

MARCH 2013

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# Teamwork's the name of the game for Carlisle's Jackson

**D**id you do one thing that made a difference in someone's life today? If you are Raymond Jackson, highway technician in the Carlisle garage, the answer is yes, many times over.

Jackson, 34, a very upbeat and positive husband and father of three, could have had a very different life. When he found out in high school that he was going to become a father, Jackson not only took on that challenge with pride, he became a husband and full-time shift supervisor at Titan Tire, allowing his new family to purchase their first home when he was just 18. He said, "My wife, Angela, was so young at that time, she couldn't even be on the deed to the house."

Flash forward to 2001. Jackson changed jobs and began working at the Iowa DOT's Grimes garage. He moved from a supervisory role at Titan Tire to one as a highway technician associate, which was difficult for him. "At first I didn't buy into the system," he said. "I fought teamwork for a long time. It was difficult for me to change from being a supervisor to being supervised, but we had great leadership with Lance Starbuck and Claude Frazier, and the employees set a cooperative tone. Over the years, I moved from the Grimes garage to the Des Moines shop to Carlisle. Over time, the DOT taught me and built me up to be a good team member, and that is something I can take into my life outside of work."

Outside of the DOT, Jackson takes teamwork to a whole new level. Fourteen years ago, Jackson's high-school aged nephew, DeMarco Turner Jr., was getting into some trouble, hanging around with the wrong crowd and allowing his grades to deteriorate. Jackson knew Turner had a love of basketball, so the two began working out every day. Jackson said, "At first it was just to give him something productive to do."

Soon other kids joined practices. Before long, Jackson had formed a team. Because the families of many of the kids on the team lacked financial resources, Jackson found himself paying entry fees to any tournament he could afford.

Because of his efforts, several of the team members, including Turner, graduated from high school. Turner continued on to attend Iowa State University and played with the Cyclones as a walk-on until an ankle injury sidelined him. But the lessons Turner learned from Jackson carried on as he persevered through the injury and pursued his education and eventually a basketball career at Central College once his ankle healed. Today Coach Turner, along with Jackson's 17-year old son, Jordan, assist Jackson with what has grown into a 70-member AAU basketball club



*Raymond Jackson*

named Ambition Basketball. Jackson coined that name from the character traits of attitude, motivation, belief, intelligence, talent, importance, organization and nobility.

Jackson's focus with Ambition Basketball is to give kids, originally just boys, but expanding this spring to both boys and girls, the stability they may not find at home. Jackson said, "It seems like for every kid who has a stable home, there are two who do not. We become like father figures to these kids and the teams really are family. We are there for each other. As coaches, we motivate the kids and encourage the kids to motivate each other to be better every day, not just on the basketball court, but in every aspect of their lives. This isn't just about basketball. We give the kids somewhere to be and something productive to do to stay out of trouble. We all pitch in, including my wife, Angela, to give kids rides to practice and games and provide them with the opportunities they might not get anywhere else."

While many of the kids involved in Ambition Basketball are able to provide some financial support to the club, Jackson still provides scholarships for many by working a third job as a girl's basketball coach at East High School in Des Moines. He said, "I use my stipend from East to pay for Ambition Basketball. At East, I'm the head freshman coach and an assistant junior varsity coach. When our varsity team

*Jackson, continued on page 3*

*Jackson, continued from page 2*

goes to the post season, I am an assistant on that staff, too.”

While the high school season is four months long, Ambition Basketball is a year-round program for third through eighth graders and a summer and fall program for high schoolers. Jackson said, “For the high schoolers, the summer program is key because that’s where the college scouts are able to see them. We travel around the Midwest and they get to show their skills.”

While not all of Jackson’s players get college scholarships, nine have gone on to play college basketball. Jackson uses the time with his players to teach perseverance

by helping players through the college application process. Jackson said, “Several of the kids would never have thought college was possible for them. But our program stresses that with good character and hard work, everyone has a chance to be the best they can be. And that’s something I’ve learned here at the Iowa DOT.”

To find out more about Ambition Basketball, volunteer, donate funds or advertise on its website, go to [www.ambitionbasketball.com](http://www.ambitionbasketball.com) or call 515-306-4487.

## Jurek Wiench 2012 Office of Materials Employee of the Year

Doing things the way they have always been done doesn’t cut it anymore. Everywhere around the Iowa DOT employees are searching for new and better ways to get the job done. This year’s Office of Materials Employee of the Year, Jurek Wiench, is doing just that.

Wiench, a chemist who came to the Iowa DOT from Iowa State University two years ago, tests the chemical composition of various construction materials that go into Iowa highways. This complicated testing process used to be done on equipment at ISU, but Wiench recently convinced Highway Division management that purchasing the equipment and using it in-house would save time and money in the long run.

The X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy unit has long been recognized as a powerful technique for the qualitative and quantitative elemental analysis of a variety of solid and liquid samples. A wide range of units are available on the market. Once the decision was made to purchase the XRF unit, Wiench began researching vendors and writing the specifications. He also developed performance criteria for bidder evaluations.

Once a vendor was selected, Wiench coordinated the installation and is now in the process of writing software to transfer results from the XRF unit to Iowa DOT databases.

