



# The Interchange

## Knocking out roadside weeds

At a pace that could see a road-side jogger actually race around the truck working along the side of the road, the District 4 Vegetation Management crew has continued to roll down the local highways to do its part in keeping the roads presentable.

The process doesn't appear to be the most important in District 4 operations, but the eradication of noxious and hazardous weeds has several benefits that Vegetation Forman Shawn Webb says makes the job still very necessary.

"We're not really spraying fertilizer and we're not watering the weeds," Webb joked. "The average person doesn't know we, the Idaho Transportation Department, are required to spray the



*Dave Jensen and hourly driver Paul Bennett from the District 4 Vegetation spray crew work along Idaho 75 alongside the Salmon River downstream of Stanley in early July. The crew is doing it normal spraying all summer.*

weeds on our property." ways.

On a yearly basis, more than 4,000 acres are sprayed along side District 4 high-

block," Webb said. "We're not like an agricultural operation. We go around a lot of obstacles, handling a lot of hazards and we're very weather dependant."

Spraying road-side weeds is not the only responsibility of the five-man crew. In addition, the Vegetation crew has the responsibility of maintaining and landscaping of the district's nine rest areas, replanting shoulders at the close of the construction season, and keeping weeds to a minimum in all maintenance yards, materials sources and building sites.

"Those places are out of site but not out of mind," Webb said.

Webb is joined with full-time applicators Dave Jensen and Jeff Dionne as well as rest area maintenance men

*Weeds, continued on pg. 2*

### In this Issue

- Relay update 2
- Giving hope 3
- Caught in the act 4

## Gooding gets new road, foot bridge

Don't blink or you could be among the many people who will likely miss two soon-to-be completed projects in the city of Gooding, including a new roadway on Idaho 46 and a new pedestrian bridge on

*Gooding, continued on pg. 3*

*Shoshone RE Tom Brown oversees the installation of a pedestrian bridge on Gooding's 7th Avenue.*





*Jeff Dionne and driver Phil Leguineche knock out weeds on Idaho 75 north of Ketchum.*

## **Weeds** (continued from page 1)

Dale Baughman and Todd Powers and three summer hourly employees to keep the roadsides and rest areas more than presentable even as the job becomes even more difficult.

There are currently 57 noxious weeds listed by the Idaho Department of Agriculture which the applicators must keep an eye out for while traveling down the highway.

However, spotting those weeds is not always the most difficult part of the job. Competing with the wind, weather conditions, and proximity of sensitive crops is easily the largest consideration when spraying – the chemical application could drift and kill many of the local crops.

“We have to stop if the wind is over 10 miles per hour,” Jensen said. “Sometimes you can’t keep going near some crops if it’s under 10. Some crops you can’t spray near if it’s one mile per hour.”

Using the breeze to their advantage can also be effective in keeping the spray away from those sensitive crops.

“We’ve managed to find a

place to spray on just about any given day,” Webb said.

Webb said District 4 attempts to spray each mile and then spot spray troubled areas using two 1,500 gallon six-wheel spray trucks, a pickup, tractor with spray booms, an ATV sprayer or back-pack sprayer.

“Some of these weeds are pretty persistent and require multiple flushes – sprayings – per year,” Webb said. “There’s a lot of misinformed people out there. It’s not just spraying Round-up. A healthy shoulder is solid grass so the weeds have competition and get choked out.

“I call it spraying for noxious and obnoxious weeds,” Webb added. “We are required to control noxious weeds and we control the obnoxious weeds for our own benefit. It helps with sight distance, snow drifts, seeing wildlife and those types of reasons.”

For more information about noxious weeds, go to the Department of Agriculture Web site at <http://www.agri.state.id.us> and more about the ITD roadside vegetation management on the ITD Web site.

## **Relay for Life update**

This last May our team participated in the weekend celebration of surviving cancer and making strides in finding a cure. District Four collected over \$6,400 in donations to this cause.

It is time to get started on our team building and preparing for the next Relay. Any one interested in being part of the team or just helping with this charity please contact Bob Johnson at 886-7830. A kick-off meeting will be held Tuesday, August 7, in the Oak Room.

