’TIS THE SEASON TO DRIVE SAFE & SOBER pg 2

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REAL LIFESAVER pg 5

DISTRICT 4’s RUSS ANDERSON ON PORTRAYING A HOLIDAY ICON pg 8
Training for the future
Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

Matt Harvey, a transportation manager at the Northwood Outpost in Wood County, has been with ODOT for four years, and wants to someday become an administrator or county manager. He recently got much closer to his dream when he graduated with 30 other students from ODOT’s fifth County Manager Training Program (CMTP). The CMTP is a May through October series of classes designed for people like Harvey who aspire to head one of ODOT’s county garages one day.

“The classes were incredible,” said Harvey. “Every manager should try to attend them. I took a lot away from it.”

Each year, two or three new managers from each district are selected to attend the program. Each of the new managers are also given a “mentor” from their district to help guide them through the classes. One such mentor is Violet Courtney, a county manager for Seneca County in District 2. A student in the first CMTP class, she believes in the program and has volunteered to guide others every year following her graduation.

“The classes are very meaningful,” said Courtney. “It also allows the new manager the ability to build a network of peers like themselves from their classmates. They help each other find the best

continued on page 4
ASK THE DIRECTOR

“I think the time, effort, and energy spent on much of the standardized communication such as weekly emails and the Transcript is a complete waste of time and money. Publishing the Transcript costs money, not to mention the cost we pay someone to put that together. At least quit printing it and make it available as a PDF if not eliminate it altogether. The true communications that employees crave is having a supervisor talk to them and explain how the direction of ODOT’s upper management impacts their job.”

“It is our goal and intention to have a well-informed workforce. It is also a significant challenge with such a large, widespread organization. In order to provide maximum opportunity for success we need to use several different tools and approaches.

I disagree with part of your statement. While some ODOT people spend their day in front of a computer, not all of our people have that easy access. As a highly decentralized department, we have about 5,000 employees located in all 88 counties. Many do not have access to a computer. Some people spend most of their day in a truck, or under the hood of a truck, or in the field, on a project or on the highway. Communication with everyone is important. I believe it is difficult, if not impossible, to over-communicate. From our Quality of Work Life Survey and other direct feedback we know that a significant number of ODOT people appreciate and look forward to Transcript, as well as the ODOT News and other communications.

These publications are statewide information and news, and are not meant to supplant the information-sharing and communication that should take place every day in the workplace. I do believe you are correct when you say employees crave a supervisor providing daily direction and pertinent information regarding ‘what’s going on and how we are doing.’ And I would agree they want some discussion on how the direction of ODOT’s upper management impacts their job. The aforementioned statewide information should provide insight into the big picture at ODOT. All of our managers, leaders and supervisors need to communicate directly and effectively with the people they oversee. We have made this a part of our management training and continuously encourage supervisors to provide thorough, relevant information to their subordinates and co-workers.

There is some cost and effort associated with any attempt to provide thorough communication. However, I believe the price of not communicating is far, far greater.

Incidentally, if you prefer to read Transcript on-line, it’s available at: www.dot.state.oh.us/DIVISIONS/COMMUNICATIONS” — Director Jerry Wray

THE ODOT NEWS

FAST FIVE

1. SNOW BRINGS NEED FOR TRANSPARENT BOUNDARIES
Ohio saw its first snowfalls recently, with heaviest concentrations in the northeast. When District 12 counties experienced heavy snowfall, crews from districts 3 and 4 shifted north to help cover the areas, ignoring borders in order to provide service.

2. TEAM IMPROVES ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS
A three-day Lean event was held this past month to examine the process of evaluating and reporting employee accidents and incidents. The effort will result in fewer forms, training plans, and streamlined procedures.

3. GROUP EVALUATES PROJECT ESTIMATING
A second Lean event took place in November to streamline the process for estimating plan packages. Team members looked for ways to streamline the current heavy data entry. Look for updates soon.

4. GUARDRAIL PRODUCT PURCHASING SUSPENDED
ODOT announced it will not purchase Trinity Highway Products’ ET-Plus guardrail end terminals after the Federal Highway Administration called for further safety testing.

