

INSIDE

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2006



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ONE 2 ONE

WITH DIRECTOR NANCY RICHARDSON

As I embark on my second year as DOT

director, I am naturally both reflective of the past year and thinking about what is on the horizon this next year. I'd like to share some of these reflections and anticipations with you on the belief that they will help you keep your fingers on the pulse of the DOT.

Looking Back

Developing and managing the DOT's 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) consumed considerable time. With the much delayed passage of the federal transportation reauthorization bill in August 2005, my primary focus as I transitioned in September and assumed the director duties Oct. 2 was to work with the Iowa Transportation Commission to get the first five-year program in three years approved – mission accomplished Nov. 1!

FY 2006 has been a challenging year for the highway program. Due to lower than anticipated federal funding availability and much higher than normal increases in construction costs, we had to adjust the program by \$69M in March. Through it all, we made great progress on several major highway projects and continued to focus as much of our program resources as possible on preserving the existing system. We ended the FY 2006 program year within the adjusted budget. We also developed and secured Commission approval of an updated 2007 program in June,

requiring program adjustments of about \$118M from what had been approved the previous November.

The department is mandated by 2005 legislation to assess the needs of Iowa's three road systems (state, county and municipal), determine the sufficiency of current state road funds to meet those needs, and identify recommendations for future road funding needs (RUTF study). We must submit a report to the Legislature by Dec. 31, 2006. I have spent considerable time this past year reviewing data on the road systems' condition and needs; seeking and receiving input from county and municipal system representatives, various highway advocacy groups and other highway partners and stakeholders; and considering revenue needs and viable methods of addressing those needs.

I focused on developing an open, productive relationship with the Commission, the Iowa Railway Finance Authority Board, legislators and other external partners and stakeholders, such as contractors and consultants; modal transportation interests; and various project, area and issue advocacy groups. This has involved lots of meetings and speeches! Although this is very time-consuming and sometimes seems burdensome, I think it has paid dividends. It has given me the opportunity to share the DOT's view on matters and to develop relationships built on good communication, honesty and trust.

I got involved in a few specific business areas of the DOT where I thought some tweaking of

the way we do things would be value-added. Examples that come to mind are clarifying logo signing program materials; refocusing transit programming to Commission review and programming; reviewing Motor Vehicle Division forms and form letters for clarity and customer understandability; consolidating one-year and five-year transportation programming and rescheduling to a spring timeframe; adjusting some of the data used for the TIP development, such as how the cost of inflation is built into it and how revenues are projected for the program; and considering how abutting landowners figure into our excess ROW disposal process. I am very appreciative of all the staff support and responsiveness in those work areas and others where I "dug into the details." My suggestions and requests were always met with open minds and a can-do spirit, and I appreciate that.

Looking Forward

As always, the TIP development will play a big part in my life. We are midstream in development of the 2007-2011 TIP, with the 2007 year approved last June and the remaining four years out for comment now and due for Commission action Nov. 14. We will then shift to the new combined TIP development process next spring with approval of all five years (2008-2012) in June. This change in schedule means a lot of programming activity in a short time frame, but it should even out once we get to the new spring schedule. We continue to face financial pressures in the program as the loss of buying power due to hyper-inflation in the construction industry and tempered growth in revenues

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I-74 travelers anticipate a new look for future Mississippi River bridge

by Christina Andersen

After extensive public involvement with Quad Cities residents and local officials, a true arch bridge design is proposed for the new Interstate 74 Mississippi River crossing. The selection of a bridge type culminates a nearly six-year study effort by the Iowa and Illinois DOTs.

One of the driving forces behind selecting a bridge type was both state DOTs' understanding that the current twin-span I-74 bridge is more than a transportation structure to the local traveling public and surrounding communities; for many it's a representation of home. "The suspension bridges are very dear to this community; these bridges have become a landmark, and it was extremely important to consider the community members feelings toward the bridges throughout every aspect of the process," said Catherine Cutler, District 6 field services coordinator.

In a study from 1998, there were 150 traffic incidents along I-74 within the seven-mile project study area. Of these, 50 incidents were reported on the Mississippi River bridges. The narrow width of the present bridges causes severe bottlenecks when traffic incidents occur, resulting in inconsistent travel times through the corridor. The current study began

