Bryan and Wade remove barricade to open Thornton Interchange Nov. 18

Photo courtesy of Troy Williams

See photos pages 4-6

6 BITS

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF ITD DISTRICT 6 – DEC. 2016 (VOLUME 16, ISSUE 4)

2016 in review

It's been a good year: Thornton, bridge repairs, microsurfacing, innovations, improved winter maintenance, awards, design-build project, culture change.

District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen became ITD chief engineer, and Jason Minzghor succeeded him.

Jesse Barrus joined the district as Operations manager.

Ben Burke was named ITD Engineer of the Year (see right), and Mike McKee and team won in the small-design category of the Excellence in Transportation Awards competition (see below).

Long-time employees retired: Randy Drake, Paul Steele, Paul Walker, Dan Hawkins, Joe Martinez, Lyle Holden, Cleston Mason, Ed Osteraas, Scott England, Mike Poole and Myron Williams. We miss them already.

ITD emerges anew as culture change advances. Getting better is the purpose. The agency aims to be the best transportation department in the country.

Click here to see the slide show "2016 in Review." The show premiered at the District 6 Christmas party Dec. 20.■

M. McKee, team win in small design

Engineer Technical 1 Mike McKee and his team won the small-design award in the 2016 Excellence in Transportation Awards competition at Headquarters in Boise. Below are excerpts from his entry.

(see page 3)

District 6 Engineer Jason Minzghor (left) and Chief Deputy Scott Stokes (right) give District 6 Traffic Engineer Ben Burke the 2016 Engineer of the Year award.

B. Burke named engineer of year

Traffic Engineer Ben Burke is ITD's Engineer of the Year. The agency made the announcement Oct. 10.

The selection was part of the 2016 Excellence in Transportation Awards competition, which showcases accomplishments of ITD employees.

Here are a couple of clips from Ben's nomination, which Engineering Manager Karen Hiatt submitted:

"Ben has submitted more than 10 innovation ideas via ITD's "Innovate ITD!" program over the past year. He constantly thinks of new ways to improve business processes, furthering safety, mobility and economic opportunity for drivers and passengers alike, which is ITD's mission. He is eager to try new methods, whether unique or just new to Idaho, through researching alternative work procedures, with the goal of improving ITD service quality and effectiveness."

"Ben consistently performs at a high level, finding and implementing ways to improve ITD services. Exceptionally responsive, he promptly meets all requests, delivering fast, accurate information or other needs. Ben produces – day in and day out – leaving nothing undone. His creativity, leadership, enthusiasm and output, not to mention his cheerful, determined work practices, make him the ideal candidate for the 2016 ITD Engineer of the Year."

Ben has worked for District 6 nine years, starting as a staff engineer in Design and then promoting to project development engineer, where he oversaw critical designs of the

(continued on page 3)

District 6 honors employees for years of service

District 6 Engineer Jason Minzghor presented service awards to employees at the employee benefit luncheon Oct. 19 at the Chuck-a-Rama café in Idaho Falls.

5 Years

David Alvarez, Residency B

Dallas Dupree, Gibbonsville

Kade Raymond, Residency B

Dalton Rice, Challis

Derk Hurst, Dubois

10 Years

JR Grotjohn, Idaho Falls

Randy Edie, Shop

15 Years

Mike Cummings, Salmon

Dave Nickel, Port of Entry

Gary Clark, Irwin

Alan Rainsdon, Dubois

Rick Carpenter, Irwin

20 Years

Karen Hiatt, Engineering Manager

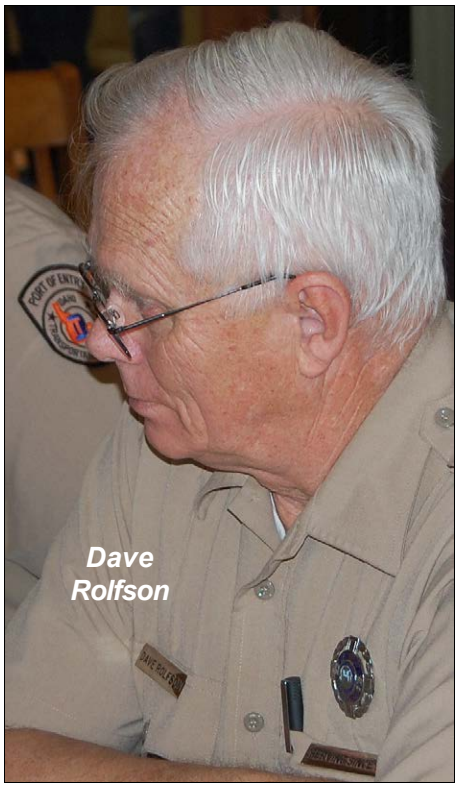
25 Years

Dave Holmberg, Residency B

30 Years

Rayce Ruiz, Land Surveyor.■

Jason Minzghor (right) congratulates Dave Holmberg for 25 years of service to ITD.

