

6 BITS

Intersection to close

Thornton, Idaho, March 18, 2016

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF ITD DISTRICT 6 – MARCH 2016 (VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1)

18 projects in '16

District 6 plans 18 highway-construction projects in eastern Idaho this year (see map on pages 4-5). Estimated construction cost is \$38.7 million.

Projects will include:

- Constructing a new interchange on U.S. 20 north of Thornton (see day 1 construction on pages 3, 6 and 7).
- Sealing the pavement on Interstate 15 between Bingham County and Dubois, U.S. 20 between Idaho Falls and Lorenzo and between Sugar City and Island Park, U.S. 26 between Idaho Falls and Swan Valley, and U.S. 93 between Challis and Montana.
- Completing the Enterprize Canal Bridge replacement project on the U.S. 26 business loop southwest of Ririe, and replacing the Badger Creek Bridge on Idaho 32 north of the highway's junction with Idaho 33.
- Repairing Henry's Fork Bridge on Idaho 33 west of Rexburg.
- Performing various repairs on 18 bridges along I-15 and U.S. 20 north of Idaho Falls.
- Administering the widening of Grandview Drive between Skyline Drive and Saturn Avenue, which will be conducted by the city of Idaho Falls this summer.
- Resurfacing U.S. 20 through Island Park.

Projects will start once contracts are awarded and weather allows.

The biggest undertaking is the U.S. 20 Thornton Interchange project, which started March 21. The \$11.2 million project is scheduled for completion this fall, as early as October. ■



Photo courtesy of Jason Minzghor

Jason Minzghor and his family gather with relatives and friends for a picture.

Minzghor named Dist. 6 engineer

It was anxiously-awaited news – who will be the new leader?

Introducing Jason B. Minzghor (pronounced MINCE-gurr), new District 6 engineer.

The new head hails from the Coeur d'Alene area, where he worked for District 1 nearly 17 years.

Recent positions were operations manager, resident engineer and project development engineer.

McKee material engineer

Mike McKee is District 6's new materials engineer. He replaces Paul Steele, who retired. Mike previously was a transportation staff engineer on Design-Construction Team B. He has led in three-dimensional (3-D) and four-dimensional (4-D) modeling, for improved design and construction. He also has introduced 5-D modeling, helping District 6 steer ITD further into innovation. ■



Chief Operations Officer Jim Carpenter announced Jason's appointment Feb. 19.

Minzghor, 41, succeeds Kimbol Allen, who in January was named administrator of the Division of Engineering Plans and Products/Chief Engineer for ITD.

The new District 6 engineer grew up on Coeur d'Alene Mountain, which is 25 miles south of Coeur d'Alene. He attended school in Harrison, where he graduated from Kootenai High School.

Jason was a wrestling champion at Kootenai, qualifying for state competition each of his four years and taking fourth place at state his senior year.

What was it like growing up in north Idaho? (*North not northern folks say.*)

Beautiful mountains, lakes, streams and childhood summers in Noxon, Montana, with his grandparents.

A carpenter, Jason helped his parents build their retirement home near Noxon.

(continued on page 2)

Minzghor... continued from page 1

“It’s the only town in the world whose name reads the same forward, backward and upside down,” Jason says.



He loves all-terrain vehicles, including motorcycles. The sand dunes near St. Anthony beckon.

He hopes to improve his fishing skills. “I’m the worst,” he says.

Moving to the plains and desert of eastern Idaho is a big change from north Idaho. But Jason worked a year in Elko and Winnemucca after his graduation in civil engineering from the University of Idaho in 1997, so the new terrain isn’t a complete shock.

East Idaho beats north Nevada, he says.

“District 6 is a sportsman’s paradise,” he continues. “I look forward to discovering some hideaways.”

Jason was a wrestling champion all four years at Kootenai High School in Harrison, Idaho.

Jason and his wife Amy hope to close on a home in Iona, north of Idaho Falls, this month. They have eight children.

Strengths?

Building people.

Management style?

