

# Operations Connection

## Message from the Director Scott A. Rogers

- *Message from the Director* 1
- *Kudos* 2-3
- *Projects* 4
- *Postables* 5-7
- *Employee of the Month* 8  
*Rewards & Recognition*

*Personnel*

- *Announcements* 9-11
- *New Hires, Promotions,* 12  
*Transfers, Retirements*  
*& Years of Service*
- *Safety & Health* 13

*Labor Management Committee  
Meeting minutes and LMC column will  
be in the July issue*

Although you haven't been able to tell by the weather recently, spring is finally here and what a winter it has been; lots of ice, wind, freezing rain, early in the winter, and then plenty of snow and so darn cold all winter long. I think this winter had it all and through it all I couldn't be more proud of our maintenance folks – you all continue to do the work that keeps Vermont moving! Let's hope Mother Nature will let us transition smoothly into our spring work and summer work... as I know there is plenty to do.

I know there has been lots of talk about financial woes the last month or two and it's just about everywhere you look. It's on the news almost every night and is being hotly debated in political circles. Internally, we're looking hard at ways to save money while we do our important work. I know it's not easy and I'm sure there will be more tough discussions ahead; but a wise man once told me "This too shall pass." We need to remember that we've been down roads like this before and we always pull together and make it through. I'm confident we'll make it through together this time as well.

In the meantime, hold-on tight and enjoy the ride. As you read through this edition of the newsletter I encourage you to let the "kudos" section remind you that your work is important and is appreciated by so many people out there. Let the "Projects" section remind you that we're doing some great work on our buildings and the places we work have greatly improved over the years. Let the story about Jason's work with the "Early Childhood Program" make you smile. Let the story about the Barre Tech Center visit to the Middlesex garage remind you that there are still a lot of kids out there who think our job is pretty cool. And let the "Rewards and Recognition" section remind you that we'll take some time along the way to celebrate accomplishments. The rest of the newsletter will remind you that we've said "hello" to some great new members of our team, and we've said "goodbye and good luck" to some retirees. Finally, let the safety message on the last page remind you that we're all in this together... and we need to watch each other's backs.

Here's wishing you all a safe and happy spring season. Be safe.

Scott



## “Kudos!” from your fans

**From:** Ellis, Tammy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2015 8:39 AM  
**To:** AOT - OPS DISTRICT 1; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 2; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 3; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 4; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 5; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 7; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 8; AOT - OPS DISTRICT 9  
**Cc:** AOT - OPS Headquarters  
**Subject:** An Appreciative & Happy Customer!!

I just wanted to pass the word that a gentleman named Ed Goodspeed (honestly that was his name...which I found ironic), who is a driver for Upper Valley Produce, stopped in the District #4 Office to thank us (which means all of you) for what we do; saying he knows it is a thankless job. He also feels that if everyone would slow down and drive according to the conditions everyone would get where they are going safely; and that he appreciates the efforts of the state highway crews and wanted to say ***THANK YOU!!*** He says he doesn't care if it takes him 3 hours to get to Waterbury that is fine with him, he'll get there safely, and it is because of all you do.

And while this guy happened to stop in District #4 to make his opinion known – he drives all over the state and therefore is really a compliment that is to be shared with all of you.

Congratulations!! And thank you on behalf of Ed, (and all the traveling public that made it safely to their destinations)!

And I thank you as well, as it great to get to hear from one of our satisfied customers, and I know it is a reflection of your collective efforts. Great Job and be safe out there today!!

Tammy J. Ellis  
 District Transportation Administrator



**From:** Patnoe, Ernie  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 05, 2015 9:40 AM  
**To:** Merrihew, Darby  
**Cc:** Blackmore, David; Thurber, David; Valentine, Ken; Rogers, Scott; Law, Todd; Gammell, Wayne  
**Subject:** Brutal Winter/Kudos

Darby Just wanted to let you and your crews know that your efforts have been phenomenal this year. I don't remember a time when your staff has been on the road this much. Your crew is fixing trucks as fast as they can, moving broken trucks and replacing them with spares. Your efforts have been noticed and appreciated by all. Thank you for all the hard work you folks have done this year!!!! please pass on to the crew... You folks are getting it done!  
 EP

