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# bulletin

Virginia Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter VOLUME 71, No. 2

**Attention VDOT retirees:**

## Do you remember when?

VDOT celebrates its 100th anniversary next year, and we are looking for your stories and your artifacts. We will be writing a series of stories on the history of the agency in the next year.

If you have a story to tell, photos to share or old highway equipment to loan, please contact Sande Snead by phone (804 225-4491, fax (804) 786-6250, or email at Sande .Snead@VDOT.Virginia.gov

***News Briefs***

# Homer named secretary of transportation

*Pierce Homer*

Gov. Mark R. Warner has elevated Deputy Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer to the post of secretary of transportation, succeeding Whittington "Whitt" Clement who has returned to the practice of law.

Before joining the Warner Administration in January 2002, Homer served as deputy county executive in Prince William County.

"Whitt Clement has been a strong partner as we have worked to restore fiscal discipline to our transportation program and improve the performance at VDOT, and I wish him well as he returns to the practice of law," Gov. Warner said.

"Whitt and Pierce have worked as a team to help find innovative solutions to Virginia's transportation challenges, including enhanced rail and mass transit options, airport improvements, and the use of public-private partnerships to build some critical highway projects. Pierce Homer is a creative thinker and a consensus builder -- attributes that have become basically a job requirement in this role."

The secretary has oversight of the Transportation, Motor Vehicles, Aviation, and Rail and Public Transportation departments as well as for the Motor Vehicle Dealer Board and the Virginia Port Authority. These six agencies employ about 12,000 people and have an annual budget in excess of $3.3 billion.

## Six-Year Improvement Program hearing set

The hearing for public comments on the working draft of the Six-Year Improvement Program for fiscal years 2006-2011 will be held April 19 via videoconference from 10 VDOT locations. The hearing begins at 5 p.m. Citizens and public officials are invited to go to one of eight VDOT district offices, the Harrisonburg Residency (for the Staunton District) or the Central Office auditorium in Richmond that evening to make comments to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).

Citizens may also submit comments in writing to VDOT or the Department of Rail and Transportation by mail or e-mail through April 29. The working draft of the program is available online at **www.VDOT.Virginia.gov**. The CTB is expected to approve the final program at its May 19 meeting.

## Luray project earns 2005 Virginia Construction Award

A Staunton District project in Page County won this year's Virginia Construction Award presented by the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance and VDOT. Managed by Luray Residency, the project on Route 340 is just north of the town of Shenandoah. Included in the project were a bridge over the Norfolk Southern Railway and Route 683 and the bridge approaches.

The project, costing just over $1.5 million, was completed on time and under budget. VDOT construction manager was Ed Wymer; VDOT lead inspector was James Shenk Jr.; and the prime contractor was Fairfield-Skanska Inc. Contractor superintendents were Mark Trujillo and Jimmy Barnes.

Other nominees for the award were Fairfax Residency for projects on Route 613 and another on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge ground improvement; Chesterfield Residency for a project on Route 718; and Suffolk Residency for a project on Route 704.

## ¿Que Pasa? Richmond crews are finding out

Photo by Tom Saunders

*Members of the Richmond District's introductory Spanish class are (from left) Johnnie Wallin, Zenobia Diamond, Debbie Williams, Elsa (special guest instructor from Cuba), John McGarry, Debbie Tash, Kitty Neale (instructor), Sandi Anderson, Carnell Harper, Mildred Holmes, Joe Echols and Catalino Reyes.*

"Where is your hard hat?" That would be "¿Dónde está su casco?" in Spanish. It was a phrase a group of Richmond District employees learned recently in a 15-week introductory Spanish class.

The students also learned Spanish for "help is on the way" and "road safety is important" and other phrases that they need to communicate with Hispanic workers. From landscaping projects to cleanup efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel and tropical storm Gaston, VDOT crews saw the need for better communication as they tried to conquer the language gap with Spanish-speaking employees.

"Often we run into people, whether they're lost, broken down, or involved in an emergency situation, and they happen to speak Spanish," said Carnell Harper, superintendent for the Crater Road Area Headquarters.

Harper, along with Joe Echols, superintendent for the Jennings Ordinary AH specialty crew in Amelia, considered taking a night class, but interest grew quickly from other employees in pursuing a Spanish course. So the District Training Center scheduled one.

