

# MILEPOST

GEORGIA

Spring 2015

## Georgia DOT Launches Campaign to Reduce Roadway Fatalities

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Georgia's Top Priority Infrastructure Improvement Project

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TIA Pennies Add Up In Middle Georgia

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Key Personnel Changes Prepare GDOT for Future

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HEROs Celebrate 20 Years of Assisting Georgia Motorists



## Commissioner's Column

Continuing the momentum



**H**umbled. Thrilled. Proud. Those are just a few words that describe how I feel about being named by the State Transportation Board as Commissioner of Georgia Department of Transportation. Another word is "thankful" - to the Board for their confidence in me; to my predecessor, Keith Golden; to Deputy Commissioner Todd Long; to Treasurer Angela Whitworth; to Chief Engineer Meg Pirkle; and to all the talented employees of GDOT - we have quite a remarkable team.

In fact, it was teamwork - with our staff, our Board, state legislators, Gov. Nathan Deal and others - that helped secure additional transportation funding during this past legislative session. House Bill-170, Georgia's transportation funding bill, is expected to generate about \$870 million in the first fiscal year to fund much-needed routine maintenance and to make capital improvements. We are grateful for the support and for the additional revenue - revenue we will continue to use wisely.

Meanwhile, we continue to face uncertainty regarding federal funding. While Congress authorized a two-month extension of funding authority for the Highway Trust Fund through July 31, that is a stop-gap measure. A long-term authorization bill is necessary to enable GDOT and other DOTs to plan, design and construct projects that span multiple years. The current federal funding uncertainty makes that quite difficult.

Despite the uncertainty however, the Department is moving forward. An example of our progress (and our partnerships) is the Interstate 285 at State Route 400 interchange project. Most recently, the Department secured federal environmental impact clearances that enable the project to move toward selection of a design-build-finance team. The \$1.1 billion project is a top priority for the state. We are pleased to work with our partners at Perimeter Community Improvement Districts and other stakeholders to improve travel times and safety in an area with the largest office market in metro Atlanta.

The Department also celebrates other good news. The Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) program, sponsored by State Farm, marked 20 years of incident management and motorist assistance on metro Atlanta highways. This issue salutes their achievements and the important work they do every day.

It also highlights key leadership changes across the Department. Meg Pirkle is now chief engineer; Bayne Smith, no longer in a dual role, is director of Field Services; John Hibbard is division director of Permits and Operations; there are new district engineers; and more. You can read about them in this issue of Milepost.

Finally, the Department kicked off one of its most important campaigns ever -- DriveAlert ArriveAlive, a joint effort with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the Georgia Department of Public Safety. The statewide campaign calls attention to a 25 percent increase in roadway fatalities in the first quarter of 2015. Two key campaign goals are to change driver behavior and to turn the tide on what in many cases are preventable fatalities. We want drivers to buckle up (passengers too), to put away the cell phone and to drive alert. It could save lives.

Russell R. McMurry, P.E.

# MILEPOST

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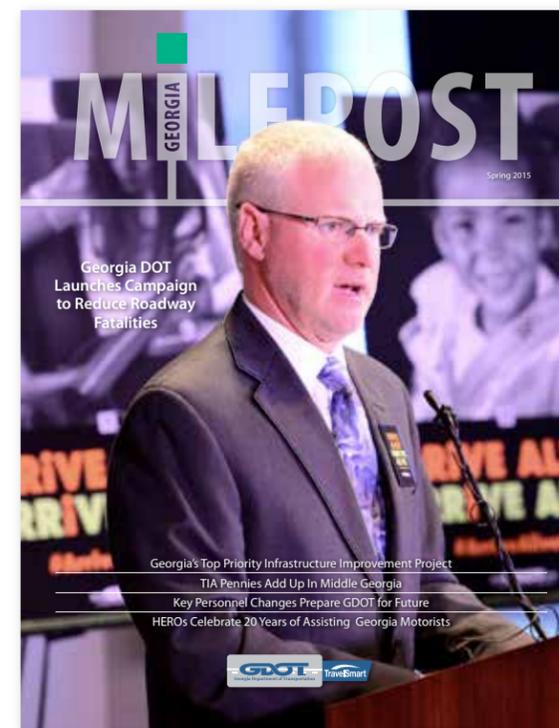
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### What is TravelSmart?

Georgia DOT is engaged in all aspects of mobility. In addition to roads and bridges, we're involved in public transit, general aviation, rail, waterways, and bike and pedestrian programs.

To reflect the larger picture, we've launched TravelSmart - GDOT's umbrella of transportation services and programs. TravelSmart embodies GDOT's approach to applying innovative engineering, customer-friendly design and cost-effective solutions to all facets of our transportation system.

The TravelSmart tag is a reminder that Georgia DOT works to keep Georgia moving - on all modes of transportation and in all parts of Georgia.

Georgia DOT's new TravelSmart website is more than just a fresh new look. It's also fast, easy to navigate and user-friendly. In fact, it's been completely revamped - with you in mind. We hope that you'll visit it often. [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)

**On the cover:** Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry, P.E. announces new safety campaign, DriveAlert ArriveAlive at May press conference.

Photography: CEDRIC MOHR



## Seventh Congressional District Bowen re-elected to Board



Rudy Bowen (CD 7) was unanimously re-elected by legislators to the STB. Bowen, of Suwanee, originally elected in 2007, is now serving his second full five-year term representing CD 7. He has previously served as board chair. Bowen is a Georgia native - born in Atlanta. He built a successful career as a developer and home builder in the metro area.

## Sixth Congressional District... Burkhalter elected to STB



Former State Representative Mark Burkhalter was elected by state legislators to represent CD 6 on the State Transportation Board. Burkhalter is a senior strategic advisor and independent consultant in the National Government Affairs Practice at McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP (MLA). He previously served 18 years in the Georgia General Assembly. He also operated a successful real estate development business.

Burkhalter thanked the legislators of CD 6. "I know how busy each of you are... and I am thrilled that you made this a priority. Transportation is a key issue and I am going to be your voice on the Board to help you and your constituents."



## Mourning the passing of Jay Shaw

The State Transportation Board and Georgia Department of Transportation are saddened by the passing of Board Member Jay Shaw. Mr. Shaw was a Georgia native, who served 18 years in the Georgia House of Representatives and was previously mayor of Lakeland. He was elected to the Board in 2010 and had just begun his second term.

## Board honors GDOT leaders Golden, Sheffield, Liles

**They have a combined total of 105 years of service. But longevity is only one factor in their amazing careers. In February the STB approved resolutions for these retiring leaders.**

**Keith Golden, P.E.** During his 28 years with GDOT, Commissioner Keith Golden held numerous positions, including planning, design and program delivery, and traffic ops. He was manager of the Transportation Management Center, and director of the Permits and Operations Division. Golden has a bachelor's and a master's in civil engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

STB Member Rudy Bowen presented the resolution. "You did an outstanding job as Commissioner and made a huge difference to the people of Georgia."

**Joe Sheffield, P.E.** District 4 District Engineer Joe Sheffield started his 32-year Georgia DOT career as a transportation engineer associate. He moved into various roles including project engineer; area engineer; design engineer; preconstruction engineer; and district engineer. The resolution states that Sheffield made a positive impact on the quality of life for citizens in South Georgia. Sheffield graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor of science in civil engineering.

**Paul Liles, P.E.** The resolution says Paul Liles is recognized as an institution in the bridge and structural engineering world. Shortly after starting his career at Georgia DOT, Liles was called to active duty as an officer in the U.S. Army. Upon return, he resumed his work as a civil engineer trainee. He found his calling in bridge design and served as state bridge engineer for 22 years. He was most recently assistant division director of Engineering. Liles has a degree in civil engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He worked at GDOT for 45 years.

The 14-member State Transportation Board determines policy and generally governs Georgia DOT. Each member is elected by a caucus of Georgia General Assembly members from their specific congressional district. Board members serve staggered five-year terms.

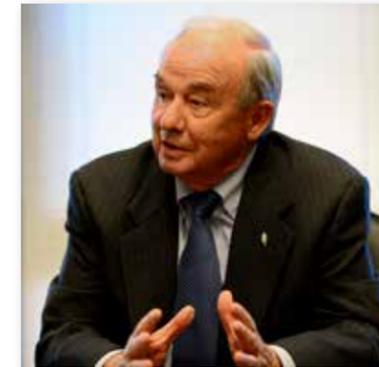
Shaw represented Congressional District 8, served as STB chairman and was most recently chair of the Finance Committee. He was a staunch supporter of providing funding for improving Georgia's transportation system. Our condolences to his wife Libby, his two sons and daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren.

## State Transportation Board, Congressional District 2

## A snapshot of Johnny Floyd

By Liz Rothman

Gas was 10 cents a gallon. The Yankees beat the Cubs in four games to win the World Series. And Benny Goodman was the king of swing. It was 1938, the year that Johnny Floyd was born.



Floyd represents southwest Georgia's Congressional District 2 on the State Transportation Board, including the cities of Albany, Americus, Bainbridge, portions of Columbus and Macon, and his home of Cordele.

The family man, businessman, civic leader and former state legislator recently shared a snapshot of himself.

