

# 6 BITS

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF ITD DISTRICT 6 – DECEMBER 2015 (VOLUME 15, ISSUE 4)

Crews replace road base south of the Stoddard Creek overpass on I-15 Tuesday, Sept. 22.



## The white stuff

It's no secret. Winter is a stressful time for motorists.

Is it safe to drive? Can I get there on time? How fast should I go?

Enter ITD.

"We clear roads, putting people's minds at ease," says District 6 Maintenance Operations Manager Ken Hahn.

Plowing snow is ITD's first responsibility, Ken says. "Maintenance sheds were organized, located and staffed to provide winter maintenance."

You know the old drill: Wheel onto the highway, lower the blade, and plow the white stuff.

### Out with the old

Today there's more to it than that.

Operators spread salt brine in advance of a storm to prevent snow from sticking to the pavement.

They apply additional brine and granular salt to melt snow.

Making water is the goal, since water drains off the road or evaporates.

*(continued on page 4)*



Snowplow heads to Sugar City shed Dec. 21.



Photo courtesy of Shawn Enright

### Excedrin headache

Removing loose rock on a slope above U.S. 26 near Wyoming Sept. 25, District 6 Geologist Shawn Enright's crew dislodged this 20-ton boulder. Motorists from Teton Valley wanted the rock for landscaping but couldn't move it. ITD pushed the boulder off the road and broke it up with "Boulder Buster" charges, so operators could lift chunks into a truck. It's all in a day's work for Shawn and his crew of professional rock scalers, who repel down rocky slopes above state highways to dislodge loose rock and drape selected rock faces with wire mesh, designed to prevent future rock slides. It's a dangerous but important service. ■

## U.S. 20 interchanges save lives

The interchanges on U.S. 20 between Idaho Falls and Sugar City have helped reduce serious-injury crashes despite increased traffic levels and higher speed limits.

Serious-injury crashes have dropped from an average of 80 in 2000 to 38 in 2015, and average annual fatalities have dropped from two to zero, with no fatalities from 2011 to 2014.

ITD has constructed six interchanges along U.S. 20 since 2000. They include the Sugar City-Salem (Exit 338), Driggs-Jackson (Exit 339) and County Line (Exit 318) interchanges constructed

in 2001, the St. Leon (Exit 311) and Hitt (Exit 313) interchanges constructed in 2004-2005, and the Menan-Lorenzo (Exit 325) Interchange constructed in 2010-2011.

In connection with the construction, ITD has closed 13 at-grade, or direct, intersections along the 34-mile stretch of the route and will close five more intersections when building the Thornton Interchange next year. Interchanges enable smoother access on to and exit from busy highways, improving traffic safety.

Since 2000, the average number *(cont. p. 3)*



## District 6 honors employees for service, safety

District 6 Engineer Kimbol R. Allen presented service and safety awards to employees at the district benefit luncheon in Idaho Falls on Oct. 28.

### Service Awards

#### 5 Years

Mike Jones, Residency B  
Bob Shaffer, Mackay  
Brad Rhodes, Ashton

#### 10 Years

Ryan Wright, Ashton  
Norman Tavenner, Dubois

#### 15 Years

Bob Dial, Rigby  
Shawn Enright, Geology  
Todd Grover, Traffic

#### 25 Years

Darrin Johnson, Residency C  
Darrell Ricks, Irwin

### Safety Awards

#### 5 Years

Brad Cook, Rigby  
John Larson, Sugar City  
Mike McKee, Residency B  
Clark Moon, Driggs  
Dusty Orgill, Rigby  
Scott Robinson, Sugar City  
Mike Van Wagner, Sugar City  
Bryan Young, Residency A

*Father and son outing. Dan (right), 10 years, and Travis Smith.*

#### 10 Years

Ron Butler, EEO/Safety/Training  
Karl Grover, Sign Crew  
Stan Miller, Rigby  
Alan Rainsdon, Dubois  
Derrick Royer, Ashton  
Dan Smith, Leadore

