

The INSIDE

LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

APRIL 2021

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4



AKA – THE ADOT WAY



What is AKA – The ADOT Way?

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2020 Employee of the Year
Erich Batman

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ADOT

**LEADERSHIP
MATTERS**

EVERY ORGANIZATION has a culture. It shows employees and customers how you operate, what values you have and how you think.

Our culture at ADOT encompasses our AIR values, kaizen principles and Arizona Management System elements. What we have needed to do is connect these concepts together so it is easy for you and me to remember what makes up our ADOT culture.

At the November 2020 Leaders Connection conference, I shared my vision of our ADOT culture to nearly 800 leaders of our organization. I gave it a name, **AKA – The ADOT Way**. I believe it embodies the way we do things at ADOT and how we operate.

So, here is the best way to remember what each letter represents in AKA:

A STANDS FOR OUR AIR VALUES –

Accountability, Integrity and Respect. I am proud of everyone knowing and embracing our AIR values.

K REPRESENTS OUR KAIZEN PRINCIPLES –

process and results, total systems thinking and no blame/no judgment. These principles aren't new, as we have been incorporating them in our daily work. With nearly 20,000 kaizens implemented in this agency in the last three years, I know you are finding creative ways to improve our processes to better serve our customers.

We are excited to roll out our campaign to officially introduce AKA - The ADOT Way! We promise to make the campaign fun, engaging and inspiring. Please visit the [AKA - The ADOT Way](#) page on ADOTNet, where you will find resources, success stories and much more.

Every organization has a culture. At ADOT, it's **AKA – The ADOT Way!**



AKA – THE ADOT WAY



*John Halikowski
ADOT Director*

**The INSIDE
LANE**

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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

ADOT Employee of the Year **Erich Batman** is shown in front of the Equipment Services Capitol Mall Shop in this photo by Producer/Videographer **Joe Llarger**. Read Erich's story on **Page 5**.

AKA – THE ADOT WAY



Learn more about the

AKA – The ADOT Way logo on **Page 3**.

What is AKA – The ADOT Way?

WHEN ADOT Director **John Halikowski** introduced AKA – The ADOT Way at the Leaders Connection conference in November 2020, he said the goal was to build a recognizable framework that gives all ADOT team members a way to talk about ADOT culture.

In other words, ADOT’s culture already exists — it’s the way we strive to do things at ADOT, and it’s how we operate. Because that culture is based on three different foundations, it can be difficult to explain it all in a comprehensive way.

Until now...

With the launch of AKA – The ADOT Way, we now have a clear way to discuss our agency’s AIR values (accountability, integrity and respect), Kaizen principles and Arizona Management System elements. It’s a universal way for everyone to share their understanding of what makes up our ADOT culture.

ADOT’s culture isn’t new — there’s just a new way to talk about it! In fact, you’re already doing things The ADOT Way just by respecting each other, solving problems and serving our customers.

Take a look at the flowchart to the right and see some examples of how you’re already exhibiting ADOT’s AIR values, Kaizen principles and AMS elements.

For even more, visit the new [AKA – The ADOT Way web page](#) on ADOTNet, and be sure to check back often for more content. ■

~ Angela DeWelles, Senior Communications Specialist



AKA – THE ADOT WAY



Behind the design

TALKING ABOUT ADOT’S culture is one thing, but representing it in a recognizable, meaningful way is a totally other situation. ADOT’s Graphics Services team took on the challenge and created several potential logos for the new AKA – The ADOT Way campaign.

Nearly 800 ADOT leaders voted on the logos during the 2020 Leaders Connection conference and chose the one you see on the left. The logo, created by Graphic Designer **Elena Diaz**, features three hexagons and a simple design that helps to define and reinforce the agency’s AIR values, Kaizen principles, AMS elements and our True North, Safely Home.

EMPLOYEES PLAY VITAL ROLE IN SHAPING ADOT'S FUTURE

FROM HANDLING emergencies and improving safety to stretching construction dollars and bringing MVD services to customers, front-line employees are providing important insight about strategic initiatives to guide ADOT's future.

More than 140 employees — representing various groups and divisions throughout Arizona — are on teams focused on each of ADOT's 12 strategic initiatives. They are problem solvers using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) method and other Arizona Management

System tools to improve processes and eliminate waste in strategic areas across ADOT.

“Leadership tells us what and why we need to get things done. But the front-line workers show us how because they are doing the work. It's important to have them heavily engaged

Joe Larget, ADOT Communications

 Construction continues on the Interstate 10 and Houghton Road interchange replacement project in Tucson.

so they implement the processes that will drive the strategic improvement,” said **Melissa Wynn**, administrator of the Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Management.

