

# Operations Connection

## Message from the Director

Scott A. Rogers

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Last month I had the honor and privilege of saying some words at Rich Tetreault’s retirement party. Over the years Rich was my colleague, my Director, my supervisor and most importantly he became my friend. As is often the case when you work so much with somebody for so long, we became close and the friendship we developed transcended whatever was happening at work. True, Rich had an amazing career that was full of excitement, accomplishments and accolades. I’ll forever remember working with him throughout the Tropical Storm Irene response and recovery, but some of my favorite memories are catching up on life over a coffee, regardless of whether it was in the national life cafeteria or the duck blind. Rich will be missed at the agency, not just for his leadership but for his friendship. (See page 16 for some pictures of his retirement party.)

This got me thinking a bit and I wanted to take the opportunity to remind all of you that although we all have very important (and sometimes stressful) jobs upon which the traveling public depends, we must continue to perform our duties with tireless devotion and respectful commitment to our customers and each other. What’s really important is the people we are working next to every day, through thick and thin. I hope you will join me in taking a moment to appreciate the friendships we all develop through doing this work together and to be thankful for the bonds that are formed that will last a lifetime.

Serving the public via the Agency is a privilege and doing it with such an incredible group of people is an honor.

I hope you all have a Happy New Year and a Safe Winter Season.



## “Kudos!” from your fans... Continued

**Sent:** Monday, November 21, 2016 2:42 PM  
**To:** Roberts, Brian <[Brian.Roberts@vermont.gov](mailto:Brian.Roberts@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Compliment!!!

Hello Brian,  
 A resident from ([Wesont Rd., VT. 155 East Wallingford](#)) called with a compliment.  
 She said, whoever was plowing through the night and morning on this day, was the most **considerate** person in all the years she has lived there (Jct 155 & 140)  
 She could not say enough great things about this employee.  
 She said in the past, the drivers have rocked her right out of bed.  
 Darlene☺

*Darlene Ricketts  
 Administrative Assistant  
 State of Vermont - VTrans  
 Operations - District 3*

**From:** Ricketts, Darlene  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 14, 2016 11:03 AM  
**To:** Bride, Michael <**Subject:** Compliment!!!

Hello all,  
 A gentleman called and wanted to let us know what a good job that is being done. He says, he was in construction for years and knows all about these roads. He stated that he knows exactly what it takes to maintain them. He also acknowledged that our maintenance workers jeopardize their lives out there on the roads every day. He shared his personal point of view on any mishaps on snowy days, and that was that everyone should slow down!  
 Just thought you would all like to know,  
 Darlene

*Darlene Ricketts  
 Administrative Assistant  
 State of Vermont - VTrans  
 Operations - District 3*

**From:** Powers, Alison  
**Sent:** Monday, December 19, 2016 1:00 PM  
**To:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>; Gammell, Wayne <[Wayne.Gammell@vermont.gov](mailto:Wayne.Gammell@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Good plowing in Hinesburg

Hi Guys,  
 I want to report an example of excellent performance by one of your employees! Saturday morning around 11am, my husband and I plopped our two-year-old in a sled and went for a walk down the sidewalk of Hinesburg to the firehouse, where Santa was visiting. A VTrans plow was driving southbound on 116, and I moved over to block Hannah from the cold spray as it approached, but the plow driver noticeably slowed down as he went by us so we weren't sprayed at all! It was so thoughtful and observant of him, and very much appreciated by us.

Alison Powers, Staff Attorney  
 Vermont Department of Human Resources

**From:** May, Alan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2016 2:03 PM  
**To:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Front line

Scott:

Just a quick note about this weekend. My wife and I went to Colchester and shopped our way back to Montpelier. Most of the day was spent on the road. Working in a similar position for over ten years I know, or have heard plenty of comments about how the roads are being taken care of, versus some body's personal opinion on how too. **My hat goes off** to the men and women that were out there all week end. No matter where we were, nor what lane I drove we saw this people out there hard at work doing what they do best all weekend. Just wanted to pass this on so that both sides are always heard.

P.S When I say my hat goes off to these fine employees, as most know that doesn't happen very often. ☺

Safe travels and have a great Holiday.  
 Alan.

**From:** Raiche, Josiah  
**Sent:** Monday, December 19, 2016 6:00 AM  
**To:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Pleasantly surprised

Good morning,

I spent some time yesterday busting ruts in my driveway and given how wet it was I expected the roads would be a mess. My drive in was actually quite clean - only local roads were slick.

Thanks!

Josiah



## “Kudos!” from your fans

**From:** Lemieux, Andrew  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 22, 2016 10:06 AM  
**To:** Lafountain, Shawn <[Shawn.Lafountain@vermont.gov](mailto:Shawn.Lafountain@vermont.gov)>; King, Joey <[Joey.King@vermont.gov](mailto:Joey.King@vermont.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Snowplow Ride Along

Shawn & Joey,

Thank you for giving me a chance to ride along in a snow plow. I enjoyed the experience immensely & it was a great opportunity to see things from a perspective that I would not have had otherwise. On top of it all I learned a great deal about snowplowing that I would have never known.

Thank you for the experience!

Happy Holidays,

Andrew

Andrew Lemieux, E.I.T. | Civil Engineer I  
 Vermont Agency of Transportation

Susan Wrobleski  
 ([Susan.Wrobleski@Hitchcock.org](mailto:Susan.Wrobleski@Hitchcock.org)) sent a message using the contact form at <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/contact>.

