Connecting *the* DOTs

October 2016

www.sddot.com

Mentoring Dates

End of Program Celebration

Wednesday, Nov. 30 9 a.m. – noon (CST)

Red Rossa, Hills/Highland Mtg Room, Pierre

Dates & Abbreviations

When writing a full date in a sentence, follow it with a comma:

On ***July 12, 2016***, the team traveled to Sioux Falls for the annual meeting.

Skip the final comma when listing only the month and year:

Our Black Hills adventure in ***March 2016*** included a visit to Mt. Rushmore.

When a date appears after a month, don't add st, nd, rd, th:

The last team meeting was held ***March 14, 2015.*** (not March 14th, 2015)

Only use those add-ons when they precede the month.

The team meeting was on the ***14th of March.***

The final meeting for the team will be held ***July 16***.

DOT News Available Online!

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Life's a Bit Better

by Phil Dwight, Aberdeen Area Engineer

Since I became an Area Engineer I have witnessed considerable improvements in the working environment for our maintenance staff. The department has made maintenance activities and the staff that perform it a priority, and it shows in many ways.

After the winter of '96-'97 the focus on equipment and winter maintenance was amped up. At that time many of our trucks were still single axles with 5 cu.yd. spreaders, all the trucks had manual transmissions, and many came with exhaust leaks into the cab. After years of steady upgrades we now have tandem axles with 8 cu.yd. spreaders and automatic transmissions. The trucks have A/C for the summer and defogging for the winter (the cab actually gets warm in the winter!), they're quieter, more capable, easier to drive and exhaust free.

The new trucks also came with wet kits that allowed us to carry brine and pre-wet the salt/sand material coming out of the spreader before it hit the road. This brine not only helped the material stick to the road it also activated the salt so it could begin to work immediately. I recall comments from a driver that did not have brine on his truck but his route met up with a driver's that did have brine. It took him two applications to get the same results the other driver got with one application. Without the brine, some of the salt either bounced off the road or was blown to the shoulder by traffic.

Brine was not the only improvement made to our snow and ice removal activities. The department more recently went to the use of straight salt rather than a salt/sand mixture. Imagine going from a 5 cu.yd. spreader filled with 3-parts sand and 1-part salt to an 8 cu.yd. spreader filled with salt. Now, pre-wet that salt to increase the effectiveness and that driver can go much further with a load and apply less often.

So, what does this mean? It means less time and effort crawling out of the truck on icy steps and into the loader to reload the truck and less time running down the road.

Summer equipment also saw improvements. When I became involved with maintenance we had small open air tractors to pull our mowers. The drivers battled the heat and cold, they were struck by debris, stung by bees, and deafened by the noise. Now we have large climate controlled tractors with comfortable seats and radios.

Many other changes have made a physical job a little bit easier like the addition of a skid-steer loader with multiple attachments, cordless tools, portable oil carts, and remote bay door operators.

Our maintenance shops have also been a focus of improvement. When I came to Aberdeen some shops had cramped office spaces and crews took breaks out in the shop. Space was minimal in every shop and the crews had to be creative with angling and positioning to get their equipment in doors. A couple shops had 40-foot deep bays which required the driver to flatten his plow and pull up against the wall just to close the door. Some trucks had to sit outside in the cold and you know how well a diesel starts in below zero temps! In recent years, work has been steady throughout the state to update our shops to meets today's needs.

In the Aberdeen Area work is currently being done on three shops. Two crews will get a remodel and additions while the other will get a new shop. In each case there will be enough bays for the trucks including a wash bay. The bays will be bright with improved lighting and windows along with a large crew space and improved office space. A fourth shop is in the design stages for next year's construction.

