EXTRA!

ODOT 2012 Director’s Cup Roadeo Winner Accepts National Snow and Ice Award

ODOT’s Kevin Buck, far right, and Thomas Lyden, fifth from left, accept the Excellence in Snow & Ice Control award at the North American Snow Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. story on page 2
Statewide News

ODOT 2012 Director’s Cup Roadeo Winner Accepts National Snow and Ice Award
Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

Kevin Buck, the 2012 Director’s Cup ODOT Roadeo winner accepted the American Public Works Association’s Excellence in Snow and Ice Control award on behalf of the department at the 2013 North American Snow Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Also accepting the award was the Office of Maintenance Administration’s Thomas Lyden. ODOT was the only state DOT to receive the award this year.

Buck, a highway technician 2 at the Montgomery Garage, was both excited and a little nervous to accept the award before a room of over 900 people. “It was a great feeling to accept the award on behalf of Ohio,” he said. “I felt like I was representing all of the 3,000 ODOT snow plow drivers from all 88 counties in the state.”

The American Public Works Association says it established the award to promote excellence in management and administration of public works snow and ice operations.

“When I first started, we wouldn’t get called in until there was two inches of snow on the roads,” said Buck. “Now we get called in before the storm arrives. When the storm gets here, we’re ready.”

County work planning to change
Alexandra Buerger, Central Office

All county managers and their transportation managers (TMs) from across the state gathered at Central Office in late April for their 4th Maintenance Operations Conference.

The meeting agenda focused on work planning. Those in attendance discussed new proposals for Quality Assurance Review (QAR) and equipment inspection processes. It was decided that district personnel will now have more ownership of QARs, with Central Office providing assistance in gathering information on best practices.

Equipment inspection processes, formerly known as dry runs, will be eliminated in favor of summer and winter equipment inspections to take place at random every year to ensure ODOT fleets are clean and ready at all times.

“This change is long overdue,” said Montgomery County TM Phil Fisher. “We’ve got to be ready to jump when we need to jump.”

The development of county annual work plans will include input from each level in the county and will take into account the labor, equipment, and materials required to accomplish projects in pavement, bridge, drainage, and safety areas.

“We will perform at the same level we demand of contractors,” said ODOT Director Jerry Wray at the meeting. “We’re going to do it right.”
**The TRAC Back on Track**

*Pieter Wykoff, Central Office*

**Survey Results Revealed**

*Alexandra Buerger, Central Office*

**Local News**

**WINNING at safety—without tiger’s blood!**

*Sharon Smigielski, District 8*

**District 8’s Randy Todd** came up with a way to improve the overall awareness of safe practices by installing electronic safety scoreboards in the district garage and in each of his district’s seven county garages. They have been up since late last year.

The idea came about after earlier efforts to decrease preventable accidents and injuries among district employees yielded only a minimal reduction in the numbers. Todd realized that a visual aid such as a safety scoreboard could be more effective in the effort. Such devices are found in many workplaces nationwide.

Todd received the go-ahead to research the idea’s feasibility and the signs were obtained after discovering they would cost just under $200 each.

“Employees come to work in the morning and see the sign every day, providing an incentive to avoid an injury or accident while on the job,” said Todd. “If it saves one injury, it has paid for itself.”

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Thank you to the passage of House Bill 51, the transportation budget, the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) is about to have a busy year. The bill authorizes the TRAC to work with the newly renamed Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission to decide how and where to spend $1.5 billion in revenue bonds. One billion dollars of those bonds will be sold this year.

Projects for major new construction were nominated by district offices and stakeholders in May. Following a series of public hearings across the state, the nine-member TRAC will vote on a draft list of projects by the end of July. A scoring system includes points for economic development, local investment, and jobs created.

Following a public comment period, a final list will be voted on and then it will go to the Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission this fall. The commission must decide if the projects have a “nexus” with the Ohio Turnpike. It moves forward to construction if the commission approves a project.

“Our process is more open than most states,” says TRAC Chairman and ODOT Director Jerry Wray. “There’s an actual public process we follow that allows everybody to participate.”