Wiench said, “This equipment is important because many decisions are made based on the results. Having the ability to conduct the testing in our own labs will save time and money. There are also certain standards our lab has to maintain to retain certification with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and being able to perform these tests helps us meet those standards.”



*Jurek Wiench*

Currently, Wiench said the XRF unit is primarily used to test chemical composition of cement, fly ash and carbonate rocks, but he said the equipment has much greater potential. “We can expand the capabilities to steel, glass beads or paint, or really anything that has a chemical composition to measure,” he said.

Because of his diligence in seeking the XRF unit and now his expertise in operating it to benefit the Iowa DOT, Wiench was named Materials Employee of the Year. Of the award, Wiench said, “I was very surprised. It is nice to be recognized and appreciated for the work you do.”

# New Web-based courses available

**T**he Technical Training and Certification Program recently added courses available in Web-based training (WBT) format. The Structures Inspection Course, presented each training season by the Office of Construction, is now available anytime via the Web. This excellent course, originally developed and presented by Wayne Sunday and Kyle Frame, can now be viewed online when it fits your schedule.

This course joins the hot mix asphalt inspection and Portland cement concrete inspection courses that were previously developed as WBTs. The structures inspection course includes four modules covering safety, culverts, substructures and superstructures. The course covers construction and inspection of structures according to Iowa DOT specifications.

The erosion and sediment control WBT has been revised and now is a part of a soon-to-be-required training for working on some Iowa DOT projects. Rhonda Pecenka and Melissa Serio of the Office of Construction developed the original materials for this course.

All WBTs can be viewed through the training webpage on the Iowa DOT website at [www.iowadot.gov/training/index.html](http://www.iowadot.gov/training/index.html). Simply click on the Web-based training link and follow the instructions. Always remember learning credentials need to be established before viewing any of the courses. If you previously set up your learning credentials but may have forgotten your password, contact Chris Anderson at 515-239-1819 or [Christie.anderson@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:Christie.anderson@dot.iowa.gov) to retrieve your password. Contact Anderson if you have any problems viewing any of the Web-based courses.

Certified technicians needing to recertify may also review course materials before testing for recertification by viewing the Web-based reviews available on the training site.

New WBT's that will be available this year include asset management, job hazard analysis, and the last two modules of the earthwork series on fill placement and embankments. Watch for these in the coming months.

Whether you want to expand your skills or review some techniques you may have forgotten, visit the training website and see what is available in Web-based format. The WBTs are easy to use from your own desk on your own schedule. Check out all the WBTs available to you.

## The WBTs available to you include the following courses.

- Advanced Self-Consolidating Concrete (SCC)
- Basic Construction Survey
- Bridge Inspection Inspector's Safety
- Change Orders, Claims, and Dispute Resolutions
- Chip Seals Best Practices
- Daily Diary (documentation training)
- Earth Materials as Engineering Materials
- Flagger Training
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Integrated Materials and Construction Practices for Concrete Pavement Series
- Maintenance of Drainage Features
- Maintenance of Traffic for Supervisors
- Maintenance of Traffic for Technicians
- PCC Construction
- PPE's and High Visibility Garments
- Pipe Inspection
- Plan Reading (individual courses)
- Preventive Maintenance and Pavement Preservation
- Roller Compacted Concrete
- Site Preparation – Earthwork Series
- Stormwater Control: Implementing Construction Site BMPs
- Superpave for Construction
- TCCC Bolted Connections
- Testing Self Consolidated Concrete (SCC)

Online Training

# The information age - nearly 75 years of computing at the Iowa DOT



The modern Iowa Department of Transportation is a data-driven, information-rich environment. But that wasn't always the case.

In the 1940s, computing at the Iowa State Highway Commission was in its infancy. Key punch and tabulating equipment were state of the art. Operators had to physically move wires on a plugboard to make the machines perform different jobs. Still, this was a vast improvement over manual compilation methods.

In the 1950s, a computer center was initiated, made up of employees whose positions were donated by other offices. Even then, no one envisioned that computers could not only do a large amount of calculations in a short time, but would also be capable of processing vast amounts of data.

The voracious appetite for data processing was just beginning. By 1976, the Iowa DOT had transitioned through several sets of IBM equipment. About this time, the concept of attaching terminals for "online" processing became a reality. In the late 1970s, dumb typewriter type terminals were installed in the district offices and attached via phone lines to the host computer. Cathode ray tube terminals were attached locally in 1981. This allowed the users to do some of their own processing without involving the computer operators.

As the number of terminals and users increased, so did the demand for software programs and data storage space. In 1982, Virtual Machine (VM) Operating System and Professional Office System (PROFS) were installed. VM allowed many users at various terminals to efficiently share the main computer resources. PROFS permitted electronic mail, scheduling, and document preparation in the office environment. At this time, online usage



of the computer was greatly expanded, allowing many users to share the processors concurrently.

Due to the backlog of application development, the Office of Data Processing created the automation support team concept in order to use the available technical expertise to assist users in finding solutions to their needs. A team was assigned to each division to assist them with their projects. This concept was fully implemented by November 1982. The creation of the distributed teleprocessing network in 1982 also enabled the various driver license stations and county courthouses throughout the state to have "real time" access to information maintained on the central computer. This was done by placement of computer processors at strategic locations throughout the state.

