

## **TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF WYOMING**

The Transportation Commission of Wyoming met in the I-80 Room at the WYDOT-U Training Building in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on June 17, 2021. Chairman Schmidt convened the meeting at 8:33 a.m. The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Chairman Phil Schmidt, Casper  
Vice Chairman Greg Venable, Worland, via Zoom  
Commissioner Jim Espy, Savery  
Commissioner Jon Dolezal, Evanston  
Commissioner Susan Holmes, Sheridan  
Commissioner Mark Hughes, Sundance  
Director K. Luke Reiner, via Zoom  
Acting Commission Secretary Kimberly Chapman

Others present and participating in the meeting: Dennis Byrne, Chief Financial Officer (CFO); Rodney Freier, Budget Program Manager; Mark Gillett, Chief Engineer; Keith Fulton, Assistant Chief Engineer for Engineering and Planning; Tom DeHoff, Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations; Colonel Kebin Haller, Wyoming Highway Patrol (WHP) Administrator; Taylor Rossetti, Support Services Administrator; Troy Babbitt, Chief Technology Officer (CTO); Mike Kahler, Senior Assistant Attorney General; Ryan Thompson, Assistant Attorney General; and Bryan Cawley, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Other meeting attendees: Senator John Kolb and Representative David Baker, Legislative Liaisons to WYDOT; Doug McGee, Public Affairs Program Manager; John Davis, Management Services Program Manager; Rhonda Holt, Controller; Melissa DeFratis, Legislative Liaison; Katie Legerski, Executive Director, Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Wyoming; Bill Wilson, Standards Engineer; Scott Taylor, District Engineer (District 4); Kent Ketterling, State Construction Engineer; Darin Kaufman, District 3 Traffic Engineer; Phillip Hearn, Aeronautics Engineering & Construction Program Manager; DeeAnn Ritter, Bailey Oil Co.; Hank Rettinger, Engineering & Operations Team Supervisor, FHWA; and Ryan Robertson, Wyoming News Now.

Commissioner Filer, of Cheyenne, was absent.

1. Pledge of Allegiance: Chairman Schmidt led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Service Awards: Taylor Rossetti led the service award presentation to a Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) employee with 40 years of service. Mark Gillett led the presentation to recognize the retirement of former Commission Secretary Sandra J. Scott and commend her for 41 years of dedicated service to WYDOT, with 16 years as the Transportation Commission Secretary.
3. Approval of Minutes: It was recommended by Secretary Chapman, moved by Commissioner Espy, seconded by Commissioner Dolezal, and carried to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2021, business meeting.

4. Director Reiner presented the Director's report.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: WYDOT had several active cases of COVID-19 during the last month as people begin returning to work. The department is encouraging employees, especially those who are not vaccinated, to take proper precautions to lower transmission.

All employees are expected to be back at work on July 1, 2021, unless they have a signed telework agreement. As telework protocol is established, the department is encouraging employees to consider a hybrid approach: work in the office two to three days a week and telework the remaining days.

Budget: The department is actively working on next year's budget. Tom DeHoff, Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations, is visiting each of the districts to determine budget numbers.

American Rescue Plan funds: Governor Gordon recently released a plan to help the state recover from the pandemic. The Governor is taking a long-term approach to growing the economy by using COVID-19 funding and other resources strategically. He has also put together a task force consisting of state agency heads, legislators, county commissioners, and other elected officials to create a detailed, concrete plan that will help Wyoming "strive, drive, and thrive."

Most of the funds from the American Rescue Plan will be included in the Governor's budget recommendations as part of the standard budgeting process.

Other Federal Legislative Issues: Reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is proceeding, and the department is hopeful that a continuing resolution will not be needed this year.

The director reported that projects submitted under the American Jobs Plan are still in consideration, but final determination will come from Congress and the President.

Director's Visits to Districts 3 and 5: The director reported that he is visiting WYDOT employees in the field this week. He is also meeting with state legislators, especially new legislators. The goal of these meetings is to build relationships, share information about WYDOT, and most importantly, to gather legislators' thoughts and concerns.

