

The INSIDE

LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

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HAPPY 50TH, ADOT!

Happy anniversary, ADOT!

Here's to many more years of safety, service and innovation



Jennifer Toth
Director

AM SO HAPPY to celebrate ADOT's 50th anniversary with you! This is truly a special milestone that gives us a chance to reflect on our agency's history.

50 years is a big deal — just think how much has changed since 1974. Along with hairstyles, fashion and the cost of groceries, transportation in Arizona has come a long way too.

When ADOT was created, there were about 5,811 miles of state highway and the interstate system in Arizona was only 86% complete. Since then, we've added more than 1,100 miles to the state's transportation system, and drivers celebrated the completion of Interstate 10's "final mile" almost 35 years ago!

Beyond highways, ADOT has evolved in many other areas as well — all thanks to the dedicated people who have worked to continuously innovate and improve the way we operate. As you'll see highlighted in this month's issue of The Inside Lane, ADOT employees have made some incredible contributions that have benefited Arizona beyond measure.

- **Our state is more connected than ever.** ADOT employees have worked over the last five decades to expand and improve Arizona's transportation system. Because of that, people can safely travel throughout our state and businesses can grow.
- **Customers have many options to choose from.** When it comes to getting the transportation services they need, Arizonans have convenient options thanks to the ADOT employees who, for half a century, have developed systems and adopted technology all in an effort to provide stellar customer service.
- **Safety and innovation are at the forefront.** During the last 50 years, ADOT employees have innovated and developed technology to keep drivers safe and informed.

We're all a part of ADOT — and whether you've been here for 50 years (we actually have a few who have!) or for just 50 days, know that this agency is only able to operate and fulfill our mission because of you.

Please enjoy this issue, and be sure to check out [ADOTNet](#) throughout the month of July for more anniversary content, including photos, games, stories, videos and details on upcoming interactive activities.

As we celebrate and look back at ADOT's history, I want you to see your place in that story. I appreciate each of you and I thank you for your contributions. Right now, we're continuing to make history — just like the ADOT teams who came before us! 🍷

The INSIDE

LANE

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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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On the cover

The Inside Lane's 50th anniversary cover illustration, created by Graphics Project Manager **Randy Sasaki**, features ADOT photos, including emulsion mixing in 1974, skid research in 1977, US 160 drilling in 1978, driver license machines in 1979, Interstate 40 and Butler Avenue in Flagstaff in 1988, Superstition Freeway in 1990, Burro Creek Bridge construction in 2006, Red Mountain Freeway opening in 2012 and Interstate 10 and 79th Avenue in 2013. Read more about ADOT's 50-year history on **Pages 3-6**.



Celebrating 50 years of ADOT!

WITH A BOOMING population accelerating transportation needs in 1973, state legislators took action for Arizona to create a comprehensive transportation system to safely move people and grow the economy.

They consolidated the Arizona Highway Department and the Arizona Aeronautics Department into one new state agency — the Arizona Department of Transportation.

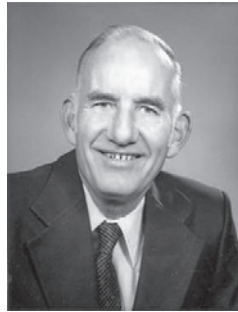
When ADOT launched on July 1, 1974, it was responsible for all the state highways and state-owned airports, and it has played a role in planning aviation, mass transit, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. ADOT became the first state DOT in the nation with its own airport — [Grand Canyon National Park Airport](#). Its terminal has been in operation since 1967.

ADOT’s focus broadened to include Administrative Services, Aeronautics, Highways, Motor Vehicles, Public Transit and Transportation Planning. The award-winning Arizona Highways magazine, which was founded in 1921, continued to be produced by ADOT.

The first appearance of the DOT name was on the new Engineering Building, which opened in 1974. At that time, the Motor Vehicle Division building was under construction and a contract was awarded to build the Administration building in Phoenix.

Appreciation for ADOT’s greatest resource — its employees — was a high priority from the get-go.

ADOT’s first director, William “Bill” Ordway (pictured below), commented on how employees play a vital role in the July 1974 issue of [Newsbeat](#), the employee newsletter at the time:



“As a new state agency, we face an exciting challenge of providing the impetus for a broader transportation for Arizona. This will take able, open, dedicated people — a resource with which I believe we are singularly blessed. This is clear already in the manner we’ve responded to staging the transition to a DOT. I deeply appreciate your cooperation and support, which is the key ingredient that will make Arizona’s Department of Transportation the finest in the nation.”

ADOT has had eight directors over five decades, one of the most notable being Mary Peters, who served from 1998 until 2001 when she became U.S. Secretary of Transportation leading the Federal Highway Administration.

