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OCTOBER 2021

Connecting the DOTs

Thank you to our employees who shared their personal SDDOT messages for our recruitment campaign. A variety of videos were produced to use at career fairs, on social media, and more!



Christal
Region Materials Technician



Nick
Traffic Operations Technician



Hannah
Transportation Planning Engineer



Derek
Transportation Engineering Manager



Mark
Survey Crew Chief



Helen
Structural Engineer



Bob
Lead Highway Maintenance Worker



Dani
Asst. Pavement Management Engineer



Jana
Project Technician



Jesse
Project Engineer

Find recruitment videos and social posts on our updated **Careers** page. (**Careers** button is on our home page!) The **Careers** page now also provides a video tutorial to assist potential applicants with the process! Check it out: <https://dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/about-sddot/careers-at-the-sddot>



The Secretary's Corner



Find the names and photos of
FY21 Maintenance Safety Award
winners on page three

Safety: Fall Maintenance Training sessions were recently held in Pierre and Aberdeen. At the trainings, the maintenance teams explored new ideas, shared best practices, and networked with co-workers from across the state.

Without a strong maintenance program, no transportation department can adequately provide a safe and efficient transportation system for our public stakeholders. Our hard-working team across the state provides South Dakota with a dependable and resilient highway system. It's important that we continue to strive to develop the next generation of transportation leaders and maximize the opportunities to share best practices with each other. Now more than ever, we strive for innovation.

At the Fall Maintenance trainings; safety awards were presented. Safety is always our top priority both for our employees, and the public that we serve. Congrats to all who earned a safety honor and, thanks to everyone for your diligence toward safety protocols.

Honoring Our Workforce - Impact Awards: Congrats to all Impact Award nominees, your hard work and dedication is inspiring. Thanks also to nominators for taking the time to recognize the work of our SDDOT team.

Congratulations to our individual and team award winners named for this quarter. The next review of nominations occurs after the Dec. 31, 2021 deadline. Please remember, the nomination process is always open at <https://dot.sd.gov/impact-awards>.

Congratulations to the Quarterly Impact Award Winners

**Rayleen
Rathbun**

**Singing Bridge
Response Team**

**Jennifer
Boehm**



FY21 Safety Award Winners - Maintenance

Congratulations to all regions, areas, shops, and units who received Safety Awards at the Fall Maintenance Meetings!



**Ship Shape Award
Herreid**



**Best Unit Statewide, Best Area Maintenance, and
Best Unit - Rapid City Region
Belle Fourche**



**Best Unit - Mitchell Region
Salem**



**Best Unit - Aberdeen Region
Sisseton**



**Best Unit - Pierre Region
Pierre**

Strategic Planning

The Executive Team recently completed the **2021-2022 Strategic Plan**. Strategic planning sets goals for our organization, establishes priorities, and focuses our energy and resources.

Please view the full Strategic Plan and watch the video overview at:

https://dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/forms-publications/reports#listItemLink_1448.

The Strategic Plan outlines our short and long-term strategic goals for the next year. All SDDOT staff will receive a key chain tag, note pads, and other visual daily reminders featuring our strategic objectives.

Strategic Objectives:

Service: Provide Excellent Services

Workforce: Value all Team Members

Safety: Everyone Home Safe Every day

Processes: Continually Improve

Assets: Provide the Best Transportation System

All SDDOT employees contribute to providing a high-quality transportation system by continuously striving to innovate and improve the quality of services.

Innovation: Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) **The SDDOT UAS program is officially off the ground!**



We've purchased five drones, four of which are dedicated to bridge inspection, and one for survey opportunities. The drones are not available for checkout by DOT staff. Over the course of the last few years, the UAS committee comprised of Larry Dean, Jack Dokken, Cody Axlund, Josh Olson, Cody Asher, Jon Nelson, Josh Bench-Bresher, and Marc Hoelscher have worked hard to develop policies, guidelines, FAA 107 certifications, insurance, and much more. A huge part of the development to date has been based on other programs throughout the state and nation. Thank you UAS committee for all your work - we are excited about incorporating this technology into our business!

One such learning experience took place on Oct. 6, 2021, when the Iowa DOT hosted a FHWA-sponsored UAS Peer Exchange with SDDOT and Iowa DOT in Ames. This was a one day Peer Exchange. The group had a round table discussion concerning various topics such as Iowa DOT UAS program overview, SDDOT UAS program overview, UAS for bridge inspection, UAS aerial mapping and DATA Storage and UAS for public relations and wetland mitigation. The Iowa DOT staff provided a UAS flight review demonstration, putting a couple of SDDOT Part 107 pilots through a knowledge test and a flight at the UAS test site. The SDDOT gained valuable knowledge at this Peer Exchange to implement our UAS program!

