

The INSIDE

LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

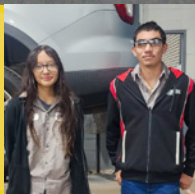
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VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2



Keeping wildlife safe

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Gilbert Jimenez.
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ADOT

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

OVERSEE INTERNAL Communications, Digital Communications and the Creative Services (web, graphics, video) teams. Eleven years ago, I joined ADOT as a public information officer embedded in the Traffic Operations Center where I was able to use my background as a meteorologist and reporter to share information on ADOT incidents that were often the result of weather events. Once this team (Digital Communications) expanded, I became the team supervisor and eventually assistant communications director for digital communications.

What do you do to take care of yourself so you can take care of your team?

If we're ever in a virtual meeting together, you may see me walking on my under-desk treadmill. I've found short stints on the treadmill throughout the day really do have a positive effect on my energy level and mood. If you don't see me walking in a meeting, please say something because I can always use help with accountability!

How do you encourage innovation with your team?

Embracing change, looking forward and strategically innovating are keys to success. Change is going to happen whether or not we're ready for it. Let's look at change as an opportunity to innovate and improve. For Communications and Public Involvement, that often means figuring out innovative ways to reach the public and our stakeholders with agency messages. From a new editing technique our Video Team experiments with to using trendy animation to bring attention to freeway closures, I'm consistently impressed by the creative ways our team members share ADOT's information.

Recognizing those who are innovating and providing support (e.g. technology, training), gives team members the freedom to innovate. Encouraging our managers to continue learning about the latest trends and technology in their area of expertise and making innovation the norm rather than the exception provides the environment for our team members to excel. ■



Caroline Carpenter
*Deputy Communications Director,
Communications and Public
Involvement*

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Transportation



On the cover

This photo of an elk on a northern Arizona highway was taken by George Andrejko, a photographer for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, which joined ADOT in filing a successful \$24 million federal grant to construct a wildlife overpass crossing and other improvements on Interstate 17 between the Munds Park traffic interchange and the Kelly Canyon traffic interchange near Flagstaff. Read more, **Page 3**.

Share your photos

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. 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.



Photos: Joe Larger, ADOT Video Services

This photo shows the location of the future wildlife crossing on Interstate 17 in northern Arizona.

GREAT TEAMWORK KEY TO SECURING \$24 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT FOR WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

ADVANCED PLANNING and research along with effective collaboration between ADOT and other government agencies helped secure a \$24 million federal grant for a wildlife crossing and fencing designed to reduce crashes involving wildlife.

ADOT Director **Jennifer Toth** spoke at a Dec. 5 news conference where Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt announced FHWA was awarding Arizona the grant for a wildlife overpass. The improvements will be initiated along 8.4 miles of Interstate 17 between the Munds Park traffic interchange, south of Flagstaff, and the Kelly Canyon traffic interchange to the north.

ADOT's Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division's Northcentral District and Environmental Planning worked with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) for several years doing research and gathering data about the need for wildlife crossings for elk, deer and other animals.

"It is part of a regional effort to provide wildlife connectivity to elk and deer, and to prevent accidents on Interstate 17 and Interstate 40," said Biology Program Manager **Justin White**.

When the availability of FHWA Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program grants was announced in April 2023, the ADOT grant team met with AZGFD, which would provide the state matching funds, and an on-call grant writing firm

began developing the 28-page application.

"This was an exemplary collaboration that proved to be very successful. ADOT already had an intergovernmental agreement with AZGFD regarding this project, so the grant team was prepared for the potential development of the federal grant application," said Multimodal Planning Division's Research Center Lead **Kohinoor Kar**.

Other ADOT groups involved with the application were the Project Management Group, Joint Project Agreements, Traffic Safety Section, Financial Management Services, and Government Relations and Rules.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR MAJOR NEWS CONFERENCE

After ADOT was notified Nov. 28 about receiving the federal grant, the Communications and Public Involvement team began preparations for a Dec. 5 news conference.

The Sunset Point Rest Area off I-17 was chosen for the event because it would showcase Arizona's beautiful landscape as state and federal officials shared the news



This is an aerial shot showing the location of the planned wildlife crossing on Interstate 17 in northern Arizona.



(Left to right) Coconino County Supervisor District 3 Mark Ryan, Arizona Game and Fish Department Wildlife Management Division Assistant Director Clay Crowder, ADOT Director **Jennifer Toth** and Federal Highway Administration Administrator Shailen Bhatt participated in a media event announcing the \$24 million federal grant to build wildlife crossings.

about the federal grant. Rest Area Manager **Bobby Wheeler** worked out logistics, such as providing power to the area.

