

The INSIDE

LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

MARCH 2021

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3



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ADOT

LEADERSHIP

MATTERS

I AM A PROJECT MANAGER in the Major Projects Group, managing the Interstate 10 Broadway Curve project. I began my career in politics — not engineering as many people assume. My transportation career began in 2006, when I was hired by ADOT's Utility and Railroad group. I was pregnant with my first child at the time. As I look at her, now 14, I realize how working for ADOT has benefited my family over the years, and how thankful I am to have had such great opportunities. I've been blessed with great mentors and leaders who've supported and encouraged me every step of the way.

In 2012, I became a project coordinator in the Urban Project Management (now Project Management Group.) While I worked to get up to speed on project management and all it encompasses, I shadowed several project managers who allowed me to ask questions and learn from their experiences.

In fall 2014, the South Mountain Freeway was gaining momentum and I was asked to join Major Projects, led by Senior Deputy State Engineer **Robert Samour**, to help deliver the project. It was an alternative delivery project and ADOT's first freeway Public Private Partnership (P3). There are many great things I could say about my experience with Major Projects. I'll sum it up with our motto: "Make a decision, be able to support it and move on."

In 2016, Major Projects was asked to run the \$700-million I-10 Broadway Curve project, and I was asked to serve as project manager. This is the first project to receive environmental clearance, acquire right-of-way, establish the schematic design and complete a P3, Design-Build procurement process simultaneously. I saw firsthand how a great team can produce great work. I'm happy to say we have a developer under contract and construction is scheduled to begin this summer.

Work will occur on I-10 between Ray Road and 24th Street. Please visit azdot.gov/i10broadwaycurve to learn about the improvements, watch the simulation video and subscribe for email updates. In another first for ADOT, the project will have a mobile app to share the most up-to-date project information. I encourage you to download the app when it's available, especially if you travel through our 11-mile work zone. During construction, it's important to #StayAheadOfTheCurve.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my husband, and very active daughter and son, cheering them on at softball, baseball and football games. ■



Amy Ritz
Major Projects Group
Project Manager

The INSIDE LANE

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ADDRESS ALL COMMENTS AND

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A WEB VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON ADOTNET OR AT AZDOT.GOV/INSIDELANE.

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Share your best cover shot

Do you snap shots that show off the scenic side of transportation in Arizona? Share them with us and we might put your photograph on the next cover of The Inside Lane.

It can be a great picture of an MVD office, a beautiful highway shot or even an artsy photo of construction materials. Whatever the subject, the photo should highlight some aspect of the work happening here at ADOT.

Submit your original, digital photographs to InsideLane@azdot.gov in JPEG format (no larger than 10MB). Along with the photo, please provide a brief description and your name/title.



On the cover

The world-renowned Arizona Highways magazine stimulates more than \$43 million annually of direct tourism revenue to Arizona, a new research report shows. The cover photos, provided by Arizona Highways, show a sampling of the beautiful Arizona Highways magazine covers, calendars and other products that help promote the Grand Canyon State. See more coverage on [Page 3](#).



Arizona Highways magazine stimulates \$43 million annually in Arizona tourism

SHOWCASING ARIZONA’S beauty, diverse culture and rich history with stunning photography and compelling articles, Arizona Highways magazine (AHM) plays a major role in boosting the state’s tourism economy, as detailed in a new research report.

The world-renowned monthly publication brings more than \$43 million annually of direct tourism revenue to Arizona, according to subscriber surveys and economic modeling analyzed as part of a new ADOT research study. The study was conducted by a team at Arizona State University under the direction of the ADOT Research Center. For every \$1 spent by Arizona Highways, at least \$3.74 enters Arizona’s economy from out-of-state subscribers whose travel decisions were influenced by the magazine.

“The study confirms the importance and impact the magazine and brand have on the

tourism community throughout Arizona. It also confirms the exceptional work the entire Arizona Highways team does each and every day,” said Arizona Highways Magazine Publisher **Kelly Mero**.

The “[Economic Impact and Contribution of Arizona Highways Magazine to State Tourism](#)” study, published in December 2020, describes how Arizona Highways magazine, its ancillary products and brand influence travel and tourism decision-making, along with the spending habits of Arizona travelers and out-of-state visitors.

The study points to how travel spending generates taxes for state and local governments and pumps tourism dollars into communities across the state, particularly in places featured in the magazine and its branded products. In-state expenditures by Arizona residents are important to many rural communities, where the tourism market includes residents from the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas.

