

CENTERLINE

A Monthly Newsletter for the Employees of NDOT

AFTER THE ACCIDENT

Whether transmitting an emergency Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) call or allowing NDOT maintainers to keep in contact during maintenance duties, NDOT communications and radio systems are a vital part of the state's road network.

That's why, when communications system trouble was reported on U.S. 93 near Jackpot, dedicated NDOT District 3 communications technician Gene D'Asto and NHP staff member Kent LeBarts prepared to fix the problem. Following NDOT safety procedures, the two logged their departure, notified NDOT's operations center of their trip plans and status check schedule, and packed a satellite phone, radio, locator beacon and work cell phones. They then departed on a Sno-Cat for their work on the snowy, nearly 9,000-foot high Ellen Dee mountaintop near Contact.

A freezing and warming weather pattern had left layers of ice underneath the snow. As the Sno-Cat nearly reached the mountaintop, the machine's tracks slid on a layer of ice. The Sno-Cat rolled off of the road the two men had been plowing. The first roll, the hardest, knocked Gene unconscious. As the machine rolled five more times, windows shattering, Kent LeBarts held on to Gene to protect his unconscious body. When the rolling stopped, Kent used his cell phone, the one piece of communications equipment that hadn't been flung from the rolling machine, to contact District 3 communications supervisor Ken Wiley.

"He said 'Ken, we've rolled off the mountain and we're in critical condition,' then the phone went dead," Wiley recalls.

It was 1:58 p.m., and NDOT staff immediately went into action to help the injured. Calls were placed to 911 and NDOT staff provided logistical coordination and transported the Elko TV District Sno-Cat to support the rescue. Wiley and NDOT Assistant District Engineer



Gene D'Asto (pictured) and another state employee are recovering after the January 27 accident that left this Sno-Cat snow vehicle damaged beyond repair.



Mike Murphy boarded a helicopter bound for the site. Jackpot's volunteer fire chief and a medical response helicopter arrived first at the remote crash location an hour after the accident, followed within minutes by Murphy and Wiley. Together, the group transported Gene, on a backboard, 1,500 yards to the waiting medical helicopter.

What followed were anguished days and weeks of recovery. Kent was released from the hospital the following day, and has undergone physical therapy for the contusions and injuries received.

Meanwhile, Gene's family and NDOT friends have stood by him in hospitals in Twin Falls, then Boise, Idaho, as he steadily recovers from the neurological damage caused by severe bruising of the brain. Luckily, as he continues to recover and his damaged short and long-term memory returns, Gene is left with no recall of the accident itself.

"We're thankful that he is steadily recovering," Wiley said, echoing the sentiments of many concerned NDOT employees.

AGC SIR AWARD



AASHTO PRESIDENT'S AWARD

AGC SIR AWARD

The Associated General Contractors' (AGC) SIR Award is one of the highest honors an individual can receive within the construction industry. Taking its name from the AGC creed, "Skill, Integrity, Responsibility," the SIR Award is bestowed upon leaders who make outstanding contributions to the construction industry. This year, that leader is NDOT Director Susan Martinovich.

The AGC Las Vegas chapter recently presented Martinovich with the SIR Cornerstone Award for overseeing the entire Department's continual dedication to transportation, including:

- *Seeking capital to improve and maintain Nevada roads through public-private partnerships and other funding.*
- *Safety advancements, such as enhanced crash data collection and analysis, public outreach on construction zone safety, and rumble strips, signage and new lane markers.*
- *Efforts to streamline and maximize NDOT processes, such as project design, permitting and approval.*
- *Partnering with the construction industry to develop, plan and continually enhance Nevada transportation and ensure the best value to Nevada taxpayers.*

"She has such a tough job, and we admire and respect the work she's doing," said John Madole, AGC Nevada executive vice president.

Frank Martin, member of the State Transportation Board, was honored with an AGC Award as well.

AASHTO PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Each year, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) awards state department of transportation employees who have improved transportation on a statewide or national level. This year, NDOT's own Assistant Director of Administration Robert Chisel has brought home the coveted AASHTO President's Award.

As leader of the department's financial forecasting, management and accounting, as well as administrative services, flight operations and information services, Chisel ensures proactive and positive stewardship of \$548 million in annual capital tax dollar expenditures while seeking out innovative funding, administration, communications and other solutions, including:

- *Overseeing bonding processes that have saved Nevada taxpayers an estimated \$600 million in construction inflation costs.*
- *Oversight of NDOT's information and communication systems to protect vital state transportation information.*
- *Bringing multiple agencies together to utilize important statewide communications tools, such as the Nevada Highway Patrol's integration onto NDOT's 800MHz radio system, interoperability improvements to better connect NDOT with Las Vegas Metro Police and Washoe County Sheriff's and championing development of procedures for AMBER child abduction alerts.*

"When I first read the nomination, I had to ask myself 'is this really about me,'" Chisel said. "NDOT has such a great staff. They are the ones who truly helped the Department reach these accomplishments."



