

# The INSIDE

# LANE

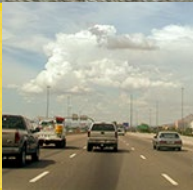
A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

MARCH 2022

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

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Building's 100 years

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**ADOT**



**HAVE BEEN WITH ADOT** for over 10 years and have held many roles, each offering increased opportunities for growth and learning new things. I am currently in the TSMO Division, where I am an assistant state engineer and manager of the Systems Technology Group. My team is responsible for the intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and emerging technology that support the safe and reliable operation of the state's transportation network. Drivers on our roadways are usually aware of the ITS devices, such as the dynamic message boards or ramp meters, but few know the complexities involved with operating and maintaining these systems. On the development side, we support the design and implementation of technology on construction projects, providing guidance on the latest recommendations and requirements to achieve the project goals. On the technology side, my team works very closely with other groups to ensure the devices and systems are functioning and recording accurately in real-time, so timely decisions can be made and used to best inform the traveling public. My team has definitely embraced the ability to speak with data to support decisions.



**Susan E. Anderson**  
Assistant State Engineer  
Systems Technology  
Transportation Systems  
Management and  
Operations Division

### How do you show respect for people?

To me, respect is demonstrated by truly listening to others and gaining a thorough understanding of their concerns. Often we cannot comprehend an issue completely until we have specific knowledge on why there is such a challenge, how it was discovered, the attempts toward resolution and outcomes thus far. This is where uncovering the root cause is key to finding the best solution, not just a solution.

Usually the opportunity to uncover the source of issues occurs during informal meetings with my staff, where we are simply discussing the progress on a project and deciding the next steps to take. During these times, I can listen to the concerns and experiences they have encountered and ask questions to get a better understanding of the impact and magnitude of each issue. I particularly enjoy uncovering opportunities for training or mentoring between my team and others. Introducing staff across the agency, particularly so they can learn how other groups function and use our team's work products, can develop real efficiencies in our processes and, better yet, it builds lasting relationships. ■

## The INSIDE LANE

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A WEB VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON ADOTNET OR AT [AZDOT.GOV/INSIDELANE](http://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](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

*This cover photo, taken by Videographer Joe Larger, shows Condemnation Team Leader Ron Middlebrook standing in front of the Old MVD Building. He is holding the extensive report that he wrote about the building's first 100 years.*

*Middlebrook used this 1920s-era photo of the Old MVD Building in his report. View photos and read more, [Page 3](#).*

This historic photo shows the State Highway Department accounting group from the early 1920s.



Ron Middlebrook, Right of Way

Ron Middlebrook displays some of the artifacts he collected from the Old MVD Building, including a door knob dating back to the 1940s.



Joe Larger, Video Services

## ADOT employee chronicles Old MVD Building's 100 years

**F**OR ADOT CONDEMNATION Team Leader **Ron Middlebrook**, the Old MVD Building was more than just a place where Right of Way records were stored.

He became intrigued about the building's history during his frequent visits to manage documents from 2005 until 2018 when files were relocated because the Old MVD Building on 17th Avenue in Phoenix, was closed due to fire safety issues.

Middlebrook's interest didn't stop then. In fact, he decided to write a report about the Old MVD Building as a way to celebrate its centennial in 2021.

When he began his quest in 2018, he planned to write about 10 to 20 pages. But it turned into a labor of love, resulting in a 342-page report. "[Report on the Old MVD Building: Its First 100 Years](#)" is posted on the Arizona State Library's Arizona Memory Project web page.

*"I enjoyed standing in places depicted in old photos and looking at how those places had changed and why."*

### Extensive research

Middlebrook did most of his research on his own time. He pored over thousands of old photos and documents from the ADOT archives, Arizona State Archives, Maricopa County Assessor, city of Phoenix and more. He combed through prior issues of Arizona Highways magazines and newsletters, and The Arizona Republic and its predecessor, the Arizona Republican. To help fill in gaps, he spoke to long-time ADOT

employees like Hazardous Materials Coordinator **Ed Green**, who has worked at ADOT for over 50 years.