Kitty Neale, the instructor, tailored the class for its members: "Each week they came to me with new phrases that could help them in their jobs." Another class is being developed for this spring.

*Names in the News*

# Kaeberle is HR administrator

*Lance Kaeberle*

Lance Kaeberle, a human resources leader in the chemical industry for 15 years, became administrator of VDOT's Human Resources Division in February. He was human resources manager for the Honeywell International plant in Chester from 2000 until 2004. Earlier he worked for Union Carbide Corporation.

Kaeberle (pronounced Kay-ber-lee) is "known by his customers and previous bosses as a 'change agent' and 'business partner' who has developed effective human resource strategies to support business goals," notes Meredith Baker, VDOT's chief of organizational development.

He holds a master's degree in industrial relations and a bachelor's degree in economics from Iowa State University.

# Beasley promoted at Hillsville

*Bob Beasley*

Robert K. "Bob" Beasley has been promoted to residency administrator for Hillsville Residency, where he has served as assistant resident engineer for the past 12 years.

After joining VDOT in 1973 as a construction inspector trainee, Beasley worked as an inspector until 1988 before becoming an assistant to the construction engineer in Salem District.

From 1991-92, Beasley was instrumental in starting the highway construction mentor program through Virginia Tech's Department of Civil Engineering. He worked as project engineer in the Bedford Residency before being promoted in 1993 to assistant resident engineer in Hillsville. Beasley holds a bachelor's degree in history from Virginia Tech.

# Long leads new division

*Janice Long*

Janice Long has been named director of the recently formed Division of Capital Assets and Inventory Control. Long, who was briefly acting director of the division, was earlier senior internal manager in the Internal Audit Division of the inspector general's office.

The new division will include three sections: an inventory section with oversight of VDOT assets as they are continually expended and replaced; a capital assets section with responsibility for VDOT buildings, infrastructure, land, and equipment; and a third to check VDOT units' compliance with policies for accounting for and safeguarding assets.

Long, a certified public accountant and auditor, began her career with Coopers and Lybrand in 1982 and joined VDOT in 1984 as a senior internal auditor. She later became VDOT's internal audit manager and senior internal audit manager before her assignment to the new division. She is a graduate in accounting from the University of Virginia.

# Cubbage is RA in Warrenton

*David Cubbage*

David Cubbage has moved up from an assistant resident engineer's post in Warrenton Residency to the position of residency administrator there.

Cubbage, a licensed land surveyor since 1996, was hired by VDOT in May 2000 as supervisor of the Land Development and Land Use Permit sections in Culpeper District. He became an assistant resident engineer in Warrenton in April 2002, serving as acting resident engineer from December 2002 until April 2003.

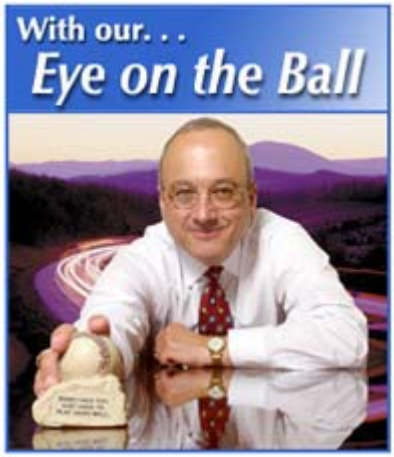
In the 1990s, he was project manager for contractor surveying at the Dulles Airport, Goddard Space Flight Center, and Union Station as well as other government and commercial projects.

Cubbage completed the Transportation Construction Management Institute at Virginia Tech in 2004. A resident of Culpeper County, he has just finished his second term as an appointed member of the Culpeper County Planning Commission.

***Commissioner's Corner***

# Partners on and off the job

Back in October 2003, we began regular chief executive officer round-table discussions with a group of about 25 contractors and consultants to promote better communication between VDOT and the people we do business with. We wanted to develop stronger relationships with our partners in industry.




Recently, my expectations for such partnerships were exceeded in a big way. Richmond District Construction Engineer Chris Winstead put together a volunteer team of VDOT workers, consultants and contractors, and together they gave up a Saturday to build houses for Habitat for Humanity. These are the same folks working together on the I-64 bridge project over the ACCA Railroad Switching Yard in Henrico County.

