

# The INSIDE

# LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

DECEMBER 2022

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 12



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# ADOT

## LEADERSHIP

## MATTERS

**HAVE WORKED FOR** the Motor Vehicle Division for almost 17 years. I have had a few different roles within MVD. I started as a customer service representative in a field office, then I was promoted to a driver improvement investigator. Two years later, I became the court liaison and since October 2018, I have been the records management program administrator, which includes overseeing the Records Unit, Account Support Unit and the Court Liaison.

### How has your team embraced the AKA - The ADOT Way culture?

At first, when ADOT introduced the “AKA,” my team was somewhat apprehensive about it and where it fit into our unit. We started doing Arizona Management System training in our monthly in-service meetings, as well as leadership leading by example. Over time, the team has really embraced the culture, and I would like to highlight our team as currently being the top submitting kaizen team in ADOT. As they utilize the Arizona Management System tools, there is definitely a feeling of accomplishment and community, and about how important their roles are within the agency.

### How do you show respect for people?

I truly believe that in order to get respect you have to show respect. With that being said, I really value my team’s voices. I know how important it is to listen to each of their ideas and/or concerns of how we process our daily work. It is also important that they feel empowered to make the appropriate adjustments to the standard work, which will allow for our customers to receive the best quality product we can deliver while eliminating any waste in our process. When I talk with them about their kaizens that have come out of their ideas, they are so excited and happy to share them with me. It really makes me feel very appreciative of how my team meets and exceeds our goals. Active listening and open communication not only builds trust in our relationship, it builds strong communication within the team. ■



*Dorrie Wiltberger  
Program Administrator  
Court Liaison, Records, and  
Account Support Unit*

# The INSIDE LANE

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## Share your best cover shot

Do you have photos showing 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](mailto: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

Deputy Director/State Engineer **Greg Byres** (left), Director **John Halikowski** and Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer **Kismet Weiss** are shown talking to participants during the virtual Leadership Conference, which was held Nov. 2 and 3. About 900 ADOT managers and supervisors from around the state were invited to the annual event. Read more on **Page 3**.

# Leaders Connection Conference focuses on connecting, building and transforming



Joe Larger, Video Services

On day two of the conference, several ADOT leaders took part in a panel discussion on AKA - *The ADOT Way*. From left, Chief Information Officer **Steve West**, Senior Transportation Engineer Manager **Iqbal Hossain**, IDO Deputy State Engineer for Design **Audra Merrick**, MVD Customer Service Manager **Denise Ohnesorgen**, and MVD Director **Eric Jorgensen**. Find more [ADOT Voices on ADOTNet](#).

## ADOT VOICES

### We want to hear from you!

What was ADOT's top milestone in 2022? What are you looking forward to in 2023?

We're looking for employees with various job functions around the state to share their thoughts.

Send your comments and a photo of yourself to [Insidelane@azdot.gov](mailto:Insidelane@azdot.gov) by **Nov. 18**. Your comments may appear in a future issue of The Inside Lane.

**ADOT LEADERS ACROSS THE STATE** attended the 10th annual [ADOT Leaders Connection Conference](#) Nov. 2-3. The virtual event included a keynote address by author Eric Bailey, presentations by Deputy Directors **Greg Byres** and **Kismet Weiss**, an announcement of the ADOT Annual Awards winners, and remarks from Director **John Halikowski** that centered on leading with respect and inclusiveness.

"Now, more than ever, I want to make clear that we are One ADOT. If we work together, with a focus on our True North, we'll keep moving forward," Halikowski said to the nearly 900 attendees. "It may seem like people are more polarized than ever, but at ADOT, we keep those differences at the door. We have an important job to do and we must work together to keep focused on what's important — getting people safely home each and every day."

After the conference, we asked leaders to answer these questions: **Reflecting on this year's leadership conference, what has been your key takeaway? What are you most excited to bring back to your team?** Here's what they had to say. 🇺🇸

~ Compiled by Angela DeWelles, Senior Communications Specialist



One important takeaway was the idea of understanding other people's "why," which will help with differentiating between someone else's perception versus reality. I will incorporate into my Leader Standard Work, Gembas and coaching 1:1 meetings the questions, "Why are you passionate about your position?" when interacting with staff and "I do not understand that, but I want to." Overall, I want to understand the person, where they are coming from and what is behind their approach.

