

# The INSIDE

# LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

MARCH 2023

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**ADOT**

**I'VE BEEN WITH ADOT** for eight years. I lead the MVD internal support groups, and continue to work on MVD projects and initiatives that were kicked off while I was in my previous role as a project manager.

### Why are you passionate about the job you do?

I really like working on innovative initiatives that make MVD more efficient or make the work easier for the good people who do it. I achieve satisfaction, and ultimately passion for my job, from observing the results of something that I helped make better, especially when I hear people talk about how much faster or easier it is for them to carry out a task or process. I like it when people are happy with their work environment, so when I go to the [gemba](#), I listen to people and look for ways to make things a little better for them.

### How do you demonstrate care?

Demonstrating care is not only about what you say or do, but also about how you make people feel. People can sense when you are genuinely caring and when you are not. Showing that I am invested in the well-being and happiness of others helps create a positive work environment where people feel confident and content. Some of the ways that I demonstrate care include:

- Being available and responsive to others when they need support or assistance
- Offering help or support when it is needed, and taking the initiative to assist others without being asked
- Giving positive feedback and showing appreciation for others' contributions and efforts
- Being honest and transparent in my communication, and building trust by being reliable and dependable

Another way I demonstrate care is by showing interest in others' lives and well-being. I am a huge proponent of work/life balance. Work is important, but the people who are important to us outside of work and our overall well-being have a significant impact on how effective we can be at work. If our personal lives are in chaos, we cannot perform at our peak. I am grateful that since I started at ADOT I have had a leader who values family and well-being, and I pass that on to my teams as well. 🍷



**Lisa Moore**  
Senior Division  
Administrator,  
Internal Support  
Motor Vehicle Division

# 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

Videographer **Joe Llarger** took this photo of **Sara Howard**, a Deer Valley Construction Unit senior resident engineer, standing in front of Loop 303 construction near the 43rd Avenue intersection. Read why Howard as well as Operational Traffic and Safety Group Engineer **Saroja Devarakonda** and Prescott Regional Materials Engineer **Jessica Banner** chose transportation careers. **Page 3**



**Jessica Banner, Prescott Regional Materials Engineer, Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division**

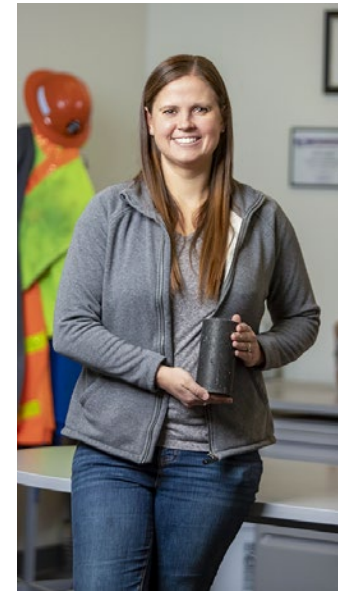
**WHILE STUDYING** civil engineering, **Jessica Banner** became fascinated by concrete and pavement materials.

“I wanted a career where I could do something I was interested in, contribute to solving problems and be innovative. The transportation industry was exactly what I was looking for,” she said.

She joined ADOT in 2010 as an **engineer in training** and completed 18 months of rotations in various areas. Her favorite rotation was the Prescott Materials Regional Lab.

“I really enjoyed seeing all of the test procedures and getting to perform some of the testing myself,” said Banner, who received her professional engineer license in 2014.

She offered her advice for girls considering a transportation career: “You may not have a clear idea of what is available or even what you might find interesting, but just take the first step and be open to exploring.”



**Saroja Devarakonda, Safety Analysis Program Manager, Traffic Safety Unit, Transportation Systems Management and Operations Division**

**SAROJA DEVARAKONDA** joined ADOT in 2018 as safety analysis program manager. Her team delivers crash data and analysis to support projects and public requests.

“We run an annual network screening for state highway system roadways and statewide intersections to identify locations with high fatal and serious injury crashes. We are also working on transitioning from crash frequency based safety analysis to predictive based analysis,” said Devarakonda, who has been an engineer for 24 years.

Her team develops and maintains **crash data dashboards** and crash location maps. ADOT staff, the Governor’s Office, cities, towns and other groups rely on this data to review project locations for safety concerns.

“I am happy that my work contributes to people getting safely home,” she added.

For girls considering a transportation career, Devarakonda shared: “There is nothing impossible if you put your heart to it. Don’t stop working toward your dreams. There is no limit.”

# Women @ ADOT

In honor of National Women’s History Month, we are spotlighting three women who work across the state in various ADOT roles.

*Stories by Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist. Photos by Joe Larger, Video Services*

## LOOK BACK: First female engineer opens doors

Read Frances Walker’s recollections of becoming the first female engineer in 1956 at the Arizona Highway Department, which became the Arizona Department of Transportation about 20 years later. Read this [Inside Lane Online](#) article from 2019.