5. ANOTHER NEW ODOT FACILITY OPENS
The Highland County staff hosted a ribbon-cutting at the opening of their new full-service maintenance facility. It features heated storage, improved mechanics’ bays, and increased salt storage.
Training for the Future  continued from page 2

path to grow their employees.”

Classes include emergency management, snow and ice control operations, facilities management, environmental issues, bridge inspection, maintenance and repair, and an overview of force account issues. Each course is taught by an experienced ODOT employee.

District 11 Highway Management Administrator Tom Corey is a former county manager and has served as a mentor with the program for the last three years.

“This program is the best training that ODOT offers,” he said. “Thirteen of our district transportation managers have been through the program, and three of our current county managers are graduates.”

Office of Employee Development and Lean Manager Doug McLaughlin, who runs the program, says it all began with a 2008 focus group of county managers, mechanics, and other county garage employees.

“We asked them what skills we should stress and what’s essential. Our goal was to give them an education that would eventually guide them into a county management position,” McLaughlin said.

ODOT Director Jerry Wray believes that management and leadership are critical to the department’s mission. Having the program at ODOT shows the department is committed to promoting from within when possible.

“We have a lot of capable, talented people at ODOT,” said Director Wray. “As we give them the skills to improve their abilities, it also gives them possible career growth opportunities in the future.”

Local News, cont.

’Tis the Season to Drive Safe and Sober  continued from page 2

of such accidents in the state of Ohio since 1936. So far in 2014, 12 people have been killed on Delaware County roadways. Already, the trend is going in the wrong direction.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol says speed is the number one cause, followed by driving too closely and not changing lanes correctly. In more than half the crashes, the people killed were not wearing seatbelts.

The coalition has constructed a memorial of 11 wreaths with a single red bow for the 11 lives lost in 2013. The memorial is a fixture on the front lawn of District 6, located on the well-traveled state routes 36 and 37 in the city of Delaware. The wreath display will stay in place until the first of the year.

“We want people to be reminded of the loved ones that will not be home this holiday,” said Ahmed. “It’s really a reminder for all of us to make the right decision before we get behind the wheel.”

District 6 Deputy Director Ferzan Ahmed speaks to Delaware County emergency responders about driving safely this holiday season.
A real lifesaver
Kathleen Fuller, District 9

Ed Cox is all about safety. Along with his duties as District 9’s safety and health inspector, Cox provides safety-related training and awareness with the Smith Driving System course and the HT Academy.

To Cox, it’s about more than helping individuals stay safe on the job or at home; it’s also about helping people save lives. So he also teaches ODOT employees how to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to victims of cardiac arrest. He has been certified in CPR and first aid training through the American Safety and Health Institute since 2012.

“Everyone who knows me, knows I take what I do very seriously,” said Cox. “And if I can help one person or teach one person to save a life, that’s even better.”

The CPR classes include hands-on, interactive training based on real-life scenarios. His classes are not limited to his home office. So far, he has traveled to five other districts and trained more than 300 employees in the process.

“CPR is serious business,” notes Cox, “but I try to take away the fears of this life-saving emergency response procedure and make training interesting and enjoyable.”

Cox is a public servant outside of ODOT as well. He is the duly-elected mayor of Williamsport in Pickaway County. He also serves as a volunteer paramedic and firefighter for his community. His experiences help him be a better teacher in his classes.

He is extremely grateful to his ODOT supervisor and his district human resources administrator for their support.

“They recognize the importance of CPR training,” he said, “and I really appreciate their flexibility and willingness to allow me to travel to other districts. I just go wherever I’m asked.”
Winter readiness
Mandi Dillon, District 7

Winter has arrived, and ODOT is ready. This was made apparent when District 7 employees took part in a winter readiness event in Tipp City. Those in attendance gathered in late November to participate in breakout sessions focused on equipment maintenance, material applications, labor relations, safety, and communications. Previously, separate seminars were held at individual county garages. This event marked the first time employees from all nine counties came together for their winter seminars.

WDTN Chief Meteorologist Brian Davis was a guest speaker, discussing how their weather team forecasts storms and the way things have changed over the years. He mentioned how much he and his colleagues use ODOT’s traffic cameras and road/weather sensors to help them with their on-air forecasts.

