

6 BITS

Oversized load parked east of Butte City March 12

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF ITD DISTRICT 6 – JULY 2014 (VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1)

Crossing the — divide —

What's best for the traveling public is a question that Ryan Day asks himself when negotiating agreements to replace old railroad crossings.

"You can take a hard line and say railroad companies must maintain their crossings per Idaho law, but that doesn't build relationships," Ryan says.

"Nor does it serve motorists, who simply want smooth and improved road crossings.

"ITD needs to help, and railroad companies welcome it."

Ryan is District 6's transportation staff engineer assistant (TSEA) assigned to work with railroad firms on crossing improvements.

"Motorists equate bumpy railroad crossings with ITD as much as with railroad companies," he explains. "Our reputation hinges on helping railroad companies maintain their crossings."

(continued on page 4)

Robinson leads Sugar City-Driggs



Scott Robinson is the maintenance foreman of the Sugar City and Driggs crews, replacing Lyle Holden, who took over for Darrin May as the foreman in Dubois.

Scott previously was a transportation technician senior in Ashton.

A California native, Scott moved to Idaho for a career change and for a new lifestyle for his family.



Kimbol, Susan, Loren, Katelyn, Amory, JD (Rottweiler), Elise and Shelby Allen.

Kimbol hails from Magic Valley

District 6's new leader, Kimbol Allen, hails from the Magic Valley where he grew up. Allen, 40, was born and raised in Rupert.

Kimbol and his wife Susan are the parents of five children. The family plans to move to the Upper Valley later this summer. Kimbol enjoys trap shooting and riding motorcycles. His wife got him into trap shooting, he says, which they enjoy together.

He also enjoys assisting young people in the Scouting program. He is an Eagle Scout, as is each of his seven brothers. He is second oldest in a family of 14 children – "all raised on state wages." His dad, George Allen, retired from ITD District 5 last year, where he was maintenance foreman in Soda Springs.

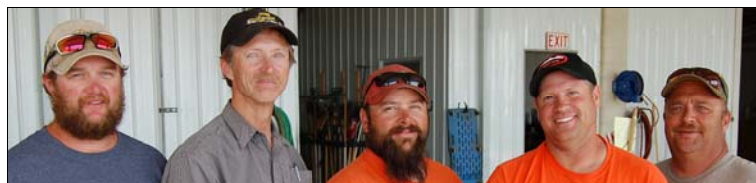
Until his appointment, Kimbol was operations engineer in District 4 in

Shoshone, where started his career with ITD in 1999 – the same year he earned his engineering degree from Utah State University. He has held management positions in both construction and maintenance at the Shoshone office.

Kimbol fills the position vacated by Blake Rindlisbacher, who accepted the job of administrator for the Division of Engineering Services at ITD Headquarters in Boise early this year.

"I want to get acquainted with everyone in the district and to learn its history," Kimbol says. "My goal is to maintain the district's continuity and to add a thing or two."

Transportation is fundamental to modern life, the new district engineer says. "I look forward to furthering ITD's mission of safety, mobility and economic opportunity for motorists." ■



*District 6
'rodeo'
winners,
page 6*

District 6 honors employees for years of service

D-6 Engineering Manager Karen Hiatt presented service awards to employees at the employee benefit luncheon May 7 at the Idaho Falls Chuck-a-Rama café.

5 Years

Roger Brucks, Service Station
Brad Cook, Rigby Maintenance
Mike Harvey, Idaho Falls
Clark Moon, Driggs
Scott Robinson, Sugar City

10 Years

Mark Christenson, Dubois
Karl Grover, Sign Crew
Mike Surerus, Shop

15 Years

Jerry Bates, Supply
Kim Ker, Mud Lake

20 Years

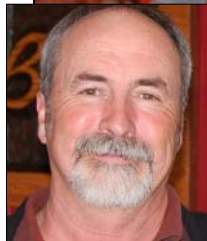
Stephen Ball, Residency B
Jeff Call, Project Development
John Cleveland, Residency B
Eric Larson, Materials

25 Years

Jeff Eagle, Salmon
Wendy Johnson, Administration
Kevin Rinehart, Island Park
Bruce Smith, Materials

30 Years

Paul Walker, Supply ■



98 employees attend.

Karen Hiatt updates District 6 employees.

Paul Walker reaches 30 years.



Karen Hiatt presents 10-year awards to Karl Grover and Mark Christenson.