#### Tina Samartean

Administrator, Employee and Business Development



My key takeaway was on communication gaps, discussed by (keynote speaker) Eric Bailey. How we are very quick to judge people and how people will not remember what you said but how you made them feel. Feeling valued is one of the key indicators of job performance. Everyone would like to feel accepted and appreciated for all their work and taking those few extra minutes to tell them they did a great job goes a long way. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and feel more driven and satisfied. Employees want to know both what they're doing well and where they can improve. It's balanced feedback, definitely something I am taking back to my team.

#### Annabelle Molina

Senior Business Manager, Information Technology Group



My key takeaway was the illusion of certainty, discussed by the keynote speaker Eric Bailey. My "a-ha" moment for this concept came when listening to (Deputy State Engineer for Design) Audra Merrick discuss an example about increased traffic noise on the I-17 corridor during the pandemic. It made me reflect on my approach to problem solving, active listening and going to the gemba. I'm going to share that story with my team so they can understand no matter how much experience or expertise we have, trying to understand a problem from another's perspective is invaluable to building relationships and sustainable problem solving practices.

#### Nina Makarenko

Operations Manager, Human Resources

# ADOT pilots new business disruption, staffing and communication countermeasures

**Whether it's inclement weather, a brush fire, a multi-vehicle crash or another sudden emergency, ADOT staff excel in leveraging emergency action plans for each situation.**

**B**UT LIKE OTHER government agencies and businesses, ADOT employees faced unprecedented challenges after the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020.

"ADOT showed tremendous flexibility by adjusting to many changes during the COVID-19 pandemic to sustain business procedures," said Emergency Manager **David Egliskis**.

Since forming in December 2020, the Business Disruption PDCA team — led by Egliskis and Statewide Road Weather Manager **Kevin Duby** — conducted several virtual Gemba walks across divisions to learn about challenges and successes.

"We were looking at the impacts at the ground level and how we can develop the plan to support daily business functions. The PDCA team gained perspective during Gemba walks. We learned how different groups adjusted with cleaning, staffing, resources, supply ordering and so much more," Egliskis added.

Examples include social distancing for customers and staff at Motor Vehicle Division offices, permitting food trucks at rest areas to serve truckers because many restaurants were closed, creating online employee resources about COVID precautions, enabling about 25% of employees to work remotely, offering COVID vaccines to employees and providing alternatives for dealing with supply-chain disruptions.

The PDCA team of about 20 to 30 members represents the Administrative Services Division; Communications and Public Involvement; Enforcement and Compliance Division; Financial Management Services; Human Resources; Information Technology Group; Infrastructure Delivery and Operations; Motor Vehicle Division; and Transportation Systems Management and Operations Division.

The team identified business strategies used during the pandemic to create standard work and countermeasures supporting ADOT's essential business functions.

About 500 employees are involved with testing three countermeasures, which are planned to be implemented agency-wide in early 2023:

#### **Emergency Contact Tree:**

This provides a way to contact employees during an emergency even if normal lines of communication go down. Team leader is Enforcement and Compliance Division Sgt. **Paul Simpson**.

**Business Disruption Plan:** This newly created template is used by divisions to provide their plan to meet core duties in the event of an emergency. Team leader is Office of Continuous Improvement Administrator **Lisa Pounds**.

**Agency Staffing Report:** This enables management to know how many employees are at their workplace, working remotely or on leave during an emergency. Management will be notified of areas that are understaffed. Team leader is Administrative

Service Division Program Administrator **Nathan Carroll**.

ADOT's goal is to be better positioned to face future challenges that could disrupt operations. The Business Disruption Plan, which is being coordinated with ADOT's continuity of operations plan (COOP), will provide a consistent and coordinated plan across the agency for extended emergencies like the pandemic.

