

the

ROADRUNNER

Nebraska ♦ Department ♦ of ♦ Roads

December 2013/January 2014

*Happy
Holidays*



Nebraska Department of Roads

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Governor Dave Heineman

Highway Commission

Rodney Vandeberg	Doug Leafgreen
E.J. Militti, Jr.	Ronald Books
David Copple	Greg Wolford
James Kindig	Jerome Fagerland

Administration

Roads Director	Randall D. Peters
Deputy Director	Moe Jamshidi
Deputy Director	Khalil Jaber

Divisions

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Business Technology Support	Bill Wehling
Communication	Mary Jo Oie
Construction	Claude Oie
Controller	Marilyn Hayes
Government Affairs	Andy Cunningham
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Legal Counsel	Jeff Schroeder
Materials & Research	Mick Syslo
Operations	Tom Sands
Planning & Project Development	Mike Owen
Program Management	Amy Starr
Rail & Public Transportation	Ellis Tompkins
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Roadway Design	James Knott
Traffic Engineering	Dan Waddle

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District 2	Timothy W. Weander
District 3	Kevin Domogalla
District 4	Wesley Wahlgren
District 5	Craig Lind
District 6	Gary Thayer
District 7	Kurt Vosburg
District 8	Mark Kovar

Editor	Linda M. Wilson
Type & Layout	Diane German

The information in this newsletter is contributed by employees, retirees and friends of NDOR.



From the Director

NDOR Remains Focused on Accomplishment



Randy Peters

At NDOR a solid culture of the four Cs – Communication, Coordination, Collaboration, and Cooperation—underpinned our success on many fronts in 2013. I want to thank all of our public and private partners throughout Nebraska and beyond for their support of our mission. In this issue you can read about a contingent of emerging International leaders who met with the deputies and me to learn how we in Nebraska earn our reputation for transparency and integrity.

While we braced for a continuation of last year’s drought what we actually faced this year was a wall of floodwater rolling down the South Platte River valley from Colorado. Throughout the event our water experts kept us apprised of what to expect and our District and Headquarters Operations staff worked around the clock to minimize flood damage, provide traffic control, and generally extend support during the emergency. I can’t say often enough how proud I am of our NDOR workers.

A major accomplishment within the realm of our Project Delivery Strategic goal was the completion of the Interstate 80 expansion to six lanes between Omaha and Lincoln. It was a great honor to commemorate the occasion with Governor Heineman, many NDOR workers, and a cast of mayors, elected officials, law enforcement, emergency responders, highway commissioners, contractors, consultants and media.

July marked the beginning of the “Build Nebraska Act” era. The Act provides a new source of revenue to address highway capital improvement needs. Under the two-year lead period, from the time of the bill’s enactment to its effective date, the department has been diligently preparing projects for the first 10 years of this vital new program. I am happy to report to you that the first phase of the Blair to Omaha four-lane project on Highway 133 is under construction with phase two to follow in 2014. Construction has also begun on the Wahoo Bypass project, around the north and west edges of the city, which will complete the Lincoln to Wahoo expressway corridor.

As always our focus remains on improving safety, delivering projects, taking care of our assets, taking care of our natural environment, bringing mobility to the traveler, practicing good fiscal management and strengthening our partnerships with the people who care about and rely on our transportation system. Thank you all for your invaluable contributions. Buckle up and stay safe! ♦

NDOR Has Updated Goals and Streamlined Mission Statement

Last year, NDOR's leadership team began to review the agency's strategic plans, goals and performance measures. The group, 16 Division Heads, eight District Engineers, two Deputy Directors, Moe Jamshidi and Khalil Jaber, and NDOR Director Randy Peters, through teamwork and perseverance, emerged from 2012 with successful results for the department. *NDOR's streamlined Mission Statement: We provide the best possible statewide transportation system for the movement of people and goods.*

While NDOR has updated its Mission Statement, the mission has not changed. The department is still responsible for all the things they have been accountable for over the past many years. Similarly, NDOR has become as efficient as is possible with the right equipment, a trained workforce and the best technology.

NDOR's has eight strategic goals, every goal has at least two performance measures. New performance measures have been developed to help move forward most effectively with the eight strategic goals. The more the effectiveness of the department's work efforts can be measured and adjusted accordingly, the more credibility NDOR will earn with stakeholders. Find NDOR's performance measures at www.roads.nebraska.gov. NDOR's new performance measures will be discussed in greater detail in future articles. ♦

NDOR Goals



Safety



Fiscal Responsibility



Environmental Stewardship



Project Delivery



Asset Management



Mobility



Communication, Coordination,
Collaboration & Cooperation



Workforce Development

I-80 Six Lanes between Lincoln and Omaha Rolled Out

Ten years after workers began widening Interstate 80 between Omaha and Lincoln all six lanes are officially open to traffic, according to Nebraska Department of Roads' District 1 Construction Manager, Curt Mueiting.