*Center: Dan Smith,
Leadore, and Frank
Unrein, Gibbonsville*



*Clockwise from lower left: Derk Hurst,
Dubois; Melissa Moyer, Ashton; Pete
Demitropoulos, Residency B; Elaine
Wolf, Administration (Elaine retired
March 27 after 25 years at ITD's
District 6 office south of Rigby); and
Kim Ker, Mud Lake.*



Crossing... continued from page 1



Veteran designer Ryan Day, TSEA.

A veteran designer in Project Development, Ryan works primarily with Scott Adams of Eastern Idaho Railroad and with officials of Union Pacific Railroad to improve up to three crossings per year.

All told, 209 roadways cross railroad right of way, most of them being side roads along Interstate 15 and U.S. 20 (see map below). Eastern Idaho Railroad owns most of the railroad crossings, reflecting its large footprint in the region.

It's a ROAST

Identifying which railroad crossings to upgrade is the job of Traffic Engineer Ben Burke, who, with other members of the ITD Headquarters' Rail Operations and Safety Team (ROAST), submits recommendations for crossing improvements as requested.

Sajonara Tipuric of ITD Headquarters heads ROAST, which is tasked with prioritizing railroad-crossing projects statewide. The Idaho Transportation Board authorizes up to \$2 million per year for ROAST's Rail Crossing Safety Fund, which finances crossing improvements for state and local roads.

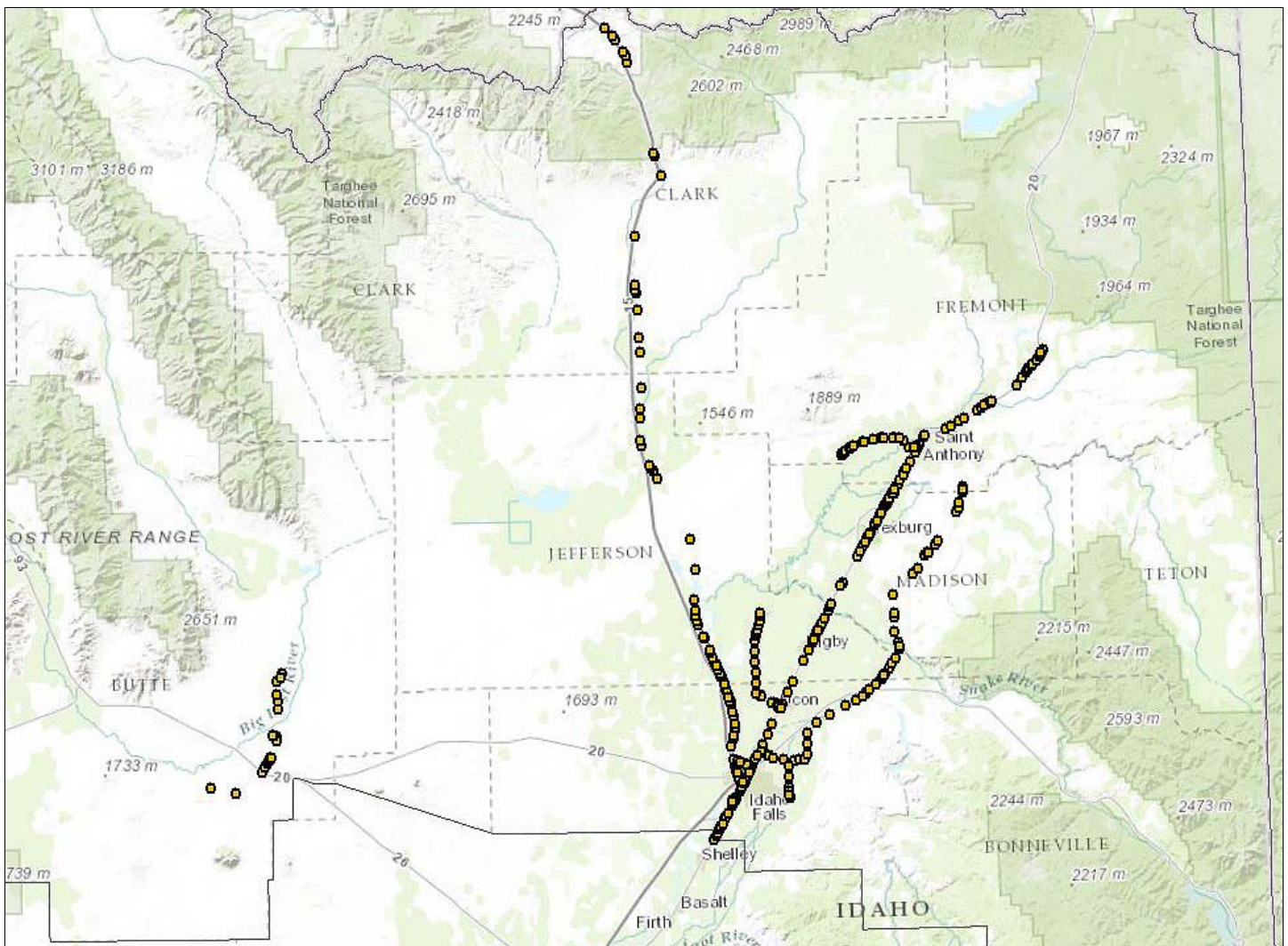
"As you might expect, we improve public railroad crossings according to need," Ben says. Last year, ITD upgraded crossings on 1st Street in Bonneville County and on 17th Street in Ammon.