**From:** "Chenette, Beth"  
 <[BChenette@nationallifegroup.com](mailto:BChenette@nationallifegroup.com)>  
**Date:** February 9, 2015 at 9:00:27 AM EST  
**To:** "Scott Rogers" ([Scott.Rogers@state.vt.us](mailto:Scott.Rogers@state.vt.us))<[Scott.Rogers@state.vt.us](mailto:Scott.Rogers@state.vt.us)>  
**Subject:** kudos  
 Good morning Scott – Just wanted to take a moment to give some kudos to the VTrans road crews for the current snow event. While local roads have been horrible, I found the condition of 89 NB and SB yesterday and this morning to be surprisingly good, considering. In my opinion anyone driving using good judgment should not have had any problems. Good job - thanks!

Beth Chenette, FLMI  
 Director - Web & Digital Marketing  
 National Life Group| 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05604



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

**From:** Darren Benoit  
<[dbenoit@mjin.com](mailto:dbenoit@mjin.com)>  
**Date:** February 10, 2015 at 12:50:51 PM EST  
**To:** "Ruzzo, Joseph"  
<[Joseph.Ruzzo@state.vt.us](mailto:Joseph.Ruzzo@state.vt.us)>  
**Subject: RE: ACEC-VT**  
Joe,

Thank you and your crew for the opportunity to ride along yesterday on the plow runs. Having an opportunity to directly interact with maintenance and operations staff help us to continue to improve our designs and formulate a better base for future communication. Along with a better understanding of how your removal operations work, I was struck by how your work interacts with the community and the outstanding commitment to public service.

Thanks again,  
-Darren



From: [vt-cms-support@egov.com](mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com) [<mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com>] On Behalf Of [dee@champlain.edu](mailto:dee@champlain.edu)

Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 8:40 AM  
To: Blake-Sayers, Eileen; Filkorn, Erik  
Subject: [General Questions and Comments] Thank you

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

I just want to say thank you to you and all the folks that maintain the roads during the winter. It seems just the complainers get the "air time" on TV - I live in South Hero and my wife & I travel to work everyday and you guys do a fantastic job on maintaining the roads and making them as safe as possible.  
Thanks for doing a great job and don't pay any attention to those that are always criticizing you. :-)



From: [vt-cms-support@egov.com](mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com) [<mailto:vt-cms-support@egov.com>] On Behalf Of [mabsaved@gmavt.net](mailto:mabsaved@gmavt.net)

Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 11:26 AM  
To: Blake-Sayers, Eileen; Filkorn, Erik  
Subject: [General Questions and Comments] Comment on roads

Mrs. Mary Ann Bovat sent a message using the contact form at <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/contact>.

Had to take the time to thank each and every one of you that has done such a superb job of keeping our roads safe ....I want to say BRAVO !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Don't let the ones who are complaining and grumbling get you down, their just real sick of winter as we all are. THANK YOU AND MAY YOU ALL STAY SAFE AND WELL AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO SPRING.....M.A. Bovat=)