Since there was no funding to print the historical photos, Middlebrook paid for them at his own expense.

"When I saw all of these undeveloped negatives with such great images in ADOT's photo archive, I knew that my report would not be complete without them," Middlebrook said. "I'm still stunned that the old negatives with images from the 1920s were still as good as they are."

Most of the report is filled with historic photos showing the building's expansions and the employees who worked there spanning decades.

Middlebrook enjoyed creating then-and-now comparisons of the interior and exterior of the building.

"I enjoyed standing in places depicted in old photos and looking at how those places had changed and why," he added.

Right of Way Titles Manager **Steven Channer** praised Middlebrook's comprehensive report.

"Ron has always been a font of detailed critical knowledge. His attention to detail, and his ability to break down complicated and complex concepts into easily understandable terms shows through on this report," he added. 🇺🇸

~Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

### Ron Middlebrook shares some interesting facts from his Old MVD Building report:

- The State Highway Commission fought with the Land and Water departments over building maintenance costs (page 12).
- Early driver licenses were small metal, quarter-sized tags kept on the driver's keyring (see photos on pages 237-238).
- Graffiti on inside walls — messages from previous employees as Ron calls them — were visible (pages 279-281), including the "1921" painted on the attic chimney (page 139).
- The Old MVD Building was the center of a very noisy complex of buildings with blacksmithing, carpentry, motor repairing, welding and other activities (pages 94-106).



# ADOT engineers analyze how pandemic traffic steers crashes

**T**HE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has affected all aspects of life, including road use and safety.

State Traffic Safety Engineer **Kerry Wilcox** is analyzing the pandemic's impact on Arizona roadways and exploring ways to improve safety.

Less traffic on roadways contributed to a 24% drop in overall crashes in Arizona during the first year of the pandemic in 2020 compared with 2019. Severe injury crashes reached their lowest point in more than 30 years. Alcohol-related crashes, injuries and deaths all decreased.

But despite decreased traffic in Arizona and nationally, there were more fatal crashes in 2020 than 2019.

Nationally, there was a 7.2% increase in fatal crashes. Arizona's 8% increase was even higher with 1,054 people killed in both urban and rural areas. This was the most fatalities since 2007. The increase was highest in the multi-unit category (two or more vehicles, pedestrian or bicycle crashes).

"It is not acceptable to have anyone die on our roads. So as we move forward into 2022, ADOT is looking at how to eliminate traffic fatalities and how to further reduce serious injuries," Wilcox said.

"We are doing this through continuously evaluating the crash data and developing solutions through the '4 Es' of traffic safety — engineering, enforcement, education and emergency services," he added.

## What's next?

ADOT leaders also are considering shifting the agency's current approach to safety to a newer philosophy known as [The Safe System](#), endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration. This involves refocusing transportation system design and operation to anticipating human mistakes, and lessening impact to reduce crash severity and save lives, Wilcox explained.

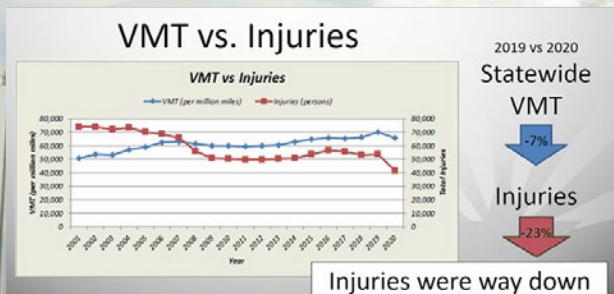
"In the meantime, while we evaluate the 2020 numbers and collect the 2021 numbers, we are focusing on one key factor. With fewer people on the road, those who are on the road were able to travel much faster than normal and, in many cases, much faster than was safe," he said.

Wilcox is compiling the 2021 Arizona Motor Vehicle Crash Facts report, which will be released later this year. He said preliminary numbers indicate that Arizona traffic fatalities in 2021 increased over 2020.

"When you are out on the road, please don't become part of the statistics. Slow down, buckle or helmet up and pay attention," he said.

