

Operations Connection

Message from the Director

Scott A. Rogers

As many of you know, I am a big baseball fan. When I was growing up I had the good fortune of having relatives living just outside Boston, and my parents took my brother and me to visit every summer. This included a visit to Fenway Park to cheer on our beloved Red Sox. And although I cheer for Boston, I developed an appreciation for the game which includes a love of baseball history.

I especially like some of the characters that are part of baseball lore. Guys like Al Hrabosky - nicknamed "The Mad Hungarian" - who would take a few steps towards second base, meditate for a minute, then slam the ball into his glove and stomp back to the mound while glaring at the opposing hitter. Or Bill "Spaceman" Lee, who once claimed that sprinkling some marijuana on his morning breakfast made him immune to bus fumes on his way to the park each day. (He lives in Vermont, by the way.) Or John Kruk, author of the book "I ain't an athlete, lady" who somehow hit .300 for his career with one of the most out of shape bodies in professional sports history.

But you can't talk about baseball characters without mentioning Yogi Berra. Not only one of the greatest catchers in history, but also probably the most quotable. Here are just a few of Yogi's pearls of wisdom :

- "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."
- "It ain't over till it's over."
- "It gets late early out there."
- "You can observe a lot just by watching."
- "A nickel ain't worth a dime any more."
- "Baseball is 90% mental, and the other half is physical."
- "No one goes there nowadays. It's too crowded."
- "It's like deja vu all over again."
- "Never answer an anonymous letter."
- "Always go to other people's funerals, otherwise they won't come to yours."

I hope reading this made at least a few folks laugh. That is something we could all stand to do a little bit more often. And as seasons change and we think ahead to winter, maybe Yogi said it best. "The future ain't what it used to be..."

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“Kudos!” from your fans

Lee Brown of VT Gas just called me. He was pleased with how Michael Chrastina worked with them on a project about a month ago in the State ROW. He said Michael was positive and helped them find solutions that worked for the permit. Lee said “You got the right man for the job.” And he wanted to let us know.

I thanked him for the call.

Jim

I am not sure how/when your group does employee recognitions, but I would really like to see big kudos for the D-8 & D-9 teams for their incredible help this year assisting in various initiatives, including engagement in infrastructure projects, at public meetings, on teleconferences and in reviewing of proposals/plans that required their input to assure safe and efficient movement across the US-Canada border. They have assisted with everything from the basics of placing/removing signage to engaging in problem solving with stakeholders and our partners in Quebec, as well as supporting efforts to coordinate current and future projects with the federal security/border agencies in the US and Canada. I always get a quick response to any request I forward to them in my role as the liaison for border issues, even though I am sure that sometimes they must cringe when they see my emails pop-up. 😊

The most recent for D-8 was in response to a request to remove an overhead sign on the approach to the Highgate Springs-St Armand crossing to alleviate a lane queuing problem for north-bound traffic (just this past week) and they have been active in all the meetings regarding the current project at the East Richford-Sutton bridge and our traffic impact studies for the completion of A-35.

As you know, D-9 has been up-to-their-eyeballs in projects at the Derby Line/I-91 crossing for the past two years, as well as assisting with improvements for the Derby Village crossing, along with a few issues at two small ports of entry in the northeastern corner of the state.

If there is something more formal that should be done, please let me know.

Thanks –
Karen

Karen E. Songhurst | Policy Analyst
Policy, Planning & Research Bureau

“Kudos!” from your fans

Good Afternoon,

On Tuesday of this week my brother called me asking about the steps he needed to take to start an emergency dig. I gave him Dan Ertel’s number for the best place to start.

Long story short, he called me later that day and said the signal crew was very quick, very helpful and very professional. And he wanted me to relay this.

Thank you guys and good Job.

Daniel Shepard

Hi Ashley (Bishop),

I just wanted to pass along some really positive feedback that I’ve heard about your work here at AOT. I do the Grant monitoring for our towns and cities, and almost every town that I’ve been to that has had some interaction with you has mentioned how helpful and knowledgeable you’ve been.

Customer service is really important to me, and while I don’t think I’ve ever met you, to know we work for the same department and a colleague of mine is doing the great work like I’ve heard you’re doing, I want to acknowledge it. Thank you for being helpful to our Grant recipients! Like the Town of Weybridge mentioned, sometimes a small gesture isn’t much to you, but means a lot to who your helping.