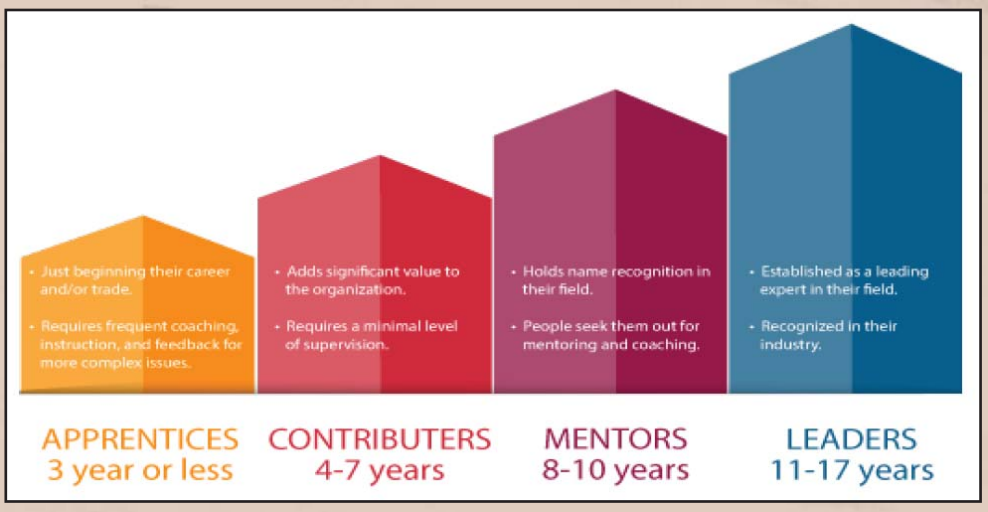
These are just a few examples of the numerous changes that have taken place since I've been around. Our maintenance crews are invaluable and I can't say enough about how much I appreciate the work they do. They are the front line tasked with keeping our roads safe for the traveling public. The life of a maintenance worker will always require physical work and battling the elements but it's been nice to see so many changes to make things a little easier, safer, and a bit more comfortable.

What Does It Take To Be An Expert In Your Field?

By Kathy Wentworth Drahosz and Alison Sfreddo

Becoming an expert in any given field takes commitment, determination and more importantly – time. Research shows that it will take the average person between ten and seventeen years of dedication, practice and experience to become considered an expert in one's field. Very few professional accomplishments happen overnight. A person cannot simply step into a profession and immediately be considered an expert.

Career management expert Caela Farren (author of Who's Running Your Career?) describes the steps toward mastery and what employees should be capable of accomplishing at each level and what is needed to help them master the expertise of their profession:



Apprentice – An apprentice is someone who is just starting his or her career or learning a trade. The apprentice requires a great deal of time and dedication to building his or her knowledge base and will benefit from frequent coaching and feedback on complex tasks and projects. The supervisor can provide guidance until enough experience and knowledge has been passed along thus allowing the apprentice to advance to the next skill level.

Contributor – Contributors are capable of tackling sophisticated issues within their field and can offer the appropriate solutions to complex problems and should be determining what skills or competencies are necessary to progress in their organization. They should also be taking on stretch assignments outside their comfort zone such as participating in higher level projects that will give them an opportunity to showcase a skill or ability.

Mentor – Mentors are relied upon to set the example and guide contributors and apprentices within the organization. They are sought after by all within the organization to solve complex problems beyond the limited capability of the contributors or apprentices. They also can provide new insight and knowledge for the less experienced professional.

Leader – Leaders are completely self-sufficient and are the driving force of innovation and the development of the next generation of leaders. They are known organizationally and industry wide for their expertise, character and competence. They are strategic thinkers and have a clear vision and specific plans for carrying out the organization's mission.

Understanding the degrees of development for each step toward mastery (set forth above) is critical to building the next generation of leaders. While experience and time are vital, how you use that time and impart that experience will make the difference and maybe even accelerate the process!