Eric Stroeder, Engineering Supervisor, Mobridge Area, Elected as a Western Region Director for the National School Board Association

Mobridge-Pollock School Board President and Associated School Boards of South Dakota (ASBSD) President Eric Stroeder has been elected as a Western Region Director for the National School Board Association's (NSBA) Board of Directors.

Associated School Boards of South Dakota is a private, non-profit organization representing more than 850 local school board members, the school districts they govern, and the students they serve.

Stroeder was elected as a Director by school members from the nine states that comprise NSBA's Western Region at their recent meeting. He will begin serving his three-year term on the national board next April. NSBA and its Board of Directors represent member states on national education issues.

Stroeder has served on the Mobridge school board for 11 years, including five years as President, and earned ASBSD's 2021 Outstanding School Board member honor.



The South Dakota Transportation Hall of Honor on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071770836803>

Be sure to like and follow the page!

On the page, find a complete list of Hall of Honor members!
The page also includes member highlights!

It's not too early to be thinking about 2022 nominations!
Questions? Contact Kari Kroll at kari.kroll@state.sd.us

SDDOT Mission: To efficiently provide a safe and effective public transportation system

SDDOT Vision: Better lives through better transportation by being the best

October is General Aviation Appreciation Month

Social media posts featuring the work of the SDDOT Aeronautics Office!

Small, medium, and large general aviation airports can be found across the state, serving over 2,500 pilots. The accessibility to these general aviation airports is key to helping South Dakota's economy grow and providing necessary services to local communities.

#GeneralAviationAppreciationMonth



Aviation does more than fly people to vacation destinations. It provides critical services to local communities such as emergency medical services, aerial firefighting, and so much more.

#GeneralAviationAppreciationMonth



Nearly 9,000 jobs and over \$900 million dollars are contributed to general aviation in our state.

General aviation is a driving force for South Dakota's economy and continues to be at the forefront of improving the quality of life from South Dakotans.

#GeneralAviationAppreciationMonth



AGC of South Dakota Hosts Pierre Construction Career Camp

Association of General Contractors (AGC) created Construction Career Camps to promote careers in construction to the next generation.

On Thursday, Oct. 21, over 90 area high school students participated in the camp to learn about careers in the construction industry. SDDOT was happy to participate with local contractors in the Construction Career Camp and give insight on the wide variety of jobs available through SDDOT not only in the construction field, but also on the engineering and administrative side.

One of the sessions for the day was a tour of the Pierre-Fort Pierre Bridge Construction site. The students were on-site to learn about the bridge construction process, how the drilled shafts are being completed, and machinery needed for the build. They also got to learn about the survey process, see the SDDOT's drone in action, learn about the variety of construction and engineering positions needed on a bridge project, and some of the starting pay scales for those positions.

For more information on careers available with the SDDOT please visit:

<https://dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/about-sddot/careers-at-the-sddot>

KELO recruitment story featuring **Dean VanDeWiele, Pierre Area Engineer:**

<https://www.keloland.com/news/local-news/pierre-construction-career-camp-gives-students-up-close-look-at-industry/>

KELO bridge update with **Jason Humphrey, Pierre Region Engineer:**

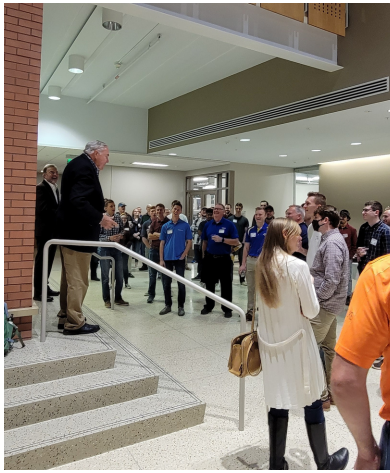
<https://www.keloland.com/news/local-news/an-update-on-pierre-fort-pierre-bridge-construction/>

Recruitment Efforts at SDSU:

Rebecca Urban, Road Grading Design Engineer, has been spending a lot of time at SDSU talking with engineering students!

Below are pictures from the **SDSU Meet and Mingle event** featuring speaker Jerome J. Lohr (for whom the College of Engineering is named) and Dr. Bruce Berdanier, Dean of the College of Engineering.