Results of the Quality of Work Life Survey were rolled out to ODOT this April through an online video message from Director Wray. In a summary report, average scores on topics regarding employee satisfaction, strategic issues, and working environment showed no major dissatisfaction with the department, but revealed room for improvement in some key areas.

Overall, 44 percent of the ODOT workforce responded to the survey. The majority of people polled agreed that work can be performed safely, are satisfied with the work they do, and say ODOT provides good external customer service.

Respondents also indicated the need for improvement in areas like communication, employee accountability, and employee recognition. The results also revealed most survey takers were not familiar with the content of ODOT’s strategic plan.

Director Jerry Wray has stated the survey will take place annually and will be used to produce an overall Work Life Index as a score to measure overall employee satisfaction. Department leadership is responding to the latest results by initiating a new internal communication plan, emphasizing employee accountability and by initiating better communication of the strategic plan to ODOT personnel.

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**District 8's Randy Todd** shows off the safety scoreboard at the district garage.
Out on the front lines of maintenance
Lauren Holdsworth, District 11

In an attempt to improve internal communications and encourage open discussion, District 11 Deputy Director Lloyd MacAdam recently held two chats with employees. Many changes and improvements have already taken place or are underway because of those two simple, sit-down meetings with employees, but the head of the district office felt the need for more information.

So just a week after the second meeting, MacAdam hopped into a Tuscarawas County traffic control truck and worked alongside a road crew to set up and tear down a work zone along Interstate 77.

“I learned quickly that a lot of communication, teamwork, trust, and preparation time goes into keeping our crews safe, especially on our busy roadways,” said MacAdam. “Spending these days side-by-side with our employees helps me get to know the people who work here, and learn about their challenges and about what they do.”

District 11 is working on initiatives to create more visibility of leadership in the counties and amongst the workforce.

Putnam County workers find girl, return her home
Rhonda Pees, District 1

A trio of highway technicians found a toddler wandering down a normally busy highway.

Dean Williamson, Jason Slattman and Lynn Hoyt of Putnam County were going about their normal workday along U.S. Route 24 when they spotted a little girl dressed in pajamas and walking in the center of the roadway pushing her doll in a stroller. Guessing the girl lived in a house down a long lane nearby, Hoyt took her hand and walked her back to a grateful mother.

The incident occurred at around 10 a.m. in the morning and traffic was light along the normally busy highway.

Transportation Manager Greg Umpleby of Stark County acted swiftly and helped two men escape a potentially dangerous truck fire. Umpleby was driving his ODOT truck through a construction zone on Interstate Route 77. He saw smoke and then flames rising from the bottom of a furniture delivery truck just ahead of him. Umpleby got the truck driver to pull over and used two ODOT fire extinguishers to put out the flames. Both the driver and a passenger on the truck escaped with no injuries.

“The fire extinguisher and first aid kit are two items in my truck that I hope I never have to use,” he said. “However, I am glad that they are there when needed to make the roadways safer.”
**CSF Scoreboard**

ODOT’s Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Critical Success Factors: Four high-level-sounding terms that many of us have probably heard before, but that many of us may not necessarily be familiar with. The problem with this is that every decision ODOT’s leadership makes regarding the day-to-day operations of our department as well as the planning for its future is based around the substance behind those four terms. In order for the people of ODOT to understand the decisions, the people have to understand the plan.

This section of each month’s Transcript will feature the Critical Success Factor Scoreboard – an easy-to-read graphic that will show all the items of which we measure our performance. Critical Success Factors (CSFs), as they stand today, are presented in the table below.

While these words may seem foreign to many of you now, the Scoreboard section in Transcript will not only show all measurements for that month or quarter, but will also highlight one CSF in each issue to allow everyone a better understanding of what it is and why we evaluate it at ODOT. Look for the first scoreboard in an upcoming edition of Transcript.

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**Q** “During your testimony on the transportation budget, you said ODOT plans to partner with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections to have prison inmates pick up trash on the highways. You said we are currently spending $4 million per year to do this and the inmates will cost less. Does this mean there will be layoffs?”

**A** “No, there will be no layoffs resulting from this program. Instead, it will free up ODOT workers to do more important, value-added work. Generally speaking, our people’s time can be put to much better use. This program will benefit the inmates, the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and ODOT. It allows us to achieve more and better results with the resources we have.”