A big thanks to all the team member and to all the other employees who stepped up to help, participate and donate. It was a lot of hard work but we had a lot of fun doing it and feel the joy of helping others. Photos from May are on the District common drive.

## **Wishing a speedy recovery ...**

Brad Lynch of the Twin Falls Maintenance Shed was riding a motorcycle in the Fairfield area when he lost control of his motorcycle from turbulence of an opposite direction semi.

Brad’s injuries were severe and had to be taken by Life Flight to Boise. He suffered a broken right collar bone, broken left shoulder blade, nine broken ribs, and four broken vertebrae. Brad was at St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise and is now at home.

He is currently undergoing physical therapy. Brad was wearing a helmet which most likely saved his life.

Anyone interested in giving a donation can contact Sue Rathke at 886-7872.

***Want some other news??***

*Give us your news.*

Submit your family news, hunting stories, committee plans, random photos or whatever else to Nathan Jerke for the next newsletter at 886-7809 or at [nathan.jerke@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:nathan.jerke@itd.idaho.gov)

**THE NEXT DEADLINE IS AUGUST 24**

Life and Times in District 4



# Giving hope

## Steve Tonks family gives message of growth at national autism conference

Every parent to-be prays their child is born with ten fingers, ten toes and no major medical issues. That is more commonly becoming less of a reality.

That reality became clear to Steve and Leonora Tonks 21 years ago when their son Jeremy was born with autism. But like everyone in their situation, the Tonks' have learned not only to cope, but to embrace the life and needs of Jeremy.

On July 11-14, Steve and Leonora along with their daughters Debi and Cami presented to the 2007 National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders in Scottsdale, Ariz., covering the "Six Milestones of Raising a child with Autism."

In their talk, the family talked about six times throughout the life of their son which each family will likely find difficulties. Those areas included the preschool years, elementary age, middle school, high school, transition into work, guardianship, and long-term care.

"We used Jeremy as an example for other parents

as a way to see what things to do and what to look at," Steve said.

Among the issues Steve said were the main topics of their discussion were legal guardianship after the child turns 18 and working with a school system through issues such as private vs. public space and emotional anger.

"These are types of things parents need to think about as they grow older and go through emotional and physical changes. You need to have step-by-step involvement with the school throughout the educational system," Steve added.

Through the care of his family, Jeremy has developed his gift for art (see an example below) and is attending art classes at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls. Jeremy has developed his skill into many types of art.

"His favorite is animation art," Steve said, "but he does all types and has sold some."

For more information about autism, go to the ASA Web site at <http://www.autism-society.org>

# Happy Retirement



Lytle Gaskill, Mike Ellis and Gary Johnson were all smiles as they received their farewell from District 4 on July 25 in Shoshone.

## Gooding (continued from page 1)

west 7th Street.

The process to complete Idaho 46 was stalled for some time, according to Tom Brown, because of a bad batch of base material, but is now in its final stages.

The bridge over a lateral canal east of Gooding High School was set into place on July 18 as part of a new side-walk running the entire length of the street from the high school to Idaho 46.

Work on both projects is set to be complete in August.



Paving on Idaho 46 through Gooding took place in mid-July and is now completed.

# Caught in the act



*Above:* The bridge inspection crew from Boise dangles both from above and on the narrow cross beams below to inspect the Perrine Bridge on July 17



*Above:* A rookie driver, to remain unnamed, found this shoulder on U.S. 30 west of Burley to be a little steeper than it looked while the Rupert Maintenance crew worked on July 17.

*Below:* The pump house at the Jerome Rest Area on Interstate 84 went up in smoke along with several bushes and trees during a wild fire on July 6, as captured here by Scott Malone.



## Newsletter News

Among the many changes seen in this edition of *The Interchange*, every employee in District 4 received this newsletter through their email account.

I would like to know how the District employees would prefer the newsletter be sent out. The benefit of receiving *The Interchange* by email is getting full-color pictures and graphics in addition to the regular news.

Employees are asked to share their opinion about

the future distribution of the newsletter. Send any comments to me through email at [nathan.jerke@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:nathan.jerke@itd.idaho.gov) or by calling 886-7809.

Thank you in advance for your input. More information will be issued in later editions about the final decision.

**Nathan Jerke,**  
Public Information Specialist