Six personal computers (PCs) were purchased in 1984. This increased to 64 the following year. This growth in individual computer power increased dramatically so that by 1988 the agency had more than 700 display terminals and nearly 300 PCs in operation statewide. The majority of the PCs were

connected to the host computer in the central complex.

In January of 1986 the first VAX/VMS midsize processor was installed on an IEEE network, which was the beginning of the DOT's usage of computer-aided drafting and design. Six Intergraph workstations and one plotter were strategically installed on the same network at the Ames campus and allowed users to run Microstation, a software package used to design roads, bridges, other structures and maps.

Innovations in data processing impact nearly every function at the Iowa DOT. From calculating the dispersion rate of salt brine on an icy highway to designing the bolt pattern on a bridge abutment, the Iowa DOT's Information Technology Division works in the background to support a consistent, reliable flow of information.

More than most other business units at the Iowa DOT, change is constant in the data processing world. Several reorganizations through the years brought new names to the offices performing data-related tasks, but the unwavering commitment to excellence by Iowa DOT employees remains consistent.



HyVee.

# Nutrition Notes

with Amy Clark



## Steps for winning weight loss

**M**any people start that ever-so-popular New Year's resolution during the first few weeks in January to help lose those unwanted pounds gained over the winter; however, it's estimated that nearly 70 percent of people who make resolutions abandon them within three months. Does this sound familiar, and if so, are you looking for ways to shed those unwanted pounds? Losing weight and getting in shape may seem like a lot of work, but these easy steps will help you stay the course.

**Set realistic goals.** Smaller weight loss goals are often better than a large unrealistic goal. We all understand the temptation to lose weight fast, but the fact is the most successful weight loss is one to two pounds per week. The slow rate of weight loss reflects small changes being made one at a time, which will encourage healthy habits long-term.

**Eat breakfast.** Eating breakfast means more energy, better nutrition and reaching a healthy weight. Breakfast eaters eat fewer calories at lunch and dinner. Try these powerful breakfast ideas: a bowl of oatmeal, fruit and yogurt, a whole grain bagel and skim milk, or toast and peanut butter.

**Don't skip meals.** Going too long between meals inevitably means overeating. People who skip meals are more likely to overeat later in the day. Refuel every three hours.

**Feel full on fewer calories.** Fruits and vegetables fill you up and are low in calories, fat-free and provide fiber, vitamins and minerals. Strive to fill your plate half-full of fruits and vegetables. Choose fruit or vegetables for snacks more often than chips, cookies and crackers.

**Think about what you drink.** Cutting back on soda can save you a lot of calories. Instead, drink lots of water. Water helps boost your metabolism and hydrates the body. Drink 10 eight-ounce glasses per day.

**Get active.** All exercise burns calories, so get moving. In fact, an extra 20 minutes of activity per day is all it takes to avoid weight gain. Do some form of activity every day, walk the dog, walk at the mall, take the stairs or do yoga. The key is to do something. Short on time? Even 10-minute bouts of exercise at a time are beneficial for your health. Take a quick, 10-minute walk in the morning and a 10-minute walk over the lunch hour.

**Dear diary.** Keep a food diary as part of your weight loss strategy. Journaling is one of the indicators of people who are successful in losing weight. Write down everything you eat and drink. This helps identify areas that need improvement. Maybe you munch late at night, drink too many regular sodas or overeat at lunch. There are websites available to track food intake and physical activity, such as [www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com) and [www.loseit.com](http://www.loseit.com). For smart phone users, these tools are available at no cost.

**Ditch "miracle" products.** If something promises results that sound too good to be true, they probably are. Skip pills or products that claim you will lose weight fast or without effort. Leading an active life and eating right is the most effective way to lose weight and keep it off.

*This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.*



# Take money matters into your own hands to avoid a personal fiscal cliff

**A**t the DOT, we are the lucky ones. We all have jobs and some level of stability in those positions. Yet, even with a steady stream of income, some of us have trouble with financial planning and seeing the light at the end of the financial crisis seems impossible. Dave Ramsey, nationally known financial planner and talk show host, sets out a list of “baby steps” to financial independence. The first three steps deal with establishing stability, the last four build a foundation for long-term security and wealth building.

For many people, accomplishing the first three steps requires a great deal of self-control and determination, but the steps can be accomplished, even in tough financial times. It is never too late to begin getting your financial house in order. Remember, if you are in financial trouble, you did not get into it overnight, nor will you get out of it quickly.

### **Step 1 - \$1,000 in an emergency fund**

According to Ramsey and many other counselors, emergency funds are quite possibly one of the most important things you can do for yourself financially. An emergency fund will give you the funds to take care of these expenses as they arrive, and help you stay out of debt.

### **Step 2 - Pay off debt in order of smallest balance to largest**

Some people refer to this as “snowflaking,” which refers to taking small amounts of money (snowflakes) and combining them into a larger amount (snowball). This concept has really taken off in the personal finance blogosphere and has even spawned several snowflake websites and networks where members share how they have applied the snowflaking principle to debt reduction, investing or any other applicable financial goals.