## Sara Howard, Senior Resident Engineer, Deer Valley Construction Unit, IDO

**AS A CHILD**, **Sara Howard** always wanted to build things (mainly roads in her backyard for bicycles). That stayed with her in choosing to get her construction management degree from Arizona State University.

She began her ADOT career in 2011 in the Contracts and Specifications Group as a transportation engineering specialist.



After obtaining her professional engineer registration in 2017, she was promoted to a resident engineer in development for the Central District and now is a senior resident engineer in the Deer Valley Construction Unit. Her team administers construction projects throughout the Valley, including the 51st and 43rd Avenue interchanges on State Route 303.

“We work to complete construction projects on time and within budget, and we minimize conflicts,” Howard said.

She provided advice for girls considering a transportation career: “Don’t be afraid to speak up; ask lots of questions. Work hard and get a mentor (or a few).”

# Live chats provide speedier service for MVD customers

**T**O IMPROVE CUSTOMER service, Motor Vehicle Division Customer Service Unit Supervisor **Kit Yourison** was tasked with developing a new live chat feature on [azdot.gov](http://azdot.gov).

“The live chat is a huge breakthrough for the Contact Center. It shows that we are always looking for new and different ways to effectively communicate with our customers,” Yourison said.

Since it launched, the live chat usage has been increasing rapidly from 8,645 in September 2022 to more than 24,000 in January 2023.

With the chat, customer service representatives (CSRs) respond to inquiries in less than two minutes on average, compared to four-and-a-half minutes to answer a phone call. A difference of a few minutes per

customer adds up to substantial time savings for everyone, considering that MVD conducts millions of transactions annually.

Customers chat virtually with CSRs through the [MVD page](#) to address concerns and answer questions from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

“The chat allows us to continue to serve customers even when we face technical difficulties with the phone system. Agents can assist three customers in real time, unlike a phone call where an agent can only speak



with one customer at a time. It improves the overall customer experience,” Yourison explained.

Before the chat was officially deployed, Yourison said she empowered CSRs to

provide feedback for the vendor to ensure the chat feature meets the MVD Contact Center’s needs.

“I provided CSRs with a ‘no blame, no judgment’ environment so they could express

their ideas, suggestions and complaints freely. I utilized the more advanced CSRs to assume the trainer role to prepare their peers for the chat. I also peer coached our lead to effectively do queue monitoring and schedule forecasts,” she said.

As a leader, Yourison said she appreciated the opportunity for MVD agents to explore faster and more effective ways to communicate.

“CSRs might not have thought that being able to communicate with a customer non-verbally in real time was possible until now,” she added.

For more information, read this [news release](#) and view this [video](#).

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

## Live Chat with MVD

Save time. Skip the wait. Chat with an MVD expert.

 Start Chat

## IN CASE YOU'RE

## ASKED ABOUT IT

### Mobile MVD bus provides services to customers in hard-to-reach locations

**THE MOBILE MOTOR** Vehicle Division bus — an office on wheels — will be traveling to rural communities and special events to provide driver license, and registration and title services.

The vehicle was originally outfitted in 2019 to serve customers when some MVD offices were temporarily [closed for staff training](#). It later was used to provide a moving MVD location for Arizonans to conveniently convert their driver licenses to a [Travel ID](#) before the May 2023 deadline. Since the Travel ID deadline was extended to 2025, the mobile MVD bus now is being used to provide services for customers in hard-to-reach areas.

State-of-the-art equipment and networking were installed in 2022 in the Mobile MVD bus, enabling customers to meet virtually with customer service representatives working in various MVD offices to obtain various services. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



Customer Service Representative **Kimberly Fuentes** at the South Mountain MVD office is shown on the computer screen as she helps a customer inside the MVD Mobile Bus.

Bill Lamoreaux, ADOT Communications

# 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.

# 3,418

(including 1,792 shareable kaizens)

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

## MEET THE TEAM

# Performance Audit Group

**THE PERFORMANCE** Audit Group within the Office of Audit and Analysis includes six employees and one vacant position. Chief Auditor **Vickie Murphy**, Audit Manager **Kim Prendergast** and Audit Supervisor **Mike Ashton** describe the group below:

### What does the Performance Audit Group do?

The Office of Audit and Analysis focuses on providing management with independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value, and improve the effectiveness of the department operations and internal controls. The performance group focuses on operational audits, which is a deep dive into processes to ensure they are performed effectively and efficiently. While other work groups in the office focus on compliance, this group's whole purpose is to help management meet their goals and objectives.

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

Our office follows the Governmental Auditing Standards. Although these standards require us to follow a strict process, every audit is built individually to meet the needs of the department and management. Each audit starts with a clean slate with no perceptions or guesses to the outcome. While sometimes it is a little intimidating, it is fun to learn more about the department and modify our work to best meet the needs of management.