## Projects

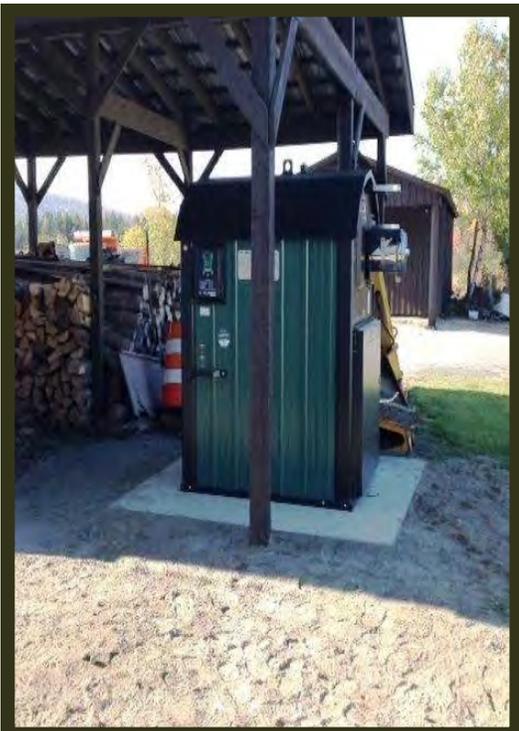
### Facilities

**Rockingham Facility** - This shed was used for sand storage and was being under utilized. We infilled the door opening and added an overhead door and personal door. On the inside we added batt insulation to the walls and ceiling and covered in plywood. To finish the project off lights were added as well as a propane modine heater. The District now has a heated storage bay for a relatively low cost compared to a new garage. This summer we plan to add a loop to the new outdoor wood boiler to provide wood heat.

Brad McAvoy



*Rockingham*



**New Wood Burner - Island Pond**



### Traffic Shop

**AVL update:**

Continuing our effort to more efficiently track where and when our plow trucks provide snow and ice control, this summer we will begin our third and final phase of installing Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) systems on our plow trucks. 163 of our plow trucks are were equipped with AVL systems during the spring and late summer of 2014. The rest of our existing trucks will have units installed this summer, and we'll be working with Tenco to have new trucks come with the systems installed. Those systems allow us to track location, plow status, and spreading activities in real time, and provide a record of our efforts.

Ken Valentine

# Postables



The Early Childhood Program at the UVM Medical Center is where the pictures were taken. But the is more to the story! First, I will get a list of the books he read but you should know that Jason taped a camera to the dashboard of his plow truck during the last big storm. He made a short movie showing big plumes of snow coming off the plow and dubbed in music (The theme from the movie “Frozen”) and played the video for the kids. Apparently the kids all loved the movie so much they sang along to the tunes during the very exciting program put on by Jason. You will also see pictures of them measuring the truck. This is part of a “ scaffolding” approach to early education. Children have no concept what “big” is. So teachers measure the kids and show them in inches and feet how tall they are. Then the children and teachers measure things like our truck and plow which allows the children to develop a fundamental understanding of what big is. Everybody got to sit in “their truck with their driver”. Because the children are concerned about Jason being hungry while working they collectively worked on a baking project, with teachers, and made a lot of goodies for Jason to have in the truck. They also presented Jason with pictures they had drawn and had a wonderful experience.

The feedback I am getting is nothing short of extraordinary. Professor Apgar will be sending us an update as soon as things quiet down(a new semester has begun at Champlain College). Teachers and parents are impressed with the way the children have engaged in this project. The entire staff at the “Y” has commented on the “perfect choice” VTrans made by selecting Jason Heath for this project. Jason has already gone above and beyond our expectations.

Brent H. Curtis  
 Public Outreach Coordinator  
 Vermont Agency of Transportation  
 1 National Life Drive  
 Montpelier VT 05633  
 Phone: 802-828-2618  
 email: [AOT.ontheroad@state.vt.us](mailto:AOT.ontheroad@state.vt.us)

# Postables



This one is from the school's collections:

*Katy and the Big Snow* by Virginia Lee Burton (also wrote Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel)

Jason Purchased these himself and donated them to the collections (they have not been put down since they arrived!)

**PLOW!** – Matchbox  
**FIRE!** – Matchbox



## ~ Postables ~

**From:** Kiley Palin [<mailto:kpalibtc@u61.net>]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2015 2:17 PM  
**To:** Dunbar, John; Lafleche, Rejean; Blackmore, David; Law, Todd  
**Subject:** Barre Tech Field Trip

Hello again!

It is now three days after our trip and I would like to thank everyone for welcoming us (the PTO class) to the maintenance garage. The boys and I certainly learned a lot about the Agency of Transportation's responsibilities and equipment.

I know my students were surprised at how much the AOT does and how much coordination, work, money, and resources go into each snow storm. They (we) were also surprised by the high tech equipment and absolutely loved exploring the salt sheds and the different trucks.

As we were leaving, one of my students turned to John and told him that he had found his future career (watch out John!!). I think that speaks to how much my students enjoyed our trip.

Attached are a few of the pictures we took.

