

Operations Connection

Message from the Director

Scott A. Rogers

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Happy New Year! Well, it's been quite a winter so far, with a few tricky storms and some dramatic temperature swings. But I suppose that's winter in Vermont. Obviously, this time of year makes us think about plowing and salting. It makes others think about skiing and snowboarding. Others can't wait to get out ice fishing. And still others are thinking dreamily about spring and warmer weather. And this time of year – the New Year – makes many people reflect on the past and look to the future. This is the time of year that thoughts turn to resolutions. What can we do differently in the coming year than we did in the past year? How can we improve ourselves? What can we change for the better?

Well, 2014 certainly brought quite a bit of change here at VTrans. So I'd be pretty happy if 2015 brought some stability. But that doesn't mean I can't make a few resolutions. Some will be work related, and some won't be. And not all of them will be serious. But without further ado, here we go:

I resolve to do more of my "district work days". Spending time in the garages continues to be my absolute favorite part of my job. And unfortunately I wasn't able to do as much in 2014 as I would have liked.

I resolve to be more patient with Yankee fans. For I know that they can't help themselves.

I resolve to limit how many organizational changes happen in the MOB in 2015.

I resolve to eat a bit less. (Sorry Bruce and Trevor, I know this will shock you.) But I'm thinking 2 trips through the buffet line instead of 3.

I resolve to take the CDL class once the VTTC offers it. I'd love to be able to drive (legally) during a "district work day".

I resolve to shoot better on opening day of duck season. Maybe this will do the trick. Maybe all these years all I needed to do to fix my lousy aim on opening day was to make a resolution?

I resolve to visit the Mendon garage and Chef Tommy for breakfast in 2015. This has become a tradition so it's kind of a gimme as far as resolutions go. And as long as I only make 2 trips through the chow line I won't violate my earlier resolution.

I resolve to continue to work with my management team to do our best to support our staff. We've got the best team in State Government, by far. And that's something I don't see changing any time soon...

That ought to do it for now. Wishing you all a healthy and happy 2015.

Be safe,
Scott



“Kudos!” from your fans

Dr. and Mrs. Leigh Smith
5 Riverside Lane
South Royalton, Vermont 05068

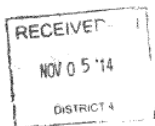
Tammy Ellis, District Transportation Administrator
221 Beswick Drive
White River Junction, Vermont 05001

Dear Ms. Ellis:

We wish to extend to all the workers who helped on the installation of guardrails bordering our neighborhood in South Royalton our deep appreciation for a job well done. The organization of the many facets of the operation on our very busy stretch of Route 14 was flawless. The job proceeded efficiently and quickly. All of the many workers involved were courteous and there was very little disruption of traffic. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the surveyors, the White River crew, and the Royalton crew for a beautifully executed highway project.

Yours truly,

Leigh and Paula Smith



From: Brassard, Trini
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2014 4:27 PM
To: Rogers, Scott; Gammell, Wayne; Law, Todd; Ellis, Tammy; Kinney, Jerold
Subject: Derek Flint

I would like to take a minute to share a story I heard today. A young mother was going to work this morning with her daughter. She hit a slippery patch and spun around leaving her with a need for some help to get back on the road but no damage. She was also quite shook up. Derek was the first one to come upon her, he stopped to see if she was alright and got her back on the road with a quick "push" (We all know a push from Derek is like a push from two to three guys)! She explained it as a huge relief when a big guy with a smiling face got out of the truck.

While I am sure it was a learning experience for her, it was nice to hear that a VTrans driver took the couple minutes to give her some comfort and get her going! Having known Derek for years I am sure it was nothing extraordinary to him, but to her it was and that is what helps show the good side of our crew!!

From: Jeff Wright
[mailto:jeffmwright@myfairpoint.net]
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 7:30 PM
To: Perron, Dale
Cc: LLC (energized@metrocast.net) 'Energized Line Const
Subject: Sweet Tree Project and RT114 Maintenance

I want to thank you for your Island Pond team's attention to RT114 and trying to keep the roads clean for us so we can work on the Sweet Tree project. We really appreciate the help. We have 8 miles of line to build before the end of the year and we are fighting Mother Nature and getting beat every day lately! Thanks for the help on the behalf of VEC and Energized Line Construction! Your team is doing a great job!

Jeff Wright
COO - Vermont Electric Coop



“Kudos!” from your fans ... Continued

From: "Searles, Brian" <Brian.Searles@state.vt.us>
Date: December 3, 2014 at 8:36:37 AM EST
To: Barb Walker <hagbarb@aol.com>
Cc: AOT - Executive Staff <AOT-ExecutiveStaff@state.vt.us>
Subject: Re: Thank you to VTrans
 Thank you so much! I am sharing this with the people who are out there making this happen.