### What is unique about your team?

Typically, people assume auditors are accountants. Our group has a diverse background of prior experience, which helps us audit with a different perspective. Our staff includes a startup business owner, a Ph.D. a Lean [Six Sigma Black Belt](#) (methodology similar to the Arizona Management System), a Las Vegas casino auditor and backgrounds in insurance and other state agencies.

### What is a recent success story for your team?

For each audit report, we follow up on the recommendations and management action plans to ensure that the action plans are implemented in a timely manner. Due to employee turnover, this was not being done. Over the last year, the team worked hard to complete audit follow-ups for a three year backlog. We have also added a new audit software, AuditBoard, that allows us to easily track audit findings that require follow up.



Pictured (left to right): Performance Auditors **Catherine Vale**, **Dominique Garcia**, **Gretchan Corey**, **Chelsea Guzman Velasco** and Performance Audit Supervisor **Mike Ashton**. Not pictured: Performance Auditor **Lindsey Hench**

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

The team embraces AKA — The ADOT Way and especially that of integrity, from AIR. We embrace our ethical standards and independence to comply with auditing standards. We are always striving to improve our business practices, providing value to ADOT via the audit process by identifying opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness. We use performance measurement and visual indicators to let us know at a glance how the team is doing.

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

We have welcomed several new team members over the last two years. To provide the new staff an opportunity to learn more about AMS and 1:1 Coaching, the team implemented standard work to have new staff observe established staff members' monthly 1:1 coaching sessions. This allows them to learn how the process works and what their expectations are. ■

~ Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist

# IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

WITH *Maysa Hanna*



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.

**Maysa Hanna has worked at ADOT for 23 years. She is the State Traffic Engineer in the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division.**

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

I am a servant in the public sector and have the honor to serve. I lead and manage a very talented group of professional traffic engineers. They provide oversight of the establishment and development of the traffic guidelines and processes, standard drawings, standard specifications, manual of approved signs and the Arizona supplement of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways. All these references are considered the bread and butter for all traffic designers, internal and external, as they use it to provide traffic control plans. I provide oversight over projects developed in-house for traffic control and ensure compliance with the state and federal laws, and guidelines.

**What's your typical workday like?**

My typical workday usually starts with checking my email and addressing critical emails, followed by essential meetings to coordinate and communicate essential functions in our daily duties or working on

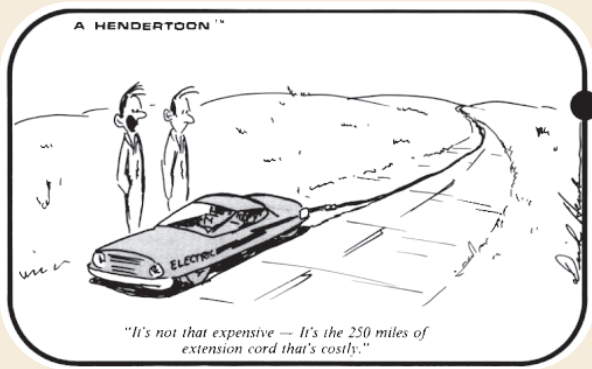
existing programs. Also, it involves huddling with my direct key staff members on a daily basis to make sure I am up to speed with any challenges or potential challenges, and to be able to remove roadblocks out of their way to achieve the established goals for the group. Our daily huddle also means sharing important information, and to cascade it down to their direct staff if it is critical enough and can't wait until the end of the week to share it with the entire Traffic Group.

**What do you want other ADOT employees to know about your job that they might not know?**

ADOT has a seat on the table with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. I represent ADOT in the Committee on Traffic Engineering. I am also a voting member in the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices/State/ADOT and the chair of the Approved Product List Evaluation Committee on Traffic.

# ADOT JUMBLE

**THIS CARTOON** was originally published in the **May 1980 issue of Newsbeat**, ADOT's internal newsletter of the day. A lot has changed since then. In 1980, electric vehicles were a novelty. Today, ADOT employees are working to roll out Arizona's recently approved **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan**.



Directions: Unscramble each of the clue words, then arrange the circled letters to form the answer. Email your answers to [InsideLane@azdot.gov](mailto:InsideLane@azdot.gov) by March 14. Everyone who solves the puzzle will be entered into a drawing for a prize. We'll reveal the answers in next month's newsletter. Good luck! ■

- 1) ETERLICC \_ ○ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
  - 2) INTUAREFRTCUS \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
  - 3) YRBHID ○ ○ \_ ○ \_ ○
  - 4) RNGEA \_ ○ \_ ○ ○
  - 5) ELFU \_ ○ \_ ○
- After the electric vehicle salesperson went on vacation, he came back to work feeling*

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Developing employees is the most interesting and rewarding thing for a manager to see over the years. Keeping the core competency of a team, in times when our resources are limited, is the most important thing for ADOT.

**What's on the top of your bucket list?**

Preparing for my daughter's wedding and working with her on many arrangements.

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

I always enjoy going to Rocky Point with my family and friends from church. ■

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