#### 15 Years

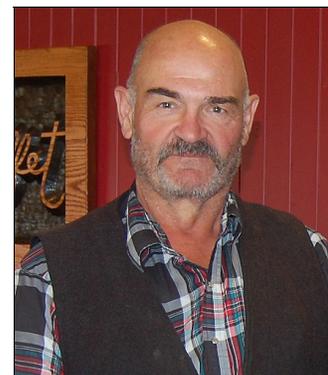
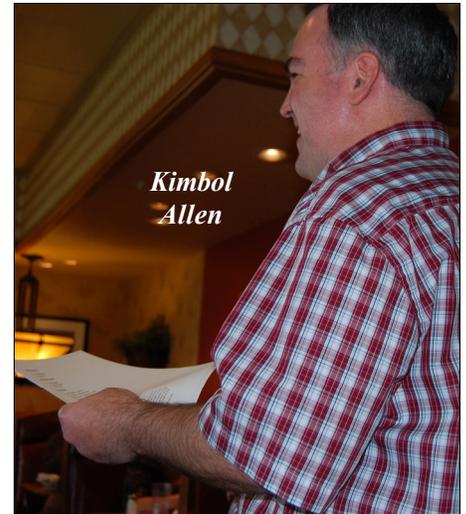
Kimbol Allen, District Engineer  
Jerry Bates, Supply Operations  
Kim Ker, Mud Lake  
Eric Verner, Project/Program Lead  
Mitch Walters, Rigby

#### 20 Years

Wade Allen, Residency A  
Ryan Day, Residency A  
Lynn Horrocks, Sugar City

#### 30 Years

Paul Walker, Supply Operations. ■



*Brad Rhodes, Ashton, five years. Other five-year service credit: Mike Jones and Bob Shaffer.*





Photo courtesy of Alecia Johnson

## Crews quickly replace Enterprize Canal Bridge near Ririe

Crews completed removal and replacement of the old Enterprize Canal Bridge on the U.S. 26 business loop one-third of a mile southwest of Ririe in one week.

The project was originally scheduled for three weeks in duration, but took just the week of Dec. 14. Removal of the old bridge, built in 1931, and placement of the new prefabricated structure proceeded without a hitch. The route reopened Dec. 19.

Approaches to the new bridge will be graded in the spring, when the frozen ground thaws. Guardrail also will be installed. Until then, the posted speed limit will be reduced to 35 mph.

The new bridge is 60 feet wide, eliminating a bottleneck and allowing commercial traffic to flow freely without weight or capacity restrictions.

Installation of guardrail along the shoulders of the road on each side of

the new bridge also will improve safety, preventing motorists from running off the road into the canal.

ITD awarded the \$305,000 construction contract to Knife River's southern Idaho division, based in Boise.

The cost of the bridge replacement is being funded by user-fee increases approved by the Idaho Legislature in House Bill 312a earlier this year. ■

### Interchanges... continued from page 1

of vehicles on the four-lane divided highway increased from 10,000 to 21,500 per day, and the speed limit increased from 55 mph to 65 mph.

“Building interchanges and eliminating at-grade accesses has minimized points of conflict for through and local traffic, furthering safety and mobility for motorists,” says ITD District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen. “Constructing the Thornton Interchange will enable us to close five more dangerous crossings, further reducing conflict points.”

ITD will award the \$11.2 million contract to construct the Thornton Interchange to low bidder Western Construction Inc., of Boise, with construction to begin in the spring. ■



Photo courtesy of Rex Hufford

### National ‘rodeo’ success

D-5’s Matt Beckstead and D-6’s Trent Maupin won 11th place in the tandem axle snowplow competition at the 2015 National Truck Rodeo competition held in Loveland, Colo., on Sept. 30. ■



### Devin Weaver

Port of Entry Inspector Devin Weaver has worked for ITD 23 years. He is a hard worker and one of the nicest guys around. He and his wife have 3 children. He enjoys building scale-model planes, cars, anything. He also likes to work on old cars and has a nice baritone singing voice. Good man. Great to know you. ■

### White stuff... *continued from page 1*

“We return roads to bare and dry conditions as soon as possible after a storm,” Ken says.

“Salt is our friend.”

### In with the new

Times have changed in the winter-maintenance business.

“We used to wait until there was enough snow to plow,” Ken says.

“Now we plan to prevent snow floors from developing in the first place.”

