

# ALDOT SPRING & SUMMER 2022 Inside Lane

## ALDOT Planning Unprecedented Series of Mega-Projects

ALDOT is entering an era where mega-projects will dot the landscape more than any time since the construction of the interstate highway system. The biggest of these mega-projects is the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway. There are also several large Rebuild Alabama projects under construction and in the pipeline. "We are entering a period of unprecedented projects and opportunities," Chief Engineer Ed Austin said of the current landscape. "The sheer number of large projects, in part due to funding from the Rebuild Alabama Act, and the size of some of these projects, is unique for any DOT. It also creates an era of significant career opportunities not just for engineers, but across the entire ALDOT workforce."

### The Largest Mega-Project

A revised \$2.7 billion Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project is moving forward.

The Mobile and Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organizations on July 27, 2022, in separate unanimous votes, added the project to their respective Transportation Improvement Programs. Adding the project to their TIPs was a critical step allowing eligibility for federal funding.

Under the newest plan, the Wallace and Bankhead Tunnels, the Africatown Bridge and the Spanish Fort Causeway would be toll-free. Only new infrastructure—a 215-foot-tall Mobile River Bridge and the 7.5-mile new Bayway—would be tolled.

MPO leaders in December 2021 requested ALDOT develop a project around a framework that guaranteed a low monthly toll rate and a \$2.50 one-way toll for passenger vehicles. ALDOT proposed a \$40 monthly rate for frequent commuters (passenger vehicles) or a \$2.50 toll per crossing, both of which would be available using an "ALGO Pass," in

the form of a window decal or transponder-type device. Rates would be higher for those without an ALGO Pass, but still less than was proposed in 2019.

The next steps are reviewing consultant proposals for the project under a Progressive Design-Build concept, additional traffic and revenue studies, and a re-evaluation of the existing environmental impact study. The project could be under construction as soon as 2024.

*Continued on page 3*



*Rendering of the Proposed Mobile River Bridge Above*

ALDOT partnered with the City of Birmingham to develop a multi-recreational facility under I-59/20 called City Walk.  
*cover image above*

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# Fresh Start to Safety

The beginning of a new season is a great time to make a fresh start, especially when it comes to safety. First, begin with your **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**. Now is the time to freshen up your PPE—Out with the OLD and in with the NEW.

PPE is equipment that will protect workers against health or safety risks on the job. PPE includes items such as hard-hats or protective helmets, eye protection, hearing protection, high-visible clothing, safety footwear, etc.

## Head Protection

Hard-hats or helmets are common in ALDOT construction/maintenance sites and bridge inspections. They are designed to protect against flying or falling objects that would otherwise impact or penetrate the workers. They should be well-fitted and should be replaced every five years.

## Face and Eye Protection

Safety goggles, safety glasses, and full-face shields give the protection against flying objects that can be seen on construction and maintenance projects. Employees should replace them when these become inoperable or damaged.

## Hearing Protection

Protecting your hearing is extremely important and something many take for granted. Always wear the ear protection designed for the job you are performing.

## High-Visible Clothing

The ability to be seen is critical for worker safety, especially for those working around moving vehicles and equipment—from construction sites to roadways to equipment shops. Review ALDOT Guidelines of Operation section 1-5 to make sure you are wearing the appropriate safety garments. Replace faded or damaged clothing that is no longer reflective.

Secondly, check your **other equipment**. Truck beds, arrow boards, and traffic control devices need your attention as well.

## Truck beds

Cleaning out your truck beds can help prevent slips, trips, and falls. It will allow you to re-organize for better access to your equipment. You may possibly find items that have been misplaced. In addition, it may help you to discover items you may need to help you perform your job better.

## Arrow Boards

Over time lights stop working and need to be replaced. Control panels become inoperable and may need to be returned to the manufacturer. Tires wear overtime and lose air during the winter months. All of these items become hazardous during emergency events. Now is the time to take care of these items so that when the need arises, this tool is available for use.