On March 12, VDOT's ACCA Project Manager Ray Johnston, Chris Winstead, two URS Corporation consultants and eight employees of Archer Western Contractors came together on a different sort of project -- instead of building a road, they'd be building homes for people who dearly needed better housing. They framed two exterior walls on one house, put up the siding on another, and framed a shed from scratch. They accomplished so much in one day that they were finally sent home -- there was nothing left for them to do.

What this one-day activity proved to our ACCA project team is that they could come together for the greater good and build something much bigger than themselves. That same principle can be applied to the construction project. This group found out that working side by side they can solve problems -- both big and small. That bodes well for getting more projects completed on time and on budget. It also bodes well for our organization and our industry.

*Philip*

Philip Shucet

# Month in the 'field' means better work back in C.O.

**Seeing how the work gets done helps Asset Management's Carol Byers budget for it**

"Sometimes I felt I was sitting here in Central Office in a cloud," remembers Carol Byers, as she thought about her first few months in the Asset Management Division. A certified public accountant with 12 years of experience in five state agencies, she had joined VDOT as a senior internal auditor for construction projects in 2000. In July 2003, she transferred to the Asset Management Division.

A new assignment in 2004 put her to work on the division's $1 billion-plus budget. However, construction and maintenance are different spheres, she says. "Sometimes, it seemed like Quintin Elliott (the division administrator) was speaking another language" when he talked about maintenance in the field. "I had a lot of knowledge about construction, but none about maintenance."

Photo by Trevor Wrayton

*Carol Byers (second from right) worked for a month with many employees in Richmond District, including (from left) Jeff Allgood, Elko AHQ superintendent; Gary Jennings, assistant resident engineer, Sandston Residency; and Reggie Patterson Jr., supervisor, Elko AHQ.*

Byers' hunger for maintenance knowledge increased when she was assigned as an analyst to a special studies section working on a new six-year program for systems operations, a tool similar to the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) for highway construction. Questions arose: What is a "project" or a "contract" in maintenance usage? How

can a plant-mix contract be used for locations in different counties, or a maintenance contract be good for operations in several residencies? How do all the operations and their expenditures weave together? "I even wanted to see first-hand how fiscal assistants get their bills and how they paid them."

She became convinced she needed to spend time in the field: "I just really wanted to see what was going on where the real work was getting done." So she proposed to Elliott that she work the month of January in Richmond District in as many work units as possible--not just to look at budgeting and bookkeeping, but also to see a variety of daily operations. Elliott quickly agreed: "Coming from a residency, I knew how valuable that experience has been to me in performing my job." Early in January, Byers left her desk on the 19th floor of the Monroe Building in Richmond and began the month at an area headquarters.

### *Byers worked 12-hour shifts with snow crews*

Byers joined crews at Elko Area Headquarters, Sandston Residency, for four days on work zones, including some scary pothole repairs on I-295. Her first impression: "I never realized how much their lives are in danger every day on the highway. Out there, it's always safety first." Her second impression: "I was exhausted at night. I couldn't wait to get my steel-toed boots off."

The second week she was set to work with a bridge maintenance team at Atlee Area Headquarters, but weather interrupted.

For four days she worked 12-hour shifts with crews plowing snow. She learned from David Christoph, district transportation operations manager, how small the window of opportunity can be to spread chemicals at just the right time before a snowfall. While on snow duty, she rode in a truck for two days with Tracy Lassiter, Sandston Residency contract administrator, discussing how she develops estimates for contracts and the contract process. Later, she attended a New Kent County Board of Supervisors meeting with Gary Jennings, assistant Sandston resident engineer.

She learned about windshield surveys of highways and placing priorities for maintaining them. She talked with Steve Hearn, assistant district maintenance engineer, about his thought process for putting together the $124 million district maintenance budget. She asked Sandston District Residency Administrator Robbie Prezioso about the management of a residency. "It was exciting," Byers says. "Out there you really get to see how it all flows together."

"I realized that the field is where the heart of VDOT is. That's what the public sees. They wear many hats. It was really eye-opening. I have a whole new appreciation for what they do," Byers reports. "It really makes me think here in Central Office about how I can make jobs--and life--better for them at work."

Part of that will be new to her new contacts in the field. "Now, while working on the six-year program, I work very closely with the assistant district maintenance engineers, and I'm learning what they do. I met a lot of good people, and if I don't understand something, I know I can pick up the phone and call them."