**Early on** Johnny Floyd was born and raised in Ridgeland, South Carolina – in the Lowcountry between Savannah and Hilton Head. *We were very family oriented, lived on farm. Dad was in the timber business, mother ran the family grocery store. I had three sisters. We were quite a large extended family. My dad was one of 21 kids - my grandfather and his brother married two sisters and they had 37 kids between them!*

After completing Forest Ranger School at the University of Florida, Floyd moved to Fargo (Ga) where he worked for the St. Regis Paper Company. He graduated from Georgia Southwestern University in Americus. *I met my wife Judy – the former Judy Jones of LaGrange – when I worked for the paper company. Her family was in the timber business and I bought lumber from them.*

**On to Cordele** The Floyds moved to Cordele in 1970. Their two sons and five grandchildren live nearby. He is president of Floyd Timber Company, a forestry products company specializing in timber sales. *I've been managing and cutting timberlands for 46 years.*

Floyd was elected to the Georgia Legislature in 1989. He served 19 years representing Crisp, Dooly, Pulaski and part of Houston counties. *Southwest Georgia has been good to my family and to me. We went there as total strangers with no family connection. The people really supported us.*

## Floyd on Floyd

Describe yourself in three words or phrases.  
*Humble. Willing to listen. Faith in the system.*  
What would we be surprised to learn about you?  
*How much I try to help others.*  
What is your view on the current political climate?  
*We should support the people. The people govern the country.*

**Taking home the bread** In the State House of Representatives, Floyd learned about appropriations and bonds, agriculture and Georgia's transportation issues. *Trying to take the bread home to the constituents who elected me was extremely rewarding. With Gov. Joe Frank Harris, we built an 18-hole golf course at Georgia Veterans State Park (in Cordele). With Gov. Zell Miller, we built a conference center there. Under Gov. Roy Barnes we added a hotel to support the conference center. And with Gov. Sonny Purdue, we put in the marina at Lake Blackshear.*

**On board** In 2008, Floyd was elected by legislators to the State Transportation Board. He has served as chairman and now chairs the Legislative Committee, and is on the Intermodal, P3 and Gateways committees. *Transportation is the hub for economic development. It attracts industry and creates jobs. We see too much of one person in one car. We need to move people by other means - carpool, public transit, commuter rail. We must improve connectivity so people from Athens can work in Atlanta.*

**Giving back** Floyd appreciates his fellow board members, the people at GDOT and his constituents. *I serve on the STB to help give back to the areas that have helped me over the years. GDOT leadership and staff are conscientious. Gov. Deal is outstanding to work with. We've got a great team - all working together to move transportation forward in Georgia.*

**Getting out of the mud** Floyd's district is in River Valley, a region that approved the one percent Transportation Investment Act (TIA) sales tax. The first major result was completion of US 27, which is on a GRIP corridor. However, there is still a basic need for paving. *In Crisp County, rural mail carriers and school buses drive on some 200 miles of dirt roads. TIA will help, but the money is short to go around. We have a need for getting out of the mud.*

**Not all business** Floyd enjoys reading, watching sports and NBC News, and spending time with Bubba, his three year old white lab. *Bubba is a real live wire! Judy has a lap dog. We're animal lovers. I've read all of the Kennedy books—they had the most interesting and fascinating lives—as well as Jimmy and Rosalind Carter, and Zell Miller. I go to church every Sunday and attend Sunday school. I like sports. My teams? The Falcons, Braves, and Georgia Bulldogs!*

## Personnel changes position GDOT for the future

**As Georgia Department of Transportation focuses on meeting increasing challenges, the Department has aligned staff with roles that take advantage of their strengths and better position the Department to serve the citizens of Georgia.**



Russell McMurry was appointed commissioner of Georgia DOT by the State Transportation Board in January. McMurry served as GDOT's chief engineer since 2013. He joined the Department in 1990 as an engineering trainee and has performed in various roles including director of engineering and district engineer in northeast Georgia. McMurry is a registered professional engineer and a cum laude graduate of Georgia Southern University with a bachelor of science in civil engineering technology. He succeeds Keith Golden, who retired.



Meg Pirkle was appointed chief engineer of Georgia DOT. Since 2012, she served as division director of Permits and Operations. Pirkle has been with the Department for more than 25 years, starting in the Office of Planning and working as a transportation engineer, planning engineer, state scheduling engineer, assistant preconstruction division director, division director of administration and assistant to the chief engineer. Pirkle, a registered professional engineer, holds a bachelor's in civil engineering from Vanderbilt University and a master's in civil engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Pirkle is the first woman to serve as Georgia DOT's chief engineer. She succeeds Russell McMurry.



Bayne Smith assumed full-time responsibilities as GDOT director of field services this past fall. He previously performed simultaneously in that role and as District 1 district engineer. The change allows him to focus on working with district engineers on field operations across the state. Smith rejoined

GDOT in 2012 as D1 district engineer. He is a registered professional engineer and has professional traffic operations certification. He has a bachelor's in civil engineering from Georgia Tech.



John Hibbard is the new division director of Permits and Operations. Hibbard, a nationally recognized expert in traffic engineering and intelligent transportation systems, has over 25 years of experience in transportation operations.

His previous roles include operations division manager for Cobb County DOT and VP/National ITS and traffic practice manager at Atkins. He has a bachelor's and a master's in civil engineering from Georgia Tech. He succeeds Meg Pirkle.



Brent Cook was appointed district engineer in District 1. The 22-year GDOT veteran began his career in GDOT's training program. He became an urban planning engineer in the Office of Planning; served as planning and programming engineer in D1; then district traffic engineer and district pre-construction engineer. In 2013, he was named assistant district engineer, a role he performed while he was district preconstruction engineer. Cook received the Commissioner's Merit Award in 2000. He has a bachelor's and a master's in civil engineering from Georgia Tech; and he is a registered professional engineer.



Michael Presley was appointed district engineer in District 3. Presley joined the Department in 1994 as an entry level engineer in the Office of Traffic Operations. He worked in the TMC during the Olympic era and helped develop, install and operate the state-of-the-art NaviGator ITS system. He held various positions in D3, including traffic operations engineer, area engineer and district traffic engineer. Presley, a graduate of Southern Tech, is a registered professional engineer in Georgia and Alabama. He replaces Thomas Howell, who retired.



Chad Hartley was selected district engineer in District 4. A 26-year GDOT veteran, he started his employment with GDOT as a civil engineer technologist. He was promoted to project manager where he oversaw construction projects throughout D4. He then held numerous positions in D5 including area engineer, assistant district construction engineer, district maintenance engineer, and assistant district engineer. Hartley graduated from Southern Polytechnic State University and Valdosta State University.



Kathy Zahul was named district engineer in District 7, the state's smallest geographic district, and it's most highly populated and most congested. Most recently Zahul served four years as state traffic engineer in the Office of Traffic Operations. In her 19 years at GDOT, she has worn many hats in construction and operations – beginning as a transportation engineer associate; then going on to construction project engineer, assistant area engineer, regional bridge inspection engineer, state aid engineer, traffic design manager, and assistant state traffic engineer. Zahul is a graduate of Auburn University and a registered professional engineer. She is passionate about safety and is committed to a future with zero highway fatalities.

Due to the unique complexity of tasks in D7, GDOT has also created two new assistant district engineer positions in D7 – one to focus on maintenance in the metro area and the other to oversee traffic engineering operations.



Rachel Brown was tapped to join the Office of Organizational Performance Management (OPM) to lead Transportation Asset Management implementation strategies. She has broad experience in key areas of asset management, including administration, maintenance and district operations. Brown was most recently the District 7 district engineer. The 25-year Georgia DOT veteran has served in a variety of other positions, including construction claims engineer, assistant area engineer-construction, area engineer, district administrative officer/assistant D.E., and assistant state maintenance engineer. Brown holds degrees in journalism from the University of Georgia and civil engineering technology from Gaston College.



Andrew Heath was selected to lead the Office of Traffic Operations as state traffic engineer. His efforts will focus on the Department's top priorities – continuing to reduce the number of statewide fatalities and addressing congestion. Heath has been with GDOT for seven years. He was most recently the executive assistant to the chief engineer, and has held various positions in the Planning Division. Heath has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master of science in civil engineering from Auburn University. He is a licensed professional engineer.



Paul DeNard was selected as executive assistant to the chief engineer. He most recently served as the state traffic operations manager, where he managed the Department's Operational Improvement Program and specialized in traffic engineering policy, operational studies, signal permitting, roundabouts and alternative intersection designs. DeNard began his career in transportation at North Carolina DOT and came to work for GDOT's Office of Traffic Operations in 2007. He possesses a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from North Carolina State University, and is a licensed professional engineer and professional traffic operations engineer (PTOE). He is active in GDOT's Succession Planning program.



David Jared was promoted to assistant office head/Research in the Office of Organizational Performance Management. His 21 years at GDOT have focused on research; he has served as unit chief and branch chief. Jared is GDOT's international exchange coordinator and a member of the AASHTO Standing Committee on Research, a national-level research prioritization committee. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Georgia Tech and is a licensed professional engineer.



# Interstate 285 at Georgia State Route 400 Interchange Reconstruction Project name belies complexity

By Liz Rothman

The interchange at I-285 and SR 400 handles 400,000 vehicles a day and is known for its bottlenecks. Now plans for the state's highest-priority transportation infrastructure improvement project—and it's most expensive road project ever—are coming to fruition. The interchange is centrally located at the top end of the Perimeter, the largest office market in metro Atlanta and one of the region's leading employment centers.

"This project is a top priority for metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia," said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry. "It will alleviate congestion, improve connectivity, create jobs and grow businesses. It will help move people and goods more safely and efficiently."

In May, working with key stakeholders and partners, GDOT obtained the necessary Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) environmental impact clearances.

Yvonne Williams, president and CEO of the Perimeter Community Improvement Districts, noted the significance of partnering with stakeholders in all phases of the project. "We have a positive history of moving projects ahead by working with the Georgia Department of Transportation and Governor Deal on strategic transportation investments. PCIDs are proud to work with our federal, statewide and regional partners once again in innovative project delivery."

In February GDOT selected four "short list" vendors to provide competitive bid packages highlighting innovation in design and construction for the design-build-finance (DBF), public-private partnership (P3) procurement. Selection of the "best value" contractor is anticipated in December, with construction to begin in late 2016 and open to traffic anticipated in 2020.