Rebecca also hosted a booth at the Career Fair and presented in various classrooms about the vast career opportunities within the SDDOT.



In November, **Mike Behm, Director of Planning and Engineering**, will be a guest speaker at an event hosted by the **SDSU Institute of Transportation Engineers**.



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@SouthDakotaDOT
@southdakotadot
www.linkedin.com/company/61904086



MEET AND GREET EVENT HOSTED BY:

- South Dakota State University Institute of Transportation Engineers
- South Dakota Department of Transportation

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 3, 2021
4:00 - 6:30 P.M.
CROTHERS ENGINEERING HALL - ROOM 209

4:00 p.m. - 1 on 1 sessions with SDDOT!
SDDOT employees will answer YOUR questions about internships, current full-time openings, etc.

5:30 p.m. - ITE Business Meeting (with pizza)

6:00 p.m. - SDDOT Presentation
Mike Behm, SDSU Alumnus and SDDOT Director of Planning and Engineering, will join via Zoom for a 30 minute presentation!

Mike will discuss the vast career opportunities for engineers within the SDDOT!

Like ITE on Facebook and follow our updates at: "SDSU Institute of Transportation Engineers Student Chapter"

National Walk to School Day

Thanks to **Marilyn Patterson, Transportation Specialist in Project Development** for coordinating SDDOT's efforts across the state for the National Walk to School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021.

A sincere thank you to all who assisted with this awareness activity! With 25 schools participating throughout the state and nearly 9,000 contacts with students, you have helped to reinforce safe and active walking for school children across our state.

Marilyn copied all received photos from our SDDOT statewide National Walk to School Day events into a folder. Copy and paste the following link:

<U:/pd/SRTS/2021 National Walk to School Day>

Left: Wyatt Reis, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, represents the SDDOT in Bonesteel.

Right: Yvonne Przybilla, Sioux Falls Area Senior Secretary, is pictured with her family members (Carmen, Savi and Baylor) displaying their snap-on bracelets!



The AWOS-III at Gettysburg Recently Commissioned

By Jon Becker, Aeronautics Engineer

South Dakota airports have a variety of weather observing systems, some paid for and maintained by FAA, some by the airport sponsor. Gettysburg airport previously had a SuperAWOS, a non-certified weather reporting system. The new AWOS is FAA-certified and is valuable for all general aviation pilots, especially commercial operators and medevac aircraft.



This project was funded by FAA, and the city used a contractor to install. AWOS, ASOS, and AWSS provide required surface weather observations. These systems generate weather observations containing the following:

- Wind speed, direction, and gust information
- Temperature
- Dew point
- Altimeter setting
- Cloud height and amount
- Visibility
- Present weather
- Precipitation accumulation
- Thunderstorm occurrence

For additional information: [https://www.faa.gov/air traffic/weather/aswon/](https://www.faa.gov/air%20traffic/weather/aswon/)

Find the latest edition of the Employee Resource Guide at:
<https://intranetdot.sd.gov/docs/EmployeeResourceGuide.pdf>

Quick Guide to the Field Calculator

by Kimberly Zerr, GIS Coordinator and
Kathryn Wesson, Transportation Specialist



The Field Calculator in ArcMap is more than your standard run-of-the-mill calculator. It's actually one of the most useful GIS tools available to you! Once you become familiar with its capabilities, the possibilities are endless. Field Calculator can be used for many purposes, including:

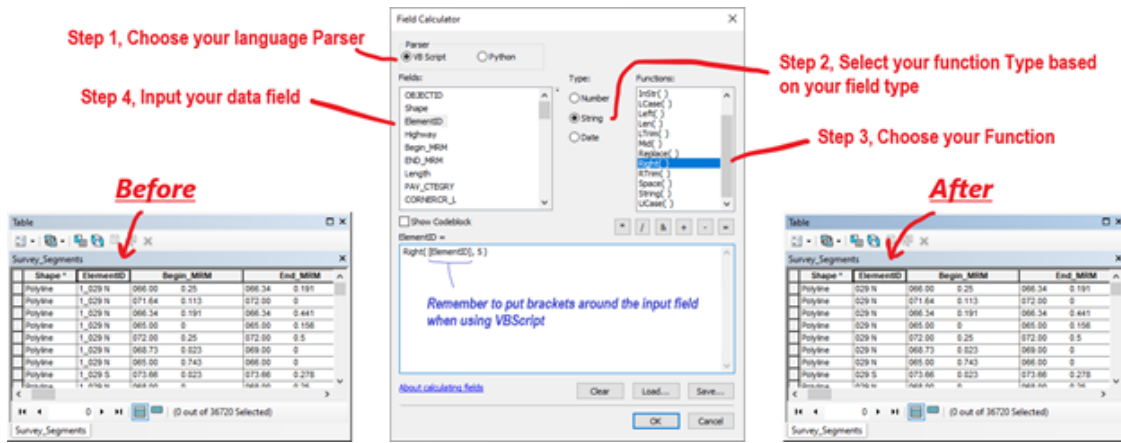
- Calculating and converting feature measurements (ex. changing units from feet to miles)
- Formatting field values (ex. rounding numbers or replacing special characters)
- Batch updating field values (ex. indicating "Yes" or "No" where a highway intersects a railroad crossing)
- Calculating field values using other fields (ex. taking the difference in traffic counts between two years)