Byers is studying a "totally new way to prepare budgets for the field," and her month in the field expedited that goal. In the past, districts split up the billion-dollar budget according to historical experience. Now, allocations for the 2006 budget and estimates for the other five years of the SYIP (2007-2011) will be based on the condition of each district's assets (pavements, pipes, signals, etc.) and what funding will be needed to bring them up to an agreed-upon standard. Elliott says that Byers' "field trip" will make a big difference in this process. Byers calls her field work “an invaluable experience.”

### *The Watsons: father and son*

## *Two things in common: Tunnels and toils*

*Andre Watson (left) follows in the tunnel tradition of his father Sanders.*

Sanders Watson retired from VDOT, but he didn't retire from work. In fact, not much keeps him from working. He was interviewed recently along with his son, Andre Watson, a traffic control supervisor at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel (MMBT). The interview did not keep the senior Watson from doing his job, however.

"I've had a very good work--" he was about to say "experience" when his cell phone rang. An employee at a cleaning company at the Navy Ship Yard where the elder Watson is quality control specialist was calling. His floor stripper was broken. The answer was sure--"There's nothing wrong with it. You just need to clean it. It's not worn out; it's just filled up with wax."

Returning to the interview Mr. Watson explains, "That's my job. I come in the door and my phone starts ringing. I see that the equipment works, I work with the people. I do it all."

Taking responsibility and getting the job done: That seems to be the theme both Watsons hold dear. Not only have they had a common work ethic, they also have worked in the same environment, VDOT tunnels. The senior Watson started in 1956 at the Elizabeth River Tunnel and retired there in 1991. His son started there in 1979 and transferred to the MMBT when it opened in 1992.

***"I enjoy working. That's the only thing I know." – Sanders Watson***

For the elder Watson, 72, work was a given. "I always had two jobs," he recalls.

When off duty from the tunnel, he was cutting grass, washing windows or cleaning offices. "The pay was low and my family was large." With nine children to support, he worked a lot. "My children were coming so fast, and sometimes they didn't see me much." But he adds, "I know they ate because I went to the grocery every month. I guess they thought I had a lot of money. I enjoy working. That's the only thing I know."

He began as a laborer at the tunnel, then took over the sign shop. When that was closed he worked up to lead person in the electrical maintenance area. He recalls being the first minority employee to have a skilled laborer's job at the tunnel. He still works almost full time at the cleaning business. "Now all six of my sons are grown and believe in working. You have to work and be decent to people and respect people." With his children, 17 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, he has started quite a heritage of hard work.

How does he view his career at the tunnel: "VDOT has been good to me, and if I had it to do again, I'd do it again."

As a traffic control supervisor, the younger Watson, 46, is responsible for the flow of traffic through the MMBT from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. He directs employees responding to accidents, hazardous cargo, oversized loads and other incidents. His performance earned him the "Employee of the Year" honor in 2004 at the tunnel and in the district. His citation described him as "one of those employees who you know you can trust to be there when you need him. He does not make big waves nor seek notoriety; he's just there to see that the job gets done."

That was obvious during Hurricane Isabel, when Andre did what he could to get his home and family ready for the storm and then went to the tunnel for two days to deal with power outages, an overturned tractor-trailer, and other events.

***"...do the best job I can, and help those that work for me do the best job they can." – Andre Watson***

Andre began as a patrolman at the Elizabeth River Tunnel, then worked with the maintenance team, and then returned to the operations side as a wrecker operator before becoming a supervisor. Work is no stranger, and he echoes his father's ethics: "In my upbringing, I had a father who said, 'If you're going to do a job, do the best you can in it. If you can't, you need to leave.'" His motivating philosophy is to "come in and do the best job I can, and help those that work for me do the best job they can."

He has worked in every position he supervises. "Really good people skills" are just as important, he says. "People are different," he says, and, "I can't deal with one individual like I would another." He understands that people have problems off the job as well as on. So he "gives a listening ear," and sometimes a little advice or help. "He has a kind and gentle mannerism, and his integrity is of the highest caliber," reads his Employee of the Year citation. His watchwords are "open, honest, and fair."

What has changed in tunnel operation over the careers of the two Watsons. The senior Watson responds without hesitation -- "Safety."