These developer teams made the short list:

- AWH Roadbuilders, LLC**  
Contractors: Archer Western Contractors LLC and Hubbard Construction Company / Engineer: Parsons
- Dragados-Flatiron-Prince JV**  
Contractors: Dragados USA Inc, Flat Iron Constructors Inc, Prince Contracting / Engineers: Figg Bridge Engineering, Stantec Consulting Services Inc
- North Perimeter Contractors**  
Contractor: Ferrovial Agroman US Corp  
Engineers: The Louis Berger Group Inc, Neel-Shaffer
- Skanska/Balfour Beatty, a Joint Venture**  
Contractors: Skanska, Balfour Beatty Infrastructure Inc.  
Engineer: Atkins

## Beyond The Interchange

While the project is called an "interchange reconstruction," it is much more. The goals are to improve travel times and safety by increasing interchange ramp capacity to accommodate more vehicles and to reduce vehicular weaving along the two routes. It features new interchange flyover bridges and ramps as well as operational improvements in the vicinity, including collector-distributor (CD) lanes\* to aid I-285 east-west travel and SR 400 north-south travel.

"To significantly impact operations and safety, we need to make improvements on all approaches to the interchange," noted GDOT Project Manager Marlo Clowers. "This project extends from Roswell Road to Ashford-Dunwoody on 285 and from Glenridge to Spalding Drive on 400. It includes 33 bridges throughout the entire project, including four or five levels crisscrossing each other within the interchange proper."

## THE SPECIFICS

On I-285, the project begins west of Roswell Road in Fulton County and extends approximately 4.3 miles to east of Ashford-Dunwoody Road in DeKalb County. On GA 400, the project begins just south of the Glenridge Connector and extends approximately 1.2 miles north to Hammond Drive, where it ties into an adjacent CD lanes project from Hammond Drive to just north of Spalding Drive.

At the interchange, new flyover bridges will be constructed and existing ramps will be

reconstructed. Radiating from the interchange, existing bridges will be reconstructed and widened; barrier-separated CD lanes will be constructed along I-285 and SR 400; and grade-separated, braided ramps will be constructed in the vicinity of SR 400, Ashford-Dunwoody Road and Roswell Road to eliminate conflicts between entering and exiting traffic. Recently completed projects at Ashford Dunwoody Road and Roswell Road interchanges will be preserved.

## Innovative Delivery

Improvements are essentially two stand-alone projects (I-285/SR 400 Interchange Reconstruction P.I. # 0000784 and SR 400 Collector-Distributor (CD) Lanes P.I. # 721850-) under one design-build-finance (DBF), public-private partnership (P3). The overall estimated price of \$1.056 billion includes private financing of \$600-\$650 million, with the state to pay back the money within five years after project completion. There is no tolling associated with this project.

## How Will Construction Affect Drive Times?

GDOT will do everything it can to minimize the impact of construction on motorists, McMurry said. There will be evening and weekend lane closures, perhaps an occasional workday lane closure. Much of the work can be done outside of the lanes of traffic.

"Starting a massive and complex project like this is painful for everyone," McMurry acknowledged. "But you've got to start, or you'll never get there."

*\*A Collector-Distributor (CD) lane is a parallel controlled-access roadway that separates high-speed through traffic from lower-speed entering and exiting local traffic.*

INFORMATION:  
[www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/i-285-sr-400-improvements](http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/i-285-sr-400-improvements)

www.dot.ga.gov

# The NEW Georgia DOT TravelSmart website

By Liz Rothman

## Georgia DOT is more than roads and bridges

That's the premise of **TravelSmart**, the theme for the Department's new website that launched in March. TravelSmart encompasses all aspects of mobility – roads and bridges; public transit; general aviation; rail; waterways; and bike and pedestrian programs. TravelSmart reflects Georgia DOT'S big picture – who we are, our services, our programs and the work that we do.

## A complete website revamp and consolidation

The site has a fresh new design. It's fast and easy to navigate - on smartphones, tablets or computers.

"Our website development team worked many months researching website best practices, reviewing content and design; conducting focus groups, and evaluating data

and feedback from the previous site," said Electronic Design Coordinator Ron Battle. "The result is a concise and easy to read website - with a clean, professional look."

TravelSmart has four components:

- **DriveSmart** addresses safety, congestion and mobility
- **PartnerSmart** relates to how we work with partners
- **BuildSmart** includes project planning and construction
- **InvestSmart** focuses on providing Georgians with high returns on their investments

As you hover over each component, drop-down options appear. Hover again for more links. From the TravelSmart navigation menu, you can access any page on the site. You can also use the search function to find what you need.

The home page includes links to About GDOT; State Transportation Board, Employment, Contact Us and a Site Map,

as well as a rotating banner with important and timely information. There are also Announcements and Key Services boxes, and a trending on Twitter box. Plus sliders that link to major projects and initiatives.

The TravelSmart website is a one-stop source for all that is Georgia DOT - rich in information for employees, consultants, contractors, partner agencies and citizens.

Visit [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)  
Send questions and feedback to [TravelSmart@dot.ga.gov](mailto:TravelSmart@dot.ga.gov).



## From \$1 million to \$5.4 million

# Property damage collections surge under new process

By Liz Rothman

When crashes damage state property, those signs and guardrails must be repaired or replaced.

Historically, collections were handled in-house by GDOT. Now 16 months after GDOT hired damage recovery firm Claims Management Resources, Inc. (CMR) to act as the state's agent in recovering those costs, the results speak for themselves.

For the 12 months ending Dec. 1, 2014, compared to a previous four-year average of annual recoveries, collections swelled from \$1 million to \$5.4 million.

"Partnering with a firm that specializes in damage recovery negotiations has enabled us to recoup significantly more funds," said Deputy Commissioner Todd Long. "It also allows GDOT staff to focus on operating

our state routes and interstates, rather than chasing paperwork."

The program operates at no cost to Georgia taxpayers and the funds funnel back into transportation projects.

## By the numbers

12/1/2013 – 12/1/2014





Georgia Ports Authority/Stephen B. Morton

## Savannah Harbor deepening & expansion moves to construction

By Liz Rothman

**T**he Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP) will deepen the shipping channel from 42 feet to 47 feet in order to accommodate massive cargo ships that will pass through the Panama Canal after its expansion is completed in 2016. The SHEP also includes extending the existing entrance channel by seven miles and navigational improvements, such as wider channel turns and a larger turning basin.

A Project Partnership Agreement (PPA), signed in October by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia Department of Transportation and the Georgia Ports Authority, cleared the way for construction. The PPA defines how the costs, estimated at \$706 million, are shared between the state and federal governments. The state's portion—\$266 million dollars—is being used to start construction, with the federal portion to come later.

The construction phase is underway. January began the recovery and preservation of the remains of the CSS Georgia, a sunken Confederate ironclad resting next to the shipping channel near Old Fort Jackson. In March the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a contract to begin dredging the outer harbor.

### Offsetting the adverse consequences of dredging is critical - nearly half of project cost is for environmental mitigation.

"Before dredging of the inner harbor can begin, all mitigation features must be in progress or completed" noted Claude Jackson, Georgia DOT's waterways program manager. "This includes a dissolved oxygen injection system to pump oxygen into the Savannah River; a raw water storage impoundment area for the city of Savannah's domestic water supply; recovery of the remains of the CSS Georgia; marsh restoration; freshwater wetlands preservation; fish bypass for endangered sturgeon; and stocking of striped bass."

### GDOT's Role

While the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructs and maintains Georgia's harbors, GDOT is a local sponsor, providing funding and technical assistance to support construction and maintenance. As the non-federal sponsor, GDOT is also responsible for land acquisition, rights-of-way, and easements necessary for the construction and mitigation features of SHEP.

Normally land acquisition would not begin until after the signing of the PPA, but in an effort to expedite construction of this vitally important project, GDOT initiated the land acquisition process well before its signing.

"GDOT utilized its in-house right-of-way acquisition personnel and its survey/location crews to secure the properties required for the oxygen injection system and raw water storage impoundment area," Jackson said. "We are working diligently to acquire the remaining properties, and the Corps of Engineers is positioned to proceed with the construction phase of these features as soon as the properties are secured."

Keeping freight moving on Georgia's highways is essential to the state's economic health. Georgia's Freight Corridor Network—the key strategic highway routes that handle the flow of freight to and from locations in Georgia—accommodates the current and projected flow of freight for efficient north-south, east-west and last mile access. Transportation infrastructure improvements—like the Jimmy Deloach Parkway Extension with an expected completion in summer 2016, which will connect the port directly to Interstates 95 and 16—will help to handle the increase in truck traffic due to the port expansion.

For more information on SHEP, visit [www.sas.usace.army.mil](http://www.sas.usace.army.mil)

### Operational Purchasing

## Working to Keep Georgia Moving —Through Snow and Ice

By Carla Murphy

**T**hey are tough negotiators – relying on skills, relationships, and perhaps even a little charm – to deliver the best product at the best price on time to the Georgia DOT. The products can vary, from 200 fine point Sharpie permanent markers, to a single-axle tandem truck, to salt at the height of one of the severest ice storms to hit the state in decades.

Whatever the needs, it's the job of Georgia DOT's Operational Purchasing team to make it happen.

As the state prepared for inclement weather this past winter, the office worked behind the scenes, placing the Department in the best position to ensure that interstates and state routes were safe for necessary travel. They serve as the conduit from which vendor products flow to their important customers.

"I like to say that our job is to help our customers be successful," said Operational Purchasing Manager Mary Zirock. "We understand that in the case of our maintenance employees in particular, our job is to make sure they have what they need to keep everybody – the public and our employees – safe."

### Hauling All Salt!

To that end, months before a snow, ice or other event occurs, Operational Purchasing staff begins making preparations, said Zirock. "We began preparing for snow and ice immediately following the last storm in February 2014," she added, noting that her team gathers for debriefings, assesses its performance and conducts research on new technologies and best practices as part of their preparation.