In ArcMap, the Field Calculator has two scripting language options to choose from; VBScript by default, or Python for those who are more familiar with code. There are many help documents available online for each language.

It's important to know what type of field you're editing in the Field Calculator, because different field types need different syntaxes. A String field (also known as a text field) requires double quotations around direct text inputs, even if the input itself is a number, whereas a Number field does not. The syntax also depends on which language you choose to use in the Field Calculator. With VBScript, using an existing field as an input for a calculation should be bookended by brackets, whereas with Python it should be bookended by exclamation points.

Let's say you're given a dataset in ArcMap that includes a field with highway numbers. Unfortunately, you notice the highways have one or more preceding characters. How do we rectify this? Certainly not by manually changing each record! Instead, there is a simple VBScript command. Use the String function Right() with the field name, then specify the number of characters you want to retain from the right side. In this case, there are a total of seven characters for each record, and we want to lop off the first two to remove the "1_" so we will type in the number "5" as the number of characters from the right side that we want returned to the field.

Continued on next page:



This is just one example and one method out of many practical scenarios or processes for using Field Calculator in ArcMap to modify your data. Remember, it may seem difficult at first, but with practice this tool can be one of your greatest allies.

Please contact the GIS team in Inventory Management and Research for other common DOT-specific examples, or for help creating your own Field Calculator expression.

Research and Innovation

By Mike Behm, Director of Planning and Engineering

In October, SDDOT held a **Research Opportunities Workshop** with representation from the transportation industry, universities, suppliers, SDDOT, fellow state agencies, and the contracting industry. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss ideas for future research projects. Topics included materials/pavement, structures/foundations/drainage, operations/safety, and planning/administration.

Nearly one hundred ideas were submitted, discussed and will be refined into potential research projects in the coming months. Watch for more information to be shared internally as the projects develop. We will also share our innovative efforts through our social media channels as part of our commitment to providing excellent services.

Many thanks to **Thad Bauer, Inventory Management & Research Program Manager**, for leading this effort to advance our strategic objective of continuous improvement.





Building a Mentoring Relationship

By Kellie Beck and Brad Remmich

Mentoring relationships are very rewarding but can be challenging. The mentoring program will be beginning in November and the mentoring committee wants to provide tips to help make your mentoring relationship successful.

- **Define mentoring goals** – What do you want to achieve in the mentoring program. When you applied to be in the program, you defined 3 goals you want to accomplish in the program. These goals will be a major component in building a relationship with your mentor. Be specific when discussing these goals as this will help come up with activities achieve your goals.
- **Be committed** – The SDDOT mentoring program is a mentee driven program and you as a mentee need to be committed to getting the most out of the program. You are the driver so navigate your course to take the checkered flag.
- **Get to know each other** – Talk about your interests, personality, hobbies, family and other subjects to get to know each other. This will help you know who the other person and gain trust in each other.
- **What are your expectations** – What do you expect from each other in the program. In the beginning, you will talk about the expectations you have to make the relationship successful. Knowing the expectations will help in achieving the goals.
- **Keep discussions confidential** – The relationship is built on confidentiality and trust. Each relationship should communicate knowing what is discussed will be kept confidential. Sometimes the Mentor will not have the answer and may need to discuss with someone else. Always ask permission to share topics with other people to keep trust in the relationship.
- **Be honest** – Honesty will aid in understanding what you want to achieve in the program and will help you come up with the best exercise to help you meet your goals. Being truthful is part of the mentoring experience. Sometimes honesty can bring some tension to the relationship so if there is a differing of opinion or a misunderstanding, this needs to be discussed to work it out. The goal is always to improve yourself and achieve you mentoring goals.