Let employees do their jobs.

Work philosophy?

Have fun filling your assignments.

Plans?

“Continue building the constructive culture at District 6.”

Jason envisions a team that exceeds the high metrics already achieved in the district.

A warm welcome to new District 6 Engineer Jason Minzghor! ■

Railroad helps Thornton project

Hats off to the Eastern Idaho Railroad for letting Rocky Mountain Power run its power line along its right of way instead of making the power company reroute its line through Thornton. This concession enabled the Thornton Interchange project to proceed on schedule and saved ITD approximately \$350,000.

Rocky Mountain Power officials didn’t think the railroad company would allow the power company to run their line along the railroad tracks, but Transportation Staff Engineer Assistant Ryan Day of District 6 said the railroad company may allow it. He called Scott Adams and the team of Eastern Idaho Railroad, who granted the desired easement.



Eastern Idaho Railroad’s only stipulation was that Rocky Mountain Power purchase liability insurance for construction, obtain easements,

and coordinate its power-pole installation to avoid conflicts with train service. Eastern Idaho Railroad is a short line railroad company owned by Watco Companies LLC, based in Pittsburg, Kansas.

In preparation for constructing the Thornton Interchange, ITD planned to pay two-thirds of the \$1.3 million cost of rerouting the power line. With the railroad company’s concession, the cost of moving the line was cut to \$800,000, of which ITD’s share was \$415,000.

Ryan’s involvement and quick thinking, coupled with the railroad company’s accommodation, saved the day. Ryan is District 6’s TSEA assigned to work with railroad companies on railroad-crossing improvements. He has frequently worked with Adams and other railroad company officials on matters involving the railroad.

“This story illustrates the benefits of stakeholder involvement and of good business relationships,” says ITD Chief Engineer Kimbol Allen. “A big thanks to Ryan and to the railroad. It

is one more example of ITD and railroad companies working together to further state-local teamwork and to improve project results.”

Kimbol is currently enjoying his new job at ITD Headquarters in Boise. ■

District 6 named ‘StormReady’

The National Weather Service (NWS) awarded District 6 the coveted Storm-Ready designation Jan. 7. ITD is the only state transportation agency in the country to earn the designation, which is usually reserved for municipalities. ITD’s District 4 (south-central Idaho), District 5 (southeastern), and District 6 (eastern) offices all have now earned the designation.

To meet StormReady requirements, the district demonstrated emergency preparedness, including communication, equipment, facilities and personnel. The recognition also considered such factors as redundant methods of weather monitoring, trained storm spotters and communication with NWS, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“StormReady is recognition of our preparedness and ability to provide services to the traveling public,” said ITD District 6 Maintenance Operations Manager Ken Hahn. “This is about expanding and strengthening partnerships to enhance safety for motorists.”

“District 6 has a strong partnership with our local NOAA office, thanks to the efforts of Ken and Vern Preston of NOAA,” said then District 6 Engineer Kimbol Allen. “Maintenance employees participate in weekly weather briefings from NOAA to plan storm response, which includes salt-brine pretreatment of travel lanes, plowing and possible road closures.”

