

COUNTRY ROADS & CITY STREETS

Community Spotlight

BUCKHANNON'S SAFETY PROGRAM

Terry Hough and Kim Carr, WV LTAP



The City of Buckhannon, West Virginia is the sole incorporated city, and the county seat, of Upshur County. Nestled along the Buckhannon River with a population of approximately 5,500 residents, the City of Buckhannon is home to West Virginia Wesleyan College, a private institution. The City is also host to the annual spring Strawberry Festival, an eight-day event that includes parades, a carnival, pageants, concerts, and more. These are just a couple of things that make-up the City of Buckhannon.

The City of Buckhannon's public works divisions are also a vital part of this community. Without public works in any city, we wouldn't have garbage pick-ups, or safe and easily

accessible water to drink, or roads to drive on and sidewalks to walk on, or parks to visit. The work that public works employees do can be dangerous. These employees are working in all kinds of weather, from freezing cold to hot and humid heat. They work on or near roadways with traffic driving close-by, and they might even be in trenches as they replace a water line.

SAFETY PROGRAM

Two years ago, the City of Buckhannon began a concerted safety effort. They had two goals:



WV Local Technical Assistance Program

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WV Local Technical Assistance Program



From L to R: Tommy Rolenson (Water), Terry Hawkins (Waste), Cody Tenney (Sanitary), Fred Langbein (Street)

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received coming from a fellow employee rather than a mandate from a supervisor.

2. Employees are not driven by budgetary constraints as much as supervisory personnel. This allows them to think outside of the box.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Quarterly meetings are held between all of the safety coordinators to discuss upcoming training opportunities, along with any other safety-related topics. Incidents are discussed regularly

in order to determine how to address and avoid repeat issues.

City administration has put their full support behind the initiative. Each safety coordinator is given two to three hours per week to work on safety-specific projects, and they receive an increase in their base wages to compensate for the additional responsibilities.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

Has this program been successful? According to Jerry Arnold and other city officials, the unequivocal answer is YES, for several reasons.

1. Empowers the coordinators.

The safety coordinators work with the supervisors to help implement needed changes. They also see the differences they are making to the overall safety of the Public Works Department, and insurance rates have decreased.

2. Acceptance from the employees.

The program has been well-received by the employees. While the employees respect the coordinators as “one of their own” they are more willing to accept and implement the proposed changes. Participation at the mandatory safety meetings is at 95%.

3. Buy-in from City Administration.

Within the last six months, the total claims in loss was lowered to \$400.00. Although this may not reflect the yearly losses, it is indicative of the overall success of the program.

1. To reduce employee-related accidents
Keeping employees injury-free is a win-win for everyone.

2. To lower liability insurance and worker compensation claims

The city leaders decided to make achieving these goals the duty of one employee – the safety coordinator – of each of the public works divisions: Street, Water, Solid Waste, and Sanitary. They conduct weekly training meetings in each of their divisions, usually safety tailgate talks that are anywhere from 15 minutes to 45 minutes.

FROM THE GROUND UP APPROACH

An employee from each division was chosen, with the recommendation of the supervisor, to head up the safety program for their division. Each division safety coordinator then researches different training opportunities from various sources and works to bring the training to the employees. These include opportunities from insurance companies, WV LTAP, and other related industry training. They are also working at ways to reduce repetitive accidents such as slip, trip, and falls. (For instance, slipping on a ladder or falling off a garbage truck).

There were multiple reasons why this ground up approach was used, including the following:

1. The safety coordinator is a peer of the other employees. The city leaders thought suggestions regarding safety would be better

Community Spotlight

BUCKHANNON'S SIDEWALK REPAIR PROGRAM

Monica Zalaznik, *My Buckhannon*



Public Works Director Jerry Arnold and Street Department Supervisor Brad Hawkins

Did you know maintaining the sidewalk in front of a home in Buckhannon is the homeowner's responsibility? The good news is, the city street department is here to help.

Since 2009, the City of Buckhannon and the Consolidated Public Works Board have a program that has been helping residents repair their sidewalks to specifications and at a lower cost than hiring an outside contractor.

Director of Public Works Jerry Arnold said this program was put in place to help alleviate the costs of maintaining the sidewalks in front of their homes for homeowners.

"We came up with a program where the street department does all the labor," Arnold said. "The only thing the homeowner pays for is the materials and the concrete itself. We've had a lot of participation in the program."