ADOT Public Information teamed with AZGFD to create a joint [news release](#). ADOT Video Services shot drone footage of the future overpass site near Flagstaff and incorporated AZGFD wildlife footage into a [video](#), as well as took [photos](#) and video at the news conference.

"This was a great opportunity to demonstrate Arizona's commitment to the safety of motorists and wildlife, and to support our partners at the Federal Highway Administration. It was gratifying to see so many partners come together quickly and effectively for this all-hands-on-deck response," said Assistant Communications Director for Public Information **Steve Elliott**. 🇺🇸

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERN AT ADOT EQUIPMENT SERVICES SHOP



Photos: Patrick McCarthy, Lube/Support Shop

Metro Tech High School seniors **Emma Arroyo** and **Oswaldo Rodriguez** are the first Equipment Services Automotive interns and are working part-time through May.

METRO TECH High School seniors **Emma Arroyo** and **Oswaldo Rodriguez** are getting hands-on training in vehicle repairs and maintenance, thanks to ADOT's new Equipment Services Automotive Intern Program.

"The interns receive on-the-job training in the field they are studying and one-on-one mentorship with automotive professionals," said Equipment Services Business Operations Manager **Anna Gomez**.

Arroyo and Rodriguez both have taken automotive classes at Metro Tech, which helped prepare them for their ADOT internship. They work part-time at the Durango Complex Support and Lube Shop performing preventative maintenance services on cars, including oil changes, filters, fluid fills, tire inspections, brake inspections and batteries. Their internship runs through May 2024.

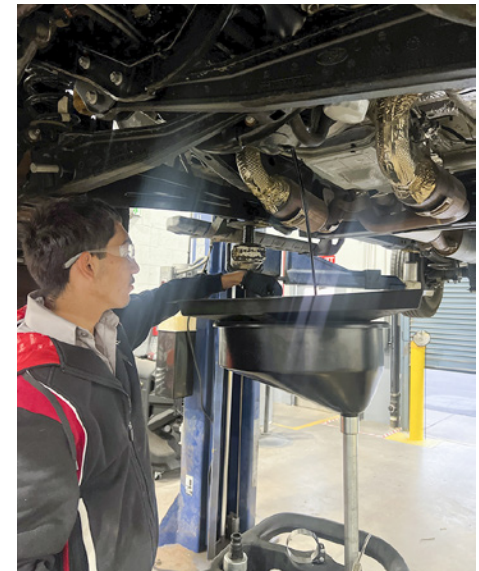
"I like working at ADOT because the work here is engaging, and it is a great place to learn about being a tech," Rodriguez said. "I am able to learn as I gain the experience of working as a technician, and this opportunity will help me reach my goals."

Arroyo also said she's thankful that ADOT is providing this internship.

"I think ADOT offering an internship opportunity is amazing because it allows students a chance to improve their skills while also seeing a glimpse of what their career could be one day," she said. "I enjoy working at ADOT; the environment is very welcoming."



Left: ADOT Intern **Emma Arroyo** works on a vehicle's tire rim at the Durango Complex Lube/Support Shop. Right: ADOT Intern **Oswaldo Rodriguez** changes oil in a vehicle.



Two new interns will be selected for the 2024-2025 school year.

"The intern program was started to help meet the high demand of vehicle and equipment maintenance service we provide on an agency and statewide level," Gomez said. "Interns also will garner interest in ADOT Equipment Services as a future employer."

For more information, contact Gomez at AGomez@azdot.gov or 602.712.6225. 🇺🇸

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

MEET THE TEAM

Budget and Research Office

The [Budget and Research Office](#) is part of the Financial Management Services Division. Budget Manager **David Bolter** describes the team's work below.

Explain what your team does.

We ensure that ADOT's finite financial resources support all functions of the agency. This is accomplished by developing ADOT's annual budget request, allocating funds to the divisions and monitoring spending. The budget office plays a crucial role in advising divisions on the best use of public funds.

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

The budget office consists of a diverse team of individuals. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and has had different career paths. One thing we all share is that we are very approachable. This helps us find creative solutions to complex problems.

When has your team been results-focused?