A big thank you to all of the people plowing and salting route 91 (north between exit 7&10). It is safer on the road because of your presence, dedication and professionalism. I travel that section of road early every morning to get to work and feel more at ease once I spot you driving your truck. I wanted you to know that the work you do is very much appreciated.

Happy holidays,  
 regards,  
 Susan W.

**To:** [Tammy.Ellis@vermont.gov](mailto:Tammy.Ellis@vermont.gov)  
**Subject:** Great job roads crew!

Dear Roads Crew,

This email is a bit late but we wanted to say thank you for such a great job on the roads on Dec. 17th, a messy day of a snow storm. We had to travel from Lebanon NH to Burlington VT for our future daughter in law's bridal shower. We were very hesitant to even go because the wind and snow were howling that day.

As we set out, the roads and highway in NH were terrible. We saw cars off the road and there were inches of slippery snow on the roads. We almost turned around and went home.

Then we crossed into Vermont. What a difference. For the remainder of our trip, we had one lane clear down to pavement the whole way! Amazing!

Thank you roads crew and a special shout out to Tim Hebb! You all work so very hard and we appreciate your devotion and long hours.

Be safe out there and take care,  
 Deb and Dan Jantzen

**From:** May, Toni  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 28, 2016 11:30 AM  
**To:** Nichols, Bruce <[Bruce.Nichols@vermont.gov](mailto:Bruce.Nichols@vermont.gov)>; Morse, William <[William.Morse@vermont.gov](mailto:William.Morse@vermont.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Mendon sign crew

Good morning gentlemen

I just wanted to let all of you know that our Mendon sign crew made AOT look good last week when looking into the damage of an OBDS assembly that was involved in a car accident in Chittenden.

The business that called didn't know the extent of the damage to the signs but was worried they wouldn't be back up in time for the busy holiday weekend. I emailed Butch with a photo of the sign assembly and he and his crew went right over to assess the damage. The signs appeared to be in good condition so they replaced the posts and had the signs back up the same day that I was contacted about them and before the busy holiday weekend. Needless to say, the business was very happy (as I was) with how quickly the work was completed.

Thanks  
 Toni

## Projects

## Logistics



Jim Weston - Logistics - prepping our new parking lot at the Dill Building - as always with a "smile"



Our "temporary" parking which will be permanent and eventually come around the other side of the Dill building. For now we have gained 20 spaces.



Photos of the new District 4 White River 10-bay Maintenance Facility. This project is currently under construction and is due for completion in the spring.

This building will house the Operations staff and the current garage, which had a 2-bay addition last year, will become the Regional Mechanics Facility. The project began this fall with the installation of a new 8" waterline back to the main road, and is having the wall infills and roof put on. The work will continue inside throughout the winter. The total project cost is approximately \$2 million.

Brad McAvoy  
VTrans Facilities Manager

## Projects

### District 1 - VT Route 9 - Truck Tire Chain-Up Site - continued on page 6

In 2009, the Vermont General Assembly passed a law requiring trucks weighing over 26,000 lbs. to use tire chains providing there is adequate notice and an area for trucks to chain-up/chain-off is provided. This was primarily in response to TT units frequently getting stuck on the steep grades of Route 9 during winter storms.

This area of VT 9 proved challenging to find adequate parcels to convert to chain-up sites because of the narrow and steep valleys that Route 9 shares with the Roaring Branch River. After several years, VTrans finally negotiated a parcel of land from the Town of Bennington.

The Program Development Bureau designed a plan that would work for the site and the District developed a grading plan based on site conditions. The backside of the property had to be excavated to allow for positive drainage. This equated to about a 1' cut. Unfortunately, the cobbles and boulders placed on the site after T.S. Irene were larger than a foot so we had to over excavate and add additional dense graded gravel. The material cost alone for the gravel was approximately \$100,000. We hauled it ourselves in an attempt to keep costs down and Weaver Excavating handled all the grading.



## Projects

### continued from page 5 - District 1 - VT Route 9 - Truck Tire Chain-Up Site

Our own talented crew poured the concrete curb led by one of our Tech's who does concrete work on the side. We did that for the cost of materials only.

We had Boudoin Paving perform the fine grading and they paved the site. We placed 7 1/2" of asphalt and again we hauled the hot mix to save money. We bought it for a record low of \$59/Ton.

We used shoulder cuttings as topsoil and our new Regional hydro seeder got grass growing pretty quickly.

Total cost to date is around \$270,000.

In the spring we will still need to finish the permit-required landscaping. The Wilmington side is being handled by the former alignment of Route 9 and only minor signage and stenciling work was required to get that site up and running. The two sites have been fully functional all winter and many trucks have been observed putting their chains on before climbing the hill.

The success of this project is a testament to all of District 1 pulling together to get this important project done. My thanks goes out to everyone involved. Job well done!



# Projects

## District 9 - Barton

The town of Barton contacted us regarding a sight distance at the intersection of Nadeau Rd and VT 58. We performed a site visit and met with the town Road Foreman and property owner to discuss potential fixes, within a few days we had formulated a plan. The District would supply the excavator and provide flagging, while the town would supply their truck to haul material as well as seed and hay the bank upon completion. The property owner allowed some trees and shrubs to be cut back.

This project was a great example of a town, the district and a homeowner all communicating and working together to come up with an efficient, cost-effective solution to improve a safety hazard that has been an issue for 70 years( according to the homeowner). I think the biggest gain of the project was that vehicles traveling west on 58 can see vehicles exiting Nadeau RD much earlier and easier. It's not perfect and didn't solve the problem completely, however, it improved it and opened up the dialogue for the town to address it further by potentially raising Nadeau road, which would certainly add to the improvements accomplished with this project.



