

**2021
PENNDOT**



**STAR
OF EXCELLENCE
AWARD
WINNERS**



MISSION

Enhance, connect and add value to our communities by providing a sustainable, equitable transportation system and quality services for all.

VISION

An enhanced quality of life built on transportation excellence.

STRATEGIC THEMES AND VALUES

Safety at All Levels:

We value the safety of our employees, customers and partners in all that we do.

Innovation:

We pursue and incorporate evolving technologies and innovative practices to improve transportation.

Mobility and Connectivity:

We enhance quality of life through investments in equitable, efficient and safe movement of people and goods.

Customer Service:

We are committed to providing a positive customer experience for all.

Communication that Fosters Relationships and Encourages New Ideas:

We are committed to effective, transparent, timely communication with our employees, customers and stakeholders.

Recruiting, Retaining and Developing a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce:

We build a strong team by respecting one another, promoting teamwork and seeking to recruit and empower our diverse workforce.

Effectively Leveraging Available Resources by Modernizing Technology and Assets:

We connect Pennsylvania to the world's economy through environmentally and fiscally sustainable, resilient transportation systems.





Each year PennDOT recognizes select employees for their outstanding performance with the Star of Excellence Award, the agency's highest honor.

These recipients represent a variety of organizational positions, spanning from highway maintenance and driver and vehicle services workers, to traffic control specialists, communications staff, and design and engineering specialists.

Unfortunately because of the continuing pandemic, they were honored during an online ceremony. This summary includes your colleagues who were recognized and a brief description of why they received the award.

Even in unusual or difficult times, it remains important to celebrate our successes and look ahead. That included showing appreciation for our stellar team members – this year's Stars.

Their leadership and example will be even more important moving forward. We continue evolving as an agency due to internal innovation and some things beyond our control, but I remain confident that we are and will be stronger than before.

You should be so proud of our progress as an organization – I know I am. Looking at the dedication and achievements of each Star makes me so grateful to be part of the PennDOT family and to be a Pennsylvanian who benefits from their services. Their dedication and creativity serve as examples to the thousands of people in the PennDOT family.

I am grateful to you and our Stars for everything you do to move Pennsylvania forward.

Yassmin Gramian, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation



District Offices

Mark A. Nicholson, P.E. Bridge Engineer • District 1



Mark is known for his strong work ethic, willingness to help others in PennDOT, and partnerships with the communities of District 1. He is respected among his colleagues for his knowledge of bridges and stewardship of the limited financial resources allotted to PennDOT.

Although it is hard to quantify a dollar amount of savings, Mark's work with the STIC and the District's link slab bridge proposal led to a pilot project that has the potential to reduce the strip seal dams on bridges resulting in future maintenance cost savings. He has also been a proponent of bridge deck waterproofing innovation, which again will save limited future dollars.

Prior to becoming the Bridge Engineer, Mark managed the Bayfront Parkway Central Corridor Improvement Project, the largest design project in District 1. His comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement were recognized as a best practice and included in the PennDOT public involvement handbook.

His work on other projects led to stronger relationships between PennDOT and local municipalities, as well as safety improvements that will service the communities well for years to come.

In his current position, Mark continues his leadership as his unit responded to two major bridge hits on Interstate 90 in less than a year.

Zachary H. Miles, EIT Sr. Civil Engineer Supervisor Transportation • District 1



As an assistant manager, Zach is an integral part Mercer County's success. His leadership helps the county maintenance manage its funding, he continues to motivate and empower employees, and provides a safe environment for staff and the public.

Budgeting limited funds is part of Zach's everyday duties, including proper use of overtime, crew staffing, and what methods are used to accomplish work. He ensures all funds are expended by Mercer County are done to give Pennsylvania residents the best value possible for their transportation dollars.

To achieve this, he participates in local planning organization meetings, contributes to the county safety committee and stand down days, and plays a major role in Mercer's agility program. He frequently tries to integrate new technology into his daily work activities, such as working with the bridge unit to develop an improved dewatering process for a major box replacement using an aquadam.

Zach is known for his professionalism when handling customers and his knowledge when discussing Mercer County transportation efforts. He is well-versed in the maintenance needs of the communities he serves and is a great ambassador for the Department.

He extends this mentality to Mercer County employees by helping them with career development plans and identifying job opportunities in the county or district.

Adam D. Bechdel Acting Highway Maintenance Manager • District 2



District 2 experienced a challenging year with the retirements of both the District Executive and the Assistant District Executive Maintenance in early 2020. Just before COVID hit in March, these leadership positions were just being filled. Shortly after that, our Centre County Highway Maintenance Manager retired. As the District looked for ways to address some of these needs, with a hiring freeze in place, we were fortunate to partner with the Operations and Performance Office (OPO) and rotate some employees. Adam Bechdel was willing to step up and accept this challenge.