### **Step 3 - Three to six months of expenses in savings**

So you have an emergency fund, and you have paid off all your consumer debt ... what’s left? Extended savings. An emergency fund is great if you need new tires, need to fly cross-country to attend to a sick or dying relative, or need major car repairs. But what happens if you get laid off and are out of work for several months? Unemployment insurance will be of some assistance, but is not likely to cover all of your expenses.

Having three to six months of living expenses at your disposal will make it much easier for you to make it through an extended period where your income does not match your expenses.

### **Step 4 - Invest 15 percent of income in Roth IRAs and pre-tax retirement plans**

Now it is time to get your retirement funds in shape. Contribute the maximum amount you can, your target being contributions of a full 15 percent of your household’s gross (pretax) income. Do not include expected Social Security benefits in your retirement calculations.

### **Step 5 - College funding**

If you have children, you’ll have college to worry about. The earlier you start, and the more attention and funding you are able to give to it, the better off you and your children will be. To assist with this, use tax-advantaged accounts (such as 529 plans or education savings accounts) to their fullest extent. These plans have certain income limits and other restrictions and/or fees, so be sure to check the fine print before diving in.



### **Step 6 - Pay off your home early**

For most people, the mortgage payment is the single largest monthly payment they will ever have. Just imagine what you can do with that money when you have paid it off. Imagine how you will feel when you make that last payment. Round up every spare dollar you can find and put it toward your mortgage.

### **Step 7 - Build wealth and give**

With every bit of your debt zeroed-out and your savings tanks on the full mark, you can finally reach for the “pinnacle point” — that moment in your life where your money works harder than you do. What would it be like to exit the rat race and live entirely off the returns of your savings and investments? Find out: Invest more, and more and more. Invest more to continue to grow your wealth and set a new path for your children and grandchildren.

*(Information adapted from [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com) and [www.das.iowa.gov](http://www.das.iowa.gov)).*



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
**TROPHY CASE**



**T**he Iowa DOT was honored with seven Quality Management Asphalt (QMA) Awards from the Asphalt Paving Association of Iowa (APAI) at its 57th Annual Convention awards luncheon in January. According to APAI, the QMA awards recognize the great degree of work that goes into building a quality pavement on the primary and interstate systems. Smoothness, quality control, density results and physical appearance all go into the overall ratings for the projects submitted in these categories. The winning pavements are considered the best-of-the-best, indicating that they are not only smooth, but exhibit characteristics that produce long-lasting hot-mix asphalt pavements.

**Two-lane primary resurfacing**

Iowa 146, Mahaska/Poweshiek counties



(from left) Greg Kinser, APAI vice president; Jeff Steinkamp, Manatts Inc.; Doug McDonald, Iowa DOT Marshalltown construction; John Adam, Iowa DOT Highway Division

**Primary resurfacing – four-lane urban**

Iowa 28, Polk County



(from left) Greg Kinser, APAI vice president; Ray Svoboda, Grimes Asphalt and Paving Corp.; Dan Zeiman, Iowa DOT Des Moines construction; Matt Yonker, Grimes Asphalt and Paving Corp.; John Adam, Iowa DOT Highway Division

**Four-lane primary resurfacing - rural**

U.S. 30, Clinton County



(from left) Greg Kinser, APAI vice president; Steve Smithson, Iowa DOT Davenport construction; David Lange, Mathy Construction Co.; John Adam, Iowa DOT Highway Division

**Primary paving**

U.S. 69, Story County



(from left) Greg Kinser, APAI vice president; John Hart, Iowa DOT Jefferson construction; Steve Rooney, Manatts Inc.; John Adam, Iowa DOT Highway Division

**Trophy Case**, continued on page 9



## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TROPHY CASE

*Trophy Case, continued from page 8*

### Primary resurfacing – two-lane urban

Iowa 122, Cerro Gordo County

### Interstate resurfacing

Interstate 35, Cerro Gordo County

### Innovation in Construction Asphalt Paving Award

Interstate 35, Cerro Gordo County



(From left) Greg Kinser, APAL vice president; Ed Simon, Heartland Asphalt Inc.; John Adam, Iowa DOT Highway Division

### Professional



(from left) Lonie Mezera, Iowa Economic Development Authority; Bev Schmeling, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (retired); Renee Shirley, Iowa DOT; Lora Coffman,

Iowa Disability Determinations Services Bureau; Carrie May, Iowa Department of Administrative Services; Deb Shafer, Iowa DOT

The Iowa DOT allows a number of employees to attend a certified public manager (CPM) course through Drake University. One section of the CPM course included Deb Shafer from the Information Technology Division and Renee Shirley from the Office of Support Services. Their team's project related to fitness opportunities at Iowa rest areas. For this project, the team was recently awarded the

American Academy of Certified Public Manager's Askew Award. These awards are given to the CPM team within each state cohort with the most outstanding project. Shirley said, "Deb and I are very appreciative of the agency's support of our participation in the CPM program and want to share this news and also that we are proud to represent the DOT as leaders once again in this program."