— Director Jerry Wray

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**ODOT Critical Success Factors**

**People**
- Work Life Index
- Progress Towards Target

**System Conditions**
- Bridges: General Appraisal
- Pavements: Priority, General and Urban Systems

**Operations**
- Operating Cost Savings
- Direct Labor Ratio

**Safety**
- Fatalities Per Year
- Serious Injuries per Year
- Crashes per Year

**Capital Programs**
- Contract Program
- ODOT Let Projects Awarded On-Time
- Local Let Projects Awarded On-Time

**Jobs & Commerce**
- Economic Development Projects Approved

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A new feature in Transcript, “Ask the Director” will allow ODOT employees to submit questions to Director Jerry Wray about work life at ODOT. He will consider questions on ODOT policy and procedures, future infrastructure projects, snow and ice control, and a variety of other issues that are on the minds of the men and women of ODOT. You can submit your questions to Alex Buerger in the Office of Communications, either by email at Alexandra.Buerger@dot.state.oh.us, by interoffice mail (Mail Stop 1420), or by phone at (614) 387-6225. Director Wray will choose which question(s) to answer for Transcript each month. All names will be kept confidential if requested.
Everybody knows Bette
Joel Hunt, Central Office

HAVING GONE from Ohio State Highway Patrol Trooper to ODOT Investigator to her current role as a supervisor in the Office of Employee Development, Bette Mendenhall has had a long and distinguished career with the state of Ohio. She is a highly regarded professional by those who work with her every day.

Until recently, Mendenhall was the program manager for the New Manager Training Program for seven years. During that time, the program was able to provide training by subject matter experts to about 700 exempt employees, with 539 of those employees completing the entire program.

In April, however, the New Manager Training Program was replaced with the newly developed Leadership Development Program (LDP), for which she played a major role. When the LDP was being developed, she and her team contacted 22 municipalities, colleges and universities around the state who have similar training programs.

“The LDP will change the way ODOT provides training and direction to its managers and executive staff,” said Mendenhall. “The goal was to help ODOT administrators reach beyond basic management skills and, instead, develop leadership skills.”

The LDP kicked off in April 2013. Adam Lape, transportation manager in District 3’s Crawford County, attended all six sessions of the LDP:

“Bette’s course on Generational Communication resonated with me because there is such a wide age gap at ODOT,” he recalled. “She taught us how to supervise across generations the same way she teaches across generations.”

Mendenhall said she attacks new projects like the LDP with a team approach. She is motivated by being able to provide something that is necessary and something people want and will help other people succeed.

“I pull together subject matter experts and with the help of my team we brainstorm,” she said. “It doesn’t matter that we all have our niches and skill sets, what matters is that someone comes to us with a problem and we find a way to solve it.”

Bette graduated from the Ohio State University with a degree in Sociology and currently resides in West Jefferson with her husband and two sons. Bette’s husband, Jim, was recently promoted to Lieutenant at the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Their son DJ is a football quarterback at Urbana University breaking school records in 2012 in rushing and passing. Their other son Nick is a successful starting athlete at West Jefferson High school in both football and basketball.

“My family is my life,” said Mendenhall. “Whatever the kids are doing, Jim and I are there. I also like gardening, sports and travel.”

Bette Mendenhall develops and delivers classes around the state. Here, she instructs county managers at training that kicked off in April.
Transportation maintenance facilities to be upgraded
Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

The Boston Psychiatric Professor Avery Weisman once said that morale is self-esteem in action. A critical ingredient to morale in the ODOT workplace are the working conditions, whether in Central Office, a district office, or a county garage, now referred to as a Full Service Maintenance Facility (FSMF).

“Over 52 percent of ODOT’s work force is based in these FSMFs,” notes Facilities and Equipment Management Deputy Director David Coyle. “The mission of ODOT’s Statewide Facilities Operations is to provide safe, functional, and cost-effective properties and facilities that support the core functions and mission of ODOT, through exemplary management, planning and service implementation.”

The talented staff of the ODOT Statewide Facilities Operations Office has been working with all of the district and Central Office shareholders to put together a master planning process to provide a systematic method for gathering and analyzing facility information. This information will assist in making effective and logical decisions regarding design, location and function of future ODOT facilities.