“A plow blade usually can’t get closer than half an inch to the pavement, so ice remains,” he says.

“Once formed, ice tends to linger, adhering to the surface even during prolonged periods of sunshine.”

Salt, on the other hand, melts ice by lowering the freezing point.

“We apply salt as needed,” Ken says, “being judicious in timing and rates of application.”

Too little salt allows ice formation, inviting melted snow and ice to refreeze, he says.

“We try to keep the road wet. The sooner we can make it wet, the less salt it takes to keep it wet.”

Wet is good, enabling drainage and vaporization.

Applying salt brine before a storm helps melt the first snow on the road, Ken says.

Drivers need to be aware that heavy snowfall, or blowing and drifting snow, slows melting, resulting in slush or ice-cream-consistency snow. Motorists then know that salt is working, and snowplows will clean off the mush during the next pass.

### Peaceful plowing

“I like plowing at night,” says Dan Hawkins, maintenance foreman of the Arco area. “It’s peaceful.”

Dan also enjoys seeing snow crystals sparkle at sunrise.

Scott Robinson, foreman of the Sugar City Area, says he likes minimizing ice buildup.

“Effectively scheduling salt usage is rewarding,” he says.



Scott Robinson

Plowing snow can be tedious, Scott admits. “Clearing crossovers and bridge decks is painstaking, requiring slow, careful maneuvering, especially in traffic.”

Servicing equipment, including checking it before operation, lubricating components, and washing off salt and sludge, also is monotonous at times, he says.

Winter maintenance is fun, except when it isn’t.

A snowplow is big and heavy, Scott notes. “It’s not a luxury sedan.”



Transportation Technician Clark Moon heads out of the Sugar City maintenance yard to spread more salt brine on Idaho 33.

Checking your truck before plowing takes half an hour, the foreman says. Everything must be working, particularly the wigwags (alternating red and yellow lights on the back of snowplows).

### Go for the goals

Scott, Dan and the other maintenance foremen (Lyle Holden, Jeff Eagle, Ryan Wright and Kori Hansen) hail the new Transportation Technician Operations (TTO) program, which provides a path for equitable advancement and improved compensation for their snowplow drivers/equipment operators. These people include transportation technician apprentices, transportation technicians, and transportation technician seniors as they work their way to the new classification of “Transportation Technician - Operations (TTO).”

*“Effectively scheduling salt usage is rewarding.”*

— *Scott Robinson*

In connection with this program, ITD raised the statewide winter-mobility goal from 55 to 60 percent, meaning that operators must keep highways free of ice 60 percent of the time during a storm.

Under the TTO program, they become proficient at collecting and analyzing data from the National Weather Service and from Road Weather Information Stations.

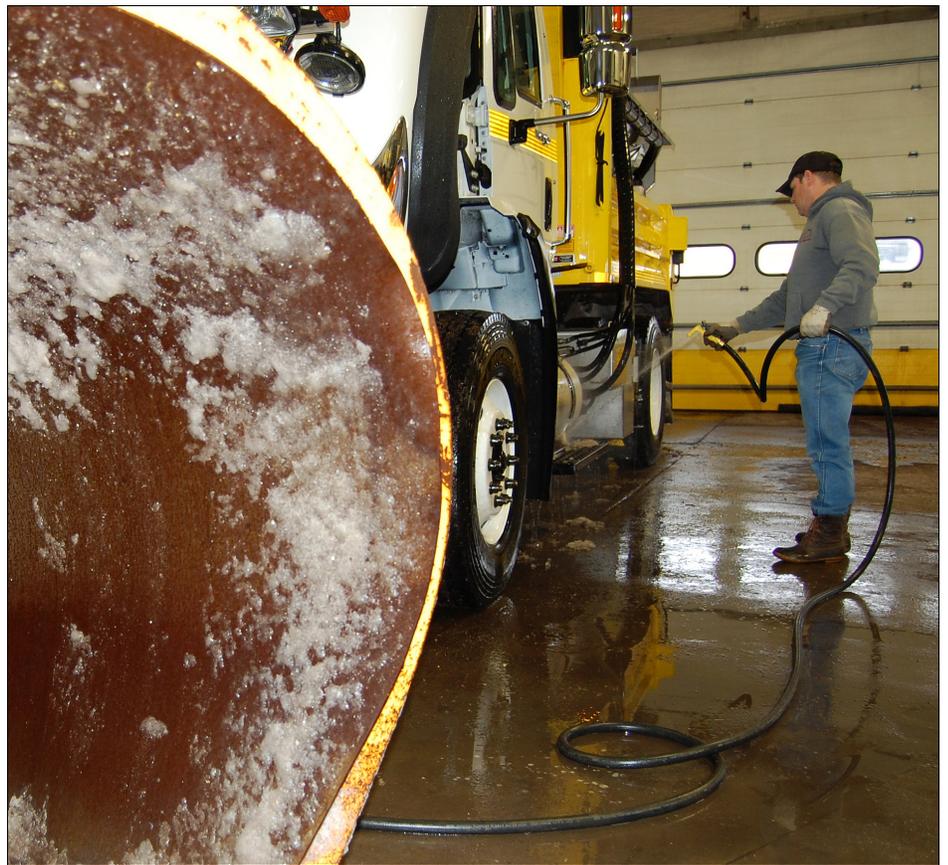
They also learn to sensibly schedule themselves for storms and to examine how they respond to storms in preparation for upcoming weather.