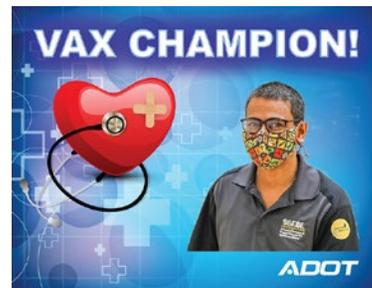
"A Business Disruption Plan identifies which services need to be prioritized and continue operating during an unplanned disruption in service past an initial emergency event. It should contain contingencies for business

processes, assets and human resources," Pounds said. "This document is not something that should be looked at once and then put on a shelf. It is a living document that should change just as core processes change." ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



*MVD office plexiglass and spacing: MVD offices like this one provided services on a limited basis with social distancing and plexiglass was installed to help keep staff and customers safe.*



*Left: Financial Systems Supervisor Rashmi Shah shows where she works remotely at home.*

*Middle: Transportation Engineer Manager Kohinoor Kar of the Multimodal Planning Division was one of ADOT's "Vax Champions".*

*Right: ADOT permitted food trucks at selected rest areas to help commercial drivers transport essential supplies.*

# KAIZEN KORNER

## KAIZEN MARKETPLACE

With the new [Kaizen Marketplace on ADOTNet](#), employees can share their kaizen improvement ideas with other ADOT groups or adopt a shareable kaizen idea from someone else.

This year's Kaizen Challenge goals are:



- 7,200 overall agency kaizen target
- 100% of team members will implement at least one kaizen
- 100% of team members will identify at least one kaizen that could be implemented by another team
- Leaders will continue to support and recognize kaizen thinking

## KAIZEN COUNT

The number of kaizens submitted by ADOT employees so far in fiscal year 2022-23.

# 1,917

(including 720 shareable kaizens)

For more information, visit the [Kaizen Challenge page](#) and the [Kaizen Marketplace page](#) on ADOT Net.

## MEET THE TEAM

# Human Resources Operations and Recruitment

**HUMAN RESOURCES** Operations and Recruitment includes nine employees. Human Resources Operations Manager **Nina Makarenko** describes the group in the Q and A below:

### Explain what your team does.

Our team handles the recruitment process from when the need to hire is identified to the employee start date. We also handle all entries and changes into the master Human Resources (HR) system, job classification changes, position updates and salary changes. Anything that is not employee relations or civil rights related is managed by us.

### What is the one thing you'd like employees to know about your team?

This team loves to learn and work together. They are willing to take on anything that comes their way and use each other's knowledge and experience to accomplish any goal.

### What is an interesting fact or fun story you'd like to share?

Most of our team are coffee addicts or foodies, so team meetings require lots of energy and stretchy pants. Last year, we had a hot cocoa bar for the holiday, and one team member made homemade hot cocoa bombs. We are very gourmet.

### How does your team embody AKA — The ADOT Way?

The entire team values and models AIR — accountability, integrity and respect — daily, and we've done a lot of work with problem-solving. We are great at solving specific defects, but are still building our muscles on root cause analysis and preventing future occurrences. We have done this by sharing the problem with the whole team and have found that a team member who doesn't perform recruitment tasks can often provide a different and fresh take on the issue. The team has learned to value this time and perspective together to improve processes, fill gaps and deliver value to our customers.

### Tell us about a kaizen that improved a process for your team.

Our transition from WorkCare to Concentra (third-party vendors the state contracts to complete medical testing) encompassed going from a paper form and email to a portal, which looked different and had different options. The team created a job aid to help portal users select the correct type of testing. The job aid includes detailed instructions, visuals and how to create a self-service ticket in the portal. It allowed the user to directly connect with Concentra on a specific candidate. We are working on additional tools and standard work to help with invoicing, portal navigation and contract support. ■

~ Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist



*Pictured: the Human Resources Operations and Recruitment team. From left to right: **Erik Busch, Angie Calderon, Chona "Jody" Tomerlin, Vanessa McHugh, Anny Wedding** (back row), **Nina Makarenko, Audrey Egure, Karen Shipley** (front row). Not pictured: **Laura Heath***

## WHERE

## IN AZ??



**DO YOU KNOW** the name and location of this rest area? Send your answer to [Insidelane@azdot.gov](mailto:Insidelane@azdot.gov) for a chance to win an Inside Lane goodie bag. The deadline is 5 p.m. Monday Nov. 28. ■

# IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

WITH *Bobby Wheeler*

AT ADOT, it's difficult to sum up anyone's job in just a few words. That's why we're giving employees across the agency the chance to share a little bit about what they do every day. If you'd like to be featured in a future issue, please send an email to [InsideLane@azdot.gov](mailto:InsideLane@azdot.gov) and we'll provide you with a questionnaire.



**Bobby Wheeler has worked at ADOT for 17 years. He is the ADOT Statewide Rest Area Manager.**

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

I manage the rest area operations, maintenance and litter pickup contracts. I spend half of my week in the office and the other half of my week behind-the-wheel going to rest areas and pull-off sites across the state managing construction projects and performing inspections.