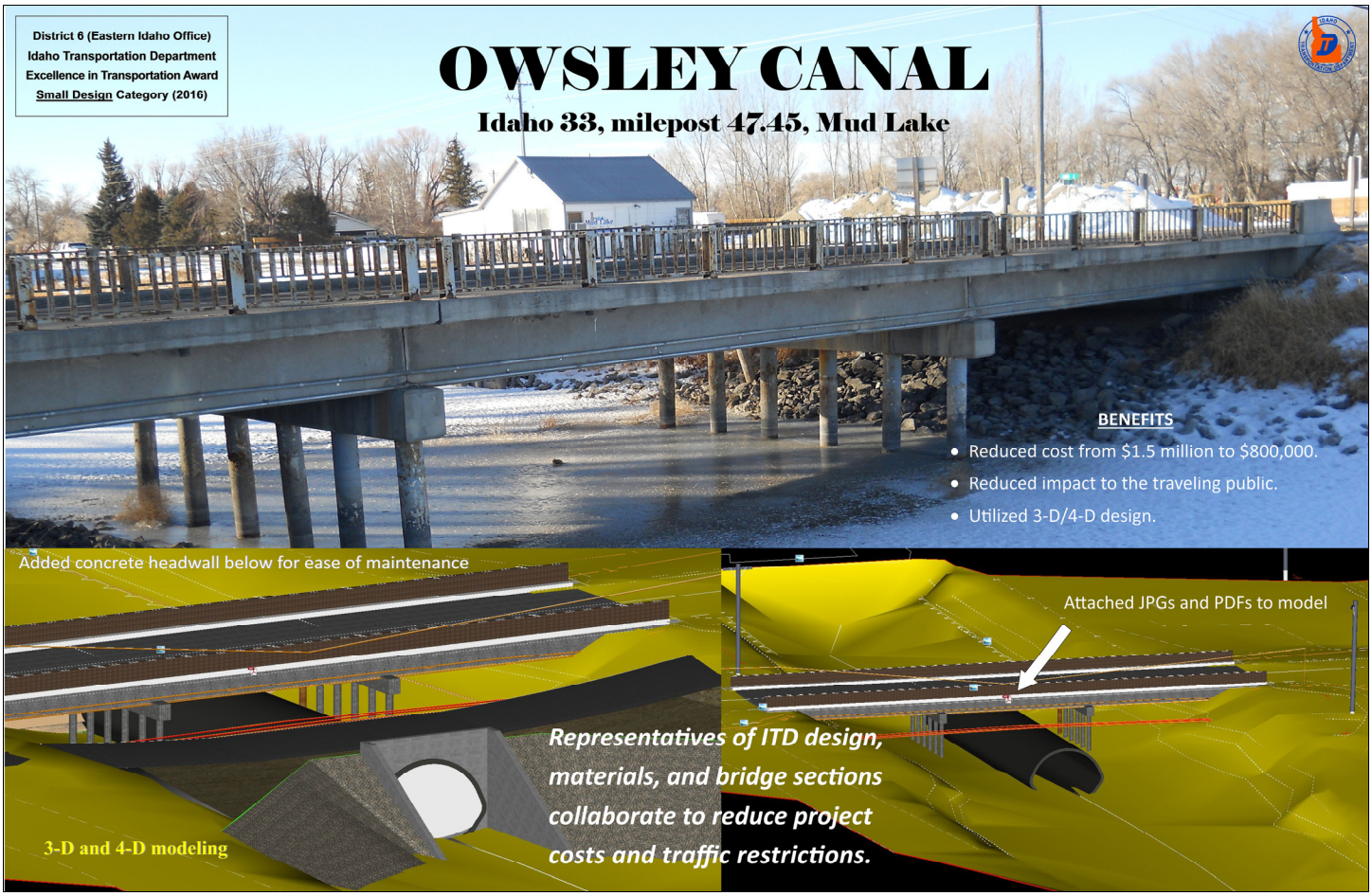


Phillip Blunck

Shannon Esser

Jeff Eagle

Ryan Stewart



Here is the poster for the small-design category of the competition in Boise, featuring 3-D and 4-D modeling, and cost savings.

3-D, 4-D modeling, cost savings win small design

M. McKee… *continued from page 1*

"District 6 of the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is replacing a bridge on Idaho Highway 33 over the Owsley Canal in the City of Mud Lake. Officials initially planned to replace the 120-foot bridge with a similar structure estimated to cost $1.5 million.

"In studying hydraulic flows of the canal, however, engineers determined that the proposed structure did not require the same span as the existing one. They found that an 18'7" X 12' multi-plate pipe-arch culvert would do the job at far less cost than a three-span bridge.

In fact, the arch culvert would save approximately $700,000 over a traditional structure.

"The arch culvert would allow the contractor to slide the pipe between existing piers so that most construction could take place beneath and around the existing roadway. Construction would only interfere with traffic flow for one of the four or five months of the replacement project.

"Using multiple software applications and combinations, engineers employed three-dimensional (3-D) and four-dimensional (4-D) modeling to better analyze the various options. Bentley Systems Inc.'s MicroStation (computer-aided design [CAD] software) and Inroads created models of the existing bridge, the proposed structure and headwall, utility lines, and approaches."