Safe Travels,

Brian

Brian R. Searles
 Secretary of Transportation
 Vermont Agency of Transportation
 Montpelier, VT
 802-828-2657

On Dec 3, 2014, at 8:27 AM, "Barb Walker" <hagbarb@aol.com> wrote:

I am an ASL interpreter who drives long distances often to interpret for groups of people who are local to the area. I have to get there or they wouldn't hire me in the winter.

I always leave early, drive slowly, and have a Subaru with winter tires. But the real reason I always get to the job is the wonderful job done by VTrans.

Today I left St J with several inches of snow, below freezing temps and a prediction if possible freezing rain or sleet. The roads were handled perfectly. Plowed and a strip of salt and sand but not completely plowed leaving some snow which could give traction in the chance we would get icing. Trucks were spreading but not plowing further. I was able to safely drive 40mph to Hardwick where the temp had risen so less chance of ice. By the time I got to Wolcott the plows were down and scraping the roads bare of snow as the temps were even warmer. What a well orchestrated treatment.

And last year I drove two days a week from St J to Springfield or Brattleboro throughout the winter and again was very impressed with how well the roads were handled. Thank you and thanks to VTrans and please thank the drivers for me. I know winters are long and not easy for them. With much appreciation, Barb Walker.

From: vt-cms-support@egov.com
[mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com] On Behalf Of awillardrn@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2014 7:33 AM
To: Blake-Sayers, Eileen; Filkorn, Erik
Subject: [General Questions and Comments] Thank you!

Alison Willard sent a message using the contact form at <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/contact>.

12/10/2014

I just wanted to say thank you to the employees of VT Trans that were involved in clearing I-91 through last night's storm. I live in Barnet, but work at Dartmouth. It was a long slow commute home last night on the snow covered interstate and I wasn't looking forward to trekking back down this morning. I was very pleasantly surprised to be driving on a completely clear interstate for the majority of my commute! So, THANK YOU so much to all VT Trans employees involved. Your hard work is very much appreciated!!

Sincerely,
 Alison Willard

From: vt-cms-support@egov.com [<mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com>] On Behalf Of John.Mejia@gmx.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 10, 2014 8:46 AM
To: Blake-Sayers, Eileen; Filkorn, Erik
Subject: [General Questions and Comments] Road Crews Doing a Fantastic Job

John Mejia sent a message using the contact form at <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/contact>.

Just wanted to take a moment to thank Vtrans and especially the frontline plow drivers for a fantastic job keeping everyone safe as they travel through this mess today. Please share my gratitude for their commitment and professionalism - without them VT would be unlivable!



“Kudos!” from your fans ... Continued

From: Donovan, Barbara
Sent: Friday, December 12, 2014 7:49 AM
To: Rogers, Scott
Subject: crews

Scott, I meant to send you this last week before the storm but... I've been to a few meetings in the last two weeks and every time I mention I'm from VTrans I get all this unsolicited feedback about what a good job your crews are doing and how happy everyone is with their efforts. Thanks to all. I think of them every time I drive back home on Rt. 2.

Barbara Donovan

From: Senecal, Carl
Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2014 10:22 AM
To: Perron, Dale; Clifford, Shauna
Subject: Fwd: Good job!

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chenail, Julie"
 <Julie.Chenail@state.vt.us>
Date: December 18, 2014 at 8:42:50 AM EST
To: "Senecal, Carl"
 <Carl.Senecal@state.vt.us>
Cc: "Lewis, Tom"
 <Tom.Lewis@state.vt.us>
Subject: Good job! (Steve Mitchell)

Hi Carl,
 I drive thru the Danvilles on Rte 2 each morning, and this morning it was dark and snowing. There was a car that had gone off the road and was facing in the opposite direction and was in the snow bank thru some S turns on Rte 2. A state plow truck had parked near this car such that his plow shielded the car in trouble from oncoming traffic, protecting it as traffic came thru the blind turns. I don't know who was driving that plow truck, but they did a good job and a great service to both the distressed car and the oncoming traffic. Please give him a pat on the back!!

Julie Chenail
 HR Administrator
 One National Life Drive 5th floor
 Montpelier, VT 05633



From: Noonan, Annie
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2014 11:08 AM
To: Filkorn, Erik; Minter, Sue; Flynn, Keith
Subject: RE: Drivers Urged to use Caution

On behalf of the Vermont Department of Labor and our 350 employees, I want to say thank you to the men and women of the Agency of Transportation and the Vermont State Police for keeping the traveling public safe, and acknowledge the long hours and difficult working conditions that your employees regularly endure. We appreciate all that you do.

Sincerely,
 Annie Noonan

Projects

Chester Garage -



Chester Garage - Before and After - New (5) bay maintenance garage with radiant slab and mezzanine level. Construction by Wright Construction.

By: Brad McAvoy - Facilities



Rewards & Recognition



Above: L-R - Craig "DiGi" DiGiammarino, Jennifer Callahan (receiving her 10 year pin) and Alec Portalupi - Tech Services



Michelle Redmond - D4 receiving Merit Award from Chris Bump



Russ Velander with his daughter Wendy and wife Joanne

40 Years!!
Russ Velander



Russ Velander's retirement party held at VTTC



Andy Masson's retirement party held at D8 - Andy Masson (L), Ernie Patnoe (R)

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 Karen Brouillette out of the District 6 Office.