"We take a look at our processes and review just about everything that happened before and after a storm," added Purchasing Contracts Manager Vanessa Walker. "We look at whether we need to make contract amendments; identify any contract breaches or vendor complaints; see if there were product failures; check for funding gaps or holes and anything else that may hamper us in getting the job done."

In fact, it was during the height of the 2014 winter storm that the team demonstrated the skills and even the relationships it takes to ready Georgia's roads for travel during snow and ice.

"The first storm took 18,000 tons of salt the Department stored for winter in early 2014," said Zirock. "And there was no way to predict back-to-back storms." What occurred over a matter of hours demonstrated why negotiating skills and relationships matter.

As Georgia DOT searched for salt in anticipation of a second storm in February 2014, the nearest location from which to deliver it was Charleston, South Carolina. The challenge? Due to the approaching storm, the salt vendor did not have resources to arrange hauling services to deliver the product to us.

So what was Plan B? "Go get the salt," shared Zirock. Following negotiations, she and her team worked with District 5 maintenance staff to organize a convoy of Georgia DOT single axle trucks to meet in Charleston to load 300 tons of salt and deliver it in time for a wintry mix moving into Georgia.

"As District 5 was getting salt in South Carolina, we were coordinating with commercial haulers to get 5,600 additional tons of salt", she added, noting that the procurement specialist working to identify haulers did so using a cellphone and a laptop powered by her car battery following the loss of electricity to her home. With all hands on deck, the team secured thousands of tons of salt, despite a widespread shortage across the country.

"It was a total team effort – with maintenance and our contractors – to get the job done," she said, noting that her team also relied on their relationship with salt contractors in their negotiations.

### Ready. Set. Snow.

As the state prepared for its next major storm in winter 2015, Operational Purchasing geared up yet again – this time with a few lessons learned. For instance, the team negotiated prices for sodium chloride (salt); renegotiated contracts to include a provision for "picking up" salt and hauling storm debris; worked with maintenance teams to add salt barns in strategic locations; and increased the Department's salt storage level to 40,000 tons. Additionally, the team worked with maintenance staff to put in place the Roadway Weather Information System, which allows GDOT staff to monitor pavement temperatures and conditions prior to a storm, noted Purchasing Supervisor Tim Swink.

"We're behind the scenes—which is okay with us," said Zirock. "It's important for us to make sure everybody has what they need, even if it means we have to get things done from a laptop powered by a car battery," she laughed.



Georgia DOT's Operational Purchasing Team  
(From left) Cynthia Mapp-Huger; Sterling Crocker; Lukasha Diah; Tim Swink; Brandee Williams; Kimberly Lyda; Chris Alger; Mary Zirock; Maria Roux; Vanessa Walker; Kristina Berry

TIA reveals truth in the adage...

# Watch the pennies and the dollars take care of themselves

By Liz Rothman

**R**esidents in 46 middle-Georgia counties can appreciate that clichéd wisdom. While federal lawmakers continue to debate long-term solutions for the country's transportation funding woes, these Georgians are reaping the benefits of addressing the transportation funding challenge head-on – with a penny.

The counties comprise the three regions that voted yes on a 10-year one percent sales tax in 2012's Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Referendum. The Central Savannah River Area (CSRA - Augusta area), Heart of Georgia Altamaha (HOGA - Dublin, Jesup and Vidalia area) and River Valley (Columbus area) are expected, over a decade, to generate a total of \$1.5 billion dedicated to regional and local transportation improvements.

Based on sales tax revenue projections, CSRA has budgeted \$539 million for 84 projects; HOGA has budgeted \$256 million for 764 projects; and River Valley has budgeted \$381 million for 23 projects. These are in addition to funds for use on local discretionary projects.

Butt Memorial Bridge (15th Street over Augusta Canal) in Central Savannah River Area's Richmond County. The 100 year-old concrete arch bridge will be repaired and restored as a result of TIA funds.

Photo: Cissy McNure/GDOT

## Improvements would not get done without TIA funds

Due to the national transportation funding crisis, in the month of January—for the first time in modern memory—GDOT let no federally-funded projects. However, four TIA projects were let.

In the two years since tax collections began on January 1, 2013, the transportation tax has generated \$245 million to help subsidize projects. This includes \$112.6 million in the CSRA; \$81.3 million in River Valley; and \$51.1 million in HOGA.

While collections are almost 16 percent short of projections, the program is still in the early stages.

*"It's a 10-year program. We have completed over 100 projects in the last calendar year and significant projects are moving forward,"* said TIA Administrator Mike Dover. *"We've made adjustments in our approach – like bundling smaller projects and finding innovative ways to design and construct projects with reduced costs, without compromising project scope and goals. I am confident we can make our milestones for delivery of Band 1 projects."*

The 871 projects on the approved investment lists include roadways, bypasses, bridges, safety enhancements, signal upgrades, interchange reconstructions, multi-use facilities, airport and transit projects, and resurfacings. Funding was sought for years for many of these projects; they are now made possible because TIA allows leveraging of funds from other sources to advance projects that had no construction funds previously identified.

Whether it is a road-widening project to improve safety, efficiency and traffic flow in CSRA; a bypass for trucks leaving the Port of Savannah to avoid the city of Eastman in HOGA; or a bridge replacement in River Valley, the 186 projects let to construction through December 2014 wouldn't be underway or completed without TIA funds. These projects represent construction contracts valued in excess of \$140 million.

**"The country may be waiting for Congress to decide how to handle federal funding for transportation, but here in the CSRA we know how we are going to keep projects going in the years to come. We are going to use TIA funds – money collected in this region because we voted for it – and we can spend it on needed transportation projects,"** said STB Member Jamie Boswell. **"More money for transportation is always needed, and we are fortunate that we are going to have a steady source for some of those funds over the next decade."**

## Leveling the playing field

In 2012, the Transportation Board reaffirmed its commitment to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and issued a resolution to encourage the use of certified disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) (including minority and woman-owned businesses), small business enterprises (SBE) and veteran-owned businesses (VBE) for work on TIA projects.

GDOT conducted significant statewide outreach regarding TIA, including six events focused on DBE/SBE/VBE, eight industry forums, as well as numerous local and small business events. As of December 2014, the average DBE/SBE/VBE participation is eight percent.

TIA projects are helping GDOT provide work for 17 Georgia construction companies and 30 consulting firms.

## Second year regional status reports

A Citizen's Review Panel assesses progress and expenditures in each region, and presents an annual status report to the Georgia General Assembly. Here are excerpts from the transmittal letters.

*"...There are six completed TIA projects as of this date in the CSRA Region...completed with projected final costs at or below original budget...it should be particularly noted that a completed project in Washington County, RC07- 000175 -- Deepstep Rd., has a projected final cost savings vs. budget of approximately \$951,000...our second year of TIA...has remained...a very positive experience for our panel and the citizens we represent."*

Philip R. Wahl II, chairman, Central Savannah River Area Citizen's Review Panel, December 29, 2014

*"Mike Dover, his staff, as well as other GDOT staff continue to be very helpful to our communities and to this panel in accomplishing the duties assigned, to improve transportation in Region 9..."*

Billy Trapnel, chairman, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Citizen's Review Panel, December 24, 2014

*"...many projects are underway with tangible benefits being realized. All of the band-one projects will be underway this year... our appreciation to GDOT personnel for the professional manner and support they have provided the River Valley Region Panel. Through their efforts, we continue to realize the benefits of the Transportation Investment Act."*

Jermiah P. Carney, chairman, River Valley Region Citizens Review Panel, December 8, 2014

See the complete reports on the TIA webpage.

**Visit Georgia DOT's TIA webpage:** [www.ga-tia.com](http://www.ga-tia.com). To receive TIA Program updates in your inbox, email [TIA@dot.ga.gov](mailto:TIA@dot.ga.gov).

Anniversary marked with remembrance and awards

# HEROs Celebrate 20 Years of Assisting Georgia Motorists

By Carla Murphy

“The beginning of the HERO program represented a significant event and milestone for Georgia DOT. We went from building roads to operating and managing incidents on our interstates.”

Marion Waters,  
State Traffic Operations Engineer (retired)

**T**hey don't don capes or leap from tall buildings, but the Georgia Emergency Highway Operators (HEROs) have been rescuing motorists and metro Atlanta traffic for 20 years now, serving as a model for traffic management officials around the world.

At a ceremony marking the occasion of the HEROs 20th Anniversary recently, Retired State Transportation Engineer Marion Waters called establishing the HERO program a historic moment. “The beginning of the program represented a significant event and milestone for Georgia DOT. We went from building roads to operating and managing incidents on our interstates. What we achieved was extraordinary,” he said. Indeed.

It was in 1994 – two years prior to Atlanta's hosting of the Summer Olympic Games – that Georgia DOT established the HERO program, placing the brightly-colored trucks on interstate highways with a primary mission – to clear roadways of disabled or wrecked vehicles so that normal traffic flow is restored. In addition to incident management, HEROs also assist stranded motorists and help with traffic control.

The program, which operates from Georgia DOT's Office of Traffic Operations, was expanded as part of the Department's NaviGator Intelligent Transportation System. Since its launch, the program has experienced extraordinary growth, with more than 100 trucks operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week patrolling more than 310 miles of interstate. The program now has a presence in 13 counties, most recently adding Coweta County in 2014.

