

Reconstructing Idaho 33 east of Newdale

Photo courtesy of John Cleveland

It's a good sign

Driving the highways of eastern Idaho isn't a pleasure trip for Cleston Mason, Corey Finn or Karl Grover. That's because each of the District 6 technicians is obsessed with looking for signs in need of repair or replacement.

Meet the sign crew, charged with maintaining District 6's 15,000-plus traffic signs. They patrol 1,000-plus miles of highways in nine counties looking for downed, damaged, dimmed or dirty signs. Their job is to ensure signs are in place and presentable, thus furthering ITD's missions of safety, mobility and economic opportunity.

"Maintaining all the regulatory, warning and guide signs in the district is a big challenge," Cleston (crew leader) says. "We monitor all of them, including mileposts on every state highway in the region. Signs are important because they regulate traffic, helping prevent crashes."

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Dave Kuisti named District 2 engineer



Dave Kuisti is ITD's new District 2 engineer, succeeding Jim Carpenter, who recently became the department's chief operations officer

after 19 years in Lewiston. Dave previously was assistant district engineer at District 3 in Boise.

Dave has been an ITD engineer since 1990. He graduated from U of I in 1991. He has handled engineering responsibilities in districts 1, 2 and 3.



Photo courtesy of Lori Wiederrick

Camilo Serrano, Dan Hawkins, Trent Maupin and Brian Lenz excelled at the District 6 roдео in Leadore May 29 and at the state truck roдео near Banks, Idaho, June 18.

Maupin, Hawkins win; D-6 excels

Trent Maupin, Sugar City maintenance, won the District 6 Truck "Roдео" in Leadore May 29, earning 1,893 points.

In second place was Brian Lenz, Ashton maintenance, with 1,865 points, and placing third was Camilo Serrano, Dubois, with 1,838 points. Stacey McCurdy, Arco, finished fourth, earning 1,830 points.

Taking fifth place was Donovan Ship-ton, Mud Lake, with 1,815 points, and placing sixth was Mike Van Wagner, Sugar City, with 1,795 points.

Dan Hawkins, Arco, won first place in the foreman category, with 1,868 points, while Darrin May, Dubois, finished second, with 1,788 points.

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Issues linger at ITD; fixes needed

By Bill Shaw

I'm approaching my 56th year of life and have passed my 16th year working for ITD. With age, it seems, comes a list of issues that linger year over year, things I would like to simply program a project for and fix; but I either don't have a ready solution or lack the funding to fix a class of problems. What does an engineer do about speeding motorists in the winter, or the poor moose that wanders onto the road? Every year crash statistics remind us that we have problems with each issue, yet I can't throw a switch to stop these crashes.

There is a small step we *can* take toward a fix, and everyone can help. On the District 6 SharePoint home page is a list called "Customer Service," where

we will begin tracking issues like these, but issues that are smaller and more readily fixed. Bruce King and Darrin Johnson will maintain the list, and as it grows we hope to see several things emerge. The first is a clear record of the small services District 6 offers our customers. The second is how much work remains for us and how vital our mission is to eastern Idaho.

The list will grow for a few years, until our funding shortfall is addressed; but that is a good thing. We will be able to see where ITD needs to double-down or back off, where we need better tools or better communication, and where the customer is still looking to ITD for help, as we become the best at what we do.

Take a look and let me hear your ideas.

District 6 honors employees for years of service

District 6 Engineer Blake Rindlisbacher presented service awards to employees at the employee benefit luncheon Oct. 16 at the Chuck-a-Rama café in Idaho Falls.

5 Years

John Larson, Sugar City
 Fred Tucker, Residency A
 Bryan Young, Residency A
 Joshua Sprague, Residency B
 Dusty Orgill, Special Crew

10 Years

Reagan Hansen, Rigby

15 Years

Jeremy Hunting, Design
 Troy Stone, Dubois
 Jinny Boozer, Port of Entry
 Doug Armstrong, Salmon

20 Years

Shawn Madsen, Information Systems
 Ryan Day, Project Development
 Lynn Horrocks, Vegetation
 Ted Maxwell, Special Crew
 Mike Taylor, Residency B
 Mark Stroschein, Port of Entry

25 Years

Paul Steele, Materials Engineer

30 Years

Mike Poole, Residency A

35 Years

Dan Hawkins, Arco. ■



Blake Rindlisbacher congratulates Bryan Young.



Dan Hawkins makes 35 years.



