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PROJECTS AND
INNOVATIONS
THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR.

WINTER 2020



COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION: MOVING A SUPER LOAD



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cooperation and Collaboration: Moving a Super Load from Erie to Lock Haven3

Pennsylvania to Ramp Up Litter Prevention Measures4

PennDOT Prepares for Tunnel Emergencies with Joint Training Exercises7

Drone Popularity Could Pose Dangers for Emergency Responders7

Bridge Naming Effort to Honor Fallen Employees9

PennDOT Organization Receives Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award10

Teams Win Pennsylvania Excellence in Technology Awards11

Eight PennDOT Staff Recognized at Idealink Awards Ceremony13

Southwestern PennDOT Holds Recruitment Fairs for Winter Hiring15

Employee Tara Callahan-Henry Travels to Mexico for Charity18

This quarterly newsletter highlights our latest efforts to improve mobility and quality of life in Pennsylvania.

This issue features Pennsylvania’s plans to ramp up litter prevention, PennDOT’s focus on going green, building a better mousetrap, Real ID, awards received, highlighting employees, and efforts to attract new ones!

As always, feel free to send story ideas or requests for information you want to see. If you’re involved in an interesting or innovative project or initiative, have ever wondered about other parts of PennDOT’s operations or have other suggestions, email the Press Office at ra-penndotpress@pa.gov.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue!

REVITALIZED MOUNT JOY TRAIN STATION OPENS



The Mount Joy Train station has had a presence along the historic Pennsylvania Railroad, today known as the Keystone Corridor, since the early 1900s. The station is not only a tool in the overall movement of passengers by rail within the commonwealth, but a part of the local community. The station is well-used but had long been little more than a "bus stop" along the Keystone Corridor, consisting of two small shelters, replaced in October 2006, on two paved low-level platforms situated in a deep trench.

The need for station enhancements coincided with revitalization efforts in downtown Mount Joy, just one block away. PennDOT collaborated with Main Street Mount Joy, a nonprofit devoted to promoting a vibrant downtown, through the multi-year process of visioning, conceptual development, and design. The enhanced station is a key component in the Borough's larger downtown revitalization plan focused on Main Street.

Improvements to streetscaping and parking at Mount Joy Station were completed in 2012, including a reconstructed parking lot, a covered walkway between the parking lot and station, and streetscaping for aesthetics and improved access to the station. Enhancements are consistent with design standards for downtown Mount Joy projects.

Phase 2, which began in 2016, included the construction of covered high-level, accessible platforms, elevators, stair towers, and a pedestrian connection between the platforms as well as expansion of the parking along West and East Henry Streets. Completion of these improvements was celebrated with a ribbon cutting on Oct. 21, 2019.





MEET THE acting secretary YASSMIN GRAMIAN, P.E.

As I begin in this position, let me start by saying it is a very humbling opportunity to take on the role of Acting Secretary of PennDOT. At its core, this agency and our work is focused on improving lives and connecting people. I share our team's commitment to developing 21st century transportation and infrastructure solutions to meet those important, ambitious goals. I am grateful for this opportunity from Governor Wolf to keep PennDOT's momentum moving forward and to build on all the accomplishments of former Secretary Leslie Richards and the team during the past five years.

As a young girl, I always had a knack for math, sciences and building things, so I found my way to the engineering school at the University of Michigan where I earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in civil engineering. My first job out of college was with an engineering firm in New Jersey where I was the first female bridge engineer on the staff and was responsible for conducting bridge inspections and analysis. I started working on PennDOT projects over 30 years ago when I moved to Pennsylvania. I began as a design engineer, then progressed to project management and business leadership positions.

I have walked the halls of PennDOT for many years, but it has truly been an amazing experience to join the agency. And now that I'm here, I am passionately pursuing workforce development and retention enhancements because it's critical that we attract and keep talented individuals. I will also continue the conversation that Leslie Richards started regarding diversity and inclusion at the department. We need to nurture a diverse organization and workforce through innovative thinking, job-specific training, and fostering an inclusive environment that encourages, supports, and celebrates our similarities and differences. It's so important that we have people with various backgrounds at the table to help tackle our most pressing transportation challenges.

Comprehensive teams and ideas are needed so we can ensure the safety and prosperity of future generations of Pennsylvanians –

whether it's those living in rural, suburban or urban areas of the Commonwealth. There are so many ways that PennDOT affects the daily lives of those who live in and travel through Pennsylvania, and it's critical that we keep those everyday operational functions going: things like winter maintenance, driver and vehicle services, keeping important projects moving. connects us to our jobs, our families, our friends. I envision a transportation network that is truly multimodal, and that supports Pennsylvanians in all the many ways that they travel, whether it's on a bike or on foot, by car or plane, or on our mass transit systems.

We also know that there's incredible potential in automation and new technologies, and I'm so proud of how PennDOT has been a leader in this area. It's important that we look at how transportation can support growth – not only in our metropolitan areas, but across the state.

But there's no way to talk about growth without facing the reality that there is a serious lack of investment in infrastructure, and that we are in desperate need of a sustainable source of infrastructure funding. This is a major focus of mine, and I am looking forward to working with our many partners and stakeholders on this issue. We have a solid backbone of infrastructure in Pennsylvania, but the only way that we can support it is by making an investment in transportation that will support jobs, freight movement, economic growth, and quality of life. We need to look into creative and innovative public/private funding partnerships and options.

These are just some of the many high-priority initiatives that need to be addressed, while also continuing to implement REAL ID, developing succession planning at all levels within the organization, and sustaining our achievements in PennDOT Connects and enhanced maintenance operations.

I look forward to working with our team in the weeks and months ahead. I know that we have the talent, resources, and determination to make a difference for those who live and travel in Pennsylvania.

For more information please visit our website: www.PennDOT.gov. Or find us on social media at:



www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation



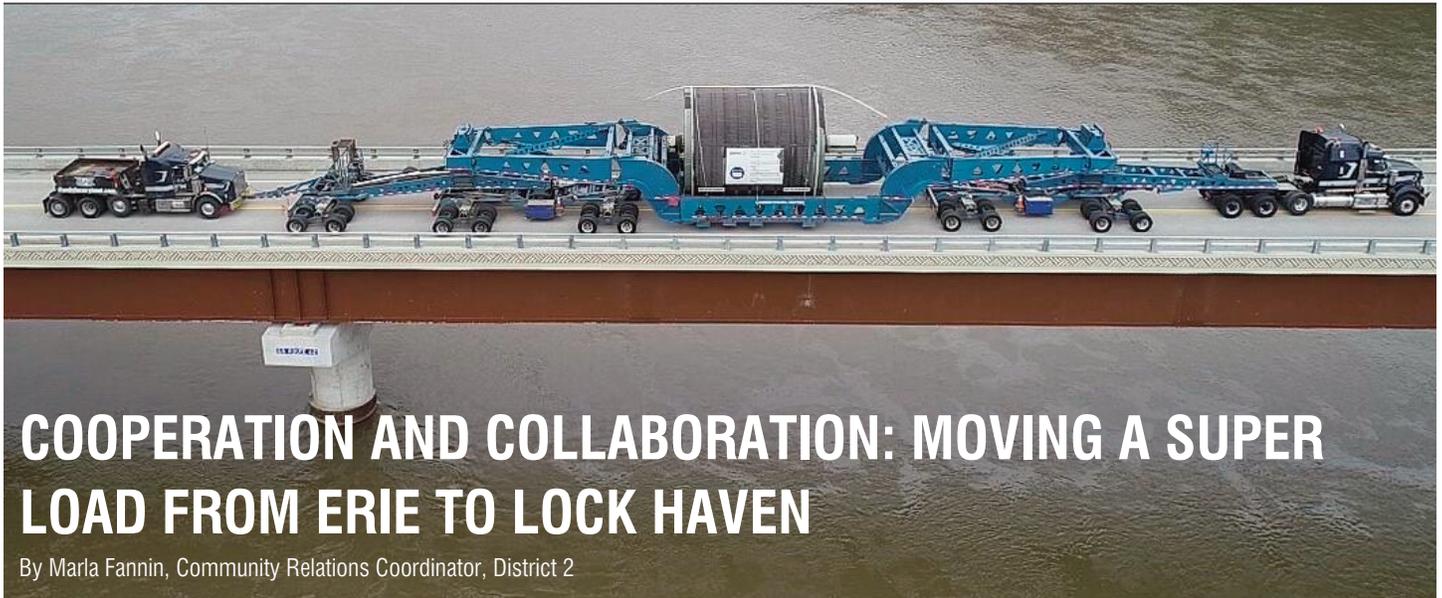
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COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION: MOVING A SUPER LOAD FROM ERIE TO LOCK HAVEN

By Marla Fannin, Community Relations Coordinator, District 2

After being housed in Erie for more than a year, plans came together in December to transport a Yankee Dryer super load from the Port of Erie to First Quality Tissue in the city of Lock Haven—a distance of more than 300 miles.

The dimensions of the Super Load made it important to share information about the move, including the next day's anticipated route, traffic delays, and opposite direction movements.

Regional Press Offices also shared the Super Load progress on social media. More than 3,575 people were following the load's move on Facebook, with posts reaching nearly 60,000 people during the that time. There were lots of engagements on Twitter as well, highlighted by one post on the Erie regional account making more than 14,000 impressions with 25 likes, 11 retweets, and 5 responses.

The trailer and load combined for a weight of 628,000 pounds. It was 20 feet high, and 217 feet long.

The 300-mile trip made use of roads in Districts 1, 10, and 2, with each District communicating prior to the start of the move, as well as updates at the end of each day high-lighting the next day's expected activity.

The move featured 25 crew members, numerous inspectors following the load and updating District offices with photos and briefings. The move was also accompanied by four PSP units and five PSP Troopers to enhance safety.

Ace Heavy Haul of Chelsea, Oklahoma sub-contracted to D and G Hauling from Valparaiso, Indiana to transport the load. Travel dates ran from Thursday December 5 through Monday, December 16. The travel schedule included Saturdays and Sundays. For the most part, movement occurred during daylight hours.

The super load travel plan involved nine counties and featured cross overs and 10 counter flow (opposite direction) movements. Flaggers were positioned at specific locations and intersections along the route to assist movements through intersections and control traffic during counterflow movements.

PennDOT continually cautioned drivers to remain alert for the slow-moving operation, which traveled at speeds around 15 miles-per-hour. Roadway message boards were also used in specific areas to alert drivers of the restrictions and traffic delays.

The trip garnered media attention throughout the region and saw residents in the region come out to witness the "parade" as the load made its way from one town to the next.

It was not all smooth sailing. Before leaving District 1, the super load had mechanical problems that were repaired. As the load entered Centre County, a soft cross-over area made it necessary to bring in aggregate to shore up the soil conditions. And, once the load reached Clinton County, the engine overheated, forcing closures and delays on Interstate 80 in both directions. Late on Sunday night, December 15, the load was able to move again and reached a stopping point near Lock Haven to shut down for the evening.

Starting around 7:30 am on Monday, December 16, the load began its last leg, traversing I-80, Route 220, and Route 64, before moving through local streets and entering the gates of First Quality Tissue.

The success of the move was made possible by hard-working PennDOT staff in Districts 1, 10, and 2. They have much to be proud of.





PENNSYLVANIA TO RAMP UP LITTER PREVENTION MEASURES

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful released the results of the first statewide comprehensive research on litter, the cost of cleaning it up, and attitudes toward litter and announced the formation of a state-led workgroup to shift Pennsylvania's strategy from cleanup to prevention.

Field research results indicate more than 502 million pieces of litter are on Pennsylvania's roads. The most common items are cigarette butts (37 percent) and plastics (30 percent), with plastic film and beverage containers most prevalent. There are an estimated 29.3 million beverage containers alone on the roads. Motorists and pedestrians are leading sources of litter, followed by improperly secured truck loads.

Cities collectively spend over \$68 million annually on cleanup, education, enforcement, and prevention efforts related to litter and illegal dumping, according to a related study of nine cities statewide commissioned by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. Eighty percent of costs go specifically to cleanup, with Philadelphia spending more than \$36 million; Pittsburgh and Allentown spending more than \$2 million; Harrisburg, Lancaster, and Reading spending over \$1 million; and Altoona, Erie, and Scranton spending hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

PennDOT spends upwards of \$13 million per year on staff and resources to pick up litter along state-owned roadways.

In a phone survey to gauge Pennsylvanians' attitudes toward litter, about 83 percent of respondents said they see educational messaging focused on litter prevention only

occasionally or rarely. About 76 percent said littering reduces property values, negatively affects tourism and business, raises taxes due to cleanup, ends up in waterways, and is an environmental problem. About half of respondents said people litter because they don't care or there's no conveniently placed trash can.

The Pennsylvania Litter Research Study was conducted in 2018-2019 with funding from DEP, PennDOT, Keep America Beautiful, and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. It included on-the-ground litter counts in 180 locations statewide, a random phone survey of 500 residents, and a forum where 120 community, business, and government leaders shared their views on litter impacts and what should be done to end littering.

DEP, PennDOT, and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will form a workgroup of state government agencies, local governments, and industry and community leaders to use the research results to develop and carry out a plan of actions to reduce littering in Pennsylvania.

The goal is to build the action plan around four behavior change strategies, including infrastructure, such as waste and recycling facilities and trash cans; public and school-based education; laws and ordinances; and incentives and enforcement.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, DEP, and PennDOT have partnered for 15 years on an annual Pick Up Pennsylvania campaign. Many thousands of Pennsylvanians have volunteered in these local community projects, removing millions of pounds of trash.

PENNDOT IS GOING GREEN!



Here's how facility improvements in PennDOT's Engineering District 6 support the GreenGov Council.

New LED Lighting has been installed on all 5 floors of the district's central office - approximately 1800 fixtures when complete. Plus, this is being done via a PECO reimbursement program and work is being done in-house to save the district money.

Bathroom upgrades include new water-saving flushometers reducing 1.5 gallons per flush to 1 pint.

New outdoor walkway lighting saw a changeover from 1000W lights to overhead low-amp LED light fixtures.

A glass block entryway wall was changed to a structural wall which provides better insulation making heating that area of the building more efficient.