People are loyal to the Arizona Highways brand across multiple platforms as Arizona Highways magazine subscribers, AHM [Facebook](#) page users, [Arizona Highways TV](#) show viewers and

[Arizona Highways](#) retail product purchasers, the study’s researchers reported. Highlights of the report include:

- About 87% of subscribers keep their magazines for trip planning months or even years later.
- Facebook users primarily seek information about sightseeing, day trips and recreation from the AHM Facebook page.
- About 77% of shoppers at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport AHM gift shop subscribe to Arizona Highways magazine.
- Focus groups of Arizona Highways TV viewers indicated that the show informs their travel decisions.

The research study, funded partially by the Federal Highway Administration, is the latest in a series of studies conducted about every seven years to assess the impact of the AHM brand. While Arizona Highways magazine is part of ADOT, it does not receive state funding and is financially self-reliant. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

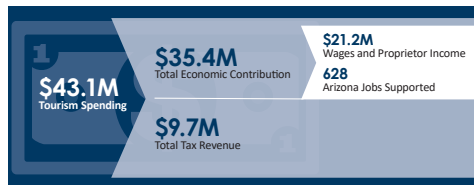


Kelly Mero
Arizona Highways publisher



Jeff Kida, Arizona Highways

Arizona Highways magazine editorial team members participate in a virtual meeting. (Left to right) Top row: **Keith Whitney, Lisa Altomare, Samantha Chow and Vicky Snow.** Bottom row: **Ameema Ahmed, Robert Stieve and Noah Austin.** (Not pictured: **Kelly Vaughn and Jeff Kida.**)



the best of what the Grand Canyon State has to offer. It publishes unique outdoor experiences, expert travelogues and historical tales accented with award-winning photographs of Arizona’s scenic wonders. The magazine has subscribers in all 50 states and more than 120 countries.

Arizona Highways sells Arizona-themed products, including calendars, travel guides, photography books, home decor and jewelry, through its online store on [ArizonaHighways.com](#). COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have temporarily closed the gift shops at the Arizona Highways office in Phoenix and the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

A one-year subscription (12 issues) to the print version of Arizona Highways magazine is \$24 in the United States, and magazine features are available digitally. For more information about Arizona Highways magazine or to purchase Arizona Highways products, visit [ArizonaHighways.com](#) or call 800.543.5432.

Arizona Highways magazine draws worldwide audience

Since its debut in 1925, Arizona Highways magazine has grown into a spotlight of

Diverse Arizona requires multiple communication platforms

CONNECTING ARIZONA. Everyone. Everywhere. Every Day. It's the ADOT mission. Along with planning, engineering and maintenance comes relaying the information to the public, and communications is not a one-size-fits all approach.

ADOT Communications employs a multifaceted strategy to reach our customers — from traditional broadcast media to public meetings and events to social media platforms. But there are certain projects and customers that require specialized outreach.

Lucy Schrader, deputy administrator for the Civil Rights Office, weighed in on this outreach. “ADOT has two documents, the [Public Involvement Plan](#) and [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#), that we use to be in compliance with the federal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency.” ADOT employees are required to complete the Title VI Nondiscrimination Program training annually, which is available through the [ADOT Learning and Development Center website](#).

At a project's onset, the Community Relations team conducts an analysis to determine the level of non-English-speaking households that may require translation services. They use myriad methods, depending on the project's language needs, such as the use of I-Speak cards, Spanish-language ads, direct mailings, staff booths, including interpreters, at local businesses or events to provide language services based on the project service area.

Assistant Communications Director for Community Relations **Daina Mann** said, “For the current [Grand-35 study](#), which is evaluating grade separations at the intersection of Grand Avenue, 35th Avenue and Indian School Road, we conducted significant Spanish-speaking community outreach because



ADOT Communications

Public Information Officer **Lourdes Lerma** does an interview at La Onda 1190 AM Radio.

our data showed that more than half the households in the area have individuals who are predominantly Spanish speaking.”

ADOT Communications also has a bilingual public information officer, **Lourdes Lerma**, who proactively reaches out to broadcast and print media on various projects to ensure relevant messaging is provided in Spanish — including the Phoenix metro area, Tucson and Nogales media outlets. She also writes columns regularly for the publication [Contacto Total, La Revista Que Habla](#). In addition, Lerma communicates with different consulates in Arizona representing Latin American countries to ensure that both trade and tourism interests are aware of important transportation information.