Their job is to plan for blizzards and other storms and to be on hand as needed to mitigate them.

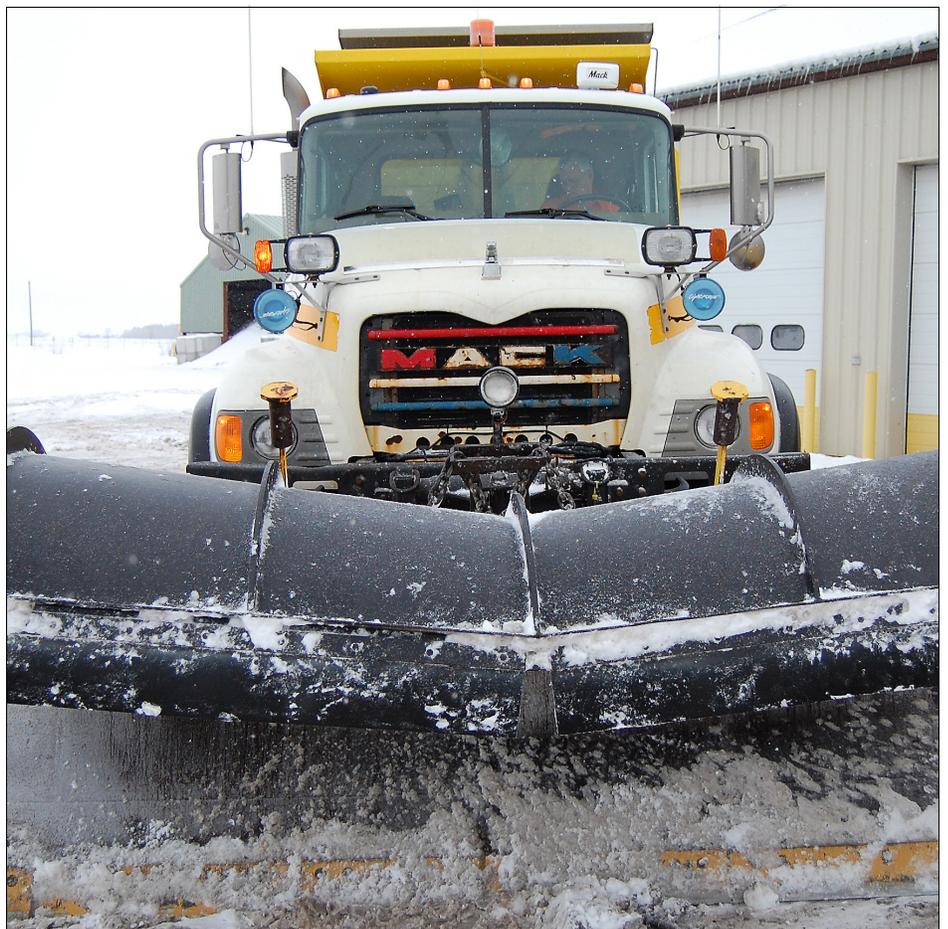
Success depends on coordinating with colleagues and meeting individual and group performance objectives. Personal and collective pay hinges on it.