### Personal



Talynn Griggs, 16, daughter of Kevin and Danielle Griggs, secretary 2 in the Office of Materials, recently won champion titles in rodeo and barrel racing. In August 2012,

Talynn was awarded the All-Around Cowgirl buckle at the Circle C Youth Rodeo in Alden. In February at the National Barrel Horse Association - Iowa awards banquet, Talynn was named the youth champion for her division.

Danielle Griggs is from a rodeo family, competing alongside both her sisters, Talynn and her niece. Griggs' sister, Deana, suffered a traumatic brain injury in May 2012 while competing in a barrel race, making Talynn's accomplishments even more special to the family. The family has only one goal for next year, to compete alongside each other.



David Wonders, son of Mary and Pete Wonders of Waukee, graduated from the Iowa Department of Public Safety 36th Basic Academy Nov. 26. The selection process started with more than 800 applicants trying for seven Iowa State Patrol slots at the academy. The five-month long academy was held at Camp

Dodge in Johnston. David was a recipient of the Ernie Baty Excellence in Physical Fitness Award. After graduation, David's first assignment was to the Capitol Complex and Terrace Hill. Pete is the highway maintenance supervisor at the De Soto and Perry shops.

*Trophy Case, continued on page 10*



## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TROPHY CASE



*Trophy Case, continued from page 9*

The 49th Annual Concrete Paving Workshop was held Feb. 6-8 in Des Moines. Four Iowa DOT projects received awards for the best Portland cement concrete pavements constructed in 2012 at the "Blue Ribbon" awards banquet.

### Traffic management category

Iowa 58 in Chickasaw and Fayette counties



(from left) Greg Mulder, Iowa DOT Office of Construction; Ron Loecher, Iowa DOT New Hampton construction; Tim Tometich, Manatts Inc.; Bob Schoenrock, Iowa DOT Office of Design

### Interstate category

I-380 in Black Hawk County



(front row, from left) Greg Mulder, Iowa DOT Office of Construction; Zachary Jolma, Iowa DOT New Hampton construction; Ron Loecher, Iowa DOT New Hampton construction; Elijah Gansen, Iowa DOT Office of Design; Tom Bonner, Cedar Valley Corp.

### Divided highway category

U.S. 20 in Sac and Calhoun counties

### and State road category

Iowa 13 in Sac County



(front row, from left) Greg Mulder, Iowa DOT Office of Construction; Bob Leon, Cedar Valley Corp.; Paul Flattery, Iowa DOT Office of Design

### Portland cement concrete overlay category

Iowa 58 in Chickasaw and Fayette counties



(from left) Greg Mulder, Iowa DOT Office of Construction; Ron Loecher, Iowa DOT New Hampton construction; Bob Schoenrock, Iowa DOT Office of Design; Kenny Alexander, Manatts Inc.

## Family happenings

### District 3

MaryBeth Banta



**Kay Scott**, construction technician in the Cherokee construction office, was honored with a retirement coffee Dec. 19 after 15 years of service. Friends, retirees and co-workers were on hand to give her a great send-off.

### Motor Vehicle Division

Diann McMillen



*Kim Snook, director of the Office of Driver Services, presents Ken Barker with an engraved clock for his 25 years of service to the Iowa DOT.*

**Ken Barker** retired Jan. 3, after 25 years of service. He began with the DOT in 1988 in the Corning maintenance garage. In 1990, he accepted a position as a driver's license examiner and moved to Carroll. Thank you to Ken for all of his dedicated years of service to the Iowa DOT.

### Operations and Finance Division

Sheri Anderson



*Lee Wilkinson (right), director of the Operations and Finance Division, presents Tim Nordholm with an engraved clock for his 24 years of service to the Iowa DOT.*

**Tim Nordholm** was honored at a retirement party Dec. 27. Nordholm spent his entire 24-year Iowa DOT career in equipment services where he was instrumental in specification development of the snowplow fleet and ensuring the Iowa DOT had the most up-to-date equipment. Lee Wilkinson, current Operations and Finance Division director and former maintenance manager in District 6, thanked Tim for his assistance when District 6 wanted to downsize their tractor fleet and at the same time get better equipment in the hands of employees.

### District 4

Brooke Bissell



*Troy Jerman, District 4 engineer, (left) presents Roy Guyer with his 20-year service award at the District 4 staff meeting Feb. 4.*

### District 1

Lori Wilkens



**Matthew Miller**, highway technician senior in the Jefferson garage, and his wife, Sarah, welcomed Liam Matthew Jan. 13. Baby Liam weighed 7 pounds, 10 ounces and measured 21.5 inches. Congratulations to the Millers.

### In memory

**Brian Miller Harpster**, lost his two-year battle with leukemia Jan. 23. Harpster was laid to rest Jan. 29 at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery near Van Meter. Harpster had worked as a construction technician senior in the Jefferson construction office from April 2008 to February 2012.

Survivors include his wife, Catherine Harpster of Jefferson; mother Hazel Harpster of Council Bluffs; father Douglas (Helen) Harpster of Halfway, Mo.; brothers: Bruce (Dilya) Harpster of Perry; Todd (Flo) Harpster of New York City, N.Y.; sister: Shannon (Joshua) Davis of Council Bluffs; son: Tyler Harpster of Forsythe, Mo.; six grandchildren; four step-children; and two brothers-in-law.