In the early years of the Elizabeth River Tunnel, before it was operated by the then-Department of Highways, the elder Watson remembers that there were no safety helmets, vests, or briefings. "All we knew was 'Go to work.' Then, when the state took over, it was all safety."

The junior Watson focuses the safety issue this way: "We all come in together and we all leave together. Safety has to be the issue. Take your eye off traffic one time and you might not be able to talk about it." ***--by Chuck Armstrong***

# The 'Deceiver' outsmarts the beavers

Beavers are determined, energized and goal-oriented--just ask VDOT maintenance crews.

The little animals' instinct to build dams, which create lakes that flow across and undercut VDOT roads, has been a problem for years. They block culverts designed to carry free-flowing streams with a choke-

load of mud, leaves and limbs. Beaver construction projects mean more maintenance projects for VDOT.

Trapping the animals and dynamiting their homes has been the standard remedy for years, but it is often a short-term one. When beavers leave a site, others can quickly move into what seems an ideal place to colonize.

Last year VDOT entered a pilot project to outsmart the creatures rather than catch them. A wildlife biologist for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) proposed an idea to the Asset Management Division (AMD) to plan, build and maintain structures that would stop beavers from their destructive tendencies and make them content at the same time.

### *'Beaver-Deceivers' could save VDOT crews much labor*

*Biologist Stephanie Boyles has done a graduate thesis on the "Beaver Deceiver" with the guidance of Morris Walton, environmental specialist, Petersburg Residency.*

The biologist, Stephanie Boyles, who is also a graduate student at Christopher Newport University, had observed a beaver control device installed by VDOT in Westmoreland County.

She knew that similar devices have been used in other parts of the U.S, and she was convinced they would be more effective and economical than trapping. However, no scientific study had been done to determine their effectiveness. So she decided to base her graduate research on these devices, commonly called the "Beaver-Deceiver."

Subsequently, Mike Hall, AMD contracts program manager at the time, negotiated an agreement with Christopher Newport University in which Boyles could begin a pilot project employing the "Deceivers." The agreement, explained Hall, now an assistant administrator in the Administrative Services Division, provides Boyles tools to install the devices in some of the locations beavers perpetually colonize.

Here's the basis for Boyles' research: Beavers are compelled to build dams where they sense free-flowing water. In following that simple instinct, they derive a benefit for their work. The pond or lake backing up from the dam provides deeper water in which they can feel safe and where they often build a "lodge" in which to live. Unfortunately, culverts carrying streams under secondary roads are a favorite place for their dams.

The solution is not complex, but it is crafty. First, a fence of cedar posts and wide mesh wiring is constructed in a large perimeter around the culvert where the water enters. This prevents beavers from getting close enough to dam the culvert. Second, a large underwater pipe is extended from inside the fence to a point 20 or 30 feet in the pond. The mouth of the pipe is under water so that the sensation of water moving into it is almost eliminated, and the instinct to build a dam is not triggered. The water taken in by the pipe empties inside the fence impoundment area. While beavers sometimes realize water is moving inside the fence, they cannot get to it. When they try to dam around the fence, maintenance crews easily remove the debris. Beavers often accept the limitation and remain in the area content only to cut small trees for food.

*Enclosures like this one on Eagle Creek in Westmoreland County prevent beavers from getting close to culverts they are prone to dam.*

**All in the Family**

# VDOTers with National Guard return from Iraq

VDOT citizen soldiers are pictured in Kuwait after recently completing a nearly year-long deployment in the Mosul area of Northern Iraq with the 276th Engineer Battalion, Virginia Army National Guard. Pictured (from left, first row kneeling) are Staff Sgt. Mike Freemen, equipment operator II, Warsaw Residency; Staff Sgt. Mark VanDyke, transportation operator II, Tazewell Residency; (second row) Spc. Joseph Madison, equipment operator, Sandston Residency; Staff Sgt. James Jones, construction inspector senior, Williamsburg Residency; Staff Sgt. Tony Cruz, construction inspector, Fredericksburg District; Sgt. Mark Suggs, maintenance crew member, Wards Corner AHQ, Hampton Roads District; and Capt. David Kaulfers, assistant state materials engineer, Materials Division, who is a company commander. The unit's missions included routing clearance of explosive devices, construction work, convoy security, patrols, demolition of weapons, and

guard duties. Those pictured above received various awards for their service and courage in combat.

