

The INSIDE

LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

DECEMBER 2023

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 12

PR Professional of the Year

Best Virtual Public Involvement



Best Transportation Special Event



And the winner is ... ADOT!

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Best External Video



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ADOT

LEADERSHIP

MATTERS

I'VE WORKED for ADOT for more than seven years. I first joined the Multimodal Planning Division, then worked for the State Engineer's Office and now, I am the Administrative Services Division (ASD) director.

What does it mean to be a public servant?

I want to always do my best, and support the ASD team to do their best, and deliver great products and services to ADOT and our outside customers. Collaborating with subject-matter experts to make great decisions is really what being a public servant is all about. It is not about me, but about what we can do together. It is making the best use of our resources, planning and delivering on our mission to provide highway infrastructure and transportation services, and supporting those endeavors.

As public servants, we are rule followers and rulemakers to ensure things work smoothly. In ASD, we are innovators and problem-solvers, which takes getting the right people together to work collaboratively, to find solutions that meet the customer's needs and also make good business sense. It is this balance that brings value to customers and taxpayers who entrust us to achieve our agency's goals.

All ASD activities help others make a difference and make our mission at ADOT a success every day.

How do you take time to reflect on how your actions may impact other groups?

I schedule time on my calendar to plan what I want to accomplish in meetings. I make sure we have the right people in the room. For future improvements, it's thinking about how ASD fits into the overall goal of the problems or issues. Sometimes, we start with a small group to get a good idea of what the issue is, then I reach out to stakeholders and schedule site visits.

As a facilities representative, we consider how our customer needs interact with other agency needs. We determine how we can collaborate with other department staff to provide great service, and save time and money. ADOT's Enforcement and Compliance Division staff, along with the Federal Motor Carrier and Safety Administration, have similar responsibilities and functions at the Ports of Entry. It makes good business sense for them to co-locate together — streamlining inspection and permit services for commercial traffic entering Arizona. Prior to the final decision about making site modifications, we review the user's needs and the overall workflow. ■



*Teresa (Teri) Kennedy
Administrative Services
Division Director*

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ADDRESS ALL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO InsideLane@azdot.gov.

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 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 in JPEG format (no larger than 10MB). Along with the photo, please provide a brief description and your name/title.



On the cover

*Congratulations to ADOT for capturing four national communications awards presented by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials Committee for Transportation Communication (TransComm). The photo collage on the cover illustrates the "Best Virtual Public Involvement," "PR Professional of the Year," "Best External Video" and "Best Transportation Special Event" awards. Read the stories behind each award on **Page 4**.*

Grand Canyon National Park Airport soars

ARIZONA NATIVE Warren Smith is thrilled to be the manager of the state-owned Grand Canyon National Park Airport and live on the airport's property with his wife and their four children, ranging from 3 months to 11 years old.

"Airport employees live here due to the nature of our jobs. About 90% of the staff are both operator-agents and firefighters so they have to be on site in the event of an emergency," Smith said.

Smith became Grand Canyon airport manager in February 2023. He started his aviation management career in Arizona as an airport operation agent at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and subsequently worked as the duty terminal manager at an airport in Everett, Wash. He has an MBA in aviation management from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

He's proud of his 12-member team's camaraderie in all aspects of airport operations. The team consists of trained aircraft rescue, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. They also provide airport operations and airfield maintenance support.

"We work hard to make sure the airport complies with all regulations in day-to-day operations, and we explore ways to expand business at the airport," he said.

For example, an airport lease was recently secured for HP Helicopters, which will be operating heavy lift helicopters during the construction of the new Transcanyon Waterline in the Grand Canyon that will replace a waterline that had been built in the 1960s.

The ADOT-operated airport, which opened in 1965, is located two miles from the entrance to the Grand Canyon National Park, which is visited by millions of visitors from around the globe each year. The airport serves as a hub for those wishing to experience the Grand Canyon via air tours.

The Grand Canyon airport staff's easy-to-work-with attributes especially shine when special challenges arise, Smith said.

"When President Biden flew into the airport in August, my team did a fantastic job coming together to provide White House and Secret Service staff with whatever they needed," he said.

Airport staff also coordinated with Information Technology Group employees, who provided the White House with

access to ADOT's network of radios, laptops and phones at the Grand Canyon airport.

Another example of great teamwork is how the Grand Canyon airport crew responded quickly after a historic flash flood swept into the town of Tusayan in August. They

assisted with traffic control and set up barricades to keep people from driving onto unsafe roads.

The airport converted its terminal into a temporary Red Cross shelter to serve flood victims and set up a clothing and food pantry in the airport's old administration building.

The airport staff also collaborated with ADOT maintenance workers and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office.

The airport has various projects on the horizon. It will get a new fire truck and convert its old small fire truck into a snow plow. Plans also include adding hangers to expand airport business. Electric vehicle charging stations are being evaluated as a future project to support the traveling public.

Staff also is working on long-term plans, including rehabbing the entire airport runway and remodeling the terminal building.