A dedication ceremony was held on November 7 at the Waverly interchange, where the last piece of the expansion - a four-mile stretch from the interchange to North 56th Street - was officially opened to six-lane traffic, with a ribbon cutting by dignitaries, including Governor Dave Heineman, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, Lincoln City Councilman Carl Eskridge - who stood in for Mayor Chris Beutler - and NDOR Director Randy Peters.

"This is a great day for the state of Nebraska and an exciting moment in our history," Governor Dave

Heineman told a crowd of state and local officials and spectators.

Seven Segments

The ceremony marked completion of the \$400 million project, paid for with federal and state funds. That price tag for the six-lane expansion is close to the \$435 million it originally cost to build I-80 from border to border. Funds were spent on a 42-mile I-80 widening project - built in seven segments - between the Nebraska 370 interchange near Omaha and the U.S. 77 South interchange on Lincoln's western outskirts.

Construction began in 2003, with work on Segment 1, east of Ruff Road to just west of the N-370 interchange for 8.73 miles. Work was completed in 2005. Six additional segments completed included: Segment 2, west of Mahoney interchange to east of

(see Six Lanes on next page)



Photo by Jay Bailey

NDOR Director Randy Peters (right) joined other dignitaries, including Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman, and Lincoln City Councilman Carl Eskridge for the November 7 dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony of the official opening of six lanes of I-80 traffic from Lincoln to Omaha.

NDOR Project Personnel

Project Managers

District 1

Dewaine Knutson, Jim England, Rodger Preble, Abdul Sidiqi, Curt Mueiting, Bob Traudt, Joseph Kuehn, Jesse De Los Santos, Ryan Hobelman, Bob Sanburn, Babrak Niazi, Dan Lange, Hugh Holak

District 2

Rick Fisher, Mike Fox, Aleksandra (Sasha) Tsvid

Years 2003 to 2013

District 1 Engineer

Rich Ruby and Thomas Goodbarn

District 1 Construction Engineer

Mike Sklenar, Mark Traynowicz, Curt Mueiting

District 2 Engineer

John Jacobsen, Timothy Weander

District 2 Construction Engineer

Marv Lech

State Staff

Roadway Design Engineer
Eldon Poppe, Jim Knott

Project Design Engineer

Brian Johnson, Jeff Johnston,
Mike Owen, Eric Dixon

Project Design

Dana Arndt, Erika Fjelstad, Bob Carnazzo,
Paul Knievel, Dan Lange, Cindy Shockey,
Christian Davenport, Tim Otto, Farhana
Tabassum, Tim McCarthy, Niki Figard,
Wayne Patras, Andrew Ross, Jeff Haase,
Kevin Wray, Brandon Prauner, Liz
Wunderlich, Brian Jelinek, Dennis Hatfield,
Brandie Neemann, Mick Syslo

Bridge Engineer

Lyman Freemon, Mark Traynowicz

Bridge Design

Mark Ahlman, Vince Koenig, Dan Sharp,
Lynden Vander Veen, Max Antoine,
Mark Fisher, Zoia Clark, Scott Milliken,
Pat Haecker, Jesse Sire, Ben Ptacek,
David Fritz, Dennis Vodicka, Dennis Boyd,
Steve Sabra, Fouad Jaber

Six Lanes (cont'd. from page 4)

Ruff Road, 4.13 miles, 2005 to 2008; Segment 3, west of Greenwood to west of Mahoney interchange, 5.78 miles, 2009 to 2011; Segment 4, east of Waverly to west of Greenwood interchange, 9.57 miles, 2010 to 2012; Segment 5, US-77 N (56th St) interchange to east of Waverly interchange, 3.86 miles, 2011 to 2013; Segment 6, I-180 interchange thru 27th St. interchange to US-77 (56th St) interchange, 5.66 miles, 2008 to 2010; and Segment 7, west of US-77 interchange thru the Airport interchange to west of the I-180 interchange, 4.11 miles, 2005 to 2007.

Final Completion

According to Muetting, contractors will finish up work over the coming

weeks, with some lane closures in both directions throughout the winter. He noted that all of the minor construction work should be done by early summer 2014, which is the deadline for completing the project. At that point, the last concrete protections barriers will be removed so that all eastbound lanes will become available. The speed limit for most of the stretch between Lincoln and Omaha will be 75 mph.