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It's Your Choice

by Tom Horan, Rapid City Operations Engineer

Show of hands, how many of you have ever been around a person who had, shall we say, opportunities for improvement in the "Attitude Department"? You know the kind of person; they complain about the weather, politics, their co-workers, family, friends, job, money, etc., etc. Listening to them, you'd think that nothing is right in their lives. The fact that you've noticed when people are being negative tells me that you probably don't like being around those people during those times. Conversely, how often do you notice when you are around a person who is enthusiastic, upbeat, positive, and encouraging?

I recently started running with a group of individuals who are very positive. And it's not just their attitudes I noticed. It's also the kind and encouraging words that they use. Granted, during, and especially after our runs, we are all hopped up on a release of endorphins brought on by the vigorous activity. But endorphins only change moods, these people encourage with their words. The more I'm around them, the more I want to emulate their great examples.

I read a quote recently that drives home the importance of how our perspective shapes our view of the world,

Loving people live in a loving world. Hostile people live in a hostile world. Same world.

The last two words in that quote are what pulled me in. We live in the SAME WORLD. The only difference is the person's chosen perspective. A much tougher thing to do is to take an objective look at ourselves. Do WE see the world in a negative or positive light? And if we dare ask, how do others see us? A Scottish poet named Robert Burns understood the importance of how we come across to other people. He wrote a memorable verse in the late 1700s,

Oh how powerful the gift to give us, to see ourselves as others see us.

Who among us would not change some things about ourselves if we could just see ourselves from the outside? I get a kick out of people who, when discussing some poorly chosen words they've said or a poor choice they've made, say things like "Well, that's just the way that I am!" What a lame excuse. They have failed to make the decision to take ownership for their own thoughts, actions, words, and the image they project to others.

Many years ago, as a young project engineer, I worked hard to get through some tough issues. I prided myself on being professional, at least that was my perspective of myself. Often times there were large issues at stake, issues involving significant time or money or material quality. As you might imagine those issues sometimes became quite emotional for involved state and contractor personnel. And occasionally, after I'd been pushed for long enough, I would give myself permission to blow up. Once I'd made that decision I would feel the blood rush to my head and completely unacceptable language would come out of my mouth. I would literally feel angry for a full day, if not two. This "giving myself permission" went on for some years. Then, one day I had a realization: I had no business getting angry like this. I was setting a bad example for my coworkers. I was bringing my anger home from work. It dawned on me that I didn't want to be that person. So, I decided that I wasn't going to just give myself permission to get angry any more. Since that time I have found that always being professional with angry customers reaps many benefits. It disarms others and calms them. In so doing, it helps us to get through the issue in a more timely manner, and often in a manner that benefits those involved. Maybe most importantly, it serves as a positive example to my coworkers about how situations should be handled. A friend made a noteworthy point to me years ago and I've found it to be a truth worth sharing with others,

You'll never regret being professional.

I make the choice every day to act professionally and have a positive attitude. And I end each day confident that my choice made a positive impact on my work environment. We all live in the SAME WORLD. How we react to it is our choice. I know my choice; what's yours?

Shop inspections

by Jim Hyde, Pierre Operations Engineer

Safety is very important to the SDDOT. To help ensure our employees are working in a safe environment, each Region conducts a shop safety inspection. Shop inspections are an important function to keep our employees safe, but most people don't look forward to them. As the Pierre Region Safety Committee Chairman, I've heard many excuses such as, "we are too busy", "we don't have any issues", and the classic, "didn't we just have one a few months ago?" Some employees mysteriously have planned leave, funerals to attend, and even scheduled surgery to be gone when the Safety Committee announces their shop inspection.

Each Region has a safety committee composed of six members, three unit and three non-unit members in accordance with the Union Agreement. Yes, SDDOT has a Union Agreement and I've been advised that I can't ask anybody if they're a union member or not. Kind of a don't ask- don't tell rule.

Every Region does things slightly different, not too shocking to believe that, but the Safety Committee Chairman determines which shop in their Region to inspect during the month. Some Regions announce the inspection up to a month ahead of time, and some Regions have tried surprise inspections. Both methods can be effective.