Adam has also played a key role in the reorganization of the Centre and Clinton County Maintenance Organizations. Most recently, Adam served as Acting County Maintenance Manager for Potter and Cameron counties, returning to his Clinton County position this past April.

Adam's efforts allowed the District to continue effective day-to-day operations while also moving toward combining the Centre and Clinton County Maintenance Organizations. A combined Centre and Clinton County Maintenance Organization will realize a savings of \$500,000 annually. Further, Adam's actions resulted in a salary savings of approximately \$50,000 over 6 months.

Janet L. Caldwell Clerk/Typist 3 • District 2



Under normal circumstances, Stockroom Clerk Janet Caldwell does an excellent job supporting our staff and performing her duties. She is very organized and provides outstanding customer service. When the COVID pandemic changed our way of doing business, Janet identified areas of need and offered to help, without hesitation.

As COVID protocols evolved, Janet worked individually with tele-working staff to ensure their incoming/outgoing communication needs were met. This includes printing, copying, mailing, and distributing correspondence and necessary documents. Janet also worked with staff to research and retrieve necessary papers.

Janet's efforts made it possible for District 2 to safely process Right-of-Way clearances, bridge inspections, municipal service activities and purchasing. Through Janet's diligence, the District continued to meet goals and expectations while tele-working and following COVID protocols.

It is difficult to quantify an overall cost saving for Janet's efforts. If we assume that her work eliminated one trip to the office per month for most D2 staff (approximately 200 people) that would equal 2,400 trips saved last year. We estimate that Janet's efforts resulted in a savings of at least \$100,000 this past year.

Janet's actions are selfless and integral to the entire District 2 operation.

District Offices

Melissa Kiessling Plant Maintenance Materials Coordinator • District 3



Melissa serves as the District's Plant Maintenance Materials Coordinator. In this position she assists the District's nine county offices with procurement and inventory management by monitoring the District's winter materials, managing the district salt reserves, and providing weekly tracking reports throughout the winter to help maintain costs.

Additionally, she analyzes contracts to ensure they meet District goals, which requires analysis of the system, policies, and the ability to forecast future needs.

Melissa is a liaison between central office and county organizations within the District regarding procurement and inventory management. She was instrumental in procuring the first pipe lining maintenance contract in the district, which required a great deal of coordination with central office, learning the new Jaggaer system, and teaching the vendor community.

Respected statewide for her knowledge in purchasing and procurement, she has served on multiple committees assessing opportunities for improvement in many different realms within the Department.

Melissa creates maps in Maintenance IQ that help the district track cyclical and sectional maintenance goals, in addition to conducting training to district users from all areas.

Her intuitive and innovative approach to work has improved the District's procurement and inventory management procedures.

Tom Poploskie District Chief of Survey • District 3



Tom Poploskie is the District's Chief of Survey and is responsible for supervising the District's Survey Unit.

The Survey Unit is comprised of three crews that complete surveys for aerial photography flights, Right-of-Way acquisitions, and design of bridge and roadway projects.

Tom has been instrumental during flooding events by mobilizing his crews to obtain a baseline survey to assist maintenance and design staff to assess the extent of the damage and calculate costs of repair.

He was influential when working with Central Office to identify a GPS collection task to scan data into a public surveying information system that allowed all members on the survey crews to continue teleworking in the event of unavailable crew members.

Tom volunteers to serve on several statewide committees to assess and develop the latest surveying technologies, including ideas on how to incorporate technologies such as 3D scanners and drones into our processes.

He works with internal and external partners as well as the public to minimize conflicts with property owners and the public impacted by roadway and bridge projects. Tom is well respected by his peers in the District and statewide.

Dawn E. Kidder Roadway Programs Manager 1 • District 4



Dawn is a Roadway Programs Manager in the Maintenance Division for Engineering District 4. Dawn's work ethic and dedication to getting the job done truly sets her apart and makes her an asset to the Department. She is hard working, dependable, and creates a positive environment where teamwork is encouraged and valued. Dawn is a true leader and an outstanding co-worker.

Dawn performed the duties of two people for eight months. She filled the void created when Wayne County's Roadway Programs Coordinator (RPC) retired on short notice and kept the county moving forward. Through doing the work of two people for eight months, Dawn has saved the Department approximately, \$50,000 in payroll costs and countless efficiencies for the Wayne County Maintenance organization.

Dawn is the embodiment of ideal customer service and an exemplary representative of PennDOT. When dealing with difficult situations Dawn always stays calm. Even with all the extra duties Dawn has taken on, she never waivers and always delivers information on time and accurately. She is a role model to all and leads by example. This has been extremely needed this past year, which has proved to be difficult and at times unimaginable.

