

# Operations Connection

## Message from the Director

Scott A. Rogers

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I spent a good chunk of time this summer visiting garages around the state. In general, I have to say that I was really happy with all of the discussions that were had and the questions that were asked. It's clear to me that we've come a long way in terms of our workplace, and I'm thrilled with our progress. That said, there is still work to do... and it's important we continue to focus on making our workplace better. There is always room for improvement, and that responsibility lies with every single one of us. But this message is not about the work we have to do, which is important. Instead, this message is about the work we've done. This message is about taking a minute to appreciate where we're at. This message is about appreciating what we've got. Because things could be a heck of a lot worse.

That's a theme I've been thinking about lately. Things could be a heck of a lot worse. You all know about the experience Wayne and Ann Gammell had. Their horrific injuries and painful recovery, which is still ongoing, has really made an impression on me. And as they will tell you, it could have been a heck of a lot worse. Yes, it sucks. But they feel lucky to be alive. And they also feel lucky for the amount of love, caring and support they received from friends, family and co-workers. And it's the co-workers piece that really touched me. Hey, we all know our jobs can be tough. And stressful. And at times full of conflict. And let's be honest, we all have times we want to shake our co-workers vigorously for saying or doing something that irritates us (and, thankfully, we almost always resist the urge to do that!) But when the chips are down, we are there for each other. I can't tell you how many VTrans employees told me to pass on to Wayne and Ann that they were thinking of them. But I know it was in the hundreds. I can't tell you how many VTrans employees took time to visit, or to call, or to send a card, or to cook them a meal. I can tell you that their Caring Bridge site had over 2,300 visits. Think about that for a minute. Even people who may not have been that close to them took the time to show they cared. And that means something.

We are very lucky to work in a place where people truly care about each other. Wayne and Ann's experience helped highlight for me just how much. Even today I was having a conversation with a relatively new employee who came from the private sector (a very large company) and told me that he couldn't believe how close people who worked here are with each other. He likes that when he comes in to work, people ask how he's doing and they actually really mean it. He said this was the first place he has worked in his career where it feels that way. And he's hoping to be here for a very long time.

So, as we talk about struggles with hiring, and struggles with budget, and everything else that frustrates us and scares us and irritates us on a day to day basis, I think it's important to take a minute to appreciate what we do have. To take a minute and appreciate the people who work here with us. We may not always see eye to eye. And we may not always get along. But when it counts we will be there for each other. Because that's what the VTrans family does. And you know what? Things could be a heck of a lot worse.



## TSMO - “Kudos!” from your fans

If I am not emailing the correct person, I would appreciate your passing this along to the appropriate parties.

I come in to Rutland every morning at about 7:45am to bring my daughter to school and my wife and I go off to work. We are coming in from Poultney, so we come into Rutland on the Route 4 bypass, exiting across from the mall.

We noticed a change in the timing of the light at that intersection, probably back some time in April. With this change, traffic coming off Route 4 to turn north on Route 7 was getting backed up between the lights almost as far as the railroad tracks. And, this was passenger cars, no busses or tractor trailers.

As this issue seems to have not improved and, possibly, gotten worse as the summer has come and gone, I was sitting at that intersection this morning long enough that I was able to actually time the lights (I sat there through two full green and red cycles before I was able to get through the intersection). So, traffic coming off Route 4 and turning north on Route 7 has exactly 18 seconds from green to yellow before the light again turns red. Conversely, the traffic going north and south on Route 7 has a green light for a full minute and 20 seconds ...

Obviously, it is not efficient to have two rows of 20 or 30 cars sitting waiting for a light that, at best, will only allow 15 cars through at a time while the north-south Route 7 traffic has fully cleared the intersection leaving the road virtually empty after only 40 seconds or so.

It would certainly be nice if whoever decided to reprogram the lights at that intersection would undo that decision as it has turned that intersection into a significant traffic jam and a danger as people coming off Route 4 know that they have to rush to beat that light or sit there waiting. It also really seems inappropriate to allow two lanes of 20 to 30 cars per lane to sit, all waiting for a 16 second green light window. As I've been taking this route for the last 5 years, I know that the previous timing for this light never had more than 10 cars or so per lane waiting to exit Route 4 and very rarely would one see more than that waiting to go north-south on Route 7 so, obviously, the timing used on those light previously was much better thought out.

Thank you for your time.  
Bill Dugan

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Mr. Dugan,

I made a trip to Rutland last Thursday to take a look at our signal system. What I found was the timing was correct in the signal controller, however we do have a Master controller that runs the system coordination (basically it tells the 13 controllers in the system what program to run) that was off. We had a “clock error” which caused the Master to run the off peak coordination program throughout the day instead of shifting to the appropriate peak programs. I don't know when the Master developed the “clock error”, but I was able to fix it last Thursday and will keep an eye on it to see if it happens again.

The 18 seconds of green time you observed is accurate, however the length of time US 7 has during the morning peak should have only been between 54 and 65 seconds depending on if any cars are exiting the diamond run mall, not the 80+ seconds you clocked.

Hopefully now the signal timing will revert to what was effectively running this past April. Thanks again for bringing this to our attention, allowing us to make the necessary adjustments. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you observe a similar situation.

Regards,  
Derek  
Derek L. Lyman, P.E.  
Traffic Signal Operations Engineer

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Derek,

I can't tell you how much I appreciate the fact that you took time to look into this.

As school will be starting up soon, I will hopefully see an improvement in traffic flow through this intersection. It makes sense that traffic offloading from Route 4 would have built up a bit more than expected if the Route 7 light was staying green for too long.

