

ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY



Family and friends, including daughter Olivia (left), hold vigil for Ryan Pretner's (right) continued recovery.



In the early evening of Jan. 12, NDOT Right-of-Way Agent Ryan Pretner was bicycling on St. Rose Parkway in Henderson. An experienced cyclist, Ryan was riding in a bike lane and wearing full cycling gear when he was struck by a truck's rearview mirror. Even while wearing a helmet, the impact fractured Ryan's skull in multiple places.

The 37-year-old athlete was given a 10 percent chance to live after being rushed to UMC Trauma Center. Over the next weeks, Ryan slowly emerged from a coma and underwent cranium surgery to relieve brain pressure. On Feb. 6 came encouraging news that Ryan was opening his eyes.

"To all of us so anxious for his recovery, his progress seems slow, but steady," NDOT Assistant Chief Right-of-Way Agent Carol Lamb explained of Ryan's continuing improvement. "He understands what is being said and will squeeze your hand or make gestures to acknowledge."

As Ryan's health continues to improve, family and friends have mobilized in support. Many visited Ryan's hospital bedside. A Web site (www.joemayphoto.com) providing updates on Ryan's condition has received 21,000 visits, while a March 21 charity bike ride brought more than 200 together to support and raise funds for the beloved bicyclist and father of two. At NDOT, bracelets of support were sold, with proceeds going to Ryan's family, and co-workers across the state donated a combined eight weeks of paid leave time.

While the full extent of Ryan's injuries are still unknown, his medical condition continues to improve.

In late April, Ryan moved to a Colorado rehabilitation hospital that is nationally recognized in the treatment of traumatic brain injuries. There, he will undergo six to 12 weeks of therapy.

"There is only one Ryan Pretner in this world and he is a true fighter," sister Dana Pretner Andrew wrote. "Nothing is going to stop this boy from getting to the finish line!"

Wishing Ryan Well

Over 1,000 well-wishes, and continual updates on Ryan's condition, have been posted on-line at www.joemayphoto.com, including:

You're a hero and an inspiration to us all... We know that you will come out of this... I can not wait to come and see you again. This time I promise not to cry... I am honored to know Ryan and be witness to such a moving experience... Such a heart-warming gift of recovery. Our boy is making his comeback!... Ryan, you are so loved.

CREW SPOTLIGHT: EMIGRANT PASS CREW

Bobby Joseph, Shel Forbes, John Kohot, John Lednisky, Patti Griffith and Cary King (from left to right) are all integral members of Crew 324.



Winter brings other duties, particularly snow operations. With dramatic changes in elevation, drivers often disobey posted chain requirements while passing over Emigrant Pass. The crew is there to help when this leads to stopped vehicles, motorist assistance calls or crashes. The dedicated group also works to mitigate and assist with road dangers caused by a migrating deer herd that yearly crosses the area. Throughout the year, they are also on call to provide traffic control and assistance for any vehicle crashes in their area.

The top of the pass is home to the crew. With no residential communities in the immediate area, crew members live in an enclave of six state homes. With their homes just yards from their work station, the dedicated team members never truly leave behind work duties at days end. But living in a single community with co-workers has advantages.

“We are our own community,” crew supervisor John Kohot said. “We watch out for each other.”

The crew was watching out for each other the day before Thanksgiving 2002. That day, as they installed guardrail, a motorist under the influence crashed through their work zone. Crew members Mike Andersen and Steve Werner each suffered partial loss of a leg, while David Dyer received whiplash and head injuries. While all three have since left or retired from NDOT, the fourth crash survivor, Patti Griffith, remains a vital part of the crew in her position as Highway Maintenance Worker IV.

No matter what they have been through, the crew stands strong to protect their northeastern Nevada roadways.

“I think they are the best crew in the state,” Kohot said.

In northeast Nevada, between Elko and Battle Mountain, lies the territory of hard-working NDOT Emigrant Pass Crew 324.

The approximately 200 lane miles of state roadway maintained by the crew are among northern Nevada’s most vital transport routes, including Interstate 80 over the 6,189-foot Emigrant Pass.

In summer, the crew repairs guardrail, potholes and fences, as well as chip seals to upkeep road surfaces. Other important maintenance duties include oversight of the Beowawe rest area. The rest stop sees occasional vandals, chief among them crows who somehow unhinge trash can covers and spread garbage.