There are many more attributes to make a mentoring relationship successful. These are a few very important ones that should help you through your journey. If you have any questions on the mentoring program, contact any of the committee members.

Remember: Make Time for Mentoring!



TRAINING UPDATE

Learn ~ Engage ~ Improve
November 2021

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Nov 16-17 | 1:00 pm to 12:00 | Ft. Pierre

TRAFFIC CONTROL COURSES

[ATSSA Traffic Control Technician](#)

Dec 14 | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm MT | Rapid City

[ATSSA Traffic Control Supervisor](#)

Dec 15-16 | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm MT | Rapid City

ADA CLASSES

[Common Issues with ADA](#)

Dec 2 | 9:00 am – 12:00 noon | Pierre

Nov 30 | 9:00 am – 12:00 noon | Sioux Falls

[Accommodating Pedestrians in Work Zones](#)

Dec 2 | 1:00 – 3:00 pm | Pierre

Nov 30 | 1:00 – 3:00 pm | Sioux Falls

BRIDGE CLASSES

[NHI 135047 Stream Stability & Scour at Highway Bridges for Inspectors](#)

Nov 9 | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm | Pierre

CERTIFICATIONS

(Remember to register for a session with a date, not just the event)

[Aggregates](#)

Jan. 3-5 | 10:00 am | Sioux Falls

Jan. 24-26 | 10:00 am | Aberdeen

Feb. 7-9 | 10:00 am | Pierre

Mar. 7-9 | 10:00 am | Rapid City

[Concrete Paving](#)

Dec. 14-16 | 1:00 pm | Pierre

[Earthwork](#)

Mar. 21-23 | 1:00 pm | Pierre

[Structures](#)

Feb. 14-17 | 8:00 am | Pierre

[ACI: Concrete Field Testing](#)

Dec. 14 | 8:00 am | Sioux Falls

Mar. 2 | 8:00 am | Rapid City

Mar. 24 | 8:00 am | Pierre

[Soils](#)

Jan. 5-7 | 1:00 pm | Sioux Falls

Jan. 26-28 | 1:00 pm | Aberdeen

Feb. 9-11 | 1:00 pm | Pierre

Mar. 9-11 | 1:00 pm | Rapid City

[Concrete Plants](#)

Jan. 18-20 | 1:00 pm | Pierre

[Erosion & Sediment Control](#)

Feb. 8-9 | 8:00 am | Pierre

Feb. 22-23 | 8:00 am | Rapid City

Mar. 1-2 | 8:00 am | Sioux Falls

TLN WEBINARS

[Knowledge Transfer & Succession Planning](#)

Nov. 9 & 10 | 12:30 pm – 4:00 pm & 9:00 am - 12:30pm | Zoom

[Improving Your Ability to Deal with Conflict](#)

Dec. 8 & 9 | 12:30 pm – 4:00 pm & 9:00 am - 12:30pm | Zoom

SDDOT Snowplow Naming Contest Returns

Last winter, the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) rolled out the first-ever **Name the Snowplow Contest**. Heavy snow was no match for Frosty (featured below) and 11 other cleverly named snowplows that cleared the state's highway system.

The contest was designed to engage people across the state with the SDDOT in a fun and unique way. Safety on our roadways is our number one priority, and snowplow operation awareness is vital to keeping people safe.

The contest is a fun way to demonstrate the hard work of the SDDOT snowplow operator. Without their work, none of us are traveling anywhere. The contest is ultimately a great way to raise awareness within our communities about safe winter driving behaviors!

The Second Annual Snowplow Naming Contest is open to the public Nov. 1 through Nov. 30, 2021. Contest information and the official online entry form are available on the SDDOT home page at <https://dot.sd.gov>.

We encourage South Dakotans of all ages to enter the contest with imaginative and fun snowplow names to honor our South Dakota history, traditions, and love of snow. Our SDDOT staff will official vote once the contest closes. In December, we will announce one officially named snowplow within each of the 12 SDDOT areas.

SDDOT created snowplow themed coloring sheets, crossword puzzles, and word finds for families/classrooms. Find materials at <https://dot.sd.gov/media/SDDOTKids%20ActivitiesBook.pdf>

Frosty the Snowplow to be Featured

Frosty the Snowplow (who was named in the Yankton Area last winter) visited students in Wakonda and Centerville for National Walk to School Day.

Frosty's visit was special for the kids and for the staff. Richard "Dick" Slowey recently passed away. He was a former DOT employee for the Yankton Area. His daughter is a teacher in Wakonda School.