## ~Postables~

## Big Truck Day - Richmond

For the last couple of years, we have been asked to attend the Big truck Day in Richmond that happened this year on Saturday, October 15, 2016. District 5 supplied one plow truck driven by Linda Millette and one plow truck with our tow plow driven by Jody Bailey. It was a beautiful but cool day, they had a great turn out with over 1500 people attending. Our trucks as well as the other participants were well represented on this cool October day. One of our drivers said our trucks got a great review and by far best display said by parents. Kids had a blast in the trucks. Even mom and dad's took self-pictures as they sat in the trucks, and were excited to learn about the trucks. People see them go down the road but were amazed at all the controls that are in our trucks. It was a great turn out!

Brian wrote,

Thank you very much for your help with Richmond Big Truck Day. We had beautiful weather and a huge turnout. Over 1,500 people attended Saturday's event. Thanks for your continued support in making Richmond a vibrant and active community.

**Brian Godfrey**

P.E. Teacher

Richmond Elementary School

[Here is a video from BTD 2016](#)





## ~Postables~

**Women Can Do - VTTC - Randolph - continued on page 10**

On Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> the Operations was well represented at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual “Women Can Do” STEM & Trades Conference at Vermont Technical College in Randolph, VT.

Women Can Do is a one-day career immersion experience for 9-12th grade girls from across Vermont. It features dozens of hands-on workshops and action stations highlighting careers in the skilled trades and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields.

Hands-on workshops are led mostly by women professionals in the skilled trades or science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. At Women Can Do, girls may operate an excavator, weld, climb a fire ladder, build a robot, design a 3D model, create an online game, wield a chainsaw, extract DNA from cells, or change a tire. **More than 35 workshops** highlight careers in architecture and engineering, computer programming, green energy, natural resources, public safety and health, communications, trades, and other non-traditional careers for women. (<http://www.vtworksforwomen.org>)

As always there were many Agency personnel from various sections present, but Operations spearheads one of the more popular interactive skilled-trades workshops known as “Digging in the Dirt”. During the workshop girls are able to operate the loader, grader, backhoe and excavator under the guidance and tutelage of trained Vtrans operators. There is a fully equipped plow truck on sight for them to see, sit-in and experience the “blind spot” experiment as well as to interact with an actual operator and learn what it is like to be someone who is helping people get to where they are going on a daily basis. It is always a day well enjoyed by the girls and our staff alike; it is a real interactive experience. As female representation in Operations has grown we have been increasingly more able to allow the girls to interact with women who actually do these jobs so they can see it is a viable career option for themselves if they so choose. And they get to see the teamwork and camaraderie amongst our entire team from across the state, male and female, all working together to ‘get you there’.

Operations participants included – Peter Lynds, Tim Dubois, Tim Davis, Victoria Biller, Acacia Knight, Michelle Redmond, Henry Lefebvre, Paul Seaver, Jason Brooker, Nicole Pierpont, Derek Flint and Trevor Starr. Thank you all. I offer my apologies to anyone I may have forgotten and my appreciation to the many supervisors throughout the state who supported the success of the event by allowing their folks to be travel to Randolph for the day to participate and to everyone who helped coordinate getting equipment to the event. It was a real team effort!!



# ~Postables~

## continued from page 9 - Women Can Do - VTTC - Randolph

Hello wonderful Women Can Do instructors,

Thank you so much for all you did yesterday! I heard story after story of how amazing the workshops were, what excellent role models you are, and how valuable this day is to the students. I hope it was worthwhile for you, as well. You spent a lot of time preparing, traveling, teaching, and sometimes dealing with less-than-optimal rooms, equipment, and lunch. We appreciate all the ways you gave to the conference, and recognize that its success is due to your efforts and talents. Please forward this email to anyone who helped make the day happen and whose email address I don't have.

I didn't get a chance to meet each one of you, much to my disappointment, but I will thoroughly read your evaluations of the day. Please feel free to share any additional suggestions – we welcome any feedback that will help us improve the way the day happens.

With gratitude,  
Jen

Jen Roberts  
Girls Program Manager  
Vermont Works for Women



## ~Postables~

### Walk a Mile in our (Plow) Shoes

#### Walk a Mile in our (Plow) Shoes Program

If you have never ridden in a Snow Plow, now is your chance!



This winter sure has started out with a bang! MOB District folks are out on the roads plowing snow, salting, sanding and ensuring all of us get where we need to go safely. Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in the Walk a Mile in our (Plow) Shoes program during our biggest storm of the year (so far). What a cool experience!

Upon arrival at the Orange Garage, I received a warm welcome from the garage supervisor, Joseph Doucette who showed me around a bit and introduced me to his team. After some brief safety instructions (he had let me know in advance that I needed to wear steel toe or composite boots and to dress warmly with gloves), he handed me a safety vest to wear in case I needed to be on the side of the road. Let's hope not!

Sandy Balzanelli from District 7 gave me a warm greeting and invited me to "climb" into the truck. With a side wing, that proved more challenging than climbing into my SUV. The safety instructions I had received from Rob Gentle really came in handy...keep three points of contact with the truck (hands and feet, head doesn't count). Thanks Rob!