The safety committee doesn't prescribe you to drink a gallon of GoLightly the night before the inspection with instructions to stay close to home.

Shop member's anxiously sit around waiting for the safety committee to arrive. When the moment they were dreading arrives, the safety committee tries to reassure them they won't feel a thing, and it'll be over relatively quickly and painlessly.

Each Committee member is given a checklist of things to look for. For safety inspections to be effective they must be consistent and it allows us to track improvement from year to year. Plus, the checklist allows multiple employees to conduct the same inspection with consistent findings.

Conducting a shop safety inspection reveals potential dangers in the workplace. If a Shop Safety inspection prevents just one injury, it's worth the time and effort. But inspections alone do not make the shop safer. Shop inspections are only effective if it's taken seriously. It is imperative that all supervisors lead by example and put a high priority on safety.

When the inspection is finished, the safety committee asks if there are any questions or safety concerns before discussing our findings. We try to break the news to them gently and explain to them there's a good chance if they knock on wood, cross their fingers, put on their rally hat, and all those superstitious things they will survive.

A report is written to summarize our findings and recommendations. The supervisor is required to make the corrections noted during the inspection within 30 days of receiving the letter.

After the inspection, we've joined shop staff for lunch, enjoy some popcorn, catch up on employees personal lives and then all go back to our normal routine. There's no quota on finding things wrong. We are simply making recommendations to help ensure everybody goes home every night uninjured.

As a supervisor for the SDDOT for close to 25 years, I've never had to inform a family member that their husband, wife, son or daughter was involved in a serious accident, and I hope I never have to.

Dan Staton, Gary Engel, Gene Gunsalus - three Rapid City Region retirees paid a visit all in one day!

Pierre Halloween Hike 2016;
Pierre Region handed out Flashlights that said Don't Crowd the Plow and Bike Lights that said DOT
Bumble Bee – Drew Plooster
Nolan Ortbahn
Jerry Ortbahn
Monica Ortbahn
Jacob Rosecky

Aberdeen Region

Pictured l to r:
1st: Dale Albright, Unit 191 Clark - score 1945
2nd: Joseph Haraldson, Unit 171 Brookings - score 1920
3rd: Brian Chase, Unit 172 Sisseton - score 1895
4th: Clarence Gauer, Unit 152 Ipswich - score 1805
5th: Wayne Benck, Unit 171 Clear Lake - score 1800

Top Rookies: Scott Salzer, Unit 172 Sisseton - score 1700 (new employee who worked for DOT 20 years ago) and Frank Hoss, Unit 172 Sisseton - score 1645 (new employee)

Top Unit for Aberdeen Region: Unit 172, Sisseton and Milbank

Pictured l to r:
Randy Lekness
Joe Sterling
Brian Chase
Dan Nickolauson
Frank Hoss
Scott Salzer
Bill Voeltz
James Loup
Darin O'Farrell
Elliot Furman
Jon Liebe

ShipShape Award:
Aberdeen Region - Milbank Shop

Safety Award:
Best Unit Statewide Aberdeen - 192 Redfield

Mitchell Region

Pictured l to r:
1st: Brad Steeneck, Unit 291 Vermillion, score 1995
2nd: Brad Huffman, Unit 252 Mitchell - score 1950 (faster time)
3rd: Nathan Loecker, Unit 292 Yankton - score 1950
4th: Curt Theisen , Unit 271 Sioux Falls - score 1945
5th: Chris Voelker, Unit 272 Madison - score 1925

Top Rookie: Kelly Tramp, Unit 292 Yankton - score 1790

Top Unit for Mitchell Region: Unit 291, Junction City and Beresford.