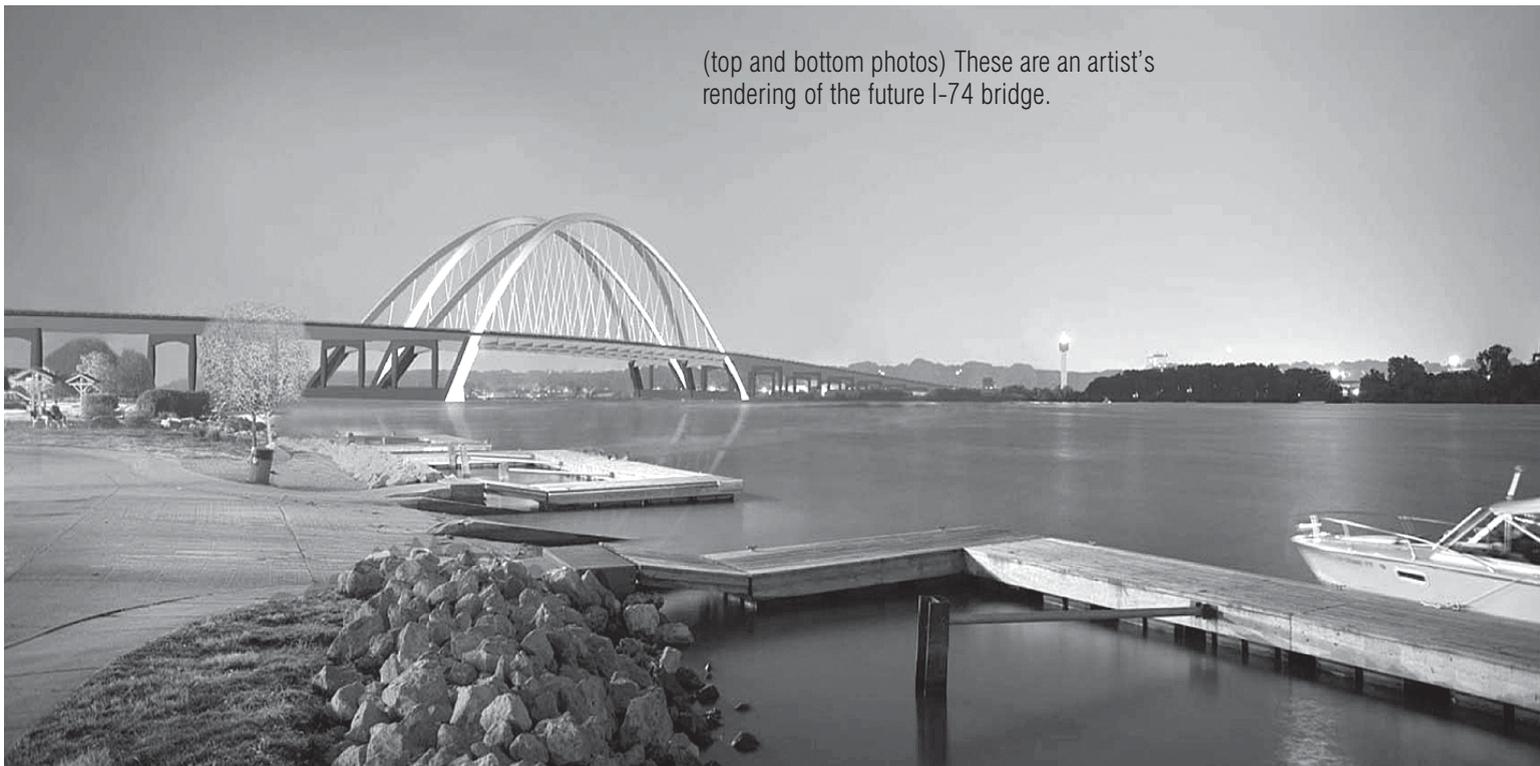


in 2000 and a conclusion was reached to replace the twin suspension bridges with a new, wider structure. The true arch design was selected and will be equipped with three traveling lanes, plus an auxiliary lane in each direction, which increases the capacity significantly over the current four-lane, twin span.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed in October 2003. Years of work go into a project of this magnitude. Environmental studies are conducted. Preliminary roadway and structural design work will include sizing for the river crossing and corridor mainline. As part of its

I-74 bridge, continued on page 9

(top and bottom photos) These are an artist's rendering of the future I-74 bridge.



DOT inspectors take to the rails

The railroads that run through Iowa link buyers and sellers of all kinds of commodities, as well as shuttling passengers through the southern part of the state.

Like our highway infrastructure, the tracks these trains run on require inspection and maintenance on a regular basis. Unlike the highway system, the rail system is owned by private businesses, and oversight is provided by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The railroads are responsible to maintain safety and inspect their operations according to federal regulations. The FRA periodically monitors the railroad's programs related to federal compliance in five elements: (1) track; (2) signals; (3) operations and practices; (4) motive power and equipment; and (5) the shipment of hazardous materials. For additional safety, 30 states including Iowa, choose to have inspectors on staff that are trained by the FRA in one or more of the five areas of responsibility.

The Iowa DOT employs two FRA-trained track inspectors. The FRA performs all inspections on the other four elements and employs its own track inspector, as well. Peggy Baer, director of the DOT's Office of Rail Transportation, says the supplemental DOT program in Iowa began out of necessity in the 1970s when track conditions were very poor and has been continued because nationwide safety data shows increased inspections lead to safer operations.

The two Iowa track inspectors, Lindon Bowen and Jeff Secora, spend four days each week monitoring the railroads for compliance with federal standards for track inspection. Bowen, a 27-year DOT veteran, worked on the Chicago and Northwestern for 10 years prior to his state service. Secora has 16

years with the state and previous experience with the Milwaukee, Soo Line and CP railroads, for a total of 16 years.

As track inspectors, Bowen and Secora enforce FRA standards that vary by track type, tonnage and other characteristics. Each railroad employs its own inspectors for day-to-day operations, while Bowen and Secora provide periodic checks of the railroads' inspection practices to make sure they are in compliance with federal requirements.

In Iowa there are five classes of track, with class 1 being the lowest speed because of rail condition, and class 5 being the highest speed with the strongest rail. "In other parts of the country there are classes 6-9 that have much higher standards, but we don't have any of that rail in Iowa," Bowen explained.

Bowen says the DOT relies on a good working relationship with each of the Iowa railroads to keep the trains rolling. "In general we have good relationships with the railroads here in Iowa," said Bowen. "While our jobs are different, the railroads' inspectors have the same goals we do, to keep the trains running as safely as possible."

A typical work day for Bowen or Secora would start at a rail yard somewhere in Iowa, hitching a ride in a "high-rail" truck (a pickup truck with equipment to allow it to run on railroad tracks) with a railroad inspector. The two would then use this specialized vehicle to drive to a crossing, lower the wheels that grip the rail and proceed to drive the truck down the rail, inspecting the track structure along the way.

Having a high-rail truck on the track requires coordination with the railroad dispatcher to ensure no trains are allowed on the section of track being inspected. Detailed time and location information is relayed by radio between the inspector and dispatcher until the inspection is complete.

There are several elements to a safe track, including the integrity of the ties, proper amount of ballast and a solid road bed. Bowen said, "With a shortage of oak and environmental issues with the disposal of old railroad ties, several of the railroads are switching from wooden to concrete ties." He says while these concrete ties have proven to work

Track inspectors, continued next page



DOT inspector Lindon Bowen (leaning) and Union Pacific Railroad inspector Jeff Payne at work on the main line south of Des Moines.