*Family happenings, continued on page 12*

**Family happenings**, continued from page 11

**Chuck R. Bergman**, 66, died Jan. 11. Bergman had worked at the Iowa DOT as an architectural technician 2 in the Office of Support Services for four years. He is survived by his wife, Cathy; son Ryan (Laura) and their three children; daughter Amy (Damon) Walker and their two children; daughter Colleen (Chris) Murphy and their two children and son Michael (Jessie). Also left to treasure Bergman's memory are two brothers, two sisters-in-law, one sister and many co-workers and friends.



**Donald "Don" Toms**, 70, of Nevada, passed away Monday, Jan. 28, at Story County Long Term Care in Nevada after a battle with frontotemporal dementia (Picks disease). Toms was born May 11, 1942, to Clyde and Margaret (McGinnis) Toms. He graduated from Ames High School in 1960 and attended Iowa State University and Luther College. On

June 13, 1964, he was united in marriage to Paula Griswold in Bettendorf. Toms was the information technology director of the Iowa DOT for 38 years, and served as a Story County Supervisor for five years. He was a member of Memorial Lutheran Church in Nevada and the Rotary Club of Nevada. He had served on the Story County Conservation Board and the Iowa Association of County Conservation Board. Toms enjoyed fishing, ISU sports, and was an avid bridge player.

He is survived by his wife Paula of Nevada; his sons, Donald Jr. "DJ" (Chris) of Council Bluffs and Marshal (Amber) of Huxley; his daughters, Lynda (Chip) Sotolar of St. Louis, Mo. and Elizabeth (Mark) Cahill of Nevada; two brothers; one sister and 10 grandchildren.



**Edward Joseph O'Connor**, 91, of Ames, died Sunday, Dec. 30, while a resident of Northcrest Health Care Center. Ed was born on Sept. 17, 1921, in Clarion, the son of William and Bertille (Broderick) O'Connor. He graduated from New

Hampton High School and Iowa State University with a degree in civil engineering. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean War, where he attained the rank of captain and was the recipient of the Bronze Star. He married Dorothy Kindred on Sept. 7, 1946. He worked as a civil engineer for the Iowa DOT and retired in 1985. Upon retirement, O'Connor worked for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, where he assisted with disaster reconstruction.

He is survived by one daughter, Pat Bywaters of Nevada; one brother, one sister, and many nieces and nephews.



**Dennis James Edwards**, 70, died Jan. 5, at his home in Milford. Edwards was born Aug. 28, 1942, to Mickey and Dorothy (Evans) Edwards. He graduated from Spirit Lake High School. Edwards was a lifelong Iowa Lakes area resident. He worked with the Iowa DOT for 36 years as an equipment operator in the Spirit Lake garage. He retired in July 2004.

Edwards is survived by daughter Tina Edwards of Okoboji; son Brian and grandson Austin of Arnolds Park; former spouse and good friend, Voanne Edwards; and two brothers and their families.



**Howard D. "Tiny" Witcombe**, 78, of Aurelia, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 30, at a Sioux City hospital. He was born on July 2, 1934, on the family farm near Quimby, Iowa, to John and Ethel (Lint) Witcombe. He graduated from Cherokee Wilson High School in 1952. Witcombe was married to RoJane B. Johnson on June 6, 1954, at the Covenant Church in Ceresco, Neb.

He had worked at Bauman's Bakery, Wright's Tree Service, worked on transformers for a power company in Beatrice, Neb., and Rausch Trucking before going to work for the Iowa DOT in 1956. During his years with the DOT, he worked highway construction, bridge inspection and retired in October 1996 as an assistant maintenance engineer. He had lived in Aurelia since 1971 and prior to this, in Cherokee for many years.

He is survived by his three children, Shelley (Don Bossung) Witcombe of Lincoln, Neb., Scott Witcombe of Cherokee, and Shane (Kim) Witcombe of Chandler, Ariz.; one grandson; two stepgrandchildren; one great-stepgrandson; two brothers; two brothers-in-law; two sisters-in-law; several nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

## Preschoolers visit Elkader garage

There are few things in life more fun than a room full of preschoolers. So, when Amy Breitsprecher, preschool teacher in Elkader, asked her dad, Brad, a highway technician associate, asked if she could bring her class to the Iowa DOT maintenance garage where he worked, how could he refuse?

Elkader shop employees pitched in to help with two tours in one day. They distributed coloring books, colors, a story book and other items related to the booster seat program.

Roger Burns, highway maintenance supervisor in Elkader, said, "Kids at this age are so fun, they were all very excited and loved getting into our equipment."



## Iowa DOT thanked for support



A few months ago Iowa DOTers gathered together to collect 65 boxes of care package items for Office of Support Services employees Steve and Teri Ehrich's son, Mick, an airman in Afghanistan. In January, when Mick (second from right) was home on leave recently, he presented (from left) Operations and Finance Division Director Lee Wilkinson, Office of Policy and Legislative Services Secretary Vicki Stamper, Ames Maintenance Secretary Kelly Bernady and DOT Director Paul Trombino III with commemorative items from his tour of duty to thank Iowa DOT employees for their generosity.

