The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) made snow – the word Virginians came to dread this winter – a bit less unpleasant for drivers and earned praise from the public and officials for its tireless efforts as well. VDOT worked day and night through each storm to clear our roads and provide timely status updates to maintain the safe and easy movement of people and goods statewide, a key part of our mission.

Snow affected every region of the commonwealth, in some areas producing more than 25 separate events starting in November and continuing up to and beyond the end of March. VDOT put safety first by treating roads in advance of each storm, where appropriate, and plowing them as quickly as possible.

All of this well-ordered snow-clearing winter work came at a price, however. As of mid-April, VDOT’s snow-related expenditures had exceeded $300 million and likely will reach $350 million. That is nearly $200 million more than we budgeted statewide for this season ($157 million), based on the five previous winters.

While we never will compromise on motorist safety and maintaining our infrastructure, we are taking one-time, belt-tightening measures within our maintenance services to find savings of between $50 million and $100 million. Other VDOT programs also are revising their budgets through the end of FY 2014 to help offset this year’s extreme snow-removal costs.

Winter maintenance doesn’t end when the snow does. Finding the innumerable potholes that result from such a harsh winter and filling them is a top task this spring. We have engaged Virginia drivers and residents to report potholes when they see them, via the “Report a Road Problem” page on the VDOT website or by calling VDOT’s Customer Service Center (CSC). The CSC assigns and tracks such public requests, which, in turn, speeds our response time to any such problem that may impede safety and mobility.

Charles Kilpatrick, P.E.
VDOT Commissioner

Construction quality, as evaluated by VDOT’s Construction Quality Improvement Program (CQIP), measures project compliance with contract quality requirements. A checklist of more than 1,100 construction quality checkpoints guides this critical assessment. The results show VDOT’s commitment to building quality roads and bridges, while seeking the opportunity for continuous improvement. Year-to-date compliance results through the end of the third quarter of FY 2014 met the 91 percent target at 93.7 percent, as compared to the same period’s rating in FY 2013 of 91.1 percent.

286 construction and maintenance contracts were planned for completion through the end of the third quarter. Of those 286 contracts, 234 (81.8 percent) were completed on time.

269 construction and maintenance contracts were actually completed through the end of the third quarter. Of those 269 contracts, 252 (93.7 percent) have been completed within budget to date.

88 construction contracts were planned for completion through the end of the third quarter. Of those 88 contracts, 60 (68.2 percent) were completed on time.

198 maintenance contracts were planned for completion through the end of the third quarter. Of those 198 contracts, 174 (87.9 percent) were completed on time.
Major projects

I-95 bridge replacements: Work began in February on the Upham Brook bridges, the final two structures to be replaced in this 11-bridge restoration project on Interstate 95. Completion is expected in June. The 12-span Lombardy Street bridge, the project’s largest, was completed in November 2013.

Falmouth intersection construction: VDOT broke ground to rebuild the intersection at U.S. 1, U.S. 17 and Route 218, which will add capacity and reduce delays at this major junction in historic Falmouth east of Fredericksburg.

I-77 safety improvements

The Commonwealth Transportation Board awarded a $7.5 million contract in February for electronic signs, cameras and other technologies to improve safety on Interstate 77 in the Fancy Gap area of Carroll County. This 12-mile section of I-77 has a higher-than-average crash rate because of fog and wind. The active traffic and safety management system will include the infrastructure to support variable speed limits based on changing weather and traffic conditions.

Travel times in Hampton Roads

VDOT began displaying travel times for commuters on six existing overhead electronic message signs on Hampton Roads interstates in February. Similar messages are used in Northern Virginia and Richmond and to help travelers “Reach the Beach” in Hampton Roads. The displays provide accurate, up-to-date travel-time information so drivers can choose the best routes according to the most current traffic conditions.

Awards and honors

Roads and Bridges Magazine: The U.S. 460 Connector Bridge, under construction in Buchanan County near Breaks Interstate Park, was ranked North America’s top bridge project. Roads and Bridges’ Top 10 Bridge Awards, created in 2000, recognize the 10 best bridge projects on the continent, based on project challenges, regional impact and scope of work. This project, due for completion in mid-2015, traverses rugged terrain and has involved coordination with multiple contractors and agencies, including the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The bridge will be the tallest in the state and is part of a larger regional effort to provide a modern, safe and efficient route through this part of southwest Virginia.

American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC): The Metropolitan Washington ACEC awarded the 495 Express Lanes project the group’s Grand Award for Excellence. The project is a complex public-private, design-build effort in one of the state’s most heavily traveled corridors.

Lynchburg Historical Foundation: The group named Randy Lichtenberger, VDOT’s regional archeologist, Preservationist of the Year. He ensures that VDOT takes all the necessary steps to reduce disruption to historically significant sites.

Contracts completed on time

78 construction contracts were actually completed through the end of the third quarter. Of those 78 contracts, 72 (92.3 percent) have been completed within budget to date.

226 maintenance contracts were actually completed through the end of the third quarter. Of those 226 contracts, 180 (94.2 percent) have been completed within budget to date.

Note: The number of actual completions may exceed planned completions when contracts are completed ahead of schedule.