Above all, I appreciate your time ... I've put off discussing this with anyone as I felt it would be for nought. I cannot adequately express my gratitude with your attentiveness to this issue.

Best,  
Bill Dugan

# - “Kudos!” from your fans

**From:** Montague, Colleen  
**Sent:** Friday, September 25, 2015 10:15 AM  
**To:** Childs, Bob; Carriere, Brad; Harvey, Scott P.; Patnoe, Ernie  
**Cc:** Starr, Trevor; Ellis, Tammy; Blackmore, David; Rogers, Scott; Gammell, Wayne; Law, Todd; Morse, And; Valburn, Lori; Cole, Chris; Tetreault, Richard; Filkorn, Erik  
**Subject:** Career Fair Thank You

Good morning

Job fair season is in full swing and we really appreciate the support of our MOB partners! Many thanks to **Bob Childs** (White River), **Ernie Patnoe** (D8), **Brad Carriere** (Morrisville) and **Scott Harvey** (Morrisville) for helping at two recent events.

Last week Bob helped us staff the River Bend Career Fair where there were over 300 students in attendance from three high schools and the tech center. Yesterday Brad and Scott brought two pieces of heavy equipment to the Lamoille Valley Career Fair. Ernie was on hand to speak to candidates about career paths and skill sets of interest to the MOB. This was open to both students from Hyde Park High School and Green Mountain Technical school as well as the public with over 450 in attendance. They all bring their knowledge and enthusiasm and are great ambassadors for VTrans and I would like to take the opportunity to send kudos and our thanks to them! Their attendance always helps to make these events more successful and showcases the great work we do in their respective communities.

Thanks again and keep up the good work – a pleasure as always to be at these events with you.

Colleen Montague & And Morse

## Projects

### District Leveling Paving Projects

*VT 122 - Sheffield*



*Route 242 - Jay*



**PHONES DOWN**  **HEADS UP** **USING A HANDHELD CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING IN VERMONT IS ILLEGAL.** **KNOW THE LAW** 



## Projects

### WHITE RIVER COMPLEX



Project includes a 2-bay addition the garage to become the new mechanics facility. There will also be a new stockroom with loading dock and office. As part of the construction the existing building will receive new insulation/siding, new overhead doors, and fresh interior paint.

Also in construction is a new 1250' sewer line with 9 manholes to connect the complex to municipal sewer.

Total project cost for this phase is just under \$1 million. Next spring we will start construction of a new 10-bay maintenance garage.

By: Brad McAvoy

### MABEY BRIDGE TRAINING VTTC



Crews attended new 2 day Mabey Bridge training at VTTC. Class involved erecting, launching & disassembly of 50 feet of Mabey Bridge.





# Rewards & Recognition

Page Ten

the Chronicle, September 23, 2015

## Tetreault to receive national award for achievement

by Nathalie Gagnon-Joseph

NEWPORT CENTER — Richard Tetreault of Newport Center wasn't thinking about awards when he started his career as a civil structural engineer, and yet he will be the first Vermonter to receive the Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award for lifetime achievement on September 27, at a ceremony in Chicago, Illinois.

"Hard work and working with great people just put it in play for me," Mr. Tetreault said in a recent interview. "I'm happy and proud to work with those people and to represent Vermont."

He started working for the Vermont Agency of Transportation in the mid 1980s and has been climbing the ranks ever since.

Mr. Tetreault was recently promoted to deputy secretary of the Agency of Transportation. Former Secretary of the Agency of Transportation Sue Minter has announced that she plans to run for governor, and former Deputy Secretary Chris Cole's has been promoted to secretary.

Mr. Tetreault found out about the award on August 20.

"I was extremely honored and surprised," he said.

The award is the highest honor an engineer can get from AASHTO, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

The yearly award was started in 1957 to honor Thomas H. MacDonald, the long-time chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, which is now called the Federal Highway Administration.

A panel of three judges reviews the nominations and each judge picks their top three. Those nominees get a score depending on where they placed in each judge's top three — three points for first place, two points for second, and one point for third.

This year the panel was composed of Mike Tooley, the director of the Montana Department of Transportation, Dave Bernhardt, the commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation, and Rudy Malfabon, the



Pictured here is Richard Tetreault, the 2015 winner of the Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award for lifetime achievement. Photo courtesy of VTrans

director of the Nevada Department of Transportation.

"The nomination committee was ... impressed with Richard's leadership in the creation of a State Transportation Innovation Council, ... the development of an accelerated bridge construction program at VTrans, ... and implementation of a statewide asset management plan which is improving Vermont's transportation system performance," Mr. Malfabon said.

There were 11 nominations, and in the final round, Mr. Tetreault came out ahead with eight points.

Ms. Minter said that nominating Mr. Tetreault for the award was an easy decision to make.

"I am enormously proud that he won this award, and I think that he is so deserving," she said. "I nominated him because of the service he gave Vermont and nationally."

His nomination included a four-page letter highlighting important obstacles he was able to overcome on behalf of the department, like handling the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene.

"Under his skillful, inclusive, experienced, calm, and confident leadership, Rich, along with others, brought Vermont to extraordinary levels of success in the timely repair of roads and bridges after Tropical Storm Irene," the letter says. "Vermont's recovery under Rich's leadership is a story of bold action and high-tech innovations that continues to resonate within VTrans (Vermont Agency of Transportation) today."

Ms. Minter said 500 miles of road were destroyed, and hundreds of bridges as well.

"He was an extraordinarily valuable leader at that time," she said.