With the COVID-19 pandemic upending how ADOT does business, some new multi-year strategic initiatives were created, including the Business Disruption Plan and the Work from Anywhere Program. In addition, implementation of MVD's new MAX modernized computer system provides opportunities for additional online services so customers can avoid coming to the MVD offices.

Progress on the strategic initiatives are being discussed during virtual Leaders Connection conferences. Videos and presentations from the November 2020 and February 2021 meetings are available for employees to view on the [Leaders Connection Conference page](#) on ADOTNet.

Look for more coverage about the strategic initiatives in future issues of *The Inside Lane*. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

2021 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The strategic initiatives listed below are excellent examples of doing things "The ADOT Way." Employees are adapting to new concepts, using a total systems effort and highlighting a process in action. AKA — The ADOT Way encompasses AIR values (accountability, integrity and respect), kaizen principles and Arizona Management System elements. They are critical for crafting effective agency-wide strategies supporting ADOT's vision: Moving Arizona. Becoming the safest, most reliable transportation system in the nation.

1.1	Business Disruption Plan	Lessons learned from the short- and long-term business impact of COVID will be analyzed.
1.2	Features Funding Prioritization	The condition of ADOT's infrastructure is deteriorating, namely bridges and pavements.
1.3	Maintenance Projects Prioritization	Many people, including some ADOT employees and external stakeholders, are unaware of where ADOT is allocating dollars and placing resources.
1.4	Improve MVD Systems and Service	MVD needs to bring more customers into the system, especially using online resources. More innovative features and upgrades need to be added to the MAX system with ongoing technical fixes.
2.1	Increase Use of Tiered Huddle System	Problems are not consistently documented on registers or escalated to overcome obstacles to problem-solving efforts.
3.1	Operationalize IT Governance and Standards	IT service requests need to be aligned with the new IT Governance and Standards.
3.2	Optimize ADOT Facilities Footprint	Processes need to be improved for workspace optimization, workspace management and to a Facilities Advisory Committee.
3.3	Policy Assessment and Management	Many divisions have policies but there is no agency-wide line of sight or review about whether policies are necessary or current.
3.4	Core Business Process Mapping	Visibility of business practices need to be improved to increase the establishment of standard work, improve results and help drive continuous improvement.
3.5	Web Redesign	ADOT's website needs to be modernized and updated to improve user experience.
4.1	Work From Anywhere Program	ADOT has more than 1,000 employees teleworking without a comprehensive program.
4.2	Align Leaders and People Systems to AKA - The ADOT Way	The current state of people programs and systems available in the agency needs to be evaluated to align those programs and leaders to AKA - The ADOT Way.

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

3,747

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

Program Project Specialist II Erich Batman is the ADOT Employee of the Year.



Joe Langer, ADOT Communications

Excellent Employee of the Year a model for all of us

BEING NAMED A TOP employee among 3,700 workers is a special feat, especially given the fact that ADOT has many exceptional employees. Program Project Specialist II **Erich Batman** lives up to his legendary name, winning the 2020 Employee of the Year last November.

He may not have a cape, but he is a super employee, a shining example of AKA — The ADOT Way. He walks the walk when it comes to AIR values, kaizen principles and the elements of AMS.

Batman’s attitude and outstanding customer service are indicative of AIR values — accountability, integrity and respect.

Lionel McFarlane, maintenance operations manager, nominated Batman for this award, saying “Erich has a positive attitude and adapts well to change. He worked through each customer request with unsurpassed professionalism, politeness and promptness to ensure that Equipment Services delivered superior customer service that consistently met or exceeded the needs of our customers.”

As a member of the Administrative Services Division team that created and distributed fabric face coverings to state employees,

Batman personally assembled more than 1,800 face coverings. He receives kudos from customers across state agencies doing business with Equipment Services, from Game and Fish to the Secretary of State’s Office.

Batman is also an Arizona Management System ambassador. He was part of a team who presented AMS modules to staff with the Arizona Health Cost Containment System, focusing on continuous improvement, huddles and total systems thinking.

He displayed leader behaviors in many ways. He took the lead as fleet coordinator for the transition of the Arizona Department of Administration’s fleet to ADOT. During the same year, he took on temporary roles as a supervisor for the Phoenix Service Center and the Lube Shop, stepping in where needed to help the division succeed, training multiple employees and finding ways to improve operations.

Speaking of process improvements, Batman clearly takes the elements of kaizen to heart, as well as a total systems mindset. He submitted a total of 23 kaizens for Equipment Services.

