

# The INSIDE

# LANE

A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation

AUGUST 2022

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**ADOT**

## LEADERSHIP MATTERS

**FIRST JOINED ADOT'S BRIDGE GROUP** in 1984. After three years, my career took me on a new path, but I was able to return to ADOT in 2011. I became the state bridge engineer in 2015.

The Bridge Group is composed of 50 professional engineers and technicians who are responsible for 4,500 ADOT-owned highway bridges, as well as nearly 4,000 bridges owned and maintained by local cities and counties.

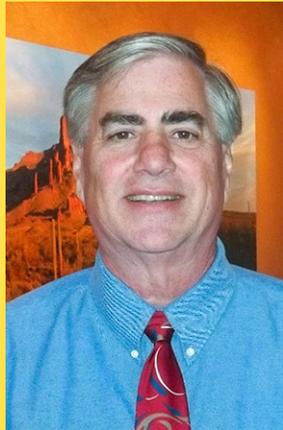
### How do you use metrics to drive process improvement?

The Bridge Group maintains an extensive variety of metrics in our bridge inventory database. Those metrics drive a variety of process improvements.

For example, bridge Inspections are required by FHWA to be performed at strict two-year intervals — the timeline must be adhered to. Bridge inspection metrics detailing the number of inspections required per quarter are used to develop and improve our bridge inspection process.

The inspection assignments required to be performed by our in-house bridge inspection teams are a function of the number of bridges required to be inspected, the complexity of the bridge inspection required, the time it takes to perform each inspection, the number of hours per day the teams are in the field, etc. Metrics help improve the bridge inspection process by enabling our teams to develop the most efficient routes for their inspections, and enables management to assess if additional resources (in-house or consultants) are required to meet schedule requirements.

Another example is the use of metrics to develop Bridge Group priorities for the Five-Year Construction Program. Along with input from the various statewide construction districts and other stakeholders, our group's extensive database of bridge condition metrics is utilized in order to determine bridge rehabilitation or replacement priorities. We do not just use a "worst-first" process. We develop condition rankings based on the metrics to know how and where to most efficiently spend our limited funding resources in order to keep Arizona bridges in tip-top shape. ■



**David L. Eberhart, P.E.**  
*State Bridge Engineer*

# 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

*This month's cover photo was taken by ADOT Leadership and Professional Development Program Manager **John Wheatley**. He used an aerial drone to get the stunning shot of State Route 179 in the Village of Oak Creek near Sedona.*

## IN CASE YOU'RE ASKED ABOUT IT . . .

*Working at ADOT doesn't automatically make you an expert on everything happening around the agency, but when friends and family want to know about a transportation-related topic, they expect you to have all the answers. Here's what you can tell them when they ask you for details about **Arizona's bridge conditions**.*

**M**OST PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE that almost every bridge in Arizona is inspected by ADOT — that adds up to include the 4,874 bridges in ADOT's inventory, along with 3,112 that belong to various local public agencies (there is one county that conducts their own inspections and report that data to ADOT).

In addition to inspections, ADOT [Bridge Group](#) employees have many other responsibilities, including bridge design, preservation and geotechnical services. There are about 50 people on this versatile team, which includes three sections.

- Bridge Design Services — provides planning, designs and post-design services for bridge construction projects.
- Bridge Preservation Services — oversees bi-annual inspections of all bridges throughout the state and

manages a database of over 8,500 structures. This section also works frequently with ADOT's Statewide Permits section to ensure overweight vehicles are able to access routes throughout Arizona.

- Geotechnical Services — provides geotechnical and geological engineering expertise along with services related to pavement and soil testing.

Recently the Bridge Group announced some newly updated statistics showing that ADOT has only 27 bridges in its inventory considered in "poor" condition, which is down from



ADOT Video Services

See more Arizona bridge photos on [ADOT's Flickr page](#).

104 back in 2015. Bridges are rated on a scale and can be considered "good," "fair" or "poor."

Bridge Design and Preservation Manager **David Benton** explained what a "poor" rating means.