"It was a daunting task for everyone in Vermont," Mr. Tetreault said.

He and everyone at VTrans had to continually reassess the situation to see how they managed to recover and what needed to be done next, he said.

"We needed to look at how we were structured," he said.

Mr. Tetreault helped reorganize VTrans by integrating two divisions into a single highway division.

"The move has reinforced the common goal of providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods along our state highways across the team and enabled us to create efficiencies in how we deploy our resources," Mr. Tetreault said. "There were lessons learned from Tropical Storm Irene as well as our assistance with Colorado

(Continued on page eleven.)

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Page Eleven

## Sue Minter nominated Richard Tetreault

(Continued from page ten.)

(Department of Transportation) when they recovered from flooding in 2013. The change also was a growing awareness among key managers of how we could organize VTrans to make a stronger team."

"Rich's leadership, positive attitude, management capabilities, and desire to think and act boldly has helped transition VTrans to a new organizational structure, where sections are able to

immerse themselves in innovative programs ...," the letter says.

Mr. Tetreault also contributed to an inter-state collaboration initiative where transportation departments in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont came together to learn from one another, creating the Tri-State Cooperating States agreement in 2010.

"This regional collaboration has helped improve our work across the region and has facilitated

partnerships that enhance our ability to maintain our transportation system," the letter says.

Mr. Tetreault serves on national committees, including the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways, the Standing Committee on Performance Management, and the U.S. Route Numbering Committee, and he is the chair of the AASHTO Innovation Initiative.

contact Nathalie Gagnon-Joseph at [natgagjo@bartonchronicle.com](mailto:natgagjo@bartonchronicle.com).

"Courtesy of The Chronicle".



# Rewards & Recognition

## Fundamentals of Supervision Training Graduates

Group 7 - Graduation: September 2, 2015



Above: Back Row L-R: **Mike Davis**, D2; **Brad Herring**, Survey; **Scott Jarvis**, D5; **Shawn Westney**, D2; **Dwight Robtoy**, D8; **Jacob Gauthier**, D2; **Chris Williams**, Construction; **Tracy Cassano**, D1; **Shawn Ainsworth**, D7; **Bruce Martin**, Roadway and **Ron Lemaire**, Construction. Front Row L-R **Kim Persons**, VTTC, **Wendy Ellis**, Contract Administration; **Nicole Gosselin**, Finance & Administration; **Robin Jackson**, DMV; **Marina Neumann**, DMV and **Terri O'Shea**, FOS Instructor. Missing from the picture, **Robert Suckert**, Construction.

Group 8 - Graduation: September 10, 2015



Above: Back Row L-R: **Greg Wilcox**, Construction; **Chris MacRitchie**, MOB Business Office; **Josh Hulett**, Construction; **Mike Pologruto**, AMP; **Chris Bearor**, D5; **Chris Lavalette**, Construction; **Kelly Lawrence**, DMV; **Charles Bartlett**, D1; **Francis Oldenburg**, D5; **Shaun Corbett**, Utilities; **Berkley Clark**, D8 and **Buck Furlow**, D8;. Front Row L-R: **Pam Thurber**, AMP; **Christine Hetzel**, VTTC; **Sonya Boisvert**, Civil Rights; **Kim Persons**, VTTC; **Terri O'Shea**, FOS Instructor and **Gary Brown**, D8.

## Snow Plow Rodeo - Colchester



# Snowplow Roadeo

The representatives for each District in the Roadeo were:

Paul Mychack & Anson Mason – D1  
 Adam Thompson & Chuck Stromberg – D2  
 Chuck Wanner & Dennis Barbush – D3  
 Tim Dubois & Robert Roux – D4  
 Scott Jarvis & Mark Adams – D5  
 Mike Hearne & Les Jackson – D7  
 Bob Walker & Mike Cutting – D8  
 Mike Sheltra & Allan Pion – D9

At the end of the day, **Tim Dubois and Rob Roux (District 4, Williamstown) took the top honors with a very narrow victory over Les Jackson and Mike Hearne (from District 7, Lyndon).** It was a real squeaker, and there were a number of other teams in the running. The close finish this year demonstrated the importance of each and every cone and barrel, as well as the walk around / Pre-trip inspection. Congratulations to all!

Running the snowplow course was not the only event that took place. Folks from across the state were recognized for the “Best Kept Truck” for 2015 in each district. Operators taking the time to maintain their trucks in “mint” condition really shows a sense of commitment and pride in what they do.

Winners of the “Best Kept Truck” are:

D1 – **Jacob Wilkins**  
 D2 – **Dave Jarvis**  
 D3 – **John Cummings**  
 D4 – **Mike Young**  
 D5 – **Ronald Baker**  
 D7 – **Diane Dargie**  
 D8 – **Ellen St Marie**  
 D9 – **Richard Whittier**

Thanks to all of you for showing such pride in your vehicles!

Of course, without the commitment and coordination of the Statewide Snowplow Roadeo Planning Task Team Members, this event would not have been possible. Diane Dargie, Jonathan Bevins, Cody Domey, Carl Hoffman, Dan Bruyette, Berkley Clark, David Muccio, Thomas Cummings, Joseph W Miller, Bruce Crockett, Gerald Dubois, Pat McDonnell, Roy Willey and Joseph Geoffrey were all involved in one way or another. These folks were behind the scenes, organizing and coordinating things so everybody could enjoy themselves. Great job!

Many thanks to our good friends from DMV for helping out with the pre-trip / walk around portion of the contest, as well as for judging the obstacle course. We love having our partners working with us, and are very appreciative of all you do.