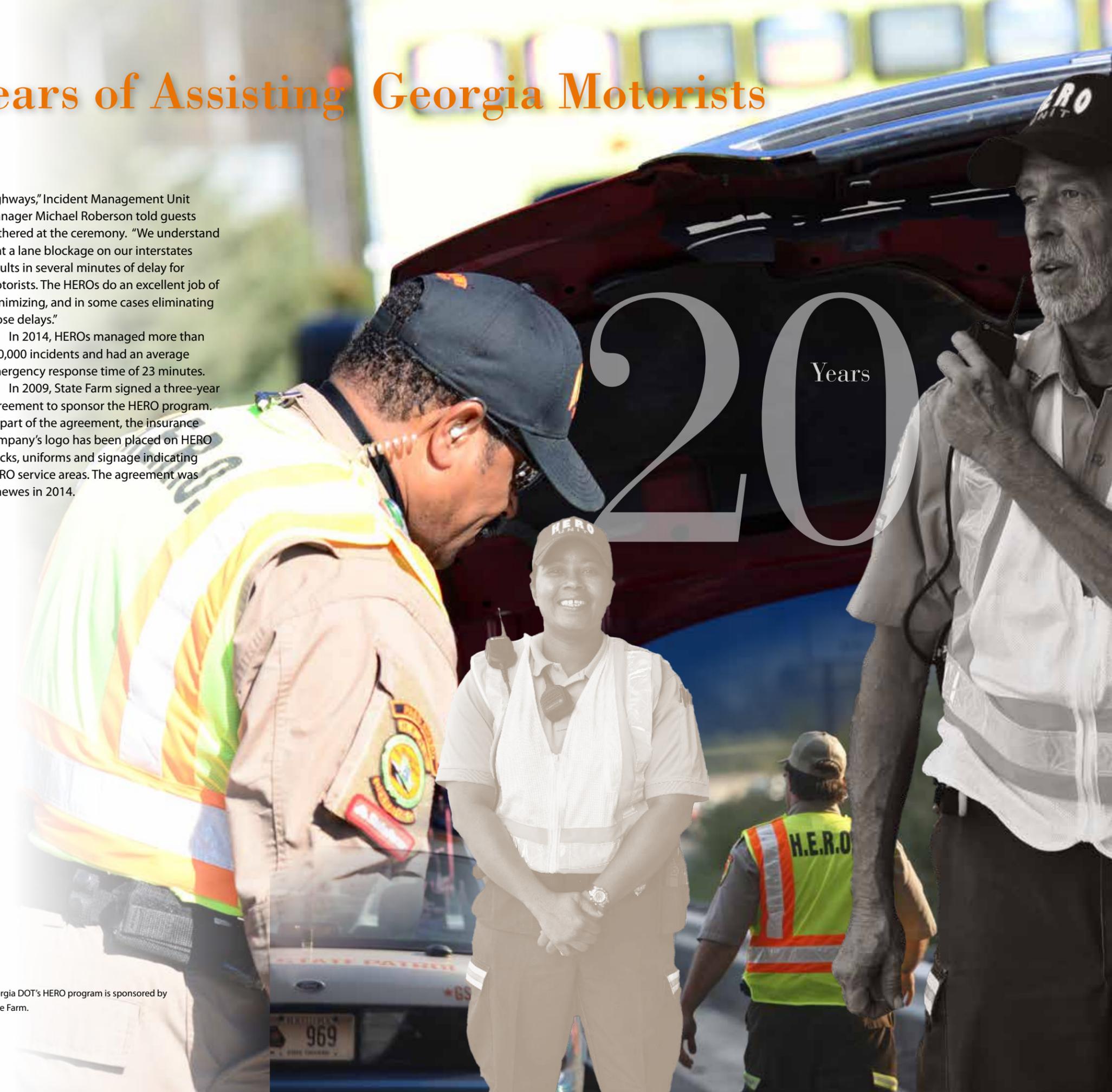
“The HERO program has been an important part of the Department's comprehensive efforts to keep traffic moving on metro Atlanta interstate

highways,” Incident Management Unit Manager Michael Roberson told guests gathered at the ceremony. “We understand that a lane blockage on our interstates results in several minutes of delay for motorists. The HEROs do an excellent job of minimizing, and in some cases eliminating those delays.”

In 2014, HEROs managed more than 130,000 incidents and had an average emergency response time of 23 minutes.

In 2009, State Farm signed a three-year agreement to sponsor the HERO program. As part of the agreement, the insurance company's logo has been placed on HERO trucks, uniforms and signage indicating HERO service areas. The agreement was renewed in 2014.

Georgia DOT's HERO program is sponsored by State Farm.



## Addressing safety, congestion, connectivity in Douglasville

By Liz Rothman



When LaShun Burr-Danley was a child, the fire department could not save her family's home.

"My house was struck by lightning and it burned to the ground," Burr-Danley said. "That's because a train was blocking the railroad tracks and the fire trucks could not cross."

That was over 30 years ago. Now Burr-Danley, a lifelong resident of Douglasville's Northside community, is a city councilwoman and chair of the City Council Transportation Committee.

She was one of the dignitaries who participated in the August groundbreaking for the State Route (SR) 92 Relocation Project in Douglasville.

### Safety First

A key component of the 3.1-mile road relocation and widening project is a grade separation railroad crossing—an underpass—which will run beneath the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks at U. S. Highway 78 (Broad Street) and East Strickland Street. The location is east of the current Brown Street grade level crossing which will be eliminated.

"Our public safety agencies sometimes have their response times compromised when trains are blocking the crossing, so that issue will be eliminated," Douglasville Mayor Harvey Persons said. "This will also enable motorists not to be blocked when a train is traveling through town or is stopped in one of our crossings. The underpass will provide seamless connectivity for daily commutes and emergencies. It's a great benefit to the community in many ways."

Several other grade level crossings will close. One will remain open and another will be rebuilt with added safety features.

### The Project

In addition to railroad crossing improvements, the 3.1-mile project widens the current two-lane SR 92 to a divided six-lane highway that will be well-lighted, with excel-decel lanes for safe traffic flow, and traffic signals at major intersections, including a preemptive fire station signal. It also includes specially designed noise barriers; retaining walls with noise barriers; pedestrian enhancements; landscaping; stamped concrete; and customized parking at Jesse Davis Park.

While the current course runs through the edge of the downtown business district, the new route swings east to reconnect with the Dallas Highway adjacent to Davis Park, serving as a north-south connector in Douglasville. It will be easier for Douglas County and Paulding County motorists to travel to and from I-20 and areas north of Douglasville, and to reach the hospital, major shopping areas, and public schools. The new route will not only benefit the local community and neighboring counties, but will also have significant regional impact to the metro Atlanta area.

The project will be constructed in three phases beginning with the railroad crossing underpass. Final completion is anticipated in 2018. The overall price tag of \$111 million includes \$43 million in right-of-way acquisition of 240 parcels. CW Matthews Contracting Co., Inc is constructing the project.

### Economic Development

While through-traffic will shift to the new Highway 92, Dallas Highway will continue to be the northern gateway to Douglasville. Through their Opportunity Zone employment incentive program, the City of Douglasville is working on economic development opportunities. Programs are underway to encourage more downtown activity. Additional lighting and sidewalk improvements are also planned.

### Nearly Four Decades

Initial plans for the project began to take form in the late 1970s.

"I have wanted to see this happen from the time I served on the City Council some 25 years ago," said Persons. "Once this major regional road project is completed, north-south traffic will move through the city of Douglasville more quickly, more conveniently, and more safely."

### CONTACT:

**Peter Emmanuel**, GDOT Project Manager, [pemmanuel@dot.ga.gov](mailto:pemmanuel@dot.ga.gov)

The SR 92 Relocation Project received the Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality (GPTQ) Grand Prize award in their 2014 Preconstruction Design Competition. The design consultant is URS Corporation. GPTQ is a partnership between the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Georgia, Georgia DOT and the Georgia Highway Contractors Association (GHCA). Their goal is to strengthen working relationships between the parties that design, build, operate and maintain Georgia's transportation infrastructure.



Georgia DOT spokesperson Natalie Dale kicks off DriveAlert Arrive Alive multi-agency press conference in May. Seated l-r: Governor's Office of Highway Safety Executive Director Harris Blackwood; National Highway Transportation Safety Administration Deputy Regional Director Alex Cabral; Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry, P.E.; Georgia Department of Public Safety Captain Mark Perry; Dr. Anna Elmers, Shepherd Center; and Georgia DOT State Transportation Board Member Sam Wellborn.

## Department Launches Yearlong Campaign to Reduce Roadway Fatalities

By Liz Rothman

**Roadway fatalities are up an average of 25 percent statewide in the first three months of 2015. Even more shocking - many are dying in preventable single vehicle crashes.**

Transportation and law enforcement officials across Georgia in May kicked off DriveAlert ArriveAlive, a campaign that calls attention to an alarming increase in roadway fatalities and to how changes in driver behavior can help decrease these numbers.

The DriveAlert ArriveAlive campaign—a partnership between Georgia DOT, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) and the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS)—implores drivers to take responsibility for their driving behavior.



"With an average of 100 deaths a month, we're on track for 1,200 fatalities in 2015. If we continue at this rate, we could see the first increase in traffic fatalities in nine

years," said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry. "That's just unacceptable—especially when many of these crashes can be prevented by changing driver behavior."

"It's startling when you consider that 60 percent of traffic fatalities in Georgia so far this year are the result of a single vehicle crash," said Harris Blackwood, executive director of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "We are looking at driver behavior as a primary cause—specifically distracted driving."

More drivers are just not focused on driving. They are doing other things—talking on the phone, texting, adjusting the radio, using the GPS, putting on makeup, eating, or just plain daydreaming. And they drift out of their lane or off the road.

Georgia DOT has consistently made safety of the state's roadways a priority. Measures like rumble strips, safety edge, center median cable barriers, high friction surface treatments, reflective signage and

striping, and pedestrian countdown timers all have contributed to nine consecutive years of decreased roadway fatalities in Georgia. The goal of DriveAlert ArriveAlive is to continue the downward trend.

**Take responsibility to protect yourself, your passengers, other drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Drive responsibly. It's easy as 1-2-3.**

- 1. Buckle up** ... Always wear a seat belt no matter how far you drive [it's the law].
- 2. Stay off the phone and mobile devices** ... If possible, shut off the phone to avoid temptation [even hands-free use is a distraction] and no texting [Georgia law bans texting and driving]. Just drive.
- 3. Drive alert** ... Do not drive drowsy or impaired.