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

ADOT owns and operates 33 rest area sites and provides litter pickup at 10 sites along Interstate 17 and Interstate 40. A typical day starts with several phone calls letting me know what happened at the rest areas the night before (power outages, water leaks, graffiti/vandalism, accidents etc.), filling out ADOT risk claim reports, receiving and analyzing water and waste water levels from each site and following up on current rehab projects. Arizona rest areas might not look like much when you pull in, but they keep me and the 70 employees busy around the clock.

**Name the most exciting/interesting thing that's happened to you on the job?**

Hands down, the most interesting time I had in the rest-area business was when ADOT allowed food

trucks on site to support the trucking industry during the pandemic. ADOT Statewide Permits issued 50-plus permits to mobile food vendors — giving them an opportunity to go out to the rest areas on scheduled days and sell hot food to truckers and travelers. Food truck vendors are a hard-working, competitive group of unique individuals, and there was never a dull moment during that time.

**If you won the lottery, what would you splurge on first?**

I'd buy really nice bath towels.

**What's your favorite holiday?**

Halloween.

**Favorite show/movie/documentary that you've watched?**

I'm a Ringer... ("Lord of the Rings").

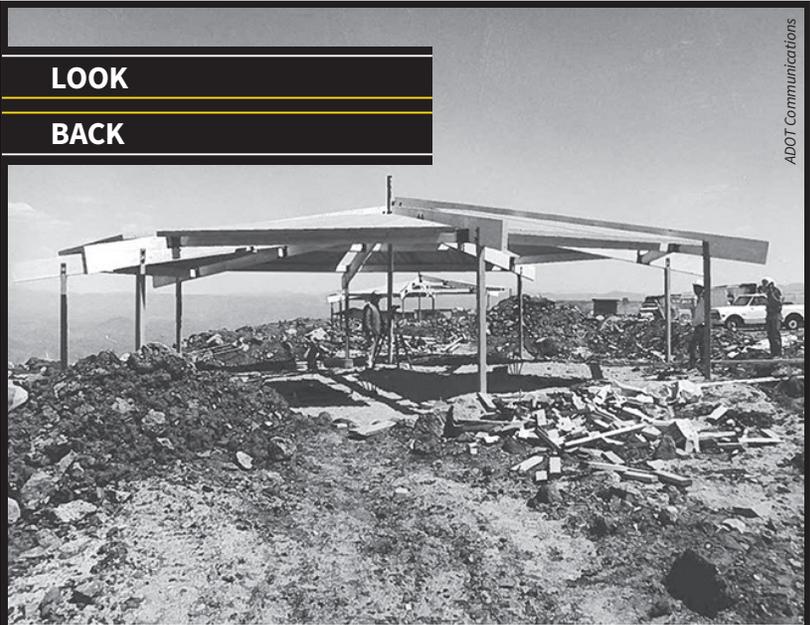
**What's your favorite dessert?**

My favorite desserts are pastries... and pretty much anything baked.

**Favorite band/musician?**

Stevie Ray Vaughn and Double Trouble. I especially like their performances when they play live on the television program Austin City Limits. ■

*~ Compiled by Kathy Boyle, Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications*



*Sunset Point Rest Area under construction in 1970.*

**Sunset Point a part of Arizona history**

**RIGHT NOW**, work is underway on [improvements](#) to ADOT's Sunset Point Rest Area. Located along Interstate 17, about 10 miles south of Cordes Junction, the rest area renovations include upgrades to the restrooms, ramadas and several features like signage, lighting and landscaping. [ADOT's sundial memorial](#) will get some attention, too.

The rest area first opened to travelers back in 1970, and almost immediately started to get widespread recognition. In 1971, the rest area was named the nation's "Outstanding Safety Rest Area with Sanitary and Other Facilities" in a competition sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration.

According to the [February 1972 issue of "Hiway Drumbeats,"](#) the department's employee newsletter at the time, the national award earned Sunset Point lots of attention, including an editorial page cartoon in The Arizona Republic. It was also reported that KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh showed its viewers "color pictures of the Sunset Point Rest Area in a campaign to upgrade Pennsylvania's rest stops." ■

*~ Angela DeWelles, Senior Communications Specialist*

ADOT Communications