Thanks Ashley! I wish there were more people like you ☐

Heidi Quenneville



Joe Doucette

Joe I just wanted to take a moment to tell you how amazed I am at the job that you all did removing the debris from the roadside on 302 in East Orange.

Tonight I went over to Newbury for my grandsons birthday and saw Curtis working in East Orange where it looked like an immense amount of paper and cardboard and then met you as I drove up Groton Heights.

When I came back a couple hours later I couldn't believe how much you had accomplished. If I hadn't have seen the mess on my way to Newbury, I wouldn't have believed it was even there as there was barely a trace and I had to look close to see any debris.

Thank you for your responsiveness and to your dedication on a state holiday. Please pass my thanks along to your crew also. I have brought up a few road issues along roads under your maintenance responsibility in the past and you and your crew has always made repairs quickly and efficiently.

Keep up the great work.

Todd (Law)

Dan Bruyette

Dan,

Thanks very much for hosting us at the VTRANS facility last month. The students (and I) were very impressed with the facility and the professionalism of the organization. I really appreciate you taking the time to show us around, answer questions, and share what it takes to start and grow a career with VTRANS.

Several of the students are very interested in VTRANS, a couple have already applied for VTRANS positions on the states website.

Again, thanks for your support.

Richard

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Richard Barwin
Work-Based Learning Coordinator
Missisquoi Valley Union High School



DISTRICT NEWS



District 8 hot mix patching along a stretch of US 7 in St. Albans

DISTRICT NEWS (Cont'd)



NW Regional Bridge Specialists repairing a plug joint on a Bridge along the I-89 corridor as a result of a Bridge Inspection Finding.

DISTRICT NEWS (Cont'd)



NW Sign Team completed intersection improvement project at US 2 and VT 314 in Grand Isle.

DISTRICT NEWS (Cont'd)



Michael Boutah, Martin Jenson, Carl Ward, Mike Martin, Tom Jarvis and Logan Riley are hard at work forming and pouring concrete pads for the brine tanks in North Hero. A great example of district staff going above and beyond allowing us to stretch our money and do more projects state wide. This project is one of the many that we are doing around the State to save and prolong the life of our brine tanks. Every time our district forces join together it allows us to do more projects and improve our ever changing working environment. Thank you to all involved.

DISTRICT NEWS (Cont'd)

NORTH HERO



D5 & D8 APPRECIATION DAY

The NW Maintenance Region along with the N Regional Construction Division held their “Extra-Mile” Employee Appreciation Day on Wednesday, May 23, 2018. It was a beautiful day, very well attended. The appreciation by the managers was warmly expressed.



WEDDING BELLS



BEER & LABOUNTY



Mike Labounty and Donald Beer, Jr., two longtime friends and co-workers are now local celebrities for a series of crazy stunts they've pulled all to benefit the Santa Fund. They are the Summertime Santas.

On Friday afternoon, June 8, 2018 the duo made a donation of \$6,500 to the local charity at the St. Johnsbury Fire Department. They were dressed as elves and wore tutus. The check represents the largest single donation in the history of The Santa Fund, which was started to brighten Christmas for local children during The Great Depression.

"It's unbelievable what they've got going," said St. Johnsbury Fire Chief Troy Ruggles. He said the community has always come through for kids at Christmas here, and when there were "slump years," people donated more and saved the day. Nobody has ever seen the likes of Labounty and Beer, however. Not only is the pair setting records for fundraising, they're also bringing attention to the charitable fund months before normal campaigning begins.

Children arrived at the fire house at 5 p.m. and dropped off toys and games on the steps, while people deposited checks and cash into a box on a table outside the department.

Candy canes were distributed, and not one, but two Santa Clauses were present for the fun.

Labounty said the amount on the check was for \$6,500, "but we broke \$7,000 this morning," on the Go Fund Me page the friends began on Memorial Day as part of a bet. Their primary mode of fundraising is to make crazy bets with each other to perform a variety of increasingly nutty stunts.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Every bet they make meets its donation goal faster than they expect, and the ante was upped again on Friday, when the pair agreed to go mono-a-mono in the Caledonia County Fair demo derby. They hope to hit \$10,000 in donations.