## Traffic Control Devices

Cones, drums, and temporary signs are used daily. Over time these items become worn down from being run over by the traveling public and our equipment. They collect dirt and dust from our many different operations. Go through and remove and replace the old worn out devices with new ones. Wipe down your signs (roll-a-flex) to get the grime off. You will be amazed at how just a little TLC can make such a difference in your safety.

Most importantly, let us clean up our practices and procedures for when we are working near or in the roadway. **Advanced warning** is a critical component to provide the traveling public notice of your presence in or near the travel way. Placing temporary traffic control devices around your work zone is not as effective without proper devices in place leading up to the work zone. Proper protection of your work zone starts in advance of where you are working. Making sure you have the right PPE and other safety equipment and that it is in good condition is important. Ultimately, working in a safe manner gives us the best opportunity for everyone to go home safely every day.

*If you are interested in having a safety topic covered in the Inside Lane newsletter, please send an email to [employeeinfo@dot.state.al.us](mailto:employeeinfo@dot.state.al.us).*

## ALDOT Planning Unprecedented Series of Mega-Projects *Continued from cover*

### Providing Interstate Connectivity

Several other major projects are addressing 17 Alabama counties currently without interstate access, a specific priority for new funds under the Rebuild Alabama Act.

The **Gordo Bypass** (US-82) will complete a four-lane connection to give Pickens County its first access to an interstate (I-20/59 in Tuscaloosa); it will also complete a four-lane route from Tuscaloosa to the Mississippi state line. Completion remains about three years away.

Finalizing a Design-Build team for the **West Alabama Corridor** is expected by this fall. This project was announced last year by Gov. Kay Ivey to provide a four-lane north-south highway from Mobile to Tuscaloosa, something envisioned for generations in West Alabama. This project includes design-bid-build projects to complete the Linden Bypass in Marengo County, while the majority of the additional lanes (a northern section and a southern section) will be achieved under the Progressive Design-Build concept. Construction is expected to be underway in 2023.

The **West Central Alabama Highway** is another project announced by Gov. Ivey as a priority. It will provide Fayette County interstate connectivity to I-22. This project is in the early stages of planning, with public involvement yet to be scheduled.

Southwest of Dothan, a four-lane project along **SR-52** from Malvern to east of Hartford, will provide Geneva County a connection to US-231 which connects to I-85 to the north and I-10 to the south. This project will be scheduled for bid in phases by summer 2023.



Gov. Ivey announcing the West Central Alabama Highway Above

## Going the Extra Mile for Safety



**Go The Extra Mile For Safety**

ALDOT has developed a training and certification course that is focused on creating and maintaining a culture of worker safety and proper deployment of temporary traffic control devices. Improving the culture of safety at ALDOT begins with a mindset that we work together to make sure we all go home safely at the end of each day. The class is available for all ALDOT maintenance personnel involved with scheduling maintenance activities and those who actively work within a temporary work zone.

The course includes five separate modules that have been created to improve the culture of worker safety. After finishing the course, ALDOT employees will have learned

about work zone dos and don'ts and work zone traffic control devices.

As dedicated maintenance employees do their job each day at ALDOT, doing that work safely and making sure that crews have the tools and processes to work safely is of great importance. To help bring attention to safety and keep the importance of safety top of mind, the new ALDOT ALSafe, Go the Extra Mile for Safety brand will be used. Starting with the new ALDOT Work Zone Safety Culture training/certification course, you will begin seeing references to ALSafe. As we introduce other measures to strengthen the culture of safety, we will do it with the commitment to Go the Extra Mile for Safety.

## ALDOT Adds New Logo

With last year's redesigned ALDOT website came the need for an ALDOT logo that would work well on digital devices and present a modern, updated look for the agency. Now, ALDOT is rolling out this new logo, called the wordmark logo, for use on print and online marketing materials and in cases where the ALDOT seal logo would not be clear enough to read.

The new wordmark logo serves as an official logo without conflicting with or replacing the formal ALDOT seal. The ALDOT seal should still be used for official ALDOT business, such as on business cards, letterhead, contracts and other legal agreements.