Fatalities indicated are for January 1 – March 31, 2015. For more information, to download the DriveAlert ArriveAlive toolkit and to view updates as the year progresses, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/DAAA](http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/DAAA). #ArriveAliveGA

# CONNECTOR

News for and about Employees of Georgia Department of Transportation

## Letters of Praise

### On winter storm response...

Considering the weather this past week, the number of people who work in Atlanta and the number of roads that lead out of the city, I believe that you made an excellent decision on keeping the roads clear of cars so you could do your work. I believe that the Washington D. C. metro area could learn from your policies. Thank you for putting the safety of the people of Atlanta first. Thank you for your recommendation to let parents get their children from school and daycare before the bad weather was to arrive.

D. Rigby

I want to thank everyone at GDOT for the fantastic job that they did keeping the roads as clear as possible on 2/26/15. The hard work showed. What a difference a year makes! I know people complain when a job is done poorly, so I thought I would comment when one was done well!

Thanks again and keep up the great work. I don't mind paying taxes when we get service like this. :)

G. Freed

Thank you all for your hard work that you've put in the last 48 hours. I came up from Henry County this morning on SR 155 to I-20 to I-285 and the roads were in incredible shape.

THANK YOU!!!

J. Sims

Thank you all working on keeping our roads clear. As a school bus driver for Cobb, I was very happy to see the roads (I-75 from Wade Green through Roswell Rd in East Cobb) clear...as we went to pick up children at 6:00 this morning. Great job folks.

R. Lynch

On 9/3/14 a DOT crew cleaned out the drainage ditches on each side of the road in front of my property. The Highway Maintenance Foreman II, Greg Jacobs was very professional and courteous. The job the crew did was well done. My thanks to him and the entire crew that performed the work at...Hickory Flat Highway, Canton, GA.

J. Adams

*Editor's note: The following is a recap of a voicemail from a citizen who had previously reported (through "Contact Us" on the website) a potential safety issue involving tree branches hanging over a highway.*

I submitted a maintenance request for Highway 16 in Coweta County a couple weeks ago. I wanted to thank you for the prompt response and the message you left for me. And also express my gratitude that the system seemed to work very well and fast. The crew was out there taking care of the trees a couple of days ago. Thank you very much.

S. Seiler

On Friday Nov 30 about 2:00PM, Durwood Griffin, (HERO) Truck# 0271, Log# 573 certainly was my hero. I was returning from a deer hunting trip with frozen venison in the front seat, and fresh Sprayberry's bar-b-q in the back floor.

The back end of my Ford Explorer seemed a little 'squishy' on the turns after clearing the airport and moving onto the downtown connector. I stopped to look at the northbound exit beside Turner Field. The rear tire on the driver's side was very low and very hot. An APD officer contacted HERO while I was trying to inflate the tire with an emergency pump plugged into the cigarette lighter. It wasn't working so it was time for the spare but I had an 80lb Yellow Lab (tracking dog) sitting on the cover over the tire tools. If I moved him inside the car he would eat my supper or gnaw on the frozen venison. I had to tie him to the outside mirror. When Durwood arrived, I was moving around on my 73-year old knees trying to get my small jack under the axle. After a short intro, Durwood swapped the flat for the spare and repacked all the tire gear so I could get the dog back in the car. Everything was easier for Durwood with a hi-lift jack and an air-impact wrench plus a great attitude. He stayed with all of the lights flashing until I pulled away and merged back into traffic.

When I got home in Roswell, the bar-b-q was still warm and the venison was still frozen.

Thanks to Durwood, DOT, and State Farm.

J. Johnson

Just wanted to say that after just two days of the new VSL, I'm quite encouraged by the potential. I drive 285 from Cascade to Ashford Dunwoody every day, and I look forward to actively participating in improving traffic.

BR  
Atlanta

To whom it may concern,  
Wanting to thank you if my letter of June 20, 2014 helped get that turn arrow on Barrett Pky & Chastain. I'm sure I speak for many people (who didn't write to you) who probably think the same thing about waiting for traffic from the other way and not being able to make that left turn. When [I saw] those men working on that intersection, I said "wow, maybe it's happening" and sure enough it happened.

Thanks again for listening & helping the little person be heard.

G. Schlegel, Marietta

*Editor's note: The following message was received after constituency services responded to the citizen's original inquiry concerning the mowing of a state right-of-way in Troup County.*

Dear Customer Service Unit:  
Thank you so much for your prompt reply and especially for the promise of correcting the issue. I must admit that in my cynical view of bureaucracy your response is far, far more than expected. I am a retired federal public servant (federal courts - Atlanta) who always made an effort to be "a good servant"; but that was not always the case with a few. You've restored my faith in Georgia government (at least in GDOT).  
Thanks! And God Bless!

J. Evans

*Editor's note: The following message was received six days after the citizen notified GDOT about a bump in the road that was creating a safety issue on SR 53.*

I just wanted to take a moment and say Thank You. The speed of service and communication into how it was being resolved was much more than I expected.

Also please forward this e mail to the individuals that actually came out and repaved the surface. Thank you for all each of you do daily.

J. Guck

*Editor's note: The following message reflects a conversation with a constituent that was shared with supervisors*

Last week, a vehicle windshield was damaged as a driver passed a mowing operation in Fayette County. Ron Rogers reported the incident to me and advised that the driver was upset and unnerved by the event. Ron gathered the driver's information and brought it with him to the District Office as he was attending a meeting in Thomaston that day. He let me know that he had called and checked on Mrs. Walker shortly after the incident.

Mrs. Walker called today to check on her claim. In our conversation, she expressed her appreciation in the concern that she was shown by Ron and his crew at the time of the event. She let me know that Ron had called to check on her once again since the incident.

The concern shown by the Fayette County crew is an excellent reflection on GDOT and its employees.

Job well done!!

Teresa Booker  
Safety Officer, D3, Thomaston

**Please share your letters and emails with CONNECTOR. Email [erothman@dot.ga.gov](mailto:erothman@dot.ga.gov).**

Results are in

# GDOT Employee Survey

The 2014 Employee Survey, conducted this past summer, focused on the tools, training and resources employees need to improve their job performance and to aid in their career advancement.

The survey was shorter than in previous years and it was carried out by GDOT's Office of Organizational Performance Management (OPM), resulting in a reduced cost to conduct the survey. Like past surveys, it was anonymous and participation was voluntary.

## Notable highs and areas of challenge

While most participants feel that their work is valuable and they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their job, about a third agree that open and transparent communication is relayed to employees and that information is shared from level to level within GDOT. Many would participate in a job shadowing or mentoring program if it were offered. The survey was completed by 41 percent of employees.

OPM is working to pinpoint the factors that contributed to employee resistance to take the survey, as well as to suggest proactive actions to leadership based on survey results.

"To improve participation, future surveys could be conducted online and on paper so that more employees can participate, especially those in the field who may not have easy access to the

Internet, explained Strategic Planner Alma Mujkanovic, the survey administrator. "We also need to remind employees that by sharing their thoughts, past surveys have resulted in interview debriefs, leadership visits to districts and a change in the focus of the 2014 survey.

## Call to action

Information gleaned from the 2014 survey resulted in recommendations that could enhance opportunities for employees. These include a formalized job shadowing program; reinstating mid-level supervisory training with an emphasis on communications; a study on how to engage and retain 5-10 year tenure employees; and improving communication with employees about the survey findings and resulting outcomes.

See the survey results and the Survey Lunch & Learn presentation on mygdot in the Our GDOT section. Send suggestions to [employeesurvey2014@dot.ga.gov](mailto:employeesurvey2014@dot.ga.gov).



## Help tell the story of the Department's first 100 years!

By Liz Rothman



It's a story that deserves telling.

From humble beginnings in 1916 to today's modern transportation system, Georgia Department of Transportation has worked for nearly a century to improve the quality of life for Georgians, to develop a favorable business climate and to advance the economic health of the state.

### Leading up to GDOT's 100th birthday.

In preparation for the GDOT Centennial in 2016, the Centennial Planning Committee is collecting documents, photographs and physical objects about GDOT from across the decades. We'll tell the GDOT story using old maps; documents; employee publications; magazines; photographs; illustrations; equipment; roadway markers; signs; and transportation-related artifacts. The goal is to track our history, beginning as the State Highway Board and to travel through the decades showcasing our successes and challenges. These items may be used online, and for events, displays, traveling exhibits, brochures and videos.

Georgia DOT has a rich history. Help us complete the narrative of the first 100 years!

If you or someone you know have items to loan, please contact the Centennial Collections Coordinator (CCC) in your area:

#### Metro Atlanta offices, OMR, District 7:

Stardina Wyche [swyche@dot.ga.gov](mailto:swyche@dot.ga.gov) 404.608.4800

**District 1:** Kim Coley [kcoley@dot.ga.gov](mailto:kcoley@dot.ga.gov) 770.531.5748

**District 2:** Zina Stephens [zstephens@dot.ga.gov](mailto:zstephens@dot.ga.gov) 478.357.1511

**District 3:** Teresa Booker [tbooker@dot.ga.gov](mailto:tbooker@dot.ga.gov) 706.646.7517

**District 4:** Stephanie Griner [sgriner@dot.ga.gov](mailto:sgriner@dot.ga.gov) 229.391.5515

**District 5:** Ginger Collins [gcollins@dot.ga.gov](mailto:gcollins@dot.ga.gov) 912.530.4360

Teresa Tootle [ttootle@dot.ga.gov](mailto:ttootle@dot.ga.gov) 912.530.4383

Margie Sloan [msloan@dot.ga.gov](mailto:msloan@dot.ga.gov) 912.427.5700

**District 6:** Dee Corson [dcorson@dot.ga.gov](mailto:dcorson@dot.ga.gov) 678.721.5288

The Centennial project is a collaboration between the Communications, Research, and Environmental Services offices.