“We want our equipment ready and our crews prepared 365 days a year,” said ODOT District 7 Deputy Director Randy Chevalley. “This is an opportunity for our drivers to refresh their snow and ice skills as we head into the winter months. By doing one event, employees can share best practices.”

Many crews had to work long hours leading up to the seminar. The area was hit with its first major snow storm of the season prior to the start. In fact, some employees were still out clearing the roads during the winter readiness event.

“Our employees work around the clock during the winter months to make sure roads are safe for travel and they take great pride in what they do,” said District 7 Highway Management Administrator Scott Kasler.

Chevalley ended the day with a discussion on ODOT Initiatives and Critical Success Factors. Overall, more than 220 people attended.
Effective by design
By Rhonda Pees, District 1

At $4.2 million, the campus development project of District 1 is the largest ODOT-administered facility project ever undertaken by the agency. The entire district headquarters is being expanded to include more operations in a central location while improving the overall capabilities of the unit.

“We want to consolidate our operations for several reasons: to bring together employees of work units who had been working in separate locations; to eliminate the costs involved with keeping deteriorating structures; and to increase our effectiveness by creating greater access to shared equipment,” said Kirk Slusher, District 1 deputy director.

According to Rick Puderbaugh, ODOT facilities program manager, the campus development is by far and away the most extensive project ever done in-house. To make certain this ambitious undertaking will serve the best interests of the region, some of the ODOT employees who will call the new facility home have been selected to administer the project. Chris Hughes is serving as the construction engineer, with Brian Rader as the inspector. Having ODOT employees administering the project in-house has been a major benefit in the eyes of Puderbaugh.

“I don’t think they could’ve made better selections,” he said. “Each one has been really, really valuable. We’ve clearly demonstrated we have the processes and people in place to be able to execute these types of projects.”

Because of its scope and complexity, the District 1 campus development project has been a benchmark from day one. The most difficult part was working between the established budget and negotiating the correct scope of work. But with a new interior reconfiguration for the headquarters and main district garage to accommodate the relocated employees, the consolidation is expected to save thousands each year. The project is expected to be completed later next fall. It has all been quite eye-opening for Hughes:

“The decision-making process is much more complex on this than a typical highway project,” he said. “We know and communicate with the users of the facilities, so we can consult with them on decisions.”

Key District 1 staff on the campus development project are District Facilities Managers Mark Vandemark, left, and Tony Lotz, District Deputy Director Kirk Slusher, Project Engineer Chris Hughes, area engineer Scott Mullins, Business and Human Services Administrator Chris Hardesty, and Project Inspector Brian Rader.
Making a list, checking it twice
Brent Kovacs, District 4

IT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR at about this time; a change comes over District 4 Radio Technician Russ Anderson. The white beard, the white hair and the deep voice are already familiar to those who know him. But then there are things that emerge from the closet, like the red suit, the long black boots and the reading glasses. And when he shows people the red hat Photoshopped on his employee ID, they know: Anderson is Santa Claus!

Anderson likes to say he did not choose the role, rather, it chose him. It started when he and his family were taking a Christmas photo and he decided to don a certain red hat for the occasion. The photo was posted on Facebook, and the next thing he knew he was booked at the Sam’s Club in Columbus as Santa. Now he makes appearances from Thanksgiving weekend through Christmas Eve.

“I truly enjoy portraying Santa Claus,” he said. “If I knew it was this much fun I would have started years ago.”

As it turns out, there is more to being a beloved holiday icon than just putting on a red suit. Throughout the summer months, Anderson meets with other local actors as part of the Buckeye Santas group and the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas. They work together to perfect their personalities and book their events. Anderson’s appearances this year include a festival, a sporting goods store and a breakfast event at the Akron Zoo. And he knows he must be prepared for his smallest fans.

“Santa has to be up on what’s new in the toy aisle,” said Anderson. “Santa has to also be able to explain where the reindeer are, what the elves are doing, and what’s happening at the North Pole.”

So the next time you are at the District 4 garage and you need your MARCs radio fixed, ask for Santa Claus. They will know who to call.

Photos courtesy of Russ Anderson, District 4