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EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER • September 2008, Vol.74 No.8

Joy White

VDOT's Bionic Woman, Page 4



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Commissioner Ekern

Commissioner's Column

In August, VDOT unveiled the next evolution in our traveler information and customer service efforts with the launch of the improved 511 traveler information system. 511 provides continuously updated traffic and travel information any time of day — while at home, at work, or on the road.

511 gives you personalized information:

- Accident and incident alerts
- Weather conditions
- Live traffic camera images
- Bridge and tunnel reports
- Road construction info
- Free mobile alerts
- Customized "511 Control Room"
- Driving directions
- Gas-saving tips

You are one of the most powerful tools we have to keep Virginians moving and keep them safe. Data used to feed this system is the same information we use to conduct emergency response activities.

When you report an incident on the roadway or a planned lane closure to one of the regional Traffic Operations Centers or the Transportation Emergency Operations Center in Richmond, that information feeds directly into the 511 system.

Access 511 however it's easiest for you — by dialing 5-1-1 from your cell or land line, online at 511virginia.org, or sign up to receive personalized traffic information by e-mail, text pager, BlackBerry, personal digital assistant or other mobile device.

So visit the new 511Virginia.org, and call the 511 system. Keep your eyes and ears open to incidents, planned activities and other messages we can convey to the public using this system.

511 is yet another way that VDOT can make every day safer and easier for our customers.

FEATURES



Recycling at Chickahominy Bridge

Thanks to a fender system made from recycled tires, the new Route 5 Judith Stewart Dresser Memorial Bridge over the Chickahominy River is not only better protected from boat impacts but also contributes to protecting the environment.

The fenders are made from discarded bus and truck tires. The rubber material is wrapped around the concrete piers and acts as bumpers when struck. This prevents damage to the boat and the bridge substructure.

According to Schuyler Rubber Company, Inc., the supplier of the fender system, the recycled material diverts 2,500 bus and truck tires from landfills, decreases the demand for imported oil by 18,900 gallons (\$63,000 at \$140 per barrel oil cost) and decreases emissions by 451,700 pounds.

"The recycled fenders are not only more environmentally friendly than the traditional fender systems, they also save us 25 percent in costs," said **Harold Dyson**, project manager.

The new, 2,500-foot-long fixed-span structure will replace the existing, 69-year-old swing-span bridge. Skanska, Inc. is expected to complete the construction in late 2008, at least seven months ahead of schedule. In May 2007, 25 members of VDOT's bridge design team received both the VDOT Commissioner's Award for Outstanding Achievement and the Governor's Award for Teamwork for completing project development in just 18 months.

— Dawn Eischen, Richmond

Improved 511 Rolls Out

On Aug. 25, we launched the next generation of the 511 Virginia Web site, which includes more features such as trip planning, personalization, bridge and tunnel information, weather updates, and real-time camera images from more than 650 cameras statewide.

"We are excited about the possibilities this new system offers the public and have taken all the feedback into consideration when developing this Web site," said Scott Cowherd, statewide traveler information program manager. "The comments we've received are very encouraging."

The new Web site (www.511Virginia.org) lets users take control of their travels like never before and get personalized traffic information when, where and how they want to receive it.

511 Virginia is VDOT's free one-stop traveler information system where motorists can find the latest information about road conditions, construction delays and traffic incidents across the state.

The 511 system provides continuously updated information any time, any place. Motorists can access 511 by going online and signing up for personalized traffic information via e-mail, BlackBerry, PDA, or by calling 511 from any phone.

Those calling from out of state can access the system via a toll-free number, (866) MY511VA, or [(866) 695-1182].

What a Long, Strange Trip it's Been for JRB Plaques

In 1928, the James River Bridge was built to connect Newport News with Isle of Wight County. To commemorate the feat, two bronze plaques were placed on both ends of what was at the time the longest bridge (over water) in the world.

Forty years later, wrecking crews made room for the new bridge. That's where then-Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation employee **Johnnie Leggette** came in. When he pulled the bronze behemoths from the rubble, a journey began that would take the plaques across the country and almost to the recycling bin before two state DOTs joined forces to get them back home.

