

Above and Beyond Awards

Several District 6 employees received an Above and Beyond Award recently.

Work Zone Safety

Congratulations to the following people for receiving an Above and Beyond Award for Performance Excellence and Teamwork Excellence - **Jim Roberts (D6), Ethan Ihlenfeld (D6), Jeff Rieder (D6), Mike Schweyen (D6), Mike Dougherty (D6), Kyle Lake (D6), Joe Bruer (OCIC) and Michelle Moser (OTE)**. They were nominated by Jean Wallace, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer. The reasons for being nominated are below.

Minnesota's Towards Zero Deaths (TZD) mission is to promote a culture where traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable. TZD includes using data and best practices in the areas of education, engineering, enforcement and emergency medical and trauma services.

Construction work zones present unique TZD challenges in ensuring safety to workers and motorists, while accomplishing the construction work in a timely manner. To meet our mission, addressing these challenges often requires a team approach. On the state highway system, specific challenges including high traffic volumes, high freight volumes, higher speeds, lane closures, distraction, and users who don't drive these roadways everyday increase the risk of serious and fatal crashes. Developing traffic control strategies requires using various combinations of signing, striping, intelligent work zones, and communication strategies. At times, rapid adjustments are needed due to changing conditions.

This award recognizes the team from District 6, OCIC, and OTE: you quickly organized to share data and expertise, make recommendations, and implement changes to work zones in District 6. Specifically, your quick work was evident in effectively deploying larger, more prominent digital message signs in advance of the merge point of the work zone before a holiday weekend. You then worked further with the contractor to ensure a rapid delivery and installation of temporary rumble strips as soon as you had the material in hand. Each of you had important roles in this team process to quickly determine the right equipment needs, procure and negotiate items, deploy, and ensure their function.

Thank you to each of you for continuing to make work zone safety a top priority and for rapidly making adjustments to work zones in District 6. Each of you tapped your experience, innovation, knowledge and abilities to work together in providing additional safety measures, signaling to the public that safety is our core value. I am especially proud of your ability to quickly deploy both additional and new safety measures in these work zones to reduce the risk of serious injury and fatal crashes, and I express my deep gratitude for your great teamwork and your passion and dedication to safety. You kept the objective in mind to not only ensure the safety

of the public, but also the safety of MnDOT workers and contractors while also ensuring that our safety equipment is functioning and effective.

Thank you for being champions of safety!

Noise Wall Inquiry

Congratulations to **David Tsang**, Traffic Operations Engineer, for receiving an Above and Beyond Award for Public Service Excellence. He was nominated by Mike Dougherty, Director of Communications and Public Engagement, and Heather Lukes, Assistant District Engineer – Program Support. The reason for being nominated is below.

Thank you, David, for going above and beyond in assisting and listening to Albert Lea residents who were concerned about highway noise at their home near I-90 and I-35. You took time to drive 66 miles to their home and talk with them, listen and take some noise measurements, and then explain some of the challenges in mitigating highway noise and enforcing noise ordinances. Your time, attention and expertise helped the residents feel validated and understand the difficulty of mitigating highway noise. You did leave them with some options and your report back to the Freeborn County Engineer, who passed along their initial concerns, showed a high standard of professionalism from MnDOT. Your extra effort to be in-person and someone who listens and discusses the issue, provided a quality interaction between the public and MnDOT.

This is just one example of how you consistently show you care what our customers think. Thank-you for taking the time to care and listen.

Wabasha Truck Station Underground Electrical Service

Congratulations to the following Wabasha truck station crew members for receiving an Above and Beyond Award for Teamwork Excellence - **Chad Rasmussen, Kevin Bergan, Mike Schouweiler and Terry Timm**. They were nominated by Nate Nord, M.O.R. Electrician. The reason for being nominated is below.

Thank you, Chad, Kevin, Mike and Terry, for your excellent teamwork at the Wabasha Truck Station on Oct. 2-3, 2023, when you assisted with the replacement of underground electrical service. There was a lot of work facing Nate Nord, the District 6 electrician, and you recognized how you could each help and ensure the project was done safely and in a timely manner. You set up the necessary utility location work, grabbed a shovel and worked in the trench, ran conduit and glued it together, and installed warning ribbon. It involved a 180-foot trench, wiring with new conduit that need connecting, hand digging around utility lines and installing warning ribbon. The teamwork was a reminder to your nominator of why he enjoys working at MnDOT.