"Our biggest goal is to try to get a major airline to bring commercial service to the Grand Canyon airport," Smith said.

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



Warren Smith is the Grand Canyon National Park Airport manager.



Photos: Michael Cockrum, Grand Canyon National Park Airport

ADOT wins four national communications awards



ADOT EARNED four national communications awards for excellence among industry peers at the annual American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials Committee for Transportation Communication (TransComm) conference in Maine in October.

"Bringing home four national TransComm awards is a testament to the work not only of our Communications and Public Involvement team, but also the collaboration with colleagues from throughout the organization who tackled these projects. We're excited about the recognition and proud of the outstanding work," said Communications and Public Involvement Director **Jon Brodsky**.

Competition was stiff with 184 entries in 38 categories in the TransComm Skills Awards.

ADOT's Transcomm award nominations were created by Internal Communications team members, who collaborated with employees involved with specific projects. They are Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications **Kathy Boyle**, and Senior Communications Specialists **Lori Baker**, **Angela DeWelles** and **Ashley Richards**. The Graphics team also assisted with the nominations.

Here are highlights about each award winner:

PR Professional of the Year Award

(Assistant Communications Director for Digital Communications **Doug Pacey**)

Doug Pacey received the PR Professional of the Year Award. He's the creative mind that leads the team behind ADOT's traffic safety messages on Dynamic Message Signs. Messages from the ADOT Digital

Communications team have been recognized on social media by musical legends like Cher, U2 and "Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda. Pacey also created popular contests for the public to create traffic safety messages and names for snowplows. Since joining ADOT in 2012, Pacey has led many safety campaigns, including "Drive Aware Get There" about wrong-way drivers and "Distracted Drivers Terrify Me" to discourage distracted driving, as well as outreach campaigns to promote mobile ID and Arizona driver licenses in Apple Wallet. Pacey was nominated by Communications and Public Involvement Deputy Director **Caroline Carpenter**.

Transportation Special Event Award

(**Marcy McMacken** and **Luis Lopez**, Community Relations Project Managers on the Major Projects team)

When Arizona's largest urban freeway reconstruction project needed three bridges removed over one weekend, ADOT's Public Involvement Team for the Interstate 10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project created a special event. Armed with a catchy name — "Ready to Rubble: The Ultimate Bridge Takedown" — the team developed a comprehensive event and communication plan. They provided on-site tours for stakeholders and engineering students to see and learn about the bridge removal process first-hand.



Joe Larger, ADOT Video Services

ADOT captured four TransComm national awards for excellence in communications. Those involved with the winning projects are (left to right) **Kathy Boyle**, **Audrey St. Clair**, **Luis Lopez**, **Marcy McMacken**, **Jon Brodsky**, **Doug Pacey**, **Daina Mann**, **John Dougherty** and **Charles Cull**. (Not pictured: **Nancy Becerra**, **Joe Larger** and **Laura Douglas**.)

Virtual Public Involvement Award

(Assistant Communications Director for Community Relations **Daina Mann** and Community Relations Project Manager **Nancy Becerra**)

In fall 2022, ADOT launched an ambitious public involvement plan for the [2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan](#) update with virtual public involvement strategies to increase public engagement statewide in a meaningful and cost-effective manner. Outreach included virtual public meetings, a Telephone Town Hall for those without access to digital devices and an interactive online survey. An interactive website ([adot2050plan.com](#)) was developed and social media was utilized to encourage public engagement.

Video Production-External

(Video Services Manager **John Dougherty**, and Videographers **Charles Cull** and **Joe Larger**)

ADOT Video Services team members produced the "Sliding a Bridge: SR 79 Gila River Bridge Slide" video by creating time-lapse footage chronicling construction of the new State Route 79 Gila River Bridge, which was built in two sections on either side of the old bridge then slid together.

Over two weekends in January 2023, crews tore out the old bridge and slid each half of the new structure where the existing bridge once stood. Video Services team members took five trips to Florence to produce this video. ■

~ *Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist*

MEET THE TEAM



UTILITY AND RAILROAD ENGINEERING

THE Utility and Railroad Engineering (URR) group includes 15 employees and is part of the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division. The team describes their work below.

Explain what your team does.

We coordinate with all utility companies and railroads for any work or mitigations resulting from the ADOT five-year program. We manage the Section 130 program, a program to improve safety at public railroad at-grade crossings throughout the state, and the Subsurface Utility Engineering program. We also prepare agreements and manage the finances of the agreements.

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

We are a valuable resource supporting you on any questions or stalemates with all utilities. When you start working with a utility company, plan to use URR as your resource.

What is unique about your team?

URR team members are diverse and each has unique talents and skills. The team's various backgrounds, individual ways of thinking, work experiences in different industries and problem-solving skills create a synergy that enriches the group's daily working experience and promotes efficient results.

What does your team do to ensure they're easy to work with?