Track inspectors, continued from previous page



Bowen noting a needed repair on his handheld computer.

well in drier climates, Bowen worries that our fairly wet ground will cause abrasion of the concrete ties at a relatively rapid rate. But Bowen said as concrete mixes are adjusted and technology changes to adapt to wetter climates, he sees railroads using concrete ties far into the future.

Another issue in Iowa that may not occur to the average person pondering railroad safety is mud. "Fouled ballast" is a condition where the rock around the ties that provides stability becomes muddy. Lack of drainage may cause this rock to wash away and take some of the protective structure of the rail bed with it. These washouts can cause one side of the rail to drop or shift too far from the other rail. Very minimal shifting can cause a train to derail. With Iowa being in the center of a region that carries the highest tonnage of coal and grain, this is a major concern---one that Bowen, Secora and the railroad inspectors deal with on a regular basis. "Water drainage is one of the most important keys to sound track structure," explained Bowen.

When a defect is found during an inspection, either the DOT inspector or railroad inspector can issue a "slow order" or go as far as closing that section of track for repairs. A slow order reduces the speed at which trains can travel on that portion of track until repairs are made. "This is an incentive to the railroad to repair this track quickly. Running the trains at a slower speed impacts schedules, which impacts the railroad's bottom line," said Bowen.

Sometimes the need for safety and the railroad's desire to keep a rail line in operation cause decisions made by the inspectors to be unpopular. Bowen added, "The railroad inspectors have a tough job; they have to make sure the track is safe to run on, but at the same time they are under pressure to keep the trains moving. I understand the stress they are under, but I can't let that influence what I need to do."



"Fouled ballast" can be a problem when the support system of a rail bed is washed away or covered in mud.



UP inspector Jeff Payne (left) and DOT inspector Lindon Bowen (right) measure the distance between track in the UP rail yard in Des Moines.

In addition to inspecting track outside a rail yard, Bowen and Secora are also charged with looking over the track used to switch cars inside a rail yard, where Bowen says many derailments occur. "Most of these are minor derailments and many don't need to be reported to the FRA. But if we have a rail yard with several derailments, Jeff and I will increase our inspections."

Form and function highlight new bridge in Keosauqua



The cozy town of Keosauqua, the name being an American Indian term for “Big Bend,” relies on the rich heritage of the Des Moines River and a sense of nostalgia for a simpler time for its identity. The main bridge over the river on Iowa 1 near the center of town was built in 1873 as a Rainbow Arch Bridge. It was replaced in 1938 as a high-truss bridge using the original piers. By the late 1990s, it was apparent the aging bridge was in need of major repairs, if not complete replacement. The bridge has an extremely low federal sufficiency rating of 17. (A bridge with a sufficiency rating of 50 is considered to be a priority for replacement.) In 2000, the DOT, along with local community leaders, began a series of meetings to find the most beneficial and cost-effective option for the bridge project, since the structure had been placed on the state’s list of targeted projects requiring specific and immediate attention.

From the very beginning it was clear to DOT employees working on the project that the citizens of Keosauqua and Van Buren County were vitally interested in the future of their bridge. Nearly 100 people in this town of just more than 1,000 attended the first public information meeting in August 2000. The sentiments expressed included concern over the ability to maintain traffic on the bridge during construction due to the 18-mile detour that would be needed if the bridge were completely closed; a need to preserve the historic nature of the bridge; and inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the bridge.

Kimball Olson of the Office of Bridges and Structures constructed a scale model to show citizens what to expect from the new bridge in Keosauqua. This image shows the touchstone that will be constructed with stone from the old bridge.

A second meeting in January 2001 addressed repercussions if an Iowa 1 bypass of town was developed. This meeting’s participants discussed the city’s ability to take jurisdiction of the structure and repair it. The majority in attendance supported replacement of the bridge near its current location, with no detour.

Discussion at these meetings concluded a “no-action” alternative (to complete only seasonal maintenance and minor repairs) would not address the degree of deterioration and design deficiencies of the current bridge. Rehabilitation of the existing structure was also ruled out because of the cost to remove the lead-based paint on the current bridge and the fact that the bridge would need to be completely shut down to make the repairs. Due to the distance to another bridge over the Des Moines River, an 18-mile detour would need to be established, jeopardizing emergency response and adding an unreasonable amount of time to school bus routes.

Once it was decided a new bridge was the option to pursue, location became the focus. Upstream or downstream, bypass or no bypass, the final decision was to locate the new bridge just to the upstream side of the existing structure so the old bridge could remain functional during construction of the new bridge.

When the public meeting process was complete, DOT staff from the District 5 Office, including Ingrid Teboe and Pete Tollenaere, joined Kimball Olson and Stuart Nielsen from the Office of Bridges and Structures in meetings with community members to discuss design options. Since the existing bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places, any design would have to be approved by the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). Assistance with this process was handled by the Office of Location and Environment’s (OLE) Judy McDonald. To add another element to the design, the land at one end of the bridge is owned by the Iowa Department

Keosauqua bridge, continued next page

Keosauqua bridge, continued from previous page

of Natural Resources (Lacey Keosauqua State Park), and the other end is owned by the city and serves as a city park. Federal guidelines regarding the process of developing structures on this 4F land were handled by OLE's Ken Toomsen. Keith Cadwell's team from the Office of Design assisted with development of the bridge approaches and roadway work.

The easy part was the decision to replace the four-span, high-truss bridge with a 680-foot by 32-foot haunched, steel-girder structure with 10-foot sidewalk on the upstream side and a five-foot sidewalk on the downstream side. Adding the features that would make this structure "fit" with the rest of the city landscape and adhere to SHPO guidelines, all within the DOT budget, was more of a challenge.

Working with a dedicated group of community members, Nielsen and Olson came up with the concepts of decorative handrail, molded and colored concrete piers shaped to accent the natural area, and accommodation for future lighting by the city. Teboe said, "The first time Kimball brought the design concepts to the meeting and explained the symbolism of the elements, people could see this bridge fitting into the tourism aspect of Van Buren County and being used in the marketing of the local area."