Karen's nomination said, in part: "I want to nominate Karen for employee of the month. She's a great person, and is very helpful with everything. She's nice to everyone she meets. She works hard, and goes above and beyond with everything she does. She is very good at her job. In fact, I can't say enough positive things about her. She is one of the best people I've worked with in my career and I think she most definitely deserves to be recognized as employee of the month."

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

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 John Dunbar, the TAMS out of the Middlesex Garage in District 5 in the NW Region.

John's nomination, which was signed by the crew in his garage, said in part: "John came over to Middlesex a year ago to fill in as TAMS, and was shortly hired as the permanent replacement. In the last year we have seen many positive changes, and big changes in moral. He brings with him much experience and a great sense of humor, while being safe and efficient. John has shown us many new techniques with working with fencing, guardrail, and team building. Overall John brings a great happy vibe to the garage. Whether he is signing, flagging, digging or plowing he always has a smile on his face. John works exceptionally hard with those who want to climb the ladder and promote within. He is always there to lend a hand and help guide you in the right direction. We think John should be recognized for all the hard work he has done, and continues to do on a daily basis."

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

Scott

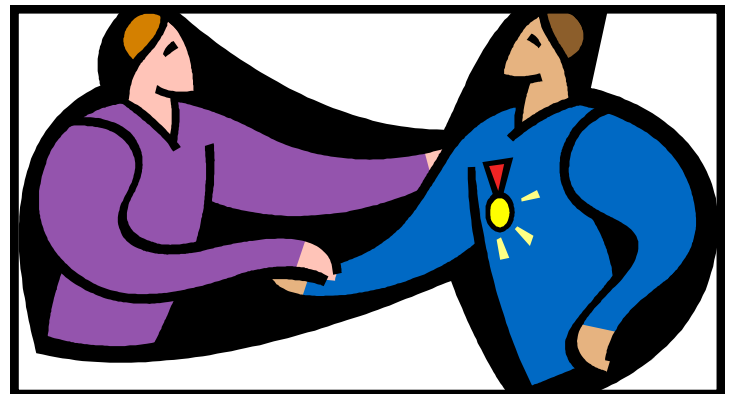
Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for December is Kim Lewis, the Administrative Services Coordinator out of the District 4 Office.

Kim's nomination, which came from everybody in D4, said in part: "Kim goes above and beyond in her everyday work. She has a kind and caring personality along with great dedication to our district 4 operations. Whenever anyone has a question on anything we all know Kim is the go to person. People from all parts of the State of Vermont call upon Kim to find out the correct way of doing things. Kim has a great way of teaching. She does everything step by step while being very patient. She never seems to get frustrated. A typical response when others are asked a question is "ask Kim". When she has the day off or is out sick the most frequently asked question is "When will Kim be back?" Kim is the "mom" of District 4. She is definitely the person that the district revolves around, without her most of us would be lost or behind the curve! Also - Kim never lets anyone of us at the office go without celebrating our birthdays. She will find out what cake, cupcakes, pie or fruit mixes you like best and always make it. She truly makes everyone feel welcome in this office."

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

Scott



I am pleased to announce that Meghan Thompson has been hired to fill the position of District 2 Technician VI. Meghan has worked her way through the Tech ranks, beginning in a limited service position. Meghan has proven to be a vital part of D2 Operations, and we are very happy to have her continue her service to the State of Vermont, Vtrans, and the District, in her new role as Tech VI. She has certainly earned it. Please join me in congratulating Meghan!

Marc S. Pickering
 Vtrans District 2
 Project Manager
 870 US Route 5
 Dummerston VT 05301
 802-251-2002
marc.pickering@state.vt.us

I am very pleased to announce that Brian Sanderson will be the new District 3 Project Manager in Mendon. Brian comes to us with a strong background in municipal highway maintenance and supervisory skills. Brian starts his new position on Monday, December 22nd and will double fill the position (for a week) with Tom Roberts. Tom will be retiring at the end of next week after 38+ years of dedicated service. Tom will be missed as his experience and skills are truly unmatched. We wish Tom the best for a happy and healthy retirement as he looks forward to a prolonged hunting season. We also welcome Brian to AOT to begin a new chapter in District 3.

Brian can be reached at Brian.Sanderson@state.vt.us or his office (802) 786-0027 or his cell (802) 779-3861. Please update your contact list.

Rob Faley
 DTA – SW Region, Districts 1 & 3
Robert.Faley@state.vt.us

I am pleased to announce that Kevin Gadapee will be joining the VTrans Training Center as the new Branch Manager for Vermont Local Roads. Kevin joins the team with 15 years of municipal experience, recently serving as the Highway Foreman for the Town of Danville. Kevin also spent a few years in St Johnsbury working as a Senior Maintenance Worker for VTrans in the 90's. Kevin's dynamic personality, excellent communication skills and thorough understanding of the municipal perspective will be invaluable as we continue to enhance the Vermont Local Roads Program. He will begin his new duties on January 12th. Please join me in welcoming Kevin to our team.