"ITD worked closely with the Mud Lake Water and Sewer Company to ensure that this company's 8-inch pressurized sewer line would retain functionality throughout the project. ITD required the contractor to avoid disrupting the sewer line during construction.

"ITD also worked closely with the Owsley Canal Company to determine the type and size of the proposed replacement structure and to accommodate the canal company's maintenance needs."

"Representatives of ITD design, materials, and bridge sections collaborated to reduce project costs and traffic restrictions. Utilizing 3-D and 4-D modeling, they identified project needs and solutions. In the process, they saved ITD $700,000 and the canal company significant maintenance costs. Innovative design and coordination furthered public safety, mobility, and economic opportunity."■

B. Burke… *continued from page 1*

Pancheri Drive overpass replacement project on Interstate 15 in Idaho Falls and of the reconstruction of a 3-mile stretch of U.S. 20 between Dump-ground Road and Sheep Falls Road on the Ashton Hill north of Ashton.■

Thornton opens

11/18/16

Opening the Thornton Interchange on U.S. 20 south of Rexburg marked completion of seven interchanges and closure of 18 at-grade (level) intersections along the 34-mile stretch of four-lane, divided highway between Idaho Falls and Sugar City. Improvements reduced severe-injury crashes by 75 percent and lowered fatalities from two to less than one per year, despite increased traffic.

Photo courtesy of Troy Williams

Photos courtesy of Troy Williams

Holiday Cheer

Bryan Young wins ugly Christmas sweater contest.

Nancy Luthy wins TV.

About 65 employees attend Christmas party on 12-20-16

The Grinch (Jason Minzghor) and daughter Athena may not have stolen Christmas, but they stole the show at the Christmas party.

Left to right: Randal Brunello, Craig Stewart, Ian Atlas, David Berdrow, Trevor Hall, Terry McGinnis, Ray McMinn, Tavia McVey, Dylan Noer, Tyler Sleeper and Colton Wright. Employees at District 6 now total 144, of which 95 are from Operations.

Comings and Goings at District 6.....

New employees are Randal Brunello, associate engineer, Residency B; Craig Stewart, transportation technician (returning employee), Arco; Ian Atlas, transportation technician apprentice (TTA), Salmon; David Berdrow, TTA, Leadore; Trevor Hall, mechanic (transfer from District 5), Shop; Terry McGinnis, TTA, Sugar City; Ray McMinn, TTA, Ashton; Tavia McVey, TTA, Dubois; Dylan Noer, TTA, Dubois; Tyler Sleeper, TTA, Ashton; and Colton Wright, TTA, Sugar City.

Promotions: Eileen Grende to district records inspector, Rigby office.

Retirees: Ed Osteraas, mechanic, 30 years; Scott England, Leadore, 32 years; Cleston Mason, Sign Crew, 30 years; Myron Williams, district records inspector, 30 years.

In Memoriam

David Morris Walker, 81, died Nov. 1, 2016. He was a former employee, who worked in Operations.

Reid C. Wright, 71, died Dec. 13, 2016. He was a former employee from the Salmon shed.

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

Opinion

Paradise Lost

Bruce King
Public Information Specialist

Jungles surrounded by gleaming beaches and turquoise seas.

Mango season.

Pineapples, bananas, papaya, watermelon.

Coconut trees everywhere.

Such greeted me and my wife during our recent trip to Vanuatu in the South Pacific.

Vanuatu (pronounced VAWN oo AH two) is a chain of tropical islands 600 miles west of Fiji.

We visited our son and his family on Efate, Vanuatu, the capital island. We also visited Tanna, which is a more remote island with an active volcano.

The ravages of Cyclone Pam 18 months earlier were mostly a memory.

I hacked off coconut husks with a machete to drink the sweet, encased contents. Green and yellow coconuts contain coconut water, while brown coconuts contain coconut milk.

The capital island's one paved road was smooth, except in Port Vila, where the roadway was a concoction of patches. Most of the asphalt was about one inch thick on coral.

Tanna

I dreamed of ITD building quality roads there and then gulped another mango smoothie.

Each morning we awoke to the singing of jungle birds, which convened their orchestras at 4:30 a.m. At dusk (6 p.m.), millions of unseen jungle insects sounded their rendition of taps.

During rainstorms, another chorus of jungle bugs clicked like castanets, reminding us of African safaris in 1950s movies.

Blue Lagoon (spring) on Efate, Vanuatu.

We weren't prepared for the natives, who had goodness and innocence that were moving. Nearly 70 percent of the nation's 263,000 citizens live off their gardens.

Shack-like tin homes and a few chickens and pigs typify their dwellings. Yet these Melanesians are genuinely happy, seemingly unsullied by materialism or greed.

The country has no poor, because families care for each other, with neighbors helping when necessary.

"Civilized" people in developed countries could learn from this culture.

The face-to-face encounter was a reminder of what is important: family, friends, character.

A little sunshine doesn't hurt, either.■