Roads Director Peters thanked everyone who worked on the project, including engineers, consultants, Roads Department staff, 12 major contractors and more than 130 subcontractors.

"It's a proud day for us at the Department of Roads," Peters said. ♦

Consultants

Kirkham Michael, Tadros Associates, University of Nebraska (Dr. Atorod Azizinamini), Wilson and Company, Schemmer and Associates

Contractors

Hawkins Construction Co.
Dobson Bros. Construction Co.
Ames Construction
Capital Contractors, Inc.
Commercial Construction, Inc.
Cohron & Son, Inc.
Prairie Construction Co.
Judds Brothers Construction Co.
Electro Braid Fence Co.
JMN Construction, LLC
Midwest Fence Co-GR Systems, Inc.
Pavers Companies
-136 Subcontractors
worked on the expansion

Fullerton Loup River Bridge Opening Celebrated

Local residents, state officials and dignitaries gathered on November 7 for the official opening of the Loup River Bridge on N-14 just south of Fullerton, in Nance County. Pictured l to r: NDOR Director Randy Peters, Nebraska Lt. Governor Lavon Heidemann, District 4 Engineer Wes Wahlgren and State Senator Annette Dubas were among those commemorating the event.

The prime contractor, A.M. Cohron and Son, Inc., of Atlantic, Iowa, began their work last summer, with the \$6.9 million bridge open to traffic before winter. Doug Williams of Columbus was the Contractor's Superintendent on the project. Rick Kwiatkowski, of St. Paul, was NDOR's Project Manager and John Graff was the Lead Inspector.

The 820-foot bridge was constructed on new alignment 50 feet downstream of the existing structure and is three feet higher than the



Photo by Greg Weinert, NDOR

existing bridge due to ice jams occurring on this stretch of the Loup River in the winter. The project utilized approximately 114,550 cubic yards of excavated soil that was used as "fill" underneath the

surfaces/roadbed to support the roadway for the new road alignment.

Removal of the existing bridge and old roadway will occur later this fall or winter. ♦

Governor Recognizes NDOR Employees and Managers of the Year

Ten NDOR employees were recognized by Governor Dave Heineman for their accomplishments as Employee of the Year and Supervisor/Manager of the Year. They joined outstanding state employees from other state agencies during recognition ceremonies held on October 30 at the State Capitol Rotunda.

Those receiving Employee of the Year awards: **Martin Egbarts**, D6, Highway Maintenance Worker/Sr.; **Diane German**, Communication Division, Artist II; **Keith Kohel**, D1 Headquarters, Highway District ROW Permits Officer; **Michael Shannon**, D4, Highway Maintenance Worker/Sr.; **Lisa Wade**, Traffic Engineering Division, Statistical Analyst II.

Those receiving Manager of the Year awards: **Ronald Arnold**, D1, Highway Maintenance Supervisor; **Kenneth Hartwig**, Roadway Design Division, Engineer IV; **Jonathan Lindgren**, D3, Highway Maintenance Supervisor; **Matt Neemann**, Traffic Engineering Division, Engineer V; **Devin Townsend**, Materials & Research Division, Engineer IV.

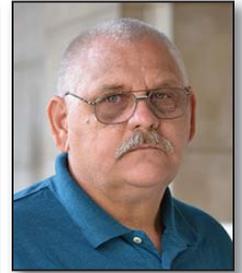
Each year, agencies select one non-management/nonsupervisory employee per 500 from their agency and one supervisor or manager per 500 from their agency whose job performance has exceeded the highest standards and contributed to the overall effectiveness of their agency. Congratulations to these outstanding NDOR employees. ♦



Martin Egbarts



Diane German



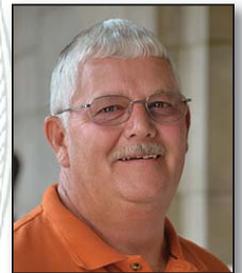
Keith Kohel



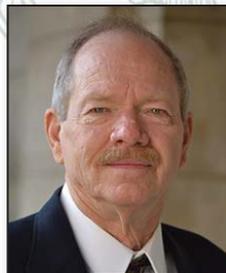
Michael Shannon



Lisa Wade



Ronald Arnold



Kenneth Hartwig



Jonathan Lindgren



Matt Neemann



Devin Townsend

Build Nebraska Award to Sampson for Kearney RYDE Transit Facility

The Associated General Contractors-NE Building Chapter recently announced Sampson Construction received the 2013 Build Nebraska Award for the RYDE Transit Facility in Kearney. The project won the award in the "New Construction Projects-Under \$5 Million" category.

