

# Operations Connection

## Message from the Director

Scott A. Rogers

• <i>Message from the Director</i>	1
• <i>Kudos</i>	2-3
• <i>Projects</i>	4-5
• <i>Employee of the Month</i>	6
• <i>Announcements &amp; Recognition</i>	7
<i>Personnel</i>	
• <i>New Hires, Promotions, Transfers, Retirements &amp; Years of Service</i>	8
• <i>Postables</i>	9
• <i>Labor Management</i>	10-15
• <i>Safety &amp; Health</i>	16

As you all know, the Maintenance and Operations Bureau does the vital work of keeping Vermont's highways open and safe.

The staff of the MOB are well-suited for this important job. We are capable and driven and we like to take action. It is our nature to tackle whatever challenges come before us, no matter what those challenges entail. Some of those challenges aren't the first things you think of, but they are still very real; insufficient funding; previously deferred maintenance and ever-increasing expectations are some of those types of challenges and they have contributed to a daunting backlog of needs across the state.

Addressing that backlog will test us, and to be successful, we must be smart. While it is in our nature to try to solve all the State's transportation problems, we must have the discipline to focus on our core responsibilities.

Along those lines a course correction is needed. We need to get back to basics... "Maintenance...and Operations", that means our focus must be on:

- Responding to weather events
- Repairing damage
- Performing preventive maintenance
- Maximizing system functionality and predictability
- Communicating with the traveling public

We have already made great strides working together. We will continue to work hard with mutual respect and commitment. We will value the strength that comes from our backgrounds and differences. We will hold ourselves accountable and work safely. We will learn along the way and we will lead by example.

With a clear understanding of our role, and shared commitment of how we will do it, I have every expectation we will succeed.



## “Kudos!” from your fans

**From:** Heberts, Mark  
**Sent:** Monday, October 12, 2015 9:41 AM  
**To:** Elovirta, William; Habel, Amanda  
**Subject:** Thank You & appreciated help

Capt Elovirta and Ms Habel;

I just wanted to send you both an email about an incident which occurred last week with Dave and James from CG. I was inspecting a super load commercial vehicle last week when I came to a situation I had never seen before. I was baffled and had never seen what was happening in the years inspecting or dealing with CMV's. The first thing which came to mind was calling Dave Carslaw because of his knowledge with vehicles to see if he could help me or explain what I was seeing with this air brake issue. He was extremely helpful, he stopped what he was doing to help me figure the dilemma out. He then referred me to James for a second opinion who described and explained why I was seeing this situation. They were extremely helpful and if it was not for them I would of grounded the vehicle for faulty brakes. I wanted you to know how helpful they were and grateful I am. These two employees are extremely knowledgeable and a huge asset to AOT.

Please let them know how much I appreciate their help.

*Mark Heberts*

Senior Corporal  
 Vermont Dept of Motor Vehicles-K9 Unit  
 Commercial Vehicle Enforcement-South

Hi All

I wanted to share with you an email that I received from Ricky Larose and kudos from Ludwig who stopped by our office to give the NEO experience a big thumbs up. Both were participants at yesterday's NEO. I thought I would also take the opportunity to express my thanks for everyone's part in making this a success. This month had a slightly new format and it was very well received. VTrans truly is a great place to work and that was demonstrated again yesterday at NEO! Attached are the evaluations from yesterday.

Thanks,  
 Colleen

**From:** Larose, Ricky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 8, 2015 6:58 AM  
**To:** Montague, Colleen <[Colleen.Montague@vermont.gov](mailto:Colleen.Montague@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: New Employee Orientation

Good morning Colleen,  
 I want to take time to thank everyone for giving me a look at the inter workings of the Agency. I was very impressed that everyone from the Secretary to the team in Records for taking time out of their busy schedule. I am a seasonal temp that would love the opportunity to find a place within the Agency to be part of a team making a difference. The idea of having a opportunity to grow and learn something new is exciting.

Thank you All  
 Ricky Larose

Scott,

I was lucky enough to spend some time in D5 yesterday. While I was there I was excited to see both Debbie Newcombe and Melissa Cruz go above and beyond for candidates interested in becoming AOT employees.

Debbie created a one page hand out for external candidates. It shows position, location, starting wage, wage after probation, and explains basic state benefits such as healthcare, life insurance, dental coverage, leave time, and retirement. Interviews are stressful and nerve-wracking already – even for the most qualified applicant – this gave them something tangible that they could take with them and review later away from the prying eyes of the panel. That allowed interview time and attention to focus on the position itself.