Stop signs at each of those crossings halted 10,000 vehicles per day, even though the railroad track hosts just one train per week. Stoppage led to motorist frustration and to a few fender benders, especially in the winter.

Ben and Ryan worked with Bonneville County Public Works Director Kevin Eckersell, Ammon City Engineer Lance Bates and Eastern Idaho Railroad Chief Engineer Scott Adams to install flashing stoplights activated by approaching trains.

Ben coordinated the \$225,000 project, while Ryan developed project plans (drawings). Ryan also prepared the necessary legal agreement for Scott's signature.

Citizens thanked ITD for removing the stop signs, which facilitated safety and mobility.



Altogether, 209 roadways cross railroad right of way in District 6, most of them being side roads along Interstate 15 and U.S. 20.

It's the Law

Idaho statute clearly requires railroad companies to maintain their crossings.

“Whenever a state or county highway crosses...a railroad at grade, the railroad company shall...maintain that portion of such highway between the rails and for a distance of not less than two feet outside the outer rails.

“The crossing shall be planked or surfaced with other suitable material for the full width of the traveled way, including shoulders, and shall be maintained at all times in a smooth and firm condition.” (Idaho Code 62-306)

Given liability issues, railroad companies do not allow cities, counties or ITD to maintain railroad crossings, except to plow snow. When it comes to upgrading or replacing crossings, however, these firms appreciate outside assistance.

“Railroad companies carry a big stick, because it's their right of way,” Ryan says. “They were there first.”

In view of costs and of construction demands in connection with fixing old railroad crossings, railroad companies are not always quick to replace them, says Maintenance Operations Manager Ken Hahn.

It's a Pain

Upgrading railroad crossings is a pain, primarily because it's hard to reset rails to match pavement surfaces, Ken explains.

“After adding rock beneath ties, railroad crews compact the ground, but rails, planking and pavement settle differently,” he says. “Crossings may have dips in them, and ITD may have paved up to the crossings several times.”

Ryan says District 6 often pays for planking, while Eastern Idaho Railroad pays for labor and equipment to install it.

A project to install flashing stoplights and planking costs roughly \$225,000, with stoplights being the lion's share of the expense.



Aging railroad crossing on Hegsted Road (2000 North) in north Rexburg, off Idaho 33.

Projects to install railroad crossing gates cost up to \$250,000, with ITD generally purchasing gates for the railroad companies to install.

Upgrading railroad crossings helps ensure safe and comfortable travel for drivers and passengers alike.

The bottom line: In cooperation with local governments, transportation departments and railroad companies work together to meet the challenge of improving railroad crossings, furthering state-local teamwork and project results. ■



Flashing stoplights and the crossing gate east of the Menan-Lorenzo Interchange.



Railroad crossing on River Bridge Road northeast of the Lorenzo Bridge on U.S. 20.



Winners of the District 6 Truck "Rodeo" are Karl Grover, Craig Stewart, Corey Casper, Trent Maupin and Brian Lenz. Not pictured are Dan Hawkins, Corey Finn, Troy Stone and Stacey McCurdy. Also earning high scores were Don Gilstrap and Tony Black.

Corey Casper wins 'rodeo' title, Maupin shines

Corey Casper, Rigby maintenance, won the District 6 Truck "Rodeo" at the Sugar City shed on May 28, earning 2,175 points.

In second place was Craig Stewart, Arco maintenance, with 2,120 points, and placing third was Karl Grover, sign crew, with 2,113 points. Brian Lenz, Ashton, finished fourth, earning 2,095 points.