Eligible projects were evaluated by a panel of their industry peers from other regions. Evaluation criterion included innovation in methods and materials, project management,

client service, challenge of a difficult job and sensitive treatment of the environment and surroundings. The award encourages outstanding performance and quality construction throughout the entire state.

The RYDE facility was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and a dedicated appropriation. The 19,000 square foot building provides vehicle storage space, an employee wellness room, and office facilities. A number of innovative features were

incorporated into the building design including a geothermal energy system to heat and cool the building, electric vehicle charges and in-floor radiant heat.

RYDE Transit is a public transportation system operated by the Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska. Based in Kearney, RYDE serves numerous communities in seven Nebraska counties. In fiscal year 2013, RYDE vehicles traveled 344,000 miles and recorded over 122,000 passenger boardings. ♦

NDOR's International Guests Discuss Accountability, Transparency

On November 18, six international guests participating in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), along with their escort from the U.S. Department of State and an English Language Officer (ELO), visited officials at the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), at Central Headquarters in Lincoln. Director Randy Peters and Deputy Directors Moe Jamshidi and Khalil Jaber met with the group, whose members were studying accountability in government. Guests represented the countries of Columbia, Ghana, Greece, People's Republic of China, Spain and Timor-Leste.

Lincoln was selected as one of three state capitol cities for IVLP guests to visit because of Nebraska's ranking in transparency and accountability; Nebraska ranked fourth as the most accountable and transparent state in the country based on the Center for

Public Integrity's research survey.

The Mayor's Committee for International Friendship, along with their joint organization, the Lincoln Council for International Visitors, worked together to arrange the visit for the international guests. They reached out to the NDOR because their guest from Columbia works for a newly created agency within the Ministry of Transport responsible for expanding their country's infrastructure through public-private partnerships for roads.

Discussion topics included Nebraska's road infrastructure, how Nebraska ensures funds allotted for road projects are used efficiently and accountably, and best practices in creating transparent and fair procurement policies for transportation projects. Specific project objectives outlined by the Department of State include: understanding the

role and structure of ethics in government in the United States; examining similarities and differences in approaches of ethical conduct between government and the private sector; addressing international efforts to strengthen ethical leadership; and examining the effect of transparency on trade, investment and economic development.

The IVLP, within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. The program connects current and emerging foreign leaders with their American counterparts through short-term exchanges to build mutual understanding on foreign policy issues. The IVLP is an opportunity to experience American culture firsthand, cultivate lasting relationships and inspire leadership to address global challenges. ♦



Photo by Jay Bailey

NDOR Deputy Director-Operations Moe Jamshidi, Director Randy Peters and Deputy Director-Engineering Khalil Jaber with International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) participants from five countries.

Are You Ready for Winter Weather?

The Nebraska Department of Roads' crews are prepared for snowplow season. Workers and equipment will be out to clear the highways and to monitor changing conditions. Motorists should be prepared, too.

Know Before You Go!

For 24-hour-a-day, year-round Nebraska road condition information, dial 511 on your cell phone or landline. If outside Nebraska, dial 800-906-9069. 511 provides motorists current information about weather conditions, road conditions and travel advisories. The 511 system and various other weather links are available at www.transportation.nebraska.gov or www.511.nebraska.gov.

Make sure everyone in a motor vehicle wears a seat belt and children are in a car safety seat. Do not use cruise control in wet or snowy weather and do keep your gas tank full.

Watch Out

When traveling outside of a business or residential district, it is unlawful to follow a highway maintenance vehicle (snowplow, truck or grader) more closely than 100 feet when it is plowing snow, spreading salt or sand, or displaying a flashing

amber or blue light. If conditions permit, however, drivers may carefully pass a maintenance vehicle.

Snowplows cause soft snow to swirl. It can become difficult to see a plow, or for the plow operator to see you. *Drive with your headlights on.* Make sure your headlights, taillights and windows are clean and clear of snow so you can see and be seen.

Plowing snow on a multi-lane roadway is often done in tandem (more than one snowplow at a time). Give them plenty of room! Do not pass on the right side and always stay where the plow operator can see you.

Beware of icy spots when driving, especially on bridges and in sheltered areas. Drive at a reduced speed and allow plenty of distance for reacting to traffic. Slow down *gradually* when approaching curves and intersections.

Motorists *may use* studded snow tires in Nebraska from November 1 to April 1. School buses, emergency vehicles, and mail carrier vehicles may use them anytime during the year.

Check often for current weather reports through local media sources *before* you travel. Keep a radio on. Weather conditions change rapidly and so do the road conditions. ♦

Winter Weather Words to Know

Winter Storm Watch – A winter storm is possible or approaching.