During his travels, the director has been able to observe several projects, including the proposed off-road vehicle (ORV) trail in southwest Wyoming and various construction projects along I-80. He had a similar opportunity on a recent visit to District 2.

One of the major concerns he is hearing from the districts is the issue of retaining and recruiting employees. With the current pay and compensation plan, the ability to recruit and retain good people is challenging.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Working Group: An intergovernmental working group on EVs is being formed. The purpose of the working group is to coordinate the work happening around the state and amongst different agencies.

Following a request from Chairman Schmidt, Director Reiner provided examples of WYDOT's current recruitment approaches. The director shared that the WHP utilizes job fairs and outreach to other law enforcement groups across the nation.

In regards to retention, the department continues to use three employee advisory teams. During these monthly meetings, a group of about 15 employees meet with Director Reiner to share their concerns and ideas to improve the work environment. Previous items from the meetings have included adjustments to policies on compensatory and volunteer time, the time reporting process, and redefining the work week.

5. Mr. Byrne presented the Chief Financial Officer's report.

Monthly Budget Report: Mr. Freier presented the monthly budget report. Overall, the budget report revealed that the Commission budget was 58 percent expended, and the Legislative budget was 56 percent expended in FY 2021.

Following a question from Commissioner Hughes about items 472 and 475 on page two of the budget report, Mr. Freier explained that Undistributed Motor Vehicle Registrations are apportioned license plate revenue that is collected in Wyoming and distributed to Wyoming counties, other states, and the State Highway Fund.

Chairman Schmidt asked about fuel tax receipts and general travel trends. Mr. Byrne explained that the department had predicted a \$21 million decline in fuel tax revenue for FY2020 and FY2021. For FY2020, the state realized a loss of about \$3.5 million. Traffic trends have improved, and while fuel tax receipts are still forecasted to be down, it will be in line with the three-year average before COVID. There are no anticipated declines in registrations.

FY2022 Budget Summaries: Summaries have been provided to the Commission. The summaries are typically shared in July, but because of the timing of budgets this year, the summaries were provided in June. These summaries are the beginning of the budgeting process for FY2022. Each report deals with a separate subject and is a request for the FY2022 budget.

Following a question from Commissioner Hughes, Mr. Freier shared that he is anticipating no significant changes from the previous year's budget, but he cautioned that these are the preliminary reports.

6. Procurement Bids: It was recommended by Mr. Byrne, moved by Commissioner Espy, seconded by Commissioner Hughes, and carried to move Bid Numbers 21-112CS, 21-115RE, and 21-130RE, to a consent list.

It was moved by Commissioner Espy, seconded by Commissioner Dolezal, and carried to approve, by consent, the following bids:

- Bid No. 21-112CS to furnish 4,418,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline (2,119,000 gallons) and diesel fuel (2,299,000 gallons) for use at WYDOT locations statewide. The bid was awarded to Kellerstrass Oil Co., of Salt Lake City, Utah, for the sum of \$25,033.50; Perkins Oil Co., of Rawlins, Wyoming, for the sum of \$161,361.70; Bailey Oil Co., of Riverton, Wyoming, for the sum of \$187,937.00; Western Cooperative Co., of Torrington, Wyoming, for the sum of \$191,880.60; Murdoch Oil Co., of Greybull, Wyoming, for the sum of \$1,382,835.60; Ellenbecker Oil, Inc., of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for the sum of \$1,876,920.00; Reladyne West, LLC, of Evanston, Wyoming, for the sum of \$2,035,828.00; and Homax Oil Sales, Inc., of Casper, Wyoming, for the sum of \$5,069,925.10; for a total sum of \$10,931,721.50.
- Bid No. 21-115RE to furnish four each, four-door DRW cab and chassis approximately 84-inch cab to axle, with a 45-foot platform lift installed, to be delivered to Cheyenne, Laramie, Rock Springs, and Basin. The bid was awarded to Greiner Ford, of Casper, for the sum of \$517,628.00.
- Bid No. 21-130RE to furnish 18 each, new Dodge Charger all-wheel drive Pursuit Patrol sedans for delivery to Bearcom, Inc. in Evans, Colorado. The bid was awarded to Bob Ruwart Motors, Inc., of Wheatland, Wyoming, for the sum of \$497,160.00.