This approach allows ODOT to properly plan and prioritize the replacement of antiquated and deficient full service maintenance facilities and outposts without regard to boundaries and other past restrictions. In addition, it encourages the increased use of unstaffed salt storage yards to reduce or eliminate “dead-heading” on snow and ice routes.

The master planning process has resulted in a six-year facility replacement & special projects plan that will achieve the goals of the division: goals that are directly aligned with the mission, vision, guiding principles and critical success factors of the department.

Some of the benefits of the master planning process are reduction of full service and outpost facilities through the use of unstaffed yard facilities in strategic locations; reduction of the overall square footage of facilities statewide; reduction in the cost-squared-foot for new construction; increased energy efficiencies; reduction in project development costs through partnering alternatives and increased opportunities for innovation.

New full service facilities designed and constructed this year include the Lucas FSMF in District 2, the Wayne FSMF in District 3, the Jefferson FSMF in District 11, and the Euclid FSMF in District 12’s Cuyahoga County. Each of these will replace facilities that are over 50 years old. New outposts will also be built this year in Hardin, Mahoning, and Muskingum counties.

In 2014, new full service maintenance facilities are scheduled for Crawford County in District 3, Warren County in District 8, Athens County in District 10, Highland County in District 9, and Warrensville in District 12. In addition, Allen County in District 1 will build a new full service maintenance facility within the district headquarters’ complex.

“Morale will improve once these facilities are implemented, and it will make it easier for our men and women to do their jobs in a better, more effective and efficient way.”
— David Coyle, Deputy Director of Facilities and Equipment Management
Running towards her dream
Sue Farver-Springer, District 8

If most people wake up at 4:15 a.m., they just roll over and continue their sweet dreams. Not Amber Krieger of District 8. She wakes up at 4:15 a.m. on purpose! To run, of all things!

Krieger is a wife and mother of three teenage daughters, and an information technologist at ODOT. Besides her three humans, she also cares for two goats, a one-eyed mutt, a Golden doodle (with two eyes), and a turtle. She keeps house, cooks, cleans, and gets her teenagers to and fro like many other ODOT moms. So, when that 4:15 alarm goes off, it is amazing that she does not take a sledgehammer to it! Instead, she runs.

How—and why—does one pick such an extreme hobby?

“I started walking in 2002,” she recalled, “just for fresh air, to get out of the house and work through stress. Those comforting strolls soon became quick jogs, then training to finish my first 5K. At the Miamisburg Turkey Trot, a close friend told me at the finish line I was not a ‘real runner’ until I completed a full marathon. I haven’t looked back since.”

Krieger set a goal to compete in a race in each of the 50 states. To date, she has checked off 16 locations, competing in a total of 10 full and around 24 half-marathons. She was part of a world record for the largest group of ‘Running Elvises’ in the sport, racing along in the signature wig and costume of the king of rock–n–roll. She has raced through scorpions and spiders in Utah, toughed out a rotator cuff injury in Nevada.

But odds are the race she can never forget is her most recent, held on April 15 in Massachusetts. That morning she joined some 27,000 athletes running 26.1 miles from Hopkinton to downtown Boston. Keeping her pace constant, Krieger completed the race in a very respectable four hours. Krieger was at a water station about eight minutes after crossing the finish line when the first explosion went off about 300 feet away, followed by a second detonation. Thankfully uninjured, she and other runners calmly walked away as first responders moved in to lend aid.

“I quickly used my mobile to meet my husband (Jim) at a rendezvous point,” said Krieger, “and texted family members to let them know I was okay. Many had been following me … and I didn’t want them to worry.”

Krieger and husband walked five miles out of the city to their hotel. The enthusiastic feel of the city was now dispirited as she learned the full magnitude of the attack. Now at home, she does think about the incident and those who were hurt or killed:

“What if I had walked when tired and crossed the finish line eight minutes later when the bombs went off?,” she wonders. “My family could have gotten a very different update that day.”

But reflection is not hesitation. When the alarm goes off at 4:15 every morning, Krieger is up, running nine miles before work. Her next full marathon is in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and she is thankful for every opportunity to prepare for that race. State number 17: check!