To access digital files of approved versions of the wordmark logo and to review the ALDOT Graphic Standards for guidance on how to properly use the logo, go to the Media & Community Relations Bureau page of the ALDOT intranet.

For any questions about logo usage, email [logo@dot.state.al.us](mailto:logo@dot.state.al.us).



## 2022 Legislative Session Wrap Up

The 2022 session of the Alabama legislature saw several bills passed that will affect ALDOT operations and employees. Most notably, Governor Kay Ivey signed bills that helped modernize ALDOT bond payments, clarified lane width requirements for trailers, further aided in the quick clearance of crashes, and created the Alabama Airport Economic and Infrastructure Program.

A piece of legislation was passed that will have a direct impact on not only ALDOT personnel but all state employees. Senate Bill 101, sponsored by Sen. Linda Coleman-Madison, provides a 4 percent salary increase for all state employees, beginning Oct. 1, 2022.

Senate Bill 67, sponsored by Sen. Clyde Chambliss, removed a requirement to secure with state funds, from first proceeds to the Public Road and Bridge Fund, in the amount of federal funds to make payments on GARVEE Bonds. This frees up state funds for matching federal funds through the fiscal year rather than withholding those funds. This modernizes how ALDOT deals with bond payments in today's market using GARVEE Bonds.

Other bills passed that impact ALDOT operations were Senate Bill 154 from Sen. Randy Price and House Bill 504 from Rep. Philip Pettus. SB 154 clarified language in state law to ensure that an 8 ½ foot trailer is legal in any width lane of highway. Previous law stipulated these trailers were only legal in a 12 foot lane. HB 504 authorized local law enforcement, in addition to ALDOT and State Troopers, to move fender-bender crashes from roadways. This change will greatly aid in keeping traffic moving on busy roadways.

Another piece of legislation, Senate Bill 83 created the Alabama Airport Economic and Infrastructure Program. This sets the stage for a new grant program administered in much the same manner as the current Airport Development grant program and could help provide much needed funds to Alabama airports.



Crash Facts 2020 Publication Above

## Crash Facts 2020

### *Why Did More People Die on Alabama Roads During the COVID-19 Pandemic?*

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across Alabama in 2020, the number of vehicles on the road dropped significantly compared to the previous year. As traffic counts decreased, so did the number of crashes. However, the number of people dying in vehicle crashes increased.

Many states around the nation had a similar experience, which led to the question of why were more people dying on our roads. After looking at the primary contributing factors in these deadly crashes, speed was the factor that contributed to most of the crash fatalities.

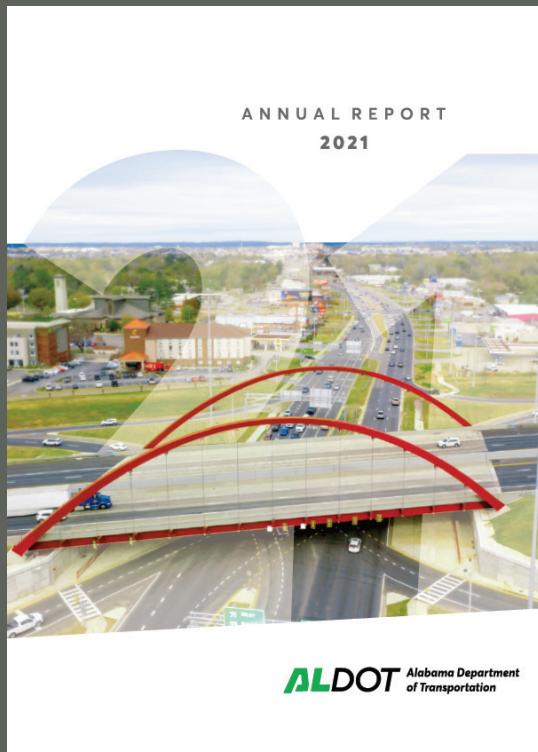
Open roads without traffic congestion seemed to be an invitation to drive

faster. What drivers didn't consider was how the severity of a crash increases as the rate of speed increases.

