

# Way to Go

## ROCKIN' THE AMARGOSA VALLEY



Southern Nevada travelers will find a newly-landscaped Amargosa Valley rest stop thanks to hard-working NDOT crew 123.

The crew spent five weeks lining the U.S. 95 Beatty-area rest area with decorative white, gold, brown and red rock to beautify and prevent weeds. Larger rocks, donated along with the smaller rock by D&H Mining, were placed around walkways and trees as accent.

"We decided to do a desert landscape and make it more appealing to tourists," Crew Supervisor Brad Hunt explained of the travelers who often stop at the rest area while journeying through the rural southern Nevada area.

## BENEFITTING THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS PROGRAM

The Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) provides training on state employees' health insurance benefits. To avoid meeting room rental fees, many Reno-area trainings are held at the NDOT District 2 offices, where Administrative Assistant Roy Terrell is there to help.

*"I would like to express my appreciation to Roy for the many ways he supports me in conducting classes," PEBP Training Officer Patti Santos wrote. "He is my 'go-to' person for everything from paper to temperature control."*

## NEW SNACK BAR

NDOT Carson City headquarters offers a snack bar run through Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation Bureau of the Blind and Visually Impaired's Business Enterprises. As the snack bar began undergoing renovations in early 2008, many NDOT employees assisted, including Information Services' Dan Berger who helped retrofit the sitting benches.

*"When I asked Dan Berger if he would take on the project, he only asked two things, 'what do you want done and when do you want it completed,'" Business Enterprises chief Katherine Yonkers said.*



**Welcome**  
Chad Collier, Reno

**Thanks for Serving**  
Tommy Swanger, 30 years, Winnemucca



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## NEVADA'S FIRST DESIGN-BUILD PROJECT UNDERWAY



North Corridor Constructors Project Manager Joe Schroeder (left) showcases the project to Governor Jim Gibbons (center) and Assemblyman Joe Hardy (right) in a tour also headed by NDOT Director Susan Martinovich and Project Manager Jeff Hale.

Nevada's first design-build road project, NDOT's Interstate 15 widening project, has made major strides in bringing innovative transportation solutions to ever-growing Las Vegas with an expedited construction schedule and recent tour by Governor Jim Gibbons.

Using the design-build principle of designing final phases of construction as earlier phases are being built, the approximately \$240 million I-15 design-build project will widen I-15 from the U.S. 95 spaghetti bowl intersection to Craig Road, reconstruct interchange ramps and bridges, and build auxiliary lanes and a new connector road. Use of the design-build method is projected to shorten construction by two years.

In mid-summer, one lane was closed in each direction to allow expedited construction. NDOT worked with the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada to reprogram arterial road stoplights for easier, quicker detours by motorists wishing to bypass the construction area. The lane closures are scheduled to last one year.

"We provided detailed detour information to help the public make decisions about alternate routes and avoiding I-15 through the area," NDOT Project Manager Jeff Hale explained. "The traffic delays have been less than expected."

Governor Gibbons recently toured the project, proclaiming it an example of a creatively-managed project.

"Knowing we're going to get it finished two years earlier than normal means, for that inconvenience and for their patience, (drivers) are going to have a much better freeway system on I-15," Governor Gibbons said.

The 5.5-mile stretch of interstate to be improved is traveled by approximately 170,000 vehicles daily. Las Vegas' I-15 corridor is also the lifeline for over 75 percent of southern Nevada goods movements.

The project is expected to complete in late 2010. More information is available at [www.i15project.com](http://www.i15project.com) or [www.nevadadot.com](http://www.nevadadot.com).

## NEW NDOT ASSISTANT DIRECTORS NAMED



*Kent Cooper (right) and Tracy Larkin-Thomason (below) have stepped into new assistant director roles.*

NDOT has new engineering and planning oversight as Kent Cooper takes the reins as the Department's new assistant director of engineering and Tracy Larkin-Thomason is named assistant director of planning.

In his new role, Cooper oversees approximately 340 engineering, right-of-way, environmental, safety, location and project management professionals responsible for the design, safety and other oversight of state road projects and assets.

Starting his NDOT career as a transportation analyst trainee in 1985, Cooper advanced to administer the Capital Improvement Program, plan adoption, and metropolitan planning organization coordination as program development manager. He then served as assistant director of planning for more than seven years, where he helped guide Nevada transportation by overseeing the Department's State Transportation

Improvement Program and Short- and Long-Range Plan.

"He also has been a staunch advocate for the Department in securing legislation and funding at the local, state and federal levels," NDOT Deputy Director Scott Rawlins added.

"As the fastest-growing state in the nation, Nevada is facing incredible transportation challenges," Cooper said. "I look forward to working with the outstanding staff of NDOT, and with our partners, in fulfilling our transportation needs."

Cooper, a University of Nevada, Reno mechanical engineering graduate, took the position in early August after former Assistant Director of Engineering Jim Souba retired from state service.

Stepping into Cooper's previous assistant director of planning position, Tracy Larkin-Thomason now oversees NDOT research, traffic information, intermodal, program development, roadway systems and operations analysis sections. Her duties include overseeing the department's major corridor studies and state rail and statewide multimodal plans, as well as the state transportation enhancement, bicycle, pedestrian and research and transit programs.

Larkin-Thomason joined NDOT in 1987 as engineer technician trainee before being promoted through the engineering technician series. Beginning in 1994, she rose through the Bridge Division to staff III engineer. In 1997, she transferred to NDOT District II and was named assistant district engineer for maintenance in 2002, where she oversaw northwestern Nevada maintenance activities.

She is a University of Nevada, Reno graduate with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering.



## NDOT ASSISTS PYRAMID LAKE MUSEUM RENOVATIONS



*From left, Linda McCauley and Ben Aleck of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Bill Schulz of NDOT Architecture, Ralph Burns of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Dave Manning, Kent Cooper, Sydnie Schlachta and Shane Cocking of NDOT, along with Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's Carla Eben, gather on the new parking lot in front of the Pyramid Lake Visitor Center and Museum.*

Pyramid Lake Museum visitors are enjoying new informational kiosks and paved parking lot thanks to National Scenic Byways grant improvements coordinated through NDOT.

The two new outside kiosks provide U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service information on the historic lake's numerous wildlife species. The museum's newly-paved 15,000-square-foot parking lot is encased by decorative concrete perimeters that complement the museum's Native American design.

"The old gravel parking lot made it difficult for some of our visitors to get into the museum," Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe collections manager and museum director Ben Aleck said. "This is a big improvement in giving everyone access to the museum."

The improvements were funded by a \$100,000 matching grant, with 80 percent provided by the Federal Highway Administration and 20 percent by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. NDOT oversaw grant funding and construction of the project.

The Pyramid Lake Scenic Byway runs approximately 30 miles, following State Routes 445 and 446 down the lake's west side before wrapping around the lake's east side on State Route 447.

"Nevada has 14 scenic byways," NDOT Scenic Byways Coordinator Sydnie Schlachta said. "The Pyramid Lake byway is an amazing example of how state roads can exhibit Nevada's history and beauty."

More information on Nevada's scenic byways is available by searching "Nevada scenic byways" at [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org) or [www.nevadadot.com](http://www.nevadadot.com).



### SAFETY SIGNS

*Plan for safety. Ask yourself "What if...." and be prepared.*