Lonell C. Shalkowski, P.E. Assistant Portfolio Manager • District 4



Loni has been the lead of the District Maintenance Permit Task Force since 2019. The District Maintenance Permit Task Force is a district-wide initiative where a group of five engineers focus on the design and submission of maintenance permits to reduce the District's priority one bridge items.

The success of the District Maintenance Permit Task Force requires open, proactive communications between the Design, Construction and Maintenance Divisions to ensure priority one bridge items are addressed in a cost-effective and timely manner. This success is also bolstered by the rapport Loni has built with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to expedite the review and approvals for priority item permits.

The goal of the team is to complete at least six priority one permits for each county. Therefore, District 4 has six counties x six permits = 36 permits and each permit takes approximately 40 hours to complete. Loni's leadership has saved the District \$237,600 with in-house team completing this work rather than consultant designers.

Loni's leadership in setting priorities and giving direction to the team members has increased the level of service to the county bridge/maintenance forces and has improved the communication between the District Office and County Managers.

District Offices



Thomas Fish Transportation Construction Inspection Supervisor • District 5



Tom oversees the District's bridge maintenance contracts in the Lehigh Valley region. The amount of active work occurring concurrently has exceeded a dozen locations and four contracts and contractors, with work being performed around the clock. Tom's ability to manage his time and all aspects of the projects are exemplary. He delivers the highest level of quality, cost control, and scheduling.

Tom is at the forefront of the District's IICs from a quality and cost control standpoint. His specialization in bridge maintenance operations requires a higher level of attention to detail and research to complete the work as intended. He is the District's most knowledgeable IIC for many specialty operations including overlays, hydro-demolition, steel repairs, bridge deck joint rehabilitation/replacement, structural concrete repairs, etc. His willingness to learn and discuss the intricacies of the work is commendable. He seeks out knowledge and shows enthusiasm that far exceeds what is required or expected to perform his job duties. His ability to oversee the work has allowed the District to efficiently and cost effectively perform a vast amount of work while achieving the utmost in quality.

Tom is always eager to take on any special assignments assigned to him. Examples of these assignments are the development of the IIC Reference Guide, the new Cost Control Summary workbook, structural steel coatings inspection workbook, various other bridge maintenance inspection checklists and workbooks. He is often consulted when developing new processes and protocols and his input is valuable. He is a key member of the District's long-term plans in regard to innovation and improved processes moving forward.



Shaun Rohrbaugh Transportation Equipment Operator Specialist (TEOS) • District 5



Shaun has emerged as a leader in the organization since his promotion to the TEOS position in Schuylkill County in 2018. Since Shaun's promotion one of his duties is to work as an acting foreman when needed. With those duties in the county organization comes the need for flexibility in scheduling and a willingness to work additional overtime, he has accepted the task without missing a beat. His fellow employees respect his leadership.

Shaun handles all the county training initiatives. These duties are no small task in a county of 109 employees. Shaun was a leader in working to get all the TEOA operators trained to meet the requirement to become TEOB's, and as a result 23 of his coworkers have received promotions. This task was a large lift, but he was there all the way, working the shifts and hours needed to accomplish the task. He is also responsible for training all our winter temporary operators, some of whom have never plowed snow.

Shaun is versatile and dependable. Throughout this past winter season on several occasions and when all other personnel options had been exhausted, he was available to work long extended hours whenever asked. Much of the time he did this with minimal time off or rest. His dedication to his job is second to none. He completely understands the responsibility and importance of the service maintenance provides.



Michelle McGrath Clerk Typist 2 • District 6



Michelle McGrath has become known as the "face" and "glue" of PennDOT's Delaware County maintenance office since she began there in 2018. As a clerk typist 2, Michelle delivers excellent customer service which has allowed the office to deal with real time issues and offer exemplary service.

Michelle's duties include handling all incoming phone calls, in-person customers, and potential employees, while demonstrating PennDOT values. Michelle makes it a point to never brush off even the smallest concerns and she genuinely wants to help every customer she encounters, even during the difficult time of COVID-19.

With the pandemic still present, Michelle is always focused on safety when helping internal and external customers through maintaining safe distances and implementing safe methods for customer interactions. She also follows COVID-19 protocols through providing documentation and updates to the Delaware County's crews to ensure safety measures are being practiced.

Michelle's mindset and values have kept the office running smoothly, safely, and in an efficient manner, even during staffing shortages. Without complaint, and extra workloads, especially during winter season, Michelle brings a positive attitude to work each day and has been credited in raising morale among the PennDOT staff.