Special thanks also goes to Jim Pritchard from District 3 a.k.a. “the chef”. What an outstanding meal! Jim told me afterwards he’s already planning next year’s feast!

Also many thanks to our numerous judges and runners. We had folks helping out from all corners of the Agency. With so many people involved I’m sure I may have overlooked some folks, and for that I apologize. However, please know that I’m very appreciative of everyone who was able to join us.

Thanks again to everyone for a terrific day.

## 1st Place - Tim Dubois & Rob Roux - District 4



L-R Ken Valentine, Tim Dubois, Chris Cole, Sue Minter, Rob Roux & Scott Rogers

## 2nd Place - Les Jackson & Mike Hearne - District 7



L-R Ken Valentine, Mike Hearne, Chris Cole, Sue Minter, Les Jackson & Scott Rogers



# Rewards & Recognition

## *Operations Employees of the Month*

Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for July is Leo Mills**, the Equipment Specialist from the District 8 Enosburg / Montgomery garage.

Leo's nomination from his coworkers said in part: "Leo Mills is an equipment specialist in the Enosburg/Montgomery area. His performance over the entire time he has worked for the state has been excellent. Leo is an expert in asphalt paving and paving equipment, a skill that he brought with him from a previous employer. His knowledge in asphalt paving has proven to be invaluable to district 8. Several years ago the district purchased an asphalt paver knowing that the skills and knowledge to be successful were already here. Leo is the go to guy when the paver is involved. He takes the task of paving very seriously and is always striving for perfection. He has completed many important paving projects over the years and he has always been more than willing to share his talents with others, which rise above his normal job duties.

This past spring Leo was asked to work on the ailing paver which involved removing the engine to perform the work. He with the help of another district employee removed the engine, made the repairs and put it back together. He has also worked on the hydraulic pump shafts and installed new master cylinders for the brakes, new tire etc. This machine is his baby which he knows inside and out and is sole person that maintains this equipment including oil changes, hydraulic and fuel filters, grease and everything in between. At this time the aging paver is up and running and again completing important work for the district. I want to recognize Leo's outstanding efforts."

Please join me in congratulating Leo. His daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by his co-workers.

Scott

Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

**I'm very pleased to announce that the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for August is Berkley Clark**, the TAMS from the District 8 Saint Albans garage.

Berkley's nomination from somebody in his garage said in part: "*Berkley has been remarkable as the new TAMS. He always goes above and beyond with any tasks that are asked of him. Berkley is very respectful to his employees and he takes the time to listen to them and their concerns. His knowledge of AOT's policies and procedures demonstrates his commitment to serving the public in a highly efficient manner. And he's a good team builder - on a recent culvert project he was able to get help from three garages to work seamlessly together to get the job done in a safe and effective manner.*"

Please join me in congratulating Berkley. His daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by his co-workers.

Scott

Maintenance and Operations Bureau,

We did not receive any nominations from staff for Employee of the Month over this past period. As such, the MOB will not have an employee of the month for September. Coincidentally, September was the only month last year with no nominations too.

Please remember that nominations for this award come solely from the employees. Although it's unfortunate that we got no nominations this month, we would welcome nominations for next month's award.

Scott





# ~ Postables ~

## District 5 Bridge Washing I-89 exit 12 mm 84



L to R: Mark Meunier, Ron Baker, Kyle LeBeau, Rejean LaFleche, Scott Rogers and Jeremy Smith



Scott Rogers, Director of Maintenance & Operations (TMW Apprentice)



L to R: Rejean Lafleche, Scott Rogers, Kyle Lebeau and Mark Meunier



Front to back: Todd Law, Rejean LaFleche, Scott Rogers, Kyle LeBeau, Jeremy Smith, Mark Meunier and Sam Runner.



L-R Scott Rogers and Jeremy Smith

## Announcements

I am pleased to announce that Shawn Lafountain has accepted the position as the T.A.M.S. at our Fort location in Colchester. Shawn will be starting his position as TAMS on August 10, 2015. Shawn has worked for the Agency of Transportation for the past 7 years. Shawn started his career at the Fort as a T.M.W., joined the bridge crew for a period of time and then back to a T.M.W. in the Cambridge garage. He recently held the title as Senior Maintenance Worker out of the St. Albans garage. Shawn brings a wealth of knowledge with him and we look forward to him joining our District 5 team. Please join me in congratulating Shawn on his new adventure.

Thank you,

*Rejean LaFleche Jr*  
District 5

I am pleased to announce that Ben Moffitt has accepted the position as T.A.M.S. at the Londonderry garage. Ben will be starting his position on August 10, 2015. Ben has worked for the Agency of Transportation since 2009. Ben started his career at the Rockingham garage as a T.M.W., was promoted to MES and then MESII. Most recently he held the title as Senior Maintenance Worker out of the Rockingham garage. Ben brings a wealth of knowledge and experience with him which will allow us a lot of operational flexibility in how we are getting the work done. Please join me in congratulating Ben on his new promotion.

Thank you,

Joseph J. Ruzzo  
Transportation General Maintenance Manager  
VTrans Operations - District 2

The Central Garage Welcomes several new faces to its ranks: Joining us as very capable mechanics are:

Steve Miner, MEM I in Berlin  
Casey Otis, MEM II in Berlin  
Clayton Butler, MEM II in the Northeast Regional Facility  
Tyler Tuthill, MEM II, in White River Junction

And on the home front, Rutland Technician Craig Ellis has a new face in their family ranks; Craig and his wife Jerri-Ann welcome Gavyn, born September 34rd.