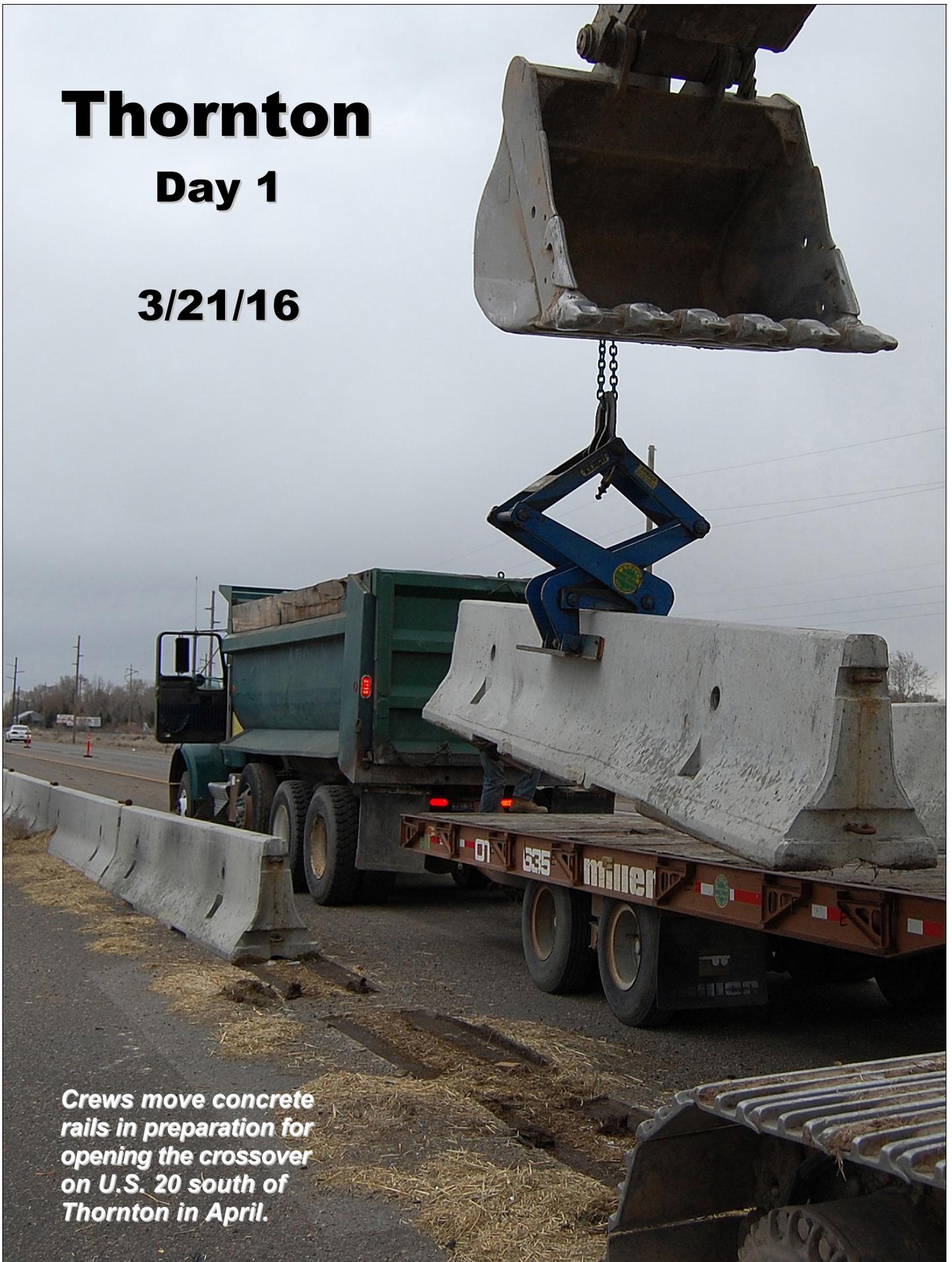
ITD benefits from customized weather modeling and forecasts, along with 24/7 phone access to a

(continued on page 8)

Thornton

Day 1

3/21/16



Crews move concrete rails in preparation for opening the crossover on U.S. 20 south of Thornton in April.



For safety purposes, crews closed 4985 South (Thornton intersection) on each side of U.S. 20 and 6800 South (River Bridge Road or Archer exit) just north of the Snake River.

Workers also closed the median at 3800 South (Burton Road), eliminating left turns at this intersection. They will permanently close the local road in the fall.

4300 West (Bear World Drive) will remain open throughout the project and then permanently close in October.

**Crews close
intersection
on U.S. 20
in Thornton.**

Worker places crash barrels to protect motorists from blunt ends of concrete guardrail at crossover.





New hires Zeke Smith, Jeremie Pettingill, Ryan Stewart, KC Crump and Jared Parker.