7. Mr. Gillett presented the Chief Engineer's report.

Material Shortage: In response to concerns from the AGC of Wyoming about ongoing issues with a materials shortage and the resulting escalating costs, WYDOT has started a task force. The group is comprised of representatives from WYDOT, AGC, and FHWA. The first meeting will be held June 24, 2021.

Even though there is precedent for adjusting fuel and steel prices, the task force will be on new ground for other materials. Fuel and steel prices are indexed independently, making the fluctuations in price of these goods more easily documented. Documentation for other materials may be less substantiated, and reliance of actual cost may reside with the contractor and supplier.

This task force faces additional issues if material cost escalation is paid. Mr. Gillett felt that instituting a cost-escalation process may appear to be penalizing some contractors who were more diligent in seeking out lower material costs. Another issue is uncertainty of how long the high prices will last. Contractors may need to understand that if WYDOT pays for higher-cost materials now and then prices lower, they will need to expect lower adjustments to their bid prices. And finally, if WYDOT pays additional costs from state funds, it could affect WYDOT's ability to match federal funding resulting in less contracts.

Rally in the Rockies Update: WYDOT continues to have conversations with the US Air Force (USAF) regarding their plan to land a C-130J Cargo Aircraft on Highway 287 between Muddy Gap and Rawlins. WYDOT has entered into an agreement with the USAF whereby USAF will pay for services related to closing the road, traffic control, and roadway testing.

It has been determined that a landing is feasible, so WYDOT is now working on a memorandum of understanding with the Air Force on costs associated with the event. Scheduling for the event is still set for mid-September.

Togwotee Pass Issues: There is an active slide at mile 27 on US 26 near Togwotee Pass. It is not a new issue, but it is a little worse than normal this spring. Maintenance crews have been placing cold mix to alleviate the drop-off across the road, but WYDOT may have to let an emergency contract for repairs. Initial estimates for the repair are between \$300,000 and \$700,000.

A consultant specializing in soil stabilization and slide repair has been on site, and Mr. Gillett expects to receive options for repairing the slide from the consultant in early July. Repairs could not start until August as construction crews are busy with other projects at this time.

Mr. Gillett is greatly concerned by the fact that this is a relatively small slide that sits in a large “slide potential” area. He reported that if there were signs of a mega-slide, the only option would be to relocate the highway, which would cost millions of dollars.

The second issue at Togwotee Pass concerns wildlife-caused traffic jams. At this time of year, Grizzly Bear #863, known locally as Felicia, is frequently seen on US 26 near Togwotee Pass. The bear has become increasingly accustomed to cars and people as tourists and photographers stop along the highway to view the bear and her cubs, causing traffic jams and unsafe roadway conditions. WYDOT and a number of other agencies, including the US Forest Service (USFS), Wyoming Game and Fish Department, US Fish and Wildlife, and the Fremont County Sheriff’s Office are all working to deal with the issue.

WYDOT has placed digital messaging signs on US 26 warning motorists not to stop on the highway and provided 45 mile-per-hour (mph) warning signs to the USFS that can be moved each day depending on the bear’s location. Mr. Gillett reported that the issue is growing as the bear becomes more widely known, and wildlife photographers are coming to Wyoming specifically to photograph this bear.

Chairman Schmidt recognized the complexity of the problem, and Mr. Gillett agreed that the competing interests of the different parties involved complicates the issue. Director Reiner gave his thanks to Mr. Gillett and his team for their handling of the situation and for successfully partnering with other governmental agencies to resolve the issue. He also reported that when the analysis came back from the roadway testing on US 287 in preparation for the C-130J exercise, the results showed that the road was extremely well-built. The director passed along his compliments to the construction crews. Following a question from Chairman Schmidt, Mr. Gillett confirmed that we are entering slide season.

8. Mr. Cawley presented an update on FHWA topics.

National Update: Conversations continue regarding the American Jobs Plan.