Another specific customer outreach came about primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the April 2020 launch of [AZMVDNow.gov](#). The customer group was older adults who may be more susceptible to COVID-19, and may not want to make a trip to an MVD office to renew their driver license. The team wanted to learn about what challenges older adults face when conducting transactions with MVD, their comfort with online self-serve options and their opinion on potential new ways to renew a driver license. That's why ADOT reached out to Arizona AARP and conducted a focus group with adults age 65 or older.



Community Relations

Pictured from left, Public Information Officer **Lourdes Lerma**, and Community Relations Project Managers **Nikki Green** and **Carolynn Ludington** working an outreach booth at Ranch Market, located in the study area for the Grand-35 project.

The data received from this focus group was helpful, providing insight into public awareness of [AZMVDNow.gov](#). It also reinforced that the online and by-mail driver license renewal options MVD was working to implement would be well-received.

“Unsurprisingly, the respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of the possibility of being able to renew their driver license online or by mail, two options MVD was already working to implement,” Assistant Communications Director for Customer Outreach **Doug Pacey** said.

In late February, MVD plans to make the contactless online and by-mail driver licenses renewal options available to eligible Arizonans.

[To help older drivers, Governor Doug Ducey extended expirations](#) by one year for licenses expiring between March 2020 and Feb. 28, 2021. ■

~ Kim Larson, Senior Communications Specialist

KAIZEN KORNER

KAIZEN 2021 CHALLENGE

The Office of Continuous Improvement announces the Kaizen 2021 Challenge goal of 7,200 kaizens. Every employee is being asked to complete one kaizen on their own. A kaizen can be big or small, eliminates waste in our processes and is documented through standard work. Team or collaborative kaizens are also encouraged. Last year, only 61% of employees individually documented a completed kaizen.

KAIZEN COUNT

The number of kaizens submitted by ADOT employees so far this fiscal year is

2,508

For a complete breakdown by division, visit the [Office of Continuous Improvement page on ADOTNet](#).

Customer Service Award winner Julia Voight goes above and beyond to resolve problems

WITH AN ANTIQUATED computer system causing major problems, Partnering Facilitator and Lean Coach **Julia Voight** was determined to find a solution.

Construction and public partnership teams had used the Partnering Evaluation Program since 1997 to enter monthly partnering evaluations. But PEP had limited or no access and an inability to save information. It took as much as four hours for a single project's information to be completed and verified.

Voight's approach to creating a successful new evaluation program illustrates why she won the 2020 Customer Service Award.

She and her Partnering Office colleagues used the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) problem-solving method to understand the root cause of the evaluation system's problems. After extensive research, Voight developed a new method of evaluation and measurement using existing resources — a combination of Google Forms and Google Data Studio.



Julia Voight
Partnering Facilitator

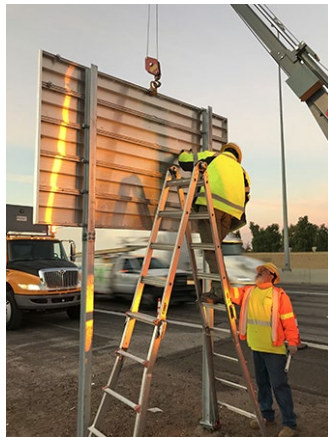
She reached out to those who had experience with Data Studio to learn the nuances of the program. She practiced the program until she understood how it works. Then, she taught her coworkers how to use it so each member of the Partnering team could provide support to customers.

"Not only is the process more efficient, but Julia's efforts have led to increased accessibility and functionality to those customers who spend a great deal of time in the field," said Partnering Office Administrator **Michael Carter**, who nominated Voight for the Customer Service Award.

Completing an evaluation is now as simple as opening a link on a smartphone, entering ratings and providing comments that are automatically saved in a Google Form. Responses are collected in a Google Data Studio report, which is shared monthly with the partnering team, including ADOT, the contractor and external stakeholders.

"I am thankful and honored about the award and recognition for the work done. This project was not all me, though — it was a group effort and I could not have done this alone," Voight said. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



Central District Sign and Striping

Replacing an exit sign are highways operations technicians **Jose Acosta** (left) and **Ron Anderson**.

Improving sign replacement a team effort

THERE ARE AROUND 200,000 signs throughout the state's highways. When one goes down for whatever reason, crews are tasked with replacing it as quickly as possible. That process is a little easier now for the Central District, thanks to improvements made by the Regional Signing and Striping and Interstate Signing units.