## Purchase a piece of Iowa DOT history

# 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary memorabilia



Order form available under current specials on DOTNET

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**March 15 - 29**





## Kudos!

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

To: Iowa DOT  
From: Nancy Klug, Perrysburg, Ohio

We are Iowa natives living in Ohio and make a number of trips back to Iowa throughout the year on Interstate 80. We just want to tell you that we think Iowa has the best rest areas. They are always very clean and kept up, and the art and sculptures at some of them are wonderful. We stopped at the new rest area on I-380 recently and it is great. Thanks to all who keep them up.

To: Iowa DOT snowfighters  
From: The Schutes, Lee's Summit, Mo.

We would just like to say thank you for all the hard work that you did from Dec. 20 to 22, 2012, to clear the roads. We traveled from Lee's Summit to Rapid City, S.D. via Interstate 29 and I-90. The roads were great and we had no problems. Thank you for helping us to travel safe.

To: Ankeny driver's license station staff  
From: MaryBeth Mc Lallen, Des Moines

I am writing to say thank you for the "red carpet" treatment you gave our son and his wife in early January. They are United States Marines who are in transit to their new duty station in Okinawa, Japan. They wanted to change their local address to ours on their driver's licenses. You fast-tracked them to the head of the line. They were made to feel very appreciated by your gesture – an unexpected surprise. As parents, we wanted to recognize you for your thoughtful actions. Thank you again.

To: Iowa DOT snowfighters  
From: Mike Moertl, Marne

I would like to commend and thank all of the snowplow drivers that worked through the night Dec. 20 from Council Bluffs to Marne exits on Interstate 80. I worked the night shift in Council Bluffs. When I got off at 6 a.m., I did not know if I could make it home. But the roads were plowed wide and very passable to make my way home, thank you very much for your response to this storm.

To: Iowa DOT  
From: Michael Nieland, Woodward

My wife and I were in an accident Dec. 30 on southbound Iowa 141 outside of Woodward. Due to the weather and blowing snow I could not see the road and went into a ditch. Our pickup was totaled. I want to commend one of your plow drivers for stopping and checking on us. Luckily, we were OK, but pretty shaken up. The plow driver was traveling southbound on Iowa 141 around 5:15 a.m. and stopped when he saw the pickup in the ditch. Please pass on our thanks to him. We realize many people don't pass on appreciation for what your snowplow drivers do. On days like that day, it is a really tough job. So please pass on to this driver our biggest thanks.

*(Editor's note: The driver who assisted the Nielands was Mike Hansen, a part-time employee from the Perry garage.)*

To: Mary Ford and Barb West, Office of Driver Services  
From: Missy Heineman, Dunkerton

I just wanted to pass along a huge thank you. My daughter is currently serving in the U.S. Navy. She was having some issues getting her Iowa driver's license renewed. I talked with Debra Homewood in the Waterloo office and she helped resolve the confusion.

In today's world, no one gets thanks enough for a job well done. That's why I'm making a point to make sure you realize what a super employee you have. Please pass along my appreciation to Debra.

*(Editor's note: Debra Homewood is a driver's license supervisor 2 in the Office of Driver Services.)*

To: Roxanne Seward, District 3 traffic technician  
From: Jim Clark, Denison Volunteer Fire Department

Thank you for following up on our concerns about signage at the U.S. 30, U.S. 59 and Iowa 141 intersection south of Denison. The new signs (put up in 2012) did not go unnoticed and I'm confident that we have done all that can be done to inform the traffic about the ramp speed for north- and eastbound drivers coming into town.

*(Editor's note: Clark and the Denison Volunteer Fire Department had a concern that the existing signage at this intersection was not bright enough to get motorists' attention to allow enough time to slow down when approaching a ramp. Seward worked with the Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety and Denison maintenance garage to replace the signs and increase safety in the area.)*

## Service awards

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for March 2013

### 40 years

**Mary Pane**, Driver Services

### 35 years

**Lyle Askelson**, Decorah garage; **Michael Brownlee**, Council Bluffs-north garage; **John Buttolph**, Design; **David Carter**, Information Technology Division; **Jay Larson**, Systems Planning; **Daniel Mackey**, District 2 Office; **Steven McMenamin**, Maintenance

### 25 years

**Michael Casper**, Elkader garage; **Brenda Differding**, Driver Services; **Jay Schrock**, Coralville garage; **Alice Welch**, Design

### 20 years

**Scott Gustafson**, Support Services

### 15 years

**Jeffry Brinkman**, District 1 materials; **Janice Gustoff**, Information Technology Division; **Jon Kleven**, District 2 materials

### 10 years

**David Anderson**, Iowa City DL station; **John Bennett**, Design; **Lon Lyphout**, Newhall garage; **Shane Powers**, Newhall garage; **Jared Raymer**, Sioux City construction; **Steve Seivert**, Bridges and Structures; **Mark Van Dyke**, District 5 Office