In 2020, vehicle crashes in Alabama were down by almost 16 percent, when compared with 2019. For that same period, crash fatalities were up slightly.

These crash stats and others for 2020 can be found in the *2020 Alabama Crash Facts* publication now available on the Drive Safe Alabama website in the News Hub section.

*Crash Facts* is a resource created by ALDOT that motorists can use to identify ways to stay safe on the road. Through its Drive Safe Alabama public information campaign, ALDOT is working to create a culture where drivers put safety first.



## ALDOT Annual Report 2021

If you are looking for ALDOT's most recent annual report for fiscal year 2021, please visit the publications page of the ALDOT website.

The annual report is a good place to reference for different facts and figures about the department. If you would like a hard copy of the report, please email Haley Ansley at [ansleyh@dot.state.al.us](mailto:ansleyh@dot.state.al.us).

ALDOT 2021 Annual Report Cover Left

# ALDOT Employees Go Orange for Work Zone Awareness Week



As part of National Work Zone Awareness Week, employees across ALDOT were encouraged to wear orange to show their support.

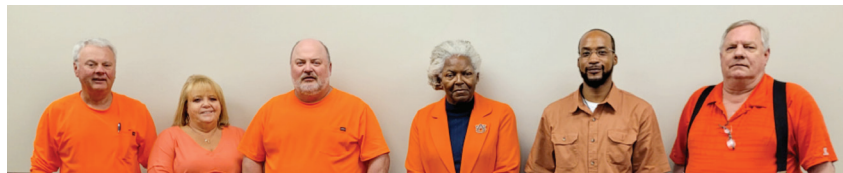
As ALDOT employees, we have a greater responsibility to be safe drivers, especially when it's often the lives of our co-workers that are on the line as they build and maintain the roads and bridges we all need.

ALDOT employees, Melissa Jordan Harlow and Xavier Davis helped promote safe work zones on billboards that were placed around the state.



Work Zone Safety Awareness Billboards featuring ALDOT's Melissa Jordan Harlow and Xavier Davis *above left*

ALDOT offices around the state Go Orange for Work Zone Awareness *collage below*



# 25-Year Awards

The individuals below were honored as recipients of AASHTO's 25-Year Award of Meritorious Service.



*top to bottom* John Cooper presents service awards to: Eric J. Christie, Virgil M. Clifton, Matthew J. Ericksen, Donald C. Powell

*not pictured* Shannon G. Golden



## Welcome Center Winner for the 4th Quarter

### I-59 DeKalb County Welcome Center

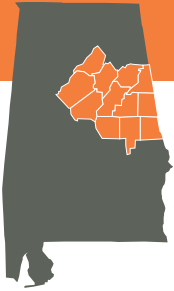
*left to right* Curtis Lowe, David Blanks, Jamey James, Alicia James, Larry Johnson, George Conner



## Rest Area Winner for the 4th Quarter

### US-82 Chilton County Rest Area

*left to right* Sky Hallman, Jeremy Grooms, Tanika Horton, Dylan Powers, George Conner



## City Walk Welcomes in the World Games



As Birmingham hosted the 2022 World Games, ALDOT opened the City Walk BHAM project where visitors from around the world experienced a unique mix of art, music, recreational sports, skate park, water features and more.

During breaks between World Games events, guests could explore vendor booths and food trucks. This allowed local businesses to share a taste of Birmingham with visitors from all around the world.

In the weeks leading up to the World Games, a great amount of work went in to preparing City Walk. Contractors planted greenery and installed turf and decorative pavers, benches, and picnic tables. They also finished construction of public bathrooms, pavilions, playgrounds and other elements all through the 31-acre site, which encompasses ten city blocks under the newly rebuilt elevated section of I-59/20 through downtown Birmingham.

City Walk stretches from 15th Street North, near the city's Civil Rights District and Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, to 25th Street North at the Uptown entertainment district and Protective Stadium.