"The community members were very glad to see the design accommodations made to fit the historic nature of Keosauqua. I think they had a fear that we would put in a very modern concrete bridge that wouldn't fit into their community," said Teboe. "At first we started with a wish list and everyone wanted the moon and stars, but once we set down the budget, the community members understood that we had to prioritize the elements we wanted to see in this project. This is a rural community that has a great sense of practicality and working within a budget."

One of the more practical aspects of building a new bridge was the utility location. Currently, utilities are run in the old bridge structure. The utility companies looked at boring holes in the river bed to run their cables, but with the extremely hard bedrock, that option was quickly discarded. The utility companies worked with Keith Cadwell from Design, District 5 Utility Coordinator Bonnie Ford and Bridge Designer Stuart Nielsen to make the new structure design as functional for housing the utilities as it will be beautiful.

Construction began last October with many of the townspeople watching progress from the walkway on the existing bridge as contractor AM Cohron and Son, Inc. from Atlantic started to work. "We



(from left) Ingrid Teboe, District 5 field services coordinator, Keosauqua Mayor Kevin Hranicka and Pete Tollenaere, assistant District 5 engineer watch construction from the old bridge.

have lots of sidewalk superintendents in the community," joked Keosauqua Mayor Kevin Hranicka. From the DOT, Resident Construction Engineer Jeff Johnson, Construction Technician Supervisor Marv May, Construction Technician Senior Tom McKay and Construction Technician Jo Ann Glover were in charge of the project.

Since Van Buren County relies on tourism as a major source of income, the DOT worked with local officials to ensure the bridge and surrounding roadways would be accessible for all festivals and events in the area. Teboe said, "This process was very much a collaborative effort between the DOT and local community from the very start."

The new bridge, which is scheduled to open to traffic in late November, will eventually incorporate stone elements from the old bridge in a "touchstone" constructed on the outside of one of the sidewalks. Once the old bridge is demolished, there are also plans to use parts of the old stone piers in a gazebo in the city park.

This bridge touchstone and the other elements brought into the design of this project to make it fit more naturally into the environment have placed it among the top "context sensitive" designs for 2006. At their Oct. 28 meeting, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials named this bridge project one of four "notable practices" out of 62 entries from 31 states in its annual "Context Sensitive Solutions" competition.

"We've been very pleased with the process and we're looking forward to the completed bridge serving this community and the region for many years to come," said Mayor Hranicka.

Motor vehicle officers raise money for Special Olympics

The team at Motor Vehicle Enforcement (MVE) is serious about raising money to support the Iowa Special Olympics. Since early September MVE officers have participated in three events, raising more than \$19,000.

From Sept. 8-10 Sergeant Rod Rhiner spent time perched on scaffolding in front of the Jordan Creek Wal-Mart store in West Des Moines. Volunteers on the ground collected more than \$4,000 over three days. Officers who volunteered to collect donations were Mark Loney, Dean House, Kelly

Owens, Donna Kelso, Matt Mardesen, Randy Rice, Steve Robinson, Jason Maahs, Ryan Ridout, and Ben Slife.

The fourth annual World's Largest Truck Convoy for Special Olympics was held Sept. 16 beginning at Southridge Mall in Des Moines and traveling around the city. Motor vehicle officers joined other law enforcement officers from Polk and Warren counties and the Department of Natural Resources in traffic control for the 80-plus vehicles involved in the convoy. The group was greeted back at Southridge Mall by a cheering crowd of more than 40 Special Olympics athletes. This event raised more than \$11,000 for the athletes.

Another officer took to a Wal-Mart roof Oct. 13-15 when Captain Dean House perched on the Windsor Heights store while volunteers collected more than \$4,000 in donations. MVE volunteers at this event were Rod Rhiner, Dick Bassett, Joe Farnsworth, Jason Maahs, Randy Rice, Steve Robinson, Dan Hostetler, Brian Westergaard, Terry Aldridge, Matt Mardesen, Ben Slife, Ryan Ridout, and Chris Moline. House's wife Ruth and sons, Ian and Jesse, and two of their friends were on the ground collecting donations with volunteers from several other agencies.



(back row) Rod Rhiner, Mark Loney, Chris Boswell, Steve Robinson, Gene Page, Roquel Oldfield, Cal Enfield, Ron Caudle, Jason Heintz, and Mike Winfrey (Front row) Gary Kretlow, Darren Reid, Glenn Goode, Joe Farnsworth, Kyle Tigges, and Brian Smith



I-74 bridge, continued from page 3



ngoing outreach, the project team held several public meetings in Moline and Bettendorf to share development mile-

stones. "Consensus is key. Keeping all the varying interests involved in the decision-making process has made the beginning stages of this project a great success," said Tammy Nicholson, project manager.

Much of 2004 was spent completing the tasks necessary to select a preferred alternative upon which to prepare the final EIS. The design-year traffic forecast, used as a basis for sizing the future I-74 Mississippi River bridge, was extended to 2035, with help from the local metropolitan planning organization. The DOTs also worked with the U.S. Coast Guard to determine a navigation channel opening acceptable for the main span of the bridge. The product of their research resulted in a bridge structure with six through-lanes, two auxiliary lanes, and full-width shoulders. The structure will be adequately engineered to accommodate future growth estimated at approximately 99,900 vehicles daily by the year 2035.

Most of 2005 was spent preparing for approval of the final EIS, continuing work on preliminary roadway and structural design, preparing interchange justification reports, refining corridor-wide implementation strategies and project costs, and developing a visually pleasing design concept.

Cutler said the community's attachment to the suspension bridges made proposing a new bridge design concept a delicate task. It was important to balance structural demands with aesthetics that will be pleasing to the traveling public and, as with all DOT projects, be ever mindful of costs. "In discussing the project with the locals involved, their anticipation is that the new bridges meet or exceed the grandeur of the existing ones. I believe the proposed basket-handle, true-arch, twin bridges will more than fulfill those expectations," said John Clute, Office of Bridges and Structures.