For more information about Arizona crashes, go to [azdot.gov/crashfacts](http://azdot.gov/crashfacts) or view a video of Wilcox's January 2022 Lunch and Learn presentation on ADOTNet. ■

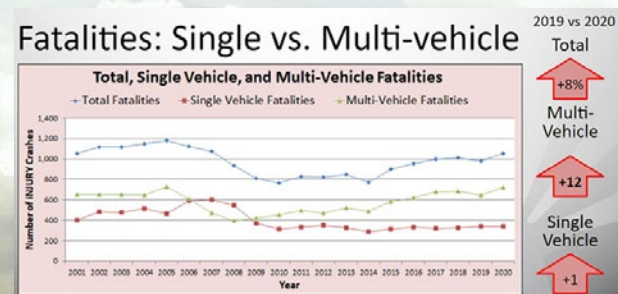
~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



The number of serious injuries incurred in crashes fell by 23%.



Fatalities from crashes increased by 8% in 2020 over 2019.



Crash increases were primarily high-energy crashes likely related to speed.



# KAIZEN KORNER

## KAIZEN CHALLENGE

We are all being challenged to embrace [AKA-The ADOT Way](#) and practice our skills of problem solving and process improvement. To do this, everyone needs to:

- Focus on improvement of core processes
- Reduce waste using **(Plan-Do-Check-Act)**
- Document and submit a kaizen via the [kaizen tracker](#) while in the ADOT network

To reach our goal of 7,200, everyone is expected to complete a kaizen on their own and do one additional kaizen.

## KAIZEN COUNT

The number of kaizens submitted by ADOT employees so far this fiscal year is

# 3,924

For more information on the Kaizen Challenge, visit the [Kaizen Challenge page](#) on ADOTNet.

# ADOT's innovative GPS fleet-vehicle system expands

**P**ROMPTED BY ITS successful program, ADOT is installing Global Positioning System (GPS) units in about 1,000 fleet vehicles for more than 40 state agencies to help reduce operating costs and keep employees safe.

Legislative approval in 2021 enables ADOT to install GPS units in other agencies' vehicles to improve fleet management efficiency, and to keep drivers safe according to State Fleet Administrator **Devin Darlek**.

Previously, ADOT Equipment Services installed GPS units in about 1,200 vehicles operated by ADOT. Under an intergovernmental service agreement, ADOT also installed 250 GPS units for the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind and another 300 GPS units for the Game and Fish Department.

"Aligning with ADOT's True North 'Safely Home,' a top goal is to ensure every employee is safe when operating fleet vehicles," said Darlek, who chairs the Governor's Fleet Council. "Savings will be noted by making key decisions using the GPS data like right-sizing the fleet, ensuring drivers are wearing seatbelts and maximizing vehicle utilization."

Other benefits rendered from the GPS data is the ability to get vehicles into ADOT shops on time for preventative maintenance work and being able to quickly locate specialized vehicles during a statewide emergency.



Luis Lopez, Equipment Services

*An ADOT Equipment Services technician installs a GPS box in an Arizona Department of Gaming vehicle.*

"Expanding the GPS system takes great teamwork and our team continues to work with our vendor each week to ensure nothing short of perfection," Darlek said.

ADOT employees with key roles include Fleet Management Information Systems Manager **Ian Kaufman**, Fleet Manager **Gary Lowe**, Vehicle Maintenance Operations Manager **Lionel McFarlane** and Get Ready Shop Supervisor **Luis Lopez**. Also, Lead Man **Tom Draper** along with Lube Shop Supervisor, **Ray Montez** and his team.

Read more about how GPS is used in state fleet vehicles in this 2020 [Inside Lane Online article on ADOTNet](#). ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

# ADOT sponsors TRB Minority Student Fellows

**THE ADOT RESEARCH CENTER** sponsored two Arizona university students to participate in the 2022 Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting under the [TRB Minority Student Fellows Program](#).

"This program promotes participation of minorities in transportation careers and in TRB," said ADOT Senior Research Project Manager **Bernadette Phelan**, who administers the ADOT program. "It exposes students to a range of transportation careers and provides an opportunity to apply classroom theory to transportation problems. It also helps them to develop a relationship with a mentor in the student's desired career path," Phelan said.