"Poor describes a condition of a bridge element that is in

need of rehabilitation or replacement," he said. "Poor in and of itself does not mean a bridge is unsafe. If a bridge is unsafe for drivers, it would be closed or restricted from certain loads."

The inspection details used to calculate the ratings are very important to ADOT, Benton said.

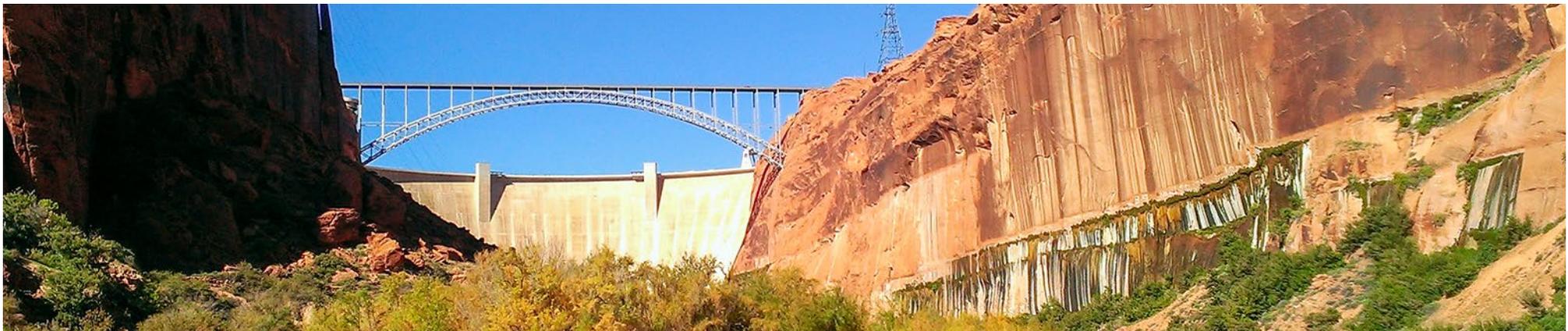
"We utilize that data to make decisions on what we choose to replace, rehabilitate or preserve," he said. "When we make those kinds of determinations and initiate projects, we'll use our inspection data within our group to make those technical decisions."

State Bridge Engineer **Dave Eberhart** says the Bridge Group's work and ADOT's commitment have continued to help improve the state's infrastructure and bring down the number of "poor" bridges in the system.

"We're doing a great job," he said of the improved numbers. "We as an agency have invested a lot of money into the system. Our bridges were not bad to begin with, but it has taken time and commitment."

Visit the [ADOT website](#) to learn more about the Bridge Group. ■

~ Angela De Welles, Senior Communications Specialist



# Insurance Recovery Team

**T**HE INSURANCE RECOVERY TEAM includes eight employees: Insurance Recovery Supervisor **Barry Friedman**, Senior Insurance Recovery Specialist and Team Lead **Lucia Penuelas**, Insurance Recovery Specialists **Anne Heaton, Marty Vargas, Heather Magness** and **Debbie Moles**, and Program Project Specialist 2s **Shelley Indiano** and **Sandy Garcia**. **Barry Friedman** describes the team in the Q&A below:

## Explain what your unit does.

The Insurance Recovery Team recovers money for ADOT from crashes that damage property on state highways, including guardrails, signs, asphalt, etc. Usually, we receive payment from the insurance carrier, but sometimes we must reach out to the responsible party for payment.



*The Insurance Recovery Team works to recoup the cost of damage to highways, overpasses, guardrails, asphalt and more.*

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

Our team identified the need and benefits of telework in 2018 and transitioned to it in March 2019. When the pandemic hit in 2020, our team had no interruptions in workflow.

## What is unique about your team?

Our team consists of eight employees, six of whom have nearly 100 combined years of experience at private sector insurance carriers. ADOT has obtained the services of former private sector claims adjusters to utilize their experience, skills and tools for the benefit of ADOT and Arizona residents.