Cutler said the team working on the bridge hopes to have a final EIS submittal by spring 2007, and a record of decision from the Federal Highway Administration sometime that summer.

Food is needed all year long

For most of us the upcoming holidays are a time of good food and good friends. But for some, the pressure of not having enough food for your family is magnified by the season. As you'll see by the thank-you notes posted below (just a sample of those received), the central complex food drive held last spring was a huge success. These donations, as generous as they were, can't last forever. Please consider contacting your local food pantry to share your holiday spirit in the coming months.

Thank you for the generous cash donation and four boxes of groceries to the Radcliffe Food Pantry from the DOT Food Drive. The donation will go a long way in helping people get needed supplies and food.
Radcliffe Food Pantry

Thanks to the DOT for the generous donation of food and money. Our finances have been lower this past year, so this was needed.

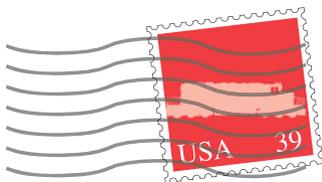
*Collins-Maxwell Food Pantry
Pat McCauley, President*

Thank you so much for organizing the DOT food drive for our food pantry. We are able to help so many more families when we have generous donations!

*Colo Community Food Pantry
Larry Clatt Sr.*

Thank you for your generous contribution of groceries and the check for \$625 for the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry from your recent Food Drive. Loaves and Fishes could not survive without the assistance of generous contributions such as yours. Our needs have grown in the past year and your support will be instrumental in keeping Loaves and Fishes supplied in the upcoming year.

*Wilma Bucklin, Secretary
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry
Roland and Story City*



Kudos!

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

To: Newman Abuissa, District 6 staff engineer
From: Gary Tigges, Johnson County Secondary Roads Department

Johnson County project FM CO 52(67) sand road regrade and PCC paving has been substantially completed and the road was reopened to through traffic Sept. 28. As sign lead person for Johnson County, I would like to express my appreciation for the job the Iowa DOT and contractor personnel performed in maintaining the detour signage located east and west of Sioux Avenue on U.S. 6. In the midst of our own widening and resurfacing project on U.S. 6 at the east edge of Iowa City, it had to have been very difficult to keep these signs in place throughout the summer as traffic was moved from lane to temporary lane and back again during the construction process. Every time we performed our drive-through inspections of the project signage, those signs were up and in place, guiding motorists as intended in our traffic control plan. Please pass my thanks to the DOT and contractor personnel responsible for seeing that those signs were maintained in such an outstanding fashion. I know that people in those positions get a lot of criticism from motorists during the construction season and little praise in comparison, so I would like to thank them for a job well done.

*(Editor's note: The inspector on this job was **DJ Carlson** from the Davenport construction office. The contractor was L.L. Pelling, Co., Inc. of North Liberty. **Travis Nitcher** and his crew at the **Oakdale garage** assisted with signage.)*

To: Steve Gent, Office of Traffic and Safety director
From: Donna Kilian, Los Altos Hills, California

This letter is to note the exceptional and kindly behavior of **Ron Kiner**, who graciously helped me last week as I was traveling through Iowa. My tire blew out on I-80 east of Des Moines. Needless to say, this was a harrowing experience, and waiting at the side of the road for the auto club to show up was quite unnerving. Ron Kiner stopped to see what had happened and waited with me. When it became apparent that the auto club was quite late, he offered to help me change the tire, since it was getting dark. He did the lion's share of the work. As a final courtesy, Ron drove behind me to the next exit so I could get off the road for the night. Ron's help and courtesy were above and beyond the call of duty and I really appreciate that. It's heartwarming to see that you have such a Good Samaritan working on your staff.

*(Editor's note: **Ron Kiner** is a sign fabricator 2 in the sign shop.)*

To: Nancy Richardson
From: Mike Ralston

This summer my wife and I accompanied our 17-year-old son to the west Ames driver's license station. He had received a citation for not making a complete stop at a stop sign. I want to tell you how wonderful your staff is at the Ames office. There is a woman there who greets customers as soon as they walk in the door. My wife had raved about her, but until I saw it for myself, I couldn't believe it. She is cheerful, helpful and simply fantastic. The officer who spoke with our son was also fantastic. She helped our son, and my wife and I have even been driving better since we spoke to her. Congratulations on such terrific people. They really represent Iowa well and are simply the best public servants I've seen.

*(Editor's note: The greeter duties at the Ames DL station are rotated between many staff members. **Renee Devine** was the driver's license examiner who assisted the Ralstons.)*

To: Ruth Skuzacek, Office of Motor Carrier Services
From: Robbin Wiley and Shelley Passehl, J.J. Keller & Associates, Neenah, Wisc.

Please allow us a few moments to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts of several individuals in your office. **Kim Nobiling, Karen Smith** and others have worked hand-in-hand with us to transition vehicles from Integris Metals to Joseph T. Ryerson and Sons, Inc. over the past few weeks. What we thought would be a simple, clean process ended up being much more involved than anyone anticipated. Everyone in your office has bent over backwards to assist us and we are very grateful for everything you have done. We work with many different states and many different offices daily and know firsthand how challenging that can be at times. Many thanks for the excellent customer service!

*(Editor's note: **Kim Nobiling** is an executive officer 1 and **Karen Smith** is a public service executive 1 in the Office of Motor Carrier Services.)*

To: DOT Web site
From: Peter Paeth, Pleasantville

Thank you for the historical photos section of your Web site. The photos are awesome!

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continue. The Commission is considering a 2007-2011 program that over-programs over the five years by about \$90M based on today's revenue and cost projections. If the financial pressures continue unabated, the Commission will make adjustments when they approve the 2008-2012 TIP next June.