Michelle's peers and managers have said she is always available and provides quality results with no delay in service. Her positive attitude is realized by all who work with her and she is recognized in increasing PennDOT's efficiency and reputation with the public.



Patrick Pietrak Building Maintenance Foreman • District 6



When District 6's doors closed because of COVID, Building Maintenance Foreman Patrick Pietrak remained working on-site to ensure that the new Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) construction continued smoothly with limited interruptions and worked diligently to ensure the building was maintained and cleaned for when employees returned.

Pat went above and beyond his normal duties for the RTMC construction project and found solutions for staging of contractors, employees, and supplies, while following PennDOT's COVID protocols.

In addition, Pat was the point of contact to allow employees to access equipment in the building in a safe and controlled manner for teleworking needs. Pat and his team disinfected fleet cars, the building, and set up COVID-19 monitoring tables with hand sanitizer and thermometers so employees entering the building remained safe. Pat also monitored PPE materials and distributed to county maintenance offices when needed.

Pat's commitment to cleaning the District 6 office and providing snow removal services saved the District over \$97,000 in contracted cleaning costs and \$24,000 in snow removal costs.

Through his excellent communication skills, Pat is known by his peers, outside partners, and managers as knowledgeable, friendly, reliable, a vital part of improving PennDOT's District 6 morale, and ensuring that the building efficiently functions every day.

District Offices

Mike Dieter Transportation Construction Manager 3 (Asst Construction Mgr) • District 8



Mike currently oversees construction projects in Dauphin and Lebanon counties valued at over \$225 million. This includes the \$104.7 million widening and reconstruction of Interstate 83 near Harrisburg. Projects of this scope and complexity come with a lot of pitfalls, but under Mike's guidance, the project is progressing smoothly toward completion.

Mike's previous experience as a highway design project manager allows him to identify constructability issues during the design process, resulting in reduced costs and fewer construction delays.

He was selected to oversee the constructability of replacing the John Harris Memorial (South) Bridge, which carries I-83 over the Susquehanna River between Dauphin and Cumberland counties. Working on an aggressive schedule, Mike helped the team meet the milestone dates for this project, which is estimated to cost over \$500 million.

He served on a committee to develop a statewide approach in handling contractor claims related to COVID-19. The committee developed guidance all PennDOT districts could use to handle claims. Mike's knowledge and experience helped save the department more than \$200,000 in COVID cost settlements. Mike has a well-earned reputation for his professionalism, dependability and dedication. He is respected by everyone he works with both in and outside the department.

Sheila Hromadik Civil Engineer (Bridges) • District 8



When Sheila Hromadik was appointed to the District 8 bridge maintenance coordinator position, she didn't just hit the ground running – she flew. With less than a year at the job, she was doing the work of two people during the transition to fill the second coordinator position. She saw this as an opportunity to redefine the district's Bridge Structure Maintenance Program.

Sheila took advantage of specialized skills in a co-worker to integrate a new in-house structure maintenance permitting process.

She played a key role in overhauling the district's outdated program for bridges under eight feet.

A significant accomplishment was reviving the district's dormant department force box culvert program. In 2020, during the middle of COVID, Sheila successfully facilitated two box culvert projects in separate counties. She managed on-site activities, so the projects stayed on time and on budget. She earned the respect of county bridge crews by getting into the trench and working side by side with them.

Sheila oversaw preconstruction planning and coordination with district staff, guided the county staff through the ECMS process, and introduced an intensive new AAR process.

Through her leadership and hard work, Sheila demonstrated a cost savings of \$150,000 to \$200,000 per project.

Jason A. Vancas Transportation Construction Manager 2 • District 9



COVID forced all employees to adjust how they perform their jobs, and many were given additional duties. However, one individual's effort extended beyond what we now call "the new normal".

In April 2020, Jason was enlisted as the primary reviewer of all COVID safety plans for District 9 Construction Projects and Consultant Agreements. At first, Jason successfully managed the workload and willingly accepted these additional duties. Then, construction season ramped up, COVID safety plans poured in hourly and Jason's North Juniata Street Project began.

Jason has reviewed over 500 COVID safety plans and successfully handled every complaint and issue on his construction project. As demands increased, Jason was offered help, but politely responded, "Thank you, but I'm able keep up." Jason still reviews COVID safety plans; not once asking for help.

The typical ICC is estimated to need two hours to review each COVID Safety Plan Submission, totaling around 1,000 manhours for 500 submissions. Jason became quite proficient, single-handedly completing that amount with 50% more efficiency, saving about one hour per plan review, (roughly 500 man-hours), saving approximately \$14,730.