“He has gone beyond all expectations by continually seeking out and accepting all challenges in work assignments in support of Equipment Services goals and objectives,” said McFarlane.

Batman, now with the agency about seven years, downplays the attention that the award may bring.

“This is very humbling,” he said. “The credit should really go to the people I work with. I am trying to make their lives better. We work together to overcome the obstacles that come up.”

~ Kim Larson, Senior Communications Specialist

AKA — The ADOT Way virtual scavenger hunt contest!



This month’s contest is a virtual scavenger hunt to introduce employees to the new AKA — The ADOT Way webpage on [ADOTNet](#). It’s easy to enter. Simply use the [Google form](#), to follow instructions, link to the webpage, and answer three questions that you’ll find exploring that page.

Deadline to enter is **April 9 for a chance to win a prize!** The hunt is on!

ADOT VOICES

What makes a good leader?

This series opened my eyes to so many different things and provided a new perspective. This has given me tools that I not only can use in my professional life, but my personal life as well.

Sharon Bova

DBE & OJT Contract Compliance Technician
Business Engagement and Compliance Office



This program taught me valuable skills to put my emotional intelligence to work and not to have a fixed mindset, and helped me to expand and clarify my vision to look at a big picture.

Rashmi Shah

Business Process Analyst
Financial Management Services



The program got me refocused on time management and taught me tools to delegate projects successfully. I look forward to being a new manager at ADOT and sharing the job experience I have with other individuals.

Jennifer Catapano

Oversight and Monitoring Manager
Local Public Agency Section



Do you hope to be promoted to a leadership role at ADOT some day? You can learn how to develop your skills and decide if leadership is the right career choice for you through the new [#ADOTLeads Aspire to Lead program](#). We asked several participants in the inaugural cohort to share how this program has helped them. 📌

~ Compiled by Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

This fantastic program is beneficial to the department and developing future leaders. There was lots of information and lessons that could be used daily in completing our roles more efficiently.

Tyson Goree

Transportation Engineering Specialist
Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division
Prescott Valley Construction
Northwest District



The series enabled me to realize the important behaviors of a good leader. As leaders, we should focus on how other people will achieve success, what development they need to improve upon and what methods they can use to achieve results.

Lukasz Betlej

Transportation Engineering Specialist
Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division
Central Construction District
Phoenix



At ADOT, it's difficult to sum up anyone's job in just a few words. That's why we're devoting space in this newsletter for employees across the agency to share a little bit about what they do every day. If you'd like to be featured, email us at InsideLane@azdot.gov.

~ Compiled by Kim Larson, Senior Communications Specialist

Nicole Merkl has been with ADOT for more than 19 years, and currently manages MVD's Specialty Plates and Account Support units.

How do you describe your job to someone outside the agency?

The special plates team issues personalized/specialty license plates, disability plates and disability placards. The account support team manages account access for business customers, who request access to the new MVD website, AZMVDNow.gov.

What do you want other ADOT employees to know about your job?

The account support team has granted website access to 5,018 business customers since April 2020. The special plates unit receives about 7,000 to 9,500 personalized plate requests per month and reviews them for negative connotation. When people inquire about new plate designs, I explain that there's

a legislative process for a new plate and a \$32,000 implementation fee is charged to the sponsoring organization.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy working with organizations when new plates pass into law. I get to collect the \$32,000. I enjoy trying to decipher a customer's personalized plate meaning, especially when they say it means one thing and clearly it's something else. The ones I think are clever are great but can't be allowed, like PB4WEGO (pee before we go.) Parents would understand.

Do you have a specialty plate?

I have a personalized plate that reads SCHATZI on a Childhood Cancer Research plate. Schatzi is German for sweetheart or jewel. We would call our Oma (grandma) this. I chose this plate to remember her and to support kids with cancer.

Which emoji is your favorite or most-used?

Face palms and smiles, sometimes simultaneously.

What's the best vacation you've ever taken?

Aruba. If you ever go, make sure to eat at Wacky Wahoo's. The Barracuda is delicious!

WINNER,

WINNER

eyethink

WE RECEIVED 120 entries in the EyeThink contest. Congratulations to Highway Operations Technician 1 **Joel Randel** of Prescott Valley whose name was picked in a random drawing. Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications **Kathy Boyle** sent Joel a special gift bag, including an Arizona Highways magazine, The Inside Lane stress ball, an ADOT cup and more.

Answers: 1. Address is different. 2. Fruit missing on tree. 3. Light was reversed. 4. Walkway is missing. 5. Different Person. 📌

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