I would also like to send a special thank you to Paul Keegan for serving as the interim Vermont Local Roads Branch Manager. Paul's commitment and dedication to this important program is truly appreciated. Paul will be continuing his work with VLR over the next few months.

Scott



Personnel Updates

New Hires

D1 - **Greg Krizan**, Tech VI, Bennington, **Brian Sanderson**, Project Manager, Mendon

D4 - **Clayton Woodworth**, TJMW, Randolph, **Arthur Sanford**, TJMW, Tunbridge, **Greg Smith**, TJMW, White River

Promotions

D2 - **Meghan Thompson** to Tech VI, Dummerston

D4 - **Jack Holding** to TechV, White River, **Chad Poston** to TMMW, White River, **Joe Miller** to TMMW, Royalton

Retirements

D3 - **Tom Roberts**, is retiring on 01/01/15 with 38 years of service, **Robert Blair**, retired on 11/28/14 with 30 years of service, **Gregory Webster**, retired on 12/13/14 with 10 years of service.

D4 - **Jim Williams**, retired on 12/26/14 with 4 years of service.

D5 - **Gale Towne**, retired on 10/31/14 with 5 years of service.

D8 - **Andrew Masson**, retired on 12/31/14 with 44 years of service.

TS - **Russ Velander**, retired on 12/27/14 with 40 years of service.

Years of Service

D1 **John Stewart - 5 years**

D2 **Dale Davis - 15 years**
Daniel Flint - 5 years
William Hallock - 10 years

D3 **William Bishop, Jr. - 5 years**
Craig Ellis - 5 years
Jody Fuller - 5 years
Jeffrey Majka - 5 years
Carl Nickerson II - 5 years
George Wanner - 15 years

D4 **Christopher Bump - 20 years**
Derek Flint - 5 years
Roderick Gray - 15 years
David Lambert - 5 years
Walter Lang - 15 years
Paul Seaver - 20 years

D5 **Paul Kirby - 20 years**
Darby Merrihew - 15 years
Laurence Roy - 15 years

D7 **Richard Kittredge - 5 years**
Jonathan Leonard - 5 years
Lauren White - 15 years

D8 **Mark Rollo, Jr. - 10 years**

D9 **Alan Rancourt - 5 years**
Richard Whittier - 5 years



Together
Working ^ to get you there!

Operations Connection is on the web:
<http://www.aot.state.vt.us/maint/Operations.htm>
January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st

Questions/ Comments/ Suggestions
Karen Brouillette, Admin. SVC. Coord.
Karen.brouillette@state.vt.us

~ Postables ~



Job Fair at Brattleboro High School
 Above: **Jon Bevins** and **Meghan Thompson D2**

Ken Valentine, Central Garage, **Bill Leach**, D1, **Ernie Patnoe**, D8, **Scott Rogers**, HQ, **Rob Faley**, D1 & D3, **Joe Ruzzo**, D2, **Trevor Starr**, D4, **Wayne Gammell**, HQ, **Tom Lewis**, D7, **Bruce Nichols**, D3, **Dale Perron**, D7 & D9, **Rejean LaFleche**, D5, **Dave Blackmore**, D5 & D8, **Bill Jewell**, D9, **Todd Law**, HQ



VTTC Staff
 Front - **Christine Hetzel**, **Renita Marshall**, **Kim Persons**, **Camille Erwin**, **Joanne Stevens**, **Joanne Fleurrey**, **Mary Borland**,
 Back: **Dale Thompson**, **Scott Culver**, **Kevin Lacross**, **Paul Keegan**

~ Postables - Adopt a Truck Program ~

There is something about small children and large vehicles that is almost magical. Whether it is a fire truck, dump truck or an excavator, the size, noise and the colors seem to captivate the minds and imagination of kids everywhere. Firefighters are the masters of the "getting to know you" approach through tours and interaction at the firehouse. This, in turn, begins a process of life-long respect and understanding for the role firefighter's play (as public service employees) in the community.

VTrans Adopt - A - Truck/Driver takes a similar approach but we go a step further than just a visit and a tour. We introduce children to the people who build and maintain our roads and bridges. They get an opportunity to learn about our personnel and to touch the equipment they see on the road almost every day. Our hope is that we will foster a sense of wonder and interest in the world of transportation and instill the importance of safety as a fundamental aspect of our job. Here is how it works:

A VTrans plow operator would volunteer to be adopted by a class. The driver will check in daily with the class to let them know what is on the schedule for the day. The class will track the driver on a map and different projects will be developed, by the teachers, so as to involve the students in a variety of activities. The class will follow their driver and truck daily using addition and subtraction to understand miles traveled. They will monitor snow fall and temperatures as well as geography.

