



# April 2023 Connecting the DOTs

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In April, SDDOT staff members attended the **Western States Coalition Leadership Academy** in Helena, MT. This photo was taken on the last day after presentations were held on Community Engagement.

### SDDOT Staff Members:

Front (L-R): Montana Rivard, Andrea Bierle, and Richard Ray  
Back(L-R): Michael Welch, James Hisek, David Jennings,  
Tom Kallemeyn, Patricia Devitt, and Joel Flesner



## FY24 BENEFIT OPEN ENROLLMENT

**This year in an active enrollment, meaning you must take action during Open Enrollment to actively elect or opt out of coverage by logging into Employee Space between May 1-15, 2023.**

If you do not log in before May 15, you will be enrolled in the Washington employee-only plan and your dependents will have to wait until next year's open enrollment to sign up for benefits. Dental, Vision, and other flexible benefits will not roll over.

If you have questions, please contact our Benefits Division via email at [BenefitsWebsite@state.sd.us](mailto:BenefitsWebsite@state.sd.us) or by calling 605-773-3148.



## The Secretary's Corner

Webpage link to the list of  
targeted job classes/agencies:

<https://bhr.sd.gov/adjustments/>

### Pay Increases:

As I shared with you in the **Information Interchange**, a 7% across-the-board pay increase was approved for all eligible state employees. On top of that, additional money was appropriated by the legislators, and signed by the Governor, for targeted increases for individuals in more than 200 job titles. The list of targeted jobs, for this year (and those that received additional funding last year), was created based on positions found to be 10% or more behind our market study comparisons, along with their corresponding job families.

Like last year, the targeted increases will be effective on June 9 based on the current hire date and rate of pay. It is important to remember that even if your job is on the targeted list, it does not guarantee you will receive more than a 7% pay increase. **Within the next couple weeks, you will receive a letter at home outlining your estimated pay rate as of July 1, 2023.**

This is truly wonderful news for state employees, coming on top of the 6% and targeted increases last year, and the decompression pay that was provided in FY22. If you have any questions please contact Heidi Olson our human resources representative.



## TRANSPORTATION HALL OF HONOR

*There is still time to submit your 2023 nomination!*

Think about the people you know that have  
gone over and above and beyond  
for the transportation systems in South Dakota.  
Not only good at their job, but more.



**NOMINATION** deadline: May 19 at 5 p.m. CT

Submit to: Kari Kroll [kari.kroll@state.sd.us](mailto:kari.kroll@state.sd.us)



# HEY SDDOT!

## SOMETHING SPECIAL THIS MAY FOR YOU & YOUR WELL-BEING....



Thanks to the Well-being Champion Pilot Project, SDDOT had the opportunity to partner with ComPsych Guidance Resources, our Employee Assistance Program, to provide YOU with these total well-being skill building opportunities.

### SDDOT/BHR Well-Being Champion Pilot Project

In the fall of 2022, Secretary Jundt announced that SDDOT had partnered with BHR to pilot their Well-being Champion Project. The goal is to give a first-hand connection to all things offered by the state's well-being program.

## Tuesday Tutorials

Skill Building Opportunities

Choose one or choose all!  
Just click the title to get registered.  
Each webinar is 45-60 minutes.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Being Accountable in Work & Life

Tuesday, May 2 @ 12:30 p.m. CT

Ready to build more accountability in your life to help yourself be more successful?

### How to be More Engaged at Work

Tuesday, May 9 @ 12:30 p.m. CT

Better lives through better transportation by being the best. Ready to get engaged?

### Personal and Professional Boundaries

Tuesday, May 16 @ 12:30 p.m. CT

Ready to set appropriate boundaries in your personal or professional lives?

### Being Part of a Multigenerational Team

Tuesday, May 23 @ 12:30 p.m. CT

Ready to understand the different working styles and preferences of each generation?

### Unconscious Bias

Tuesday, May 30 @ 12:30 p.m. CT

Ready to be the person who wants to understand what biases you hold as well as want to disrupt or reduce them?