Winter Storm Warning – A winter storm is imminent.

Snow Advisory – One to five inches is expected.

Blowing and Drifting Snow Advisory – Visibility can be at or below a quarter mile.

Wind Chill Advisory – Wind chills of -30 to -35 are expected.

Freezing Rain/Sleet Advisory – An accumulation of freezing rain or sleet could make exposed surfaces dangerous or cause damage.

Travel Not Advised – The Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Department of Roads and local emergency responders warn motorists not to enter highways, roads, or streets after this advisory has been issued as hazardous conditions have been reported.

Road Closed – If the State Patrol or Nebraska Department of Roads show a state highway or any part of the Interstate as "Closed" on their Advanced Traveler Information System (ATIS) and/or on the 511 road conditions reporting system – this means the highway or the Interstate is *officially closed to traffic* – until the "Closure" is removed from the reporting system.

Ice and snow
take it slow



State Highway Commission Serves Nebraskans for 60 Years

On September 14, 1953, the Nebraska State Highway Commission met for the very first time at the Nebraska State Capitol Building. The Commission was created by the 1953 Legislature to insure citizen input in the planning, design and operation of the state highway system. It acts as a liaison between the public and personnel of the Department of Roads regarding highway matters.

The Commission is composed of eight members, one from each of the eight field districts. Each commissioner

is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature to serve a six-year term. The Director-State Engineer is an ex-officio member of the Commission.

The Highway Commission meets no less than six times per year. All meetings are open to the public and conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. At these meetings, and various other hearings on proposed projects, the Commission serves as an additional channel for citizens to voice their opinions con-

cerning the state highway system.

The basic duties and responsibilities of the Commission have not changed since inception. The group advises the Director in establishing policies and programs for NDOR; assists in conducting public hearings, investigations and studies related to providing an adequate and safe highway system for the state; provides assistance in advising the public regarding policies, programs and activities of NDOR; and advises the Governor, upon request, regarding appointment of a Director. ♦



Now: Members of the 2013 Nebraska State Highway Commission. *Seated (l to r):* James H. Kindig, District 4–Kenesaw; Douglas C. Leafgreen, District 5–Gering; David E. Copple, District 3–Norfolk; NDOR Director Randall D. Peters; and Ronald W. Books, District 6–North Platte. *Standing (l to r):* E.J. Militti, Jr., District 2–Omaha; Rodney P. Vandeberg, District 1–Falls City; Greg A. Wolford, District 7–McCook; and Jerome A. Fagerland, District 8–Atkinson.

Photo by Jay Bailey



Then: The very first members of the Nebraska State Highway Commission met in September 1953 at the Nebraska State Capitol building. Governor Bob Crosby is standing at the left. Merle Kingsbury, seated far right, represented District 3 and served from September 1953 – November 1987, a total of 34 years, 2 months – the longest time served by any commissioner.

Angel Dog Program Rewarding for Both Volunteers and Patients

By Linda Wilson
Communication Division

Murphy loves people. He is even-tempered, controllable, reliable and predictable, making him the perfect candidate for the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program. Murphy, a golden retriever, and his teammate, NDOR employee Ed Kelley, recently joined the ranks of more than 11,000 registered Pet Partners teams across the U.S. by becoming part of Madonna's Angel Dog Program.

According to the Pet Partners' website, the mission statement reads: "Pet Partners is the leader in promoting and demonstrating that positive human-animal interactions improve the physical, emotional and psychological lives of those we serve." To that end, Angel Dogs have been bringing a sense of being at home to patients at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln for more than ten years. Anxiety, fears, and loneliness have been lessened by many individuals who have received visits or met an Angel Dog in the hall. The Angel Dog Program works with Pet Partners to register volunteers and their dogs as nationally recognized visiting teams.

Kelley, an IT Infrastructure Support Analyst Sr. in the Materials and Research Division, said he decided to volunteer after his family's first golden retriever, Kelsey, passed away. Over the years, they had thought about doing animal-assisted therapy, as the dog was so gentle and good with their children, but their schedules were too hectic.

Calm Disposition

"When we brought Murphy home and started raising him, we noticed his disposition was even more laid-back. After the kids encouraged us to look into animal-assisted therapy for him, we did some research and found that Southeast Community College in Lincoln occasionally has half-day classes for pet owners who would like



Photo by Barbara Peterson

NDOR employee, Ed Kelley, and his golden retriever, Murphy, enjoy time with a patient at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln during an animal-assisted therapy visit.

to explore getting involved with the program."