In addition to serving as the public plaza for the World Games, and a new public amenity all on its own, City Walk will provide pedestrian connectivity to multiple downtown attractions, from the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute to the Birmingham Museum of Art, historic Linn Park and the 20th Street North "Birmingham Green"—the city's central north-south spine with its array of restaurants, shops, and hotels.



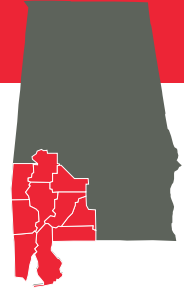
Entertainment & Volunteers for the World Games *top*

Vendor Booths for the World Games *middle*

Completed City Walk Skate Park *bottom*







# ALDOT Paves the Way for a Cure

The Southwest Region has been busy making strides and paving the way for a cure!

The ALDOT Southwest Region Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (MSABC) Team raffled, bowled, golfed, and walked their way to raising over \$8,000 for the campaign. One of the team highlights included a fall golf tournament at the Rock Creek Golf Club hosted by Mobile Area construction staff members Jen Eubanks, Jim Tabor and Chase Chitwood. With the help of MSABC Team Leader Cassandra Hansberry (Mobile Area IT) and Mary Jordan (District 91) on the fundraising and support side, it was a total success, raising close to \$4,300 of the overall total! The golf tournament brought ALDOT employees, friends, family, and fellow industry folks together for a great day of golf, fun, and fellowship—all while supporting a great cause that has affected so many lives. Local businesses not only participated but sponsored holes and helped the team surpass the fundraising goals set the previous two years. The team also hosted a shirt fundraising campaign coordinated by Mobile Pre-Construction staff members Chris Blackwood, Virginia Johnson and Cindy Wheeler, which raised over \$800. The shirt, designed by

Chris Blackwood himself, led to this year's campaign slogan **“ALDOT Helps Pave the Way for a Cure!”**

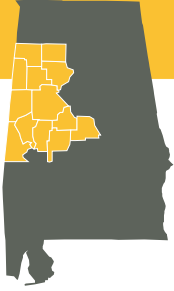
Through generous donations from many local businesses and fellow industry leaders, the team was able to raffle items such as restaurant gift cards, gift baskets, golf merchandise, hotel stays, and boot camp packages. These donations allowed for multiple opportunities to push fundraising to the next level. Each Southwest Region District and Area office was led by its own team leaders to support the cause, with additional team help on several other fundraising efforts from Cassandra Hansberry, Rita Williams and Alicia Baxley (Mobile Area) to round out the campaign. Grove Hill Area office raised \$1,000. Their fundraiser included a t-shirt campaign and other activities hosted by Erika Abston. For more than two decades, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer has united communities in the fight against this deadly disease, and the employees, and team members of the Southwest Region are proud to come together to organize, support and partner with each other to help pave the way for a cure!



*left to right* Rita Williams, Dennis Gibson, Doris Davis, Chase Chitwood, and Cassandra Hansberry *top*

Beverly Mosely *bottom*

## West Central Region News

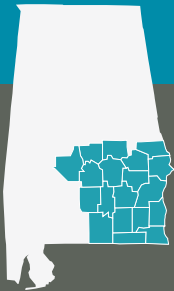


# ALDOT to Connect Fayette to Interstate

Gov. Ivey announcing the project that will connect Fayette to I-22. She has called this project crucial for the economic development of West Central Alabama. This project, which is fully funded by the Rebuild Alabama Act, will make SR-171 a divided four-lane highway.



## Southeast Region News



# Being in the Top Five

ALDOT's Montgomery Regional Traffic Management Center works 24/7 to maintain incident-free roadways by communicating in real time with commuters and local authorities.

The Montgomery RTMC's hard work was recently recognized as having the top four ATS Operators out of 71 in the state for 2021.