Melissa has been fielding phone calls and walk-ins from interested candidates. She will explain the position, its requirements, answer their questions, and offer to help them navigate the confusing online DHR system. She has worked with many applicants on how to use the system – providing handouts they can take back with them, and instructed them on the importance of checking email during the job advertisement/interview process. I got to hear one of these calls while I was there. She is warm, informative, and encouraging to these potential applicants.

Both Deb and Melissa are invested in D5, and all of AOT, succeeding. They do it with a smile on their face and an ever filled bowl of candy to greet visitors. It is people like that who make AOT such a great place to work. These kudos are earned and deserved.

And Morse  
 Vermont Agency of Transportation  
 Civil Rights  
 (w) 802-828-4002  
 (C) 802-505-1329

*Please note new email address:*  
[and.morse@vermont.gov](mailto:and.morse@vermont.gov)



## “Kudos!” from your fans

Just got a call from Mr. Kyle Duffy. He wanted to express his deep appreciation to our road crews for keeping the roads safe, especially yesterday morning. He traveled from St. Albans to Williston and said “your crew must have been out all night cause the roads were in great shape”. He also said he has been all over the country and came back “home” 9 years ago and said we are the best at keeping roads safe.

Margy

*Marquerite M. Moore*

Financial Specialist III

Vermont Agency of Transportation

Maintenance and Operations Bureau

802-522-6155

802-828-2848 (Fax)

**From:** Sweeny, Gary

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 06, 2016 7:50 AM

**To:** Rogers, Scott <[Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov](mailto:Scott.Rogers@vermont.gov)>

**Cc:** Lafleche, Rejean <[Rejean.Lafleche@vermont.gov](mailto:Rejean.Lafleche@vermont.gov)>; Lafountain, Shawn <[Shawn.Lafountain@vermont.gov](mailto:Shawn.Lafountain@vermont.gov)>

**Subject:** ride a mile in our plow shoes

Hi Scott:

On December 29, 2015, I had the opportunity to ride in one of our plow trucks. I went to the Colchester garage and met Shawn at 4am and he sent me out with Randy. We went out VT 15 to Underhill and then on VT 128. Before we even left I was impressed with the garage and truck itself, both were spotless and in tremendous shape. I totally enjoyed the experience, especially Randy’s comments explaining what he was doing at any particular time and why. I have always had an appreciation of the guys who are out there in the dark in all weather conditions (we had snow and then sleet), but knowing some of the little details makes it more obvious that they are under-appreciated. Since it’s early in the season, I hope to do this again if there’s room.

Thanks for allowing me to do this.