Employee Appreciation

NDOT Employees - You Make It Happen! THANK YOU!

Celebrating dedication all year long!



FULL STEAM AHEAD: V&T RAILROAD



The V&T Railroad, past and present.

Stretching from Carson City to Virginia City and beyond, the Virginia and Truckee Railroad, known as the V&T, first rolled in 1870. Through some of America's steepest and curviest rail lines, the legendary railroad transported the mining wealth and goods of the Comstock Lode before ending its run in 1950. Now, an NDOT-supported project has reached a milestone in bringing the historic railroad, and a retired state bridge, back to life.

The Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railway is rebuilding the tracks between Virginia and Carson cities. As a local public agency stewardship project, NDOT oversees the restoration to ensure federal requirements are met. And, when a bridge was recently installed to carry the railway over U.S. 50 east of Carson City, NDOT support went beyond that.

Through the initiative of NDOT designers John Bradshaw and Steve Merrill, and the support of Director Susan Martinovich and the NDOT Bridge Division, the Department donated the steel railway bridge after it was removed from Interstate 15 in Las Vegas nearly five years ago. Now, the approximately 50-year-old bridge has been re-installed, still in strong condition and ready to eventually carry V&T trains.

"The bridge was almost a perfect fit; even the skew over the highway fit almost identically," said Deputy Resident Engineer Kent Hanford of consultant firm Manhard Consulting while recognizing NDOT for the bridge donation. "The donation saved the commission the cost of constructing the entire bridge."

NDOT was on-scene throughout the V&T project's phase 2C, which included bridge installation.

"When work is performed in NDOT right-of-way, we are out there once a week to ensure that construction meets standards," NDOT Crew 911 Assistant Resident Engineer Jerry Vradenburg explained. "We actually drove and

walked the original alignment constructed over 100 years ago. The work done then, the work they did with horse and buggies and picks, was still standing. And now, the project is rebuilding on most of that same alignment."

Ultimately, the project aims to resurrect the historic V&T as a tourist line, contributing a projected \$16.5 million annually to the northern Nevada economy. NDOT has designated \$3 million in federal economic recovery funding toward the next phase of restoration.

V&T Restoration

NDOT has been an active partner in the railway restoration through many construction phases:

1-Railway over Overman mining pit (2005)

2A/2B-Moundhouse extension (2008)

2C-U.S. 50 extension (2009)

Future Phases

**3-Carson River extension
4-Carson City depot construction**

Further information:

www.vtrailway.com

KudosKorner

BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK



Many children received an inside view of the important transportation work that makes the state move when NDOT employees recently brought their children to work for Bring Your Child to Work Day. Youngster Brandon Pappas (pictured above in center) even had opportunity to meet Governor Jim Gibbons while at work with his father, NDOT vehicle mechanic Steven Pappas (pictured on left).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Nevada communities are one of the most important stakeholders in NDOT road improvements. NDOT District 1 Assistant Director of Construction Joe Martinez keeps residents updated on NDOT's continuing enhancements to state roads.

"Joe has taken extra effort and time to ensure that I am informed and updated," Las Vegas resident Michael Lee wrote. "Joe is an excellent ambassador and point of contact for the citizens of Las Vegas."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

Local governments are another important stakeholder in NDOT road improvements. NDOT planning and district staff members often meet and collaborate with local agencies to ensure that state road improvements best fit local community needs.

"I appreciate NDOT staff coming to the counties," Humboldt County commissioner, and state transportation board member, Tom Fransway said. "It is very well done. They do a good job in making presentations and seeking input from local governments."

Welcome

David Chase, Carson City
Christine Hannah, Carson City
Frederick Kingman, Carson City
Ginger Manning, Battle Mountain
Adam Skiles, Tonopah
Kyle Sloan, Las Vegas
Marcus Thomason, Carson City
Bingham Walch, Alamo
Scott Watson, Reno

Thanks for Serving

Donald Atkinson, 25 years, Carson City
Kenneth Brown, 23 years, Reno
Louis Errea, 19 years, Winnemucca
Kathy Landis, 27 years, Carson City
Richard Millsap, 29 years, Wells
Conni Valley, 32 years, Carson City
Larry Westmoreland, 29 years, Elko



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Director

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SAFETY SIGNS

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