Jason was the recipient of the 2020 Extra Mile Award in District 9. This goes to an individual who provided exceptional efforts during the previous calendar year, going above and beyond the call of duty.

He continues taking any challenge thrown his way, stepping up to represent the District with professionalism.

Luke Llewellyn Assistant Highway Maintenance Manager • District 9



As an Assistant Highway Maintenance Manager in Cambria County, Luke's duties include directing all phases of seasonal highway maintenance work to including planning, scheduling, and controlling all work to include winter snow removal operations, investigating highway related complaints, and reviewing work zone traffic control setup to ensure crew safety. Recently, additional duties were placed on him with understanding COVID guidelines, educating the field employees and ensuring compliance with these guidelines.

Luke began his career in 2012 as a Transportation Equipment Operator, was promoted to a Highway Foreman 2 in 2015 and to an Assistant County Manager in 2019.

During the month of August, Luke performed the duties usually performed by three Assistant County Managers. Estimating a yearly salary of \$50,000/Assistant, this saved the Department approximately \$8500 for the month of August. Without his dedication, Cambria County would have had to reassign other two additional employees to do the work he completed.

Luke is a hard-working supervisor who leads by example. His steady work ethic and treating people with respect are traits that have made Luke valued by all of his peers, foreman and field employees. He is always willing to listen to ideas and is willing to apply the ideas to the project at hand if it is viable. Praises and recognition of Luke has come in the form of verbal compliments, emails and phone calls from subordinates, peers, County Manager, District Staff and Executives.

District Offices

Amber Lowmaster Roadways Program Technician 2 • District 10



Amber has held three positions in the Jefferson County front office and has excelled in all of them. Because of her varied background, Amber is the go-to employee and always willing to help.

For one year, Amber was both Roadway Programs Technician 1 and 2 while the county worked to fill the position. During this time, she saved the county roughly \$33,000. Amber has developed a variety of instructional documents and flow charts for her varied assigned tasks. These documents have been used to reduce the hurdles facing employees in new positions.

Amber's true "cost savings" to the county are directly related to her dedication to Roadway Accident Recovery (RAR). Through Fiscal Year 2019, Jefferson County recouped \$115,000.

She works closely with the salt vendors to ensure that Jefferson County provides safe and passable roadways. Amber works with our field supervisors to efficiently monitor winter material inventory. She always strives to make our field personnel's jobs easier.

Amber has been recognized by employees and customers for being extremely thorough and a positive employee. Amber is the example of an exemplary employee. Her work ethic and dedication show in the thoroughness and accuracy of her work.

Matthew Forni Maintenance Repairman 2 • District 10



Matt is the District 10 Office Maintenance Repairman responsible for District building equipment and operation. When the office closed during COVID, Matt stepped up to the forefront of the distribution supply chain.

In addition to his regular duties, Matt coordinated the distribution of COVID safety supplies throughout the District's five counties. He did an incredible job accomplishing these extra duties with never a complaint.

He prepared COVID Go-bags for Field employees, filled bottles with sanitizer, created ingredient labels for bottles, and fabricated plexiglass sneeze guards. Matt custom built the sneeze guards for less than \$90 each saving \$200 - \$400 for each unit.

Matt ensured our District Office building systems operated safely and efficiently during the shutdown. He championed the replacement of lights with LEDs to save energy and money. This saved several thousand dollars in overtime costs by doing it during the regularly scheduled workday.

Matt demonstrated exceptional response and performance during the shutdown. His focus on employee safety through planning, creation of items, and distribution of PPE products was nothing short of outstanding.

Lori Musto Allegheny County Manager • District 11



Lori's leadership shined as Allegheny County Manager. She led the team during the COVID, worked to keep maintenance employees safe, found ways to maximize department resources, and continued operations efficiently and effectively. Leading by example, Lori utilizes best practices for customer service with a boots-on-the-ground management style, achieving positive outcomes. She often gets quality results on time and under budget. She was also instrumental in insuring that all district equipment needs were met, Lori initiated equipment sharing meetings, promoting a teamwork attitude within the district.

Lori developed a sheet pile contract to permanently repair seven slides in Allegheny County with a savings of more than \$1.5 million in 2020. Additionally, she introduced the Automated Flagger Assistance Devices to the district. The devices allow flaggers to stand out of traffic's path, decreasing the flagger's risk of being struck by a vehicle, seriously injured, or even killed. This not only increases safety, but also saves the department approximately \$900 per day in contracted flaggers.

In September 2021, Lori was promoted to the District 11 Assistant District Executive of Maintenance where her hard work, innovation, and outstanding skills will be utilized further.