"I took the class on August 17th; on September 7th, Murphy and I took an evaluation test and aced it. After that, I filled out some paperwork and sent it to Pet Partners, a national certification organization. They reviewed and processed the paperwork and about five weeks later, sent a confirmation letter, followed by an identification badge for me and a tag for Murphy. Within several more weeks, I had arranged visits and orientation tours with Madonna Rehabilitation and St. Elizabeth hospitals in Lincoln. Within the last month, Murphy and I have had four visits at Madonna and one at St. Elizabeth."

While admitting he is still apprehensive at times, Kelley said he is getting more comfortable with each visit and it has been gratifying to see the quick rapport that has developed between Murphy and the patients. For example, during their first couple of weeks at Madonna, while accom-

panying a mentor and her dog up and down the halls of the facility, Kelley noted two men who stood out.

Positive Reactions

"Both have interesting histories; one is a veteran and the other retired from a career in graphic arts, having met famous people such as actor Tom Hanks and cartoonist Charles Schulz along the way. Both love Murphy, especially when he does tricks, such as catching a milkbone placed on his nose, which makes them laugh and smile. Also, I've had the opportunity to observe positive reactions during visits to a woman with a stroke and a man with a brain injury who couldn't talk. Even though there weren't verbal exchanges, the expressions on their faces told the story... Murphy gives hugs and kisses as needed."

This positive connection extends beyond specific patient visits to casual encounters. When Murphy stopped by the nurses' stations at St. Elizabeth's,

(see **Angel Dog** on next page)

Angel Dog *(cont'd. from page 10)*

they loved him, too. Also, while passing a mother and her two young daughters as they were checking in, both girls could hardly wait to pet him. Both examples reinforce Kelley's observation that animal-assisted therapy isn't just for patients; it can be for whomever you run across in the course of the day.

Their first visit to St. Elizabeth's stands out in Kelley's mind: "A woman was with her dad who had just had a medical procedure, followed by an emergency episode afterwards, and was recovering. Murphy and I just happened to be there and she saw us. She told me how much her dad loved dogs and asked us to come by. We did and it made a noticeable difference to both the man and his daughter."

Reduced Stress

This is a great example of the role a therapy animal can play in a patient's healing process. Research has shown that stress reduces the immune

function and slows wound healing; therefore anything that can be done to reduce stress, especially in someone in a hospital situation, is extremely valuable. According to a 2009 study in the *European Journal of Integrative Medicine*, animal-assisted therapy significantly reduced anxiety levels in hospital patients with major depression. Another study in the 2011 *Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* showed that chronic heart failure patients' ambulation refusal rate decreased from 28 percent to 7.2 percent when they were offered a chance to participate in canine-assisted ambulation (walking).

Because of this research and the positive experience he and Murphy have had with the Angel Dog Program, Kelley is hoping to help a group get started at the Nebraska Heart Hospital. Also, since there is a much higher risk of depression after heart surgery, he believes animal-assisted therapy could be especially beneficial in this setting.

In addition to dogs, Pet Partners

registers cats and other non-farm, domesticated animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, potbellied pigs, horses, donkeys, llamas, alpacas and birds. They must be one year of age to be evaluated as therapy animals. Also, as long as a human and an animal can get along together, the option is available to get evaluated with someone else's pet. The only requirement for dogs is that they must be on a leash at all times.

Kelley encourages those who are interested in volunteering with the [Angel Dog Program](#) and [Pet Partners](#) to visit their websites. He wants others to experience the positive results he has seen during his initial few months in the program.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference visiting folks that might otherwise spend many evenings and weekends alone. It benefits both the volunteer and the patient in so many positive ways. It is a good reason to do for others as we would have them do for us." ♦



We Get Mail...

The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.

September 3, 2013

To: Director Randy Peters

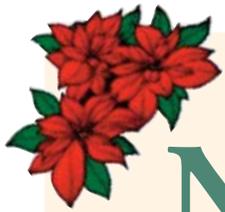
Deputy Director Larry Wayne recently hosted training with a large number of staff from the Department of Correctional Services. He shared with me how helpful your staff had been in coordinating this training and asked that I pass this information along to you.

Specifically mentioned was Charlie Bowlby, who helped in reserving the Department of Roads' auditorium, setting up the tables and chairs for the training, and in getting the training materials from the parking lot to the auditorium. Also of considerable assistance was Zack Broshears who set up the speakers, DVD projector, and power point for the training. Finally, Christine Trueblood the receptionist was extremely helpful, cooperative and pleasant in helping Mr. Wayne and other Corrections Staff find their way around the building and getting us connected with the right people.

I know you are proud of your staff and I wanted to express my appreciation to you for the outstanding job of cooperation and assistance they provided us in this training endeavor.