### *Central Office*

Archer Carr, a database analyst-system architect with the IT Applications Division, has returned from a year-long deployment in Kuwait. Captain Carr commands the 130-member 499th Quartermaster unit, based in Richmond. Welcome home!

### *Fredericksburg Residency*

Bowling Green Residency: Congratulations to Alvin Balderson on his recent promotion to transportation operations manager I at the Tappahannock AHQ.

### *Hampton Roads District*

District Office: Dwayne Cook, facility manager of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, has been promoted to district operations engineer. A 12-year VDOT veteran, Cook will oversee bridges, tunnels, the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, the Smart Traffic Center in Virginia Beach and traffic engineering. Todd Halacy, formerly assistant resident engineer in Williamsburg, has been named district urban engineer.

*MSgt. Jesus "Bing" Mendoza, engineer, Bridge Division, and Anthony P. (Tone') Sanchez, engineering technician III, Materials Section, Lynchburg District, are serving in Iraq in a civil engineering squadron. Although they are having some fun here with some false teeth, their primary job is base plan management, construction inspections, surveying, AutoCAD and GIS/GPS management.*

Congratulations to Paul Moose and his wife, Amber, on the birth of their third son, Ryan Joseph, born Feb.14. Paul is an engineer in the Bridge Design Section. Cindy Vaughan, financial services specialist in accounts payable, and her husband, Charlie Vaughan, a VDOT retiree, are grandparents to a new baby girl, Kayla Denise.

Congratulations to Jerome "Jerry" Pruyne on his promotion to transportation roadside program manager. He was previously the assistant district environmental manager. Lena Mosley, financial services specialist in accounts payable, recently earned an associates degree in accounting.

Monitor Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel: Robert "Bob" Steele has been promoted from traffic control supervisor to assistant bridge tunnel superintendent of operations. John "Jack" Wintermoyer has been promoted from road maintenance supervisor at the tunnel to road maintenance superintendent of the Frederick AHQ.

Suffolk Residency: Ruby King, inspector trainee, was promoted to highway permit and subdivision specialist in the residency.

Williamsburg Residency: Madeline Ryan was promoted to executive secretary in the Asset Management Division in Central Office. She was formerly a program support tech senior at the residency.

### *Lynchburg District*

Amherst Residency: Larry Nash, formerly a construction inspector in Appomattox Residency, has been named acting construction project manager for the residency.

Appomattox Residency: Clayton Thomas is the new contract administrator, coming from Amherst Residency where he was project manager.

Halifax Residency: Charles "Chuck" Phillips, a 26-year VDOT veteran, was recently named maintenance manager in the residency.

District Complex: John Carwile, Location and Design Section, has been named project coordinator in the section. Drew Spencer, an L&D technician, has accepted a position in the Engineer Development Program. Regina Newman, Location and Design, and husband, Donavon, are celebrating the birth of their first child, Wyatt, March 3. Rebecca Neal, administrative office specialist, Environmental Section, and her husband have a new son, John David Neal, III.

### *Staunton District:*

District Office: Darrell W. Hayes has been promoted from engineering technician III in the Bridge Section to architect-engineer I at the VDOT Learning Center.

Edinburg Residency: Congratulations to Tina and Terry Davis on the birth of a daughter, Brooklyn Ellen. Tina is an administrative office specialist III at the Stephens City AHQ and Terry is a transportation operator II at the Cross Junction AHQ.

Harrisonburg Residency: Douglas A. Simmers has been promoted from engineering tech III to engineering tech IV at the residency. At McGaheysville AHQ. David Dean has been promoted from transportation operations manager I to transportation operations manager II, and Gary W. Via Jr. has been promoted from transportation operator II to transportation operations manager I.

Lexington Residency: John E. Jeffries Jr. has been promoted from transportation operator II to transportation operations manager I at the Triangle AHQ.

Luray Residency: Gary L. Good has been promoted from transportation operator II to transportation operations manager I at the Front Royal AHQ.