Continued of page 12

## ~Postables~

### Walk a Mile in our (Plow) Shoes

Continued from page 11

Once I was safely aboard, Sandy and I headed out to plow Route 302. Particularly cool since I've ridden my motorcycle on this road for years and felt like I knew every square inch of that road. I quickly learned that Sandy understand lots more about this road than I do. Throughout our 1 ½ hour ride, she shared lots of information with me about what she was doing and why. We talked about the different objectives she has when plowing, focusing on the center of the road on one trip, focusing on the edges of the road on others, when they salt, how much and why. How they slow down when they see folks outside (so they don't bury them), different types of tar, different areas of the road that are narrower when meeting tractor trailers, the differences between plowing during the day vs. night, Interstate vs. secondary road plowing, even when and where they slow down because a house is close to the road, particularly when it's slushy. Such great information, I'll never look at 302 the same way again. She even let me raise and lower the side wing (in the parking lot of course), but don't tell anybody.

We returned to the garage so that Sandy could go home and rest for a few hours, it had already been a long day and she needed to go back out on the road that evening for another shift.

By participating in this program, I learned three things:

1. People be crazy! Slow down, you don't need to pass a plow truck or drive on snowy roads with Summer tires.
2. These plow trucks are big! Given them plenty of room on the road.
3. Our plow drivers are very dedicated! They love keeping our roads safe and really welcome the opportunity to share with us what they do.

Many thanks to District 7 for sharing their knowledge and their time with me. I'll be a better winter driver for the experience. If you would like to participate in the program, you can connect with Karen Brouillette at [Karen.brouillette@vermont.gov](mailto:Karen.brouillette@vermont.gov). She will coordinate making contact with the appropriate District. Once you have the name of the garage supervisor, watch the weather, coordinate with your Supervisor and schedule a time that works.

A big thank you to all of the District teams who spend countless hours keeping the roads open and safe for the rest of us. What you do makes a difference every day, even when at times it might go unnoticed. Stay safe and know you are greatly appreciated!

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

Christine Hetzel, VTrans Training Center

## Operations Employees of the Month

Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for November is Michael Yannotti**, a Technician out of the Bennington District office in the Southwest Region, District 1.

Mike's nomination from a coworker said in part: *"Since Michael has been here he's maintained a positive & uplifting attitude. He has a willingness to help all of his co-workers no matter how big or small the job may be or how long it will take, anything from taking out the trash or cleaning out the refrigerator in the office to operating equipment (even a shovel) on a job site. Mike is a great team player, he gets along very well with everyone who comes in contact with him within the district as well as within the general public and contractors he always treats everyone in a kind and respectful manner. Michael has a terrific "yes we can" attitude as well as a personality that truly shines. He was involved in the very successful team effort on the North Bennington foot bridge project in June 2016 in addition to being instrumental on the Woodford CHAINUP project over the last couple of months. Mike should also be recognized for his willingness to volunteer his CDL for the maintenance and operations during our winter months. Michael was also commended for helping the Traffic Signal group in August when he was able to successfully follow the phone directions given to safely put the Aldi's pedestrian cross walk light into flash mode until the crew could make it down the following day. He is often requested by D1 work crews on specific jobs due to his willingness to lend a helping hand, his work ethic, experience and knowledge of equipment operation, safety procedures/processes, as well as his continued commitment and dedication. He is definitely a role model and a huge asset to everyone here in District 1. Please help us recognize Michael's hard work and enthusiastic efforts."*

Please join me in congratulating Mike. His daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by his coworkers.

Scott



Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

We did not receive any nominations from staff for Employee of the Month over this past period. Typically this means that the MOB will not have an employee of the month, because nominations for this award come solely from the employees.

However, this month the MOB Managers decided to do something a bit different in the absence of an employee nomination. We decided to recognize an employee who is retiring on December 24<sup>th</sup> and has held a special place in the MOB's heart for a very long time.

**Therefore, I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for December is Richard Tetreault.**

*Rich began his career as a temporary employee in District 9 out of the Derby garage well over 30 years ago, where he proved to be a very hard worker and darn good with a hand shovel. Rich's career took him many places from there. Among his jobs over the years he was a bridge engineer, the Chief Bridge Inspector, the DTA in District 7, the Director of the Program Development Division, the Chief Engineer and the Deputy Secretary. And at every stop along the way he believed in, and displayed, the respectful workplace culture that this employee of the month award is all about. Rich has always come to work with a smile on his face. He's always the first to try to help if you have an issue, and he's always the first to ask how you're doing. He is truly a pleasure to work with, and we wish him a grand and glorious retirement.*

Please join me in congratulating Rich. His daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by his coworkers.

Scott

Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for January is Melissa Champney**, the District Info Tech out of the Colchester District office in the Northwest Region, District 5.

Melissa's nomination from a coworker said in part: *"I would like to nominate Melissa Champney who works in the District 5 office. This Woman is amazing. Along with all her tasks at the office she will drop everything to help anyone of us, from Supervisors to the TMWs like me. She has unbelievable computer skills and is always so happy! She keeps our safety meeting going and on track. She is like a Guardian angel to all the D5 employee's. It would mean a lot to all of us if you would consider her for employee of the month."*

Please join me in congratulating Melissa. Her daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by her coworkers.

Scott

## Announcements & Recognition

I am pleased to report that Dan Ehlers has been hired full time to work for the North Montpelier garage. He starts with them on Monday 12/12/16. Dan started as a temporary with us in 2014. He has been a dedicated employee to the bridge maintenance division. Dan took it upon himself to obtain his CDL this summer to qualify for the journeyman position. Please join me in congratulating Dan and wish him good luck as he transfers to a full time position with the Agency of Transportation.