Thanks again and Happy Spring!

--

Kiley G Palin  
 Barre Technical Center  
 Pre-Tech Outreach



## Operations Employees of the Month - Rewards & Recognition

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for February is Debbie Newcombe**, the Admin Assistant B out of Colchester "Fort Ethan Allen" in District 5 in the NW Region.

Deb's nomination, which was signed by the employees at the Fort, said in part: "In our District Deb is like the glue that holds things together. Her organizational and multi-tasking skills are truly amazing. Her wealth of knowledge is tremendous and unsurpassed. She helps everyone from the office staff to all of the many district employees. She even assists other districts, and has the respect of them all. She is always courteous in the way she deals with the public. She helps them with who they need to contact, or provides them with the information they are looking for. She is courteous even to those "not so friendly" callers. Deb is always willing to go the extra mile. We all enjoy the "family" like feeling Deb brings to our team. Whether it's her "good mornings", cards of sympathy, joyous birthdays or the occasional apple crisp, she is thoughtful to all of us. She always finds time to lend a helping hand to those who need it. Her work ethic is unsurpassed, "the first to arrive and last to leave", and with over 37 years of service this year. She is an example of what a valuable, loyal and wonderful employee we should all strive to be."

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

Scott

**Flo Smith** transferred from the HQ business office to the Legal section within the Agency. We greatly appreciated all of her hard work, her friendly demeanor, and her willingness to assist. We wish her the best and good luck in her new position, and she will be missed.

Amy Mercier  
Business Manager, Maintenance and Operations  
Bureau  
Highway Division  
Vermont Agency of Transportation

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for March is Andy Shively**, Headquarters Haz-Mat Specialist.

Andy's nomination from a district employee said in part: "Andy has been a great asset for VTrans for many years, being available at a minute's notice for emergency calls, or just to answer a simple question that can prevent a costly decision if made incorrectly. Andy's positive attitude and vast knowledge on all aspects of VTrans made him an ideal candidate on the Bulk Fuel Procedures committee, where he has helped educate, address, and improve the way we track and monitor fuel usage and detect possible leaks. Andy's vast knowledge, positive attitude, dedication and responsiveness make him a wonderful role model for anybody working for VTrans. With all of the complexity of dealing with hazardous materials throughout the State, Andy has the ability to tackle very large problems precisely which makes our jobs run smoother. Every time I have dealt with him, he has provided superior customer service. He has always made sure that any requests are answered promptly and his customer service is second to none."

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

Scott

**Alec Portalupi (L) - with Andy Shively (R) - Headquarters Haz-Mat Specialist and Employee of the Month - March 2015.**



## Announcements

I'm very pleased to announce that Jason Sevigny joined the District 9 Tech Team today January 26, 2015.

Jason Sevigny comes to the District 9 Tech Team with two+ years of service with the State of Vermont in District 7 as a Technician V, and nine years of post-college experience in the civil engineering and construction industry for a small local company who specialized in design, permitting, and installation of water and wastewater systems including all aspects of site development.

You can reach Jason Sevigny at:

VAOT District 9  
 (802) 334-4342 (Office)  
 (802) 535-7767 (Cell)  
[jason.sevigny@state.vt.us](mailto:jason.sevigny@state.vt.us)

The recently formed Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Section is pleased to announce two new staff members will be starting on February 23, 2015:

Derek Lyman will be joining us as the Traffic Signal Operations Engineer.

Nancy Avery will be joining us as the Work Zone Traffic Management Engineer.

Both will be reporting to Amy Gamble in Traffic Operations.

Amy Gamble, PE  
 Traffic Operations Engineer  
 Vermont Agency of Transportation  
 1 National Life Drive  
 Montpelier VT 05633-5001  
 (802) 828-1055 office  
 (802) 477-3251 cell  
[amy.gamble@state.vt.us](mailto:amy.gamble@state.vt.us)

We are pleased to announce that Michael Golden has accepted the position of Traffic Investigations Supervisor. Michael comes to VTrans from United Technologies Corporation in Vergennes, where he was a team leader working on electro-mechanical systems for commercial airliners. Along with Derek and Nancy, Michael will also start on February 23.