This year alone, 519 families have registered for Santa Fund help, representing 1,224 children, and thanks to the generosity pouring in, Christmas will be happy for all those kids.

“It’s been pretty amazing,” said Labounty, standing on the fire department steps thanking everyone who has been a part of the fun fundraising effort. He said many of the donations have poured in \$10 at a time, showing a lot of small gifts add up.

Wearing elf costumes on the steps of the fire department to present the check was one of the bets, and Labounty said if someone had told him he’d be doing that two weeks ago, “I would have told you you were nuts!”

“People must like seeing a couple of fools dressed up,” he said.

Money is raised with harmless social media challenges, pranks, dress up as the NE Kingdom Lollipop Guild from the Wizard of Oz and appear in Memorial Park. They collect donations for The Santa Fund in the park, from 10 AM til noon,

Dan Allard Sr., a close friend, is helping the pair fundraise. Allard was involved in the demo derby for many years, and is helping to build one of the cards for the men’s contest. His business, Allard’s Metal Recycling, on Hill St., in Lyndonville, has seen an uptick in Santa Fund donations, and he’s also been taking donations instead of payment for some scrap and parts.

When Beer and Labounty decided to turn the fun they were having, and getting noticed for, into a way to raise funds for a good cause, The Santa Fund was the instant choice.

Labounty said, “I believe this is so successful because this is something that the community has been waiting for, without realizing it. With everything we are divided about, one thing we all can agree on is when it comes to kids, they all deserve a great Christmas. We were just the ones that got the conversation started,” he said. Labounty was the DJ at a dance at the Sutton School and the kids donated \$50 from a bake sale to The Santa Fund. Kids are donating their allowances and businesses are being challenged too, in the weeks leading up to the demo derby to raise as much as possible.

“The community has really gotten behind everything we do,” said Labounty.

If you are interested in donating they have a Go Fund Me page called Mike-N-Don Demo 4 Santa.

NEW HIRES

WELCOME

All,

Please join me in welcoming Carl Senecal as the newest Occupational Safety Technician to the Agency of Transportation (AOT) Safety Team. Carl brings with him over 10 years of knowledge and service with AOT and has spent the last 6 years as an Area Maintenance Supervisor. Carl was a leader in implementing the Voluntary Protection Program's Lock-Out/Tag-Out (LOTO) program with the Vermont Occupational Safety & Health Act (VOSHA). Carl is passionate about safety and we look forward to what he will bring to the Safety Team.

Rob

I am happy to announce that Kevin Gadapee has accepted the position as the NE Region District Transportation Administrator. Kevin brings with him a lifelong wealth of maintenance experience, most recently as the District 7 General Manager. We look forward to his critical thinking, team first approach and excellent communication skills.

His first official day will be Sunday September 2nd. Please help me welcome Kevin to his new position.

Ernie Patnoe Maintenance Transportation Administrator

NEW HIRES

I am happy to announce the addition of three new employees to the Contract Administration Unit!

Elizah French joined the Construction Contracting Team. Elizah is a graduate of the National Summer Transportation Institute program and was working for the MOB in a temporary position, where among other things, I am told she drove a skid steer. She is a part-time student at Community College of Vermont, getting her associates and eventually her bachelor's degree in business. Fun fact: Elizah plays ice hockey- on a men's team!

Linda Bouffard has joined the Contract Administration Team. Linda came to us from AP and has also worked in the Highway Business Office, and in the Treasurer's Office. Linda will be continuing to work on the Construction Inspection Contract, and has generously volunteered to keep her duties as the custodian of the safety gear, so keep coming to her for those vests and hard hats. Fun fact: Linda drives golf balls and old convertibles.

Shawn Goodell has joined the Services Contracting Team. He was previously with Department of Vermont Health Access as a Contract/Grant Administrator, where he did everything from RFP's to writing contracts/grants to processing invoices. Prior to DVHA he spent many years in private industry as an Operations Manager. Fun facts: Shawn is the Fire Chief in Morrisville and a golf champion.

We are super happy to have gotten these great folks, please join me in welcoming them!