The hard work of many NDOT employees (pictured from left to right) led to the high-caliber of this project.

*Back row: Darin Tedford, Greg Price, Tim Hellwinkel, Sue Donaldson and Pete Vradenburg
Front row: Rick Bosch, Mike Draper, Alex Conwell, Rob Schofield, Joel Wortman, Sara Cufflin and Bill Myer*

NDOT PROJECT AWARDED for QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

An NDOT Lake Tahoe-area road improvement was recently recognized with a National Asphalt Paving Association “Quality in Construction” award.

The approximately \$9 million NDOT project paved and open-graded 11 miles of U.S. 50 from South Lake Tahoe northeast to Spooner Summit last summer. The project also improved guardrails, eliminated water pooling on the roadway and cut back a nearly vertical slope that previously sluffed loose rock and dirt onto the highway.

While maintaining high-grade workmanship and materials, NDOT accommodated traffic on the thoroughfare that sees approximately 13,000 vehicles daily. Work took place 24-hours-a-day to more quickly complete the project, with traffic control removed during non-working hours and weekends.

“Through partnering and teamwork, both NDOT and [contractor] Q+D Construction were successful in completing a difficult project in one construction season with minimal disruption to the traveling public,” NDOT Resident Engineer Rick Bosch explained of the project overseen by his construction crew 911.

“I am impressed,” Area Transit Management Operations Manager Gabriel Chavarin wrote of the project. “Our bus experienced minimal delays, and we could not be happier.”

The NDOT Materials Division and crew 911 materials testers played a key part in the high quality of materials used on the project by promptly testing paving materials to exacting specifications, as is done for all NDOT road improvements.

The “Quality in Construction” award is given annually to hot mix-asphalt highway construction projects that showcase dedicated workmanship and top-quality hot mix asphalt, an engineered mixture of aggregate paving stone and liquid asphalt cement.

Another NDOT improvement project, a 2006 repaving of State Routes 431 and 28, previously won a “Quality in Construction” award.

DID YOU KNOW?

Simultaneously with the award-winning project, NDOT Crew 911 also oversaw a similar U.S. 50 project between Spooner Summit and Carson City. Both projects improved an old road surface on the U.S. 50 thoroughfare that is so vital to Lake Tahoe events, tourism and commutes.

KudosKorner



ASSISTING TO MAKE ROADS SAFER

NDOT Reno-area maintenance supervisor Ralph Lopez recently received a Support and Assistance Award from the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP).

Ralph and NDOT Reno-area maintenance crews, along with NDOT staff throughout the state, often go above and beyond to assist the NHP in accident-related road closures.

Not only does Ralph's assistance provide more safety on Nevada roads, it also helps allow Highway Patrol staff to assist, patrol and respond to other areas and other incidents, NHP staff explained while presenting the award.

THE BIG SNOW

When a once-in-a-generation snow storm hit southern Nevada in December 2008, NDOT District 1 personnel were out in force.

"I was so appreciative of the clearance of the roads, and thought 'who are those great people who had to be out of a warm bed clearing the slushy mess so people would have a safer drive to work,'" thankful citizen Pamela Collins wrote.

CATCHING THE BUS

When school bus driver Wanda Krenka's school bus was stuck in ice and snow on the Jiggs Highway (State Route 228) one recent winter morning, Crew 351's Wilber Greer was there to save the day.

"He was very nice and considerate, and helped me out," the thankful bus driver called to say.

FAMILY MATTERS

NDOT Engineering Technician Vicky Thompson also knows the importance of the hard work of NDOT maintainers.

"My daughter, who is only 28, had her second cancer surgery Christmas Eve in South Lake Tahoe," she wrote. "The only reason my husband and I were able to visit her in the hospital on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was the excellent work of NDOT maintenance crews who kept the roads open. Because of those NDOT crews, we were able to spend Christmas with our daughter, her husband and my granddaughter."

Thankfully, Vicky's daughter is progressing well through medical treatments, with no cancer found in her recent surgery.



Welcome

Matt Blade, *Carson*
Michael Chauvin, *Las Vegas*
Eric Donner, *Carson*
William Giles, *Carson*
Roy Labrador, *Las Vegas*
John Letoile, *Carson*
Judy Price, *Carson*

Thanks for Serving

Michael Maylone *30 years, Ely*

Mike Quintero *31 years, Carson*

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