A Leggette relative liked the obscurity of the plaques and moved with them to Chicago, and then to California, before leaving them behind when the house was sold. **Tony Opperman**, preservation program manager, was contacted by the realtor when the plaques were found in the garage. Fortunately, Opperman has a friend at the California DOT, who packed the plaques up and shipped them back to Virginia. "Three thousand miles away and we were able to work together," said Opperman.

Transportation Roadside Program Manager **Jerry Pruyn** (pictured) in the Hampton Roads District is working with the Isle of Wight Beautification Committee to mount a plaque on a portion of the original bridge used as a fishing pier, and the other in Huntington Park at the foot of the current bridge. "These are the remnants of what was a monumental structure," said Opperman.

— Mike Salmon, Northern Virginia

EMPLOYEE NEWS

JOY WHITE

VDOT's Bionic Woman



Left:

White wears a protective glove on the amazing iLIMB, which allows her to return to work, and ride and show horses.

The work day of Thursday, June 21, 2007, started out quietly for **Joy White**, operator II, Franklin Residency. But before the day was through, White would experience a horrific, life-altering accident.

While White cleared roadside debris using a wood chipper, a branch caught between her wrist and glove. There was no time to break the branch or shake off the glove, and the chipper pulled her in.

A quick thinking co-worker reversed the machine, releasing her. But it was too late. Tragically, White lost her hand.

A testament to her incredible spirit, White called 911 herself, while a co-worker ran for help.

During a week in the hospital, White's mind was on her horses. The day of her accident, White was supposed to pick up her filly, Ellie. "I thought, how can I pick up my filly without a hand?" said White.

Her fingers were amputated across the first knuckle. White could ride her three horses with a prosthetic hook, but it was difficult to hold onto the reins. That just wasn't going to work.

Then one day, everything changed. White discovered the iLIMB (www.touchbionics.com), a bionic hand with five individually powered fingers and joints that flex and bend. White was the first in Virginia to get the technologically advanced iLIMB. Each digit has five motors operated by what's left of her pinky finger.

If the surgeons had removed more of her hand, the iLIMB would not have been an option.

Today, the 10-year VDOT veteran is back on the job and back riding and showing Ellie. In fact, the first time she competed using her new hand, she won.

You don't have to know White a long time to realize she's not allowing what happened last year to define her.

White's iLIMB will soon be sent to Arizona where it will be covered to match her skin tone, a six-to-eight week process. But that's just going to have to wait. "I told them, 'Let's wait until winter for that,'" added White with a grin. "I don't want to miss a single day of riding time."

MEET ANGELA FOROUGH, New Fredericksburg Residency Assistant Resident Administrator



Ever since she was a little girl, **Angela Foroughi**, assistant resident administrator, Fredericksburg Residency, wanted to be an engineer. "I played video games like Sim City, which fueled my passion to build things," she said.

Now that she's all grown up, Foroughi has earned a Bachelor of Science and a master's in civil and infrastructure engineering with an emphasis in transportation engineering from George Mason University. She also holds a Professional Engineering license.

"VDOT will provide me with an excellent opportunity for growth as an engineer in the transportation field," comments Foroughi.

Before coming on board at VDOT, she spent four years as a civil engineer for the Stafford County Government Office of Transportation.

With transportation in her blood, she couldn't help but marry a civil engineer. She and her husband Ryan reside in Stafford County and have two dogs. (Incidentally, her father-in-law Ali Foroughi, P.E., transportation engineer senior, Northern Virginia District, is a 16-year VDOT veteran.)

Angela and her husband love to travel, they have vacationed in Fiji, Bermuda, the Bahamas and Mexico. An avid card player, Angela visits Atlantic City and Las Vegas to test her skills.

— Tina Bundy, Fredericksburg

PROFESSIONAL NOTES

OBITUARIES

Jonathan Eagle
92, Staunton District

Alma Gibson
58, Salem

Olive Hawkins
92, Staunton District

Walter Noell
66, Salem

Rodney Ratcliff
67, Salem District

Louie Smith
83, Staunton District

Bueland Stevers
81, Salem

Raymond Whitt
73, Northern Virginia

BIRTHS

Ralph and Amy Frye, both of Bristol District, recently had a baby boy, **Kolby**.

Ian Norris was born on April 11 to **Brian and Stacey Diefenderfer**, both of VTRC.