Michelle
Chief of Contract Administration

NEW HIRES, Cont'd

All,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Asset Management & Programming Bureau has hired Jonathan K Nelson for the GIS Professional position in the Data Management Section. He will be serving as a Web Map Developer, creating maps and apps for sharing AMP data. Jonathan joins us from Strava Metro, where he created high-performance analytical tools to help cities make sense of Strava's massive dataset. Jonathan recently purchased a house in Northfield, loves cycling, hiking, taking photographs, making maps, and spending quality time with his fiancé, April, and their three dogs, Sprite, Maggie, and Nittany.

Jonathan has nearly 3 years of experience in cartography and user experience (UX) design and is finishing a PhD in Geography from Penn State University. He brings creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills to our team, and his service will provide considerable benefits to Vermonters. The primary focus of this position will be to continue the development of our existing web applications like SK1, as well as focus on new opportunities to leverage web-based spatial technology to make our data more useful. Jonathan will report directly to me, will sit on the 4th floor at National Life, and can be reached at jonathan.nelson@vermont.gov.

Tuesday, May 29th will be his first day reporting for duty. Please join me in welcoming Jonathan and remind him to bring doughnuts.



Thanks,

Stephen Smith
Data Administration Director

NEW HIRES

All,

I'm pleased to announce that Seth Hisman has accepted the Northeast Regional Construction Engineer position. Seth started with the Agency as part of the Rotation Program, where he worked in many parts of the Agency, gaining valuable insights into the broad scope of work that the Agency performs. Seth has spent the majority of his career in the Northeast Region as a Resident Engineer where he has worked on a wide range of projects. Seth has the respect of the Construction staff and will be providing strong leadership to the region. Seth will officially begin this assignment on May 27, 2018.

Please join me in welcoming Seth to this new challenge.

Thanks,
Jeremy Reed,
Construction Engineer

Good Afternoon,

I'm happy to announce that Lindsay White has accepted the vacant Financial Specialist III position in Accounts Payable that was previously filled by Michelle Dion. Lindsay comes to us from the Vermont Housing Authority where she worked for the past 13 years working with Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Payroll tasks. Lindsay will be working on Payroll, Expenses, Invoice payments and other various A/P tasks. Her first day will be October 22nd.

Garret Folsom, Financial Manager III



Happy Retirement!

ROYCE PERO
25 YEARS

DEAN J. DeGRAY
34 YEARS

ROBERT S.
CHILDS
18+ YEARS

DALE
PERRON
27 YEARS

CHARLES BOOSKA
27 YEARS

YEARS OF SERVICE

- CG - Jeffrey Hebb 15 Years
Daniel Ploof 10 Years
Dylan Bishop 5 Years
- F&A - Michael Pologruto 35 Years
Angela Langevin 25 Years
Colleen Montague 20 Years
- TSMO John Blodgett 50 Years
Alan Roy 20 Years
Nancy Avery 20 Years
- TS - Andrew Shively 20 Years
Craig Digiammarino 15 Years
Jeremy Hook 10 Years
- D 1- Jacob Wilkins 5 Years
D 2 - Nicolaas Garbacik 25 Years
Paul Meoli 5 Years
Darlene Ricketts 10 Years
Gary Rogers 20 Years
D 3 - Kurt Kimball 30 Years
Bradley Keith 5 Years
D 4 - Devin Paradis 5 Years
Michael Young 10 Years
D 5 - Jay DeBono 35 Years
Randy Kennett 15 Years
Ronald Baker 10 Years
D 7 - Gerald Griswold 15 Years
Andrew Martin 10 Years
Paul Conton 5 Years
Roy Willey 15 Years
Ryan Hovey 15 Years
D 8 - Gary Brown 10 Years
D 9 - Michael Sheltra 10 Years
Michal Pion 10 Years

Operations Employees of the Month

Congratulations on being selected as the **Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for May 2018.**

Your nomination said, in part: *“Tyler has worked here for 2 or 3 years now. He’s a good young man and always willing to learn new jobs. He also can’t wait to finish a job to see the end result. He helps everybody out and always has a good attitude. He takes good care of his dump truck and is always making something for his truck or making something for the shop - he’s always building something. He takes a lot of pride in what we do. All in all, Tyler is a great guy to work with.”*

Thank you for displaying a positive daily attitude and terrific work ethic. Your efforts to make our workplace better are greatly appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