Lori Miles Construction Support Services Manager • District 11



Lori Miles, District 11's Construction Support Services Manager, was tasked with aligning department construction staff with the 18 emergency projects that restarted during 2020. Additionally, she ensured that each remaining construction project had enough PennDOT inspection personnel to run efficiently until they progressed enough to bring back consultant staff members.

Lori was also responsible for the interviewing and on-boarding of 25 ESTT's in 2020 which saved the Department over \$600,000. She used her technical talents to facilitate virtual meetings for the new employees, conduct Basic Construction Inspection training, distribute equipment, and also assigned employees to projects to minimize travel expenses while being mindful of safe levels of occupancy. Additionally, Lori utilized and developed new electronic methods and workflows which were invaluable to our construction staff. She accomplished all of this while continuing to oversee and manage locally sponsored projects in Beaver and Lawrence counties.

Beyond these achievements, Lori is the consummate professional. She is always willing to provide her expertise to a statewide committee or mentor a new employee. She has a friendly disposition and is inclusive with her interactions on every level.

District Offices

Michele DeFrancesco Clerk Typist 3 • District 12



Michele went above and beyond her daily duties after the fire destroyed our Greene County Maintenance facility in May of 2019. The county organization was temporarily reassigned 30 miles to work from the computer lab in district office. Michelle continued timekeeping and clerical duties without any change.

When the Clerical Supervisor retired, Michele took on the duties of that position in addition to her work. She processed request to post vacancies, prepared interview packets, set up interviews for Winter Temporary positions, drivers tests, and drug testing; along with all the paperwork and on-boarding of new employees. She helped Greene County reach our compliment of temporary as well as filling full-time vacancies. The additional duties were expected to be short term, but continued for over one year. (Overall Cost Saving: \$45,000.00)

The County received a call from a motorist concerning an individual setting up a campsite along Interstate 70. Michele was directed to call the Pennsylvania State Police who dropped the individual at the next exit. Michele called the homeless shelter of Greene Co. to assist this person and stopped twice a day to give them food and water and check on the persons wellbeing for the next few days.

Melissa R. Maczko Administrative Assistant 1 • District 12



Melissa has demonstrated dedication to the Department, successful use of innovation, customer service and problem solving in many ways in 2020.

Melissa championed a successful recruitment fair in Fayette County for temporary winter operators in 2019 and duplicated in the remaining counties. At least one other District and Central Office attended subsequent events to learn how the events were structured.

In June 2020 a new DE took over the district. Legislative meetings were needed to open that line of communications. Melissa organized these meetings, ran the PowerPoint, and took minutes. Melissa researched platforms that could handle large events, and found that, "TEAMS Live Event" could accommodate larger groups. With this format, we held events that covered Employee Recognition, Safety Stand-down (District only), SECA, and the Veteran's Recognition event using a hybrid of TEAMS and in person. Melissa produced each event. Estimated District savings in travel time and expenses were a conservative \$30,000.00.

Melissa was the SECA coordinator for the District, so that campaign was weaved into each of the above referenced events as well. This campaign was also successful, and District 12 was the leading District within PennDOT in both participation and donations.

Central Office

Amanda M. Frank Management Analyst 2 • Administration



As a Management Analyst for the Bureau of Innovations tasked with leading organizational change efforts, Amanda Frank has provided department wide support to PennDOT project teams. From project analysis and data collection to meeting facilitation and development of implementation plans, Amanda's leadership and support have enabled teams to reduce processing time, streamline program processes, engage employees and consultants in problem-solving initiatives, and ensure process improvement initiatives are able to advance effectively.

In 2020, Amanda independently developed a PennDOT Lean Dashboard representing the cost and time savings resulting from employee-driven and BOI-led process improvement projects. That dashboard recently acted as an at-a-glance resource for executives as they prepared for budget briefings. It will also serve as a reference for the Secretary during her upcoming "Lean Briefing" call with Governor Wolf, assisting the Secretary in communicating PennDOT's accomplishments aligning with his LeanPA initiative.

In 2020, Amanda worked to develop templates and best practices for virtual facilitations, enabling the bureau to host several events virtually that might otherwise have been held in-person. Her efforts led to an estimated annual cost avoidance of more than \$6,700 in employee travel costs and materials usage.

Jodi Nolt Administrative Officer 2 • Administration



In 2020, Jodi was responsible for the implementation of SAP Concur for Travel in PennDOT which went live January 2020. Jodi planned for three months to facilitate a successful implementation and trained nearly 1,000 employees on the program. Jodi was on the road for weeks providing training, both in-person and virtual, in the field and central office.

By conducting the SAP Concur for Travel training in person at the district office, field personnel were not required to travel to Harrisburg for training. If Train-the-Trainer training would have been held, two people from each District would have needed to travel. Overnight accommodations and subsistence would have been required for eight Districts, assuming overnight travel would not have been needed for representatives from Districts 3, 5 and 8. Cost avoidance of overnight stay, subsistence, and lost production totals nearly \$7,456.00.

