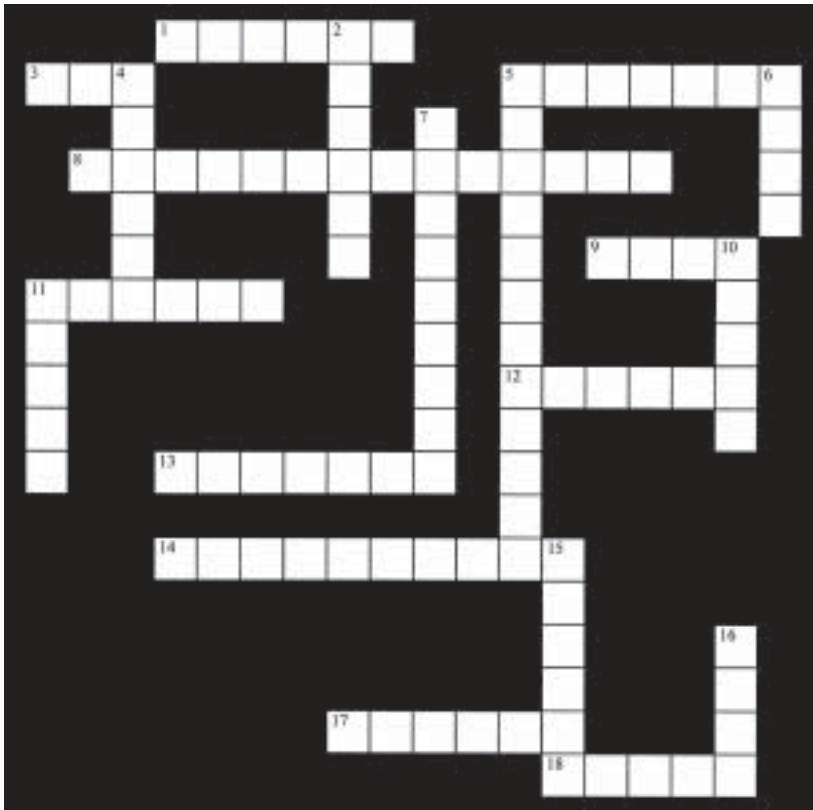
To: **Mark Wandro**

From: Ron Sleep, Long Grove

I would like to thank and commend your staff at the De Witt garage. I really appreciated their honesty and integrity in returning my daughter's stolen wallet. One of your men found it along the roadside. It is good to see your people care about those they serve.

*(Editor's note: Equipment Operator Virgil Schroeder found the wallet along U.S. 61 and turned it in to Highway Maintenance Supervisor Dick Banowetz. Banowetz contacted the Mr. Sleep and returned the wallet.)*