**1<sup>st</sup> JENNA ANDREWS**  
*with 6,343 events*

**2<sup>nd</sup> DUDLEY LUCKIE**  
*with 4,864 events*

**3<sup>rd</sup> KAITLYN BARRON**  
*with 4,242 events*

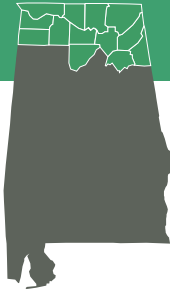
**4<sup>th</sup> MICHELLE WOMACK**  
*with 3,868 events*

Commuters in the Southeast Region should feel safer on the roadways with such dedicated operators working for them.

Michelle Womack said, "I am honored to be named in the top five of the state. It is nice to be recognized for the work we do."

Montgomery RTMC operators are hardworking individuals and having the number one operator in the state two years running is an achievement they hope to continue. "These awards show how well we work together as a team. We may have received individual awards, but it was the whole Montgomery TMC working together," said Jenna Andrews.

The Montgomery RTMC covers the Southeast Region of the state, which includes 19 counties, and Chambers



## ALDOT Moves Gadsden Eastern Connector Forward

The Rebuild Alabama Act has breathed new life into a once-dead dream for the City of Gadsden.

At a May 4 special meeting of the Gadsden-Etowah Metropolitan Planning Organization, Transportation Director John Cooper announced plans to move forward with the long-awaited Eastern Connector project using state funds that are now available thanks to Rebuild Alabama. Preliminary engineering, right-of-way,

utilities, and construction are estimated to total \$65 million.

Cooper also set ambitious goals for ALDOT and its consultants; the director wants right-of-way acquisition to begin this fall and the project ready to let by late 2023 or early 2024. Cooper told the large audience gathered for the meeting at the Venue at Coosa Landing that they could be driving on the Eastern Connector within five years.

That is a relatively short time frame, considering how long some Gadsden residents and

officials have been waiting to see a link constructed between I-759, the roughly five-mile spur from I-59 to US-411, and the US- 278 and US-431 corridors on the east side of the city.

“For the whole 16 years I’ve been mayor, extending I-759 has been one of my major infrastructure goals,” said Gadsden Mayor Sherman Guyton, who took the opportunity to present Cooper with the key to the city.

The Eastern Connector will not technically extend the interstate.

But it will construct about two miles of divided four-lane highway with curb and gutter connecting SR-759, a short highway at the terminus of I-759, to the US-278 and US-431 intersection.

In 2001, the Department presented the public with a proposal to extend I-759. However, the project never received funding, and was put on hold in 2013. Following the 2019 passage of the Rebuild Alabama Act, the project finally has a way forward.

County between I-85 and US-29. The ATS Operators utilize resources such as Twitter, Broadcastify, CAD systems, police scanners, Google Maps, Waze, and ALDOT employee communications to confirm incidents and relay this information to the public through ALGO Traffic. Montgomery RTMC has also worked hard to create strong relationships with regional dispatch centers, police and fire departments through meetings and mutual support.

The goal of the Montgomery RTMC is to continue to provide the safest roadways for commuters. Communication and staying abreast on current incidents in the Southeast Region are just a few of the ways the Montgomery RTMC ATS Operators are working hard to keep our roadways safe.



Montgomery RTMC ATS Operators Kaitlyn Barron, Jenna Andrews, Michelle Womack *Above*



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*INSIDE LANE is a newsletter published for the employees of the Alabama Department of Transportation. Publication is managed by the Media & Community Relations Bureau in conjunction with ALDOT's Regions and Bureaus.*

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## In Memoriam

James D. Brown proudly served ALDOT for 52 years before retiring on April 30. Brown died on May 8, but left a legacy within the department. His thoughtfulness, intelligence and empathetic nature made him an ideal leader.

Brown began work with ALDOT in 1970. He served as assistant project engineer, project engineer and district engineer. In 1979, he became the division maintenance engineer before serving as the construction and materials engineer. Brown accepted the chief engineer position in 1994 and was appointed division engineer in 1996. He was selected as the West Central Region engineer in 2014, where he served until retirement.