# Bravo 2014 Statewide Award Winners!

By Julette Carter

## Wayne Shackelford Leadership



**Thomas McQueen**, Planning Division

The Wayne Shackelford Leadership Award—the Department’s highest honor— is presented annually to a single Georgia DOT employee who consistently demonstrates exceptional leadership and expertise, commitment to the Department, and service to the public.

This year’s recipient is Thomas McQueen, assistant state planning administrator.

McQueen’s focus on proactive statewide freight and logistics planning and his extraordinary achievements have resulted in clear value to Georgia’s citizens and businesses. McQueen mobilized and motivated strong project teams to deliver outstanding results, ensure value-added findings and identify creative cost-effective recommendations - all on schedule and within budget. Equally important are his ongoing endeavors to help develop and mentor young transportation professionals in Planning at GDOT. McQueen’s efforts, expertise, and visionary leadership make him an exceptional role model. He has elevated GDOT’s Office of Planning to an enviable position among its peer states.

## Heroism

**District 4 Area 1 Maintenance Crew: Melanie “Dawn” Griffin, Donna “JoAnn” McCorvey, Steven “Trent” Taylor**

When Griffin and McCorvey arrived on the scene of an accident just as it happened, they immediately went into action. Griffin tended to the injured and applied compression to the driver’s head to slow the bleeding. McCorvey called emergency services and directed traffic around the scene using the GDOT truck and flagging. When Taylor arrived, he assisted with first aid. Their selfless acts of heroism saved lives and avoided further injuries.

## OUR GDOT Awards

## Innovator

**District 1 South Hall Routine Maintenance Crew: Danny Crane, Joseph Slade Gabriel, Anthony Boggs, Lynn Shook**

Instead of using the typical motor grader to clip shoulders, this crew came up with an innovative, faster technique. They modified a force feed loader and leebay loader so that clipping material is instantly transferred into a dump truck on the go, while a traffic control team moves ahead to place signs and keep traffic moving. The technique enables them to clip more than 20 miles a day. The South Hall crew perfected a faster and more efficient way to clip shoulders and have shared their innovation with crews across the Department.

## Professional

**Teresa Lannon, Engineering Division, Roadway Design Office**

As a senior design engineer, Lannon consistently demonstrates extraordinary professionalism, exemplary leadership, and teamwork. She uses her sound engineering judgment and skills to mentor junior engineers. Her humor, courtesy, and quick service for internal and external customers have contributed to the success of the Office of Roadway Design.

## Volunteerism

**Sheila Smith, Administrative Division, Legal Services Office**

While caring for her own mother, Smith realized that other employees also function in the unexpected role of caregiver. As a result, she formed and leads the GDOT Caregiver Support Group. Smith hosts regular meetings at One Georgia Center that are video-conferenced to participants in the districts. Her efforts help GDOT employees find some balance between work and the caregiving responsibilities for their loved ones.

## Healthy Employee

**Lalon “Deneen” Walters, District 1, Accounting Office**

This avid runner participates in marathons and local, national and international athletic competitions. Despite a fear of swimming, she worked with a coach to take on the Savannah River in a swimming event. For an Iron Man competition, she swam a mile, biked 56 miles and ran 13 miles. She also ran on the Great Wall of China (and climbed 5000 steps!) with thousands of international competitors. Walters eats carefully, exercises daily and pushes to accomplish her goals.

# Above & Beyond: Commissioner’s Commendation for Excellence

By Julette Carter

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

Richard Taylor, Assistant Foreman; Andrew Pearce, Equipment Operator 1 – District 4

Richard Taylor, a 20-year employee, and Andrew Pearce, who had been with the Department less than a year, work to keep state routes clean and safe for the traveling public in rural southwest Georgia. But their routine was interrupted in the early morning hours in December 2013 when they became more than routine maintenance workers for two elderly women.

The men came upon a vehicle that had pulled onto the shoulder with obvious car troubles. Robbie Green and her mother had a tire blowout; Taylor and Pearce arrived just as the women were about to call for help. Without hesitation, the men pulled out their tools and changed the flat tire.

Area Engineer Bill Cooper nominated Taylor and Pearce for the Customer Service Award. He said: “Richard and Andrew went above and beyond to provide courteous and helpful service to these elderly women. Ms. Green considered their help to be invaluable and she wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper to say so! We are so proud to have Richard and Andrew with their excellent customer service on the District Four Team!”



(L-R) Richard Taylor and Andrew Pearce with then Commissioner Keith Golden

Troy Byers, Assistant State ROW Administrator – Office of Right-of-Way

Troy Byers was responsible for putting together the right-of-way acquisition team for a project that required the purchase of 247 parcels in less than three years. His firsthand knowledge of the State Route 92 project and of the residents of Douglas County allowed him to assemble an awesome team – a team faced with the daunting task of settling with angry property owners, but one that remained fearless in the midst of constant pressure. Byers ensured that all applicable laws and procedures were followed, that GDOT stayed within budget, and that his team delivered on time to meet the accelerated right-of-way completion date.

Peter Emmanuel, project manager for P3 Program Delivery, nominated Byers for the Performance Award. He said: “In the midst of a challenging project, Troy demonstrated that conflict can be handled in a peaceful and civilized manner. He was always available during nights and weekends via phone and email to help his team handle any crisis that came up. Troy’s outstanding leadership paved the way for the SR 92 project to get right-of-way certification for the April 2014 letting.”



Troy Byers (L) and then Commissioner Keith Golden (R)

## COMMISSIONER’S COMMENDATION WINNERS

June 2014

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Dawn Griffin, Highway Maintenance “Forewoman”;  
JoAnn McCorvey, Equipment Operator 1;  
Trent Taylor, Highway Maintenance Foreman – District 4

Richard Taylor, Assistant Foreman and Andrew Pearce, Equipment Operator 1 – District 4

### PERFORMANCE

Troy Byers, Assistant State ROW Administrator – Office of Right-of-Way

Sherrod Smith – Highway Maintenance Foreman 2 – District 3

Debra Hill, Training Officer – District 7

# CONNECTOR

## SHORTS

Georgia Commute Options

### Get more by driving less

Has your commute got you down? Here's an immediate solution to bring you up!



GEORGIA COMMUTE OPTIONS

Get More by Driving Less

Georgia Commute Options—brought to you by Georgia DOT—provides free programs and services that reward you for using an alternative to driving alone to and from work. By reducing the number of cars on the road, we can make an immediate improvement to traffic in Metro Atlanta.

Just once a week, you only need to carpool, vanpool, ride transit, telework, walk, or bike to work to be eligible for these incentives:

- \$3 a Day – by switching from driving alone, you can earn \$3 a day, up to \$100
- \$25 Prizes – when you log clean commute trips, you are entered into a monthly drawing to win a \$25 gift card
- \$40-\$60 Gas Cards – carpools of 3 or more can receive a \$40-\$60 monthly gas card

In the past year, hundreds of GDOT employees eliminated one million vehicle miles traveled and saved more than \$630,000 in fuel and car maintenance. They know the benefits of Georgia Commute Options free services like carpool and vanpool matching, mapping transit routes, telework training, and free ride home when the unexpected happens.

Do you want to get more by driving less? Check out GaCommuteOptions.com or call 1-877-9-GA-OPTIONS.

CONTACT:

**Cindy Bennett**, GDOT's Georgia Commute Options coordinator, can be reached at [cbennett@dot.ga.gov](mailto:cbennett@dot.ga.gov).

### Start an I-85 Express Carpool & Earn Toll Credits

Peach Pass customers who currently drive alone in the I-85 Express Lanes are encouraged to start a two-person carpool and earn up to \$100 in cash and another \$100 in toll credits over a 90-day period! Existing carpools who log their commutes will have the chance to win a \$25 VISA gift card as well as \$25 in toll credits!

This pilot program is a joint partnership between the Georgia Department of Transportation's Georgia Commute Options Program, the State Road & Tollway Authority and the Atlanta Regional Commission. Register at [www.PeachPass.com](http://www.PeachPass.com).

### Are you a Georgia Express Lanes champion?

GDOT is bringing express lanes to metro Atlanta and our employees are our most effective ambassadors. As the Department rolls out Georgia Express Lanes (GEL), GDOT invites you to get to know all about them. When friends, family and neighbors ask questions, you'll have answers – or at the very least, you'll know where to find them.

What is a GEL Champion? It's someone who appreciates this exciting new mobility option and actively shares GEL information at community and neighborhood events.

The Communications Office is visiting GDOT offices to share information on GEL and to encourage employees to sign up as champions. After the visits, we will begin training our champions to prepare them to spread the word – *in any way that they are comfortable*.

Want to know more? For starters, visit the employee GEL web page on [mygdot](http://mygdot). Watch the lighthearted GEL with GDOT Water Cooler Q&A videos - featuring GDOT employees. You will laugh out loud! Plus you'll find details about the various express lanes projects. And don't miss the GEL Education Center on the 4th floor at OGC.

Get involved...spread the word about Georgia Express Lanes. GEL with GDOT!

- Employee GEL page on [mygdot](http://mygdot)
- [www.dot.ga.gov/ds/gel](http://www.dot.ga.gov/ds/gel)
- [www.PeachPass.com](http://www.PeachPass.com)

### Team Georgia Careers – the new site for state agency jobs



TGC is the new site where Georgia DOT and other state agencies advertise their job vacancies. It replaces FastHire and Careers.Ga.Gov.

Here are some things to know:

- No login needed to view external GDOT and Georgia state agency job advertisements
- Login needed for employees to view Internal Only GDOT and Georgia state agency job advertisements
- GDOT job advertisements published weekly on Monday

Visit [www.team.georgia.gov/careers](http://www.team.georgia.gov/careers).