Yankton Senior Secretary, Tanya Liska, noted, "She was so humbled, and felt like her dad was there when we brought Frosty to the school."



Frosty, and his special connections being made in the Yankton Area, will be featured in an upcoming news story! Many thanks to Yankton Area staff, **Lyle Norling, John Sackett and Tanya**, for sharing Frosty and snowplow safety and winter driving awareness information with elementary students!



SDDOT Employee News and Updates:

Promotions and Lateral Position Changes:

Justin Smith - Lead Highway Maintenance Worker (DeSmet)

Dalton Warren - Journey Transportation Tech (Mitchell)

Dave Jennings - Unit 191 Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Huron Area)

Jordan Pierce - Pavement Smoothness Technician; Materials and Surfacing (Pierre)

Kelly Hudecek - Certification/Accreditation Program Admin; Materials & Surfacing (Pierre)

Steve Gramm - Engineering Supervisor for Planning Squad; Project Development (Pierre)

Jesse Gosch - Lead Highway Maintenance Worker (Selby)

Greg Rothschadl has transitioned into the Yankton Area Engineer position. He will continue in his position as engineering supervisor until that position is filled in the near future.

New Hires:

Chukwuebuka (Chuk) Oragwu, Engineer I (Pierre)

Samuel Ballard, Journey Transportation Tech (Belle Fourche)

Alex Smith, Engineer II (Sioux Falls)

Mathew Lewis, Highway Maintenance Worker (Plankinton)

Rhett Butler, Highway Maintenance Worker (Belle Fourche)

Christopher Olson, Highway Maintenance Worker (Platte)

Timothy Carey, Journey Transportation Tech (Pierre)

Seth Hauge, Highway Maintenance Worker (Mitchell)

Christian Anderson, Highway Maintenance Worker (Junction City)

October Longevity:

Alvin "Ray" Olson, Lead Highway Maintenance Worker – 25 years (Winner Area)

Mark Rieger, Project Engineer – 45 years (Mobridge Area)

Kyle Lewis, Highway Maintenance Worker – 30 years (Belle Fourche Area)

Larry Dean, Planning Data Manager – 35 years (Central Office)

Brad Cox, Highway Maintenance Worker – 30 years (Sioux Falls Area)

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Harry Johnston, Sioux Falls Area Engineer, and his family.

Harry's parents, Ken and Sue Johnston, recently passed away. The funeral for Ken and Sue was held on Oct. 29, 2021 in Dunning, NE.



SDDOT Employee News and Updates:

Congrats to **Ray Olson, Lead Worker in the Winner Area Shop**, on 25 years of service with the SDDOT!

Ray is pictured receiving his 25 year longevity pin from **Gregg Ulmer, Highway Maintenance Supervisor**.



Tammy Williams served in various positions within the SDDOT for 38 years! No matter the position or geographic location, Tammy always demonstrated an endless passion for public service.

On behalf of the countless people positively impacted over 38 years, we congratulate Tammy on her retirement!



Mark Rieger - Engineer II from the Mobridge Area (left) receives his plaque tag for 45 years of service from **Eric Stroeder, Engineering Supervisor**.



Stephen Neumeister, Project Engineer for the Highway 46 regrade project in the Yankton Area, needed a chainsaw for an unwanted tree!



Beresford - Purple Heart Honors
SDDOT - 297th Unit, Yankton Area



Project Engineer, Matt (Rip) Rippentrop took this picture of **Rich Zacher, Custer Area Engineer**, and **Tim Wicks, Custer Area Engineering Manager**, before the pre-bid meeting for the Hot Springs urban project.





Michael VanDeWiele's band, Drop Off, earned 3rd place in the South Dakota Rock and Roll Music Association's Battle of the Bands, held in September in Sioux Falls. Five bands were selected as finalists.

The band also had the opportunity to perform during the SD Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



Michael is the son of Dean and Kelly VanDeWiele (Pierre)



Rian Edwards, Winner Area - Lead Highway Maintenance Worker, sent this photo of his niece, Chaela, ready for School Career Day in White River! Definitely, A future DOTer!



Maeve Kellie Gengler arrived Oct. 6, 2021 @ 3:22am ET, weighing 6lbs., 9.6 ounces, and 18.5 inches in length. to

Maeve is Natalya and Patrick Gengler's first child. Carol and Joel Gengler are the very proud grandparents of nine grandkids now!

Joel is the Right of Way Program Manager in the Planning & Engineering Division.