Dan, you have been a valuable asset to the team, and while I hate to lose you as an employee, we wish you nothing but the best in your new career.

Thank You,  
 Michael Labounty, BMW V  
 NE Bridge Maintenance Supervisor

District 5 welcomes Kristopher McAvoy to District 5 as our new Tech II. Kris is a Vermont Tech graduate and has worked summers for Materials and Research as a hot mix plant inspector.

Welcome aboard Kris.

Richard Hosking, P.E.



"Moblallow Budget Fluff"

I'm pleased to announce that Wayne Gammell has accepted the position of Director of the Finance and Administration Division. As a dedicated state employee for nearly 35 years, Wayne possesses a wealth of Agency knowledge and experience and is known as someone who supports his staff, relishes working in a team environment, believes in getting things done, and who, as the saying goes, bleeds orange. Many of you know Wayne as a committed employee and leader of the Maintenance and Operations Bureau. Wayne holds a degree in Business Administration and Organizational Change. I have tasked him with working together with the F&A management team to focus on customer service, process improvement, and workforce development. His first day will be January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please join me in congratulating Wayne on his new assignment.

Joe Flynn



Above - Certificate of Appreciation presented to District 7 worked with Creative Workforce Solutions to get people (some still in High School) into garages as interns to expose them to what & how we do things. Some go on to get hired as summer temps and we work with them to get their CDLs. We recently hired a person to a permanent TMW position.

Welcome back Joe Flynn - Secretary of Transportation

## Personnel Updates

### New Hires, Promotions & Transfers

D1 - **Hunter Bovey** - Transportation Apprentice, E. Dorset, **Colby Harwood** - Transportation Journeyman, Readsboro

D5 - **Kristopher McAvoy** - Tech II, Colchester

D9 - **Jason Sevigny**, Tech IV, Derby

Bridge - **Nick Garbacik** - Bridge Maintenance Worker IV

### Retirements

D2 - **David Jarvis** - 16 Years

D4 - **Garold Jamieson** - 30 Years, **Henry Marcy** - 30 Years, **Tracy Smith** - 30 Years

D8 - **Foster Sherman** - 15 Years

Bard Owl  
at Dewey  
Building



## Years of Service

D1 - **Peter White** - 10 Years

D2 - **Sandra Dixon** - 5 Years, **Michael Furgat** - 10 Years, **Marc Pickering** - 5 Years

D7 - **Joseph Doucette Jr** - 5 Years, **Kristin Driscoll** - 5 Years, **Kevin Sargent Jr** - 10 Years

D8 - **Daniel Bruyette** - 30 Years, **Brad Carriere** - 10 Years, **Thomas Jarvis II** - 5 Years, **Foster Sherman** - 15 Years

CG - **James Sabens** - 10 Years

TSMO - **Greg Fox** - 15 Years, **Amy Gamble** - 25 Years, **Mark Gerrish** - 10 Years, **Derek Lyman** - 10 Years

VTTC - **Christine Hetzel** - 10 Years, **Jo Ann Stevens** - 20 Years



Together  
Working ^ to get you there!

Operations Connection is on the web:  
<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/operations/newletters>  
January 1st; April 1st; July 1st, and October 1st

Questions/ Comments/ Suggestions  
Karen Brouillette, Administrative Services Coordinator  
Karen.brouillette@vermont.gov

## ~ Celebration ~

The MOB wishes to extend our warmest wishes to Rich for a Long, Healthy and Happy Retirement.



### *A distinguished career:*

Rich began his career in public service in the mid-1980s as a temporary state employee serving as a “utility worker” for \$3.61 per hour. Upon receiving a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Vermont in 1985, Rich was hired as a permanent employee.

By 2009 he rose to the position of Director/Chief Engineer for the Vermont Agency of Transportation, after serving in other leadership roles since February 2005. He ascended to the role of Deputy Secretary in September 2015, which accentuated a career involving a wide array of diverse and interesting assignments.

Rich spent his entire 31-year professional career with the Agency of Transportation, working in many different parts of the organization, including:

- Resident Engineer of Bridge and Airport projects;
- Engineer in a design squad in the Structures Section;
- Chief Bridge Inspector, responsible for inspecting town and state-owned bridges and culverts across the state;
- Maintenance Programs Engineer, managing the Agency’s Buildings Program, ITS Program, District Engineering Support, and Local Grant Programs for Class II Town Highways and Structures;
- District Transportation Administrator, responsible for all highway maintenance activities throughout Vermont in the North East Kingdom;
- Agency’s Qualified Representative (State Support Function 1) during activation of the Emergency Operations Center at Vermont Emergency Management; and State Public Assistance Officer for FEMA disaster declarations.



### HQ Annual Holiday Party - Dill Building



"Viani Claus" reading "'Twas the Week Before Christmas" at the annual HQ holiday party held at the “Dill” Building in Berlin.

Congratulations also go to Chris MacRitchie for winning the “ugly Christmas sweater challenge” for his hot pink “T-rex in Santa hat” sweater.



# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

**Official AOT (Operations) Labor Management Minutes**  
**Fall Meeting, November 9, 2016**  
**Approved by Labor & Management on 11/18/2016**

**Present for Labor:** Jason Health (Chair, Georgia Garage D8), Shawn Ainsworth (Vice Chair, North Montpelier Garage D7), Peter Boyd (Marlboro Garage D1), Brian Labounty (Dummerston Garage D2), Nick Davis (The Fort D5), Alan Pion (Barton Garage D9), Dave Van Deusen (Senior Union Rep-AOT), Adam Norton (VSEA Analyst).