**Click on any of the five titles below to register for a course!**

[Being Accountable in Work & Life](#)  
[How to be More Engaged at Work](#)

[Personal and Professional Boundaries](#)  
[Being Part of a Multigenerational Team](#)  
[Unconscious Bias](#)



## April Mentoring Minute

By Jason Baker  
and  
Matt Dorfschmidt



Congratulations to those who signed up to participate in the 2023-2024 Mentoring Program. Because, after a winter that seemed would never end, everyone could use a break to recharge their batteries, right? You may have asked yourself, “Why would I sign up to participate in something that isn’t required?” Those who made the leap and signed up understood that the Mentoring Program is an investment in yourself and your development within the Department. It has the potential to open doors and offer exposure to different things that aren’t otherwise readily available within our normal work assignments. Some experiences that are often available within the program include construction project site visits, attending a transportation commission meeting, and attending an executive team meeting.

Mentoring can be a fun and educational experience. The Mentoring Program is only bound by the imagination and is mentee driven – meaning the mentees identify goals and tasks that they would like to accomplish within the program. Mentors can help with the development of ideas and assist with the facilitation of those goals and tasks. The program emphasizes confidentiality between the mentor/mentee pair. However, including the mentee’s supervisor in the development of goals and tasks is always an option.

On April 12, 2023, mentors and mentees who registered to participate in this years’ Mentoring Program met in Fort Pierre to participate in **Speed Mentoring**. Mentors and mentees are introduced and learn about others within the program. From April 12–28, 2023, mentors and mentees identify up to five people they would like to be paired with based upon several factors, including goals, experience, impressions from the Speed Mentoring event, etc. On May 3rd, the Mentoring Committee will meet and identify mentor/mentee pairs based upon the information each submitted within the application process and those they identified as someone they would like to be paired with after the Speed Mentoring event.

After the mentoring pairs have been established, the next step is to actually start the formal mentoring process at the Kickoff Event on May 18th. At that event, all mentoring pairs will begin to identify goals and the “roadmap” for the program year. This is truly where the rubber meets the road and a great year of personal and professional development starts!

### **Mentoring Coming Events:**

**April 28, 2023** Deadline to Complete Matching Form

**May 18, 2023** Dynamic Mentoring Kick-off - 9a.m. – 4 p.m. CT Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center, Ft. Pierre

**Make time for Mentoring!**

## Drone Update - UAS Part 107 Training

By Larry Dean, Planning Data Manager, Office of Project Development

On Wednesday, April 12, 2023, SDDOT hosted a UAS Part 107 training in Pierre. The trainer was Mike Klarenbeek with Elite Unmanned. This was an 8-hour training covering the following topics to prepare to take the FAA UAS Part 107 exam: FAA rules and regulations, how to read an aeronautical chart, weather, and the types of airspace.

The following 10 SDDOT staff members attended the training:

**Surveying staff:** Mark Fox, Ronald High Bear, Andrew Harvey, Kevin Bergman, Scott Olson, Tige Thorman, and Joshua Schwartz

**Bridge Inspection staff:**

Kate Sieverding

**Communications staff:**

Taylor Brusven and Bret Mattice

The SDDOT will soon have 21 pilots with FAA Part 107 remote pilot certification.



## Reminder - Processing Purchase Order Invoices

By Patricia Devitt, Accounting Manager

When paying Purchase Order Invoices, it is **very important** to make sure that the PO's are getting paid correctly.

### **Example:**

23POxxxxxx gets paid by a direct voucher, these are the ones the secretaries can process for payment.

23Sxxxxxxx (starts with the year then a **single letter** and 7 numbers) goes to **Susan Frederick** to process for payment.

All PO's sent in for processing need to have the invoice attached to the PO, your DOT/MSA coding written on the back sheet and signed. Please do this ASAP after receiving.

Make sure you check the partial box for all invoices unless it is the last or only invoice paid on the PO. If it is the last or only invoice you would check final so Susan can make sure the PO gets closed.

**Lately, the 23Sxxxxxxx (starts with the year then a single letter and 7 numbers) PO's have been getting paid by direct voucher and not getting to Susan. This results in a lot of work at the end of the fiscal year when trying to close the PO's.**

If you have any questions, you can call Susan Frederick at 605-773-2951 or email.

