

Reorganization

What will ITD look like in 2020? That's the question currently before management.

Leaders are addressing the vision of a more streamlined transportation department, with fewer positions and increased compensation.

Executives at Headquarters and at district offices are working on new organization charts, due out in a few months, which identify positions in a more simplified, uniform ITD.

Changes will be implemented over time, with all existing employees retaining their jobs. Responsibilities of employees in the new organization may be altered and/or increased, and new reporting relationships will be instituted.

The reorganization aims to further ITD's goal of becoming the best transportation department in the nation. Stay tuned.

Sandy takes leave



Sandy Holder's doctor says she has to stay home for the foreseeable future to deal with health issues. She took leave of ITD on Oct. 17.

"Sandy is the heartbeat of the district," Administration Manager Nancy Luthy says. "She will be greatly missed by all of us."

Employees honored Sandy at a cake and ice cream event Oct. 16 at the district office. She has 23 years of service at ITD. A Rigby native, Sandy joined District 6 on April 22, 1991. Marla Tilton, of District 5, will take over her responsibilities.



Believe it or not. A New Hampshire woman escaped serious injury when she struck this moose May 9, 2010. The force of the impact sent the animal through the windshield into the passenger seat of the car, but amazingly she received only minor injuries. The man in the story below wasn't so lucky, suffering severe injuries that claimed his life.

Motorists and moose don't mix

One winter night in 2010, a young man died when his car struck a moose on U.S. 20 near Thornton. The tragedy graphically underscored the dangers of wildlife, especially big animals, on state highways.

"Driving conditions were less than ideal because of fog," the *Post Register* reported Jan. 31, 2010. "Emergency medical services crews were dispatched at 11:36 p.m. [Friday, Jan. 29], but [Derek] Johns, a 24-year-old student at Brigham Young University-Idaho, was pronounced dead at the scene.

"Crews from the Department of Fish and Game were called to remove the moose, which was also killed," according to the newspaper report.

Crashes involving wildlife in America kill more than 200 people each year and seriously injure thousands more.

The cost of death, personal injury and property damage totals billions of dollars. Many animals also perish.

Transportation departments around the country have addressed this problem by constructing overpasses or underpasses that allow wildlife to safely move over or under roads. But these structures are expensive.

ITD has no animal overpasses, but it boasts five animal underpasses, four on U.S. 95 in north Idaho and one on Idaho 21 northeast of Boise. Effective at passing wildlife, each of the structures costs a minimum of \$500,000.

State highway departments also install wildlife-detection systems, which alert motorists to animals present. These devices are less expensive than overpasses or underpasses, but they still

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Darwin Smout inspects resurfacing of U.S. 20 in Rexburg Sept. 3.

Dennis retires



Sixteen years was enough, Dennis Jackson decided. He retired Sept. 19.

Dennis has been the training specialist at District 6 for

eight years. Before that he was a construction inspector. He joined ITD in 1999 as a storekeeper in Supply.

Inspection was his favorite work, which he performed in both construction residencies of District 6.

Early in his career, he almost died when the brakes of a pneumatic tire roller failed on Lost Trail Pass north of Salmon. The roller smashed into his pickup, causing severe injuries. It was 9 months before he could return to work.

“I miss coming to the office every day,” Dennis says. “I appreciate the many friendships with fellow workers.”

The Roberts resident just returned from three weeks of fishing in Salmon. He plans to continue restoring the green Studebaker he often drove to work

“After that, I’ll have to figure out what else to do,” he says. – All the best.

Maintenance crews further safety, help 3 counties achieve zero traffic deaths in 2013, advancing mission

Conscientious road upkeep by District 6 maintenance crews last year furthered ITD’s mission of safety, mobility and economic opportunity for the traveling public. Moreover, it helped three District 6 counties – Butte, Madison and Teton – achieve zero traffic deaths in 2013, which is gratifying.

“Thanks to each employee in our Maintenance Operations Division for a job well done,” District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen says. “Steady, quality services by the division save lives.”

ITD congratulated officials of Madison and Teton counties for their role in the achievement at the Idaho Transportation Board meeting in Harriman State Park Sept. 18. The agency will thank officials of Butte County at a county commission meeting in Arco Nov. 10.

Highway safety is important not only to save lives but also to conserve bank accounts. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, society at large picks up nearly 75 percent of all crash costs incurred by



ITD presented two framed certificates similar to the one above, which will be presented in November, to each county – one to county commissioners and one to the sheriff or his deputy. Certificates are for having no traffic deaths in 2013.

individual motor-vehicle crash victims. These costs are passed on to the general public through insurance premiums, taxes, direct out-of-pocket payments for goods and services, and increased charges for medical care. ITD estimates that the average cost to every Idaho taxpayer for a single crash is \$1,700.