Pictured L to R front:
Rodger Serviss
Tyler Small
Brad Steeneck
Jerry Hansen
Bill Brown
Lyle Norling
Pictured L to R back:
John Sackett
Allen Brown
Brian DuBois
Trevor Job
Todd Kirkie
Richard Jahn
Darin Brandt

ShipShape Award:
Mitchell Region - Junction City Shop

Safety Award:
Most Improved Maintenance Unit - Unit 291 Junction City
Best Region Statewide - Mitchell
Best Area Operations - Sioux Falls
Best Unit Statewide Mitchell - Unit 291 Junction City

ROADEO!

Pierre Region

ShipShape Award:
Pierre Region - Selby Shop

Safety Award:
Best Unit State-wide Pierre - Unit 371 Herreid

Pictured above l to r:

1st: Chad Hintz, Unit 371 Selby – score 1925 (faster time) - didn't drive in state finals
2nd: Larry Zebroski, Unit 351 Gettysburg – score 1925
3rd: Kathy Brown, Unit 391Kadoka – score 1870
4th: Craig Diegel, Unit 351 Gettysburg - score 1850 – retired & opted not to drive in finals
4th: Mark Bates, Unit 371Herreid – score 1825 (faster time)
5th: Jay Boldt, Unit 372 Isabel – score 1825
6th: Larry Anderson, Unit 352 Hayes - score 1800

Top Rookie: Josh Gullickson, Unit 391 Murdo - score 1715

Best Average Unit Score Pierre Region is Unit 351 Pierre and Gettysburg:

L to R: Craig Diegel, Merlin Bennett, Larry Zebroski, Aric Hovelson, John Tanner, Cyle Philips, Keith Johnson (supervisor), Dean VanDeWiele(Area Eng), Greg Lemieux, Chad Curtis, Greg Shoup, Corky Bergeson, Todd Madden, Mike Burrer

Rapid City Region

Pictured above l to r:
1st: John Helms , Unit 471 Buffalo - score 1925
2nd: Kenneth Gednalske, Unit 491 Custer - score 1840 (faster time)
3rd: Steve Frost, Rapid City Operations - score 1840
4th: Jeremie Mackie, Rapid City Operations - score 1820
5th: Shayne Hagen, Unit 492 Oelrichs - score 1805

Top Rookie: Don Gerard, Unit 492 Edgemont - score 1790

Best Average Unit Score - Large Shop: Unit 491 Custer

pictured l to r:
Ray McLaughlin, Tom Manes, Dave Pennel, Andy Jacobs, Rod Lindstrom, Kenny Gednalske, Kim Salszieder, Gary Stender and Rich Zacher

Best Average Unit Score - Small Shop: Unit 471 Buffalo

pictured l to r: Rick Walton, Supervisor
Buffalo Crew: Justin Till, John Sacrison, John Helms and Bryce Matthews

Safety Award:
Best Region Maintenance - Rapid City
Best Region Operations - Rapid City
Best Unit Statewide Rapid City - Unit 471 Belle Fourche

ShipShape Award:
Rapid City Region and Outstanding Maintenance Shop - Custer Shop

ROADEO!

State Finals

On Wednesday, Oct. 12, the top 20 drivers from across the state (top 5 from each Region) got together in Pierre to compete for the SnowFighter Roadeo championship!

Pictured l to r: Greg Fuller, Director of Operations, 1st - Nathan Loecker, Unit 292 Yankton/Menno/Tyndall, 2nd - Chris Voelker, Unit 272 Madison/Flandreau, 3rd - Jay Boldt, Unit 372 McIntosh/Eagle Butte/Isabel, Secretary Darin Bergquist