# On Virginia highways:

***Q. -- Where can I get travel conditions quickly and free of charge?***

***A. -- The new statewide 511 service. It's available to motorists now.***

*Xavier Graves unveils a 511 Virginia sign on I-295 near Richmond.*

Traffic updates and travel information--offered for all interstates and many primary highways throughout the state--is now available by simply dialing 511. Motorists can now make better travel decisions with 511's round-the-clock information on traffic incidents, road and weather conditions, work zones and much more. The same information is available on **www.511va.com**.

"This service is very simple to use and is a great source of statewide traffic and travel information," says Connie Sorrell, chief of VDOT system operations. In addition to road and traffic reports, 511 also provides information on gas, food, lodging and transit connections. Real-time traffic information from 511 Virginia is derived from two main sources -- VDOT and the Virginia State Police. Verizon land-line users and out-of-state callers should call 1-800-578-4111.

***Tech-Bytes: Cameras for catching stop-light runners…***

# Photo-red might increase safety, but researchers need more time.

*Red light enforcement can be done electronically.*

American motorists hold strong opinions about the effectiveness and the fairness of red light traffic monitoring cameras--devices used in about a dozen states that are often called "photo-red." The cameras take photos of vehicles running a red light, and the local jurisdiction operating them then sends a citation to the motorists for violations.

Some say cameras are just a means for local jurisdictions to increase revenues. Improvements, they think, such as longer yellow lights and properly installed traffic-control devices, can accomplish as much as cameras. Others insist photo-red decreases red-light running, as well as the chances of dangerous "T-bone," or side-impact, crashes.

In the midst of the discussion, the Virginia Transportation Research Center (VTRC) has presented a report with findings about photo-red in the Commonwealth. The principal investigators for the study were Dr. Nicholas J. Garber and Dr. John S. Miller. As a backdrop for the research are these facts: Between 2001 and 2003, a total of 198,269 citations were mailed to motorists whose vehicles were photographed running a red light in Virginia. Red-light running caused almost 5,000 crashes, 18 deaths and 3,800 injuries during this period.

*Virginia Transportation Research Center researchers, Dr. Nicholas J. Garber and Dr. John S. Miller, took on the timely topic of red light camera (photo-red) enforcement in Virginia, just before the General Assembly had to make a decision about its future. Included here are some of their findings.*

Last summer Virginia lawmakers asked the VTRC to conduct a study of red-light cameras' effectiveness. The recent General Assembly faced a decision to extend or end the authority for localities to use cameras after June 30. About 49 cameras were in use in seven Virginia jurisdictions in September of 2004 -- 39 in Northern Virginia and 10 in Virginia Beach. Legislators voted to withdraw that authority effective July 1.

The few months VTRC researchers had to study photo-red devices were not sufficient for final conclusions; however, they did learn some interesting facts. For example, cameras

do affect driver behavior. In the 23 intersections where reliable data from cameras could be obtained, researchers noted that:

- Citations decreased an average of 21 percent;
- Crashes attributable to red- light running decreased (crashes in which a driver was charged with failure to yield at a stop light); and
- Crashes with injuries attributable to red- light running also decreased.

*This housing includes a photo-red camera.*

However, there was a downside because:

- Rear-end crashes increased, and
- The total number of crashes with injuries also increased.

More study will be needed to determine whether the severity of the eliminated red-light-running crashes was greater than that of the induced rear-end crashes. Although the researchers have data from one jurisdiction supporting the belief that injuries from angle or side crashes are more severe than those from rear-end collisions, the data is not conclusive. The potential exists for increased safety of motorists where cameras are used, say Drs. Garber and Miller, and in the report they recommend continued use of the cameras for enforcement.

# Humor — It's always close to the centerline (the heart) of VDOT

*Jim Cline getting ready for retirement.*

It's hard to imagine that some people don't know how to get to the Central Office. Jim Cline, for instance.

Jim, assistant division administrator in the Asset Management Division and Big Man on Campus at the Truck Roadeo for years, retired in March after 44-plus years of VDOT employment. That means he started with the department in 1961, for those who are arithmetically challenged.

In 1961, the first American blasted into space, a first-class stamp cost four cents and a Corvette was not a classic car, just a hot one. Also, Patsy Cline released "Crazy" and "I Fall to Pieces," for you readers interested in culture.

Of course Jim's from a small town in Southwest Virginia, which, he says, had only one stoplight and one dentist. "Why it had a dentist, I don't know, because out of 400 people there were only 20 teeth in the whole town."