Each year during "budget season" (February to August), there are multiple milestones that must be met when developing ADOT's budget request. Any request for additional resources is dependent on submitting a compelling request by the deadline. For example, the budget office has been able to successfully demonstrate the need for specific programs to receive inflationary increases across the agency.

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

ADOT has a number of reports due to the executive team and Legislature throughout the year. This requires the budget office to work closely with the divisions to ensure the information is accurate, as the information may affect the future of the agency.



Kip Carroll, Traffic Maintenance Administration

◀ Pictured (Left to right): (Front row) Budget Analysts **Noah Munoz**, **Dara Griggs**, **Melissa Epperson** and Budget Analyst and Interim Budget Supervisor **Saul Morales**. (Back row) Budget Manager **David Bolter**, Budget Supervisor **DeeAnn Brewer** and Budget Analyst **Derek Romero**.

their divisions before sending them to the budget office.

What is an interesting fact you'd like to share?

The budget office is one of the few areas of the agency that works with every division regularly.

What is a recent success story for your team?

Recently, two major systems used by the budget office — the statewide accounting system and the budget submission software — were replaced within three months of each other. With any system change, there are a number of difficulties. But the budget team worked together to overcome all the challenges that the team encountered. ■

~ Compiled by Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist



Innovation Marketplace

Innovation:

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

Submit an Innovation

Innovation Form

For Upline Leaders

Highlight Request Form

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 quality innovations to the new and improved Innovation Marketplace!

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Gilbert Jimenez is the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division's Springerville maintenance supervisor. He's worked at ADOT for six years.

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

Supervising the Springerville Maintenance Unit involves maintaining the assets on our highways, performing winter storm operations, overseeing crew and equipment management, and responding 24/7 to everything from vehicle crashes to natural disasters, flooding, forest fires, etc.

Why do you choose public service?

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.

What do you do to ensure that you're easy to work with?

I try to be fair and believe that communication, listening and collaboration play a huge role in being easy to work with.

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

I would definitely buy my mom a house, then pay all my bills off.

What's your favorite holiday?

Christmas and Easter equally.

What's your favorite dessert?

Pineapple upside-down cake.

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

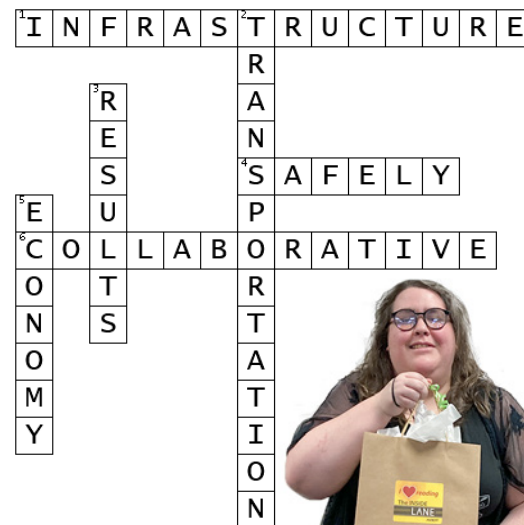
This past summer, I took all of my family to Eureka, California where my wife is from. I got to go deep-sea fishing with my sons and also saw the Redwood trees for the first time. 🌲

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

WINNER,

WINNER!

WE RECEIVED MANY entries in response to last month's crossword puzzle contest based on the new ADOT mission, vision and values, but there could only be one winner. Congratulations to **Shaughnessy Finley** (pictured at right), a customer service representative 3 at the Tempe Motor Vehicle Division, who was chosen in a random draw! Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications **Kathy Boyle** presented Finley with a special gift bag, including a deck of Grand Canyon playing cards, Arizona Highways magazines, a pen, a lanyard, stress ball and candy. 🍬



Kathy Boyle, ADOT Communications

ADOT JUMBLE

DIRECTIONS: Unscramble each of the clue words, then arrange the circled letters to form the answer. Email your answers to InsideLane@azdot.gov by **Feb. 16**. 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) ERETPATUREM _ _ _ _ _

2) BTYATRE _ _ _ _ _

3) TLEAICM _ _ _ _ _

4) SLNAP _ _ _ _ _

5) IOESTADITNN _ _ _ _ _

When project engineer George flipped a coin to decide where the team should order lunch, Jerry thought the method

This cartoon is vintage! It appeared in the [March 1971 issue of Drumbeats](#), the Arizona Highway Department's employee newsletter. "Hendertoons" appeared in employee newsletters throughout the 1960s and 1970s.



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