We contacted Professor Kathi Apgar, of the Champlain College, and Director of the YMCA Early Childhood Program at the UVM Medical Center. We explained what we wanted to do and before we could finish the explanation she had formed an outline of how she could use such an idea.

Professor Apgar explained "This project falls into the Emergent Curriculum philosophy we use here. The idea that we can develop multiple curricular objectives around the basic understanding of community, and those people that build and maintain our roadways is perfect".

When the project was approved by Scott Rogers we contacted David Blackmore to see if we could run the pilot project out of the District 5 Garage. After getting the green light, driver Jason Heath volunteered for the project. Working with David, Jason and Jason's supervisor Mark Meunier, we set up a meet-and-greet between the children and their truck/driver.

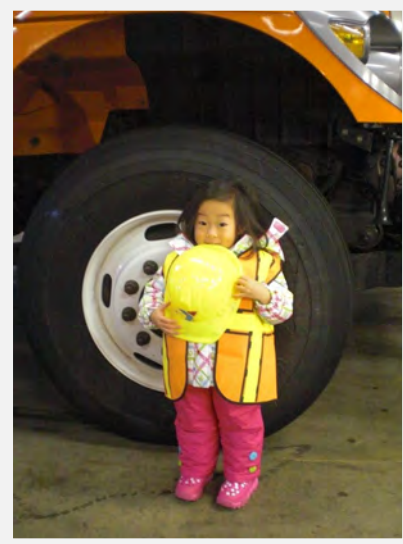
On December 3rd, 30 children and 10 teachers from The Y Early Childhood Program at the UVM Medical Center took a field trip to the District 5 Chimney Corners garage to meet Jason and Mark. An anonymous donor arranged for the school bus and the safety equipment that each child is wearing in the photo.

The latest report from the class is that they are concerned that Jason is getting enough to eat during these long hours in the truck. I think we see banana bread in his future. Some children observed a state snowplow having difficulty on a snowy road last week and had their teacher check to make sure that it was not Jason! Jason and his truck have been invited to join the class at the end of the season. Drawings, snacks and of course Jason and his truck will be on the schedule. Thank you David Blackmore, Mark Meunier and Jason Heath!
Brent Curtis

More pictures page 12



~ Postables - Adopt a Truck Program ~



Special Interests

Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

AOT Labor Management
Meeting Minutes
For December 31, 2014

Present From Labor: Jason Heath, Chair; Art Aulis, Vice Chair; Jerry Comstock; Brian Labounty; Nick Davis; Dave Van Deusen, VSEA Senior Union Representative. Present From Management: Scott Rogers; Wayne Gammell, Ken Valentine; Todd Law.

Snow Season Changes/Mechanics:

Labor wants to discuss how it hears management is changing eligibility for Snow Season Status.

Discussion: Labor has heard that Management, statewide, intends to no longer retain Motor Equipment Mechanics (MEMs) and Vehicle Equipment Technicians (VETs) assigned to the Districts/Regions (and Central Garage Regional Supervisors) on Snow Season Status unless they volunteer to drive a plow truck. Management confirmed they were considering this in accordance with NMU CBA Article 68, paragraph 6.

Labor stated it has been previously understood that some MEMs and VETs received Snow Pay in order that they make themselves available to respond to breakdowns in the middle of the night. Labor cautioned that If MEMs and VETs are not to be placed on Snow Season Status; they may not be available for work (outside their regular shift) unless they are explicitly placed on Standby Status or if it's scheduled overtime. Management stated that they understood this, and *if* they moved forward with this, they *could* call through the list of Mechanics until they reached one who is available and willing to come in to work overtime, and that one reached could be called out to do off hour jobs as needed. Even so, after further discussion, Management agreed that they are committed to making sure the necessary work gets done during the difficult Winter months, and that they are also very committed to acting in a fair and just manner concerning all workers who do their part during the challenging snow storm season.

Resolution: Management and Labor will continue to communicate with each other over this issue, and will both be happy to look at Snow Season Article in the Contract, and recommend, where appropriate, fair changes that are beneficial to workers, and address the overall operating needs of AOT. If and when Labor and/or Management have recommendations for improvements to the Snow Season Article in the Contract, they will communicate these recommendations to the appropriate negotiating bodies (ie Union Bargaining Team(s) and/or DHR).

Operation of Equipment:

Who operates it, and why?

Discussion: Labor provided two examples, in two different Districts, whereby Equipment Specialists are often not being utilized as the primary operators of equipment. Management responded that they agree with Labor that Equipment Specialists should be the go to people in the Districts regarding operation of equipment, but that there are appropriate situations whereby it makes sense for Supervisors or others (especially for training purposes) to operate equipment. Labor agreed, but further stated that in at least two distinct cases, there is an appearance that the local Supervisor is not allowing the Equipment Specialist to be the lead concerning the operation of machines.