CAREER MOVES/PROFESSIONAL NOTES

Faghri Arsalan
architect/engineer II
Northern Virginia District

Jay Brown
Named architect/engineer I
Lynchburg District

Richard Buckingham, P.E.
received Master's Certificate in project management
Bristol District

Quintin Elliott
Named district administrator
Fredericksburg District

Sara Holt
named architect/engineer I
Lynchburg District

Danny James
named AOS II
Lynchburg District

Gary Lester, P.E.
named as architect/engineer II
Bristol District

Matt Lipscomb
Named architect/engineer II
Lynchburg District

Gina Poulas
received Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Richmond District

Eddie Stamper, L.S.
received Master's Certificate in project management
Bristol District

Jim Utterback
named district administrator
Culpeper District

David Shipe
named transportation operations manager II
Northern Virginia District

John Stafford
transportation operator III
Northern Virginia District

Danny Tipton
transportation operator II
Lynchburg District

NEW TO VDOT

Donald Brewer
transportation operator II
Bristol

Manuel Ball
transportation operator II
Fredericksburg

Jack Williams
transportation operator II
Richmond

Frank Brooks
transportation operator II
Fredericksburg

Rebecca Smith
procurement officer I
Staunton

Anthony Hash
transportation operator II
Bristol

Troy Musick
transportation operator II
Bristol

Douglas Horton
highway maintenance worker
Salem

Jason Reedy
transportation operator II
Bristol

James Martin
transportation operator II
Salem

John Cockram
transportation operator II
Salem

Nestor Martinez
engineering technician III
Northern Virginia

Joseph Cox
transportation operator II
Salem

Roger Weaterman Jr
transportation operator II
Bristol

Charles Lyle
transportation operator II
Staunton

Rudy Sprouse
transportation operator II
Staunton

Kevin Davis
transportation operator II
Bristol

David Walton
transportation operator II
Fredericksburg

James Whitley
transportation operator II
Fredericksburg

Russell Martin Jr
transportation operator II
Fredericksburg

Thomas Digiulian
location and design engineer
Salem

Philip Rinehart
Project management engineer
Hampton Roads

Jeremy Snyder
transportation operator II
Richmond

Willie Royal III
transportation operator II
Richmond

Robert Sheehan
appraiser
Northern Virginia

Curtis Wright
transportation operator II
Salem

Randy Friedland
land acquisition and property management mgr II
Hampton Roads

Edwin Carter
assistant residency administrator
Staunton

Lynn Settle
administrative and office spec III
Culpeper

Bruce Puffenbarger
engineering technician I
Richmond

Roger Williams
electrician
Richmond

Nathaniel Thomas
highway maintenance worker
Salem

Larry Woolwine
highway maintenance Worker
Salem

Timothy Hoss
transportation operator II
Salem

Bryan Haynes
engineering tech IV
Salem

Around the State



RICHMOND DISTRICT

Early one cool Monday morning in February 2004, the Richmond District Environmental office received a call from an inspector working on an Amelia County bridge project. **Erica Jeter**, archaeologist, and the late **John Wells**, architectural historian, were amazed when a blue blanket was carefully unwrapped to reveal a remarkably preserved, albeit rusty, Civil War musket along with two Williams cleaner bullets – issued to keep gun barrels clean. The ramrod and trigger mechanism were intact, and a piece of leather strap was still attached. “It was as if it was just dropped there 140 years ago, a scenario that is quite possible,” said Jeter, now with the Transportation Enhancement and Scenic Byways programs in Central Office. “This rare find was found along one of the routes of Robert E. Lee’s 1865 retreat from Petersburg.” The gun has gone through conservation treatment and will soon be on public display.



MAINTENANCE DIVISION

Representatives from VDOT’s Fiscal Division completed the year-end fuel inventory audit of the automated fuel management program and inventories were found to be within one-tenth of one percent (.10 %) accuracy statewide. VDOT dispensed approximately 9.4 million gallons of fuel from its 260 fuel sites during FY 08.

“I recognize that much of the fuel process is automated, however the accuracy of the inventories and transactions is impressive,” said Acting Division Administrator **Robbie Prezioso**. “This is a challenging task for those in charge of the fuel sites. For a fleet of the size of VDOT to receive and issue fuel and close the year with less than one-half percent discrepancy is an accomplishment to be praised.”