ADOT's 2022 TRB Minority Student Fellows are:

- Arizona State University engineering major **Marvin Burton** presented "Evaluating the Effect of Waste Polyethylene-Terephthalate on the Resistance of Asphalt Binder to Ultraviolet Aging."
- University of Arizona urban planning major **Ashley Avila** presented "The Effect of Vehicles on Personal Heat Exposure: A Pilot."



Marvin Burton



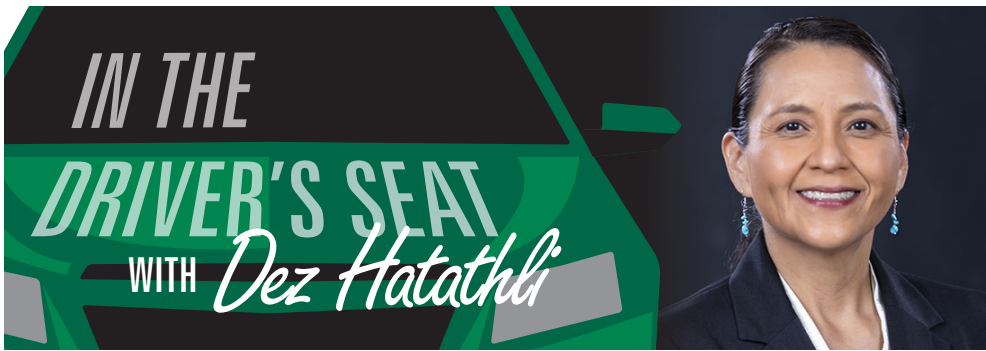
Ashley Avila

Burton and Avila were among 24 fellows nationally who presented research papers and networked with transportation professionals at the TRB meeting in January in Washington, D.C.

ADOT has sponsored TRB Minority Student Fellows since 2018. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist





*Dez Hatathli has been with ADOT for almost a year. She became the Government Relations Community Outreach Manager in November. She previously worked in the Northeast District as a Community Relations Project Manager.*

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

I serve as the primary contact for autonomous vehicle companies, local communities, industry associations and the public regarding autonomous vehicle (AV) testing and deployment in Arizona. I connect companies with the appropriate folks in the areas they want to test. I also do outreach and facilitation between internal and external stakeholders regarding AVs and other emerging technologies.

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

The majority of the work involves building and maintaining positive relationships with many people. Most of my prior roles before ADOT have been invaluable to building a solid network with folks and organizations, as well as giving me a strong foundation in the AV space. As a former safety driver for an AV company, I've spent many hours being chauffeured around the Valley. I also led the policy and community strategy in Arizona to successfully launch the world's first driverless ride hailing service.

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

Staying current with autonomous vehicle technology growth. There are so many positive impacts that technology has to make our roads safer, provide independence to individuals who cannot or choose not to drive, and increase productivity and efficiency in areas such as food delivery to ride hailing to trucking.

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

A first-class trip around the world!

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

Space travel! I've jumped out of a plane at 13,000 feet and I've also gone scuba diving. Space seems like the logical next step.

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

"Star Wars." All of them.

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

Not really a vacation, but I volunteered some time at an orphanage in Halaucesti, Romania. The kids (quite understandably) had some developmental challenges and our team basically organized various activities to keep them engaged and entertained (and to give the caregivers a small break during the summer). There was a language barrier but their warmth and appreciation for us being there was very rewarding. I wish I had more time to explore the country and I'd like to go back one day. ■

*~ Compiled by Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist*

## 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](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) HECVIEL     \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_
- 2) ELMI        ○ \_ \_ ○
- 3) EGDROHYN    \_ ○ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ ○
- 4) LEUF        ○ ○ ○ ○
- 5) TEUATST     \_ \_ ○ \_ ○ ○ \_

**What did the electric car say to the gas pump?**

,

\_ \_ \_ \_ \_

*\*ADOT's Internal Communications Team would like to say a special thank you to ADOT Graphic Designer John Walradt, who has created many amazing cartoons for our newsletter contests through the years ... We wish him well in retirement!*