**Absent From Labor:** Brad Carriere (Morrisville Garage D8), Diane Dargie (Lyndon Garage D7-filling in for vacant Bridge Crew seat), Justin Irish (Chimney Corners Garage-Central Garage).

**Present From Management:** Scott Rogers (Director), Wayne Gammell (Deputy Director), Ken Valentine (Superintendent of Central Garage), Todd Law (State Maintenance Engineer), Christine Hetzel (Program Manager-AOT Training Center).

### 1.) Keeping an eye on our issues:

Management would like to discuss with Labor how we all follow up on issues and resolutions as discussed at Labor Management. Do we circle around enough to make sure we are all following through? Management, for example, asks Labor what was the resolute of our discussions about “no wasting good wood.”

**Discussion:** Management’s Ken Valentine suggested that it would be useful to review past agenda items at each meeting to make sure the agreed resolutions was implemented by both Labor and Management. Discussion ensued. Specifically concerning not wasting good wood, Labor reported that it appears good wood is no longer being wasted. One Labor delegate reported that the guys in his Garage tossed some good wood over a bank, and was later ordered to go back to retrieve it. Together all were pleased that the good wood was ultimately retrieved (as it should be). After further discussion, both parties agreed that mutual accountability is important.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Looking forward, each Labor Management meeting will double back to review past recent agenda items/resolutions to confirm that both Labor and Management did the agreed upon follow-through and that the issue was adequately resolved.

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## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

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### 2.) Wage Comparison concerning AOT workers vs Town workers:

VSEA Analyst Adam Norton has been working with Management's Ernie Patnoe on comparing the wage and benefit data concerning state AOT workers in relation to town workers. Labor will be happy to share the findings, and looks forward to a discussion concerning next step (if any).

**Discussion:** Labor's Adam Norton provided his findings to Management. Boiled down, the data demonstrates that on average the wages/benefits of State workers is *lower* than Town workers upon hiring, but significantly *higher* as Seniority progresses. Specifically an Apprentice is hired on with the State at about \$3.10 an hour *less* than the Town. A Journeyman is hired at \$1.77 an hour *less* than the Town. However, a Journeyman at the end of their career will make \$2.82 an hour *more* than the equivalent with the Town. Further, a Master who works for the State, by then end of their career, will be making \$6.01 *more* an hour than their equivalent in the Town. For AOT Motor Equipment Mechanics I & II, they start off \$2.63 *less* than at the Town, but will end their career \$5.48 *higher* than the Town. Of course these higher end of career totals also translate into higher retirement compensation for the rest of their lives as well. And on all accounts, wages aside, the benefits between the State and Town workers are comparable. Labor observed that that these findings are in-line with the reported difficulties, in recent years, recruiting new workers to the State. Management pointed out that while recruitment has been a challenge in recent years, this fall there are only (about) 20 vacancies in the Garages (about half of what existed this time last year-when recruitment bonuses were offered). Labor asked Management if, given these findings, there is any interest from Management in seeking a market factor adjustment to bring some of these starting wages up. Management indicated that the fact that we are doing better than the Towns over the course of a career makes such a move unlikely. Management also stated that there are times when they can hire someone in range, therefore boosting their starting pay, although doing this, when another qualified but less experienced applicant exists, is not typically possible.

**Resolution:** State AOT workers make less in starting pay in comparison to Town workers, but significantly more over the course of their career. By extension, State workers have better compensation in their retirement. Management will use this data in future efforts aimed at recruiting quality workers. [~~Note: Attached to these Minutes is the full wage comparison report.~~]

*(Report not included in this publication)*

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### 3.) AOT Training Center:

Management would like to have VTTC Manager Christine Hetzel address the committee to give an update on the Pathways to Supervision pilot class, and to talk about the newly formed Technical Branch.

**Discussion:** Management's Christine Hetzel began by discussing the new Supervision trainings. Part of this training aims to encourage workers to act differently at job sites prior to seeking a promotion to a Supervisory Unit position (taking on more responsibility, being more focused, a leader, etc.). These trainings will not only teach how to conduct an effective interview, but also how to do a good interview as the subject. It was also stated that the Training Center intends to do trainings aimed at sharpening skills relevant to the weather conditions and job duties associated with the season just ahead. In general, Management stated that an important element of the Training Center is that it aims to help employees develop, document, and work towards their own individual career goals. Management affirmed that it wants to help staff be active participants in their own (and our common) success. Christine also pointed out that the new online registration process for classes allows workers to put themselves on a waiting list for any given class. Management also stated that local District Admins have been trained to train Garage workers on how to navigate the online registration process. By the end of 2016, all Garage workers will have been trained in this regards. In addition, moving the registration and tracking (of who has done what training and when) to an online system will also mean that individual workers will have their own account which they can access from a computer. From this account they will be able to see what courses they have taken, what they are signed up for, and will be able to print their own transcripts (for State job applications/interviews/etc.). Labor expressed that they sometimes hear that workers will request trainings, but will be denied these opportunities by Management. Management responded by informing Labor that the new online registration form *requires* Managers to provide specific reason why any given worker was denied an opportunity to take a class. Those reasons will be observable, as needed, by upper-Management. In this way frivolous denials will be observed, and patterns of unreasonable denials will become impossible to mask. Labor expressed firm support for such a system. Discussion progressed to more general topics involving the Training Center. During this discussion Labor and Management further agreed that as the Training Center program continues to mature, it is desirable that how one moves up the career ladder becomes more defined based on required trainings, etc..