Over many weekends during the winter months, from her home in Carlisle, Jodi can be found putting together the travel arrangements for snowstorm Mobile Equipment Teams.

Larissa Newton Digital Director • Communications



Larissa Newton is the Digital Director in the Communications Office. Her work at PennDOT truly embodies nearly all our strategic themes. To say that she is responsible for building, collaborating on, or supporting innovation, customer service, recruitment, and leveraging resources in our internal and external communications is an understatement. On many occasions, she developed or built a way to do something better that often meant much more work for her but was the best result for the Department.

During COVID, she (in concert with Project Delivery staff) developed an Online Public Engagement guideline to ensure staff knew the available tools and protocols to reach out to customers and partners in a virtual environment. This has instituted and expanded the use of Facebook Events to promote online public meetings for construction projects.

Her guidance and ownership of standards for our website has reined in spending on consultant-developed websites overall, including special initiatives and construction projects. She has also ensured separate social-media assets are not created beyond the department's tools or worked to bring in-house those that were previously created.

Her work on the www.pennidot.gov/funding and related subsites has been recognized by department leadership and our consultant team. Her focus on bringing accessibility and approachability to department communications has been recognized by customers.

Ngani Ndimbie Executive Policy Specialist • Policy



Ngani Ndimbie is an Executive Policy Specialist in the Policy Office. She has been one of PennDOT's most effective champions of promoting equity and combating structural racism in transportation. In doing so, she has demonstrably contributed to supporting our values and has advanced specific PennDOT strategic directions.

She was a key driver of the Policy Office's landmark study and report, "Dismantling Systemic Racism and Inequities" which took a 360-degree view of equity issues and racial biases. She has leveraged her background in community organizing to help expand the voice of our stakeholders to include more people of color, low income and disadvantaged communities, and especially those who are either overburdened by transportation's externalities or underserved by its facilities and services.

An example of this work is her representation on PennDOT's behalf on the Equity & Investment Committee of the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI), where she was one of the select presenters for the TCI Equity Webinar.

She is a leading voice in the Department in support of adopting micro mobility devices to connect users from underserved neighborhoods with fixed-route transit services; and through her work with our Office of Transformational Technologies, she has been instrumental in keeping the needs and interests of disadvantaged and disabled populations central in the development of vehicle automation in Pennsylvania.

Ngani is no longer with the department but still works for the Commonwealth at the Department of Environmental Protection.

Connie Sprague Safety Manager (HR Analyst 4) • Highway Administration



Connie Sprague is the Employee Safety Division Manager in Highway Administration. She leads by example and provides leadership and guidance to all ensuring they have the resources needed to maintain a safe work environment.

She worked with her staff to review the ever-changing guidance being issued from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the PA Department of Health (DOH) from the start of the pandemic. She was in constant communication with the DOH and then coordinating with team members updates that necessitated changes to policies, procedures, and developing protocols to conform with all CDC and DOH guidance.

New protocols were developed and implemented as well as adjusting existing processes and procedures to incorporate COVID safety measures. She and her team developed COVID safety materials, safety talks, and related materials that were shared as examples for other agencies.

She led the effort to develop protocols for our field staff to balance heat safety and COVID safety to ensure the safety of staff during all operations. Connie is recognized by her peers as a leader in the safety field and district staff often comment about her willingness to help develop the COVID related safety protocols.

Daniel J. Whetzel Section Chief, Emergency Incident Management • Highway Administration



Dan is the Emergency Incident Management Section Chief of the Bureau of Maintenance and Operations. During the first several months of the Governor's order to close state offices and order all non-essential workforce to stay at home, Dan made PennDOT's Area Command a stable presence when things were changing daily. He led the Area Command tirelessly for three straight months and was the central point of contact for many questions, documents, decisions, and overall coordination of an agency which had just been broken apart from daily regimented practices to an agency that was reacting daily to new challenges associated with construction shutdowns, work stoppages, uncertainty, and confusion.

In the first few days of the pandemic, disinfectant and cleaning supplies were exhausted nationwide. A critical component to restarting even basic county emergency maintenance crews. Dan developed a plan to locate, order, and distribute supplies to field staff. He worked directly with the Department of Corrections (DOC) even dispatching our own staff to the DOC supply warehouse to bring back the needed cleaning supplies, and then coordinated the delivery to the locations where they were needed.

He and his staff helped to bring PennDOT back to a more stable operational platform, reduced the confusion, and updated staff on the questions they had.

