West Virginia 1,200 Roads to Prosperity Projects Complete

The hard work put in by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) in implementing Governor Jim Justice’s $2.8 billion Roads to Prosperity program is paying off for the citizens of West Virginia, the governor said in a press briefing on November 8.

Of 1,263 bridge and highway projects undertaken through the Roads to Prosperity program, approximately 1,200 are currently complete. Since 2017, the WVDOT has paved approximately 9,000 miles of road, more than at any time in the state’s history.

“You have done an amazing job,” the governor told state Transportation Secretary Jimmy Wriston, P.E. “That’s all there is to it. I hope to goodness that this audience and the media and many others would take heed to what has happened in the state department of transportation. We walked into a situation a few years back where we were upside. There were people who could not get to the grocery store because of the damage to the roads. Think about how this has changed.”

When Governor Justice took office in 2017, West Virginia was in dire financial straits and struggling with a highway system plagued by decades of underinvestment in infrastructure. The governor envisioned Roads to Prosperity as a way to immediately put people to work and rejuvenate the state’s ailing roads.

“The Roads to Prosperity program saved the department of transportation; it saved the state,” Wriston said. “It laid the foundation for all the growth that we’ve seen in every sector across the state. Read more.

WVU Engineer Aims to Combat Climate Change with Fleet of Marine Robots

A West Virginia University engineer is working as part of a nationwide project to develop marine robots to probe underneath ocean ice and collect data to track the

WVU associate professor Dr. Xi Yu is one of seven engineers and oceanographers from across the United States working on the project, which includes principal investigators from Oregon State University, Temple University, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The project has an end goal of sending a fleet of marine robots — led by a “mothership” — underneath ocean ice to reach otherwise inaccessible waters and crevices to collect critical climate change data.

Yu explained that ice melting underneath the glacier is problematic, explaining that the melts create cavities filled with fresh water, which flows out while ocean water flows in.

“This kind of circulation ... will destabilize the glacier and speed up the whole melting procedure even further,” Yu said. “It’s essential to take some sampling and measurements inside those cavities to understand how this melting is happening, how fast it’s happening and how bad the situation is.” Read more.

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