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**Agreed Upon Action:** Management has made the registration process for trainings available online via computer. Managers will have to provide specific comments as to 'why' if a worker is denied training. These comments will also be online, will be accessible to upper-Management, and will need to be rational. Both Labor and Management agree that an overall goal should be making the career ladder, largely defined by trainings, experience, etc.. This will be a topic of discussion at a future Labor Management meeting.

#### 4.) On Equipment Committees:

Labor would like to point out how these committees are formed in D1 & D3, whereby all Equipment Specialist serve (with input from Mechanics), and suggest that this may be a good way to organize the committees in other Districts. Labor would also like to suggest that these committees meet once every 6 months.

**Discussion:** Labor's Peter Boyd reported that the recent Equipment Committee meeting in D1/D3 went very well. Peter stated that instead of 'volunteers' all the Equipment Specialists attended. Having the Equipment Specialist all present lead to a very informed conversation. Prior to the meeting Peter stated his passed around a paper asking the folks in his area Garages to write down topics of concern that they would like him to bring up. All told Labor suggested that this good experience in D1/D3 may be a model for Equipment Committees in other Districts/Regions. Management was appreciative to hear how well this meeting worked. After much discussion Labor and Management agreed that this model, meeting every 6 months, should be tried in the other Districts/Regions.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Management agreed with Labor to replicate the D1/D3 model for all District/Region Equipment Committees. Equipment Committees will now be composed of all the Equipment Specialists (with input from the Mechanics). Equipment Specialists will be encouraged pass out a paper requesting relevant ideas and concerns from the folks in their area Garages prior to the meeting. Meetings will take place twice a year (one before Snow Season, one in the spring).

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### 5.) Defeating Discrimination In The Garages:

Management would like to provide Labor with more feedback concerning the Labor proposal to conduct mandatory Union trainings on this subject.

**Discussion:** Management reported that it has not yet processed all the feedback collective from relevant Managers concerning this proposal. Management apologized for this delay, and requested that the agenda item be tabled until the next meeting. Labor agreed to this request.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Tabled until next Labor Management meeting.

### 6.) A Predictable System of Garage to Garage Transfers:

Labor would like to continue the conversation in regards to what a uniform statewide system of transfers could look like. Since our last committee meeting Labor, as agreed, provided Management with the language the Corrections Contract has concerning transfers. Note that Labor is supportive of Seniority playing a strong role in any system which may be created. This is just a discussion. Any official creation of an official system of transfers would go through Labor's Bargaining Teams, and Management's Department of Labor Relations.

**Discussion:** Previous to this meeting Labor provided Management with essentially the same language the Corrections Unit already has in their Contract regarding facility to facility transfers. Among other things, this language provides that when an opening at a different location occurs, before Management can hire for a position, workers (who have the same job title/position) will be afforded the option of transferring into the position if 1. their latest Performance Evaluations are Satisfactory and above, 2. that they have not received Discipline above a Verbal Reprimand over the course of the last two years, 3. that they are not currently being Investigated for alleged misconduct, and 4. that they have not applied for and received a transfer over the last two years. In Corrections, when such conditions are met, the worker with the most Seniority automatically gets the transfer. Labor indicated that they would like to see a system like this implemented (and put into the Contract). Management's Wayne Gammell indicated that he would not want to see Seniority be the ruling factor. Wayne stated that there may be circumstances whereby a hard-working, less Senior, worker should get the transfer over a more experienced worker who may not be as good of an employee.

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Labor countered by saying that under this proposal no one with an Unsatisfactory Performance Evaluation would qualify for a transfer, and that in Labor's mind Seniority should count for more than it does in AOT. Management also stated that they do not want to see the process for filling positions become more bureaucratic and time consuming. Labor agreed with Management that any new system of transfers should seek to make the process as efficient as possible. Much discussion followed. Both Labor and Management heard each other out, and agreed to consider this topic further. If possible, both sides will work to refine their views on transfers in order to come to as many points of agreement as possible. However, since Management is not presently willing to make Seniority (in and of itself) the controlling factor, and since Labor would like to see Seniority be the controlling factor, it may not be possible to come to a mutually agreeable position until next year's round of Contract Bargaining begins.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management will continue to give thought to each other's concerns, and will work hard to agree about as much as they can in regards to transfers before Contract Negotiations begin (again) in 2017. This issue will likely be addressed again at future Labor Management meetings.

### 7.) AOT T-Shirts:

Labor would like to briefly address the lateness of such T-Shirts as is experienced in some Districts.

**Discussion:** Labor stated that shirts/sweatshirts (as are provided for in the Contract) are late in coming in some Districts. Management stated that they would talk with the DTA and figure out why there are delays. The shirts/sweatshirts will be delivered to all workers entitled to them under the Contract.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Management will talk with the DTA's to find out why shirts/sweatshirts have been delayed in some Districts. All workers eligible for these items under the Contract will receive them.



# ~VTTC News~

## News from the VTrans Training Center (VTTC)

The VTTC would like to wish all our coworkers and program partners a very safe and prosperous new year! We are looking forward to assisting you in meeting your learning and career goals in 2017.. Looking for a training topic not currently offered? Let us know and we will work with you to develop or locate the training you need to be successful in your role today as well as in the future.