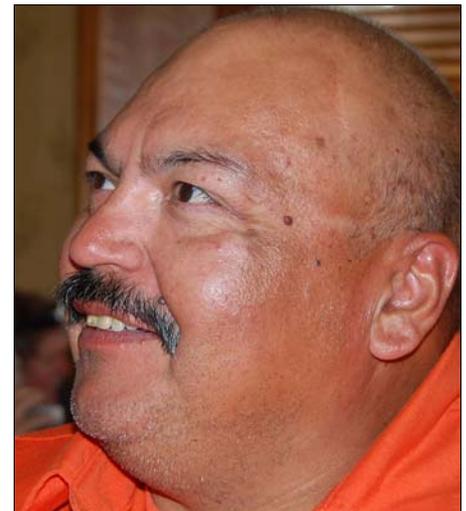
Casey Richardson, Traffic



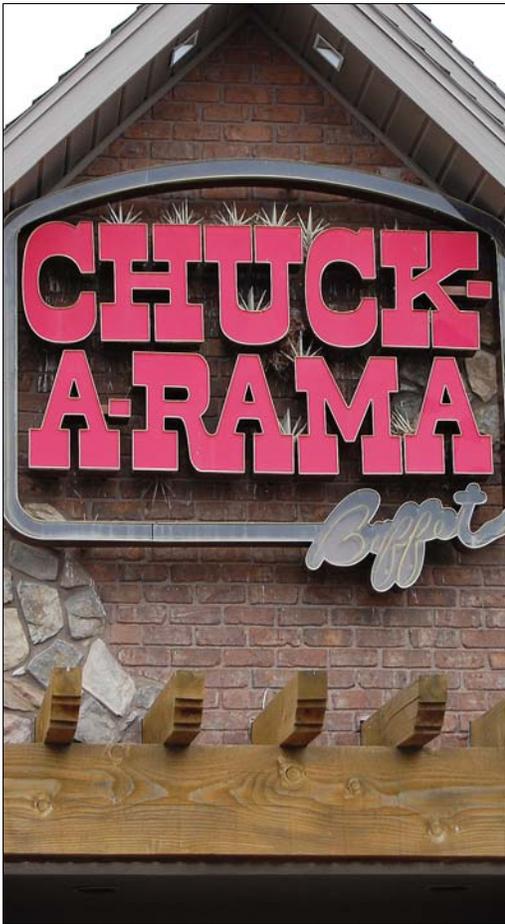
Dave Nickel, Port of Entry



Leon Thornton, Residency B



Dallas Dupree, Gibbonsville



Paul Hansen, Port of Entry



Bob Shaffer, Mackay



Troy Despain, Pocatello



Warren Cuppy, Residency B



Lori Wiederrick, Gibbonsville; Sheldon Jones, Leadore



Sign Crew Leader Cleston Mason changes a stop sign on Idaho 33 east of Newdale. Stop signs are his crew's first priority.

Sign... *continued from page 1*

Signs should last 10 to 15 years, Cleston says. "It depends on the direction they face." Wind and precipitation take their toll, as do other weather events. "I've seen the face of signs burned off by lightning."

Drivers topple 200 signs a year, he says. Vandals, meanwhile, deface (shoot, paint, etc.) 100 signs annually, and thieves make off with about 50 signs each year.

Under Idaho code (40-2311), defacing or destroying a traffic sign is a crime. Of course stealing signs also is illegal (Idaho code 18-2403, 2408), punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or jail time of up to a year.

Arise and Shine

Cleston, Corey and Karl meet each morning at seven to plan their day. A typical day includes repairing or replacing signs, installing new signs, or placing or removing thermoplastic road markings (crosswalks, turn arrows and stop bars). In the winter, Corey and Karl relieve snowplow operators in the Sugar City area, as needed.

Once each year, crewmembers drive district routes at night to check sign reflectivity. "A sign that has lost its reflectivity is just a black mark on the road," Cleston says.

Work hours normally are 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays.

What is the most enjoyable part of their work?

"Seeing accomplishments at the end of the day," Corey says.

"We're never stuck in one place," Karl adds.

Cleston appreciates working with Corey and Karl, who are "thorough and dependable."

What is the least enjoyable part of the job?

"Digging postholes," Corey replies, "especially in Salmon, where shoulders are straight shale rock."

The crew installs 4 x 4-inch or 6 x 6-inch wooden posts on state highways and 6 x 8-inch steel I-beams on the interstate, according to Federal Highway Administration specifications. Posts are 12- to 24-feet long, planted 3- to 6-feet deep.

Crewmembers use an auger truck to drill postholes, although they have to clean out holes with shovels and diggers (handheld grippers) before placing the posts. They often dig postholes by hand, because augers are not allowed near gas, power or fiber-optic lines.

“Digging postholes makes for long summers,” Corey says.

District 6’s inventory of signs increases by 150 to 200 signs per year, as community expansion warrants additional signs. The Traffic Section directs where new signs will be located.

Cleston orders new signs from the ITD sign shop in Boise, which manufactures traffic signs for all six districts, at a cost of \$10 to \$15 per square foot. New signs reflect light better than old ones, he says.

Stop and Start

“Our first priority is reinstalling downed stop signs,” Cleston says.

“We try to do it within two hours of notice.”

If signs are spaced reasonably close, the crew might change or replace 25 signs per day, he says.

He calls Dig Line Inc. (a statewide call center) to request that utilities identify the location of underground lines by painting or staking paths.

“Reconnecting a fiber line costs about \$50,000,” Cleston says.

Over the years, the crew has cut a few utility lines, but only because utility representatives mismarked line paths.

