

Tennessee Department of Transportation

The Civil Rights Division celebrates Black History Month by recognizing some of our employees.

Employee Spotlight: Joan M. Haynes



TDOT Technician Supervisor
Right of Way Division, Headquarters

Joined TDOT Family March 1984

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

When I saw the movie, “Hidden Figures” in August of 2016, starring Taraji P. Henson (Katherine Johnson), Octavia Spencer (Melba Roy), and Janelle Monáe (Mary W. Jackson), it changed my perception of my life. I was in the process of going to school and guiding my daughter through high school. My parents were requiring more attention as well. It was a challenging time. Hidden Figures showed me integrity under fire. It showed me NASA’s motto, “*Failure is not an option*” in action. This encouraged me and gave me the focus I required to push on. It was like my Heavenly father was telling me, “*Don’t give up, you can do this, you can finish this one race, you have the perseverance to graduate, if you just keep at it.*” I graduated in 2021 with an Associates in Civil Engineering. Every time I get tired, Hidden Figures plays in my head and encourages me to keep moving forward.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

All the core values of TDOT resonate with me but I focused more on development. While in school, developing good study habits and staying focused on my overall goal of graduating helped evolve my working knowledge of the Civil Engineering field. As a result of this acquired knowledge my career has been enhanced as I apply what I’ve learned in my everyday work tasks. For example, using the Excel database broadened my range of knowledge regarding diagrams, insertion of drawings, and mathematical equations. Development inspires me to continue learning new skills every day to enhance my job performance.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

Black History Month is important because it provides knowledge of who and what we are. Black History Month helps to guide us on how to develop and be innovative in our daily tasks and views. We have been able to learn from the wisdom of trailblazing African Americans both past and present. We can view what others have created, helping us to use our imaginations to improve upon our current environments. Each year we learn about new contributions and what each trailblazer did to better our world. This information is presented during Black History Month to motivate and inspire each of us to give a little more. Black history was once hidden from the public and brought to light in February which can inspire our children to say, “*I am somebody.*”

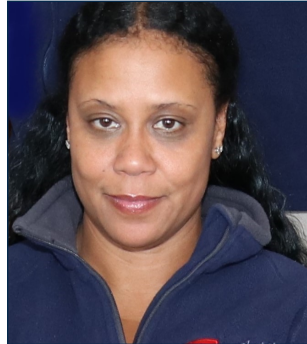
Black History Month helps me to realize that my dreams can come true. Our ancestral foundation which has been shaped by such people as Martin Luther King, Ida B. Wells, Dorothy Irene Height, Roy Wilkins, Andrew Young, Barbara Charline Jordon, Horace Julian Bond, John Robert Lewis, Heather Booth, Victor J. Glover, Bessie Coleman, and Constance Baker Motley and many others, we can see the path that has been paved. I feel honored to know that they lived and blessed this world as well as carving out a path for myself and others to follow. I hope that I can also be a trailblazer on some level and inspire at least one person.



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Employee Spotlight: Pamela M. Cobb



Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 1, Traffic Office Knoxville

Her interests are gardening, history, decorating and shopping.

Joined TDOT Family December 2014

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

There is not just one specific moment that influenced or shaped my life, but rather countless events throughout this amazing history of ours. Boycotts, peaceful protesting, marches, and sit-ins of combined races to object to the unjust treatment of any group of people are remarkable examples of unity. It was and still is, okay to do what's right, to stand up for others, and to say that any injustice is not acceptable. When I think about how many people died so that I may have the opportunity to vote, and to live peacefully alongside neighbors in a location where African Americans were previously not accepted, I am appreciative of the sacrifices and acknowledge their contributions. There are no excuses and no justifications for me to not push and challenge myself to achieve greatness. I am an American who just so happens to have African ancestry. I am the *All-American Girl*, and I look forward to the day that I am seen as just an American.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