Resolution: Management agreed to provide a Memo to local garages/Districts confirming that local Supervisors should be allowing the Equipment Specialist to be the primary person running equipment. However, it is acknowledged that this may not always be possible due to unique circumstances in an individual garage.

Continued on page 14

Special Interests

Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Continued from page 13

Overtime Calculations & Use of Sick Leave:

Labor wants to clarify the 8-40 hour OT rules in order to avoid mistakes by local Supervisors.

Discussion: Labor stated that there is concern that in some cases mistakes could be made which results in workers not receiving all the Overtime they have due. Labor points out that Garage workers need to be paid OT for any work performed above 8 hours in a single day, or anything over 40 hours in a single week. Labor recognized that Sick Leave does not count towards OT, but if someone used 8 hours of Sick Leave on a Monday, but worked 10 hours on a Tuesday, that person needs to be paid 2 hours of Overtime for the Tuesday, regardless of how many hours they actually worked for the full week. Labor further stated that part of their concern is based on how confusing the electronic timecard tracking system is; in short the timecards are very confusing and hard to understand, let alone track day in and day out (especially in the winter when people tend to work crazy hours).

Management agreed that workers need to be paid OT for anything over 8 or 40, and also recognized that tracking one's time and pay in the electronic system can be confusing.

Resolution: Management encouraged workers to do their best to individually track their OT, and to bring pay discrepancies to themselves (directly or through their Steward/Union Rep). Management also agreed to send an email to local Managers/Supervisors again clarifying the circumstances when workers need to be paid at OT rates. Management will also ask local Office Administrators to make themselves available to garage workers in order to provide a local training/education concerning how to better understand the electronic timecard/tracking system. After Admins provide such information to garage workers, if confusion still exists, workers in garages should contact their Labor Management reps, and a request will be made for Management to provide a more detailed training to the specific garages as needed.

Consecutive 16 Hour Shifts, Emergencies, and Adequate Rest:

Labor would like to reiterate existing contract language in order to be sure the local garages are on the same page; Labor welcomes a general discussion about long shifts and general safety concerns.

Discussion: Labor reported that after road crews work more than 16 consecutive hours, some Districts (or some local garages) are not providing the equivalent time (over the 16) for workers to rest (and therefore come in late to their next shift) without sacrificing Comp Time or Annual Leave. After some discussion about the need for rest (as a basic safety issue) both Labor and Management agree that all garages need to adhere to this rule (as it is provided in the Contract, and insofar as this is a real safety concern).

Resolution: Management will provide clear clarification to local Managers/Supervisors that when a worker labors for more than 16 consecutive hours, and when that worker is scheduled to work a regular shift the next day, and if that next shift does not coincide with an 'emergency', that worker will be allowed to come in late to that next shift in order to get some sleep. In these circumstances, the worker will be allowed off an equivalent amount of time that they worked above and beyond the 16 hour amount. So if a worker labors for 18 consecutive hours, the next day they will be allowed to come in 2 hours late, without sacrificing their Annual Leave, Comp Time, etc.

Downed Trees/Night Time Safety:

Labor would like Management to communicate with the State Police, so that dispatchers relay more information to AOT concerning downed trees in order to better predict staffing needs (1 or 2 workers) on such issues. The goal here is time efficiency.

Discussion: Labor stated that there are times when one worker is called out in the middle of the night to clear a downed tree. Sometimes when they get there, it is clear that it will take two persons to clear the tree. However, by the time a second worker is called out, much time has gone by, traffic may be backed up, etc. Labor therefore suggests that AOT have a discussion with State Police Dispatch (who often alerts AOT to these situations), and ask that a good faith attempt be made to provide more information to AOT up front, so that the right amount of workers can be called out to efficiently deal with off hour situations.

Resolution: Management will seek to have this conversation with State Police Dispatch, acknowledging that sometimes Dispatch does not have complete information about the hazard that is reported. Labor will also bring this issue up with local Managers/Supervisors and encourage local Management to have these conversations with Local State Police Dispatch (as all agree that fostering such local relationships is good for AOT and Local State Police).

Continued on page 15

Special Interests

Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Continued from page 14

VTTC, Labor Participant:

At our last meeting we discussed coming to a conclusion on this process after a new Manager was installed. Labor would like to finalize this process.

Discussion: Management reports that Christine Hetzel has been hired to manage the Training Center. Labor would therefore like one of their own designated as Labor's liaison to the Training Center in order to bring a Rank and File perspective to this important AOT service. Management agreed.

Resolution: Labor officially appointed Nick Davis (AOT Union Steward, member of the Labor Management Committee, and worker out of the Middlesex Garage) as the Labor liaison to the Training Center. Nick Davis will be Labor's point person for suggestions, thoughts, concerns, ideas, etc., concerning the Training Center. As such Nick will occasionally meet with the Training Center Management in order to make suggestions concerning curriculum, training needs, etc. The expectation from both Labor and Management is that by having a Labor designee serving in this role will help the Training Center carry out its mission of providing the most relevant and effective trainings to AOT employees.