# Statewide Safest Operations: Mitchell Region Operations!

Photos by Steve Weisz - Mitchell Region Operations Engineer



## Media/Public Engagement Training . . . public engagement skill development

We asked participants to share what they gained from the training.

"Being able to answer the five "W's: who, what, where, when, and why will satisfy most situations."

**Joel Flesner, Engineer III (Belle Fourche)**

"I really did enjoy the media/public speaking training. I learned several words or phrases that I use, more frequent than I thought, that could make me seem less credible than I am. I plan to take the things I learned and apply them when speaking during public engagements to be more confident, and sound more credible. **Clint Freeman, Utility Coordinator/Road Design**

"I found the answers during role-playing to be very helpful largely due to the diverse backgrounds of the participants who attended. I was able to gain some intriguing information I had not known prior to taking the course. This will prove to be handy when making individual and group presentations."

**Scott Nelson, Right of Way Specialist**

"It was a well-put-together training and I wished it was longer. The key takeaway for me was to build on current skills and to be confident (something I lack at times). Always be mindful that it's not just about the "words we say" but how to convey the story and connect with our audience. It was a great team-building exercise and wasn't based solely on communication BUT on active listening. Being an effective communicator means building lasting connections with others, reading the room, and fostering relationships with the people we serve. I wasn't overly excited about the live video exercise, but it was very effective to see myself in action. I was shocked after watching the video clip and I did all the pitfalls identified in the session (talking with hands, facial expressions, etc.) Great session!! **Jordon Kitts, Federal Funding Grant Specialist**



Despite the anxiety of role-playing unknown situations; everyone was still smiling!

Brock received speaking tips in advance from a former media training participant, the legend, Keith Winter!



(FYI . . . role playing is hard for engineers because they are forced to address situations where they **DO NOT** have **all** the details!)



Cheri was calm and collected at the podium to answer some pointed questions!

## It's More Than Just Giving, It's Good for Us!

By Kari Kroll, Well-being Champion



If you haven't guessed by now, doing what I can to help my community and the people of this state is important to me. I feel lucky to work for an organization that also values societal well-being because there are health benefits for both those giving and receiving. Let me share with you the intrinsic, extrinsic, and big picture benefits of giving and volunteering in your community.

**Intrinsic:** It can't be a surprise that according to research by the Mayo Clinic, volunteering has been proven to improve one's physical and mental health, provide a sense of purpose and teach valuable skills as well as nurture new and existing relationships. The group that answers the call to go to Feeding South Dakota here in Pierre every other week can vouch for this! We get a great workout, have loads of laughs, and help others who find themselves food challenged.

**Extrinsic:** Did you know you can earn wellness points for volunteering? Yep, 100 points to be exact. That is a \$100 that could be put into your HSA or HRA ... FREE money for medical! It is earned by recording 12 hours of volunteer hours for 50 points and you can do that twice a year.

Within SDDOT, we have our own extrinsic award annually with the Holiday Smackdown. Aberdeen Region has displayed their trophy proudly for two years now. This award is won by the region during competition in December that has the most donations collected. The last two years it has been FOOD DRIVES. But if you remember, along with the trophy, the winning region also gets to CHOOSE THE CHARITY for the following year's Holiday Smackdown. We'll have to wait and see what Aberdeen proposes for this year!!

**Big picture:** A criteria for Baldrige is societal well-being. Every time we as an organization do good for our state/community, we can report it to help increase our score/status. One of the questions asked in the Baldrige criteria is *how do your senior leaders, in concert with your workforce, contribute to improving these [key] communities?* That's EASY! It is found IN the Strategic Plan in the *Everyone Home Safe Everyday* and *Provide Excellent Service* objectives. When an opportunity arises, they are there with the rest of the workforce helping to make each event a success. Our senior leadership contributes by VALUING the need for societal well-being as part of the SDDOT culture.

**PLEASE KNOW:** Not everyone wants to or can participate in these events. That is completely understandable and expected. Please know, it is never forced or required... just an opportunity for those who are interested.