More efficient air intake handlers have been installed on the roof.

Building trims have been fixed and windows were repaired and caulked to help with energy savings.

The department is planning to install charging stations at future projects, including four future facility projects in Dauphin, Greene, Lycoming, and Montgomery counties.

PENNDOT PARTNERS WITH LOCAL STUDENTS FOR LANDSCAPING PROJECT

By Kim Smith, Community Relations Coordinator, District 1



PennDOT's District 3 office in Montoursville is getting a makeover with the help of students from Pennsylvania College of Technology's horticulture.

The facilities unit was recently tasked with designing a landscaping project for the district office. Recognizing the need to consult with landscaping and plant experts, the staff reached out to the district's roadside unit, who then suggested they consider working with PCT.

Professor Carl Bower and the horticulture students were quickly on board. Tanya Tolomay, PennDOT's district roadway programs manager, and Roy Beck, building maintenance repairman, along with Lyndon Mink and Brett Runkle of the roadside unit met with them in early October to give a scope of work.

"We appreciate PennDOT giving us the opportunity to practice the skills we have been studying in class," Bower said. "This project has given us the chance to fulfill several objectives from class and it shows students that design projects can come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes it is a challenge to think simply, instead of a grand scale, but a low maintenance design such as this, can be in much higher demand than one that is heavy in plants and hardscaping."

Partnering with PCT not only provides valuable experience to the students, it also saves design cost for the district.

"In the end, we hope to take their recommendations and will use them to bid the project," Tolomay explained. "The students were very excited for this opportunity and we are looking forward to their recommendations. This engages students in real life projects."

PENNSYLVANIA TEAM WINS NATIONAL BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP CONTEST



At the 2019 National Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Conference, the East Brandywine Township, Chester County, team won the nationwide "Build a Better Mousetrap" competition for their Spreader Rack invention.

It was PennDOT's ninth year of participation in the competition, which recognizes innovative inventions and improvements. The purpose of the competition is to collect and disseminate real-world examples of best practices, tips from the field, and to assist in the transfer of technology. It also allows the exchange of innovative ideas with others and provides recognition to participants for their hard work.

Submissions can be the development of tools, equipment modifications, or changes to processes that reduce cost, improve efficiency, improve the quality of transportation, and increase safety for workers and drivers.

There are four categories in the competition:

- Inspection and Data Collection (automated/remote means, testing, time, etc.)
- Asset Management Techniques (GIS, mapping, decision support systems, etc.)
- Maintenance Tools and Methods (lifters, reachers, modifications, assembly, etc.)
- Transportation Facilities Improvements (storage, access, operations, services, etc.)

The spreader rack was entered in the category of Transportation Facilities Improvements. The device holds four spreaders that would have normally been stored on the floor. It can be easily moved inside and outside and allows a spreader to be mounted on a truck by one person, as opposed to two. It was built at a cost of just \$50.

It is estimated that this solution reduced the manpower needed for the changeout operation by one full person, and also cut the time of the operation from 25 minutes to 10-15 minutes. All while improving the safety of the workforce and protecting the valuable equipment.

A total of four municipalities submitted entries in this year's Build a Better Mousetrap competition. Submitting alongside East Brandywine Township were the City of Williamsport in Lycoming County, the City of Easton in Northampton County, and Swatara Township in Dauphin County.

Roadmaster Matthew VanLew couldn't say enough about the skillset of his crew. Kyle Mortzfield, a carpenter by trade, and Derrick Claas were hailed as the creators.

One look at the construction, and there is no doubt that Mortzfield's background served as the basis for this idea. Digging through the scrap lumber, there were 4 x 4 galvanized posts that were cut for the upright posts. These posts were then attached to 2 x 8 scrap pieces that were used as the braces. The top and bottom bracing was notched where each spreader would be placed to prevent them from rolling and moving when they would be moved around.

The big expense of the idea was the wheels. \$50 was spent on a set of four casters that were affixed under the bottom. Aside from nails and some lag bolts, the cost of this project was very low.

The department all but eliminated the use of its backhoe in the operation as well.

"We repurposed a portable hoist that allows us to position the rack closer to the truck the spreaders are being installed on making it safer and quicker to install," VanLew said. "One man can now chain the spreaders to the hoist, raise it up high enough to position the spreader on the tailgate, pin it and we are done."

PENNDOT PREPARES FOR TUNNEL EMERGENCIES WITH JOINT TRAINING EXERCISES



By Steve Cowan, Deputy Communications Director, District 11

If the purpose of shared emergency drills is to improve response, the early October Liberty Tunnel drill served its purpose, and then some. PennDOT's Tunnel Maintenance and Operations personnel and the City of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Fire conducted three separate drills over a 12-hour period. The event also included participation from the Allegheny County 911 system, PennDOT's regional Traffic Management Center staff, SPC Planning, and the U.S. Coast Guard's exercise team.

Mock fires and multi-vehicle crashes gave firefighters and PennDOT tunnel personnel a chance to practice and improve response activities, including coordinating communications, traffic control, and fire suppression. Pittsburgh Fire Chief Darryl Jones was on hand at the opening of the events, conducted in two-hour blocks to give three separate groups of firefighters the chance to engage with tunnel personnel in a typically unfamiliar environment. While one crew responded in the outbound tube, another crew was at the inbound end and conducted search and rescue tasks, including rescuing a woman sleeping with her dog in an abandoned car.

For many on both sides of the equation, it was a unique opportunity to learn about how to approach, fight, and survive a similar response in the future. For many firefighters, it was the first time they had ever been inside the tunnel, and several said the familiarity with the facility will pay dividends in the future.

The Bureau of Fire is working on a standardized approach to using their newfound knowledge and skills to the dangerous tasks to which they are entrusted run even smoother in the future.

For PennDOT, recent modifications and upgrades to tunnel emergency systems got a workout, as did tunnel personnel who work with responders during emergency incidents.

DRONE POPULARITY COULD POSE DANGERS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONDERS



According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), there are more than 1.5 million drones registered in the United States, and they are being used for everything from recreation to commercial and military applications.

All drones, both recreational and commercial-use, must be registered with the FAA. Recreation and commercial drone operators must follow FAA guidelines. One of those guidelines is to not interfere with emergency response activities. In addition, the Pennsylvania's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Law makes it a crime to operate a drone in the following circumstances:

- to conduct surveillance of another person in a private place;
- in a fashion that places another person in fear of bodily injury;
- to deliver, provide, transmit, or furnish contraband.

Because a State Police or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) helicopter's flight path and altitude may change abruptly and with little warning, drone operators need to keep safety in mind and leave the area or land their unmanned aircraft when they see a police or EMS

EMS helicopters cannot land when there is a drone in the vicinity, which means that there may be a significant delay to getting care to a patient. This is not just an inconvenience, but it can be a life or death situation. Operators need to be aware of regulations, and to help keep the air space safe at any emergency scene.

There are 81 licensed air ambulances in Pennsylvania. In 2019, there were more than 21,000 calls for air medical services. First responders also use drones as a tool to assist them in searching for missing persons, in firefighting activities and to protect public safety.