New Employees/Promotions/Transfers

Demers, Lance	Transportation Specialist I	Pierre	10/09/2016	Promotion
Vockrodt, Dan	Engineer Manager II	Pierre	10/09/2016	Promotion
Kessler, Andrew	Journey Transportation Tech	Yankton	10/11/2016	New Hire
Bult, Chad	Traffic Data Technician	Sioux Falls	10/11/2016	New Hire
Gorden, Jessee	Journey Transportation Tech	Huron	10/11/2016	New Hire
Santillanes, Alejandro	Highway Maintenance Worker	Custer	10/11/2016	New Hire
Bauley, Alicia	Senior Secretary	Aberdeen	10/17/2016	New Hire
Gibson, David	Highway Maintenance Worker	Gettysburg	10/17/2016	New Hire
Morford, Teri	Engineer II	Pierre	10/24/2016	New Hire
Rouillard, Karl	Region Operations Technician	Rapid City	10/24/2016	New Hire
Mulvenna, Travis	Highway Maintenance Worker	Aberdeen	10/24/2016	New Hire
Reecy, Bradley	Highway Maintenance Worker	Aberdeen	10/24/2016	New Hire
Witlock, Scott	Region Operations Technician	Aberdeen	10/24/2016	Promotion
Boyle, Terri	Accounting Assistant	Pierre	10/24/2016	Promotion
Kunkel, Dale	Highway Maintenance Worker	Plankinton	10/24/2016	Rehire
Dunlavy, Scot	Equipment Techinician	Pierre	10/24/2016	Promotion
Odell, Steve	Highway Maintenance Worker	Murdo	10/31/2016	New Hire

Walk to School Day

Sioux Falls JFK Elementary: Travis Dressen and Greg Aalberg

Pierre Jefferson Elementary: Kellie Beck, Leah DeMers, Melissa Dockter, Brian Moore, Mary Hoyt, Bill Englehart, Jan Talley, John Fuglsang

Pierre Buchanan Elementary: Scott Fuerst, Kirk Van Roekel, Sarah Maskovich, Jerry Ortbahn, Dave Voeltz, Claire Peschong

Ft. Pierre Elementary: Marilyn Patterson, Diane Buchholz, Shanda Schunot, Connie Johnson, Mark Reiss

Mobridge: John Villbrandt, Kelly Armfield, Jason Kraft, Neil Filler, Perry Steiger

Pierre Kennedy Elementary: Krista Olson, Jeff Brosz, Mark Leiferman, Lana Lambert and Shelley Larson.

Mitchell LB Williams Elementary: L Milo Hansen, Stephanie Stacey, Paulette Huber, Nathan Maeschen, Jay Peppel, Nate Crago

Winner Elementary: KayDense Long Crow (student), Colleen Farley, Ryken Orel (student), Doug Sherman

Babies!

Bill Brown, has added a sweet new granddaughter to his brood.
Olivia Newcomb.
DOB: Oct. 25, 2016
Weight: 6 lbs. 13 oz.
Length: 19.25 inches
Parents: Stacy & Aaron
Siblings: Austin, Jasper & Isabelle
Bill is a Hwy. Maint. Worker at Junction City

Someone tiny, someone sweet we would like for you to meet. Introducing **Eero Grayson Lehmkuhl**
Parents: Megan & Tom
DOB: 10.3.2016 at 8:28 p.m.
Weight: 5 lbs. 7 oz.
Length: 18 inches
Tom is the manager of the Environmental Section in Pierre.

Longevity

Kyle Lewis	25	Sturgis	10/27/1991
Larry Dean	30	Project Dev.	0/30/1986
Brad Cox	25	Mitchell Area	10/31/1991
Lyle Lenius	25	Britton	11/12/1991
Brenda Flottmeyer	25	Rapid City Area	1/15/1991
Jay Peppel	25	Mitchell Area	11/16/1991

Brenda Flottmeyer, Engineer III from the Rapid City Area receives her 25 year pin from John Matthesen, Engineering Supervisor.

Condolences

Tony Hoffman, Equipment Tech in Aberdeen lost his two grandsons, Chesney Marvin (5) and Brendan Lee (4) in a mobile home fire on Oct. 25. His son Austin was hospitalized for smoke inhalation. A memorial will be held Nov. 3 in Aberdeen. A GoFundMe page has been set up: https://www.gofundme.com/2w1k0ho?ssid=788656919&pos=2