Planes, trains and automobiles are very important forms of transportation. But so are bicycles and having safe paths for those bicycles. Through the combined efforts of various offices and staff (Statewide Planning & Research, Program Management, CADD & Mapping), the department has been working to plan, coordinate, and designate a network of bike routes that will eventually touch nearly every county in the state.

The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) was established in 1978 by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The first two USBRS paths were established in 1982. These were the only two until 2011 when steady growth and interest in the system resulted in more additions of trails, bike lanes, shared roads, and paved shoulders. Today, Ohio has over 3,500 proposed miles of bike routes throughout the state.

The state bike routes establish a backbone for local networks as well. These networks support navigation for cyclists by identifying preferred routes and providing signage. These efforts also help to inform statewide investments and coordinate with regional and local opportunities to construct safe and accommodating bicycle facilities along priority routes.

Designating USBRS paths connect Ohio to many economic opportunities through tourism and retail. Nationwide, bicycle travel has been shown to contribute $133 billion annually to the U.S. economy. This includes supporting nearly 1.1 million jobs across the U.S. and producing $53.1 billion in annual retail sales and service.

For more information about Ohio’s bikeways and trails, visit www.bike.ohio.gov.
I became interested in monarch butterflies when my kids were young. Trying to make TV time as educational as possible, we borrowed many nature videos from the library, including one about the monarch butterfly. Their incredible migration story fascinated me. We found caterpillars in nearby ditches, brought them home and watched as they ate...
Union County HT Greg Rigsby will be the first to tell you when his 25-year old son Aaron was little, he would race to get under the bed whenever storms raged outside, so he was a little surprised that his son chose storm chasing as a passion and career. Tornadoes, thunderstorms, hurricanes, snow storms, haboobs (sandstorms), wildfires – young Aaron Rigsby has been to all 50 states chasing these conditions, camera in tow.

“I bought him his first digital camera for his 13th birthday,” said HT Rigsby proudly. “He started taking pictures of lightning, and his love of weather grew from there.”

“When you live out of your car during a chase, you don’t turn down a free shower.”

Today, Aaron Rigsby’s photos and videos has been featured on CNN, ABC, Fox News, NBC, CBS and other national news outlets. He has also gone on assignments for the Weather Channel and hopes this work will eventually turn into a full time job. Recent video of Hurricane Michael was some of Aaron’s most successful:

“Hurricane Michael was the strongest storm in decades. I had such an uneasy feeling because I knew what was coming and there wasn’t enough time for folks to evacuate,” said Aaron. “But you can’t let the fear take over. That’s when experience kicks in.”

“I had such an uneasy feeling... but you can’t let the fear take over. That’s when experience kicks in.”

Aaron has a solid Facebook following, which has come in handy more than once while on the road. When on a chase, followers have offered him a place to stay or somewhere to take a shower.

“When you live out of your car during a chase, you don’t turn down a free shower,” joked Aaron.

You can follow Aaron and his crew on their website at ohistormchasers.com or their Facebook page by the same name.
It has to be one of the worst nightmares any highway worker faces, and it happened to four Williams County highway technicians last October. Preston Thiel, Tyler Seaman, Chuck Mason and Dalton Beck were headed to a training when a car pulled out in front of them at the intersection of State Route 110 and County Road 7. The vehicle collided with the oncoming ODOT truck, sending both vehicles into the ditch bank. As they recovered, the technicians could see that the two women in the other car were injured.

Instincts kicked in. Beck had nearly four years of EMS training and is currently a part-time EMT for Montpelier Volunteer Fire Department. He attended to the driver of the vehicle, staying by her side and reassuring her that everything was going to be okay. Thiel gave aid to the passenger of the car who had an obvious head injury. All the while, Seaman and Mason did their part to clear debris from the road and direct traffic until help arrived.

Despite all their fears, these four followed their immediate natural instincts to help until aid arrived. The McClure and Liberty Center Fire and Rescue has awarded these men with a Highway Heroes award to honor their actions.

“To see your guys in action,” said Maryann Reimund of the Liberty Center Fire and EMS, “it was just something that we normally don’t see. So, we wanted to give them something that they will always remember, for their good deeds that were performed that day.”

No Ordinary Day

Reghan Waltmire, District 2

PRESTON THIEL BEING PRESENTED THE HIGHWAY HEROES AWARD BY JUSTEN VOCKE AND MARYANN REIMUND.