Central Office



Michele Harter, P.E. Program Manager 1 • Highway Administration



Michele provided swift, professional guidance to our customers during the state mandated shutdown. Construction projects were placed on hold to minimize exposure. She provided guidance to support these temporary suspension orders.

PennDOT worked with industry partners on solutions for restarting construction projects with focus of avoiding the spread of the virus. She was the PennDOT lead of the Lettings, Award, and Notice to Proceed (NTP) group of the construction restart team. A multi-organizational project delivery team was formed to identify critical operations and a document was created providing guidance to restart field activities consistent with DOH guidance.

She created template letters for districts to notify consultants of construction inspection and design fieldwork that could resume. Firms were requested to submit COVID-19 Safety Plans; she led a team responsible for the review/acceptance of 128 statewide Safety Plans.

PennDOT faced a cash flow crisis as motor license fund revenues declined and a difficult decision was made to pause construction lettings due to these shortfalls. A Cash Flow Team was established, and she led a sub-team responsible to provide graphical representations of actual and projected revenues and expenditures in various appropriations. Summary information provided current and projected cash flow, ultimately supporting a restart of the letting program.

She was also a Governor's Award of Excellence Finalist in 2020 and was nominated by the Department of Labor and Industry for her extraordinary work. She tackled all special assignments while leading the Contract Management Section within the Bureau of Project Delivery and assisted with specification changes, Risk Allocation Committee items, On the Job Training (OJT) System rollout, ECMS activities, consultant agreement concerns, etc.



Raymond Green Transportation Planning Manager • Planning



Raymond is responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of transportation plans and programs as required by federal and state laws, regulations, and policies for the six Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in South Central Pennsylvania. He supervises and supports the development each MPO's, and transit authorities' Transportation Improvements Program (TIP), Twelve Year Program (TYP), and Long-Range Transportation Plan for highways and public transportation projects. He provides oversight and guidance in the coordination and preparation of each MPO's biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Once the UPWP is approved, he is responsible for providing oversight and guidance in the management of the funding. The funding amounts for the six Planning Regions under Ray's area of Supervision total over \$6.4 Million.

In addition to performing his assigned duties related to transportation program development and management, Ray has been engaged in supporting PennDOT efforts to address social equity and address under-served communities. He has been the PennDOT Planning Deputate representative in a collaborative effort with the Federal Highway Administration and several Pennsylvania Metropolitan Planning Organizations in developing Environmental Justice guidance. He was selected by Executive Staff to represent the Office of Planning on the Dismantling Systemic Racism and Inequities Workgroup for PennDOT.



Anthony Stever Operating Program Division Manager • Multimodal



Anthony has been the lead in implementing PennDOT's Fixed Route Intelligent Transportation System (FRITS) project. This is a complex project that touches many aspects of a transit agencies' maintenance and operations. The technology will allow transit agencies to provide real time data to their customers via web and mobile apps, dynamic message boards. FRITS allows Transit Agencies to deploy state of the art technology to provide better service and understand their customer base by improving communication between driver and dispatch and collecting key operational data to make better service decisions.

During the COVID crisis he found ways to ensure that grants were reviewed, processed, and executed in an expedient fashion to get critical funding to transit agencies so they could continue to provide service. He kept in close contact with agencies to provide weekly status reports to the Deputy Secretary and the Federal Transit Administration so that they knew what service and fare adjustments were being made in 53 transit agencies across the state. He knew what agencies were offering free fares, what cleaning policies were being employed, and what routes were being canceled or modified. He worked directly with legal and the multimodal administration unit to ensure that additional funding was provided to transit agencies to keep their doors open and the buses running.



Shane Moyer Bureau of Support Services • Driver and Vehicle Services



Shane played a crucial role throughout 2020 ensuring continued operations of statewide driver, vehicle, and photo licensing facilities while maintaining safety of both customers and DVS staff during COVID. Shane and his staff led the effort to identify essential staff to be deployed to the Harrisburg Riverfront Office Center (ROC) to continue back-end, mission-critical functions that could not be performed via telework.

In early April, as DVS planned for the eventual opening of the ROC, Shane spearheaded the plan to staff the ROC leading up to reopening vehicle counter services. He directed multiple components of a statewide plan to bring DVS back online to service customers through the safe closing and consequent reopening of all driver licensing and photo sites along with services at the Riverfront Office Center. His personal interactions with plexiglass companies ensured the availability of this important item to construct sneeze guards. Through his actions in procuring this and other necessary supplies, protective screens were successfully installed on time and prior to the ROC and driver and photo license centers opening for business.

Overall, Shane helped keep 1,400 DVS employees appraised during the initial COVID-19 mitigation efforts and continues to do so as changes unfold.