My work will continue on the RUTF study effort over the next couple of months completing the study, finalizing and submitting the report, and laying the foundation for support of the report's conclusions by those who will receive it and those with an interest in it. After the report is submitted, we expect there will be a focus on the road systems' funding needs during the 2007 legislative session. My job is to continue to explain the report and advocate for support of its conclusions by the Legislature.

Internally, I will continue to look for ways to improve the ways we do our business. I also intend to focus on getting to know you better. Much of my first year was focused on building relationships with those we work with who are outside the agency. As a new director, not well-known to many of them, I thought it was important to develop and grow those relationships. In my second year, I'd like to focus on developing and growing my relationship with DOT employees.

Even though I am a 24-year DOT employee, there are many of our 150+ work sites I have never visited and many of you I have never met. Time will not permit me to get every where and meet everyone in one year, but my "New Year's resolution" as I embark on my second year as DOT director is to try!

Starting this winter, I will set aside time each month for work unit/staff visits. I will work around the seasonal work requirements and daily scheduling issues with which many of you deal. My visits to garages, driver's license stations, engineering field offices, weigh scales, and administrative and program offices are intended to be informal, relaxed events where I can see and experience a bit of "your world" and share with you any information in which you might be interested. If it works best for you to work a visit from me in with some other event you're planning (safety meeting, office potluck, etc.), just let me know and I'll see if I can accommodate your schedule.

Thanks for all your support during my first year. I am honored to be DOT director and work for and with you on behalf of Iowans. I look forward to my second year as director and hope I have the opportunity to see you sometime during the year.

Nancy

19th Annual Tacos for Tots to be held Nov. 20



Mmmmm. Tacos!

'Tis the season for...*tacos!* The 19th Annual Tacos for Tots will be held at the First United Methodist Church, 201 E. Nebraska Ave. in Algona, Monday, Nov. 20 from 5-7:30 p.m.

Noe Villarreal, an equipment operator in the Swea City shop, has been cooking up tacos to raise money for underprivileged kids since he and his family were helped by strangers nearly two decades ago. All the money raised at the event will be used to buy Christmas presents for kids who might otherwise not have any.

"This year I asked one of the fourth grade teachers to have her kids write down what Christmas means to them," said Villarreal. "I did that about 10 years ago and about 99 percent of the letters mentioned presents. We'll see if that changes this year."

With last years' record 185 pounds of meat cooked for more than 1,850 tacos, Villarreal has moved the event to provide more parking for those who attend. "We've had a really great turnout and I expect we'll continue to grow this year," he said.

For more information on the event or how you can help, call Villarreal at the Swea City shop at 515-272-4295 or at home at 515-272-4751.



Trophy Case
Recent DOT Awards

I-380 clean-up cleans up at awards ceremony

The Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operators' (ISOSWO) board of directors has chosen Keep Linn County Beautiful's I-380 clean-up program to receive that group's "Outstanding Beautification Program" award. The award was presented at the ISOSWO fall conference awards luncheon Oct. 10 in Dubuque. This long-running event is organized by Jerome Steward, engineering office assistant 1 in Cedar Rapids maintenance, working with the Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency and KDAT radio. As you read in the July edition of INSIDE, the April 24 event saw 540 volunteers collect more than 300 bags of trash.

Motorcycle safety brochure judged best in the U.S.



Each year the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) selects a safety publication for its "Outstanding Media" award. Office of Driver Services employee Toni Kerkove nominated the Iowa Safety Management System (SMS) Motorcycle Task Force's "Share the Road" publication for the award. In 2005, there were more than 35,000 of these brochures distributed at presentations for driver education classes, motorcycle classes for novice and experienced riders, older driver seminars, and various motorcycle group activities. The SMS Motorcycle Task Force is comprised of members that share a common theme - motorcycle safety. "As the

demands upon the rider education community grow, MSF desires to acknowledge those outstanding contributors whose accomplishments exemplify the spirit and intent of rider education," said MSF President Tim Buche. "We're pleased to recognize the Iowa SMS Motorcycle Task Force as one of this year's true leaders and role models in motorcycle safety, education and public awareness."

Griggs' barrel-riding baby



Danielle Griggs, secretary 1 in the Office of Construction, has a little barrel racer on her hands. Ten-year old daughter Talynn competed for the first time at the National Barrel Horse Association's Iowa State Championship Show held in Mason City Aug. 11-13. Talynn competed in the youth division of the barrel racing competition against 120 other youth ages 18 and under. Talynn and her horse, Smoke, won third place in the Fourth Division in the Saturday Go round, which qualified her to run in the Short Go. Only 40 qualified to compete in the Short Go. In that round, she placed third again. She came home with a trophy, halter, saddle pad, grooming bag, and a nice check. Danielle and her sister, Deana (Williams), both competed in the open division of the show.

Make high-quality leadership decisions

The ability to make quality decisions is the hallmark of a good leader. Use these tips to improve your decision-making skills:

- **Share the responsibility.** Avoid the trap of micromanaging every decision. If one of your employees can handle the decision, delegate it.

- **Farm the decision.** Establish whether you must consult anyone else and discover the time frame you have to make the decision. Define the problem and place it in a wider business context. When you are clear about what you are doing and why, you will be able to communicate your reasoning.

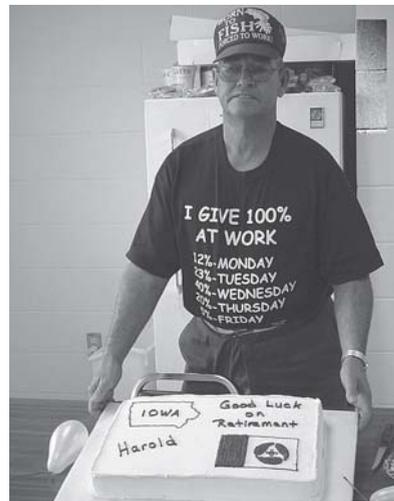
- **Consult others.** Encourage stakeholders to give feedback and highlight weaknesses in your plans. Involve people with opposing views and differing perspectives; they may arrive at solutions you would never hit upon.