FHWA continues to administer the FAST Act, via a continuing resolution that is set to expire on September 30, 2021. The following are some bills being discussed regarding transportation reauthorization:

In May 2021, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee advanced the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021 (STRA). The bill is very similar to the one reported in 2019. This five-year bill will increase highway funding by approximately 29 percent, with 90 percent distributed by formula. The STRA would introduce approximately 20 new programs with a focus on carbon reduction, resilience, and project delivery.

In June 2021, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure advanced the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America (INVEST) Act. This five-year bill would increase funding approximately 42 percent with 87 percent distributed by formula. The INVEST Act would introduce approximately 14 new programs with around \$14.7 billion in member-designated projects (earmarks) associated with the bill.

Local Update: Mr. Cawley reported that the FHWA has processed two Federal Land Transfer Easements to support the advancement of the Dry Piney Creek Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project, 2019 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant. Two Federal Land Transfer Easements to support the advancement of the Worland – West River Road, WY 433, project have also been processed.

WYDOT has successfully submitted their annual Highway Performance Monitoring System data. This data is used to calculate the formula funding distribution, highway condition reporting, and highway statistics data that is reported to Congress and the public.

9. Mr. Fulton presented the Engineering and Planning report.

Mr. Fulton reported that there was no bid letting in June, but there will be eight projects in July estimated at \$60 million. He informed the Commission that the department would monitor the bids closely, given the current high costs of materials.

10. Mr. Fulton presented the June 2021 addendum to the FY 2021 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

It was recommended by Mr. Fulton, moved by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, and carried to approve the June 2021 STIP addendum.

Chairman Schmidt acknowledged the difficulty contractors are facing with the current high costs and shortage of materials. In response to a question from the chairman, Doug McGee reported that the district public relations specialists are including information on the issue in their project-based releases, and WYDOT has addressed the issue in a few recent video releases.

Chairman Schmidt asked how the engineers would grade the overall condition of WYDOT's snow fences. Mr. DeHoff stated that he would give the snow fences a B or B+ as WYDOT has a

strong record of maintaining the fences. He reported that there is a plan to add additional snow fences along I-80. Mr. Gillett reported that there are some snow fences along I-90 that WYDOT can no longer access because of a property transfer. The quality of the fencing has been impacted negatively in those areas.

In response to another question from Chairman Schmidt about the use of the flexible delineator poles, Mr. DeHoff stated that the flexible poles present advantages and disadvantages compared to traditional metal poles. Overall, their performance is satisfactory and WYDOT plans to continue using the flexible poles.

*Commissioner Hughes left the meeting at 9:44 a.m.*

11. Mr. DeHoff presented the Operations report.

Construction Update: There are currently 62 active projects across the state, an increase of 24 projects from last month. District 1 has 11 active projects, District 2 has 11 active projects, District 3 has six active projects, District 4 has 13 active projects, and District 5 has 21 active projects.

Annual STIP Presentations: The districts are currently scheduling their annual STIP presentations to local governments. Commissioners are encouraged to attend the meetings, which will occur primarily in July and August. Commissioner Espy requested that meetings be scheduled on days separate from Commission meeting dates if possible.

Maintenance Update: All three passes that were closed for the winter were cleared and open before Memorial Day. Normal summer operations are underway, including asphalt patching, chip sealing, fencing, mowing, cleaning ditches, fixing delineation and guardrails, and removing trash.

The state hot plant is set up in Guernsey and is producing hot mix for crews in District 2. The other districts are paving, patching, and sealing roadways using various commercial plants.

There has currently been no significant flooding in the state, but Mr. DeHoff and his team continues to monitor it. There is a forest fire in District 4, but it is not currently causing any issues to roadways or traffic. Another forest fire in Pine Haven has caused the closure of WY 113 to local traffic. The road is closed between US 14 and Pine Haven.

Traffic Update: A shortage in the traffic paint supply has caused WYDOT to fall in its emergency striping plan. The emergency striping plan restricts painting in rest areas, parking lots, ports of entry, urban roads under 45 mph (that are not on the National Highway System), low-volume roads, high-speed roads identified by each district, and all other roads with good markings.

The paint supplier feels that the shortage will continue through July. District traffic engineers continue to monitor the situation and will modify the plan as needed. Mr. DeHoff remains

hopeful that the supply will increase by the end of the summer and enable WYDOT to catch up on painting and striping.