Greetings All,

I'm very pleased to announce that Eric Pope has joined the MOB - District 9 Tech Team.

Eric comes to the team with nearly 20 years of experience in and around the construction industry. Eric has worked in the civil engineering field as a construction inspector, and most recently for a large concrete, asphalt and aggregate supplier where he served as a quality control technician.

Eric's Contact information;  
[eric.pope@vermont.gov](mailto:eric.pope@vermont.gov)  
802-334-4342(office)  
802-487-4194(cell)

**SHANE M. MORIN**  
State of Vermont\_AOT-MOB District 9

District 4 is also pleased to announce that we have found a permanent position for Jack Holding as a Tech V. Along with his other Technician duties, Jack is overseeing the District's Safety Program, working closely with our Specialists and Project Manager.

Kim L. Lewis  
District 4

Roger Sargent (retired 1997) of Tunbridge, a 46 year employee of District #4, and brother to Clara Hutchins (retired D4 AA) passed away Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. Our thoughts are with Clara and her family.

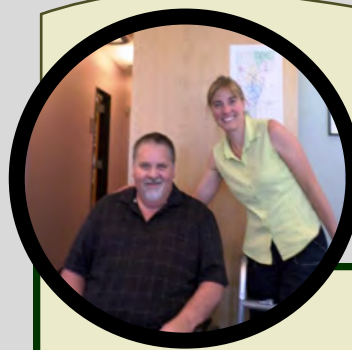
Gary Goodrich, a 15 year employee of the Chester Garage passed away last week after a brief but valiant battle with cancer; he is missed by his co-workers throughout the district and our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.



# ~ Celebration ~



**Glenn Massey** - Area Supervisor - Londonderry - 25 Years! Pictured above: L-R Joe Ruzzo D2, Glenn & Family & Tammy Ellis, SE Region

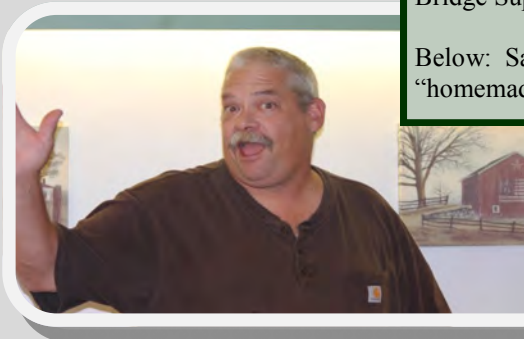


## Thank You !!

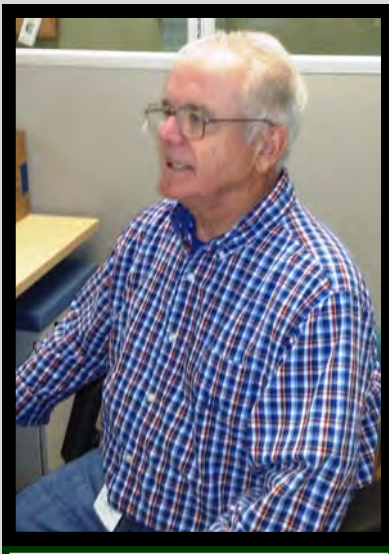
Thank you! These two words cannot express the way we feel towards all of you who called, visited, helped, cared, cried and prayed for us. We are truly blessed and are overwhelmed by the support we received from our friends and family at AOT. We look forward to returning to work full time. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. **Wayne and Ann**



Congratulations **Sal Balzanelli** - SE Regional Bridge Supervisor - 31 Years!



Below: Sal with Hobie Gates with his "homemade treats"



**Jim Sumner** - 15 Years!- Traffic Research



Congratulations **Tom Anderson!**  
District Project Manager - 15 Years!  
L-R Alec Portalupi, Tom Anderson & Sven Scribner

## Personnel Updates

### New Hires, Promotions & Transfers

D2 - **Mike Furgat**, Master Maintenance Worker, Rockingham, **Jake Gauthier**, Senior Maintenance Worker, Rockingham, **Ben Moffitt**, TAMS, Londonderry

D3 - **Chris Butkins**, Apprentice, Mendon, **David Hogenauer**, Journeyman, Clarendon

D4 - **Daryl Benson**, Journeyman, Tunbridge, **“Butch” Arvid Daniels**, Supervisor, Royalton, **Jack Holding**, Tech V, WRJ, **Chris McPhetres**, Journeyman

D5 - **Shawn Lafountain**, TAMS, Colchester

D9 - **Eric Pope**, Tech, Derby

CG - **Clayton Butler**, MEM II, NE Regional Facility, **Steve Miner**, MEM I, Berlin, **Casey Otis**, MEM II, Berlin, **Tyler Tuthill**, MEM II, White River Junction

### Retirements

D4 - **Charles Page** - 27 Years

D8 - **Robert Anderson** - 33 Years, **Dwight Robtoy** - 33 Years

Bridge - **Sal Balzanelli Jr.** - 31 Years

Tech Services - **Tom Anderson** - 15 Years

TSMO - **James Sumner** - 15 Years

## Years of Service

D1- **Travis Bolte** - 15 Years

D2 - **John Alexander** - 25 Years, **Jill Wood** - 15 Years

D3 - **Dick Brunelle** - 30 Years, **Stephen Evans** - 25 Years, **William Morse** - 15 Years, **Timothy Reed** - 5 Years

D5 - **Nicholas Davis** - 5 Years, **Johnathan Dunbar** - 10 Years, **Francis Oldenburg** - 5 Years, **Philip Vermette** - 5 Years