The utilization of drones in firefighting applications has been accelerating for some time, and are providing departments with new capabilities, and affording them critical situational awareness data that saves lives. These benefits are not without cost; however, and we want to ensure that operators are using them safely and in accordance with the applicable laws.

It's vital for drone operators to understand that official emergency response activities take priority over personal attempts to get pictures or video of an incident scene by using a drone, and that use of a drone during an emergency may result in significant safety issues for emergency responders as well as delay vital care to those who are injured or in need of rescue.

It is important to know that the FAA is responsible for the safety of U.S. airspace. Anyone who chooses not to operate a drone legally could face civil penalties, and potentially criminal prosecution.

For more information on drone operation and registration, visit www.faa.gov.

FEDERAL REAL ID DEADLINE APPROACHING FOR PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS

By Diego Sandino, Community Relations Coordinator, Driver and Vehicle Services



REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and photo ID cards have now been available to Pennsylvanians who want them for a full year, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) reports that it is well on its way to meeting the projected demand for the federally-approved form of identification.

Based on data from other states offering an optional REAL ID program, PennDOT projected that 1.3 million of its customers would get a REAL ID prior to the federal deadline of October 1, 2020. Since March 1, 2019, PennDOT has processed about 2.7 million customers, with more than 826,000 individuals choosing to opt in to the REAL ID program. The remaining 1.8 million have chosen not to participate or use an alternative federally-acceptable form of ID come the October deadline.

"Although October may seem far away right now, we encourage our customers who want a REAL ID to get one as soon as possible," said PennDOT Acting Secretary Yassmin Gramian. "We continue to focus on providing the best possible customer service to all of our customers as the federal deadline approaches."

A federally-acceptable form of identification (whether it's a Pennsylvania REAL ID driver's license or ID card, a valid U.S. Passport/Passport Card, a military ID, etc.) must be used as identification to board a commercial flight or visit a secure federal building that requires a federally acceptable form of identification ID for access on and after October 1, 2020. REAL ID is optional in Pennsylvania, there is no requirement that any resident obtain a REAL ID; PennDOT will continue to offer standard-issue driver's licenses and photo IDs.

Federal REAL ID regulations require that PennDOT verify a customer's identity, social security number, Pennsylvania residency, and name changes (if applicable), even if a customer already has a PA driver's license or ID card. More info about document requirements, including a printable document

checklist, can be found on the Document Check page of the PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services website.

Customers have three options for obtaining a REAL ID product: customers may order their REAL ID online if they have been pre-verified; they can visit any PennDOT Driver's License Center, have their documents verified and imaged, and their REAL ID product will be mailed to them within 15 business days; or they can visit one of twelve REAL ID Centers and receive their REAL ID product over-the-counter at the time of service.

When a customer gets their first REAL ID product, they will pay a one-time fee of \$30, plus a renewal fee (current renewal fee is \$30.50 for a four-year non-commercial driver's license or a photo ID). The expiration date of their initial REAL ID product will include any time remaining on their existing non-REAL ID product, plus an additional four years, unless the customer is over 65 and has a two-year license. This expiration date structure means that the customer won't "lose" time that they've already paid for. After the initial REAL ID product expires, the customer will pay no additional fee, beyond regular renewal fees, to renew a REAL ID product.

To meet the added demand for REAL ID-compliant products, PennDOT upgraded seven of its existing driver's license centers to allow for over-the-counter issuance of REAL ID (Williamsport, Wilkes-Barre, Rockview in Centre County, Erie, Altoona, Norristown and South 70th Street in Philadelphia) and added the following new locations:

- 1025 Washington Pike, Rt. 50, Bridgeville;
- 143 S. Gulph Road, King of Prussia;
- 1101 MacArthur Road, Allentown;
- 429 North Enola Road, Enola; and
- 2090 Lincoln Highway East., Lancaster.

REAL ID-compliant products are marked with a gold star in the upper right corner, standard-issue (non-compliant) products include the phrase "NOT FOR REAL ID PURPOSES," per federal regulations. Sample images can be viewed on PennDOT's website.

More information about REAL ID in Pennsylvania, including frequently asked questions and information on documents required for REAL ID, can be found at www.penndot.gov/REALID.

PENNDOT ANNOUNCES BRIDGE NAMING EFFORT TO HONOR FALLEN EMPLOYEES



The department is in the initial stages of an effort to name bridges after the PennDOT employees who died while on duty since 1970. Once this has been completed, PennDOT will work with the General Assembly to pass a naming authorization bill in the spring 2020 legislative session.

PennDOT's intent, with the involvement and approval of the family, is to name a bridge after each fallen PennDOT worker as an acknowledgement of their service to Pennsylvania. Each bridge will be marked with a sign that includes the fallen worker's name, a visual reminder to motorists to slow down in work zones.

The statewide initiative was inspired by a similar effort completed in honor of PennDOT District 3 employee Harold "Don" Whipple, who was killed in the line of duty in 2016. A bridge in Northumberland County was memorialized in Whipple's name earlier this year.

PennDOT continues to honor our fallen colleagues through our Traveling Worker's Memorial, but the bridge renaming effort will give communities a lasting monument to remember those lost and emphasize the fact that the safety of workers in a work zone depends on all of us.

PennDOT staff will reach out to the families of fallen employees to discuss the program and is currently working to identify families of fallen employees who the department does not have next of kin information for, due to the length of time since the employee's passing.

A list of the names of fallen PennDOT employees statewide and additional information on the Traveling Worker's Memorial can be found on www.penndot.gov.

STUDENTS, DRIVERS HONORED FOR SCHOOL BUS SAFETY



In a ceremony at the Governor's residence October 23, PennDOT, along with other Pennsylvania school bus safety advocates, honored twelve students for communicating important school bus safety messages, and six school bus drivers for their superior driving skills.

The students, in kindergarten through eighth grade, were recognized for their winning entries in the 2019 School Bus Safety Poster Contest. The theme for this year's contest - "Red Lights Mean STOP!" - reflects an important message for drivers to remember when encountering school buses.

This year's winners were chosen from 1,084 public and private school student entries. The first-place entries were forwarded to a national competition and will be judged at the end of October.

Six school bus drivers were also recognized for winning the 2019 Pennsylvania School Bus Driver Safety Competition. Held each June, the competition tests school bus drivers' knowledge of safety rules and safe operation of their buses.

Photos of this year's winning students and drivers, along with photos of the winning posters, can be found on the Driver and Vehicle Services website at www.dmv.pa.gov by selecting Driver Services, then School Bus Drivers and clicking the School Bus Safety Week button.

Visit PennDOT's school bus safety page for more tips and information on the school bus stopping law.



PENNDOT ORGANIZATION RECEIVES ROSA PARKS DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

By Dave Thompson, Community Relations Coordinator, District 8

The Harrisburg-based District 8 TRUSS organization received the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) 2020 Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award. The award was presented during a WTS Central PA Gala at the Harrisburg Hershey Sheraton on January 30.

The award recognizes people or organizations that made significant contributions in promoting diversity and cultural awareness that supports the goals and mission of the WTS organization.

District 8 Executive Mike Keiser, P.E., accepted the award on behalf of TRUSS members and gala attendees Nexa Castro, Christa Newmaster, Sheila Hromadik, Fritzi Schreffler, and ADE for Design Chris Drda. The award was presented by Karen Munro and Fawn Cassel of the PA Turnpike Commission's Women's Network, which received the award last year.