Arnold said the program started when Ordinance 193 passed, which stated "It shall be the duty and responsibility of all owners of real estate to maintain in good repair all sidewalks abutting or adjoining their premises, including curbs." Arnold said people can ask a contractor to fix the sidewalk, but they are looking at a 50-70 percent price increase. "Even if you got a contractor to do the sidewalk, it would have to be to the specifications (of the city) because everything that we do has to be ADA-compliant now, and that can be extensive for some, depending on the location," Arnold said.

There is currently a waiting list for someone to get their sidewalks finished. Street Department Supervisor Brad Hawkins said the program has been popular. "I'm currently working on two sidewalks that have been in the queue for two years," Hawkins said. "We'll be working on one sidewalk and then the whole neighborhood wants to get their sidewalks fixed. I love it when that happens." He said part of the wait time is due to other major infrastructure projects the city street department is in the midst of completing.

Anyone who wants to sign up for the program can go to City Hall, 70 E. Main St., and fill out an application. After that, Hawkins will go out and give an estimate to the property owner; then, the owner can decide if they want to proceed with the program. "The actual work itself only takes about a couple days," Hawkins said. "Sometimes, weather plays a factor, but usually it doesn't take very long."

Hawkins said the cost varies, depending on sidewalk size. "Right now, the cost of concrete is about \$170 a yard," Hawkins said. "A normal, average household or residence is usually between 50 and 60 feet long, so you're only looking at roughly about 4 yards of concrete, and so it's about a \$500 to \$1,000 investment." Arnold said investing in fixing the sidewalk is less expensive than making a claim through homeowners insurance. "It is your responsibility," Arnold said. "If someone were to trip and get hurt on that sidewalk, that can go against your homeowners insurance, not to mention just having a safe, aesthetically pleasing sidewalk in front of your house."

Do you have a program or project you would like to share with others? The WV LTAP would love to do a community spotlight highlighting your public works department!

*Please give us a call or send an email to Kim or Ashley.
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ROAD FACTS

Pedestrians and Drivers: Whose turn is it?

Confusion among drivers and pedestrians regarding who has the right-of-way, which simply means who has the legal right to go first, is one reason pedestrian and driver crashes happen. Just as drivers do not always have the right-of-way, neither do pedestrians. Knowing and following traffic rules is essential! *West Virginia Code Chapter 17 C. Traffic Regulations and Laws of the Road* is the law for pedestrians and drivers in West Virginia. <http://www.wvlegislature.gov/wvcode/code.cfm?chap=17C&art=1>

Crossing at Intersections with Traffic Signals – (WV State Code §17C-10 and §17C-3-6)



Pedestrians: If a pedestrian signal is present, **wait for the WALK indication before beginning to cross in the designated crosswalk.** In most instances, the signal is timed to allow pedestrians to cross one street.

Once the flashing don't walk indication appears, wait and do not enter the intersection. This indication means there is only enough time remaining to finish crossing.

If the traffic signal does not have a pedestrian signal, cross only when drivers going the same direction have the green light. **Be alert for drivers that may be making right turns at the same time you are attempting to cross the roadway.**

Drivers: Pedestrians have priority to cross during the conditions listed above. It is important to be alert to pedestrians crossing. The most common potential conflict is right-turns. **Never make a right turn without first checking for pedestrians about to enter, or already in, the crosswalk.**

Crosswalks without Traffic Signals – (WV State Code §17C-10-2)

Pedestrians: At designated crosswalks without traffic signals, it is essential to first find a safe gap in traffic to enter the nearest lane. While crossing, stay alert and ensure that it is safe to enter the next lane. It is never acceptable to enter the crosswalk if the driver does not have sufficient time to identify a pedestrian and stop.

Drivers: Pedestrians are permitted to enter the road at any designated crosswalk away from a traffic signal as long as there is a safe gap in traffic. It is imperative to be alert at all times, especially at these marked crossing locations. Drivers need to yield whenever a pedestrian has entered the crosswalk. Also, never pass a vehicle that is stopped for a pedestrian in the crosswalk.

No Marked Crosswalk between Intersections – (WV State Code §17C-10-3)

Pedestrians: Pedestrians crossing a roadway mid-block (between intersections) at a location without designated crosswalks need to remember that drivers always have the right-of-way at these locations.

Drivers: It is always important to be alert and avoid distractions when driving.