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

VDOT received national honors at the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO) annual meeting in Orlando for two Virginia construction projects. The \$2.47 billion replacement of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge connecting Virginia and Maryland was the winner in the Innovative Management, large project category, tying with Mississippi’s Biloxi Bay Bridge project.

VDOT also received the Innovative Management award, small project category, for the Interstate 64 Westbound New Kent Safety Rest Area and Information Center project.

The New Kent facility is the Commonwealth’s first LEED-Gold Certified environmentally friendly state-government building. It is 75 percent more efficient in energy consumption than its predecessor.

VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH COUNCIL

VTRC’s **Brian Diefenderfer** is working with Salem and Richmond districts on innovative ways to reuse existing pavement materials when VDOT resurfaces roads.

Diefenderfer is evaluating pavement projects in Franklin, Powhatan and Goochland counties using full-depth pavement reclamation. The process begins by pulverizing the existing pavement and adding either cement or asphalt binder. What’s left acts as a stabilized aggregate, ready to receive a hot-mix asphalt overlay. This process differs from typical milling and overlay in that the deteriorated pavement is not left behind. The new pavement incorporates the old, eliminating the costs for new materials and transportation.

LYNCHBURG DISTRICT

Carl Stevens, equipment manager, will share his paper “PM (Preventive Maintenance) and Today’s Maintenance Realities” at the Pd-M 2008 Lubrication World Conference in Omaha, Neb. The district’s research has led to improvements in the statewide equipment maintenance program.

A statewide survey showed a 60 percent reduction of equipment lubricants, which streamlines the invoice and single-source process and reduces the risk of misapplication and inventory-carrying costs. In addition, the district’s oil sampling program will be used statewide and could save the department thousands of dollars by reducing equipment failures and extending drain intervals while reducing the use of virgin oil and the generation of waste oil.

HAMPTON ROADS DISTRICT

Hurricane season is here and the Hampton Roads District is making sure residents are prepared.

“We have had terrific response to the new Hurricane Guide and have been distributing them successfully through our local municipalities,” said **Nora Jump-Scott**, public outreach coordinator in the region’s Traffic Operations Center. The district also distributed guides through *The Link*, published by *The Virginian-Pilot*. *The Link* distribution is about 34,000 copies a day, with overprint distribution for special events such as a heavily attended boat show. Two targeted demographics were reached: 20-somethings and boaters. The district continues to seek out other non-traditional and targeted publications to assist with distribution.

Around the State

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

An August column in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* by William R. Ermatinger heralds VDOT's Knowledge Management Division and how best practices can be successfully applied to a government agency.

"What got my attention was the recent (and largely ignored) news that the agency's Knowledge Management program was being recognized by the Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Out of hundreds of applications, it is one of 15 semifinalists nationwide. The list will be pared down to six finalists for the national award next month."

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION

In an effort to communicate VDOT values, accomplishments and recognize employees, the *Bulletin* newsletter was created more than 70 years ago. Based on reader feedback, the publication was revamped. Today's national award-winning *Bulletin* is an eight-page, full-color, magazine-style newsletter. Printed copies and home mailings ensure that each employee is afforded an opportunity to receive the publication.

The decision to continue printed mailings was influenced by an overwhelming response from retirees when the *Bulletin* was moved online. VDOT spends approximately \$4,000 every other month to print and mail the *Bulletin*.

DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

Did you know...within the next few years VDOT will have five generations of people working together? These employees will be working side by side to make Virginia's transportation network the safest and strongest in the nation. Efforts are under way to understand how we support a diverse workplace and can ensure VDOT's vitality in the future. In August, VDOT surveyed more than 3,000 employees on perceptions and diversity practices. This fall, consultants will conduct focus groups across the state to learn how our agency can continue or improve practices to embrace a diverse workforce now and in the years to come.

SALEM DISTRICT

When **Kim Kristensen**, C.S.M.E., signed up for a VDOT conflict resolution class, he never dreamed where it would lead. Kristensen, Salem District's equipment repair manager, recently received his mediator certification for Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court from the Supreme Court of Virginia.

"I think it's a great way to handle conflict effectively," he said. Kristensen's certification is the culmination of more than two years of training. "I use a lot of reflective listening at VDOT," he said. "The goal is to help employees find common ground and come up with solutions that improve the way they work together."