"It is an absolute honor to share in receiving this award with our friends in PennDOT's TRUSS District 8 Women's Group," Ms. Munro said upon presenting the award.

Ms. Munro noted the organization was founded after District 8 highway designer Nexa Castro job shadowed then-PennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards and was inspired by the secretary's focus on diversity and inclusion.

Inspiration turned to action. Nexa brought her idea of forming a women's organization to the attention of others in the district and found there was plenty of support. With encouragement from Mike Keiser and Chris Drda, a committee was formed, and bylaws and vision and mission statements were written.

The group's vision is to advance women through workforce development and support.

The mission is to challenge and motivate oneself and others, inspire others to set and reach goals, share work-life balance experiences, embrace being comfortable while being uncomfortable, welcome change, and actively listen.

TRUSS is built on five values, each standing for a letter in the organization's name:

- Team Building- Collaboratively work to enhance social relationships
- Role Model- Inspire others to continue their career path
- Uplifting- Encourage and motivate each other to achieve success



- Support - Advocate for each other through sharing skills, experiences, and lessons learned
- Success- Employ, retain, and support leadership roles while navigating any detours

Plans were put in motion to reach out to employees in the district and county maintenance offices. Feedback from these meetings allowed the committee to learn what employees needed and expected from the group.

The committee also set as its primary goal its first annual women's conference, where employees could come together, support one another and enjoy a day of motivational speakers and uplifting activities.

Within a few short months, the committee, in collaboration with employees from WTS and the PA Turnpike Commission, planned and designed the November conference. Held at the PA Farm Show Complex and Expo Center, the conference attracted more than 70 percent of the district's women employees.

The event was a great success. Karen Munro and Fawn Cassel were among the featured speakers. The event also included keynote speaker Krystal Turner-Childs, director of the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Forensic Services.

Although the organization was founded to provide support for women, TRUSS is an inclusive group that fosters the needs of all individuals throughout the district and welcomes men to become involved and support the group.

"It all started because of a kind gesture from the (former) secretary to let a district employee shadow her," Mike Keiser said. "It doesn't take an incredible amount of effort to encourage or uplift your employees and coworkers. In fact, it benefits everyone when others are encouraged to do their best and reach for the stars."

PENNDOT TEAMS WIN PENNSYLVANIA EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

In December 2019, teams from Pennsylvania's Infrastructure and Economic Development (IED) Delivery Center — which includes PennDOT — were nominated for three Pennsylvania Excellence in Technology Awards at the Pennsylvania Digital Government Summit.

REAL ID PROJECT

The IED's Project Team was nominated for their outstanding project design, development, collaboration, and delivery. As required by both federal and state legislation, the business and technical team worked closely together to retrofit enhanced identity verification checks into a mature, mainframe-based legacy application known as DL&C. The goals of the REAL ID project were to enhance the integrity and security of state-issued driver licenses and identification cards, intended to aid in fighting terrorism and further mitigate the risk for fraud.

This 21-month project was carefully coordinated with Homeland Security, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and the Social Security Administration. The combined accomplishments of these resources resulted in commonwealth residents' ability to obtain a federally recognized REAL ID. Since March 2019, PA has issued approximately 500,000 REAL IDs.

CUSTOM BIDDING SOLUTION

Another team from the IED Delivery Center built a custom bidding solution in PennDOT's ECMS application. The new system eliminates all bid rejections due to a faulty software tool, which saves PennDOT more than \$5 million annually. Bidders are notified of any potential errors before submission, allowing for correction.

The bidding and subcontracting experience has been streamlined, especially for minority businesses. The bidding rules laid out in Pub 408 are now enforced to ensure only valid bidders can bid. Joint venture bidding capabilities have been enhanced to encourage more bidders to partner, allowing them to bid on larger dollar projects.

The team worked very hard to deliver the project on time and under budget.



SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

For more than three years, the IED's Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery Team has been assembling processes and tools that automate the building, analysis, and deployment of customized software solutions. The effort has resulted in software development that is better, faster, and cheaper.

The manual tasks of building and deploying software can now be automated and accelerated. Developers can see a quality and security analysis of their code almost immediately, allowing them to implement fixes early in the development process and save expensive rework.

Currently, approximately 200 developers and 130 applications can take advantage of these processes, leading to an estimated cost savings of more than \$240,000 per month. In projects using this process from the start, there has been a clear difference in both quality and security.

PENNDOT COUNTY CASTS OWN BRIDGE DECK SLABS FOR COST SAVINGS, EFFICIENCY



PennDOT's Adams County maintenance organization recently completed a bridge rehabilitation project on Quaker Valley Road (Route 4004) near Biglerville that included a unique feature: The concrete bridge deck slabs for the project were fabricated at the county maintenance facility.

The project also included wingwall and abutment repairs, new parapets, and guide rail upgrades.

According to Doug Etter, county assistant maintenance manager, who oversaw the project, the practice of casting the concrete deck is not new to the county, but it is rare.

"This is the fourth or fifth one in Adams County," he said. "We formed everything up in the (maintenance) yard – put all the rebar in and poured the concrete right there. We let them sit for 28 days, stripped the forms, then used a crane to put them on a low boy and take them to the job site."

The slabs were put in place by a county bridge crew.

The project "turned out great," Etter said.

According to Dave Rock, assistant district executive for maintenance in PennDOT District 8, using department force crews to cast concrete bridge decks is a cost-effective way of maintaining state bridges in the district.

"Having the capability to cast our own bridge decks allows small department force bridge projects to be completed in a less costly and more efficient manner," he said. "Our maintenance crews are top-notch and I'm very pleased with how this project turned out."

PENNDOT CELEBRATES THE COMPLETION OF PENN STREET BRIDGE REHABILITATION IN BERKS COUNTY

By Ronald J. Young Jr., Community Relations Coordinator, District 5



PennDOT held a ribbon-cutting ceremony last month for the Penn Street Bridge Rehabilitation project in Berks County. The bridge crosses the Schuylkill River, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Schuylkill River Trail and Front Street in the City of Reading and West Reading Borough.

The project rehabilitated the 27-span concrete arch bridge. Work included concrete repair, superstructure replacement, ramp work at the interchange of Penn Street and U.S. 422/West Shore Bypass, ornamental lighting, traffic signal work, new signs, new pavement markings and other miscellaneous construction. The rehabilitation began in December 2016.

The Penn Street Bridge was originally constructed in 1913. It is 1,337 feet long and 80 feet wide. This section of Penn Street has an average daily traffic volume of 33,796 vehicles.



EIGHT PENNDOT STAFF RECOGNIZED AT IDEALINK AWARDS CEREMONY

By Richard Kirkpatrick, Bureau of Innovations



Eight PennDOT employees who submitted their Idealink proposals to suggest leaner and better ways of doing their jobs were honored at a ceremony in November at the Keystone Building in Harrisburg.

Executive staff including then-Secretary Leslie S. Richards, now-Acting Secretary Yassmin Gramian, now-Executive Deputy Secretary George McAuley and Deputy Secretary for Planning Larry Shifflet offered praise at the ceremony.