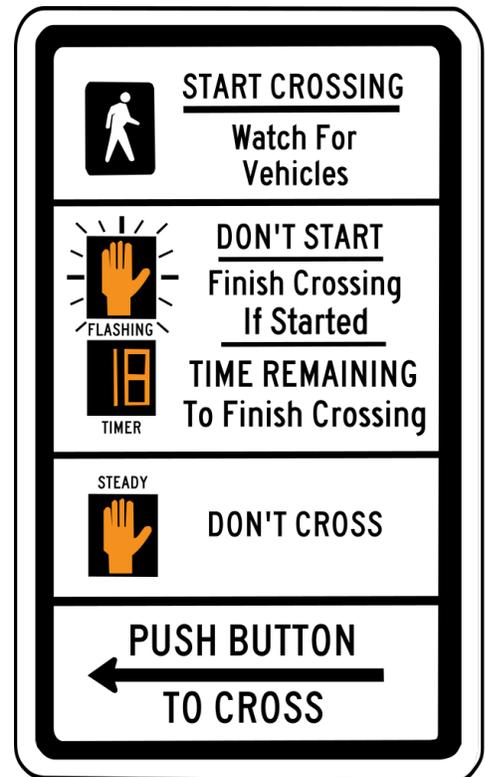
Road Facts has been designed to help provide useful tips and facts regarding roadway issues. The Road Facts series can be downloaded from the WV LTAP website (wvltap.wvu.edu) as a PDF or Microsoft Publisher file. The Publisher files are formatted so agencies can add their individual contact information if desired. The WV LTAP does ask that the main text not be changed or altered without permission. Agencies are encouraged to post these information sheets on their webpage, distribute printed copies to elected officials and citizens, send out in mailings, etc. The WV LTAP staff welcomes your suggestions for new topics and will continue adding new sheets as they become available.

Pedestrian and Driver Tips

Pedestrians



- Cross at designated and marked crosswalks.
- Look both ways before crossing the roadway.
- Don't assume a driver sees you.
- Be alert when walking. Don't text and walk!
- Don't wear earbuds or headphones while walking; this will help you hear what is going on around you.
- Don't jump in front of an oncoming vehicle, even if there is a marked crosswalk.
- If a pedestrian signal is present, wait for the WALK indication before beginning to cross in the designated crosswalk.
- Once the flashing don't walk indication appears, WAIT and do not enter the intersection.
- At night, wear retroreflective materials and/or carry a flashlight.
- When a crosswalk or intersection is not available, try to find a well-lit location to cross. Wait for a gap in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely. Also, watch for traffic while crossing.
- Make eye contact with the driver before entering the roadway. It's possible that you might be in a vehicle's blind spot. The driver might be distracted. There are many factors that can impair a driver.



Drivers



- Be alert! Watch for pedestrians everywhere and be especially attentive at night or in bad weather conditions.
- Don't assume a pedestrian sees you.
- Put the phone down. Don't text and drive!
- Don't wear earbuds or headphones while driving; this will help you hear what is going on around you.
- Slow down and be prepared to stop when approaching a crosswalk.
- Never pass a vehicle that is stopped for a pedestrian in the crosswalk.
- Drivers need to exercise care and yield their right-of-way if they come upon a blind or vision impaired pedestrian crossing the street with a white or metal cane, with or without a red tip, and/or the pedestrian is being led by a guide dog.
- Follow the speed limit, and other traffic laws. You never know where pedestrians will be present.

WV NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The WV LTAP conducted a needs assessment survey from August 2017 through March 2018. We gained valuable information from the 349 individuals who completed our survey, and a huge thank you if you were one of the 349! These responses can help us continue to fulfill our mission, while also better understanding the needs of West Virginia state and local agency employees who are tasked with taking care of our roads and communities.

The assessment was available as an online form and as a printed form. The newsletter, electronic communication, and the website were used to market the online version of the needs assessment. Paper copies were handed out during WV LTAP training events. This needs assessment is just one method used to gather information. We encourage you to contact us at any time with training requests, suggestions, critiques, or general comments. Our ultimate goal is to have a program that meets your needs.

A FEW OF THE THINGS WE LEARNED

- The municipal responses composed 18% of the sample size.
- Responses were received from a wide variety of job classifications, providing a diverse set of responses.
- Attending traditional classroom training over webinars and self-paced training is strongly preferred (85%). Additionally, the respondents strongly indicated they feel they learn better in traditional training face-to-face sessions (89%).