The team relies on their backgrounds, knowledge of construction, federal rules and development to remain flexible. The team relishes the opportunity to facilitate and be "easy to work with."

When has your team been results-focused?

About 90% of our work is tied to the five-year program, so we are always results-focused. We provide one of the required clearance letters allowing ADOT to receive federal funds.



The Utility and Railroad Engineering group participates in a virtual meeting.

Tell us about a time when your team successfully collaborated with others.

Each project that ADOT constructs, or supports a local agency to construct, is evidence of successful collaboration.

How does your team respond to customer needs?

Our team listens and seeks favorable solutions. When a project does not go as planned or there is potential for a delay, our team supports ADOT and the utilities to communicate and facilitate an answer that works for everyone. Oftentimes, the solution requires flexibility. ■

~ Compiled by Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist



Coming Dec. 4:
A new Innovation Marketplace!

An innovation is the renewal of a product or service by applying new processes, introducing new techniques or establishing successful ideas to create new value.

Employees are encouraged to submit innovations that are shareable in the Innovation Marketplace. Contact your [Lean coach](#) if you have questions.

At ADOT, solving problems is what we do. Keep submitting innovations to the Innovation Marketplace!

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DECEMBER 2023

We provide highway infrastructure and transportation services.





Jody Murphy, Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division

Jody Murphy has worked at ADOT for six years. He is a highway engineering permits supervisor in the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division Central District.

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

I supervise one of the teams responsible for reviewing, processing, documenting and monitoring any encroachment work affecting the operational control or use of ADOT's right of way. This includes processing and issuing a variety of permits, which define the requirements for use of state highways and for all uses other than travel by the public.

What's your typical workday like?

My days usually consist of coordinating and attending meetings, such as pre-design and scoping, pre-application, preliminary site reviews and pre-construction. I also confirm that all encroachment program permit requirements are met and work is performed in compliance with the applicable laws, rules, regulations and ADOT-standard specifications. In addition, I assist with research for the State Attorney General's Office for litigation reviews.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy that we permit special events that impact ADOT right of way, such as the Arizona State University and Arizona Cardinals football season traffic control plans, March Madness, Renaissance Festival, etc. Special events increase traffic volume,

which impacts all commerce in the area. It is really interesting to be a part of the pre-planning for these events and learn the processes to administer them.

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

I suppose I'm pretty boring. I would just pay my student loans off and save the rest. Nothing else would change in my life.

What's on the top of your bucket list?

One day I want to sail from Santa Barbara, California to my parent's house in Port Angeles, Washington, using nothing but the power of the wind, analog maps and navigation tools. No electronics or Global Positioning System (GPS).

Do you have a special talent that people would be surprised to know about?

In the 1990s and early 2000s, I was a professional ballroom dancer and won several championships nationwide, including the Cross Country Dancesport Championships in Las Vegas, Nevada.

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

Last year, my wife and I were able to attend the Formula 1 event in Montreal, Canada with Paddock tickets. This happened to coincide with the Montreal Jazz Music Festival, which was incredible. Best vacation of our lives! ■

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

Arizona Highways news

Arizona Highways new scenic book available

From expansive landscapes to intriguing history, Arizona Highways' new "Scenic Drives" guidebook celebrates Arizona's visual wonders by sharing 100 of the best routes for exploring the Grand Canyon State by car.

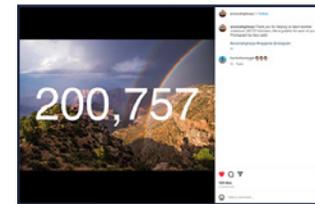


Sorted by region, the 328-page year-round guidebook features iconic full-color photography, tour guides and maps. Text was written by Arizona Highways staff and contributors, and edited by Arizona Highways Managing Editor **Noah Austin**. Photos were made by Arizona Highways contributors.

The book costs \$29.99, but ADOT employees can get a 30% discount through Dec. 31. Order online at ShopArizonaHighways.com and use promo code **P3STA30** at checkout.

Arizona Highways surpasses 200,000 Instagram followers

Congratulations to Arizona Highways Magazine and Editor **Robert Stieve** for surpassing 200,000 followers. The Instagram page was launched in January 2012.



In addition, Arizona Highways was again named the **Best Instagram Account** by the Phoenix New Times. Arizona Highways has received this "Best of Phoenix" honor three times in the past four years.

Arizona Highways' Instagram features photos of Arizona's natural beauty, along with local culture and historic photos. According to the Phoenix New Times, it "not only gives us inspiration for our next

weekend getaway, it makes us truly appreciative of all Arizona has to offer." Check out the Arizona Highways Instagram account, [@arizonahighways](https://www.instagram.com/arizonahighways). ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

We want to hear from you!



WHAT ARE YOU looking forward to in 2024 at ADOT? The Inside Lane is looking for employees with various job functions around the state to share their thoughts. By **Dec. 5**, send your comments (up to 75 words) and a photo of yourself to Insidelane@azdot.gov. Your comments may appear in a future issue of The Inside Lane. ■