Equipment Update: Mechanics are busy repairing and supporting surfacing and mowing equipment. The Equipment Program will be putting the light-duty fleet out for bid.

Facilities Update: The nine rest areas that were closed in 2020 were reopened in May and will remain open through the end of September. Mr. DeHoff thanked everyone who worked hard to reopen those facilities, including field crews and staff at WYDOT Headquarters.

All other facilities, including rest areas, are open at present.

Chairman Schmidt asked if WYDOT received many complaints or comments from the public about the hot plant or reallocating construction crews for emergency repairs. Mr. DeHoff explained that he does receive those kinds of questions and that it requires educating the public on the cost and logistics behind emergency repairs.

Commissioner Holmes asked if the hot plant was permanently located in Guernsey or if it moved to different locations, as warranted by construction projects. Mr. DeHoff reported that the plant does move around the state, but that it is primarily located in Districts 1, 2, and 4.

12. Colonel Haller presented the Highway Patrol report.

The Fatal Crash Summary through May 31, 2021, includes 35 fatal crashes involving 39 deaths. The fatalities include 2 rollover crashes, 2 multi-car crashes, 1 fixed objects, and 5 motorcycles. Of the 35 fatal crashes that have occurred in 2021, 5 involved commercial vehicles.

*Commissioner Hughes rejoined the meeting at 9:54 a.m.*

There were 5 fatal crashes deemed drug or alcohol related, resulting in 5 deaths, of which one was attributed to not using occupant restraints. One of those deaths was a rollover crash, one was a multi-car crash, and 3 involved motorcycles. Of the 5 drug- or alcohol-related fatalities, none involved commercial vehicles.

Of the 39 deaths this year, 18 were attributed to not using occupant restraints, with 10 involving rollover crashes, 5 involving multi-car collisions, and 3 involving fixed objects. 15 of those who died from the non-use of occupant restraints were Wyoming residents. 3 of those who perished were under 21 years old, and 1 of those fatalities was attributed to the failure to use proper occupant restraints.

Of the 35 fatal crashes so far this year, 9 of those drivers had no distractions. In 17 of those crashes, it was unknown whether a distraction caused the incident.

Of the 35 fatal crashes that have occurred this year, 15 occurred on primary/secondary highways, 11 occurred on interstate highways, and 9 occurred on city/county roads.



Of the multiple-fatality crashes in 2021, 2 were rollovers, none involved multiple vehicles, none involved commercial vehicles, and 4 were drug and/or alcohol related.

In locations where rumble strips/stripes were present, there were 17 crashes. There were 11 crashes where rumble strips/stripes were not present.

Inclement weather or road conditions contributed to 4 vehicle crashes in 2021, which resulted in 4 deaths. Speed was considered a factor in 12 of the vehicle crashes, causing nine deaths.

The days of the week for fatal crashes in 2021 were as follows:

Sunday	5 crashes
Monday	1 crash
Tuesday	1 crash
Wednesday	6 crashes
Thursday	7 crashes
Friday	8 crashes
Saturday	7 crashes

The times of day for fatal crashes in 2021 were as follows:

12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.	4 crashes
6:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	10 crashes
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	13 crashes
6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.	8 crashes

The Commission also heard the following statistics:

- 63 percent of those who died in rollover crashes were unbelted.
- 56 percent of those who died in multi-vehicle crashes were unbelted.
- 60 percent of those who died in fixed-object crashes were unbelted.
- 72 percent of the fatalities in 2021 were drivers.
- 18 percent of the fatalities in 2021 have been passengers.
- 83 percent of the resident fatalities were unrestrained.
- 25 percent of non-resident fatalities were unrestrained.
- 41 percent of fatalities involved alcohol and/or drug impairment.

Patrol-Investigated Crash Summary: The Patrol-Investigated Crash Summary depicts 2,194 crashes statewide, of which 659 involved commercial vehicles.

*Commissioner Dolezal left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.*

“Secure Your Load” Campaign: WHP participated in a nation-wide campaign to educate the public on the importance of properly securing items during transport. In 2019, there were 739 deaths across the U.S. attributed to unsecured loads.