Amy Gamble  
 VTrans Traffic Operations Engineer

We are very pleased to announce that Josh Schultz has accepted the position of TSMO (Transportation Systems Management & Operations) Manager. In that position, he will head up the newly formed TSMO Section within the Maintenance & Operations Bureau. Josh comes to us from the VTrans Rail Section, where he has served as a project manager. Before that, he served as the Traffic Design & Safety Unit supervisor and project manager, a roadway design engineer, and prior to that assignment he went through the VTrans Rotation Engineer program.

We are very excited to have Josh join our team and to head up a section which will continue to provide much needed services to the travelling public and to our Agency. Please join me in congratulating Josh on this new assignment!

Alec Portalupi

**Alec Portalupi, P.E.**  
**VTrans Highway Division**  
**Maintenance & Operations Bureau**

## Announcements

Please welcome **Ashley Bishop** as District 5's new Tech III. Ashley previously worked for John Turner Consulting specializing in concrete testing, compaction, graduation and other aspects of construction. Ashley graduated from Vermont Tech with a degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Richard Hosking, P.E.

Please join me in welcoming **Kristin Driscoll** to the District 7 technical team. Kristin comes to us from the Municipal Assistance Bureau; she brings vast knowledge regarding municipal grants as well as Section 1111 permits.

Kristin may be reached at 802-751-0618 or via email. Please include her on any email correspondence sent to the District 7 technical/office staff.

I am pleased to announce that **Chris MacRitchie** has accepted the position of Financial Manager I in the MOB business office. His first day will be March 23rd. Chris brings a wealth of financial experience to our team, and will be overseeing the day to day operations of the Headquarters' business office support team. Chris played a major support role in the FHWA review of Tropical Storm Irene payments and processes. As a result, Chris helped us identify risks and worked closely with FHWA to identify areas of opportunities for improvement in our processes. His background includes auditing and accounting, and he brings with him nearly a decade of VTrans experience. Please join me in congratulating Chris and welcoming him to the MOB.

Amy Mercier  
Business Manager  
Maintenance and Operations Bureau  
Highway Division  
Vermont Agency of Transportation  
(802) 595-5043  
[amy.mercier@state.vt.us](mailto:amy.mercier@state.vt.us)

District #8 is pleased to announce that **Berkley Clark** has accepted the position of TAMS in the St Albans garage. Berkley came to D8 in the spring of 2008 and worked his way up to TSMW in the Georgia garage. We look forward to using Berkley's knowledge and skills to help us complete our mission here at VTrans. Please help us welcome Berkley to his new position.  
Ernie Patnoe

## Announcements

**Justin Burkewitz**, currently working in the SE Regional Central Garage facility in White River Junction will be transferring to a position in the NE Region, closer to home – while we will miss him in White River Junction we will welcome in in St. Johnsbury!

Ken Valentine

It is my pleasure to announce the hiring of **Christopher Berg** as Technician IV in District 2. Chris brings extensive experience in roadway construction and maintenance from his work at Zaluzny Excavating Corporation, where he was an Operator for the last 14 years. Chris was fully involved in Irene response and recovery, as well as with repairs made as a result of storm damage in District 2 this past July. We are excited to have Chris on our team.

Chris can be reached at 802-251-2091 and at [Christopher.berg@state.vt.us](mailto:Christopher.berg@state.vt.us)

Please join me in welcoming Christopher Berg to the VTrans family!

Marc S. Pickering  
Vtrans District 2  
Project Manager

The Vermont Local Roads Program is very excited to announce that **Holly Hayden** has accepted the position of Vermont Local Roads Program Coordinator, beginning on April 6th. Holly has served the Agency since 2002 and is bringing a wealth of knowledge from her past experience as an Executive Assistant to Commissioner Ide at DMV. Her talents and skills will provide exceptional service to our municipal customers.

Please join me in welcoming Holly to the VTrans team.

*Christine Hetzel*  
Program Manager

Vermont Local Roads would like to welcome: **Kevin Gadapee** as our new Vermont Local Road's Branch Manager and **Todd Eaton** as Vermont Local Road's Circuit Rider.