Jim got promoted to the Central Office in 1968, and after you hear his story, you realize that Jim was not quite yet a man of the world. Here's how he tells about making the move from the Great Southwest to the Capital City:

"While working on the survey party in the Wise Residency, the state survey party engineer (Vern Brill) came down and left a note on the door that he wanted to see me in the morning. When we talked the next morning, he told me that I had been promoted to a road design table head in the Preliminary Engineering Section in the Central Office.

"I asked him, 'Where's the Central Office?' and he said, 'in Richmond.' I asked if I had another choice. He said, 'Either that or go to Fairfax.' So I asked him, 'How do I get there and when do I start?' Back then, you didn't have to bid on jobs, they just promoted you."

And that's the rest of the story.

Jim, thanks for the memories, and best wishes on your retirement!

# Retirements

**AHMET C. ANDAY,** Arch/Engring Mgr II, Environmental, 33 years of service.
**ROGER W. BELCHER,** Engineering Technician IV, Martinsville Residency, 34 years of service.
**JAMES D. HUTTON JR,** Electronic Technician II, Bristol District Office, 38 years of service.
**JAMES L. NEWTON,** Hsekeep &/or Apparel Workr II, Bristol District Office, 20 years of service.
**H C. RASNICK,** Gen Admin Manager III, Programming, 43 years of service.
**JOHN B. VIAR JR,** Gen Admin Manager II, Lynchburg District Office, 15 years of service.
**TOMMY E. BREEDEN,** Transportation Operator II, Harrisonburg Residency, 29 years of service.
**CLARENCE D. CLIBORNE,** Transport Opertns Manager II, Petersburg Residency, 42 years of service.
**WILLARD R. COOPER,** Engineering Technician IV, Louisa Residency, 40 years of service.
**GEORGE J. FOWLER,** Engineering Technician II, Culpeper District Office, 9 years of service.
**DONALD A. GRADY,** Transportation Operator II, Suffolk Residency, 28 years of service.
**B F. HOLLIMAN,** Transportation Operator II, Suffolk Residency, 39 years of service.
**LEWIS A. HOWARD,** Transportation Operator II, Northern Virginia District Office, 30 years of service.
**SAMUEL W. JORDAN,** Transport Opertns Manager II, Suffolk Residency, 42 years of service.
**R T. MARSHALL,** Transportation Operator II, Hillsville Residency, 35 years of service.
**CHARLES M. MILES,** Equipmt Serv Repair Tech I, Salem District Office, 30 years of service.
**STEPHEN E. MITCHELL,** Transportation Operator II, Christiansburg Residency, 35 years of service.
**ELSIE L. MONTGOMERY,** Admin and Office Spec III, Amherst Residency, 31 years of service.
**SHIRLEY C. NOELL,** Lnd Acq & Prop Mgmt Agent II, Salem District Office, 26 years of service.
**JACK A. OSBORNE,** Transport Opertns Manager III, Amelia Hill Residency, 32 years of service.
**BILLY E. REXRODE,** Transportation Operator II, Staunton District Office, 29 years of service.
**EARL T. SCOTT,** Lnd Acq & Prop Mgmt Agent II , Suffolk District Office, 35 years of service.
**ELVIN L. SHIFFLETT,** Equipmt Serv Repair Tech I, Culpeper Residency, 34 years of service.
**ROBERT G. SMITH JR,** Transport Opertns Manager II, Leesburg Residency, 27 years of service.
**J F. STATON,** Arch/Engring Mgr II, Warsaw Residency, 43 years of service.
**DELMAR D. VANDEVENDER,** Transportation Operator II, Verona Residency, 26 years of service.
**CHARLES C. WIMER,** Transportation Operator II, Verona Residency, 36 years of service.

# Obituaries

**William V. Carpenter**, 80, equipment operator B, Edinburg Residency, died Jan. 9; retired in 1980 with 19 years of service.

**Hurley A. Clark,** 85, plumber-steamfitter, Staunton District, died Jan. 3; retired in 1982 with 36 years of service.

**Elaine Haynes,** 54, fiscal technician, Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, died Dec. 18 after a courageous battle with cancer; she had 25 years of service.

**Lewis W. Ramsey,** 79, equipment operator A, Shipman Area HQ, Lynchburg District, died Jan. 30; retired in 1987 with 20 years of service.

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