Impaired Driving Conference: WHP hosted an Impaired Driving Conference and training event in May 25-27, 2021, in Laramie, Wyoming. There were 115 law enforcement officers from across the country who participated in this event.

WHP Recruiting Efforts: As reported at the April meeting, trooper testing was performed, and 14 people advanced to the next round. Background investigations are currently being performed on those individuals, and hiring decisions will be made in the next week.

The WHP currently has the following vacancies: 14 in port of entry, 9 in dispatch, and 26 trooper vacancies. With the recent retirements of Major Keith Groeneweg (retired June 1, 2021), Captain Stoker (retired June 16, 2021), and an additional two lieutenants, the WHP is continuing to experience the impact of the 22 percent retirement rate.

New Sidearm: The WHP recently transitioned to a Sig Sauer P320, a 9mm sidearm. The Glock 35's currently used by the agency are traded in for the new sidearm, meaning there is no extra expense.

Awards Banquet: The annual WHP awards banquet was held in Laramie on June 11, 2021, after being cancelled in 2020. Col. Haller thanked Director Reiner for attending and speaking at the banquet.

Commissioner Espy recognized the challenge that the pay scale presents to recruiting and retaining new and experienced troopers. Col. Haller reported that there are numerous reasons people choose to leave, but compensation and staff shortages are typically their top concerns.

Commissioner Hughes asked how we correct the issue of unsecured loads that lead to accidents. Col. Haller said that a large function of the port of entry officers is to perform inspections on vehicles. Additionally, education and enforcement could make a difference.

*Commissioner Dolezal rejoined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.*

13. Mr. Rossetti presented the Aeronautics report beginning with the May 2021 Aeronautics Flight Operations Passenger Summary Report.

According to Tory Meisel, Flight Operations Manager, utilization of the state aircraft is returning. In April flights were at 33 percent of the five-year average, and in May at 67 percent of the five-year average.

Federal Legislation – Aviation Issues: The American Rescue Plan included funds totaling about \$8 billion for airports, but Mr. Olsen is still waiting to hear how much will be apportioned to Wyoming airports.

The American Jobs Plan is still in development, but Mr. Olsen is active with the federal delegation to express Wyoming's aviation needs. Recently Mr. Olsen and members of his staff, along with several Wyoming airport operators, met with Senator Lummis to discuss aviation infrastructure needs around the state. The meeting was productive, and Mr. Olsen remains hopeful that those needs will be included in the infrastructure package.

Air Service Trends: Nationally, air traffic still remains down 22 percent; international air traffic is down 47 percent. Summer bookings in Wyoming are looking strong, particularly at Jackson Hole Airport. Leisure travel is recovering more quickly than business travel.

Rental car shortages nation-wide are affecting the recovery of air travel in the US and in Wyoming.

Wyoming was the only state in the country to have an increase in air travel passengers in May according to Transportation Security Administration Throughput. Air traffic in May 2021 was up 11.7 percent from May 2019 numbers.

Cheyenne Airport Runway: The runway reconstruction project has been delayed by a shortage of low-alkali cement. The runway is anticipated to reopen September 1, 2021, instead of the originally projected July 1<sup>st</sup> reopening.

The division currently has 16 ongoing construction projects.

14. Mr. Rossetti presented the Support Services report.

Employment Summary: WYDOT employed 1,875 personnel as of June 10, 2021, compared to 1,886 a month ago and 1,957 one year ago. WYDOT has 100 positions posted on the State of Wyoming Human Resources website. WYDOT continues to experience a decrease in applicants for positions department-wide.

Chairman Schmidt asked the director if he is communicating the staffing issue to legislators and others in state government. Director Reiner assured the Commission that this issue remains one of his top concerns. He is working with the Human Resources Division to address wages and compensation, and one of his main talking points with legislators is recruitment and retention. This problem is statewide, across multiple agencies, so the director feels like all state officials are aware of the issue. The director also encouraged Commissioners to advocate for WYDOT with their legislators.