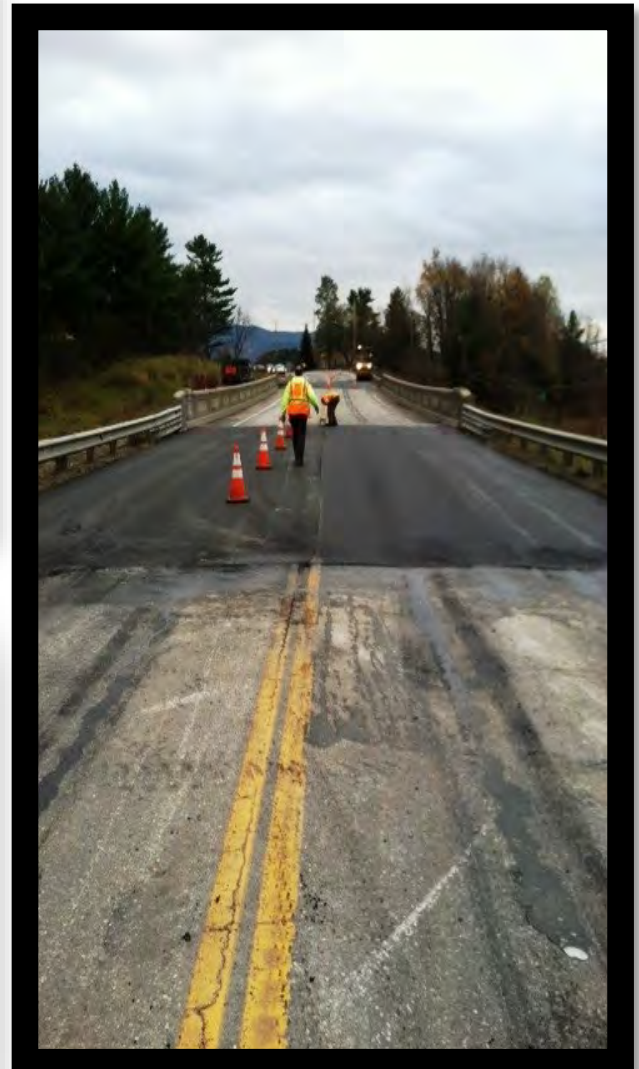
Gary

## Projects

### Bridge 213 - VT 100 - Morristown

When the bridge was installed the approach slabs didn't "match up" well with the vertical alignment of the roadway. The result was a "slamming" effect – made worse for big trucks – as vehicles transitioned from the roadway to the approach slabs to the bridge deck. This was rough for our plow trucks and also for the trucking community. We received many complaints – to include dump truck drivers calling to say that their tailgates were jarred open by the impact.

Bridge Maintenance partnered with PDB (Project Delivery Bureau) to come up with an acceptable solution. The Bridge Maintenance Crew, with the help of District 8 forces and local contractors, we were able to remove the concrete approaches, add sub-base material and pave the approaches back in to smooth out the transition from road to bridge.



## Projects

### East Dorset Loader Storage Building

The new East Dorset loader storage building is nearing completion. The building is 30'x60' with covered storage on the side.

There is propane heat and plenty of room for the loader and extra storage. You can also see the yard has been recently repaved.



## 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 October is Alysha Kane**, a technician from District 5 in Colchester.

Alysha's nomination from a coworker said in part: *"Alysha joined District 5 at the end of June and has been a huge asset to the team. She is very easy to work with and has caught on to what we do here very quickly. She always has a positive attitude every day at work, and brings a wealth of knowledge to the team."*

Please join me in congratulating Alysha. Her daily attitude, work ethic, and efforts to make our workplace better have clearly been noticed by her 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 November is Philip Mathieu**, a Vehicle and Equipment Technician from the Northeast Region.

Philip's nomination from his coworkers said in part: *"Philip is always helpful and is willing to guide his coworkers in the right direction. He is always happy. Philip has a good sense of humor. He always has a good attitude. Philip works exceptionally hard every day. When the supervisor is out Philip continues to keep the shop running smoothly. He keeps all of his fellow coworkers motivated. Philip is always willing to do anything that is needed to help us. Philip has an exceptional work ethic. He cares about his co-workers. He helped everyone with the integration of our team into the new facility. And last but not least Philip is a great mentor and co-worker!"*

Please join me in congratulating Philip. 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 December is Bonnie Elliot**, the Executive Office Manager from District 1 in the Southwest Region.

Bonnie's nomination from her coworkers said in part: *"Bonnie works hard with a great attitude and sense of humor. Her personality keeps us on our toes and smiling throughout the work day. She is always willing to help her coworkers in a friendly and proficient manner, listening to them and guiding them in the right direction. Her knowledge of AOT policies and procedures makes her a great benefit to her coworkers. Bonnie is a tremendous asset to District 1 and to AOT."*

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

Scott

- As a reminder of the process for selecting our employee of the month, nominations for this award come from employees, not managers. Nominations can be written or via email, and should include a short paragraph about the person you're nominating. Explain what they've done that makes them a good candidate to be the MOB Employee of the Month. The nominations should be forwarded to your manager. All nominations received are reviewed at our monthly manager's meeting, and voted on by the Section Heads (Wayne Gammell, Alec Portalupi, Ken Valentine, Christine Hetzel, Todd Law and Amy Mercier). The selected MOB Employee of the Month will receive a personalized certificate, a shirt and a pin. They will also have their name etched on a plaque that will permanently hang in HQ, and they will be recognized in the newsletter.

**Remember, if you nominated somebody and they were not selected, you CAN nominate them again.**

## Announcements & Recognition

Hello,

John Wilkin has accepted a position in our St. Albans office. John has great experience and we are pleased to welcome him to our District 8 Tech Team on November 16, 2015. He will be working with our Towns, District projects, permitting, right-of-way, FEMA etc. Please join me in congratulating him once he settles in to his new job and begins to coordinate work with many of you.

