



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 9, 2020

PennDOT Announces Regional Innovations Challenge Winner

Uniontown, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) today announced that a team of students from the Norwin School District, Westmoreland County has been selected as the PennDOT District 12 winner for its third Innovations Challenge.

Team members include John Christian, Joshua Gubanich, Jordan Loy, Elias Mignogna and were mentored by Thomas Harskowitch.

Since last fall, students have been working hard to solve this year's challenge: Aside from laws, programs and educational campaigns, what cost-effective, innovative solution can be developed in the next five to 10 years to help PennDOT more efficiently, effectively and safely control litter along roadways?

"Last year, PennDOT spent nearly \$13 million cleaning up roadside litter across Pennsylvania," said Acting PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. "These dollars could have otherwise been spent on delivering a better transportation network and making Pennsylvania a better state in which to live."

The winning regional team's innovation would be the use of an original app called PALS (Pennsylvania Litter System). This app will function as an addition to law enforcement, allowing other drivers on the road to report other drivers that they see litter. Drivers could make use of a new generation of E-ZPass transponders that will have dash-cam style video recorders installed inside of them allowing video evidence of perpetrators to be downloaded and sent to law enforcement.

Now in its third year, the PennDOT Innovations Challenge invites high school students in grades 9-12 to use their problem-solving, creative and strategic-thinking abilities to solve real-world transportation challenges. The Innovations Challenge aims to not only help students explore actual transportation challenges that PennDOT is facing, but also open their minds to the very real possibility of working for PennDOT after graduation.

Regional winners will now move on to compete in Harrisburg for the state championship.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) and the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB) organization are providing a combined total award of \$3,000 to be divided among the first, second and third place statewide winning teams.

Follow PennDOT on Twitter at www.twitter.com/PennDOTNews and like the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation and Instagram at www.instagram.com/pensylvaniadot.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jay Ofsanik, 724-439-7135

###