The awardees presented with a commemorative Idealink license plates on a wooden base:

- Tracy Schmucker, administrative assistant, District 10. Employee thank you cards for great work.
- Jerry Skelton, Bureau of Driver Licensing, Erie Driver License Center, for window clings to explain available services for customers.
- Irene T. Reed, District 5-4, Monroe County, high-visibility safety vests for litter clean-up volunteers.
- Warren P. Dell, District 9-5, Huntingdon County, tandem truck steps, to enhance safety.
- Christopher L. Robinson, District 10-2, Butler County, streamlined training forms for flagger on-the-job performance evaluations.
- Clifton "Kip" Charles, District 2, improved IT application for Right-Of-Way Plans.
- Christopher Kapitan Jr. and Arlan Thomas, District 9-7, Somerset County, PennDOT Workers' Memorial Logo.

"I am extremely excited at the opportunity to recognize great ideas generated by the PennDOT staff," McAuley said in his opening remarks. Noting that continuous process improvement or Lean thinking, under any name, has been a commitment of PennDOT's for many years, he underscored that, "The greatest asset PennDOT has is its people. ... There are a lot of great thoughts out there and Idealink sets the stage to encourage ideas to the forefront."

Gramian applauded the "thoughts, passion and creativity" of the award winners.

Shifflet noted that just a few feet from the ceremony was the permanent PennDOT Workers' Memorial that displays the photo and story of each PennDOT employee who lost their life in the line of duty.

"Our people work long, hard hours, often under difficult and in many respects hazardous weather and traffic conditions ...," he said. "It takes fortitude and guts to come back day after day and face these challenges. But, that is what our fine people do, and they take justifiable pride in what they do. The innovation and talent we honor today reflects that and what PennDOT is all about."

Josh Easton, director of transformation for Governor Tom Wolf, and Colby Clabaugh, executive director for the Governor's Office of Performance Excellence, offered their praise for the program and the ceremony.

"Employee driven suggestions and improvements are the heart and soul of a Lean culture, so as members of OPE we were excited and honored to attend the recent Idealink awards ceremony," they said. "Through Idealink, PennDOT employees across the state connect to share ideas [that can become] best practices and have an opportunity to be recognized for their efforts. This a great program, and we encourage everyone at PennDOT to get involved!"

All the awardees expressed their gratitude for the recognition.

"I appreciate someone taking note of my idea," Irene Reed said.

"The big take away was a lot of other people are thinking along the same lines ...," Christopher Robinson said. "It is incredibly important that people with the feet on the ground, who know the problems we face, can come up with the simple solutions."

Showing an example of the length to which PennDOT staff will go to deliver the very best for the people of Pennsylvania, awardees Christopher Kapitan Jr. and Arlan Thomas were part of the Somerset County crews who worked all day until midnight plowing eight inches of snow just prior to the awards ceremony.

They were part of the team working with foreman Robert Gensimore, who lost his life last year when he was hit while placing flares on Interstate 99 during a snowstorm.

They had developed the idea for the logo to honor fallen PennDOT people that is now widely circulated across the state.

"We needed to do this for we in the department to honor our family (of fallen colleagues)," Kapitan said.

District 9 Assistant District Executive David Kammerer accompanied his three staff members who were honored at the ceremony.

"I am very proud and honored to have three recipients out of District 9," he said. "There are a lot of great ideas coming from the field staff, and we need to recognize these wonderful ideas."

PennDOT District 2 Executive Karen Michael, who accompanied her award winner, said the ceremony was wonderful and noted how Idealink builds on a quality emphasis stretching back decades at PennDOT.

"I am glad to have people who know what they are doing, [and having them] speak up and say, 'We can do better,'" she said. "It will inspire more to happen in the districts."

FIRST PHASE OF RICHMOND STREET PROJECT IN PHILLY NEARING END

By Brad Rudolph, Deputy Communications Director, District 6



Major construction is nearing an end on PennDOT's improvements to Richmond Street in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia. The project is the first section (AF1) of PennDOT's overall plan to reconstruct and improve mainline Interstate 95 between Allegheny Avenue and Frankford Creek and the surface streets near the interchange.

Under the AF1 project, Richmond Street was widened by 2 feet between Ann Street and Allegheny Avenue to provide 11-foot wide northbound and southbound travel lanes that will straddle newly installed trolley tracks. The wider travel lanes — a result of PennDOT's multimodal approach to designing and building Richmond Street improvements to benefit motorists, transit riders, and pedestrians — will allow vehicles to pass safely between SEPTA's Route 15 Trolley and vehicles parked along Richmond Street.

Over the final months of 2019, crews on the AF1 project installed sidewalk and curb improvements on the west side of Richmond Street between Clearfield Street and Allegheny Avenue. They also completed a new sidewalk on the west side of Richmond Street from Allegheny Avenue to Westmoreland Street. PennDOT's contractor also completed the installation of the trolley rails from Clearfield Street, through the intersection with Allegheny Avenue and into the Westmoreland Loop terminal. A new brick perimeter wall is in place along Emery Street, and new platforms for loading and unloading passengers have been built at the terminal. The remainder of the new terminal will be completed this spring.

Installation of poles that will hold the trolley line's catenary wires was also completed across the Richmond Street project area, along with installation of new, decorative LED streetlight poles.

Richmond Street construction began in early 2018 with utility installations and relocations in the project area. Over the course of that first year of construction on the \$32 million project, new gas and water mains were installed and connected to the properties along the Richmond Street corridor, and numerous other utility lines and wires have been relocated to accommodate the improvements.

In early 2019, crews returned to the southern end of the project and began the next major stage of the project. First, new sidewalks and curbs were built, then the outer edges of Richmond Street were reconstructed. By mid-year, a new crew returned to the southern end of the work area and began installing two sets of trolley rails as part of reconstruction of the middle section of the roadway under the final stage of the project. An additional residential parking area for Richmond Street residents was also installed and is now available on reconstructed Melvale Street, which runs parallel to Richmond Street, adjacent to I-95 between Clearfield Avenue and Wishart Street.

The completion of AF1 construction this spring will be followed by a second surface street project, AF2, that will improve sections of Delaware, Allegheny, and Castor avenues beginning in 2021. Construction on mainline I-95 in this section is expected to begin in 2024.

SOUTHWESTERN PENNDOT HOLDS RECRUITMENT FAIRS FOR WINTER HIRING



Check PennDOT's social-media accounts, including the "Events" section on our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniadepartmentoftransportation) www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniadepartmentoftransportation, for job fairs near you.

Over the past few years, it has become increasingly difficult to hire employees to fill our complement for winter services such as CDL drivers, diesel and automotive mechanics, semi-skilled labors, tradesman helpers, stock clerks and radio dispatchers. Even though help wanted ads were placed in local papers and the positions posted online, very few people applied.

To break this trend, PennDOT's District 12 in the southwestern part of the state decided to change its hiring strategy. They gathered a team of employees who were challenged with determining why we were not getting applicants and to find a way to change it.

The most common issues we were aware of were:

- Applicants did not know how to apply
- They were not good with computers
- They did not have an email address
- They do not have computer access

Our biggest question then became, "What can we do to help?"