For a half-century, ADOT employees throughout the state have embraced public service to expand the state’s transportation infrastructure, and implement new technologies and innovations to provide safer and more efficient ways to keep Arizona travelers moving. 🇺🇸

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



A workman affixes letters spelling out Arizona Department of Transportation on the Administration Building on 17th Avenue in this photo, which originally appeared in the July 1975 issue of Newsbeat, ADOT’s employee newsletter at the time.

Year	Licensed Drivers	Registered Vehicles	Vehicle miles traveled annually
1974	1.3 M	1.5 M	15.7 B
1984	2.5 M	2.1 M	20.9 B
1994	2.8 M	2.8 M	38.7 B
2004	3.8 M	4.2 M	57.3 B
2014	4.9 M	5.3 M	62.6 B
Most Recent	5.8 M (2023)	8.0 M (2023)	73.8 B (2022)

1974

ADOT became a state agency on July 1.



1975

New MVD building was built in Phoenix.



1978

I-17 was completed to Flagstaff.



1983

Work began on the Papago Freeway segment of I-10 being underground in central Phoenix.

1985

Maricopa County voters approved sales tax increase to fund Metro Phoenix freeway construction.

ADOT VOICES

Sharing memories of ADOT

A lot has changed in ADOT's 50 years and some employees have been there to experience most of it.

~ Compiled by Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist

Ed Green has worked at ADOT for 62 years. He started as a summer intern and is currently a hazardous material coordinator in the State Engineer's Office's Environmental Planning Group.



What are your first memories of working at ADOT?

There are so many, it's hard to define one. But one thing that still stands out from the early days is that our per diem was \$6. With a motel bill of \$4 per night, that didn't leave much for food.

How has ADOT changed in the past 50 years?

We certainly are provided better equipment; that's a real plus for those of us that travel the state on a regular basis.

Why have you continued working at ADOT all this time?

It is a great place to work, and the benefits are outstanding. I get to work with and learn from some of the best and brightest people.

Tami Wollaston has worked at ADOT nearly 51 years. He started as a draftsman and is currently a transportation engineering specialist in the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division's Roadway Engineering Group.



What are your first memories of working at ADOT?

Most people were very technically competent, and if you were willing to learn, they were very helpful.

How has ADOT changed in the past 50 years?

Not only ADOT, but the world has changed with inclusion of the available technologies that make our tasks easier and quicker.

Why have you continued working at ADOT all this time?

I've liked what I do through all the changes and challenges in these past 50 years.

LeRoy Brady has worked at ADOT for 50 years. He's been the chief landscape architect in IDO's Roadway Engineering Group the entire time.



What are your first memories of working at ADOT?

ADOT had just transitioned from the Highway Commission to ADOT the month before I started, so it was somewhat new organizationally.

How has ADOT changed in the past 50 years?

When I started working, most of the engineers had served in the military and then used the GI Bill to complete their education. Organizationally, we were somewhat more like the military.

Why have you continued working at ADOT all this time?

I enjoy my work and working with engineers on related issues to improve environment and community aesthetics with good transportation projects.

Paul Patane has worked at ADOT for 43 1/2 years. He started as an engineering aide and is currently Multimodal Planning Division director. Effective July 1, he will become the Southwest District Administrator.



What are your first memories of working at ADOT?

I remember being part of the ADOT survey crews and traveling throughout rural Arizona working on different types of projects. Survey crew size was typically four, so you had the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with those people.

How has ADOT changed in the past 50 years?

Technology has advanced. When issuing my first encroachment permit application, I had to use carbon paper to make copies. It's also been a great experience seeing the expansion of the state highway system. And it's amazing to see the diverse workforce we have today.

Why have you continued working at ADOT all this time?

I appreciate the meaningful and challenging work, and enjoy seeing how the projects we develop and construct enhance the quality of life for communities. The agency has also given me multiple career advancement opportunities, and supervisors were very supportive in helping me obtain my college degree and professional engineering registration. With leadership's strong support for a work-life balance and the benefits offered, why would you not want to work for ADOT? 🇺🇸

1988

First section of Loop 101 Northern to Peoria avenues opened.



1990

Papago Freeway's dedication marked completion of I-10 through Arizona.



1991

Superstition Freeway was finished after two decades of construction.

1997

Sunset Point Rest Area's Sundial Memorial was constructed to honor fallen ADOT employees.



2002

The Loop 101's final segment was finished, marking completion of the 60-mile loop.



Look Back: 50 years in photos

These photos from the ADOT Archives provide a glimpse into ADOT's history.