Thank you,
Robert P. Houston
NDCS Director

Editor's Note: Charlie Bowlby is Secretary/Administrative Assistant in Rail & Transportation, Zack Broshears is an IT Infrastructure Support Analyst in Communication, and Christine Trueblood is the Switchboard Receptionist/Word Processing Specialist II in Communication.



NDOR 2013







Take Steps to Manage Holiday Stress



By Amy Haycock, RN

The holiday season often brings visitors, financial responsibilities, health ailments, changes to diet and normal schedules. The dizzying array of demands, parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining can create a silent situation—stress. When stress

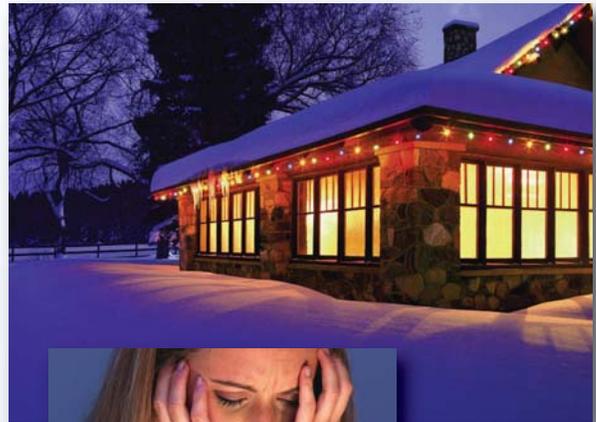
is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. When stress is not combated a dire dip in emotions is realized—depression.

Many shy away from an honest discussion of emotions. Too many times people are labeled depressed when sad, or bipolar when irritable. Stigma is the definition of how someone feels to be set apart and often shamed because of mental health changes and diagnosis.

Five Steps

Depression can happen at any time, but can spike during times of stress like the holidays. There are some ways to manage stress which can combat depression.

- 1. Planning.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking and visiting friends. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list, preventing last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. Make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
- 2. Budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend; stick to your budget! Make a list of the people you need to buy for. Shop early. Pay with cash so the dread of credit card bills is eliminated. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Donate to a charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts or start a family gift exchange.
- 3. Be flexible.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few traditions to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.
- 4. Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress. Have a healthy snack before gatherings so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. Continue to get plenty of sleep and physical activity. Studies have shown there is a link between sleep loss and depression, so you need to be extra careful about cutting back on sleep to get everything done. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) can be treated by long walks during daylight hours or exposure to a light box for about 30 minutes a day.



- 5. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh and elevate your mood enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Support and Companionship

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable, hopeless and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

High expectations, money woes and other holiday hazards can spell trouble for anyone, but especially those prone to depression. With a bit of foresight and planning, however, holidays can leave you feeling up, not down.

All in the Family

Information for "All in the Family" should be sent to the Communication Division. Appropriate information will be included in future Roadrunners.

Please note: Birth announcements will be published as long as written permission is received by the Communication Division. This is necessary, as NDOR is required to adhere to privacy laws under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Condolences

Right-of-Way sends condolences to family and friends on the death of Don Shulz. Don worked for NDOR for 43 years and was Chief Negotiator when he retired on September 29, 2006.

Births

Congratulations to Katie Duong and Steven Nguyen on the birth of their son, Ethan Thien-Nghia, born November 20. Katie is a Statistical Analyst in Planning & Project Development. Steven is an IT Business Systems Analyst in Materials & Research.

Congratulations to Matt and Sheri Beran on the birth of their third son, Caleb James, born October 8. Matt is Assistant Flexible Pavement Engineer in Materials & Research.

Congratulations to Josh and Sandy Willard on the birth of their daughter, Hailey Mae, born November 10. Josh is a Hwy. Project Manager at District 6 in North Platte.

Congratulations to Paul and Sonya Glup on the birth of their son, Levi Wayne, born October 9. Paul is a Maintenance Worker, Sr. at District 4 in Fullerton. The proud grandfather is Roy Plugge, District 8 Crew Chief at District 4 in Bartlett.

Janie Vrtiska has a new grandson, Mason James, born November 18. Janie is the Fleet Manager for Operations.

Weddings

Roadway Design sends congratulations to the following couples on their recent marriages: Darren and Cortney Betz, married April 13. Darren is an Engineer II. Eric and Kimberly Gonzalez, married May 11. Eric is a Hwy. Designer II. Curtis and Angela Nosal, married May 25. Curtis is an Engineer II. Corey and Logan Donahoo, married September 1. Corey is an Engineer III. Dan and Amelia Carpenter, married September 7. Dan is an Engineer II. Best wishes for a beautiful journey (on a well-designed road) building your lives together.

