

# WVDOT Newsletter

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Volume 77



## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Building a Website
- Plan Reading



## Shay 5 locomotive cuts the ribbon on Trout Run Bridge as WVDOT reopens Cass to Durbin rail line

Secretary of Transportation and Commissioner of Highways Jimmy Wriston, P.E., joined local dignitaries on the first official trip over the reopened Trout Run Bridge on Friday, May 12, 2023, when Shay 5, the locomotive, burst through a golden ribbon on the new span.

Completion of the bridge reopens the excursion line from Cass Scenic Railroad to the town of Durbin, which had been closed since the bridge washed out in 1985.

"Nothing was easy here," said Wriston to the crowd on Friday. "Not one thing was easy, but you did it. You did it because you have will, you did it because you believe in the vision that we have, and you did this because you're West Virginians and have West Virginia values."

When floodwaters swept the tracks from the old hand-stacked stone railroad bridge in 1985, it shut down a rail line that had been open since the early 1900s, and was a regular run on Cass Scenic Railroad since the railroad opened in 1963. In cooperation with the West Virginia Department of Transportation's (WVDOT) Division of Multimodal Transportation Facilities and the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad, which runs the Cass trains, the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) piled on to build a new bridge and reopen the Cass to Durbin run for tourism.

"That's what we do in this state. When we have a tough job to do, we roll up our sleeves and do it. That's what happened and that's what this bridge represents," said Wriston.

Multimodal Transportation Facilities Commissioner Cindy Butler said, "Finally! The multi-year labor of love to restore the track from Durbin to Cass is finally complete."

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## Falling Short: Construction Must Prioritize Worker Safety

A building boom across the United States, particularly in nonresidential projects, has many construction firms and contractors concerned about the availability of workers. To keep up with demand, some contractors have resorted to lowering their hiring standards. But in one of the most perilous professions in America, these actions could have serious implications for the safety of workers.

Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows construction and extraction occupations had the second most occupational deaths in 2021—the most recent data available—at a rate of 12.3 fatalities for every 100,000 workers. Falls continue to be a leading cause of construction deaths and injuries on jobsites, with more than 300 fall-related deaths each year and thousands of serious injuries. Despite increased awareness and stringent regulations, these incidents continue to disrupt workers' lives and livelihoods, as well as businesses' abilities to operate.

There has not been a notable reduction in construction fall-related deaths or injuries over the past 10 years, but these accidents are mainly preventable. Increased focus, education and training are vital to combatting these hazards in the construction industry.

### LESS EXPERIENCED WORKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER FALLS ON JOBSITES

It's critical that construction employers pay close attention to the experience level of workers. Nationwide claims data show construction workers with less than two years of experience with a company account for more than half (53%) of all reported construction fall claims since 2020. This underscores the importance for builders to ensure all workers, and especially those new to their company, are properly trained and equipped with the necessary safety gear to prevent such accidents from occurring.

This issue isn't just about complying with regulations. It's about protecting the lives of our workforce and ensuring their well-being on the job.

### GROWING COSTS OF WORKER INJURIES

In addition to the human cost of falls on jobsites, there is a significant financial burden that companies must bear. Across all industries, the average workers' compensation claim cost in 2022 rose by 15% over 2021, Nationwide's data reveals. A variety of factors are driving up workers' compensation costs in the industry, including the high-risk nature of construction and increasing health-care costs.

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## About The WVDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on WVDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



CEI DBE Supportive Services

(800) 423-7058

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