Driver Services Presentation: Misty Dobson, Driver Services Program Manager, presented an overview of the Driver Services Program to the Commission. Presentation topics included information on employees; office locations and hours of operation; services provided to the public; trends in licensed drivers; transactions, budgets, and resources; and the challenges to service delivery.

*Chairman Schmidt left the meeting at 10:27 a.m. He rejoined the meeting at 10:30 a.m.*

15. Mr. Babbitt presented the Chief Technology Officer's report.

Information Technology (IT) Update: Mr. Babbitt reported that his team is working to enable those employees who want to telework to have the capability and proper equipment. Working closely with Enterprise Technology Services (ETS), WYDOT is equipping authorized teleworkers with laptops and a Meraki Z3 device, which creates a virtual private network directly to the state's network. The Portal 2 application will still work for employees who do not have a Meraki device.

Revenue Information System (RIS) Replacement Update: Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Rossetti are part of a working group to modify the draft Request for Proposals (RFP). The working group also contains representatives from ETS, the University of Wyoming, and the consultant from Mathtech.

WYDOT is migrating the data to a separate Oracle database in preparation for obtaining a new vendor. This work will allow the team to better understand the data and ensure a seamless launch of a new system.

HB0014 Update: WYDOT is part of a broadband taskforce to assist service providers with right-of-ways along sections of federal highways. After collecting input from the group, the taskforce will draft a report to the congressional delegations containing recommendations for moving forward.

WYDOT continues to have conversations with internet service providers to identify rural broadband projects in each district and to help the internet service providers understand how critical it is to properly plan and construct projects in the right-of-way.

WyoLink Update: WYDOT is completing the RFP for the end-point radio devices. For economies of scale, this RFP will not only replace radios for the WHP and maintenance, but will also allow other state agencies, counties, and other partners to purchase WyoLink-compliant radios at the negotiated price.

WYDOT will soon implement a plan to replace the first one-third of the Quantar Base Station radios. Radios at approximately 18 WyoLink sites will be replaced in the next biennium.

Of the 16-tower buildout project, eight of the WyoLink towers are now active. The following locations are up and functioning: Sundance, Alcova, Jackson, Lusk, Buffalo, Greybull, Orin Junction, and Wright. The two sites in Rock Springs are under construction. The remaining sites include Meadowlark, Little Sheep, northern Goshen County, Newcastle, Bondurant, and Evanston.

Next Gen 911 Update: WYDOT recently completed the annual report to the Federal Communications Commission on 911 in Wyoming. A copy was also submitted to the Governor's office. The report found that 200,000 911 calls were placed in Wyoming in the past year, and 85 percent of those calls were transmitted using cell phone/mobile technologies.

WYDOT is anticipating a future federal package to potentially provide a significant amount of funds to upgrade the 911 system to Next Generation 911 (NG911). NG911 would allow for emergencies to be reported using text, videos, images, and phone calls. Wyoming is preparing for federal grant opportunities to assist in funding NG911 efforts.

IT Advisory Group: WYDOT recently created the IT Advisory Group (ITAG) to help recommend IT projects. This group will allow WYDOT to strategically select and standardize projects to ensure they are a statewide enterprise solution.

Mr. Babbitt reported that WYDOT is working to educate the counties and other partners about the radio features, capabilities, and costs. Chairman Schmidt asked if it was possible to work with other states to bulk purchase radios. According to Mr. Babbitt, it would not be possible as other states are using various generations of technology. Chairman Schmidt asked if Wyoming's topography made it more challenging to select the necessary equipment. Mr. Babbitt said that the terrain affects the percent coverage that can be expected. Whenever possible, WYDOT tries to site WyoLink towers on hills or higher elevations to increase the range of the signal.

16. The next Transportation Commission meeting will take place via Zoom on July 15, 2021.

17. General Matters: It was moved by Commissioner Espy, seconded by Commissioner Dolezal, and carried to remove Sandra J. Scott as an authorized signatory for the Transportation Commission.

Chairman Schmidt invited state legislators, Representative Mark Baker and Senator John Kolb, to make comments to the Commission. Topics included the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, snow fence materials, and budget shortfalls.

18. It was moved by Commissioner Hughes, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, and carried to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Schmidt adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m., on Thursday, June 17, 2021.