Comings and Goings at District 6

New employees are Zeke Smith, transportation technician apprentice (TTA), Salmon maintenance; Jeremie Pettin-gill, associate engineer, Residency A; Ryan Stewart, mechanic, Shop; KC Crump, TTA, Dubois maintenance; Jared Parker, TTA, Sugar City main-tenance; and Jason Minzghor, district engineer (see **Minzghor...**, page 1).

Promotions: Kimbol Allen to chief engineer in Boise and Mike McKee to materials engineer (see **McKee...**, page 1).

'StormReady'... *continued from page 2* meteorologist, Allen added. NOAA benefits from access to ITD weather stations, which extend NOAA's data-collection abilities.

According to the NOAA website, "being part of a Weather-Ready Nation is about building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather and water events. StormReady helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before, during and after the event. StormReady helps community leaders and emergency managers strengthen local safety programs." ■

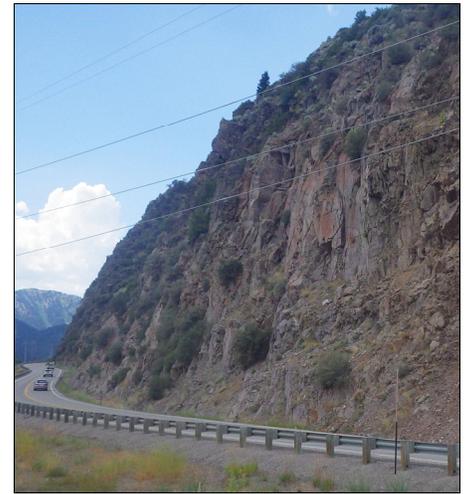
Retirees: Randy Drake, maintenance coordinator, 38 years, and Paul Steele, materials engineer, 28 years.

In Memoriam

Alexander "Alex" Demitropoulos, 85, died March 6, 2016. He is the father of Pete Demitropoulos, former transportation staff engineer assistant (TSEA) in Residency B.

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

New Arrivals: Malakai "Kai" Chase Horrocks, grandson of Transportation Technician Senior Lynn Horrocks. The newborn is the son of Lynn's son Greg and his wife Lacy, of Afton, Wyoming. ■



Slope along U.S. 26 east of Swan Valley.

ITD studies hillside

District 6 is evaluating the stability of slopes along U.S. 26 east of Swan Valley. Results of the study will enable ITD to plan road improvements and to learn how such improvements could impact slope durability.

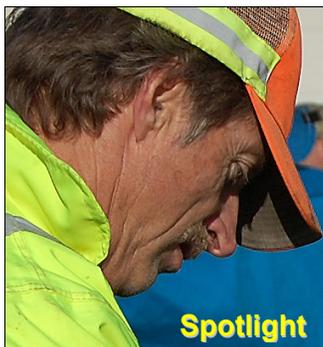
Researchers have completed most of the field work for the study and will finish the investigation this year. Plans are to:

- Draft a subsurface exploration program to better define geotechnical conditions at landslides and embankments.
- Conduct a surface exploration program to adequately define slope characteristics for future cuts into rock cliffs.
- Compile a database of study results relevant to the anticipated reconstruction area.
- Create interactive mapping applications for internal needs and stakeholder involvement.

Researchers also are preparing web-based applications to exhibit, display and share results of findings. Engineers use these findings to recommend road realignments.

ITD awarded the \$200,000 contract for the "U.S. 26 Swan Valley Geo-technical Planning Study" to Land-slide Technology, of Portland, Oregon.

Contact Senior Transportation Planner Bill Shaw for more information. ■



Craig Stewart – faithful employee

Transportation Technician Craig Stewart, of Arco maintenance, has worked for ITD 30 years. He is punctual, prepared and steady, says Area Foreman Dan Hawkins. "Craig takes pride in his work and cares for the equipment. In addition, he stays busy. He believes that the state doesn't pay him to stand around." Craig enjoys motorcycles, snow machines and other recreational vehicles. He is a fine family man and member of the community. ■

Spotlight