- **Monitor the outcome.** Track your decisions' effects. You will learn if fresh problems erupt down the line, and you can measure success. Over time, you will spot patterns in your decision-making process that will allow you to make better and more dependable choices.

(Reprinted with permission from *Communications Briefings*, October 2006. Adapted from "How to Improve Your Decision Making," Personnel Today, www.personneltoday.com)

Family happenings

District 6
Jeanne Heeren



Harold Risner retired Sept. 29 after nearly 32 years with the DOT. At the beginning of his career, Risner was an equipment operator at the Blairstown garage under the supervision of Earl Gordon. Risner finished his DOT career at the Newhall garage where his coworkers, family and friends held a retirement coffee for him on his last day. Outside the DOT, Risner enjoys fishing, boating and working on his farm. He plans to take a vacation now that he has time, as well as continuing the pursuit of his hobbies. We wish Harold the best in his retirement.

Thank you

I would like to thank each of you for your generosity and kindness during my lengthy illness both before and after my surgery. Each of your hospital visits, cards and phone calls lifted my spirits to help me through a very difficult time. I feel truly blessed to work with so many wonderful and caring people. Thanks to all.

Dianne Eppert
Iowa DOT receptionist/
switchboard operator

I would like to thank everyone who donated leave time or sent cards and well wishes to me for my surgery and recovery. My shoulder is feeling great, but my hand is still numb. My handwriting with my left hand is not improving at all, but I'm feeling great otherwise. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

Dawn Westrum
Employee Services

In Memory



Wilbur Whaley "Shorty" passed away Friday, Sept. 15. He was a longtime equipment operator senior at the Council Bluffs-north garage. Whaley began with the DOT on April 17, 1967. After a brief leave to serve in the Navy, he returned to the DOT in 1971. He is survived by his wife, Edith, and stepsons, Kyle and Cory.

Personnel Updates

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for Aug. 25 to Sept. 21, 2006

New Hires

Don Huntrods, equipment operator, Grimes garage; **Larry Lesle**, motor vehicle officer, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Laura Rieck**, administrative assistant 2, Driver Services; **Jason Schnorenberg**, motor vehicle officer, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Brian Smith**, motor vehicle officer, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Chad White**, motor vehicle officer, Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Rebekah Williams**, clerk-advanced, Motor Carrier Services

Promotions

Kyle Bennett, from design technician to design technician specialist, Design; **Joel Bryan**, from bridge inspector 1 to bridge inspector 2, Bridges and Structures; **Nicholas Sailsbury**, information technology specialist 3 to information technology specialist 4, Information Technology Division

Transfers

Terry Aldridge, motor vehicle officer, within Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Austin Budden**, motor vehicle officer, within Motor Vehicle Enforcement; **Steven Hill**, equipment operator, from Carlisle garage to Altoona garage; **Lance Holmes**, equipment operator, from Boone garage to Grimes garage; **Carmen Homrighausen**, equipment operator, from Davenport garage to Tipton garage; **Dennis Kimsey**, equipment operator, from Altoona garage to Carlisle garage; **Rodney Lilly**, equipment operator, from Donnellson garage to Gowrie garage; **Alvin Treloar**, from engineering technician supervisor to land surveyor, District 1 Office; **Ardella Walker**, equipment operator, from Altoona garage to Grimes garage; **Aaron Wiegand**, equipment operator, from Grimes garage to Grinnell garage

Retirements

John Adams, survey party chief, Design; **Lee Benfield**, transportation planner 4, District 6 Office; **Gary Zeimen**, construction technician senior, Cherokee construction; **Marcia Ziel**, driver's license clerk, Marshalltown DL station

Service Awards

Information supplied by the Office of Employee Services for November 2006

35 Years

Marcia Fischer, Driver Services; **Bruce Jacobson**, Storm Lake maintenance; **Mike Jensen**, District 4 Office; **Thomas Vaughan**, Systems Planning

30 Years

Paul Hockett, Materials; **Barbara Slagle**, Information Technology Division; **Bryan Spanier**, Fairfield materials

25 Years

Daniel Grote, Sheldon garage; **Colette Simpson**, Information Technology Division; **Bradley Steinhart**, Washington garage; **Melvin Tesch Jr.**, Spencer garage; **Joanne Wade**, Cedar Rapids DL station

20 Years

Robert Boyer, Rock Valley garage; **Mark Callahan**, District 2 Office; **Susan Daniels**, Finance; **Steve Duitsman**, Waverly garage; **Tammy Hamilton**, District 5 maintenance; **Christen McClain**, Des Moines construction; **Todd Siefken**, Materials

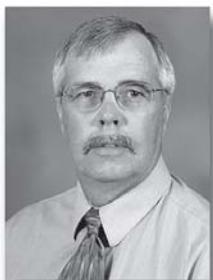
15 Years

Jeffrey Cunningham, Des Moines maintenance; **David Groves**, Information Technology Division; **Larry Hargis**, Grimes garage

10 Years

Joe Anderson, Right of Way; **Jolene Bersch**, Information Technology Division; **Carl Duncan**, Sidney garage; **Mark Fevold**, Iowa Falls garage; **Douglas Harris**, Adair garage; **James Janssen**, Waverly garage; **Craig Lynn**, Soldier garage; **Thomas Maher**, De Witt garage; **Benjamin Petty**, District 6 paint crew; **Peter Saeugling**, Dubuque garage; **William Sager**, Grundy Center garage; **Aaron Sandersfeld**, Williamsburg garage; **Timothy Trick**, Spirit Lake garage; **Steven Ulrich**, Des Moines construction; **Steve Valentine**, Dubuque garage; **Kevin Vogt**, Williamsburg garage; **Carroll Weeks**, Carlisle garage; **Eric Weigel**, Design; **William Welchans**, Sidney garage

35 YEARS
Iowa Department
of Transportation



Mike Jensen
District 4 Office



Marcia Fischer
Driver Services



Dennis Smith
Design

October and November

Djordjevic called to active duty



Peter Djordjevic, equipment operator in the Carlisle shop, recently received orders for deployment to Iraq. He left Oct. 1 for two weeks of training in Wisconsin and then was transported to Iraq for a one-year deployment with the Air National Guard from Des Moines. The employees in the Carlisle shop wish Peter the best and will keep him in their prayers.