Integrity (professional, honest, and do the right thing) is one of the TDOT values that resonates with me. Integrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising devotion to strong moral, ethical principles and values which I try to exemplify in my daily life at TDOT. To be professional, is not only in image but in customer service, as well, maintaining honest and true character to other employees, local officials, and the general public.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

I believe Black History Month is important because it is a continued commitment where history is vital as it helps give context for the present. It is an opportunity to understand, going beyond stories of racism and slavery to spotlight achievements. Black History Month is a time of triumph, celebrating and thanking those African Americans for giving us hope and life lessons that can be used in our daily lives. It's about integrity, leadership, determination, and showing our true character. Lastly, it serves as a living tribute to the men and women, and their descendants that persevered in their efforts to achieve freedom, equality, and justice.



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Employee Spotlight: Daniel Jones



TDOT Operation District Specialist
Region 2, District 29 Administration Chattanooga

His hobbies are golf and fishing.

Joined TDOT Family January 2001

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

There is no one moment in Black History for me that shaped my career or life. However, there are many African Americans who influenced and revolutionized the world through the transportation industry. Garrett Morgan Jr, inventor and businessman, made one of the most significant advancements to traffic control when he improved the traffic signal. The Montgomery Bus Boycott resulted in a high court decision that changed the public transportation experience for people of color and ensured equality for all generations to follow. Lastly, Archie Alexander became a well-known architect and engineer despite his college professors telling him he would have difficulty finding work as an African American engineer.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

Safety will always resonate with me as a core value in the transportation environment. Part of my responsibility as an Operations District Specialist is to ensure freedom from harm resulting from unintentional acts or circumstances on Tennessee's roads and bridges. I've worked in the major metropolitan areas of Knoxville, Nashville, and Chattanooga in both Maintenance and Construction Departments, and safety is by far the primary concern of everyone involved, including employees and contractors.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

Black History is important to learn and celebrate because it preserves the rich legacy of African Americans who have made significant contributions for all Americans in our everyday lives. It also provides an opportunity for younger generations to see the strides or lack thereof and aspire to make a difference.





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Employee Spotlight: Lacy Word



Transportation Manager 2
Region 2, HELP Program
Transportation Management Center

Hobbies include spending time with family, restoring old cars and Alabama football. He also enjoys being involved in community outreach programs through the Prince Hall, Masonic lodge and Shriners.

Joined TDOT Family August 1994

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

My father represents the strongest image in Black History for me. Serving overseas in Italy during World War II for a country that was very much divided by segregation, represented strength and grit that he instilled in me and has been my driving force ever since. I carry this forward in my everyday life and strive to teach my son that our history is one to be proud of.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

Stewardship is the TDOT value that resonates most with me. This value is about the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. An example of this would be TDOT providing a safe motoring environment for people that travel through our state. My team embraces all of the TDOT values and we strive to bring them to life in everything that we do.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

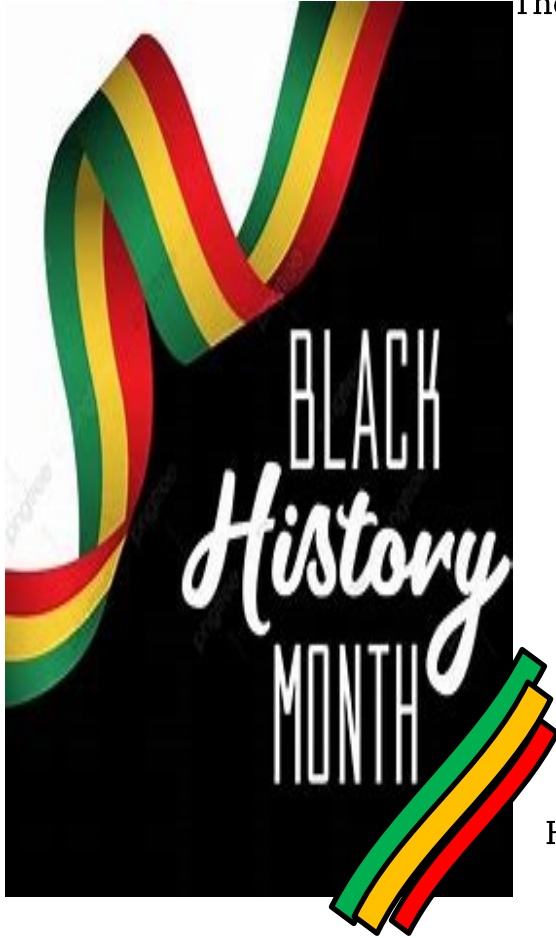
Black History Month is so much greater than a month. Celebrating accomplishments and the steps of our ancestors is a responsibility that we as a Black race must carry forward. Black History Month is an opportunity to highlight the milestones, the inventions, the civil gains as well as a time to reflect on the recent unrest of our nation. It is all important and a part of our history and deserves to be taught.