Taking fifth place was Troy Stone, Dubois, with 2,085 points, and coming in sixth was Stacey McCurdy, Arco, collecting 2,038 points.

Trent Maupin, Sugar City, won first place in the foreman and lead worker category, accumulating 2,248 points – out of a possible 2,250 points – while Dan Hawkins, Arco, finished second, earning 2,185 points. Corey Finn, sign crew, placed third in this category, garnering 2,180 points.

Trent Maupin, Dan Hawkins and Corey Finn scored the most points overall in the competition. It's the second year in a row that Trent and Dan registered the highest totals.

Trent went on to win sixth place in the state truck rodeo at the Twin Falls maintenance shed on June 10. Craig won eighth place and Corey Casper won 16th place in the state competition. District 6 placed fifth overall, falling short of last year's second-place finish and short of 2012's first-place victory. District 5 won this year's state rodeo contest. ■

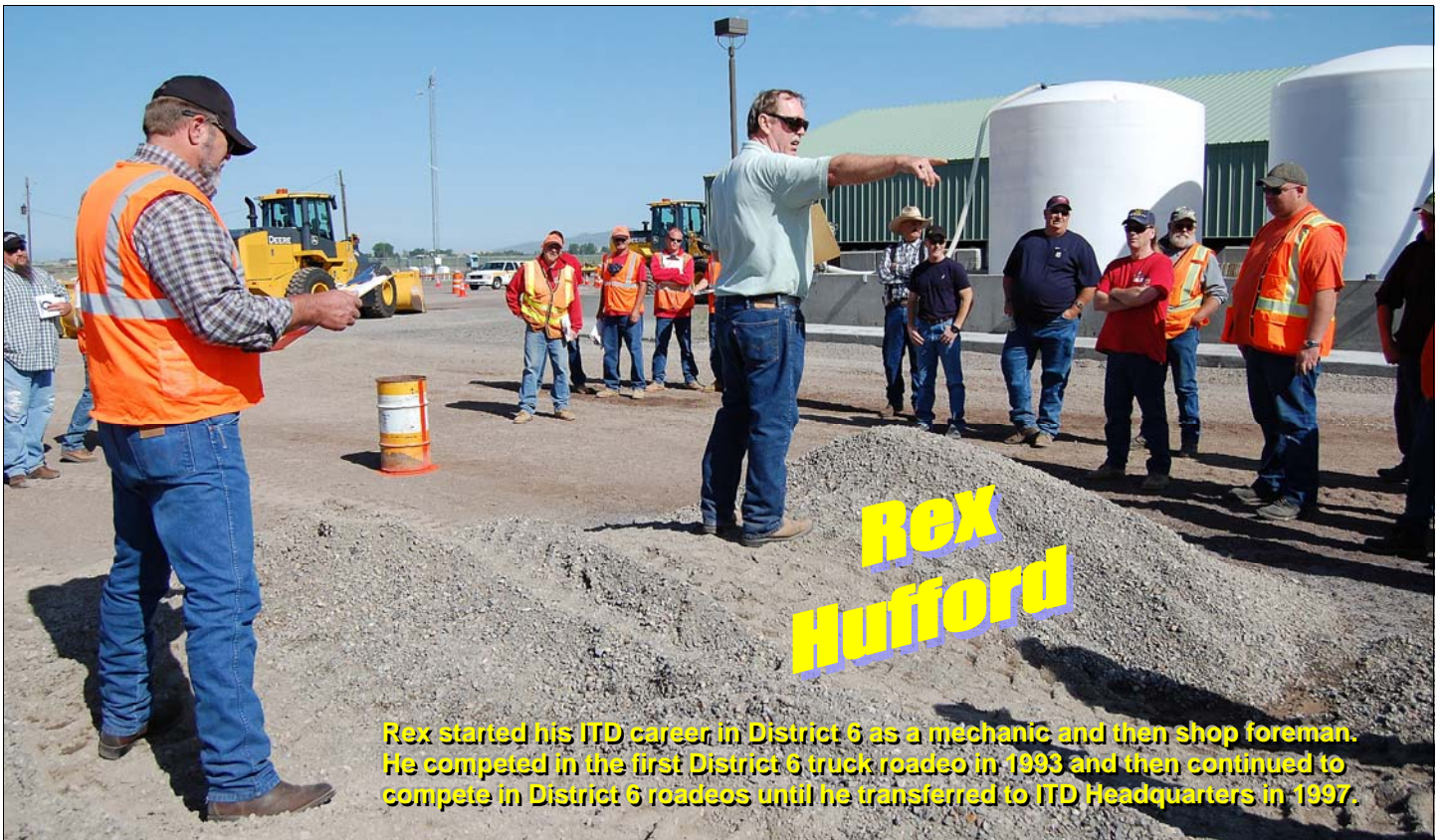


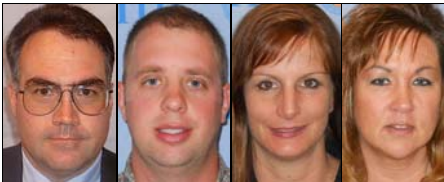
21st Annual Truck Rodeo at District 6

Briefing at the loader stop-bar event.



On this page: Rex Hufford, highway equipment analyst and state rodeo coordinator, briefs contestants on events in the obstacle course. Hufford has helped plan and implement ITD's annual district rodeo competitions and the state competition for 17 years.





Kimbol Kade Eileen April

Comings & Goings

New employees are Kimbol Allen, district engineer (see **Kimbol...**, p. 1); Kade Raymond, engineer in training; and Eileen Lawrence and April Baler, technical records specialists, Office.

Departing employees: Julie Thompson, designer, Project Development, and Melissa Stewart, technical records specialist, Front Office.