BRISTOL DISTRICT

The Bristol District's first design-build contract was awarded for the Route 460 Connector in Buchanan County. Bizzack Construction, from Lexington, Ky, received the \$102 million contract that includes the design and construction of nearly one mile of roadway, three bridges, and a two-lane connector road to Route 80, which will improve access to Breaks Interstate Park. The project includes secondary connections from Route 80 to Routes 609 and 693.

When completed, the twin-span bridges above Route 610 will be more than 250 feet high, establishing them as the tallest bridges in Virginia.

FREDERICKSBURG DISTRICT

The Spotsylvania Courthouse Bypass project is a two-phase project to provide a more direct east-west corridor between the Fredericksburg and the Lake Anna region by bypassing the historic Spotsylvania Courthouse District.

Phase I begins near the National Park Service Entrance on Route 208 and will end approximately 1.5 miles south of Robert E. Lee Drive. The three-mile, four-lane divided highway with limited access will feature designated pull-off areas. Historic markers will be installed to highlight areas of historic significance. Phase I of the project is scheduled for completion in December 2008.

STAUNTON DISTRICT

Safety outreach comes in many forms. **Lindsay Walker**, assistant district maintenance engineer and **Matt Dana**, P.E., location and design section manager, teach motorcycle safety as part of a DMV-sponsored rider education program. "The program is designed to provide a safe environment for people to learn to ride motorcycles or improve their skills," said Dana.

The curriculum is produced by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation in a national certification training program. The two-and-one-half-day course includes applying newly acquired skills on a riding range. Visit www.learn2ride.com for more information.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

The bridge department in the Northern Virginia District is using a modular method to reconstruct the Buckland Bridge. The bridge, which carries Route 29 over Broad Run in Prince William County, was rebuilt over three weekends in August and September. This project will replace the southbound Route 29 bridge deck and widen the road. Bridge sections will be constructed offsite before they are lowered into place.

This method minimizes the time that the road will be closed to motorists. The project is scheduled to be completed by fall 2008.

FISCAL DIVISION

By Nov. 1, 2008, all VDOT wage and classified employees are required to have electronic direct deposit of their paychecks pay. Employees have the option of establishing up to five separate electronic deposits. This may be accomplished by using a combination of direct deposits to a savings and/or checking account, the Commonwealth's payroll debit card (EPPICard), or to any other personal debit or pay card that accepts electronic deposits. For more information on the EPPICard, visit <https://www.eppicard.com/eppicard/vacard/index.jsp>. All of the program details including the enrollment form can be found under the heading "Program Material."

THE INBOX

Commuter Incentive Program Grows

Has the high price of gas forced you to rethink how you travel to work? VDOT can help through its Commuter Incentive Program (CIP). CIP subsidizes your ride to work on a vanpool or through mass transit. Eligible employees can receive a maximum subsidy of \$115 a month. VDOT is currently subsidizing commutes on vanpools, buses, and trains in Richmond, Salem, and in Northern Virginia.

Full time and hourly employees can join, but must agree that a rideshare will be their primary mode of work transportation.

"I had 10 new people sign up in July, said **Catherine Hill**, program

coordinator. "High gas prices have a lot to do with people looking at the program."

Vanpools can be formed anywhere in the state. VDOT does not lease the van, all leases are available through Vanpool Services (VPSI) or Traffic.

For more information about the CIP program, call or e-mail **Catherine Hill** in Central Office, **Kathy Phillips** in Salem, or **Angelique Grant** in Northern Virginia.

Visit <http://www.vanpoolusa.com> for more information.

Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign

The 2008 Commonwealth of Virginia campaign (CVC) kicks off on Sept. 23 with a Charity Fair in Downtown Richmond in the James Monroe Building from 9 a.m. until noon.

VDOT Districts and the Central Office will be conducting various fundraisers to support the more than 1,400 charities participating in the CVC. Online giving will be available through EmployeeDirect.

Thanks to the generosity of state employees the campaign has raised more than \$29 million since its founding in 1997.

Of the \$4.4 million raised in 2007, VDOT generated more than \$305,000.

The CVC runs from Oct. 1 through Nov. 30.