His phone number will be 802-782-9109 and his email will be [john.wilkin@vermont.gov](mailto:john.wilkin@vermont.gov)

Have a great day,

Jim Cota  
VTrans MOB  
District 8 Project Manager



L-R– Digi Digiannarino, Tyler Hanson & Scott Rogers

## ~ Retirements ~



**Chuck Page - 27 Years!**  
L-R:  
Tammy Ellis, DTA, Ray Chase, TAMS, Trevor Starr, GM & Chuck Page - District 4



**Tom Lewis - 43 Years!!**  
L-R Shauna Clifford, DPM, Tom Lewis GM & Dale Perron, DTA District 7



## Personnel Updates

### New Hires, Promotions & Transfers

D1 - **Andy Bourn**, Journeymen, E. Dorset, **Michael Yannotti**, District Tech, Bennington

D4 - **Floyd Cadwell**, MMW, Thetford, **Nate Castellini**, TAMW, WRJ, **Timothy Dubois**, MMW, Williamstown, **Larry Jacques**, TJMW, Rochester, **Kevin Mcphee**, TJMW, WRJ, **Devan Paradis**, MMW, Royalton, **Sam Runner**, TJMW, WRJ, **Mike Sonderland**, TJMW, Thetford, **Todd Stanley**, TJMW, Thetford

D8 - **John Wilkin**, Tech I, St. Albans

D9 - **Jason Sevigny**, Tech IV, Derby

### Retirements

D5 - **Ronald Greene** - 25 Years

D7 - **Robert Gallant** - 14 Years, **Tom Lewis** - 43 Years, **Ezra Senecal Sr.**, 8 Years

D9 - **Dean Birchard** - 27 Years, **Ronald Dane** - 35 Years, **Robert Rivers** - 14 Years

CG - **Richard Wimble** - 38 Years

## Years of Service

D1 - **Rick Knight**, October 9, 2015 - 15 Years  
**Jeffrey Murray**, November 1, 2015 - 35 Years

D2 - **Zachary Bacon**, October 11, 2015 - 5 Years  
**Glenn Wilkinson**, October 6, 2015 - 20 Years

D4 - **Melvin Darling Jr**, October 1, 2015 - 35 Years  
**Timothy Dubois**, November 20, 2015 - 15 Years  
**Royce Pero**, November 21, 2015 - 20 Years

D5 - **Richard Hodziewich**, November 14, 2015 - 10 Years  
**Kevin Lawrence**, October 26, 2015 - 5 Years  
**Tyler Lewis**, November 7, 2015 - 5 Years

D7 - **Carl Senecal**, October 30, 2015 - 15 Years  
**Randy Thomas**, November 27, 2015 - 15 Years

D8 - **Steven Collins**, December 1, 2015 - 35 Years  
**Michael Derby**, November 21, 2015 - 20 Years  
**David Muccio**, December 11, 2015 - 10 Years

D9 - **Dennis Bingham**, October 21, 2015 - 20 Years  
**Robert Gunn Jr**, December 1, 2015 - 30 Years  
**Michael Andre Pepin**, November 29, 2015 - 5 Years

CG - **Joey Vantine**, December 27, 2015 - 10 Years

TSMO - **Ronald Gustafson**, December 28, 2015 - 15 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@vermont.gov](mailto:Karen.brouillette@vermont.gov)



## ~ Postables ~

Take good care of that truck --- it's like free money!

Providing and maintaining our plow truck fleet consumes more than \$9 million of the MOB's annual budget. Each truck depreciates almost \$20,000 per year, and we annually invest more than \$12,000 in parts and mechanics' labor to keep each one ready to go to work.

These are costs we can control. The most effective way is one of the simplest: to regularly wash, inspect, lubricate, and otherwise care for our trucks.

We all know of trucks that are fastidiously maintained by their operators --- salt is promptly rinsed after a storm, greasing touched up be- become big that sail through At the other end nual service and ignored rust will likely need lars of new parts



is done regularly and thoroughly, and paint scratches are fore rust can spread. Small problems are noticed before they ones. In addition to looking good, these are typically the trucks their seasonal PM's in a few days with few parts to replace. of the spectrum are trucks that neglected. They come in for an- caked in salt that has been there for months, with pins seized taking advantage of every piece of exposed steel. These trucks weeks of attention to return to service, with thousands of dol- replacing those swept into the dumpster.

At auction time, a truck that has been well cared for can easily bring \$5000 to \$10,000 more than one that has been neglected. "Extra" money received for a well-maintained truck is invested back in the fleet; money "lost" to poor maintenance is lost forever.