New Employee Recruitment Update:

Labor and Management will report on the progress since the last meeting. Labor would like to ask Management for related posters, for Labor to help distribute around the State.

Discussion: Management reported that a full page ad was printed in the back page of the new 2015 VT Hunting and Fishing Regulations magazine that highlighted the career opportunities available within AOT. Management also presented large posters they have printed using the same messaging. These posters are now being distributed by Vermont Department of Labor. Labor reported that VSEA paid for the same ad to be placed in the Auto Hunter, and within the Green Mountain Trading Post. VSEA also highlighted this effort in the Union wide "Week in Action" newsletter. Both sides expressed pride in this joint effort. The ad included the benefits received by AOT workers through a "Solid Union Contract", and had both the VTrans logo, and VSEA Union logo.

Resolution: Labor requested and received a number of posters containing this recruitment ad, and will further distribute it/post it within their communities. Management offered to supply more posters as needed.

Transportation Budget/Legislative Issues:

Labor would like to discuss areas for cooperation with Management in securing adequate State funding in coming Legislative year.

Discussion: Labor expressed its willingness to work with Management in helping to guarantee adequate funding for AOT through the coming legislative session. Management expressed gratitude for this offer, and agreed to take Labor up on this offer as the need arises.

Resolution: Labor will support adequate funding for AOT as may prove effective and appropriate. Management will seek to inform Labor how the budget process is moving, and what assistance may be required.

AOT Labor Management Expansion:

Labor is open to expanding LM within Highway Division. Labor would like to discuss what this could look like.

Discussion: Labor and Management discussed the possibility of expanding the Labor Management Committee beyond Operations, in order to include all the subgroups of the Highway Division. Management also asked if this Committee would like to expand in order to include Supervisors. After considering this idea, Labor decided it did not want to include Supervisors at this time, but agreed that finding ways to expand local conversations with Supervisors (in order to resolve local issues) is desirable and deserving of more discussion.

Resolution: Labor and Management agreed to seek the expansion of the Committee as of our next (spring) meeting. Subgroups (beyond Operations but within the Highway Division) will tentatively meet in the morning, with Operations still meeting on its own, in the afternoon. Labor will seek to recruit persons for this Committee. Both Labor and Management will communicate further with each other on this issue between now and the next Committee meeting (spring). This expanded Committee will meet if and when it is ready.

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Local Meetings between Labor and Management:

Discussion: Labor reported that local Management and Labor in the Dummerston Garage will soon implement regular meetings between Supervisors and Union Stewards/Labor Team members. These regular meetings will seek to address/clarify/etc. local issues in order to avoid unnecessary Grievances, disputes, better morale, etc. Labor stated that they are excited about this local development, and that it could be a good way to build solid (and productive) local relations. Management expressed support for this local project as well. Labor and Management further discussed doing something like this at the District level.

Resolution: Labor and Management expressed support for the local Labor/Management meetings in the Dummerston Garage, and Labor committed to following how this local process goes and will report back to the Statewide Labor Management Committee. Upon success, Labor may seek to encourage local meetings like this in other garages. Management also agreed to invite a local Union Steward to attend District Managers / Foreman's meetings (which in some districts are every week, in others they are every two weeks). The purpose of this will be to have Labor address any District specific concerns/thoughts/ideas/questions to the District Management in order to foster better understandings between Labor and Management, resolve any disputes (or clarify any rumors), etc., at the District level before they become wider in scope.

Charging a Rental Fee For Use of State Vehicle?

Discussion: Labor stated that they were hearing rumors that the State would begin to charge a rental fee to AOT workers who take their truck home after work. Obviously, Labor expressed concern over this. Management clarified that rental fees WILL NOT be charged. Rather, the State believes that under IRS rules, they are required to include the value of commuting as a taxable benefit. Clarification and guidance is expected soon from the Agency of Administration. Based on their current understanding, Management believes that the State intends to list the use of a State truck as a benefit with the value of \$1.50 per commute, or \$3 for a typical day. The effected workers will NOT be charged this or any amount for using the truck, but they will be taxed on that additional value of that benefit. [Note: VSEA and the State of Vermont will be engaging in talks on this issue in the coming days and weeks. More information will be provided from VSEA as it is available.]

Resolution: VSEA and the State of Vermont will be engaging in talks on this issue, as it applies to all state workers in the coming days and weeks.

LMC: "Column"

As we go forward in 2015, leave no rumors unturned. Let's get these issues out in the open and have the discussions that you feel passionate about. You can make a difference by talking to one of the Labor Representatives below in confidentiality, and in turn we will bring up your issues to be discussed at our next meeting with Management. Next meeting will be in March.

We are currently looking to fill seats for Districts 1, 3, 6, 7 and Bridge Crew. If you work in one of these districts and you would like more information about this committee or have issues you would like to have discussed, please e-mail us. If you have suggestions for bargaining, you may also contact us and we can pass those ideas along to the bargaining team.