# Think **SPRING**



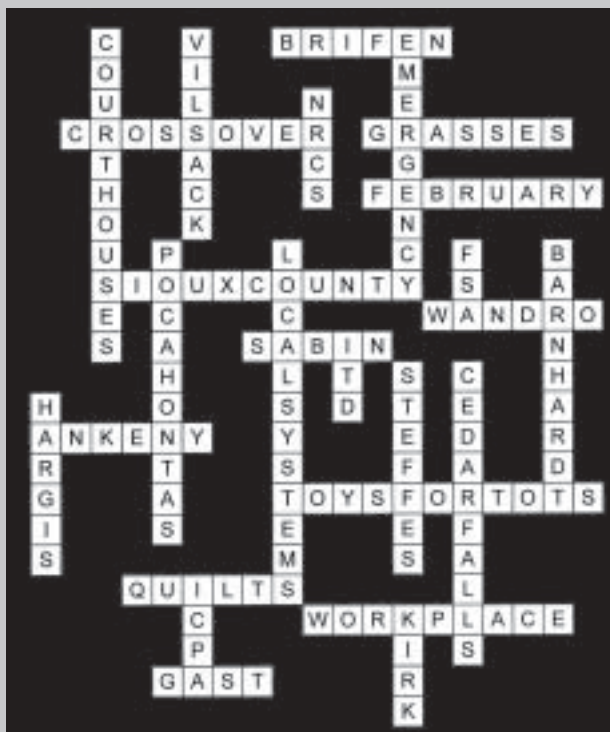
## ACROSS

- 1 Worn in Easter parades atop your head
- 3 What you'll be doing to the lawn soon
- 5 Used to get salt and sand off vehicles
- 8 Baseball now in Florida/Arizona
- 9 What the Easter Bunny hides
- 11 Used to collect Easter eggs
- 12 Baby chickens
- 13 April showers bring them
- 14 Ronald Reagan's favorite candy
- 17 Peter Rabbit got caught here
- 18 St. Patrick's color

## DOWN

- 2 Last Sunday in March this year
- 4 Change the blades to see better out your windshield
- 5 Orange cones mark the spot
- 6 What kids do to find eggs
- 7 Yellow flowers that will come up soon
- 10 Not-quite melted snow
- 11 Critter that distributes eggs in spring
- 15 It begins March 20
- 16 Liquid precipitation

### February crossword solution



## Stumped?

The solution to the March crossword is in the March **INSIDE** on **DOTNET** under the publications pulldown menu.

## PERSONNEL UPDATES

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Dec. 31, 2004, through Jan. 27, 2005.

### New Hires

**Alkan Bektur**, transportation engineer intern, Design; **Kristin Brostrom**, transportation engineer intern, Design; **Tim Carlson**, maintenance repairer, Facilities Support; **Jason Coy**, equipment operator, Sioux City –Hamilton garage; **David Duncan**, mechanic, Sheldon garage; **Kelli Elijah**, transportation engineer intern, Traffic and Safety; **Aaron Greiner**, program planner 1, Transportation Data; **Scott Jordan**, equipment operator, Sloan garage; **Traci Keel**, driver's license clerk, Davenport DL station; **Kent Miller**, information technology specialist 4, Information Technology Division; **Thomas Miller**, mechanic, Repair Shop; **Jennifer Rehbein**, mechanic, Repair Shop; **Courtney Tim**, equipment operator, Malcom interstate garage; **Robert Welper**, transportation engineer intern, Design; **Aaron Wiegand**, equipment operator, Grimes garage; **Dustin Wilkinson**, mechanic, Repair Shop.

### Promotions

**Marcia Campbell**, from secretary 1 to construction technician, Mount Pleasant construction; **Kim Nobiling**, from management analyst 2, Employee Services, to executive officer 1, Motor Carrier Services; **Michael Pawlovich**, from transportation engineer intern to transportation engineer, Traffic and Safety; **Vincent Poush**, from construction technician to construction technician senior, Chariton construction; **Beverly Rust**, from garage operations assistant, Waterloo garage, to executive officer 1, District 2 maintenance.

### Transfers

**Anthony Babcock**, transportation engineer intern, from District 1 materials to Des Moines construction; **Gerald Irwin**, equipment operator, from Ottumwa garage to Fairfield garage; **Vincent Martin**, equipment operator, from Davenport interstate garage to Dubuque garage; **Peggy Riecken**, secretary 1, from General Counsel Division to Systems Planning; **Kelly Stratton**, clerk specialist, transfer within Driver Services; **Dirk Zaiser**, construction technician senior, from Des Moines construction to Jefferson construction.

### Retirements

**Judy Allen**, program planner 2, Transportation Data; **Gary Lane**, equipment operator, Davenport interstate garage; **Mary Manning**, driver's license clerk, Clinton DL station; **Donald Wiley**, equipment operator, Burlington garage.

## SERVICE AWARDS

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

### 35 Years

**Sheldon Kardell**, Contracts; **Stephen Kling**, Council Bluffs construction; **Richard Meyer**, Atlantic materials; **John Joseph Nagel**, Elkader garage; **Billie Rutherford**, Adair garage.