Regarding hands-on training,

- 44% of both state and municipality respondents would like hands-on work zone setup training
- 56% of local agencies are interested in backhoe operation and safety and 46% would like mini-excavator operation and safety training.



The data indicated that nearly two out of three respondents are unfamiliar with our electronic-only newsletter, **Road & Street Speak**; we need to do a better job of marketing this communication tool. If you are not currently getting this through email, please let us know! You can subscribe on our website or contact Ashley at 304-293-9930 or acolli15@mail.wvu.edu. This is a separate newsletter and we often advertise upcoming training events and other resources. You don't want to miss it!

The **WV LTAP website** is also a valuable resource you should check out regularly! In fact, if you would like to read the final report of this needs assessment, it is available on our website.

The WV LTAP staff also want to remind you that we are available to come to your community to offer **technical assistance** on many different issues, such as drainage, proper pothole patching, intersection safety, road conditions, and so on. Please contact us if your local agency could use some technical assistance.

If you didn't have an opportunity to complete the needs assessment, but you have feedback you would like to share, please contact us! We strive to have a program that meets your needs, and the only way to do that is to have two-way communication!

2019 BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP COMPETITION – *SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY BY JUNE 7!*



Have You Built a Better Mousetrap?

Have you or one of your coworkers recently built an innovative gadget or developed an improved way to accomplish an everyday task? If either of these apply, you've built a better mousetrap, and now is the time to show

off your creativity and help other agencies solve problems by submitting an entry in the WV LTAP's Build a Better Mousetrap Competition.

Your entry can be anything from the development of tools or gadgets to equipment modifications to processes that increase safety, reduce costs, improve efficiency, or improve the quality of transportation. The purpose of

this competition is to collect and disseminate real world examples of best practices, tips from the field, and assist in the transfer of technology.

Submit Your Entry

To enter the competition, please visit the WV LTAP website, wvltap.wvu.edu. If you would prefer to submit your entry by paper copy, please contact Kim at kim.carr@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-9924. **Competition deadline has been extended to June 7, 2019.**

We encourage you to also include photos and a video clip that showcases your project. Videos can be short clips taken on your smartphone or computer tablet. A WV LTAP staff member is available to help with your write-up or to take photos, should you want.

TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES



The WV LTAP hosted six different load securement classes March 26 to March 28, 2019 in Buckhannon, WV. Forty-five public works employees from local agencies and ten employees from the West Virginia Parkways Authority attended this training. Local agency attendees were from: City of Beckley, City of Bridgeport, City of Buckhannon, City of Elkins, City of Fairmont, City of Stonewood, City of Wheeling, Morgantown Utility Board, Town of Fayetteville, and Town of Moorefield. We were excited to offer this combination classroom/hands-on training on this important topic, as we know how vital proper load securement is to anyone responsible for transporting equipment or materials. Watch your email for the next edition of *Road & Street Speak*, which will include more information on load securement.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events, and please visit wvltap.wvu.edu for more information.

- **Control of Silica Dust** one-day class in two locations.
June 18 - WVDOT-D6 Headquarters, Moundsville, West Virginia • June 19 - Shepherd University - Martinsburg, West Virginia
- **Snow and Ice Control Workshop** - October 2, 2019 • Summersville, West Virginia
- **Roadway Management Conference** - October 21-23, 2019 • Ellicott City, Maryland

COUNTRY ROADS & CITY STREETS

A newsletter of the WV LTAP



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Country Roads & City Streets is published three to four times per year. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information that is beneficial to decision makers, elected officials, and roadway construction, maintenance, and management personnel.

The material and opinions included in this newsletter are those of the West Virginia LTAP and do not necessarily reflect the views of FHWA or the WVDOT. Every effort has been made to ensure the integrity and accuracy of both original and borrowed material. However, the West Virginia LTAP does not assume responsibility for any information that is found to be incorrect.

THE MISSION

The mission of the West Virginia LTAP is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers.

To help achieve this mission, training, demonstrations, technical assistance, and resource materials are provided.

Mark Your Calendar for the 2019 Roadway Management Conference!

October 21-23, 2019
Turf Valley Resort
Ellicott City, MD



Attendee Registration Fee
\$150 until August 30, 2019
\$175 after August 30, 2019



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