D7 - **David Fellows** - 10 Years, **Douglas Petterson** - 30 Years

D8 - **James Marshall** - 5 Years, **Michael Martin** - 15 Years, **Auther Young Jr.** - 15 Years

D9 - **Stephen Hoadley** - 15 Years, **Nicholas Ming** - 15 Years

CG - **Dawn Donahue** - 15 Years

TSMO - **Larry Dodge** - 30 Years, **Joe Kelly** - 25 Years



**Together**  
**Working ^ to get you there!**

Operations Connection is on the web:  
[http://www.aot.state.vt.us/maint/  
Operations.htm](http://www.aot.state.vt.us/maint/Operations.htm)  
January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st

Questions/ Comments/ Suggestions  
Karen Brouillette, Admin. SVC. Coord.  
Karen.brouillette@state.vt.us



# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

### Labor Management Agenda

7/28/15 Summer

**Present From Labor:** Jason Health (Chair), Jerry Comstock (Vice Chair-Central Garage), Brian Labounty (District 2), Justin Irish (District 5-Filling in for Bridge Crew), Shawn Ainsworth (District 7), Brad Carrier, Justin Irish (District 5-Filling in for Bridge Crew), Allen Pion (District 9), Dave Van Deusen (VSEA Senior Union Representative-AOT);

**Present From Management:** Scott Rogers (AOT Director), Todd Law (State Maintenance Engineer), Ken Valentine (Central Garage Superintendent), Heidi Dimick (DHR Manager-AOT);

#### 1. Well Wishes To Mr. and Ms. Wayne Gammell;

Labor would like to offer its thoughts and prayers to Wayne and his wife.

**Discussion:** Labor expressed its concern for Wayne Gammell, Deputy Director of AOT Operations (and past VSEA member), and his wife Ann, who recently suffered serious injuries in a motorcycle accident. Management provided an update concerning their recovery and the medical challenges they face ahead.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management jointly offer their best wishes and prayers to Wayne Gammell and his wife Ann, as well as for all AOT workers who have suffered injuries and illnesses over the past year.

#### 2. Towards a More Transparent Interview Process;

Labor would like to discuss the policy for the interview process, as well as highlight how this process happens in the N. Montpelier Garage as an example of what works well.

**Discussion:** Labor expressed that in numerous Garages, in multiple Districts, there has been some talk that the AOT hiring process is not as transparent as it could be, and that perhaps a better hiring process (that includes more rank 7 file participation) can be devised. Labor also expressed that they have heard very positive descriptions of Garages who conduct a very transparent, fair, and effective hiring process; the North Montpelier Garage is one place where Labor is aware of such a positive hiring process. There, for all positions that are *below* Foreman, one rank and file Garage worker always serves on the hiring committee, and they are full participants in the process. In this Garage all persons who serve on these hiring committees have previously taken the related class (on hiring) at the AOT Training Center. Labor stressed that what takes place in North Montpelier appears to be very positive, but that that is not what always happens in other Garages (and it typically does not take place for the hiring of Foremen-who are represented by the VSEA Supervisory Contract). Management, for its part, stated that it was useful to hear of such examples (like in North Montpelier) where something works well. Management also stated that they support the goal of having a rank and file worker on hiring committees when the hiring is 'peer to peer' (ie hiring for a position below Foreman). However, they will have to give more thought to the idea of

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having a non-Management worker on hiring committees looking to find a Foreman. Management further stated that when Foremen are hired, typically two Managers plus a person from DHR or AOT Civil Rights serves on the hiring committee. Management is weary of having too many people on any one hiring committee, as they do not want to appear intimidating to potential new hires. Labor clarified that it is important to them to explore having 'one of its own' on all hiring committees, including those for Foremen. Both Labor and Management agreed that the current hiring process that typically takes place in the Districts is much better than how it was done years ago (before this Labor Management Committee was in place, and prior to the present Management team being in place).

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management will continue to consider this issue, and Management welcomes Labor bringing a specific and detailed written proposal concerning hiring committees to the next meeting of Labor Management. Labor will further refine its opinion, and will bring such a proposal forward this fall for further discussion.

### 3. Are GM's and DTA's still expected to regularly visit Garages?

Labor supports continuing communication between itself and Management, and would like to know if these Managers are still expected to visit Garages, if so, how often?

**Discussion:** Labor made clear that they believe it is good for GMs and DTAs to visit Garages so Management in order to facilitate good communication between Labor and Management, and for Management to have a grounded view of the work being done in the Garages. In some Districts it seems like these visits have not been happening as often as would be expected, and Labor would like to know if it is still the policy for them to regularly visit Garages. Management strongly expressed that they too believe in the value of these visits from GMs and DTAs, and it remains the expectation that they will conduct these visits on a regular basis. Management stated that DTAs are expected to visit each garage every other month, and GMs are expected to visit each garage monthly, at a minimum.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management Agree that Management will discuss this issue with the GMs and DTAs and make sure that the expectation is understood.

### 4. Brief Report from the Labor Liaison For the AOT Training Center;

What we are hearing from the rank & file.