Both of the units cover the Central District, but they work on different types of signs. The regional unit handles flat sheet signs, like a speed limit sign, while the interstate unit works on extruded panel signs, like an exit sign. Both crews

had a rotational call-back for after-hours sign knockdowns. Each standby team needed two technicians on the standby schedule at a time, but the interstate unit is a smaller team — four technicians as opposed to 11.

"It made sense to combine efforts for the two units. For six months, my unit cross-trained with the interstate crew," Highway Operations Supervisor **Sean McHugh** said.

"We were then able to place two techs on a weekly rotational call-back, which not only saves money for less hours worked, but it eliminates fatigue by expanding weekly rotation to every eight weeks versus four," McHugh added.

This kaizen reduces waste and increases safety with the added bonus

of employees having more work-life balance, as they are on standby less often.

Another notable improvement for the signing units is the use of a mini-excavator, recently procured to replace the digger derrick.

"The difference between the 'mini-ex' and the digger derrick is like night and day," said **Roy Turner**, highway operations technician. "It is so much quicker. It also requires a smaller footprint, which is safer."

Find more information on the Traffic Maintenance group, part of the Transportation Systems Management and Operation Division, on [ADOTNet](#). ■

~ Kim Larson, Senior Communications Specialist

Did you know that March is Women's History Month? Because women have made so many major contributions to the transportation field, we asked several women at ADOT to share the reasons why they entered into a transportation career. ■

~ Compiled by Angela DeWelles, Senior Communications Specialist

I have been passionate about engineering ever since I can remember. Transportation engineering includes planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of facilities that improve people's lives every day. Being a part of this industry gives opportunities to be involved in the cutting-edge technologies that keep evolving. I am proud to be a part of the industry, especially ADOT. And I am proud to be working with those who share the same passion.



Tazeen A. Dewan
Project Manager
Multimodal Planning Division

I initially "fell into" the transportation sector as an environmental consultant, consulting for ADOT and railroads. The nature of the work and the opportunity to serve the public as part of something so integral to their daily lives are what have motivated me to work at ADOT.



Julia Manfredi
Manager
Environmental Programs

When I applied to ADOT 19 years ago, I did not think of it as trying to get a job in transportation. I saw it as another opportunity to be of service, only this time it would be for the citizens of Arizona. My passion is helping others and I knew that I could impact ADOT in a positive way and it would also give me the opportunity for career growth. ADOT has a great reputation as being family friendly, which also factored into my seeking a career with the agency.



Sonya Herrera
Director
Administrative Services Division

I credit my career in transportation to my college internship with the regional planning organization, where I conducted transportation modelling and forecasts. I couldn't believe there was a career path where I could play SimCity all day! I've since enjoyed planning and designing roadway improvements throughout Arizona.



Susan E. Anderson
Systems Technology Group Manager
Transportation Systems Management and Operations Division

Having spent years practicing law in the private sector, I had a desire to take the next step to become a judge. I was fortunate enough to be hired with the Executive Hearing Office in 2017, which has opened me up to the world of transportation. I enjoy dealing with the many interesting laws and regulations and working with a wide array of divisions and agencies.



Allyssa B. Reid
Associate Presiding Judge
Executive Hearing Office

CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCES?



NO, YOU'RE NOT seeing double! Created by ADOT Graphic Designer **John Walradt**, both of these panels look the same, but there actually are five differences between the two cartoons.

Can you spot them all? Email each hidden difference to InsideLane@azdot.gov by **March 12**.

Everyone who locates all five will be entered into a random drawing for a great prize! We'll reveal the answers and the winner in next month's newsletter. Good luck!! ■



WINNER, WINNER

ADOT JUMBLE

WE HAD A GREAT response to last month's Jumble Contest, but there can only be one winner. Congratulations to Safety Analysis Program Manager **Saroja Devarakonda** whose name was selected from a random draw of entries. Saroja, who works in the Transportation Systems Management and Operations Division, received a special gift bag from Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications **Kathy Boyle**, including an Arizona Highways Arizona Ghost Towns book and magazine, stress ball, lanyard, pens and a post-it-note pad. ■

Answers: 1. Google; 2. Muted; 3. Distance; 4. Technology; 5. Profile

Final answer: After letting a coin toss decide which virtual meeting she'd attend next, an overscheduled and stressed-out Corky resolved to manage her calendar better next week — in other words, it was **time for change**.



Kathy Boyle, ADOT Communications