Attention to detail means operators progress, ITD advances, roads improve, and travelers arrive safe and happy.

Jolly holidays! ■



*Transportation Technician Senior Trent Maupin cleans snowplow at Sugar City shed.*



*Transportation Technician Senior Lynn Horrocks completes morning shift Dec. 21.*

# ITD-supported regional plan wins Gem Award

A regional plan supported by ITD was named winner of the 2015 Gem Award by the Idaho Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA).

Titled the Teton View Regional Plan for Sustainable Development – May 2015, “the plan and its 20 supportive studies and companion tools chart a realistic path towards economic and community sustainability across a changing social and environmental landscape” of Fremont, Madison and Teton counties in eastern Idaho, and Teton County in Wyoming.

In announcing the award, Teton County Planning Administrator Jason Boal said that, of all the nominations received, the regional plan best exemplified the 2015 Idaho APA Conference theme: “Rural Spaces and Urban Places: Charting the Future of Idaho.” It also met the criteria for a Gem Award, which recognizes planning achievement and leadership. Boal chaired the 2015 Idaho APA Awards Committee.



Cover of plan

The Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium, which the four counties formed to prepare the plan, aimed to help local-government officials and public-land managers better coordinate land-use planning, resource management and community development.

The plan (<http://sustainableyellowstone.org/>) is “creative, attractive and comprehensive,” said Bruce King, District 6 public information specialist.

In addition to the four counties, the consortium includes Island Park, Ashton, St. Anthony, Rexburg, Driggs, Victor and Jackson. Other participants include the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Bridger-Teton National Forest, U.S. Bureau of Land Management Upper Snake River District, Idaho Department of Lands and ITD.

The Yellowstone Business Partnership and the Ashton Community Foundation were nonprofit partners in the consortium, which launched a three-year planning process in February 2012. The consortium received a \$1.5 million Sustainable Communities Planning Grant in November 2011 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund the planning effort.

“The planning endeavor was significant because rarely do rural counties engage in such cooperative planning,” said Bill Shaw, District 6 senior transportation planner. *(continued p. 8)*

# Trail along U.S. 93 south of Salmon receives funding

Salmon and Lemhi County get a new trail. Local officials and residents identified a need for it, and transportation authorities are making the trail a priority.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded \$1.43 million to construct a five-mile trail between Salmon and Shoup Bridge. The trail will run along the west side of U.S. 93.

Supported by ITD, the trail, which will be 20 feet off the highway in ITD right of way, will be 10 feet wide and have an asphalt surface. Construction is planned in 2018.

The project will add parking, a kiosk, and bike racks to the recreation site at the Shoup Bridge. The trail will be for pedestrians and cyclists.

“I am excited about this step in connecting Salmon residents to their public lands, and I look forward to many more connection opportunities,” said Linda Price, who manages the Salmon Field



Photo courtesy of Gina Knudson

*Amish ride bikes on southbound U.S. 93 near Salmon, paralleling the future trail.*

Office of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Salmon. “BLM nationally, as well as locally here in Salmon, is placing a high priority on the development of sustainable and comprehensive trail networks.”

Gina Knudson, who directs Salmon Valley Stewardship, a nonprofit organization that conducted a feasibility study for the project, said, “We are thrilled that the highway 93 trail was

selected and deeply appreciate the Idaho Transportation Department going to bat for rural places like Lemhi County.

“We thoroughly examined several trail possibilities within about a 10-mile radius of Salmon, but when it came to access, a highway 93 right-of-way trail ranked highest.”

“This has been a meaningful public-private partnership,” said *(cont. p. 8)*



About 80 employees attend Christmas party on 12-16-15

Don Randall wins 49" TV

# *Holiday Cheer*



Troy Williams, emcee



Jeff Call



New hires Travis Smith, Mitch Thomas, Carlos Garcia, Camilo Serrano, Brian Lamoreaux, Paul Potter, Jeanne Bailey and Brad Richards.