We decided to alleviate some of these issues by hosting a recruitment fair for our county offices. We stepped up our advertising by using message boards throughout each county announcing the event and creating a flyer that was distributed to CDL schools, legislative offices, farmers' associations, and other interested parties. We created an email version of the flyer that was shared with our partners including municipalities, school

districts, EMS services, media, and more. It was also shared with our employees with a note to pass it along to their friends and families.

The fairs were set up to make it easy to apply. After greeting the prospective candidates, we had current employees talk to them about what they could expect as a temporary winter employee and the benefits they would experience. There was a plow truck on display along with operators to answer any questions. Laptops were set up at each fair with regional recruitment personnel available to help them sign on and apply.

It was a success!

- Fayette County had 72 prospective employees and 65 completed an online application.
- Westmoreland County had 83 prospective employees and 70 completed an online application.
- Washington County in combination with our Greene County had 32 prospective employees and 20 completed an online application.

Combined, there were approximately 60 CDL operators who expressed interest in our Winter Maintenance Program. During the fairs, we also had permanent CDL operator positions available in two counties. We had 23 permanent CDL applicants for Westmoreland County and 12 for Washington County.

MEET COURTNEY LYLE; DISTRICT 1 PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING MANAGER

By Jill Harry, Community Relations Coordinator, District 1



If there is one word that characterizes the PennDOT career of District 1 Planning and Programming Manager Courtney Lyle, it would be non-traditional.

The 18-year PennDOT employee rarely sits still and is not afraid to take on a challenge, another similarity among the variety of positions she's held.

"It's never been boring, and I hope it stays that way," Lyle said of her time with the Department.

Lyle started as a Business Intern in 2001, working out of the Clarion County office. Then a senior at Clarion University, she co-created the first winter materials database alongside Andy Firment.

"It was eye-opening because I had no idea what PennDOT did before I started," she said.

Following her 2002 graduation with a degree in Information Systems, Lyle joined the District 10 staff full time as an IT Technician, which was then part of the Design unit. At the time, PennDOT was not operating on a network that connected the counties, the district offices and Central Office.

"We used disks. People shared email addresses," she recalled with a laugh.

It didn't take her long to feel the tug to return to the Clarion County maintenance office. In August 2003, she transferred to a Roadway Programs Coordinator position at that facility, bringing her closer to family.

"To me, maintenance feels like home. It did then too," she said.

After 10 years working at the county level, including time as PennDOT's first county-level business manager, Lyle knew she was ready for another set of challenges. Through a statewide

committee, she had the opportunity to network with the former District 1 Executive Bill Petit. He made her aware of an opportunity to apply for the district's unique Information Data Management unit, a job that was a perfect fit for someone looking to venture in a new direction.

Lyle was chosen to lead the unit, which focuses on creating and managing information to help other units with decision making and information sharing internally and externally.

During her nearly five-year stint with the unit, the married mother of two thrived on the opportunity to create new internal programs, develop presentations, and increase communication efforts.

"I went out and met with every maintenance employee," Lyle said of the efforts as IDM manager.

Despite the rewards of the challenging position, she continued to seek out other opportunities within the Department.

"I decided to make a complete turn and go back to design," she said of her latest move to Planning and Programming. "I wanted to experience something new while at the same time doing something familiar to me. I like fitting all the pieces of the puzzle together."

Lyle describes her career with PennDOT as eclectic and rewarding; and admits she's applied for positions she did not receive and accepted jobs that were not necessarily promotions in order to gain experience.

So what strategy does she offer to those looking for career development advice?

"Be open to all possibilities. Sometimes you move sideways to move up. Don't be your own roadblock to success," she said.

MEET PENNDOT'S WILLIAM PENN FELLOW, SHANE RICE



In July 2019, we welcomed Shane Rice to the PennDOT team as our William Penn Fellow. During this time, he has been a great asset to the Executive Policy Office.

Rice is contributing to various projects, including freight optimization, land use, economic development, automated and connected vehicles, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. One of his main projects has been related to transportation funding.

"Transportation funding is one of the biggest challenges facing our nation," Rice said. "One of the largest threats to our economy is the underinvestment in transportation infrastructure and the lack of sustainable, dedicated funding for interstate maintenance and operations."

Part of Rice's fellowship is visiting sites across the state, including the Erie Port Authority and Waste Management Recycling Center. He has also attended various conferences for organizations like the National Governor's Association and the Northeast Association of State Transportation Officials, meeting public officials, and private-sector leaders from across the nation and around the world. Throughout his fellowship, Rice has also enjoyed working on a broad array of topics through interagency collaborations.

Rice's fellowship will conclude in July 2021. Through his work with PennDOT, he hopes to develop data-driven transportation policies that enhance mobility options and increase the accessibility and equity of the transportation system.

Prior to beginning the fellowship, Rice attended Fordham University, earning his bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in economics. He went on to earn a master's degree in public administration and certificate in public finance from the University of Pennsylvania.

"I went back to school and earned my MPA with the desire to take on big challenges facing society, and work to improve

people's lives," Rice remarked. "Working for the commonwealth, and specifically with PennDOT's Executive Policy Office, gives me the opportunity to engage with national and international policy issues, while also improving the quality of life and economic strength of my local community and communities across the commonwealth."

Rice lives in Doylestown but spends most of his time in Harrisburg during the week. Outside of his work with the commonwealth, he caters to his eclectic taste in music by enjoying live shows.

About the William Penn Fellowship

The William Penn Fellowship is granted to talented, passionate individuals with a commitment to public service and a drive to help make Pennsylvania a better place to live. The program provides aspiring professionals with the opportunity to serve and learn with the state's top executive leaders.

Enthusiastic and highly-motivated individuals spend two years working full-time for senior and top-ranking government officials. Fellows are assigned to state agencies to complete impactful projects based on their personal interests and skill sets.

Throughout the program, fellows will participate in leadership development trainings and have opportunities to attend events with the state's top private and public sector leaders.

For more information on the fellowship, please visit the William Penn Fellowship page at governor.pa.gov.

PENNDOT EMPLOYEE TARA CALLAHAN-HENRY TRAVELS TO MEXICO FOR CHARITY



In honor of National Kindness Week, we want to highlight our District 9 press officer, Tara Callahan-Henry, for using her time to help those in need.

Going to another country to help a less fortunate family in an impoverished city sounds daunting; it may even invoke a little fear and uncertainty in a person. But, with no hesitation, Tara Callahan-Henry, together with a group of 19 others, did just that this past summer and loved the experience so much they already have started planning another trip for this year.

The group was made up of members of Callahan-Henry's church, Hicks Methodist in Duncansville, and other friends and family. They travelled to Ensenada, Mexico, which is on the Baja Peninsula, about two hours south of San Diego. There, they spent a week building a new home for Isabel Pacheco-Cruz and her five sons. Pacheco-Cruz took her children and left an abusive relationship for a better life, but a diagnosis of tuberculosis left her unable to work and get necessary medical treatments. Her eldest son, Edgar, dropped out of school at age 14 to provide for the family – working at a flower farm for \$89 a week.

Ensenada is a very poor community with little running water, little electricity, and few paved roads. Dogs are kept as guards, not pets, to protect people and their belongings.

