A Buzzworthy Rescue
VDOT Richmond District employees and hobbyist beekeepers Bruce McFadden, Melvin Morrison and Butch Sirry worked together to safely relocate two hives of honey bees discovered during routine tree trimming operations on Huguenot Trail/Route 711 in Powhatan County.
The hives were taken to the Huguenot Beekeepers Association in Powhatan, saving the approximately 120,000 bees from extermination.
“It is rewarding to use our hobby on the job to save bees’ lives,” Sirry said. “We were able to make the roadsides safer for the public, keep our workers safe and better the environment by rescuing the honey bees.”

There are 26 SMART SCALE projects currently under construction, and 11 of these are planned for completion within fiscal year 2018. 23 (88 percent) of the 26 projects are progressing on time, while 25 (96 percent) are forecasted to be delivered within budget. Source: SMART SCALE Dashboard

There are 321 SMART SCALE projects currently being developed; 251 (78 percent) are progressing on schedule and 293 (91 percent) are tracking on-budget. 27 of the 321 projects are scheduled to be awarded within fiscal year 2018. 23 (88 percent) of the 26 projects are being awarded before the end of 2018, and 13 of those 27 projects have been awarded.

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COMMISSIONER’S MESSAGE
It is a tremendous honor to present this report as commissioner of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). It has only been a month since I assumed this role, but having served at VDOT before, I have witnessed firsthand the outstanding people and work this agency puts forward.

VDOT continues to be a leader in innovative solutions. On Dec. 4, the Interstate 66 Inside the Beltway Express Lanes – the nation’s first peak-period, all-lanes-dynamically-tolled roadway – opened to traffic. With toll prices that change based on real-time traffic volumes in order to manage demand and keep traffic moving, the lanes offer new travel choices that move more people on I-66 with greater speed and reliability.

Earlier, in November, a groundbreaking was held for the I-66 Outside the Beltway Express Lanes Project, which will deliver about $3.7 billion worth of transportation improvements benefitting Northern Virginia’s I-66 Corridor.

In December, VDOT formally began the process of seeking a private-sector partner to deliver the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel Expansion Project. This project, which will be the largest infrastructure project to date in Virginia and one of the largest in the nation, will build another bridge-tunnel and widen the four-lane segments of Interstate 64 in Hampton and Norfolk to bring much needed congestion relief to Hampton Roads.

As we continue building and improving Virginia’s infrastructure, safety is our number one priority. That includes making travel safer for the millions who rely on our transportation system. This quarter’s Big Picture focuses on traffic safety. We and our transportation partners are working to mitigate an increase in fatalities and serious injuries on Virginia’s roads. The 2017 - 2021 Strategic Highway Safety Plan sets goals such as a 2 percent per year reduction in fatalities and a 5 percent per year reduction in serious injuries. The Strategic Highway Safety Plan Executive Committee was chartered to address these and other safety challenges in the commonwealth.

Stephen C. Brich, P.E.
VDOT Commissioner

THE BIG PICTURE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY
From calendar year 2008 (CY08) through preliminary CY17*, the number of traffic crashes dropped by over 7,800 (6 percent).

From CY08 to CY16, the number of serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes dropped by over 7,800 (6 percent). A preliminary estimate for CY17* is not yet available.

Once on a downward trend, the number of fatalities have been increasing over the last three years. Preliminary results indicate that there were 844 fatalities in CY17*.

As of February 15, 2018

* Preliminary results provided by VDOT Traffic Engineering Division as of February 5, 2018. Final CY17 results, including serious injuries, should be available in March 2018 Sources: VDOT Traffic Engineering
**Major Projects**

I-95/Temple Avenue Interchange: Following approximately 22 months of construction, the design-build project to replace the signalized intersection at Interstate 95 and Temple Avenue in Colonial Heights with a roundabout and reconfigure the interchange ramps was completed on time and within the $20 million budget. It is one of the first interstate interchanges to include a roundabout in the commonwealth.

Route 460 Southgate Connector: A new diverging diamond interchange at Route 460 and Southgate Drive near the entrance to the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg opened to traffic on Dec. 14. The interchange replaced the only traffic signal for a 37-mile segment of Route 460 between Interstate 81 and the Town of Narrows.

First Segment of I-64 Widening: A completion ceremony for the first segment of a project to widen Interstate 64 on the Virginia Peninsula was held Dec. 1, in Newport News. The project included a new 12-foot travel lane and 12-foot shoulder in each direction along the nearly six-mile Segment I corridor.

I-95 Express Lanes Southern Terminus: A two-mile extension of Interstate 95 Express Lanes in Stafford County, including new northbound and southbound ramps, was completed and opened ahead of schedule on Oct. 31. The $50 million project extends Express Lanes beyond the flyover ramp where they previously ended, just north of Route 610 (Garrisonville Road).

**Awards and Honors**

National Roadway Safety Award: VDOT was honored by the Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation with a 2017 National Roadway Safety Award for its implementation of an “instant roundabout” that reduced crashes at Poland Road and Edgewater Street in Loudoun County by 89 percent and provided an inexpensive, immediate safety benefit while a more permanent solution was studied.

Engineering Excellence Awards: The American Council of Engineering Companies of Virginia selected the Route 501 James River replacement bridge project in Amherst and Bedford counties to receive a Merit Award in the 2018 Engineering Excellence Awards.

PRSA Summit Award: The Salem District Communications team received a Silver Summit Award from the Public Relations Society of America Blue Ridge Chapter for media relations related to opening the new Interstate 581 Valley View diverging-diamond interchange.