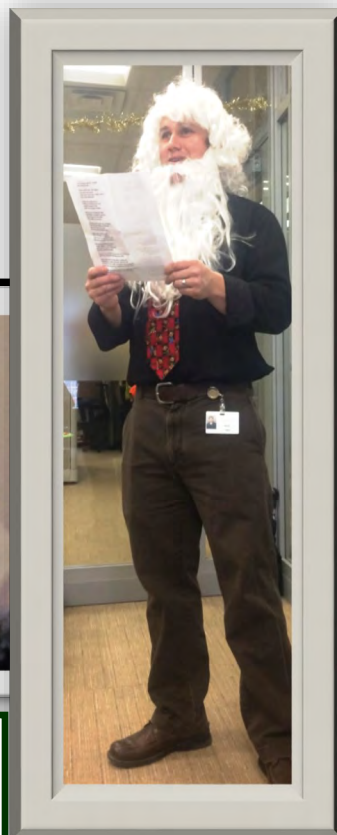
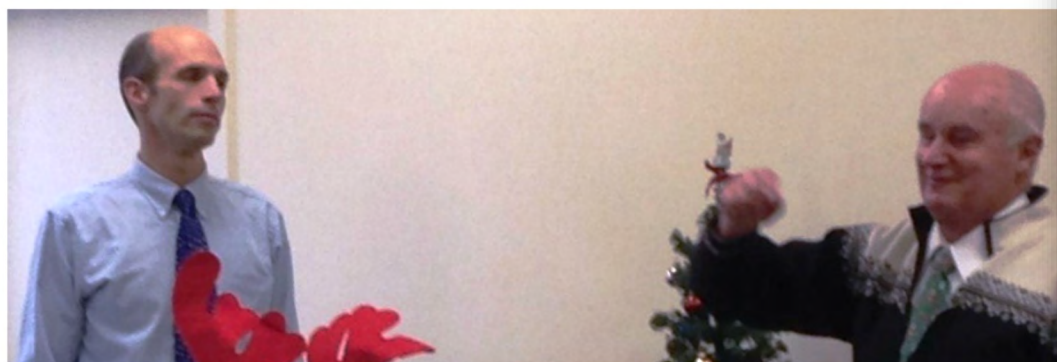
Corrosion is a science unto itself, but the basics are simple and unescapable --- metal exposed to salt and moisture will rust. Our job is to break that cycle --- remove the salt, coat the metal, and minimize expo- sure time. These are things within our power to do.

Recently, and in the coming months, you will hear the Director, managers, and supervisors re-emphasize vehicle maintenance. The Bureau will provide the time, tools, and guidance.

You can do your part with thorough vehicle care, and by encouraging your col- leagues to do the same.

In addition to being a job expectation, it's good for us all, both as taxpayers and people who take pride in our work environment. Less money spent on the fleet leaves more money to tackle the many other needs that we see on the roads.

You can make a difference.



L-R Alec Portalupi with Fred Costello receiving a "thank you" gift from VTrans - "Crossings - a History of Vermont Bridges" by Bob McCullough and far right is our very own Kevin Viani with his rendition of the poem at this year's HQ holiday potluck feast.

# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

### Official AOT Labor Management Minutes

Montpelier, Vermont

Meeting Held On: October 27th, 2015

Approved by Labor & Management On: 10/30/15

**Present For Labor:** Jason Heath (Chair); Jerry Comstock (Vice Chair & For Central Garage); Justin Irish (filling in for District 1 vacancy); Brian Labounty (District 2); Allen Brown (District 4), Shawn Ainsworth (District 7); Brad Carriere (District 8); Allen Pion (District 9); Dave Van Deusen (AOT Senior Union Rep).

Absent From Labor: Ed Olson (District 3); Nick Davis (District 5); Diane Dargie (filling in for Bridge Crew Vacancy).

**Present For Management:** Scott Rogers (Director of Operations); Todd Law (State Maintenance Engineer); Ken Valentine (Central Garage Superintendent), Heidi Dimick (AOT DHR Manager); Present For Anti-Discrimination Agenda Item: Michele Boomhower (Director of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development); Faith Brown (Director of Finance and Administration); Lori Valburn (Chief of Civil Rights).

Absent From Management: Wayne Gammell (Deputy Director of Operations)

### Agenda Items/**Resolutions**/

#### 1. The Retirement Incentive and Its Effects on AOT:

While Labor is pleased that mass layoffs were avoided, in part, by creating a Retirement Incentive, Labor is concerned that over 50 workers utilizing this incentive are from AOT. Labor wants to make sure we retain a right-sized work force necessary for keeping the roads open and in good conditions for the public, and invites a conversation with Management on this issue.

**NOTE: Agenda items #1 and #2 were combined. See below for related minutes and resolution.**

#### 2. Winter Workforce Challenges:

Management would like to have a discussion about contingency planning for vacancies. MOB currently has 35 vacancies related to plowing snow (drivers and mechanics) and that number is growing. We have been asked to brainstorm ways to ensure route coverage when we have so many vacant positions. Management would also like to discuss what can be done to help recruit new AOT employees and (where needed due to recruitment shortfalls) temp positions.