Promotions: Blake Rindlisbacher to administrator for the Division of Engineering Services at ITD Headquarters in Boise, Beau Hansen to ProjectWise coordinator at ITD Headquarters, and Scott Robinson to transportation technician principal, Sugar City (see **Robinson...**, p. 1).

Retirees: Casey Richardson, Traffic, 38 years; Bruce Smith, Materials, 25 years; Elaine Wolf, Office, 26 years; and Wendy Johnson, Office, 36 years.

In Memoriam

David “DJ” Scott Warnke, Jr., 32, died Nov. 12, 2013, from complications of diabetes. He was the son in law of Johnny Larson, Sugar City.

Ned S. Sauer, 75, died March 12, 2014. He and his wife Pam worked for District 6 many years.

Edward Pierre Bala, 81, died May 23, 2014. He was the father of District 5 Engineer Ed Bala, of Pocatello.

William Dennis Pope, 70, died June 16, 2014. He was a past member of the Sign Crew.

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



New Arrivals: Sutton Ann Williams, Records Inspector Myron Williams’s granddaughter. The toddler is the daughter of Myron’s oldest son Clint and his wife Adrienne, of Lathrop, Calif.



Mike McKee, Design, and wife Kirsten welcomed a new daughter, Caroline Anna. ■



District 6 Picnic

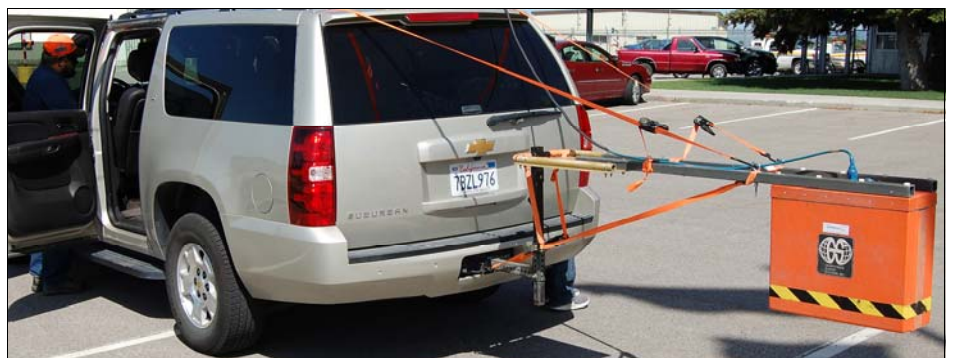
Ed Bala, acting District 6 engineer, and Shawn Enright, District 6 geologist, visit at the District 6 Employee Appreciation Picnic in the Island Park yard on May 14.



Office Specialist 1 Elaine Wolf retired March 27. She says, “I really enjoyed working with the people at ITD, and the work was very satisfying.”



Administrative Assistant Wendy Johnson retired June 24. She says, “I loved all my years at ITD and have made many, many lifelong friends. Thanks for all the memories and for lots of laughs. Retirement’s not too shabby, either!!!!”



Vehicle equipped with a ground-penetrating radar system identifies road conditions.