Joe Martinez of Idaho Falls maintenance with a city technician passes a filled void (right), which developed in U.S. 26 in August.

Sinking feeling – crews fix void in U.S. 26 in I.F.

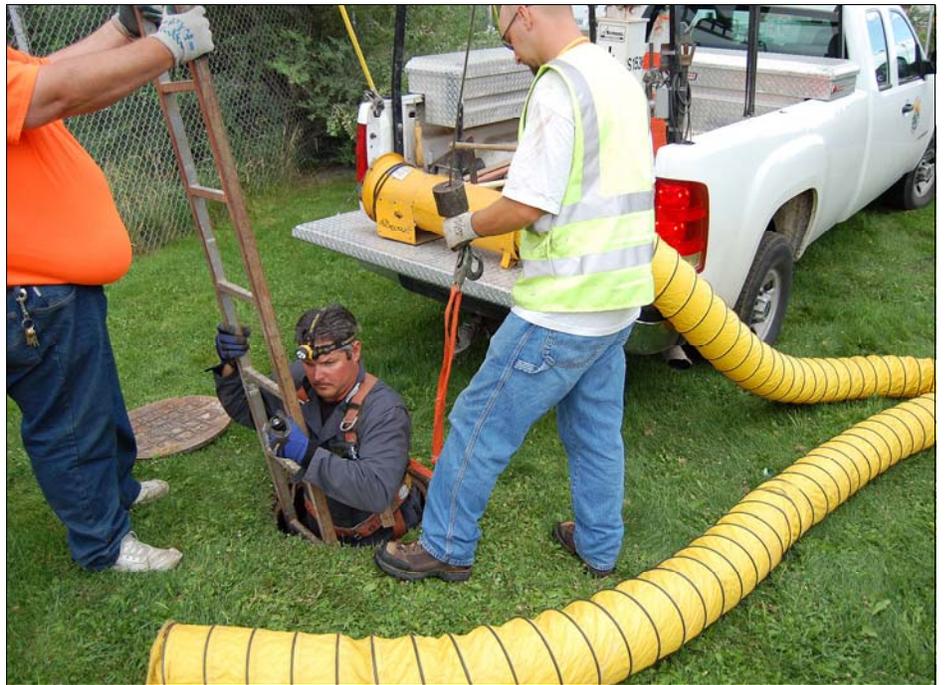
It was a sinkhole. But why? This isn't Florida. We're built on good solid rock in the Gem State.

ITD and Idaho Falls officials set out to discover the reason for the sinkhole, which turned out to be a "void."

It all started in early August, when the Idaho Falls maintenance crew of District 6 found a three- to four-inch dip about two feet in diameter in the asphalt pavement on U.S. 26 (Yellowstone Highway) under the center Union Pacific Railroad Bridge, which is just west of the ITD South Boulevard Bridge south of G Street in Idaho Falls.

When crew members removed the asphalt on the dip located along the north side of the westbound (south-bound) lanes of Yellowstone Highway, they found a void beneath the concrete pavement that is below the asphalt. It took four yards of cement grout to fill the cavity.

Using pipe-inspection cameras, city of Idaho Falls street crews helped District 6 investigate the cause of the void by inspecting nearby city sewer and storm drains for possible leaks that could have contributed to the void.



An inspector from the Idaho Falls street crew prepares to descend a manhole north of the bridge on U.S. 26 (Yellowstone Highway) to check the storm drain 30 feet below.

The district also hired a local testing company to pinpoint any additional voids beneath the pavement under the bridge, using ground-penetrating radar. The study revealed three minor voids. Over time, water may have drained at this location, carrying away

soil and rock into old basalt rock with internal voids and cracks. Officials decided that this likely caused the void. Maintenance Foreman Don Gilstrap says his crew continues to monitor the roadway carefully for new dips.

Motorists... continued from page 1

cost tens of thousands of dollars and are expensive to maintain.

Automakers recently announced animal-detection systems in upcoming vehicle models, which will warn drivers of large animals in their path.

Road departments concentrate on stretches of highway most frequented by wildlife. It isn't feasible to construct a bridge or install a detection system wherever an animal may access a route, which is everywhere.

Which brings us to a recent study.

Where oh Where

A few years ago, District 6 Senior Environmental Planner Tim Cramer proposed a study to identify the main animal-crossing locations in Island Park, where wildlife abound. Timing of this proposal stemmed in part from community residents complaining about too many vehicle-animal collisions and near misses along U.S. 20 in the vicinity.