"I don't think I was prepared for the poverty we saw. Some people had nothing," Callahan-Henry said. "Isabel and her boys slept each night on the concrete slab at the construction site to ensure no building materials would be stolen."

The family had been living in an addition built onto another family member's home. They shared two mattresses among all of them, with only a small cabinet for furniture and a camp stove for cooking.

"We wanted to provide this family with a home, a sense of safety and a place to grow in love and to grow with their faith," Callahan-Henry said. "For the first time the boys each had their own beds, their own pillows, extra clothes, new bikes – things they never had."

The language barrier presented challenges, as very few people outside the Yugo Ministries campus where the group stayed spoke English.

"Two members of our group spoke enough Spanish to help, but, they weren't always with us," Callahan-Henry explained. "Yet,

there was still an understanding between everyone, a simple smile or hug from a stranger meant so much. They were happy to see us and willing to help us. One night, we went to buy school supplies at the local Wal-Mart and a young mother helped us determine what certain items were and what the boys would need in the best way she could without knowing much English herself."

A few of Callahan-Henry's ministry group also conducted a vacation bible school program each afternoon for a group of 20-30 children, who did not speak English. An interpreter helped with lessons, but shyness prevented some of kids from waiting for the translation.

"A friend and I would have some of the little girls come up to us and want to tell us something and when we could call our translator over, they would giggle and run away," Callahan-Henry explained. "They wanted to share something with us as women and they didn't want to tell the male interpreter."

But they quickly learned that you don't need to speak the same language to show your love.

"Each day when we showed up on the build site, the smiles of the family showed us all the love we needed."

Callahan-Henry and the others at Hicks Methodist are eagerly planning the next trip to Ensenada for August 2020. It takes about 10-11 months to pick dates, coordinate arrangements and raise funds to pay for the house-building and other items for recipients.

"We purchase items to help furnish the family's home — clothing, bedding, curtains. And once we get there, we shop for things we can't fly with like dishes, kitchen items, and other housewares," Callahan-Henry said.

This journey has inspired her to continue to do more ministry work like this and eventually bring her children when they are old enough.

"This trip was very humbling and eye-opening for me. The hardest part was being away from my kids and explaining to them why I was going to help build a house for a family that didn't have one and that I was buying clothes for children who don't have many," she said. "For my kids who have all their basic needs met, hearing that these kids have no TV, no video games, no running water or electricity was a foreign concept to them."

The theme for their trip was "Love is," from the book of 1 John in the Bible. Tara and the others set out to show kindness and love to people in a place they'd never been and received it in return.

"The kindness from complete strangers was just amazing - from the church congregation who welcomed us into their service and prayed for us, to the women who prepared a lunch for us on the last day of the house build," Callahan-Henry reflected. "They came around to hug and thank each of us for helping one of their own. It truly was an amazing experience."

This follows the pattern of generosity at the district, with District 9 participating in "Stuff the Barrel" and a canned food drive every year.

MEET DAN SHIFFKA; HUMAN RESOURCE ANALYST 2



For the past four years, Dan Shiffka has coordinated PennDOT's seasonal programs. During the winter months, upwards of 900 temporary employees are hired. In the summer program, between student and adult positions, up to 1,700 hires are conducted, all of which are routed to Dan for approval.

Dan joined the commonwealth in the summer of 2015, being hired as an Administration and Management Trainee to oversee the seasonal programs. Since that time, he has progressed to a Human Resource Analyst 2. His duties include coordinating the majority of criminal background checks and reviews for seasonal hires each year, supplementary recruiting duties for the programs and heading the Department's participation in PHEAA's State Work-Study Program. He also manages the summer internship program, which while a part of the larger summer program, has increasingly become its own entity since being integrated into the NEOGOV system a few years ago.

Due to the frenetic pace that both programs inevitably reach each year owing to their volume of hiring activity, Dan jokingly considers it an achievement each time one program wraps up and the next one commences. However, in all seriousness, he stresses that credit for the continued success of the programs rightfully belongs in equal measures to all PennDOT employees who work with the programs, as counties and districts wade through hundreds of applications each year, conduct interviews

and take all the steps necessary to reach a hiring decision, which is then submitted to Dan for his final approval.

Dan lives right across the river from Harrisburg (in what should be a 10-minute commute) with his wife and two young boys. His dog is practically a third child with his obstinate need for frequent fresh air throughout each night, contributing more to Dan's fitful sleep than even his kids do! How does Dan recover from this chronic sleep debt? By taking each opportunity to stay up too late after the rest of the house has tucked in and either sticking his face in a book or pointing it at a TV screen. When his sons are awake, Dan will tip-toe down the hall to pick up a guitar before being discovered a minute later and having his practice session terminated when one of his children either squeezes the guitar neck as Dan plays it or takes it from him altogether. He also cherishes family outings and watching sports and engaging in them with the boys, particularly the 6-year old, as he is at that age! A native of the Wilkes-Barre-adjacent town of Nanticoke, he's not quite awed by the city of Harrisburg, but he's grateful for the convenience of having a theatre downtown in the Whitaker Center where he can either take the kids to a show or sneak out by himself for a few hours to see a top-tier comedian or two perform.

Recently, while doing some last-minute shopping on Christmas Eve, he ran into such a comic at the Capital City Mall, himself a native to the area visiting home for the holidays. While not prone to fanboying, Dan indulged in this for just a minute before heading into FYE for some whacky gummy candies to drop in his sons' stockings. Never considering himself sentimental or prone to being star-struck, this was nonetheless some seasonal magic.

WINTER HELP TURNS FULL TIME; MEET MARK CULP



Do you know where you were on November 4, 2013? Mark Culp remembers that date because it was his first day working for PennDOT. Culp was hired as a seasonal employee working as a Transportation Equipment Operator A (TEOA) and he worked one winter.

He was a self-employed logger for a decade before working for PennDOT and that is when he got his CDL. While driving, he was offered jobs in the sawmill area as a Log Buyer and a Forester. Culp worked his way up to a Procurement Manager and a Log Yard Supervisor. He did well for himself in the timber industry, but felt it was seasonal work and risky.

When PennDOT offered him a full-time position in October of 2014, he accepted. While he worked as a TEOA, he took advantage of any training that was offered. He never turned down an opportunity for personal growth and within two years, he was promoted to Supervisor Highway Foreman II. The last two

summers he has overseen a specialized crew for seal coat and paving as a Highway Foreman 3. Mark feels that his work ethic and steady training has paid off.

"Believe it or not," Culp says, "when you're plowing in Clarion County, there are truck drivers and others thanking you for what we do to keep their roads drivable in the winter."

Mark recalls a time that stands out in his memory. Last summer, a mom and her kids drove by his crew each day. Each time they passed, they would wave and smile. When the job was finished, Culp said the mom had stopped and handed him an envelope.

"It had drawings from the kids, of the set ups with flaggers and the equipment right down to the detail! Then a hand-written letter from the kids thanking us for making the road safe for them to travel with each of their signatures," Culp said.

Mark Culp doesn't miss his old days of working 70-80 hours per week year-round. If someone was considering a career at PennDOT, he thinks now is the time because, "...there are people retiring and the opportunities are endless right now!"