In the end, to know me is to know I am an organizer. It's my nature and I enjoy the creativity of planning our fundraising events. I've reached out to staff and staff have come to me with philanthropic organizations that interest them and HOW they'd like to participate. AND IF any of these opportunities help someone **feel a sense of purpose** OR fill them with **feelings of happiness** OR motivate them to do something within their area ... well, I call that a **win for EVERYONE!**

## National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 17 - 21, 2023)

Through National Work Zone Awareness Week, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and its partners hope to bring attention to the critical issue of road user and worker safety in and around work zones. It's important for everyone to do their part to be safe.

View news stories and staff engagement photos at [dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/of-interest/work-zone-awareness-week](https://dot.sd.gov/inside-sddot/of-interest/work-zone-awareness-week)



## Featured Construction Pages for 2023 Season Now Live on dot.sd.gov!

The featured construction project pages are filled with project information such as maps, timelines, contacts, and more. You will find the projects listed by Region and then Area. View the menu page at <https://dot.sd.gov/projects-studies/construction-info>.





Prepared by: Joyce Gottlieb, FY17 National NSTI Program Manager

## 2023 National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) The summer camp that takes you places!

SDDOT participates in the National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) in partnership with SDSU and South Dakota Mines. Students explore engineering careers in transportation during these week-long residential camps, which are sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and administered by SDDOT.

The program is fully funded by FHWA. All selected students receive scholarships to attend the NSTI camp! The scholarship covers the cost of registration, on-campus housing, food, and workshops. **The camps are completely free to the participants!**

During the one-week-long summer camp, students are introduced to different aspects of transportation engineering, such as planning, materials, and transportation modes among other topics. Students participate in hands-on lab activities in workshops, and learn from experts about the transportation sector and the problems transportation engineers solve!

The NSTI emphasizes how math is used to design transportation systems for land, air, and water. Students will get a behind-the-scenes look at how transportation systems work, along with classroom instruction, and hands-on activities in labs.

With one-on-one attention from faculty and staff, students come away understanding the career opportunities in the transportation sector and will be encouraged to pursue college degrees that prepare them for transportation-related degree programs, such as civil, environmental, and industrial engineering.

Please share this amazing opportunity with children, grandchildren, and friends who might be interested in attending.

**Both programs are open to students entering grades 9-12.  
The application deadline is May 31, 2023.**



July 9-15, 2023 or July 23-29, 2023

**For more information:**

<https://www.sdstate.edu/civil-environmental-engineering/national-summer-transportation-institute>



June 26-30, 2023

**For more information:**

<https://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Events-and-Outreach/Summer-Camps/Camp-NSTI/>



## SDDOT Employee News and Updates. . .

### 2023 James H. Jenssen Scholarship -

**DEADLINE APRIL 30, 2023!**

The **2023 James H. Jenssen Scholarships** is available for application again this year for students attending or planning to attend SDSU or SDSM&T to pursue an undergraduate degree in engineering.

This scholarship fund was established by the Jenssen family in memory of Jim Jenssen, who worked many years in a variety of positions for the South Dakota Department of Transportation. These scholarships are offered to those students demonstrating the ability to become an asset to the engineering field.

**The opportunity to apply for this scholarship is only available to family members or relatives of current or former DOT employees, as further detailed in the requirements.**

**If you have any questions regarding the scholarship opportunity, please contact Mike Behm, Director Division of Planning & Engineering. The completed application, with other required information, must be submitted to the Mike **by April 30, 2023.****

If you know of someone who may qualify for and be interested applying for these scholarships, please forward this information to them.

Access the fillable application on the Intranet site at <https://intranetdot.sd.gov/>.



### Celebrating Graduates:

If you or a family member has a milestone graduation this year, please send photos to **Julie Stevenson** **by Friday, April 28, 2023**, for the May newsletter and a video collage.

With the photo, please include the graduate's name, high school or college from which he/she is graduating, and your name/position as the DOT employee.