**Discussion:** Management recognized that *more* than 35 positions are presently open in the Garages, and given the fact that snow is looming, expressed grave concern. It is also true that more than a dozen Garage workers have taken the retirement incentive and will be leaving during the winter months. In response, Management stated that it is taking the following steps to address this challenge:

# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

- AOT received clearance for 60 winter Temp positions;
- AOT was able to get the Secretary to lift the internal Agency hiring freeze for Plow Drivers and Mechanics –those are all being actively recruited;
- AOT was able to have the Administration agree that any Plow Drivers and Mechanics who take the retirement incentive will be replaced by new workers (note: the intent of the legislation was to keep three fourths of all these positions empty as a cost cutting measure);
- AOT will be advertising the open (Classified) and Temp positions through radio spots (via Brent Curtis) and through Front Porch Forum (community email service) and other venues;
- The Hiring process will be expedited (where it typically takes 3 months to fill a position, it will now take an estimated 6-8 weeks);
- AOT Reached out to the Civil Rights in order to tap into their database of potential workers who have CDLs (and are in need of a job);
- AOT reached out to the Associated General Contractors in order to spread the word about open Temp positions to private sector workers who are to be laid off over the winter;
- AOT is seeking to convert a couple Limited Service State positions into plow driver positions;
- AOT is doubling down on efforts to find in-house volunteers for Snow Season Status (by Contract these volunteers would get half Snow Pay);
- As a long term strategy, the AOT Training Center will begin to offer CDL training/aimed as receiving a CDL permit;
- The full page ad in regards to AOT career opportunities, taken out last year in the Hunting and Fishing Regs, will be done again this year.

Labor, upon hearing these steps, stated in clear terms that they do not support further reliance on Temps. Labor does not view temps in a positive light, and Labor does not like bringing more workers into the Garages who are not covered by the Union Contract.

Labor also questioned the logic of Temps; “if we cannot fill regular classified positions, why do we think we will be able to fill Temp positions; Temps do not receive benefits.” Labor also questioned if private sector workers who are laid off over the winter would be motivated to work as a Temp. Labor stated that many in private sector construction jobs make good money, and many should be expected to receive \$400+ a week in unemployment insurance. So why would they turn around and work as a Temp for the State for no benefits, and make something close to what they would be making on Unemployment?”

Labor, for its part, suggested the following steps be taken in order to fill the 35+ open (Classified) positions, and to retain those Classified (Union) workers we already have:

- State should offer a sign-on bonus for those that are hired on into a Classified (Union) position (this benefit would not be for Temps).
- State should continue to explore retention incentives for current AOT workers who remain with the State;
- Salaries/Benefits of State AOT workers and Town Road Crew workers should be studied and compared.

# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Much discussion followed on these topics.

**Resolution:** Despite Labor's disagreement, Management will move forward with its attempts to recruit new Winter Temps as is consistent with the Contract and within State law. Management will also move forward with the other action steps it outlined and which Labor was in general agreement with. Management will explore the possibility of offering incentives to recruit/retain workers within the Garages over the winter, and will seriously explore the possibility of offering new Classified (Union) workers a sign on bonus in order to fill the vacancies that presently exist. Labor and Management will also work together to compare State and Town pay/benefits. If a significant disparity is factually demonstrated, Labor and Management will discuss the issue further and consider appropriate next steps.

### 3. Accidents On The Road:

Labor would like Management to clarify if their personal DMV record is affected by accidents that may occur while on the clock, at work.

**Discussion:** Labor asked if an individual plow driver should have it held against him/her (for insurance reasons) if they are involved in an accident, which is not the plow drivers fault, while on the clock and driving State machinery. Management expressed sympathy for Labor's concern, but stated that they do not know the answer to this at this time.

**Resolution:** Management will talk with DMV and seek clarity on this issue. Management will report its findings back to Labor.

### 4. What Management is Hearing in The Garages:

Management would like to provide Labor a summary of issues that came up during recent Garage visits by Management. Management would like to also provide Labor a summary of the actions they are taking as a result.

**Discussion:** Management reported that they have visited many Garages to talk with workers directly. As a result, the most common themes/concerns were reported as follows:

- Concerns about highway/work zone safety;
- New equipment needed.