1 Interstate 19 fully completed in 1978 from Nogales at the Mexico border to Tucson in Arizona is the only highway in the United States that's fully marked in kilometers, rather than miles.



2 Pictured is Interstate 19 construction south of Tucson in the Amado area in 1977.



3 Construction of the Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge created a bypass so US 93 traffic no longer had to go over the Hoover Dam. Built 900 feet over the Colorado River, this was the highest and longest arch concrete bridge in the Western hemisphere when completed in 2010.



4 The Superstition Freeway from Gilbert Road to Val Vista Drive opened in 1983.



5 This is the cover of Arizona Highways magazine when ADOT was launched in July 1974. The magazine has been published since 1925.



6 ADOT's official mascot, the Highway Hawk, has made it a mission to educate children and adults about highway safety since 1996.



7 This photo shows construction in 1986 of the "Stack" interchange at Interstate 17 Black Canyon and Interstate 10 Papago freeways.



Here's an aerial view of Interstate 10 and State Route 51 from early 2000s.

2004

Voters approved additional funding for the Regional Transportation Plan, including the South Mountain Freeway.



2008

The final mile of Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway opened to traffic.

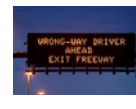


2011

State Route 87 improvements enhanced safety and traffic flow between Payson and the Phoenix area.

2018

The first-in-the-nation wrong-way vehicle alert system featuring thermal cameras was installed on a 15-mile stretch of -17 in Phoenix.



2019

Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway opened to traffic.



How well do you know ADOT?

TEST YOUR HISTORIC knowledge about the Arizona Department of Transportation by answering these questions. Email your answers to InsideLane@azdot.gov by **July 19**. If you're stumped, try looking on ADOTNet, azdot.gov or the ADOT Blog. Everyone who answers all the questions correctly will be entered into a random drawing for a fun prize! We'll reveal the answers and the winner soon. Good luck!! 🍀

1. Which Arizona governor appointed Jennifer Toth as ADOT director?

- A. Jan Brewer
- B. Katie Hobbs
- C. Doug Ducey
- D. Janet Napolitano

2. What year did the Federal Highway Administration approve the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway building alternative enabling the project to move forward?

- A. 2010
- B. 2012
- C. 2015
- D. 2009



3. What freeway provides better access to Glendale's sports and entertainment complex?

- A. Loop 303
- B. Interstate 10
- C. Loop 101
- D. Interstate 17



4. Which artist had his paintings featured in 70 Arizona Highways magazines?

- A. Robert McCall
- B. Bil Keane
- C. Ted DeGrazia
- D. Frank Lloyd Wright

5. When Arizona's first license plates were issued in 1914, what colors were the letters?

- A. Red and White
- B. Black and Orange
- C. Copper and Blue
- D. Blue and White

6. Where was Arizona's first freeway interchange?

- A. Interstate 17 and Van Buren Street
- B. Black Canyon Freeway and McDowell Road
- C. Grand Avenue and Black Canyon Freeway
- D. US 191 and Interstate 40

7. What movie was filmed along Loop 303?

- A. "Transformers: The Last Knight"
- B. "The Kingdom"
- C. "The Grapes of Wrath"
- D. "Forrest Gump"

8. Which rest area features the sundial memorial to fallen ADOT employees?

- A. Painted Cliffs
- B. Sunset Point
- C. Meteor Crater
- D. Sacaton

9. Who was the first ADOT director?

- A. Mary Peters
- B. Chuck Cowen
- C. Charles Miller
- D. Bill Ordway

10. Under Governor Rose Mofford's leadership, what year did ADOT's Adopt a Highway program start?

- A. 1991
- B. 1980
- C. 2000
- D. 1988



More 50th anniversary activities

THROUGHOUT JULY, we will continue to celebrate ADOT's 50th anniversary.

Our Creative Services team created fun games for you to discover interesting facts about ADOT's first 50 years as a state agency. Games that can be downloaded and printed will be posted in July on the ADOTNet home page:

- ADOT Director Names Word Search
- Transportation-Related Terms Crossword
- Unscramble the MVD-Related Words and Reveal the Secret Word
- Maze: Can You Get the Drivers Safely Home?

Check ADOTNet for historical photos, videos and more. Look for our Digital Communications team's 50th anniversary coverage on the ADOT Blog and on ADOT's [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ADOT), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ADOT) and [X/Twitter](https://twitter.com/ADOT). 🍀

2020

First-in-the-nation dust detection and warning project launched.



2020

Arizona Highways celebrates its 95th anniversary.



2021

I-10 Broadway Curve Project construction started.



2022

SR 189 flyover ramps opened in Nogales.



2024

ADOT landed a \$95 million federal grant for I-10 expansion.