**Discussion:** Labor recognized that the Labor Liaison to the Training Center, Nick Davis (who also serves on the Labor Management Committee) could not attend the meeting due to a (non-work related) injury that has temporarily put him out of work (Doctor's orders). Therefore, a detailed discussion on this topic was tabled until the fall Labor Management meeting. Even so, Labor did report that Nick was planning to express a feeling coming from a number of Districts that some workers have not been afforded opportunities to do trainings. An example



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was given of workers who signed up to do trainings were told by the boss that they could not, but were not afforded an explanation (operating needs due to short staffing?) as to why. Management agreed that a reasonable explanation should have been provided, and if operating needs prevent a worker from doing training during month X, Management should strive to create an opportunity for the worker to do the training in month Y. Management also stated that it is important that a productive balance be reached between offering trainings, and getting the core work done in the field. Management also make the point that in order to rationalize this balancing, it is also important that the courses a worker take be directly relevant to their current job title and the next level which the worker is seeking to advance to. In other words, an Apprentice should be taking classes that help build up their skills to become a Journeyman and not classes that are geared for Masters who are looking to move up to Senior Maintenance Workers, etc.. And finally, Management reported that by this time next year they hope and expect to have a tracking system in place where by the class that each worker takes (or should be taking) is tracked in a more accessible database; this tool is called the Learning Management System (LMS). Labor concurred with these assertions, and looks forward to LMS being utilized.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management agree that a detailed discussion on this topic will be tabled until such a time as the Labor Liaison to the Training Center (Nick Davis) is available. This topic may be revisited at the fall Labor Management meeting.

### 5. Locked Lockers in the Garages?

Labor would like Management to clarify what the policy is on this.

**Discussion:** Labor reported that a Garage in District 2 was told that it is against statewide AOT policy to allow Garage workers to put a lock on their locker. Labor asked Management for clarification on this. Management clarified that it is *not* a statewide policy.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Recognizing that there is no statewide policy on having locks on lockers, Labor and Management agree that Labor will take this issue up, at its discretion, with Management in the effected Garage(s).

### 6. Annual Leave For Collective Bargaining;

Labor would like to have a number of AOT workers in the room (and would like to have AOT Management in the room) for the day we negotiate AOT specific Bargaining proposals. Labor is therefore requesting that unless there is a specific operational need, that Annual Leave requests that are put in for this purpose be granted by Management.

**Discussion:** Labor stated that they would like to allow for AOT workers to attend the Bargaining session(s) dedicated to discussion AOT specific issues, and that they would like to encourage the State to also allow AOT Management at the table for when these proposals are discussed [note: active negotiations are expected to begin in September]. Labor would there-

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fore like Management to be liberal with the approval of Annual Leave requests that may come to them for this purpose. Management, for their part, informed Labor that they have requested that they too be in the room for when AOT proposals are discussed. A decision from the State is pending. Management also stated that subject to the operating needs of individual Garages, they foresee no problem with such Annual Leave requests.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management agree that it is common sense that interested AOT workers, and AOT Management be at the negotiating table when AOT proposals are being discussed.

**Management will continue to ask the State permission to be at the negotiations, and, subject to the operating needs of individual Garages, Annual Leave requests by workers (to attend AOT Contract Negotiations) will be granted.**

## 7. Low Sick Leave Accrual Form Letters;

Labor understands that a number of these were sent out to AOT workers with under 40 (?) hours of Sick Leave. Labor does not take issue with this in principle, but were not pleased to see the reference to possible “termination.” Labor would therefore like to discuss the language that was chosen in this instance.

**Discussion:** Labor requested further information on this letter, what Leave levels triggered it, etc., and strongly suggested that including stock language referring to possible “termination” for misuse of Sick Leave is not good for morale, or welcomes by Labor. Management explained that the letter went out to Central Garage workers who have less than 40 hours of Annual or Sick Leave. The intent was to bring to low Leave accruals to the attention of individual workers in order to help avoid workers having to go “off payroll.” Labor stated that it appreciated the desire to bring low accruals to workers attention, but found the possible “termination” language unnecessarily threatening. Management stated that the letter was not intended to provoke workers, and that that “termination” language is part of the stock language that comes with many of these template letters.

**Agreed Upon Action:** Labor and Management agree that unnecessarily provoking a negative response from workers is not something to be desired, and Management agrees to take Labor’s strong opinions on this matter into serious consideration in future bulk letters that Management may send out to workers.

## LMC: “Column”

As we go into bargaining for the next contract, showing unification between AOT members is key in order for a good outcome. We need to stay together on issues we believe in, while respecting others opinions. Many workers showed there support at the last barging session set up for just AOT issues. There is still more to do, we will keep you posted.

We are currently looking to fill seats for Districts 1, 7 and Bridge Crew. If you work in one of these districts and you would like more information about this committee or have issues you would like to have discussed, please e-mail us. If you have suggestions for bargaining, you may also contact us and we can pass those ideas along to the bargaining team.

Jason Heath (Chair)  
[fyrfytr14@comcast.net](mailto:fyrfytr14@comcast.net)  
District 8

Jerry Comstock (Vice Chair)  
[Jerry.Comstock@vermont.gov](mailto:Jerry.Comstock@vermont.gov)  
Central Garage

Brad Carriere  
[hpfsems1@yahoo.com](mailto:hpfsems1@yahoo.com)  
District 8

Brian LaBounty  
[Brian.labounty@vermont.gov](mailto:Brian.labounty@vermont.gov)  
District 2

Nick Davis  
[nick.davis@vermont.gov](mailto:nick.davis@vermont.gov)  
District 5

Alain Pion  
[Alain.Pion@vermont.gov](mailto:Alain.Pion@vermont.gov)  
District 9

Ed Olsen  
[Streetglidehd2012@yahoo.com](mailto:Streetglidehd2012@yahoo.com)  
District 3

By: Jason Heath, Chair, District 8



# Safety & Health

## Safety & Health:

The safety training classes have been going very well. I am happy to report that I am noticing a bit of progress in the safety approach to old and new tasks as well as the attitude of employees on all levels. The updated JSA features a stronger, more focused approach to identification, control and communication of hazards on the job. This is a fundamental step to improving the safety culture consistently throughout the MOB and AOT as a whole.