Concerning safety, Management stated in clear terms that they take this very seriously, and are taking the following steps in response:

- Meetings with police have taken place and will continue to take place with a focus on 'enforcement' within work zones;
- AOT is pushing for cops to pull people over in work zones and not just be there with the blue light on;
- AOT is encouraging cops (not typically assigned to work zone monitoring) to spend more time

# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

patrolling and observing work zones;

- AOT is floating an idea that came out of a Garage whereby a plain clothed cop stands with a flagger, and calls ahead to a police patrol if and when a motorist is seen on a cell phone or exhibiting other unsafe work zone behavior;
- DTA has the power to set lower work zone speed limits, and this is being considered;
- AOT is pursuing grants to buy speed feedback signs.

Labor expressed general support for these ideas, and reinforced that these are huge concerns for workers. Labor and Management discussed many of these issues at past Labor Management meetings, and will likely do so again, as safety remains paramount.

As for Equipment, Management reported that money has been found to buy new equipment by adjusting District budgets. This adjustment came to having budgets based off a 5 year average of winter costs. Districts are presently being asked to inform Upper-Management of their equipment priorities.

**Resolution:** Labor and Management agree that safety is paramount, and Labor supports Management's efforts concerning active law enforcement within work zones. Labor also supports Management's commitment to purchase new equipment within the Districts.

### **5. Dealing with Issues Locally (In District/In Garages):**

Management would like to discuss with Labor its desire to encourage communication locally and work on problems with their DTA and GM directly.

**Discussion:** Management expressed an interest in encouraging issues to be resolved at the lowest possible level; Garage issues at the Garage level, District issues at the District level, multi-District issues at Labor Management. Labor agreed with Management on this point. Note that previous Labor Management meetings resulted in the understanding that when a District issues comes up (one that is not statewide in nature), the AOT Labor Delegate for that District can (and is encouraged) to inform the General Manager and/or DTA of the concern, and to request time at the next District Management meeting to discuss and resolve the issue. This process can be a useful tool and should be supported by the DTAs and utilized by the local Union leaders.

**Resolution:** Labor and Management agree that addressing issues at the lowest possible level is the right course of action for all. Labor will continue to encourage Union leaders to do this, and Management will continue to encourage Garage/District Management to do the same.

### **6. Fair and Transparent Hiring Process:**

Labor & Management discussed this issue at our last meeting (summer). Management requested that Labor provide an official written proposal on this subject. Labor will provide this written proposal.

**Discussion:** Labor provided Management with the following policy proposal:

# Special Interests

## Labor Management Committee Meeting Minutes

### **Proposed Hiring Policy/Labor Proposal AOT Operations**

**Purpose:** To better guarantee transparency and fairness in the hiring process, and thereby to increase morale and confidence (in AOT Management) on the shop floor.

**Policy:** The hiring of all new employees (up to and including Forman), in AOT Garages (Maintenance and Central Garage), will include the participation of a Hiring Committee. The Hiring Committee will be appointed by AOT Management, but will include at least one classified employee (from Maintenance or Central Garage) within the Non-Management Unit where such a qualified employee exists. A qualified employee will have previously completed the Interview Class offered by the AOT Training Center. This appointed (classified) employee will work in the District where the hiring is taking place.

The ultimate decision as to who is hired, will remain with Management (in accordance with the CBAs), but Management will take into account the recommendations of the Hiring Committee when making its decision.

Following a candidate being offered the job in question, Management will inform each person serving on the Hiring Committee of its decision.

Labor and Management discussed this proposal.

**Resolution:** Management agreed to review this written proposal from Labor. Management will seek feedback from others within Management on it, and will provide Labor with proposed edits as may be advisable. Labor and Management will seek to come to a final agreement on this issue, if possible, at the next Labor Management meeting.

### **7. Defeating Vestiges of Discrimination In The Garages:**

Labor and Management would like to have a serious conversation about this issue, and to work together towards eradicating any vestiges of discrimination which may exist in Operations. Specifically Labor would like to propose that their Union, the VSEA, take on an official role, supported by Management, concerning this goal. Management, for its part, would like to discuss how it is important for the workforce to reinforce good & equitable behavior among their peers.

**Discussion:** Labor, in no uncertain terms, agreed that any remaining vestiges of Discrimination that may exist in the Garages and elsewhere with AOT must be overcome. Labor further stated that AOT has made great strides in this area over recent years, but like the rest of society, is yet to achieve perfection. Labor further stated that the historic interests of working people, and Labor Unions, is directly tied to building anti-discriminatory workplaces, whereby workers experience and practice a common solidarity. Management agreed that overcoming vestiges of Discrimination is a priority for AOT. Both sides expressed an interest in working together to address this issue.