### 5 years

**Clint Ammenhauser**, Ottumwa garage; **Michael Chapin**, Council Bluffs-south garage; **Cheryl Ewinger**, Burlington DL station; **Nicole Fox**, Local Systems; **Ryan Fox**, Grimes garage; **Jarrod Green**, Information Technology Division; **Joseph Halbach**, Motor Vehicle Division; **Willie Hegna**, highway lighting maintenance; **Frank Heimbaugh**, Carlisle garage; **Tylor Husske**, Information Technology Division; **Russell Johnson**, Sioux City-Leeds garage; **Chad Lohrer**, District 6 Office; **Marcus McClannahan**, Des Moines DL station; **Dana McKenna**, Employee Services; **Paige Merrill**, District 2 maintenance; **Linda Narigon**, Research and Technology Bureau; **James Sailer**, District 3 Office; **Nicole Smalley**, Des Moines DL station; **Terisa Thomas**, Location and Environment; **Nicolas Vest**, Driver Services; **Nathan Wilson**, Transportation Data

## Personnel updates

Due to a change in the computer program used to process personnel actions, personnel updates are not available this month. We expect to be able to report these updates again in the near future.



# INSIDE

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

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**PLEASE RECYCLE THIS ISSUE**

District 1 .....	<b>Lori Wilkens</b> , Des Moines .....	515-261-9500
District 2 .....	<b>April Concepcion</b> , Mason City..	641-423-7584
District 3 .....	<b>MaryBeth Banta</b> , Sioux City....	712-276-1451
District 4 .....	<b>Brooke Bissell</b> , Atlantic .....	712-243-7620
District 5 .....	<b>Brenda Hadley</b> , Fairfield .....	641-472-6142
District 6 .....	<b>Sandi Byers</b> , Cedar Rapids.....	319-364-0235
Bridges and Structures .....	<b>Judy Whitney</b> , Ames .....	515-233-7917
Construction .....	<b>Nancy McMenamin</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1353
Contracts .....	<b>Mary Thompson</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1415
Design .....	<b>Vacant</b> , Ames.....	
General Counsel.....	<b>Chris Crow</b> , Ames.....	515-239-1509
Information Technology Division .....	<b>Colette Simpson</b> , Ames.....	515-233-7728
Local Systems .....	<b>Gail Nordholm</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1528
Location and Environment .....	<b>Susie McCullough</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1225
Maintenance.....	<b>Cindy Shipley</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1971
Materials.....	<b>Adriana Reyes</b> , Ames.....	515-239-1085
Modal offices .....	<b>Cathy Mather</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1140
Motor Vehicle Division.....	<b>Diann McMillen</b> , Ankeny .....	515-237-3250
Operations and Finance Division .....	<b>Sheri Anderson</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1340
Performance and Technology Division .....	<b>Lori Pflughaupt</b> , Ames.....	515-239-1646
Right of Way .....	<b>Tami Bailiff</b> , Ames .....	515-239-1216
Systems Planning .....	<b>Peggy Riecken</b> , Ames.....	515-239-1664
Traffic and Safety .....	<b>Stephanie Anderson</b> , Ames.....	515-239-1746

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**On the cover:** Downtown Des Moines' new Landmark pedestrian bridge.

**March I-Spy clue:** Four minus one

**February I-Spy solution:** The center aircraft had a heart on the nose.

# Iowa's Strategic Highway Safety Plan

*Join the plan to save more lives...*

**F**or all of us at the Iowa DOT, safety is a core function of why we do what we do every day. In the last two decades, the Iowa DOT has been a national leader in strategic planning for highway safety. Including stakeholders from all sides of highway safety has long been the model for reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries in our state. In 2006, the Iowa DOT, in cooperation with many other groups, developed the first Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP).

To continue this multidisciplinary approach, the Iowa DOT hosted members of the safety community at a workshop Jan. 23 to begin the updating of the state's new Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), modeled after the original CHSP.



*A group of students from Saydel High School was able to join attendees and discuss the program they have started to keep young drivers safe.*

A requirement of the federal government, a SHSP is a statewide-coordinated safety plan that provides a comprehensive framework for reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The SHSP strategically establishes statewide goals, objectives and key emphasis areas developed in consultation with federal, state, local and private sector safety stakeholders. In general, the plan is required to include:

- Consultation from a variety of stakeholders during the development process.
- Analysis and effective use of crash data.
- Engineering, enforcement, education and emergency services input, plus management and operations.
- Consideration of the safety needs of all public roads.
- Projects or strategy descriptions to reduce or eliminate safety hazards.
- Implementation and evaluation.

The SHSP workshop was attended by more than 150 safety professionals. The larger group was broken up into five emphasis areas: lane departure and roadside collisions; intersections; speed, impaired, unprotected driver behavior; older, younger and distracted drivers; and traffic safety culture.

Each group was guided through a series of Lean Six Sigma tools to develop the key focus items for the emphasis area. At the end of the day, the groups joined to report their findings.



*Kate Murphy (second from left), Iowa DOT facilitator for one of the small group sessions, engages the group in discussion.*

The next step in the planning process is to take the information from this workshop and develop specific steps to address the issues that were defined.

Jeremy Vortherms, state safety engineer in the Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety, said, "Gathering, analyzing and implementing ideas gained from a variety of perspectives is crucial to developing successful strategies that will save lives on Iowa's highways."



*Chris Albrecht from Iowa State University, reports back to the larger group related to the discussion held in the traffic safety culture session.*