### 30 Years

**Clyde Bartel**, District 3 field staff; **Thor Highland**, Procurement and Distribution; **Carol McDaniel**, Program Management; **Robert Rye**, District 1 Office.

### 25 Years

**Brian Arnold**, Dubuque garage; **Lindon Bowen**, Rail Transportation; **Marcia Buboltz**, Council Bluffs maintenance; **Larry Junkman**, Rockwell City garage; **Steven Vannoy**, Information Technology Division.

### 20 Years

**Bobby Dahl**, District 4 Office; **Lynn Dickinson**, Missouri Valley garage; **Steven Gray**, Information Technology Division; **Michael Lawrence**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Judy McDonald**, Location and Environment; **Michael Seek**, Traffic and Safety.

### 15 Years

**Daniel Calvert**, Jefferson construction; **Gary Gust**, Avoca interstate garage; **Michael Jantzen**, Tama garage; **Kevin Molsberry**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Christine Palas**, Elkader garage; **Stacey Rockwell**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Deborah Short**, Driver Services; **James Smith**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Esther Toms**, Jefferson construction.

### 10 Years

**Tracy Hodges**, Iowa City DL station; **Donald Lee**, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Warren Mittelstadt**, West Union garage.

### 5 Years

**Josie Anderson**, Motor Carrier Services; **Jill Bossard**, Ottumwa DL station; **Michael Casey**, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Steven Gast**, Information Technology Division; **Mark Hines**, Driver Services; **Jennifer McCarty**, Waterloo DL station; **Michael Murray**, Cherokee DL station; **Kimberly Newendorp**, Ottumwa DL station; **Donna Paulson**, Ames DL station; **Luann Thiede**, Davenport DL station; **Barbara Thiesen**, Sioux City construction; **Rianna Zirkelbach**, Des Moines DL station.



# 35 YEARS

Iowa Department of Transportation

## Turn Hunger Around

The Iowa DOT 2005 Food Drive, "Turn Hunger Around," will be held April 4 -8.



**Events include:**

- All week online auction\*
- Monday, April 4  
Cinnamon and Pecan Roll Sale
- Wednesday, April 6  
DoBiz Cookies and Annual Book Sale
- Thursday, April 7  
Ice Cream Social and Half Price Book Sale

*\* Parking spaces will again be up for auction. Donors will be able to specify whether their donations should go to the current food drive, Toys for Tots drive to be held next December or split between the two fund-raising efforts.*



**Stephen Kling**  
Council Bluffs construction

## 2005 DOT auction dates

- April 9 Small equipment
- June 4 Vehicle
- Sept. 17 Small equipment
- Oct. 29 Vehicle

# 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](mailto:tracey.bramble@dot.iowa.gov).

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PLEASE RECYCLE THIS ISSUE

**On the cover:** Freight trains sharing the tracks with passenger railcars may be increasing in the future.

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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
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Construction	Nancy McMenamin, Ames	515-239-1043
Contracts	Peg Muxfeldt, Ames	515-239-1422
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Motor Vehicle Enforcement	Val Hunter, Des Moines	515-237-3218
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Traffic and Safety	Linda McBride, Ames	515-239-1557
Vehicle Services	Thelma Huffman, Des Moines	515-237-3182

## Rail study confirms viability of Midwest route

A consortium of nine Midwestern states recently released an updated report on the Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS), which confirms the viability of a plan to enhance rail passenger service throughout the Midwest, including Iowa. The proposed rail passenger network radiates from Chicago, providing service to most major Midwestern cities and other population centers through a feeder bus system.

Providing a safe, reliable, comfortable, and convenient service using modern trains traveling at speeds of up to 110 mph (largely in existing rail corridors) is the goal of the system. The MWRRS is expected to carry an estimated 13.6 million passengers annually by 2025, and provide additional travel options for business and leisure travelers throughout the Midwest.