ITD signed a memorandum of understanding with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), an international organization, in October 2009 to study crossing locations of moose and elk. The consortium determined to identify crossings of U.S. 20 and Idaho 87, which together traverse the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



District 6 Engineer Tom Cole (now retired) alerted Tim to a potential funding opportunity if the environmental planner could quickly draft a scope and budget

for the project. The result was \$575,000 in financing through the American Restoration and Recovery Act, after which researchers set out to identify not only impacts on U.S. 20 and Idaho 87 of moose and elk crossings but also impacts of U.S. 20 and Idaho 87 on animal movements and habitat.



Photo courtesy of National Geographic Society

Teams from IDFG and WCS captured 42 moose and 37 elk, fitting them with radio-transmitter collars for a three-year study of animal and herd movement. Tim designed the environmental and traffic study in collaboration with ecological professionals at IDFG and WCS, and with traffic engineers at ITD.

At the conclusion of the research last December, data showed 15 moose crossed U.S. 20 and Idaho 87 fully 354 times, and elk crossed the highways 152 times. Animals mostly accessed nine stretches along U.S. 20 and Idaho 87 (see red bands on map opposite).

Movin' Movin' Movin'

Except for moose that live in the Island Park area year-round, moose and elk populations migrate between the Island Park region and winter ranges on the East Snake River Plain near St. Anthony.

Learning of the study, National Geographic Television shot footage of research teams trapping and collaring moose and elk. Footage appeared in the documentary "Wild," which aired in 2011.

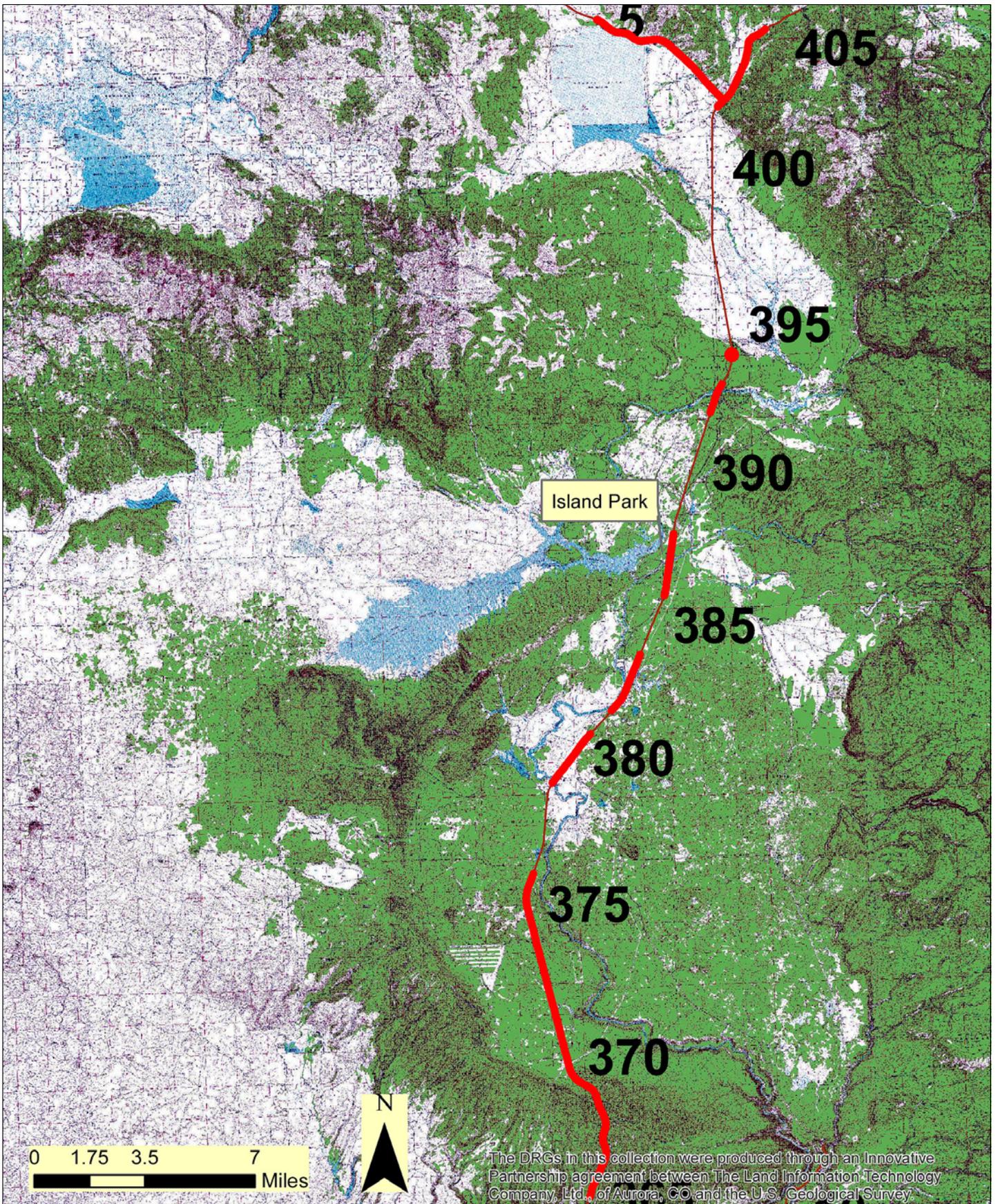
After analyzing the data, officials of WCS suggested to ITD leaders that state traffic engineers consider a combination of overpasses/underpasses, detection systems, warning signs and roadside clearances to help reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions throughout eastern Idaho.