Here is a sample of requested information as provided by Jason Arnold:

**Robert (RT) Arnold is graduating from T.F. Riggs in Pierre.**

**He is the son of Jason & Ona Arnold. Jason is a Journeyman Transportation Tech. with Materials & Surfacing.**



## SDDOT Employee News and Updates. . .

### April 2023 Longevity:

**Brian Chase, Highway Maintenance Supervisor – 20 years (Watertown Area)**

**Dale Adams, Project Technician/Region Roving – 30 years (Watertown Area)**

**Paula Huizenga, Grants Program Engineer – 30 years (Central Office/ Office of LGA)**

**Mike Burrer, Highway Maintenance Workers – 30 years (Mobridge Area)**



**Paula Huizenga, Consultant Management Engineer**, celebrated 30 years of service with the SDDOT.

Paula is pictured receiving her plaque and longevity pin from **Administration Program Manager, Joanne Hight**.



**Dawson Lewis, Business Intelligence Specialist**, celebrated 15 years with the state of South Dakota in April.

He has been with SDDOT for six months. **Craig Smith, Director of Operations**, presented Dawson with his longevity pin.

## SDDOT Employee News and Updates . . .

**Information/photos submitted by  
Ken Payne, Mitchell Area Highway  
Maintenance Supervisor**

In January, the kindergarten class at Dakota Christian made cupcakes and thank you notes for the Plankinton and Platte SDDOT crews. Last week, the SDDOT team went to the school to say thank you for the treats!

**In the pictures are Bob Dyk from Platte and Bruce VanZee, Dale Kunkel, Mathew Lewis, and Austin Taylor from Plankinton.**

The group photo is of the kindergarten class with the guys. The K-2 classes had the chance to honk the horns and ask questions about plowing snow.



**The crew on  
the day that  
the cupcakes  
were delivered!**



## SDDOT Employee News and Updates. . .

### April New Hires:

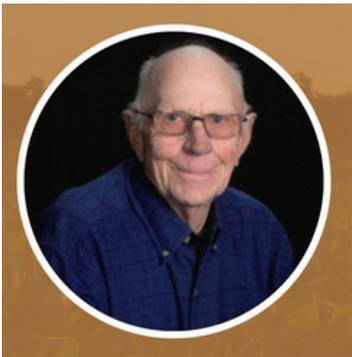
Daniel Cooper, Region Operations Tech, Rapid City  
 Madison Kluge, Wildlife/Wetland Biologist, Pierre  
 Dean Kirschenmann, Partsroom Technician, Rapid City  
 Michael Noonan, Highway Construction Project Engineer, Sioux Falls  
 Justin Simpson, Highway Maintenance Worker, Huron  
 Ben Kaiser, Journey Transportation Technician, Rapid City  
 Caleb Huettl, Highway Maintenance Worker, Aberdeen  
 James Blaha, Highway Maintenance Worker, Buffalo  
 Cassandra Myers, Structural Engineer, Sioux Falls  
 Andrew Ferris, Highway Maintenance Worker, Wall



### April Promotions & Lateral Position Changes:

Alyssa Taylor, Region Traffic Engineer, Aberdeen  
 Patrick Wellner, Bridge Design Engineer Manager, Pierre  
 Brad Richards, Right-Of-Way Acquisition & Relocation Manager, Pierre  
 Lexi Lassel, Maintenance Specialist, Pierre  
 Dylan Riedl, Wildlife/Wetland Biologist, Pierre (Transfer from GFP)  
 Cody Herrboldt, Highway Maintenance Worker, Sioux Falls  
 Allen Brown, Highway Maintenance Worker, Menno

### In Sympathy . . .



Sympathy is extended to **Andy Griese, Aircraft Mechanic - Pierre**, on the recent death of his grandfather. Larry G. Griese, Gettysburg, passed away on Saturday, April 8, 2023.

Funeral services were held on Friday, April 14, 2023, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Gettysburg. Burial followed in the church cemetery with military honors.

Sympathy is extended to **Rayleen Rageth, Senior Secretary, Central Office**, on the recent death of her grandmother. Abbie Rathbun passed away on Wednesday, April 19, 2023.

Mass of Christian Burial is Sat., April 29, 2023, at St. John's Catholic Church in Fort Pierre, with interment to follow at Scotty Philip Cemetery in Fort Pierre.