## Personnel Updates

### New Hires, Promotions & Transfers

D2 - **Christopher Berg**, Tech IV, Dummerston

D4 - **Jamie Hodgdon**, TJMW, Windsor, **Houston Lee**, TMMW, Thetford, **Joe Miller**, TMMW, Thetford, **Mike Blakeslee**, TECH IV, WRJ, **Rob Laird**, TMMW, Rochester

D5 - **Ashley Bishop**, Tech III, Colchester

D7 - **Kristin Driscoll**, Tech IV, St. Johnsbury

D8 - **Berkley Clark**, TAMS, St. Albans

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

TS - **Justin Burkewitz**, Motor Equipment Mechanic II, St. Johnsbury

Business Office - **Chris MacRitchie**, Financial Manager I, Montpelier

Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) - **Derek Lyman**, Traffic Signal Operations Engineer, Montpelier, **Nancy Avery**, Work Zone Traffic Management Engineer, Montpelier, **Josh Shultz**, Transportation Systems Management & Operations Manager, Montpelier, **Michael Golden**, Traffic Investigations Supervisor, Montpelier

### Retirements

D4 - **Warren Pratt**, retired on March 31 with 12 years of service, **Robert Whyte**, retired on March 21 with 13 years of service.

## Years of Service

D2 - **Shawn Westney** - 10 years

D3 - **Dennis Barbush** - 30 years  
**David Patterson** - 30 years  
**Brian Swane** - 30 years

D4 - **Robert Childs** - 15 years  
**Peter Gourley** - 5 years  
**Ervin Ricker** - 25 years

D5 - **Larry Blacklock** - 20 years  
**Melissa Cruz** - 5 years  
**Gerald Dubois** - 10 years  
**Justin Gibbs** - 10 years  
**Ronald Greene** - 25 years  
**Steven Guyette** - 15 years

D7 - **Russell McBey** - 5 years

D8 - **Leo Mills** - 10 years

D9 - **Perry Elie** - 5 years  
**Janelle Green** - 5 years  
**Dennis Sample** - 20 years  
**Allen Stevens** - 5 years

CG - **Arvid Daniels** - 15 years  
**Eric Kipp** - 15 years  
**Adam Thompson** - 5 years

TSMO - **David Crossley** - 20 years

VTTC - **Scott Culver** - 25 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

## Safety & Health

Winter is finally winding down. Work outside will start to move forward and that means you can expect to see Kevin and Scott at your worksites too. Please remember they are truly there to help keep each and every one at each site safe and healthy. They are another set of eyes at work to recognize hazards before they cause an incident.

Of course, I expect they will see less issues this year since you are all freshly trained on FESC + Health and the updated JSA...right? I attended a few of these training classes and was pleased to see how quickly everyone adapted to this new phrase and put it to work for themselves. Please remember the key points: filling out the JSA as a team; the Competent Person is an extension of the TAMS authority and stays in communication with the TAMS; and hazards are **controlled**, not just accepted.

The Chainsaw Trainers are expanding their ranks with more experienced chainsaw users stepping up to the trainer role. The current experienced trainers are adding these folks to the classes to observe and participate until “graduation”. Once all are comfortable and secure in presenting their skills and experience to others, the new teams will receive their own training kits and strike out on their own. The demand for this training could not be met last fall (Mother Nature loves rain in October apparently), so I expect a surge in demands for this training in April and late September, as they are scheduled. We are aiming for 2 classes per week (1 North and 1 South) during these periods.

The incentive program, “Mugged by the MOB” is gaining momentum. I am getting new nominations weekly from people at all levels recognizing the efforts of their coworkers putting Safety first. Next time you are in VTTC, check out our wall display. I keep the list of names updated and photos will be added as mugs are distributed. I am adding some details of what people did to earn their cards. It’s a wide variety of actions and approaches that were recognized for improving safety. Those that have stepped up to provide training for each other and the municipalities are just some of those landing on this growing list.

Take care all, stay safe. Spring is finally here.

**By: Camille Erwin, Safety & Health Branch Manager**