District 6 plans to define a path forward next year. For now, the sign crew will post additional wildlife crossing signs at migration points.

Regardless of the strategies selected, drivers must remain alert. Wild animals are ever unpredictable, as evidenced by the Thornton incident. They emerge anywhere, anytime, and just when you least expect it.

In the near future, District 6 hopes to help eliminate a good portion of that ambiguity. ■





Moose and elk frequently accessed nine stretches of the two highways in the Island Park area (see red bands). The eighth and ninth bands at the bottom run together. The black numbers along the routes are mileposts. Senior Environmental Planner Tim Cramer of District 6 says: “Highways and associated traffic impact wildlife in four ways: decrease the extent and quality of habitat, limit access to resources, sever migration routes, and fragment populations, increasing wild animal vulnerability.”

Replacing bridges on Idaho 75 southwest of Challis



May 5 – Cofferd dam

Photos courtesy of Matt Davison



East Fork
Salmon
River
Bridges

October 22 – Bridge and roadway construction

Reconstructing U.S. Highway 20 on the Ashton Hill



July 15 – Excavation and grading

Photos courtesy of Gregg Bowman



September 25 – Rock cap and paving



Joan

Andrea

Comings & Goings

New employees are Joan Burgert, staff engineer, Traffic; and Andrea Lee, technical records specialist 1, Port of Entry.

Departing employees: Sandy Holder personnel technician, Administration (see **Sandy...**, p. 1); Camilo Serrano, transportation technician, Dubois; and Mark Christensen, transportation technician senior (TTS), Dubois.

Transfers: Leon Thornton, of Residency B, transferred to District 2 in Lewiston.

Promotions: Korby Hansen to transportation staff engineer assistant (TSEA) in Materials.

Retirees: Dennis Jackson, Training, 16 years (see **Dennis...**, p. 2); Kent Holden, TTS, Special Crew, 37 years; and Dennis Ahlstrom, welder, Shop, 14 years.

In Memoriam

Cynthia “Cindy” Diane Cochran Stone, 45, died Sept. 24, 2014, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was the wife of Troy Stone of Dubois maintenance.

Ronald J. Sperl, 56, died Sept. 1, 2014, from natural causes. He worked for Dubois maintenance for several years before retiring Feb. 17, 2011.

District 6 expresses condolences to family and friends of the bereaved.



TTS Josh Sprague displays unique art

“But I do know this clock does one very slick trick.

“It doesn’t tick tock. How it goes, is tock tick.” – Dr. Seuss

This clock is a representation of the clock owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. Carmichael Krox from *Dr. Seuss’s Sleep Book*. Construction inspector Josh Sprague, of Residency B, fabricated it from steel and cast bronze.

The piece and other artwork by Josh are on display at Idaho State University’s Transition Gallery in Pocatello until Nov. 21.

The inspector obviously is multi-talented, handling all types of “construction.” Well done.

Opinion

Why vote Nov. 4

Ordinarily, nations and their economies are resilient and multifaceted, such that bad policy does not quickly destroy them.



Bruce King
Public
Information
Specialist

Political leaders create bad policy, and citizens, being consumed with daily life, hardly notice.

In time, however, bad policy brings trouble.

Who is responsible? I suggest that it is those who made the bad policy and those who did nothing to prevent it.

Maybe that is one reason why Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) of the U.S. Supreme Court said, “The most important political office is that of private citizen.”

“We in America do not have government by the majority — we have government by the majority who participate...,” said Thomas Jefferson. “All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.”

Sound policy comes of sound understanding and of the integrity of wanting what is best for society. This is sometimes referred to as “the general welfare.”

In the end, each citizen is obligated to advance sound principles and responsible behavior. Nothing short of that will eliminate the threat of societal and economic decline.

Tuesday, Nov. 4, is Election Day. Consider voting. Better yet, consider studying the issues and candidates so that you will be an informed voter.

Nothing less promises you or me a bright future.

Vote November 4