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

The majority of our employees have more claims handling experience than private sector claims adjusters. We've had several instances where an Insurance Recovery Team employee had to coach a private sector claims adjuster regarding Arizona's negligence laws, coverage, liability insurance limits and Arizona Revised Statutes in order to get our claim processed and paid on behalf of Arizona residents.

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

In fiscal year 2022, the Insurance Recovery Team recovered \$7.4 million, making it our best year ever and beating our previous record set in fiscal year 2018 by 13%.

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

Through kaizen principles and total systems thinking, we revised our file handling and investigation process in 2015, before the Arizona Management System (AMS) was even rolled out, which resulted in a 100% increase in recovery dollars. In 2018/2019, we did a kaizen to go to a fully paperless environment, which included the rollout of a new database called Origami. This allowed us to go to a remote/telework operation.

## How many kaizens has your team implemented during the most recent Kaizen Challenge?

29 🏆

*~ Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist*

# 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

ADOT teams surpassed the kaizen goal of 7,200 kaizen in the last fiscal year. Stay tuned for details about the next challenge.

## KAIZEN COUNT

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

# 216

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

# Needle Mountain develops innovative ways to replace guardrail posts

**W**HEN ADOT MAINTENANCE CREWS find out a crash has damaged a long guardrail section, they know they're in for a week of backbreaking work digging out thick wooden posts.

While a backhoe can remove the top two feet of dirt around each post, crews can only reach the last foot of dirt by shoveling out soil by hand. With a typical guardrail replacement spanning 200-600 feet and posts spaced slightly more than 6 feet apart, that's a lot of manual labor.

When the work takes place in the hottest parts of Arizona at the hottest times of year, things just don't move along as quickly.

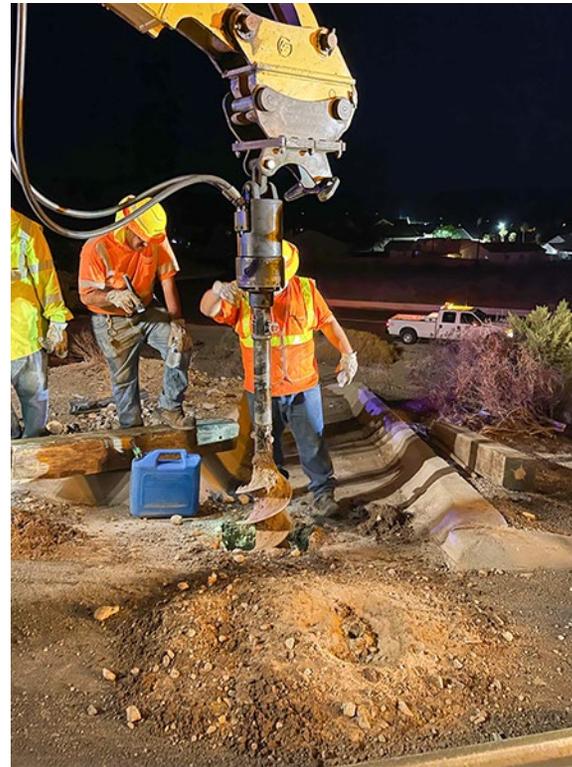
"As the temperatures go up, productivity slows down when you rely solely on manpower," said **Jeff Baumeister**, a highway operations supervisor of the Needle Mountain maintenance yard in Topock.

To save time and speed up guardrail projects, Baumeister developed a way to improve the removal process. He and his crew ordered an auger extension that can dig down the entire 3 feet rather than starting with a backhoe and then digging by hand.

"We use it for the whole process. Now that the guys have that, they haven't let it go," Baumeister said.

"Once we get the posts out, the guys can go right down the line just pulling one post after another out."

A typical guardrail replacement project might have taken a week before the auger extension went into use. Now, the same project might take two days, and



*Jeff Baumeister, IDO*

*Crews use the new auger to replace a guardrail post. From left, Highway Operation Technicians **Russ Conklin, Adam Munoz and Shawn Andersen.***

that's with a smaller crew because the removal operation is so much more efficient. It frees up crew members so supervisors have more flexibility when scheduling maintenance work.