The proposed passenger rail system would mean good news for Iowans, as it would include five round-trips each day between Chicago and Des Moines with stops in some of the state's largest cities including Davenport and Iowa City; and interconnecting bus service to Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Fort Dodge, and Sioux City. The Chicago-Omaha route (including a branch to Quincy, Ill.) would run through Iowa on the current Iowa Interstate

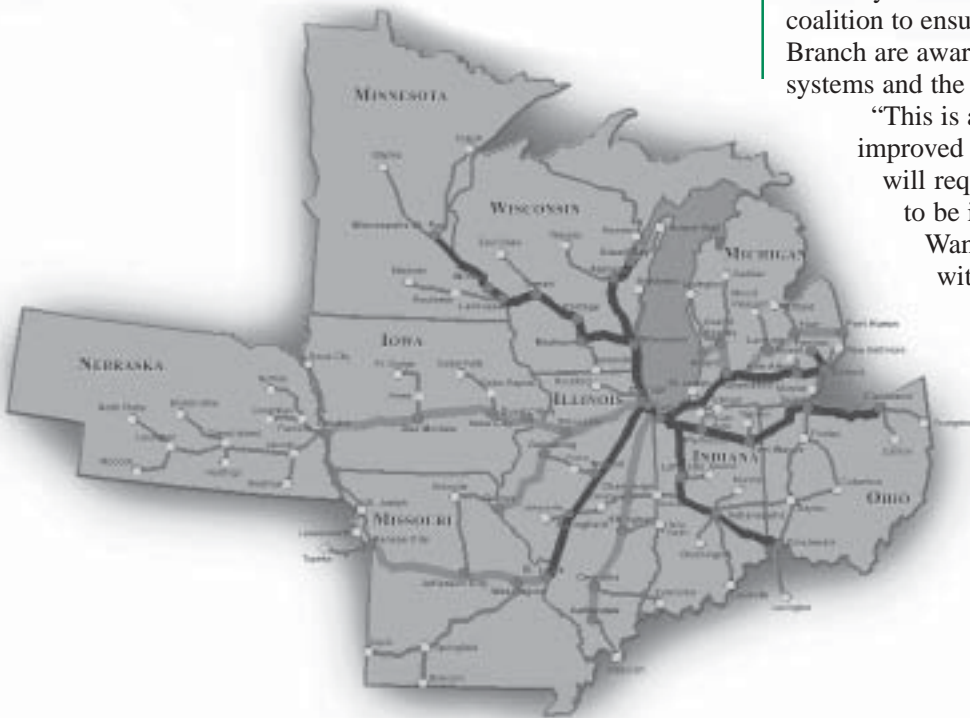
Railroad. This route would be designed for 79-mph speeds and is expected to carry nearly 1.3 million passengers. The MWRRS is not expected to have a direct impact on existing Amtrak services, the California Zephyr through southern Iowa and the Southwest Chief through Fort Madison. The report assumes these services will continue to provide long-distance service from Chicago to California.

Implementation of the entire Midwest system carries a total capital cost of \$7.7 billion. This includes \$6.6 billion for track and signal improvements, and \$1.1 billion for state-of-the-art train equipment. The Chicago-Omaha route alone would require \$806 million in infrastructure improvements and train equipment. (These estimates are in 2002 dollars and do not account for inflation.) This investment is expected to create 2,000 permanent rail-related jobs and 8,000 temporary construction jobs. Once completed, the system will require subsidies initially, but is expected to become self-sufficient within 10 years of operation.

Federal support of a multi-year 80/20 federal/state partnership program is the essential element necessary for system development. The nine Midwest states, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin, are currently active with other interests in developing a coalition to ensure Congress and the Executive Branch are aware of the importance of passenger rail systems and the need for such a program.

“This is an incremental and phased plan for improved passenger rail service. However, it will require significant federal funding for it to be implemented,” said Iowa DOT Mark Wandro. “We are continuing our efforts with the other Midwest states to encourage Congressional action on passenger rail funding.”

For additional information, go to [iowarail.com](http://iowarail.com).



# Think **SPRING** solution