The Statewide Safety Task Force has worked on a statement defining the mission, organization and duties of members of this committee. This solidifies the direction and intent of this safety committee. I am very proud of the progress and dedication of this team of people. They are extensions of the Safety team and provide an effective and rapid communication link throughout the Regions. The inclusion of a variety of employee levels and positions has broadened the perspectives of all members.

We are in the process of updating and standardizing the format of all the Safety Tailgate Talks (TGTs) on SharePoint. The Rail Bridge Inspection Team has asked to be included on the distribution list of these TGTs. The Safety team is in its second year of distributing these monthly calendars with suggested TGTs on seasonally appropriate safety subjects.

The Excavation Safety Training for Competent Persons (aka Trenching and Shoring Training) was held from mid-July through August. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> year we have offered this training. Municipal groups and MOB employees attended alongside one another. Each gained from the experiences and knowledge of the other attendees. The class this year included On-Target's Terry Sylvester with Dig Safe information and Jeff Magner from American Shoring. Both contributed greatly to improving the value of this class for all attendees. Terry clarified the Dig Safe process, utility markings and avoiding the costly mistakes made by others in New England. Jeff explained the use, maintenance and repair of the aluminum trench boxes we have in the Regions. I think this year's class was the best of the 3 years. Vermont Local Roads acted as the sponsor and provided logistics support critical to the success of these sessions.

The Mabey Bridge Training had to be shortened to 2 sessions, but it was well-received by the attendees. Hobie Gates and Sven Scribner are the instructors. We plan to offer 1 class next May/June and see if municipalities are better able to participate then instead of the September dates held this first time around. These classes certainly drew crowds and fascinated the observers.

The Working Over Water (WOW) Training was a huge success. We held 4 classes that provided classroom training as well as hands-on practice using buoys and the rescue skiff. For the last 2 class sessions, the Safety Instructor Rob Gentle, jumped into the water and the attendees had to react. OSHA mandates that rescue occurs within 4 minutes of the victim entering the water during a WOW activity. The longest it took to "rescue" Rob in 2 separate classes with 5 different teams of 2 was 46 seconds. Rob was of course conscious during his dips in the Winooski River, and yes, he was wearing a Coast Guard approved life vest each time. However, the average time was 17 seconds with ring buoys alone. The boat took longer in all cases, but still well within the 4 minute window. That information alone was surprising to all of us involved. A 4 minute deadline seems too short. With employees prepared to respond on site, it was more than enough time.

I attached a few photos of the recent Mabey Bridge and WOW training. The wet, bobbing head in the water is Rob. Some are requesting the opportunity to submit names of candidates for rescue practice next year. We'll see...

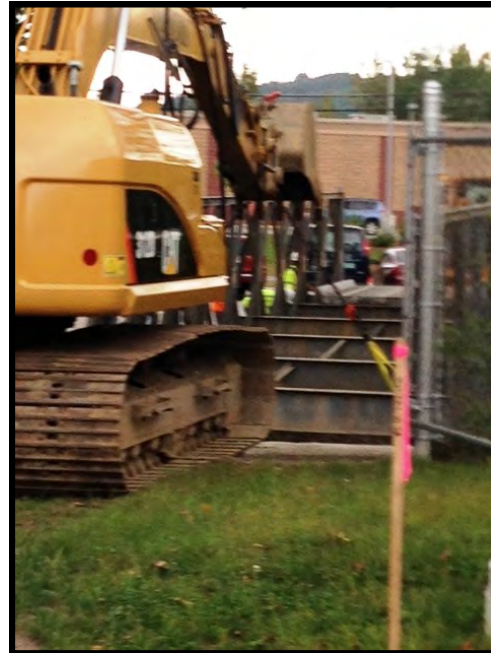
Take care, stay dry, and keep your eyes open,  
Camille

# Safety & Health

## Mabey Bridge Class, September 9-10, 2015



Construction Phase

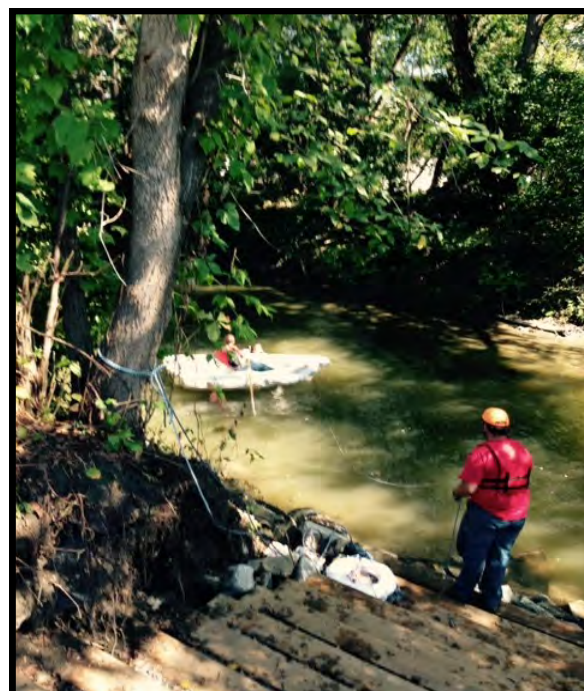


Launch Phase

## Working Over Water Class, September 15, 2015



Mike Pepin "rescues" Rob



Rob holds onto rescue skiff