As much as the auger extension sped up guardrail projects, crews developed yet another improvement after discovering the auger teeth broke off frequently while digging into rocky areas. Crews determined that by welding two teeth together, the auger can stand up to the rockiest conditions without breaking.

The innovation even benefits drivers, Baumeister said, noting the Needle Mountain maintenance yard maintains 780 lane-miles of highway that include two-lane sections of SR 95. Since guardrail work requires flagging operations that bring traffic to a stop on two-lane highways, the shorter repair time cuts down on lane restrictions. And that means fewer delays for motorists.

The auger extension project included input from **Gary Havens** and **John Padilla**, both highway operations technicians who work with Baumeister in Topock.

If there are other maintenance crews who haven't adopted the auger extension innovation, Baumeister said all they need is access to a backhoe and to order the tool. Crews appreciate

they can now replace guardrails faster.

"All the guys who know how to use the backhoe have gotten really good at using it," Baumeister said. ■

~ Garin Groff, ADOT Communications

# Way to go, MVD!

Teams bring home awards for innovation, video series

**M**VD TEAMS earned big honors when the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) recently announced its annual award winners.

- MVD's Virtual CSR initiative, which launched in 2021 to maximize the time employees spend helping customers rather than commuting to offices, was announced as this year's Trailblazer Award winner.
- The AZ MVD Now how-to video series earned AAMVA's Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) Award in the video production category.

Both efforts have had a positive impact on customers and staff by expanding convenience and efficiency, said MVD Director **Eric Jorgensen**.

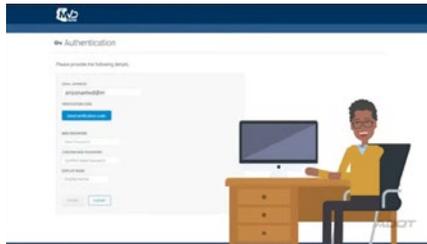
"We have fantastic teams that seek opportunities to continuously improve our products and services," Jorgensen said. "They are getting Arizonans out of the line and safely on the road, and other states are looking to see what we are doing. These two projects are a shining example of teamwork, commitment and Kaizen thinking by our employees. Congratulations to everyone involved in these two projects. The recognition is well deserved." ■

~ Angela DeWelles, Senior Communications Specialist



Christy Sanchez, MVD

MVD CSR **David Mix** tests out Virtual CSR technology while Tucson Regional agent **Andrea Scuff** assists virtually from another office.



ADOT's MVD Now how-to videos were created to help people make the best use of [azmvdnow.gov](http://azmvdnow.gov) for their MVD transactions. "We wanted the videos to take a granular approach, explaining each step clearly and plainly," said Assistant Communications Director for Digital Communications **Doug Pacey**.

LOOK

BACK

## Lounging in the lunchroom

**WHERE WERE YOU** in November 1977? If you were working for Arizona Highways Magazine back then, you might have been enjoying a meal in a brand new lunchroom. According to Newsbeat, ADOT's employee newsletter from the 1970s, this new lunchroom was part of a \$104,000 improvement project that also included editorial offices and a bulk mailing operation.

Office design and vending machine technology have changed a lot over the past 45 years. Read about ADOT's current use of [universal workspace design](#) saves time and money. ■

~ Angela De Welles, 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 **Aug. 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) METOPRUC \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ ○ \_ \_ \_
- 2) PNHOE \_ ○ \_ \_ \_
- 3) REPOCJT ○ ○ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_
- 5) SCPAE ○ ○ ○ \_ \_

Before email was widely used, office employees still occasionally took their work with them. To get it home, they had to

\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .



"I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE TAKE AS MUCH WORK HOME FROM THE OFFICE AS HERB DOES."

This cartoon is from a December 1969 issue of *Hiway Drumbeats*, the Arizona Highway Department's employee newsletter from that time.