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Art Aulis (Vice Chair)
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District 9

Jerry Comstock (Recruitment & Retention)
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District 4

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District 5

By: Jason Heath, Chair, District 8

Safety & Health

The Safety Team is still shaking things up and moving forward. We are working on Retraining programs to help employees see different techniques or correct habits they may have fallen into over the years. OSHA statistics show that incidents and accidents occur more often once complacency sets in when people have been performing the same work for 12 years or more. The Safety Team is putting together PowerPoint training packages with a few questions to measure their effectiveness. We are following the FESC + Health categorization of hazards and matching the training to an event that occurred to an employee. This keeps the retraining focused on the needs of the individuals. We have collaborated with Pat McManamon of DMV to provide access to the Driving Simulator for employees experiencing vehicular events. Pat explained the simulator can mimic fog, sleet, snow, day or night as well as mechanical issues and even a flat tire! Is that cool or what? We will start these sessions to help employees try different techniques, improve their skills, and potentially regain their confidence after being involved in events of this kind. I expect it will be a popular training. Pat suggested we keep the simulator at VTTC for the winter to allow for these sessions without transporting the trailer back and forth to the Police Academy. With Ken Valentine's approval, we will now have it here for convenient access.

Rob is doing the JSA Marathon. He is going to each garage or "garage unit" (2-3 small garages with one Foreman for all) and reviewing the JSA as the tool it was intended to be – hazard assessment. He has about 30 or so more to do. I can barely keep up with his list of where we've had this training and where he needs to go next. This takes about 2 hours and really helps employees understand how to approach a task and determine any and all hazards present that they can identify as a group, before taking that first step. This is turning out to be an enjoyable class for both participants and Rob. I sat in on the first one in Ludlow. Rob is rocking and rolling on this one. Tough questions are coming up each time and he hasn't balked at a single one. The message is consistent and this training will have a positive impact. At present, there are holdouts that only see the JSA as a time-consuming piece of paperwork. As a hazard assessment tool, it is extremely valuable. This training will help achieve better JSA's and thereby safer work environments for VTrans employees.

The CSA training is still going very well. We're still holding this monthly and we're not running out of participants yet. The municipalities are starting to sign up and will soon see the worthiness of this general safety awareness training for their employees. The weather is as usual fighting for attention, so Rob is staying flexible if changes are needed. We have these on the VTTC calendar through June, 2015.

I met with the current Chainsaw Training Teams and several potential future trainers. My aim was to have one team of trainers per district. There were districts that were not represented or were under-represented, so we will need to be sure that there are 2 teams per Region so that chainsaw safety is taught and used throughout the state. I am scheduling this training twice each year to try and catch everybody for annual refreshers. The demand for this class is very high. I have asked the present set of trainers to be watchful and observant so that we can all be confident in each team's skill level and safe approach using chainsaws. The current 2 teams have been doing really well. Each member will receive a first card in the Mugged by the MOB incentive program. I can't thank them enough for being able to step up and share their skills and experience for the benefit of the MOB, Aviation, Municipalities, and all of AOT, whoever needs this training. These trainers are Greg Sargent and Scott Harvey of D8, Morrisville; Anthony Solari of D3 (Clarendon) and Tom O'Connell of D2 (Dummerston).

The new incentive program, "Mugged by the MOB" is coming along. The first "mugging" is ready for delivery! I hid the name of the recipient so I wouldn't ruin the surprise. Nine cards and 1 mug have been earned so far. Everyone is fair game; I recently "carded" Joe Ruzzo, the General Manager of D2. More names are coming in. I just ask if you want to recommend someone, that you send me a name and a quick description of their activity, attitude or idea that is promoting safety above and beyond the norm.



Take care all, stay warm and stay safe.

Year End Information

Do you know where your W-2 is being sent?

2014 W-2's will be mailed to all State of Vermont employees by January 31st.

Please make sure both your home and mailing addresses in Employee Self Service (ESS) are correct!

- ✓ **Home Address:** This is used to determine your residency for tax purposes.
Think of this as your 911 address.
- ✓ **Mailing Address:** This is where you receive your mail.

How to update your address:

Log in to VTHR:

Main Menu > Self Service > Personal Information > Home and Mailing Address

Additional information:

<http://humanresources.vermont.gov/vthr/payroll/w2>

FAQ's.....

My home and mailing address are the same and my mailing address is blank, is this ok?

- No. Your address must be entered in both home and mailing.

Why does the State of Vermont need to know my home address?

- This address is required in our system in order to successfully calculate taxes.

How do I request a reprint?

- You will be able to print your own after they have been mailed!
 - Log in to VTHR: [Self Service > Payroll & Compensation > View W-2/W-2c Forms](#)

Can I print copies from prior years?

- Yes! 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 are available in ESS for re-printing in ESS.

Who do I contact with questions?

- Contact the VTHR Help Desk at VTHR.helpdesk@state.vt.us or by calling 802-828-6700, Option 1 then Option 2

Agency of Administration
VTHR Operations Division

