

NE DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

EYE ON III

JANUARY 2024

DRONE PICTURES FROM MIKE MCGINN



Humphrey Yard



West Point Yard



Schuyler Yard

MISSION STATEMENT

To build, maintain and operate a system of highways in Northeast Nebraska as approved by the legislature, suitable for the continuous, safe and efficient movement of people.

VISION STATEMENT

To continue to be the leading District in building, maintaining and operating our highway system, meeting and exceeding all the expectations of the traveling public, supported by a staff of well trained, diversified employees using the state of the art technology. We also provide a fulfilling work environment.



"SCOOP THERE IT IS"

On Wednesday Dec 6th, Dean Guenther, Lee Reuss, and Kevin Ames took "Scoop There It Is" to Norfolk's Christ Lutheran School for Show "n" Tell. Mrs. Debbie Schmidt, and her 1st grade class were all excited to be up close to the equipment we work with every day. They have been learning about carriers, and discussing the jobs people do to help the communities we live in. Kevin discussed with them what a Construction Technician does, being 1st graders they weren't that interested in seeing blueprints though. The real excitement, and questions came when Dean, and Lee discussed their job with the kids. Every question was answered, no matter how many different ways it was asked. Then they took some time for the kids to set up in the truck, and look at all the controls. After asking him several times what Lee liked least about his job, the kids all decided that changing "Scoop There It Is" oil was in fact Lee's least liked part of his job.





JOY OF THE SEASON

THE DISTRICT 3 WAYNE MAINTENANCE OFFICE GOT TO HEAR HOLIDAY SONGS PLAYED BY THE ST. MARY'S 5TH AND 6TH GRADE BAND.



WARREN RACELY RETIREMENT

Once upon a time, in May of 1974 to be specific, there was a young man who thought it was a good idea to sign up as a Highway Maintenance Worker in Neligh. And here we are, several snowstorms, floods, drive-arounds, and certainly plenty of permits later, looking in amazement at how quickly the years of Warren Racely's illustrious career have flown by.

Working his way up the ladder, Warren became the crew chief, and then made the move to the South Sioux yard to take the supervisor position in 1992. He was the superintendent there for about a year before moving to Columbus in 1998.

Throughout his professional journey Warren could be relied on to be dependable and dedicated to do the job before him to the best of his ability. As he achieved greater success and advancements, he worked hard at fulfilling his goal of being the kind of boss who encouraged and supported the people who worked for him. He truly lived by his motto, "Remember Where You Came From," and the following quotes by some of his teammates bear witness to this:

"I appreciate about Warren how he had faith in his employees and embraced them finding their own rhythm here. Not bird-dogging or hovering but having trust."

"Working with Warren has been very educational and eye opening. Seeing how things on the other side (maintenance) work. He has a wealth of knowledge that over the years he has been able to share. Working with Warren has been a great experience!!!

"I have always appreciated how personable Warren is. No matter what issue you may have, he's always more than willing to help. He truly cares about his employees."

"Warren has decades of experience with NDOT, bringing a lot of insight to projects and existing infrastructure, and of course it's always supported with a story! He takes great pride in his work. Warren's compassionate nature and genuine interest in his employees makes NDOT a very enjoyable place to work. He has endured many sacrifices through the years to ensure NDOT remained functional and efficient. We will miss him greatly. Enjoy your retirement Warren, it has been well earned!"

Under Warren's leadership there has always been an emphasis on co-operation and teamwork. He coined the acronym CAT (Columbus Area Team) for the Albion, Columbus, Humphrey, and Clarkson Maintenance Crews, and often expressed his appreciation for Construction's help during snow removal season.

Was Warren the perfect boss? PRETTY DARN CLOSE!!! They just don't make 'em like that anymore... He will be missed by many, especially those of us who were lucky enough to work closely with him. HAPPY RETIREMENT, WARREN!



BYE FROM
THE CREW

Best Wishes!!



GOOD
LUCK!

Cook's Corner

From the kitchen of Sandra Hansen

Cheez-It-Chicken (it's a family favorite!)

2 ½ - 3 lbs of boneless, skinless chicken breasts, or chicken tenderloins

1 small box of Cheez-It crackers, crushed

(Ritz Crackers or Doritos can also be used)

1 cup sour cream or mayonnaise



Preheat the oven to 400 °F.

Cut chicken into 1 ½ inch strips, and pat dry with paper towels. Coat the strips with sour cream (or mayo) and then the Cheez-It crumbs.

Bake on a cookie sheet for about 20 minutes. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce.

HOMEMADE MAPLE SYRUP

This might prove useful for anyone that wants something to do between the Superbowl and when fishing gets good.

For the last 7 or 8 years I have been making homemade maple syrup. If you would like to try, the directions are below. If you have questions, feel free to contact me.

The first thing you need to do is locate maple trees. These can be sugar, red or silver varieties. Box Elder will also work. I have read that walnut trees will work too but I have read that it is a bit on the bitter side.

If the trees are not on your property, get permission!

Tapping:

I like to start in mid to late February. Normally flows don't start till March but I don't want to miss any.

You can safely install one tap for every 12" of the tree's diameter. Start on the South and West sides of the tree because it receives more sunlight. Pick a spot 2-3 ft above the ground, underneath a large branch that leaves the trunk of the tree.

Drill a 3/8" hole on an upward angle 1" – 1 3/8" deep. Remove all the wood shavings. Drive a 3/8" pipe which is about 2-4 inches long, deep enough into the hole, so it is snug and wont leak. I have used plastic, galvanized and brass pipes. You can order all this stuff online, but I just go to the local hardware store. Next make sure the pipe is clear of debris and install a plastic hose that fits snugly over the end of the pipe. Run the hose to a 5-gallon bucket with a lid. Drill a hole in the lid that is just big enough to fit the hose into. This will keep dirt and bugs out. You may go for days before the sap starts to flow but when it begins, check, and empty your buckets daily. You may have to do it morning and night. Each year and each tree is different. Some trees may produce a quart and the next tree may produce 50 gallons. The sap is clear and will look like water. When the sap turns cloudy it is time to stop.

This will be in mid to late April.

At the end of the syrup season be sure to seal the tap hole. I usually look around for a stick of the correct diameter and drive it into the hole with a hammer and saw it off flush with the trunk. The tree will heal around it.

Processing:

After collection, you will need to strain the sap. I use the old 6" milk filters from when we milked cows, but cheesecloth and coffee filters will work fine. The next step is to boil the water out of it. This is a long process. You want a large shallow pan, preferably stainless steel. You need to put as much heat to it as you can muster. Turkey fryers work well. A small fan helps. Do it outside or in the garage. If you do it inside, it will be raining from your ceilings. As you boil water out, just keep adding sap to it. Bring it inside to finish it.

The finished product will be approximately 12% water. You can buy a hydrometer reasonably cheap to check it or just boil it till it gets to 219 degrees. It won't get to that temp till it's done. When it gets close to being done- DO NOT WALK AWAY FROM IT. If you boil it too long and all the water is gone, it will foam up and will get all over everything and your spouse will get mad. Really mad. Been there done that.

It takes 40-50 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup depending on the sugar content of the trees. 5 Gallons will equal 1 pint of syrup.

There is some work to it, but it is very good. When it is done, there will be sugar crystals in it. Strain these out too. I then water bathe the syrup in Mason jars for 10-15 minutes and they will seal and keep for a long time.

Enjoy

Bob Wiebelhaus – Hartington

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If you try it, let me know how it goes.