### Identified need for group after caring for her mother Smith hosts GDOT Caregivers Support Group

By Robin Glaubman

When her mother became ill more than 12 years ago, Legal Services Special Assistant Sheila Smith was more than happy to take her into her home. She loved her mother; and it was important to ensure her well-being as she searched for a suitable assisted living facility that would offer her the best care.

Smith's mother was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia, a fairly common form of dementia that resembles both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Smith only housed her mother for nine months, but she says it was long enough to understand the many challenges of caregiving.

"It was a roller coaster ride with her. A lot of elderly people with dementia behave in a way that a child may," Smith says. "Through no fault of their own, they may do things just like your children do. And sometimes you have to be firm with them. It's a lot of work, especially if you have a full-time job."

It was through her own personal experience that Smith recognized the importance of a support group. In fact, she relied on a local Caregivers Support Group in her time of need and wanted to bring that support to her fellow GDOT coworkers.

"When I was seeing these friends who were going through that, I said, 'the support group helped me tremendously,' so that's what we started."

With help from Human Resources and the GDOT family, the GDOT Caregiver's Support Group was formed in 2006. The majority of the group's members deal with aging parents, but Smith says the group welcomes anyone in a caregiver's position: those taking care of spouses, children, other family members, or others in need.

Smith invites professionals to speak with the group about how they can create a safe and loving environment for family members while carefully managing the daunting subjects of finances and legal issues.

The group has seen many professionals since its creation, including members of the Council on Aging, elder abuse specialists, and other experts on legal matters such as wills and power of attorney.

Support Group members share stories, experiences, and resources with one another. Smith says the resources are out there for people in need, "but you have to find out somehow... they don't just tell you."

The group meets in One Georgia Center once a month, usually in the fourth week of the month, during lunch and has conference calling and video conferencing features available for those unable to attend in person.

Watch for meeting announcements.



For information, contact **Sheila Smith** at 404.631.1748 or [sheismith@dot.ga.gov](mailto:sheismith@dot.ga.gov).

# Congrats To All!

## Retirees

August 1 – November 1, 2014

Ralph C. Allen  
 Alfred Allen III  
 George Allen III  
 Johnny Barber  
 Belinda Michelle Barker  
 Dennis Ray Barron  
 William Earnest Bass  
 Davie S. Biagi  
 Ronald L. Burkhalter  
 Charles Camp  
 Leroy Campbell  
 Penny A. Cannon  
 Dennis F. Carter  
 Sandra M. Cobb  
 Billy Randall Collier  
 William H. Cooper  
 Samuel Morris Council  
 Alfreida Jewell Davis  
 Keith Edmond Deyton  
 Larry E. Doss  
 Jeffery Fletcher  
 Georgene Malone Geary  
 Sharon F. Hamler  
 Michael J. Hancock  
 Lucy B. Harris  
 Michael A. Harris  
 Kathy P. Haygood  
 Robert D. Hodge  
 William D. Horton  
 Stanley Howell  
 Ronald Jackson Sr.  
 John Wesley Jenkins  
 Steven King  
 Travis W. Lassiter  
 Walton Louis Lumley  
 Bobby Lynn  
 Lillie Belle McCrary  
 James T. Mitchell  
 Corzetta Anise Motley  
 Eugenia B. Phillips  
 Genise M. Printup  
 Willie C. Redding  
 William R. Singleton  
 Tommy Eugene Slaton  
 George Robert Tharpe  
 Judson Thompson  
 Robert L. Turner  
 William E. Wasden  
 Bobbie J. Wiley  
 Brenda Kay Williams  
 Cheryl D. Williams  
 Mark J. Williams  
 Michael Alexander Williams  
 Wesley D. Woodard  
 Wallace Edward Wright Jr.

## Service Anniversaries

October 1 – December 31, 2014

### 30 YEARS

Gary L. Adcock  
 Melanie D. Corson  
 Wanda D. Fuller  
 William P. Jackson  
 Reginald Lee  
 Derek Wayne Lindsay  
 Dwayne B. Maddox  
 James B. Westmoreland

### 25 YEARS

James H. Addison Jr.  
 Mary A. Alexander  
 Deborah B. Blackwell  
 George Brewer  
 Beverly Carol Bryant  
 Donald Steven Burke  
 Timothy Lee Cooper  
 Jet Arthur Cox  
 Dianne I. Dell  
 Ethridge Troy Goff  
 Richard Anthony Goober  
 Larry James Greene  
 Danny A. Griffin  
 Chadwick Hetman Hartley  
 William Ivan Holloway Jr.  
 Clinton Lee Jackson  
 Johnny Roger Kilpatrick  
 William R. Liddle  
 Lonnie Lee Lorenz  
 Willie J. Mason  
 Casey H. Miller  
 Robbie Dewayne Mosley  
 Robert T. Mullis  
 Edwin Keith Posey  
 George Phillip Scarborough  
 Calvin J. Smith  
 Larry Eugene Smith  
 Joseph Ellis Strickland  
 James Larry Warren  
 Eddie Vann Watts  
 Calvin Wells  
 Rickey D. Wilbanks

### 20 YEARS

Levern Vernon Adger Jr.  
 Ronald D. Anderson Jr.  
 Larry Carlisle Barnes  
 Karlene E. Barron  
 James Daryl Cothorn  
 Thomas Peyton Cox  
 Javier Garcia  
 Christopher B. Gardiner  
 Kenneth J. Gloré  
 Jerry William Harper  
 Randall Scott Harris  
 John Edgar Hays  
 Randall Hicks

## Terry Lee Hicks

Linda N. Hill  
 Johnny Frank Howell  
 Monica T. Ivey  
 Gregory Charles Leggett  
 Frances N. Miller  
 Wanda N. Roberts  
 Randle Roddy Jr.  
 Lester Nelson Scott Jr.  
 Roger S. Smith  
 Jody E. Tucker  
 Edward K. Vinson  
 Cecil D. Wells  
 Sherry P. Wilburn

### 15 YEARS

Anthony L. Bannister  
 Vincent L. Beal  
 Robert Herman Beavers  
 John W. Bennett Jr.  
 Joy C. Brinson  
 Quentia Tyrone Caldwell  
 Christopher Crawford  
 Stacey M. Czech  
 Lukesha Donshae Diah  
 David M. Fowler  
 Hilton Glenn Fraiser  
 Therion Gilbert  
 A. Avery Hardy  
 Joshua M. Harper  
 Samantha Diane Henry  
 Benjamin Larkin Holt  
 David Houston  
 Willie Lester Huff  
 James Daniels Hughes  
 William E. Jones  
 Sherry Lynn Kowtko  
 Aubrey N. Lee  
 James Kevin Lovell  
 James K. McDaniel  
 Doug Marvin Nettles  
 Demetrius N. Paschal  
 Vinesha C. Pegram  
 Michael D. Perrien  
 Paul Junior Reeves  
 Angela Robbins  
 Charles R. Simmemon  
 Jackie L. Smith  
 Robert A. Smith  
 Sherrod Lijuane Smith  
 Willie Rogers Smith  
 Jessie Keith Stanfield  
 David T. Stepney  
 Garrod L. Tatum  
 Amanda VanHouten  
 Alan K. Veasey  
 Johnny Lee Washington  
 Kristy Melanie Watkins  
 Noel B. Woodard  
 William B. Yeara  
 Randall M. Young

## 10 YEARS

Michael T. Adkins Jr.  
 Katrina Thomas Anderson  
 Elaine Eva Armster  
 Andrew J. Bates  
 Robert Lewis Binns  
 Troy D. Byers  
 Jessie James Chandler  
 Richard Clinton Cochran  
 Daniel Ray Collins  
 Jason F. Crane  
 Dan Trute Dill  
 Willis Kyle Evans  
 Christopher George Folsom  
 Mark Nathan Giles  
 Douglas E. Gimson  
 Benjamin Jock Gosnell  
 Charles Anthony Goss  
 Jack Alan Gray  
 Donald L. Hawkins  
 Allen T. Hendley  
 Matthew Eric Hill  
 Eric Steven Holtapp  
 James Marvin Hoskins  
 Frank Eugene Hutchings  
 Alkalik F. Jenkins  
 Phillip D. Jennings  
 Stacie A. Kagee  
 Brian Lee Mangrum  
 Bobby L. Mashburn  
 Lashannon Mathis  
 Steven Moreno  
 Janis Hooton Morris  
 Carla Watkins Murphy  
 Elizabeth Pane Osmon  
 Thomas Stephen Pace Jr.  
 Walter Dale Parker Jr.  
 Joey D. Patton  
 Phillip Michael Peevy  
 Eddie G. Powell  
 Conrad P. Reinhold  
 Donald Dean Rhoades  
 Tamika Nicole Rivers  
 David M. Robbins  
 Ronald Royal  
 Matthew S. Sammons  
 Daniel L. Shook  
 Robert C. Skipper Jr.  
 Jerry Wayne Smith  
 Van Patrick Smith Jr.  
 Dewayne A. Sorrow  
 David L. Spear  
 Donald Tracey Stull II  
 James D. Thornton  
 Andre Maurice Washington  
 Cheryl Lynn White  
 Johnny F. Wilkinson Jr.  
 Bobby L. Wilson  
 Charles Ernest Wilson  
 Adrienne Nichole Wise  
 Charles Michael Workman



## Your knight in shining yellow armor

Georgia DOT salutes our HEROs on their 20th anniversary serving the citizens of Georgia.

## HEROs help keep our roads safe by responding to more than 130,000 incidents a year.

Whether it's clearing a major traffic incident or changing a simple flat tire, HERO units ride to the rescue 24/7. Patrolling more than 310 miles of metro Atlanta freeways, they work hard to keep motorists safe and traffic flowing. Call 511 for HERO assistance.

Georgia DOT. Working to keep Georgia moving.

[www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)

Georgia DOT's Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) program is sponsored by State Farm.



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