## Comings and Goings at District 6.....

New employees are Travis Smith, transportation technician apprentice (TTA), Salmon maintenance; Mitch Thomas and Carlos Garcia, TTAs, Ashton maintenance; Camilo Serrano, TT, Dubois maintenance, Brian Lamoreaux, TTA, Irwin maintenance; Paul Potter, Port of Entry inspector trainee, Sage Junction; Jeanne Bailey, staff engineer, Residency C; Brad Richards, transportation staff engineer assistant, Planning and Engineering Resources.

### Gem Award... continued from page 6

Fremont County, which applied for the HUD grant, led the planning mission. Planning and Building Department Administrator Tom Cluff, of Fremont County, said consortium members focused on what the region shares in common while respecting the varied economic, political and cultural views of each community.

Officials of Idaho APA presented the Gem Award to the Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium at the 2015 Idaho APA conference in Sandpoint on Oct. 7. ■

### Trail... continued from page 6

ITD District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen. "Public agencies have worked together with private entities to further accessibility as well as safety and mobility for motorists and pedestrians."

FHWA will design-construct the trail. ■

### Meppen, Raymond pass exam

Drew Meppen, of Residency C, and Kade Raymond, of Residency B, have passed the national civil professional engineering exam and have received their Idaho professional engineer licenses. Congratulations! ■

**Retirees:** Mark Strochein, Port of Entry inspector, 22 years, and Karl Martin, transportation technician principal, 30 years.

### In Memoriam

**Steve Charles Husted**, 63, died Sept. 22, 2015. He used to work in the residency of District 6 in Rigby.

**Bailee Rose Gomez**, 13, died Nov. 4, 2015. She is the sister of Travis Sorenson, TT in Rigby maintenance, and

niece of Darrin Johnson, transportation staff engineer assistant in Residency C.

**Irene Phyllis "Renee" Cook**, 87, died Nov. 9, 2015. She is the mother of Brad Cook, TT in Rigby maintenance.

**Samuel Brent "Skip" Moulton**, 75, died Dec. 7, 2015. He is the father of Tracy Whitmore, transportation technician senior in Driggs maintenance.

District 6 expresses condolences to family and friends. ■

## End of the tunnel.....

He came from Minnesota in '85. He liked the mountains and dry air. He took a job in the District 6 shop.

Ed figured he would try it. Ed Osteraas, that is, a lifelong mechanic.

Fast forward three decades.

"Thirty years was too hard to envision at first, even with binoculars," Ed says, reflecting on his approaching retirement. "Now I can see the end of the tunnel, and it's amazing."

He plans to lay down his wrenches this coming summer.

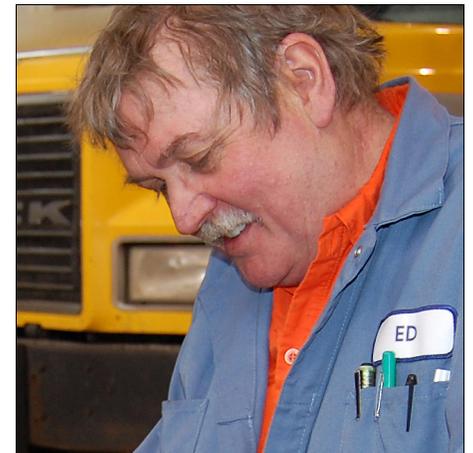
"I want to move to Arizona to be near my son and grandkids. I don't have family here," he says.

When asked about the meaning of retirement, Ed gets philosophical.

"You go on vacation for two weeks and then you have to come back to work," he grimaces.

"The thought of every day being Saturday and of every night being Friday night is mindboggling."

Ed actually started at ITD July 13, 1987, in the very building where he works today.



Mechanic Ed Osteraas at his workbench.

"I've worked on this concrete floor all these years," he says. "The idea of leaving is hard to comprehend."

Stool, tools, workbench – they haven't changed much. He has though. He's grown older and more meditative.

Poet Robert Frost said he could sum up what he'd learned about life in three words: "It goes on."

Thanks Ed for your dedicated service over the years.

Arizona sounds great, especially this time of year. – All the best. ■