Ashton garage open house draws rave reviews



Visitors to the Ashton shops share smiles at the open house

The new Ashton garage is open for business. An open house held Wed. Aug. 23 from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. was attended by more than 150 people, including state representative Royd Chambers of Sheldon. Attendees raved about the facility and equipment on display for the event. Children joined their parents in the celebration and a regional transit bus brought several elderly residents to view the facility. Highway Maintenance Supervisor Tom Jungers says the garage employees appreciated hosting the public and showing off the facility.

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.

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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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Location and Environment	Jean Jesse, Ames	515-239-1225
Maintenance	Cindy Shipley, Ames	515-239-1824
Materials	Dawne Berner, Ames	515-239-1919
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Motor Carrier Services	Diann McMullen, Des Moines	515-237-3250
Motor Vehicle Enforcement	Val Hunter, Des Moines	515-237-3218
Operations and Finance Division	Janet Kout-Samson, Ames	515-239-1340
Research and Technology Bureau	Phyllis Geer, Ames	515-239-1646
Right-of-Way	Linda Kriegel, Ames	515-239-1135
Traffic and Safety	Linda McBride, Ames	515-239-1557
Vehicle Services	Thelma Huffman, Des Moines	515-237-3182

On the cover: Construction of the Keosauqua bridge is beginning to look like the model (inset)

A precious gift

by Christina Andersen

Sergeant Kevin Killpack from the Office of Motor Vehicle Enforcement, his wife Lynn, and their two sons Grady, 12, and Gage, 8, anxiously awaited the arrival of a new baby girl. However, they weren't waiting in a hospital. Cora Grace Killpack arrived on a flight from South Korea at the Des Moines International Airport Aug. 16, 2006. Cora Grace was four

months old and weighed around 12 pounds.

"We gave her the American name Cora Grace, Grace because she is a precious gift, one that we did nothing to deserve," said proud daddy Kevin.

The Killpacks have been blessed with two wonderful sons, and felt that there were other children already in the world in need of love, and they had more than enough to give. After careful consideration and

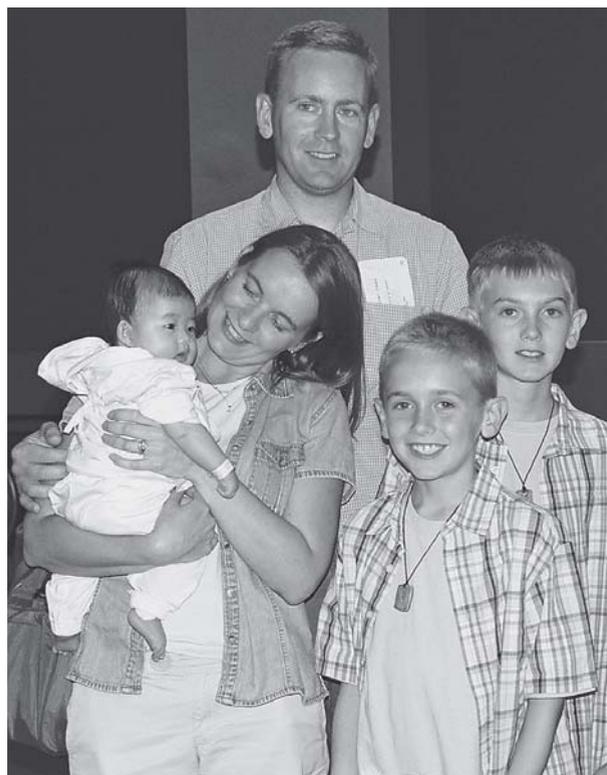


extensive research, Kevin and Lynn chose the Holt International Adoption Agency to assist them in welcoming their third child.

The Killpacks chose Korea as the country from which they would adopt. Lynn's great grandparents were missionaries in Korea and had lived there for many years. Korea has an excellent reputation for the care of orphans and an escort program permitted Cora Grace to be escorted to the U.S. by a Korean agent, allowing the Killpacks to remain home with their other children.

The process wasn't a quick one. The family started the adoption paperwork in March 2005. "We were open to any child in need of a loving home, regardless of age or special need. On June 22, 2006, we received a referral for a healthy baby girl and instantly fell in love with her!" said Kevin.

Just seven weeks after seeing her picture, the Killpacks met their beautiful baby girl face-to-face. "There has never been a more humbling moment for us, for someone on the other side of the world to give you such a precious gift and ask you to do what they cannot," said Kevin.



The Killpacks, Dad Kevin, Mom Lynn, baby Cora and big brothers Grady, 12, and Gage, 8

Cultural taboos prevent the Killpacks from meeting Cora's birth family, but they express immense gratitude to her birth family for choosing to love Cora unselfishly by giving her up for adoption.

Since she arrived, Cora has more than doubled her birth weight and is right at home with her new family. Kevin said at first she was a little reserved, but now she giggles and plays constantly. Her older brothers argue over whose turn it is to feed or hold her. However, when it comes to changing her diaper they gladly let mom and dad take over.

When considering international adoption, the Killpacks recommend researching the country from which you would like to adopt. Each country has its own set of stipulations, such as length of marriage and number of children. More research should be done on adoption agencies, as well. The Killpacks had a very positive experience with the agency they used, and would recommend it to others.

"The wait was long and frustrating, but once she was in our arms, it all melted away. We knew she was meant to be our child and would have waited even longer for her!" said Kevin.