

TRANSPORTER

New Jersey Department of Transportation – Through the Years: 1970s – 1980s

The 1970s

Leading the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) through its second decade were Commissioners John C. Kohl (1970 – 1974), Alan Sagner (1974 – 1977) and Russell Mullen (1977 – 1978). In 1978, Louis J.



Gambaccini

not an intersection. This signal provided gaps in the northbound traffic to improve the traffic flow of the circle.

A first for NJDOT occurred in 1973 when the Department hired the first female maintenance worker who worked with the Somerville Maintenance Yard. One year later, NJDOT hired the first all-woman maintenance crew, assigned to the new I-295 Rest Area, located a few miles north of the Delaware Memorial Bridge

in Salem County. This new facility, the first fully-equipped rest area on the New Jersey State highway system, featured an information center, rest rooms, a picnic grove, parking for cars and trucks and sanitary and potable water facilities for recreational vehicles.

Also in 1974, the first bikeway sponsored by New Jersey was constructed. The 2.5 mile Trenton bikeway, built in Stacy and Cadwalader Parks, was connected by the Lenape Avenue pedestrian bridge over Route 29.

The 1980s

As in the 1970s, the 1980s brought many firsts to transportation, one of those being the first female

commissioner. In 1981, the NJDOT welcomed its first female Commissioner, Anne P. Canby and then

again in 1986, Hazel Frank Gluck became the second female NJDOT Commissioner. Other Commissioners in this decade were John



Canby

P. Sheridan, Jr. (1982 – 1985), Roger A. Bodman (1985 – 1986)

and Robert Innocenzi (1989 – 1990).



Gluck

A pivotal point in NJDOT's history came in 1984 when Governor Tom Kean signed the Transportation Trust Fund Authority Act which gave NJDOT the first reliable, stable funding source since the Constitution was changed in 1948 to eliminate the dedication of funds to transportation projects.

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Public Transportation Act of 1979

Gambaccini became Commissioner and was instrumental in getting the Public Transportation Act of 1979 signed into law which established the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT) as a separate public agency providing commuter bus and rail services. In addition to this significant milestone for transportation in New Jersey, there were many 'firsts' for the Department during the 1970s as well.

In 1972, NJDOT installed the first 'remote' traffic signal in the United States on Route 206, about a quarter mile from the Whitehorse Circle in Hamilton, where there is



Transportation Trust Fund Authority Act

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Other milestones in the 1980s include:

1980:

- The first noise barriers built in New Jersey were on I-676 in Camden.
- The third Interstate built through New Jersey was completed when the last 3.6 miles of the 18-mile I-280 was opened.
- The first High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in New Jersey was opened on the Garden State Parkway from Exit 129 to Exit 141 (12 miles).

1982:

- Arlene Butler Feldman, became the first female to hold the position of Director of the Division of Aeronautics in New Jersey and in the nation.

1984:

- First conceived by NJDOT planners in 1969 shortly after the creation of NJDOT, the re-electrified 67-mile Morris and Essex rail line was opened.

1986:

- The 5.5 mile missing link of I-78 was opened, completing the interstate from the Holland Tunnel to Still Valley near the Pennsylvania border. It included more environmental safeguards than any other road construction ever undertaken in New Jersey, including the first national wildlife bridges.

1987:

- The state's first employee child care center opens, DOT TOT, at the NJDOT Headquarters in Ewing.

1989:

- A fire burned for three days causing severe damage to I-78 near Newark, a main route to New York City and Newark Liberty International Airport. NJDOT was able to fix and reopen the highway in eight days.
- The final 13-mile section of the Route 55 Freeway opened in Gloucester County, connecting Route 42 to Route 47. This project required one of the largest right of way acquisitions in NJDOT history - 700 parcels of land - and the removal of three landfills.



Morris and Essex rail line



DOT TOT



I-78 fire

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Spaghetti Dinner Raises Funds for Injured Employee



On July 22, 2016, NJDOT employee, **Keli McCatharn**, was seriously injured when a civilian pickup truck collided with an NJDOT safety truck near Exit 3 on I-78 in Greenwich Township. The safety truck was securing a crew of NJDOT personnel who were on location conducting routine tree trimming and maintenance work in the center median.

Keli is a member of the Bloomsbury Highway Operations Crew 336 and works as a Highway Operation Technician. She has been

with the Department since 1988 and performs maintenance in her designated area to ensure the roads are clean and safe for motorists.

Keli was released from rehabilitation on August 28. She walked into a spaghetti dinner fundraiser organized by her family that night. 200 people attended the successful event helping to raise approximately \$1,500. Keli is doing very well and her entire family is grateful for all the support.

If you wish to contribute or for more information, please contact **Sue Dempsey** 732-625-4345. Her family has set up a GoFundMe page to assist with her rehabilitation at <https://www.gofundme.com/2gnfvf8?ssid=751076459&pos=1>.

NJDOT Works with FHWA to Promote Every Day Counts Initiative

In 2009, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) launched Every Day Counts (EDC) in cooperation with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to speed up the delivery of highway projects and to address the challenges presented by limited budgets. EDC is a state-based model that identifies and deploys proven but underutilized innovations to shorten the project delivery process, enhance roadway safety, reduce congestion and improve environmental sustainability.