TYLER THOMAS

Congratulations on being selected as the **Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for June 2018.**

Your nomination said, in part: *“Rob is an integral part of the District 5 team. When new employees come to his garage he is always helpful and courteous, taking them under his wing and making sure their experience is a good one. As a Safety team member, Rob goes above and beyond. He volunteered to help with Spring Training and teach others how important safety is, along with awareness and proper protocols. He is very organized and he assisted with the technical support and the material presented. He has a great sense of humor even when things are thrown at him, and he is best known for stepping up to the plate even when it’s out of his comfort zone. We truly appreciate his contributions to the District 5 Team.”*

Thank you for displaying a positive daily attitude and terrific work ethic. Your efforts to make our workplace better are greatly appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

ROB BARROWS

Employees of the Month (Cont'd)

Congratulations on being selected as the **Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for July 2018.**

Your nomination said, in part: *“Steve’s dedication and willingness to fill-in when needed without hesitation has been a great asset to the Georgia garage this past winter. He played an instrumental part in keeping the Georgia garage up and running while other employees were called out for other duties. He gave 110%, and always made sure all the equipment and trucks were in good working order so when the next person went to use them, they were always sure to be safe to use. Steve was always willing to pitch in and help out even after the long hours of what this past winter threw at us. His approach to safety and detail is among the best I have seen, always seeking out knowledge and better ways to do things.”*

Thank you for displaying a positive daily attitude and terrific work ethic. Your efforts to make our workplace better are greatly appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

Steven Cummings

Congratulations on being selected as the **Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for August 2018.**

Your nomination said, in part: *“Shawn has worked for VTRANS for 13 ½ years out of the Rockingham shop. He is at the master level but he also fills in as the Senior at times to help out. He helps train new employees to get their CDL, and is also outstanding on the equipment and helps train coworkers how to run it safely. He has a positive attitude, is always ready to go, and is a good role model to be around. He is excellent with a chainsaw and knows how to fix anything you put in front of him. In fact, he knows how to do just about every job. He can even run the servalift for bridge washing. Shawn takes pride in his work, and takes good care of his road during winter months. Shawn is a good man, and a good friend and coworker to be around.”*

Thank you for displaying a positive daily attitude and terrific work ethic. Your efforts to make our workplace better are greatly appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

Shawn Westney

Employee's of the Month (Cont'd)

Congratulations on being selected as the Maintenance and Operations Bureau's Employee of the Month for October 2018.

Your nomination said, in part: *“Dan has been helping out greatly with the Northeast Region Bridge Team. He is always willing to help employees with learning new techniques for concrete forming. He has been willing to show folks how to properly form and pour concrete using rebar, anchoring methods and dimensional lumber. Dan has helped lead several concrete projects and he tries very hard to deliver contractor grade finished products. He also volunteers often to carry concrete up and down banks when others cannot. Dan takes care of his team mates and always makes sure they are capable before having them do a task. He offers training to them if they are unsure of what to do. Dan volunteered recently to lead the MAYBE bridge team for the northern half of the state. This is a very complex initiative which Dan has welcomed. It has been a pleasure to watch Dan step up.”*

Thank you for displaying a positive daily attitude and terrific work ethic. Your efforts to make our workplace better are greatly appreciated.

Keep up the great work!

Daniel Whitehead

MAY YOU BE PROUD
OF THE WORK YOU DO
THE PERSON YOU ARE
AND THE DIFFERENCE
YOU MAKE

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE GRADUATION



Good Evening Gentlemen,

I wanted to again express my gratitude for this amazing opportunity and the continued support as I develop and grow into my role on the management team. I couldn't be any more proud to work for the best agency in state government and that's a true testament to this top notch leadership team! Kle

All of us in the Maintenance and Operations Bureau send our heartiest congratulations to our Leadership Institute Graduates! Dana Caron, Kyle Carpenter, Amanda Habel, and Sara Williams each stepped up to develop their own skills --- and we're confident each will help bring the Agency into the future. We are grateful for their initiative, diligence, and teamwork. We're proud of you all and are excited to see what you can help us all achieve!

Graduates not pictures are: Dana Caron, Amanda Habel.





Congratulations to Shane Morin on his graduation from the VPM program!!!

Congratulations!