### Safety & Health Branch:

For CY 2017, the monthly CSA 55 class for new employees will continue to be scheduled, alternating between Berlin and Mendon locations.

Chainsaw Training can be requested as needed with trainers located in D8, D7 and D9 in the North and in D4 in the South. These are conducted within the requesting Region or District.

Confined Space Training will be offered in the Sept-Oct timeframe. This will cover how spaces are categorized – Permit-Required or not. These will be located in each Region.

The Excavation Training for Competent Persons will continue the established weekly classes from late July to early September around the state.

First Aid Training is available via trainers in D8, D7, D9 and D4 currently, with D1/D3 soon to have trainers getting certified to provide this class.

LOTO training will continue this May/June as needed and as time allows.

The roll-out of the new Safety for Supervisors is scheduled for April, 2017. We will cover the responsibilities of Supervisors according to OSHA with mock VOSHA conferences.

All Safety and Health training classes are reviewed periodically throughout the year to determine any need for updates, clarifications, or other changes.

Camille Erwin, Healthy and Safety Officer , (802) 595-1636

### Technical Branch:

The technical branch, with the help of other staff, is currently working on an AVL Tutorial and MATS Tutorial. These “online”, self-serve trainings will be available through the Learning Management System (LMS) early in 2017.

This new approach to interactive training is very exciting and we look forward to your feedback. The AVL Tutorial will be finished in the beginning of January and the MATS Tutorial available by Spring. Other trainings the technical branch is working on are a TAMS guidebook, welding/cutting, storm clean up, Workzone training, Simulator/Excavator training in D3, video trainings including videos of section leads, and a lines and levels training. This new branch of the VTTC is up and running and focused on meeting your training needs.

Lance Duquette, Technical Branch Manager, (802) 751-0214

### Employee Development Branch:

We were very excited to kick off the new Pathway to Supervision training in September, 2016!

This five-day course is designed to deliver the fundamentals of supervisory responsibilities. The program is for those looking to advance their careers, team and crew leaders, and specialists within the Agency of Transportation. This course is a foundation program and consists of two main segments:

1. Supervisory roles and expectations, how to foster an environment that motivates employees to excel and communicate effectively
2. Using strength based assessment to develop your career and be a successful role model and leader.

**The Spring session starts on March 24 and continues on, April 6, April 20, May 5 and May 18. Participants need to be able to attend all 5 days. There is still time to register. <https://vermont.csod.com/samldefault.aspx?oid=2>**

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# ~VTTC News~

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## Congratulations to our first group to complete this new training.



*L-R Back row: Trey Polk, Jonathan Griffin, Peter Pochop, Josh Martineau, Pierre Lamarche, Jamie Dearmin, Nichole Pierpont; front row: Doug Bowles, Jody Baily, Colleen Montague (Employee Development Branch Manager), Tammy Kelly, Flo Smith, Gary Sweeny, Andrea Proulx, Denise Safford, Ashley Barnhart, Bonnie Davis, Michael Yannotti, Kristin Driscoll, Jason Sevigny.*

### Upcoming Learning Opportunities:

Engaging Your Audience with Finesse – 2-Day training January 10 and 24

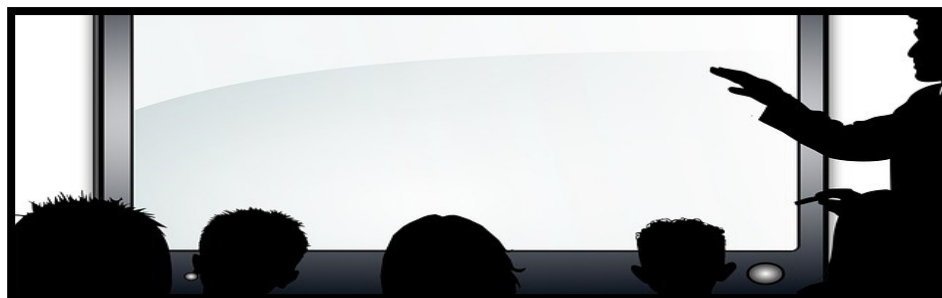
Adobe Pro DC – January 25

Excel Formulas & Functions – ½ day training February 7

Excel Tips & Tricks – ½ day training February 7

Change Management (bid review and contract development underway), first classes will likely take place in February.

Colleen Montague, Employee Development Branch Manager, (802) 777-2654



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# ~VTTC News~

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## Learning Management System (LMS) Update

The VTTC development team continues to focus on supporting our users and fine tuning the new Learning Management System.

As a reminder, we recently added an e-learning module to help answer questions. After you sign into the system: <https://vermont.csod.com/samldefault.aspx?ouid=2> click on the “Browse Trainings” icon toward the bottom of your screen.

Click on “Type” and scroll down to “LMS Tutorial”

You can then launch the new e-learning module and work at your own pace to watch a demonstration on areas that might be of interest.

This tutorial will be added to your transcripts and you can return to it as often as you need.

**LMS Tutorial**  
Online Class - VTrans Training Center (VTTC)  
A tutorial about the Learning Management System.

**Supervisors** – You will receive an email notifying you when one of your team have requested a training. *Please provide approvals as timely as possible, otherwise your employee might not secure a spot in the training and be placed on the waiting list. Many of our courses continue to sell out!*

We are here to support your career development and learning, let us know how we can help!

Email: [AOT.HWYMOBVTTCRegistration@vermont.gov](mailto:AOT.HWYMOBVTTCRegistration@vermont.gov) Phone: 802-828-3768