Through the EDC model, FHWA works with state and local transportation agencies and industry stakeholders to identify a new collection of innovations to champion every two years. Innovations are selected collaboratively by stakeholders, taking into consideration market readiness, impacts, benefits and ease of adoption of the innovation.

After selecting the EDC technologies for deployment, transportation leaders from across the country gather at regional summits to discuss the innovations and share best practices. These summits begin the process for states, local public agencies and Federal Lands Highway Divisions to focus on the innovations that make the most sense for their unique program needs, establish performance goals and commit to finding opportunities to get those innovations into practice over the next two years.

"Facilitated by the FHWA Every Day Counts initiative, New Jersey is taking advantage of an opportunity to use the great innovative minds, not only within NJDOT, but also those from local governments, consulting and contracting industry, and academia to rapidly implement new technologies and practices

that will save time and money," NJDOT Assistant Commissioner Capital Investment, Planning and Grant Administration **David Kuhn** said.

Throughout the two-year deployment cycle, specifications, best practices, lessons learned and relevant data are shared among stakeholders through case studies, webinars and demonstration projects. The result is rapid technology transfer and accelerated deployment of innovation across the nation.

"The Every Day Counts Initiative and the New Jersey State Transportation Innovation Council provides a platform to highlight the innovative work we are doing at a state and national level," Kuhn said. "It is a real opportunity to solidify NJDOT's credibility as a progressive transportation agency."



Commissioner Hammer Names John Case NJDOT Chief-of-Staff

On September 29, 2016, Commissioner **Richard T. Hammer** named **John Case** as the Department's new Chief-of-Staff. John previously served as Assistant Commissioner of Government and Community Relations. Prior to joining the NJDOT John served as a Regional Director in Governor Christie's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs where he worked with elected officials at all levels of government. Mr. Case has a Bachelor's Degree from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

We had a chance to talk to John about his experience at the Department and what he hopes to accomplish in his new role.

What has been your proudest accomplishment at the Department?

My greatest accomplishment was being a (small) part of the Route 35 reconstruction project. It's something I've been involved with since my first day here in 2013 and really helped introduce me to a lot of folks across various units in the department.

What do you think makes NJDOT unique from other departments?

The DOT is unique because of the wide range of projects



and issues we manage. One day you're in a planning meeting with representatives from 10 towns going over traffic control for the upcoming I-495 project and the next you're working with a group of mariners to make sure we're getting their state channel dredged all the while fielding calls from the public and trying to help get a section of guide rail replaced in front of someone's house. It never gets old because it's something new every day.

What do you hope to accomplish in your role as Chief-of-Staff?

As Chief-of-Staff I want to make sure the Department runs as efficiently as possible while identifying and solving issues before they get to the Commissioner's desk. With the renewal of the Transportation

Trust Fund, we will focus on ensuring that projects get back to work in a timely manner and the work gets completed as planned. This is definitely an exciting time to be sitting in this office.

What do you think NJDOT does best?

There is a ton of great work being done every single day at the Department. It's hard to pick just one thing and not feel like I'm offending any of my colleagues. But, if you're forcing me to pick one, I would probably say winter operations. Last year we got almost two feet of snow on Saturday and come Monday morning the roads were clear and the state was open for business – I think that tells you everything you need to know about the job **Andrew Tunnard** and his team does for every winter event.

What would you change?

I would replace the Dunkin' Donuts with Wawa coffee.

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your free time?

When I'm not working I enjoy playing golf, reading and spending time with my family – especially my nephew Sean.



Planning to Retire?

If you are planning to retire, the DOT Retirees Association (DOTRA) is always looking for more members. Visit its website at www.DOTRA.org



Left to right, top row: **Brian Boyer, Melissa Boyer, Jim Schmidt, Aundrea Schmidt, John Bystrycki, Ron Holmes, Lisa Voorhees, Kelly Hutchinson, John Howell, Steph Chandler, Sunita Devi, Kim Stuhltrager, Becky Rouze, Chase Loreti, Jean Loreti, Joe Loreti** Left to right, bottom row: **Christina Partyka, Tom Partyka, Andrew Tunnard**

NJDOT Staff and Family Volunteer for Beach Sweep Clean Up

A group of NJDOT volunteers and some of their family members participated in Beach Sweep 2016, an annual event to clean the New Jersey Shore from Sandy Hook to Cape May. Kim Stuhltrager

and Stephanie Chandler from Operations were the primary organizers of the NJDOT effort. The group met at Seaside Heights on October 22 and picked up about eight bags of trash. The

event, sponsored by Clean Ocean Action, began in 1985 and is one of the longest running cleanups in the world. Here is a link to their organization:

www.cleanoceanaction.org

2016 Annual Golf Outing Another Success

The annual NJDOT golf outing was held on September 9th. Pictured from left to right are this year's low gross winners (-9) Bob Clelland, Bill Henderson, Frank McCombs, and Ian Erndl. The event was held at Mountain View Golf Course, and was a great success. Next year's outing is again scheduled for the first Friday after Labor Day, September 8th at Mountain View Golf Course. Anyone interested in participating can contact John Zim at 609-530-2314.