Labor therefore proposed that AOT require workers to attend an anti-discrimination training that would be offered by the Union Educator. Having the Union, which is an expression of the rank and file, offer this training would be effective insofar as it could not be understood as an 'outsider' trying to impart values to workers; rather it would be the Union (as the expression of the workers) reinforcing the values upon which Unions are built (ie mutual solidarity, respect, etc.).

Management went on to discuss the trainings they presently offer through AOT Civil Rights division and DHR. Management also stated that it is important that individuals stand up for anti-discrimination on the shop floor. Labor agreed. Labor further informed Management that toward that end, at the next training of AOT Union Leaders (winter), the VSEA Labor Educator will be providing an anti-discrimination training. Providing this Union training to Labor Delegates and Stewards will help bring these values back to the Districts and Garages.

More discussion ensued about Labor's proposal to have the Union provide mandatory anti-discrimination trainings.

**Resolution:** Labor will develop the outlines of an anti-discrimination training. This proposal will be informed through gathering feedback and input from Management (Christine Hetzel of the AOT Training Center) and AOT Civil Rights division. AOT Management (via the Training Center, Civil Rights, DHR, etc.) will further provide VSEA with materials regarding the related trainings that are already being offered by the State, in order that VSEA can seek to reinforce mutually held principles, and in order not to recreate the proverbial wheel. Taking into account the feedback provided by these groups/individuals, Labor will come to the next Labor Management meeting with a more detailed proposal regarding what these Union offered trainings would consist of. Once this has been provided, Labor and Management will continue to discuss the possibility of the Union providing mandatory anti-discrimination trainings to AOT workers.

###

### JOIN YOUR UNION & WIN!

If you are not already a member of your Union, the VSEA, we need you to join today! It is only by standing together, united, that we will in fact win a good and fair Contract, and will continue to improve the pay and working conditions of those who keep our roads open. So if you are not already a fully voting member, become one today by clicking on the below link:

<http://www.vsea.org/membership-application>

## Safety & Health

We are in the Winter Season when most Safety Training is put on hold for “snow control”. Safety is not idle during this time. This is our heavy planning and development season for all classes scheduled after snow season. Currently in process are Lockout/ Tagout (LOTO) projects, LOTO Training Development, and Flagger Training updates. The Lockout / Tagout (aka Control of Hazardous Energy) project involves locating or acquiring the manual for all facility equipment (power tools, mowers, generators, etc), garage by garage. Each will be reviewed and any regular scheduled maintenance items will be listed separately so garage personnel can have all they need to ensure proper care, operation and maintenance of equipment in their facility. It is during service and/or maintenance that LOTO is crucial. This project is in the hands of both Safety Technicians on the Safety Team. I anticipate this being completed in late January or early February. By completing this groundwork we will be able to move into the LOTO training in March, ready to fully implement proper LOTO for facility equipment across all Districts. This project will also provide the details needed by IT as they look at a Lockout Pro update (LOTO software currently in use by the MOB).

The Flagger Training updates involve some minor changes to slides and photos to keep it looking fresh. Based on feedback from current in-house trainers, this update and a new shorter version for refresher training were the most frequent requests. This project is in its early stages.

The Statewide Safety Task Force mission statement has been sent to and reviewed by Scott Rogers and Wayne Gammell. As the membership has expanded, Scott suggested we continue to expand and welcome more people from different areas. I think this is an excellent plan. Starting April 2016, I will begin inviting others from throughout the Highway Division to this monthly meeting.

All the updated and reformatted Tailgate Talks (TGTs) are now on SharePoint. The old ones, in their various formats, styles, and veracity, have been archived. Safety is still sending out monthly TGT calendars with seasonally appropriate TGTs to Districts, Bridge Crew and Rail. These are issued around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month. This timing is intended to cover the weather variations from North to South.

I submitted 2 paragraphs about safety to Rose Gowdey of CAPS for inclusion to their training for supervisors and/or managers. The intent is to make new supervisors aware of their safety responsibilities as representatives of “the employer” per OSHA regulations. I’ve been doing quite a bit of research on the Behavior Based Safety (though some call it People-Based Safety) approach after receiving several intriguing emails from Safety Officers at other state DOTs. Those that have been involved with this approach mention effective positive changes in their Safety Culture without the “gotcha” or punishment approach. I’m still in the information gathering phase, trying to assess its effectiveness for us, pros and cons, etc. It’s definitely interesting.

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