District 6 extends congratulations to Carrie Brabec on her marriage to Jesse Haynie on November 19. Carrie is a Staff Assistant in Lexington.

This 'n That

Zachary R. Foreman graduated from Army Basic Training at Fort Jackson, located in Columbia, South Carolina. He will be serving in the Nebraska National Guard upon completion of Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Ft. Lee located in Richmond, Virginia. Zachary is the son of Judy and Milt Foreman. Judy is a Location Analyst, Statistical Clerk II in Traffic Engineering.

Congratulations to Esther Shepherd on her retirement on October 31 after 41 years of service. Esther was the Administrative Assistant at District 4 in Grand Island.

Congratulations to Ron Disney on his retirement after 47 years of service. Ron was a Transportation Planner II in Materials & Research.

Congratulations to Rhonda DeButts on her retirement after 36 years of service. Rhonda was a Transportation Planner III in the Roadway Asset Management Section of Materials & Research.

Congratulations and good luck to Joe Hunt on his retirement after 32 years of service. Joe is an Electronics Design Specialist in Operations and his last day will be January 2, 2014.

Congratulations to Bob Corner on his retirement after 37 years of service with both DMV and NDOR. Bob was a Federal Aid Administrator II in the Office of Highway Safety in Traffic Engineering.

Congratulations to Linda Wilson on being awarded Toastmasters Division Governor of the Year for District 24, which includes Nebraska and western Iowa. Linda was selected from among five division governors based on the criteria of outstanding service and exceptional leadership. As the 2012-2013 Division C Governor, she was responsible for 21 clubs in the cities of Lincoln and Beatrice, including RoadToasters, a communication and public speaking training club sponsored by NDOR and affiliated with Toastmasters International. Linda is a Public Information Officer in Communication.

Congratulations to Dillon Byre, who recently completed a 5-3 season with Lincoln Midget Football on the Assurity team playing as a nose tackle. Dillon is the son of Dale Byre, Jr., Quality Assurance Manager in Materials & Research.

Kay Benson's grandson, Justin Brinkman, and his doubles partner, CJ Sjulín, won 1st Place at the State Tennis Tournament in Omaha on October 18. Justin and CJ are members of the Southwest High School Tennis Team who also won the State High School Championship. Kay is the Procurement Manager for Operations.



Service Awards

Congratulations to these dedicated individuals for their work and continued service with the Department of Roads. They celebrate their service dates in *December 2013 and January 2014*.

30 Years

Jeffrey Frasch, District 3
Charles Schwanke, District 2

20 Years

Ernest Buhr, District 5
Larry Hoium, BTSD
Michael Jenson, District 6
Marty Lashley, District 7
Michael Sklenar, Construction
Gregory Wood, Construction

10 Years

Richard Davidson Jr, District 2
Shannon Erdman, Bridge
Jerry Harris, District 5
Patrick Howell, District 2
Victor Larson, District 6
Terry Maudlin, District 4
Keith Mitchell, District 5
Bradley Wooge, District 1

*Ice and snow. . .
take it slow*

*Drive Carefully and
Wear Your Safety Belt!*



NDOR Events Calendar

— December —

National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month

- 4 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 12 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528
- 13 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
8:30 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Greg Weinert @ 402-479-4871
- 12/13 - 1/1 You Drink & Drive. You Lose. Crackdown**
- 18 Blood Drive – Community Blood Bank**
NDOR Central Headquarters
Contact Diane Holthus @ 402-479-4580
- 18 RoadToasters Holiday Meeting**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 25 State Holiday – Christmas**

— January —

- 1 State Holiday – New Year's**
- 8 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 13 New Employee Orientation Program**
Rm. 152, 5001 S. 14th (the "Hill")
Contact Denice Sears @ 402-479-3656
- 17 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 20 State Holiday – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

- 22 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 24 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
8:30 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Greg Weinert @ 402-479-4871
- 24 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m. NDOR Materials & Research Conference Rm.
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

— February —

- 6 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528
- 12 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 16 - 22 National Engineers Week**
- 17 State Holiday – Presidents' Day**
- 21 Bd. Public Roads Class & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 21 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m. Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 26 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

If you would like a key event included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication Office 479-4512 or e-mail linda.wilson@nebraska.gov. Information for the February/March Roadrunner should be received by January 27, 2014.



Photo by Steve Olson

Every year Greg Schafer, Operations Division Groundskeeper Supervisor, decorates the motor grader displayed on the front lawn of the 5001 South 14th Street office. It is included in Lincoln's annual Holiday Lights Tour.