Crewmembers record each repair, replacement and new installation on work sheets, which Cleston stores for future reference.

Lean and Mean

When ITD reorganized its districts in 2011, the sign crew shrank from five to three personnel, impacting production capacity. The crew now focuses

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on sign repairs and replacements, with other tasks completed as time permits.

“Think of it,” Corey says: “Three guys are responsible for more than 15,000 signs on 1,000-plus miles of highway. It’s a great example of improving efficiency.”

Cleston joined the sign crew 27 years ago, in 1986, and was named lead worker in 1994. He now reports to Maintenance Supervisor Randy Drake.

Corey and Karl joined the sign crew in 2001 and 2003, respectively. Corey was named a lead worker in 2003.

“Signage enables safe and efficient travel,” Cleston says, “but signs are only as good as their visibility and readability.” ■



Technicians Corey Finn and Karl Grover change a speed zone sign on the U.S. 20 business loop east of St. Anthony Nov. 5.

Maupin... *continued from page 1*

Trent went on the win third place in the state truck roдео at the Garden Valley shed near Banks on June 18. Brian won fifth place and Dan won eighth place in the competition. Camilo came in 17th. District 6 placed second overall, one place behind last year, when it won the state meet. Way to go District 6 professionals! ■



A near perfect score at the stop bar event in Leadore.



Tyrell Jewell, Challis; Cole Wagner, Shop; Dalton Rice, Challis. Twenty-eight employees competed.

Photos courtesy of Lori Wiederrick and Troy Williams



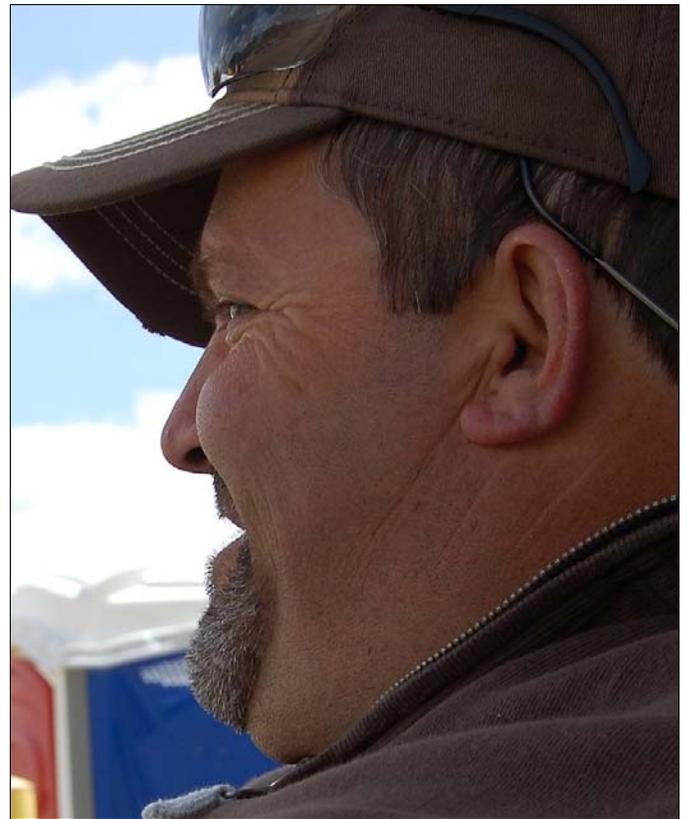
Melissa Moyer, Ashton



With the day cool and calm following a day of rainfall that settled the dust, conditions were ideal for the annual District 6 roдео.



Darrin May, Dubois



Stacey McCurdy, Arco



Maria Serrano experiences the competition from the vantage point of her husband Transportation Technician Camilo Serrano, Dubois.

Comings & Goings

New employees are Paul Hansen (see picture page 3), Port of Entry.

Departing employees: Kurt Cox, designer, Project Development; Darrin May, foreman, Dubois.

Promotions: Gregg Bowman to transportation technician principal, Residency A.

Retirees: Ron Burnside, transportation technician, Driggs, 12 years. (His wife has already called to see if ITD wants him back.)

In Memoriam

Clyde Gillespie, 77, died Aug. 22, 2013. He was a past assistant district engineer.

Charles “Chuck” Schlueter, 64, died Sept. 3, 2013. He was a past transportation technician senior in Salmon.

Lynn Briggs, 75, died Sept. 8, 2013. He was a past member of the Sign Crew.

Ruth Kremer, 69, died Oct. 9, 2013. She is the mother of Matt French, Port of Entry, and wife of Brian Kremer, former Region 1 engineer.

District 6 expresses condolences to family and friends.

New Arrivals: None. ■



Photo courtesy of Lynn Horrocks

Scarecrow

Lynn Horrocks, Vegetation Crew, fashioned this scarecrow with an ITD-issue shirt to scare birds out of his orchard in Rexburg. The crude figure worked “for a while.”

Speaking of signs...



Canadians have a knack for designing road signs (left) and other notices. They may be some of the world's most creative individuals.