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Employee Spotlight: Phillip Allgood



TDOT Mechanic Senior
Region 2, Garage Chattanooga

His hobbies are building old cars and riding motorcycles.

Joined TDOT Family September 2018

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

A moment in Black History that influenced my life was the 1968 Olympics. When Tommie Smith and John Carlos used the podium to protest injustice. Their actions helped inspire me to always stand for what I believe in, even when it isn't the most popular decision.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

The TDOT value that resonates the most with me is consistency. While working at TDOT staying consistent throughout my work and personal life has allowed me opportunities to succeed in many areas. One area where I feel great success with consistency is working with my team to accomplish our daily and weekly goals during winter calibrations. This allows our highways to stay open for travel during inclement weather.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

Black History Month is a chance for us to celebrate and remember the African American inventors and pioneers from the past and present. To name a few African American inventors, Granville T. Woods, Frederick M. Jones, Garrett Morgan, and Elijah McCoy changed the world as we know.



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The Civil Rights Division celebrates Black History Month by recognizing some of our employees.

Employee Spotlight: Stacia R. Young-Ganaway



Administrative Services Assistant II

Region 3, Project Development
Right of Way Division

Joined TDOT Family August 2021

She enjoys spending time with her husband, grandchildren, traveling, and event planning.

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

I have two special moments in Black History that influenced and shaped my life and career. The first moment occurred during my 7th & 8th grade Junior High years at Highland Heights School in East Nashville. I signed up for an accelerated class in Forensics and Speech when I, among eight others, was selected to portray “Historic Fisk Jubilee Singers” and sing at school events for an entire year. I was graced with the opportunity to wear the “original” historic clothing of the choir that had been preserved by Fisk University. The attire was still easily frayed and tore at the slightest of touch. But I was so impacted by the opportunity to feel the ambiance that the attire and mission exuded, my imagination easily allowed me to visualize and feel certain emotions from the lyrics in the songs to help them make it through and get past excruciating times. The second moment was the reading and interpretation by my grandmother of Maya Angelou’s poems, “And Still I Rise” & “Phenomenal Woman” along with a host of Biblical and Dr. King’s literatures. As a young girl that resonated with me and made me realize and understand early on, what it means to be the Queen that I am today with servitude in my spirit, resilience in my mind and heart, compassion for others, integrity, a rich self-worth, and a deep and priceless spiritual background.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

The main TDOT values that resonate with me are “collaboration & family” because I have served in other State departments and did not experience the family-like cohesiveness that I have come to know and appreciate with my TDOT family.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

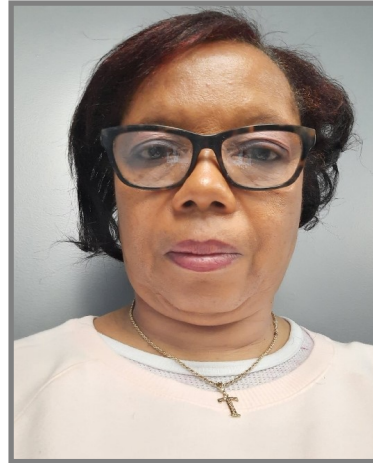
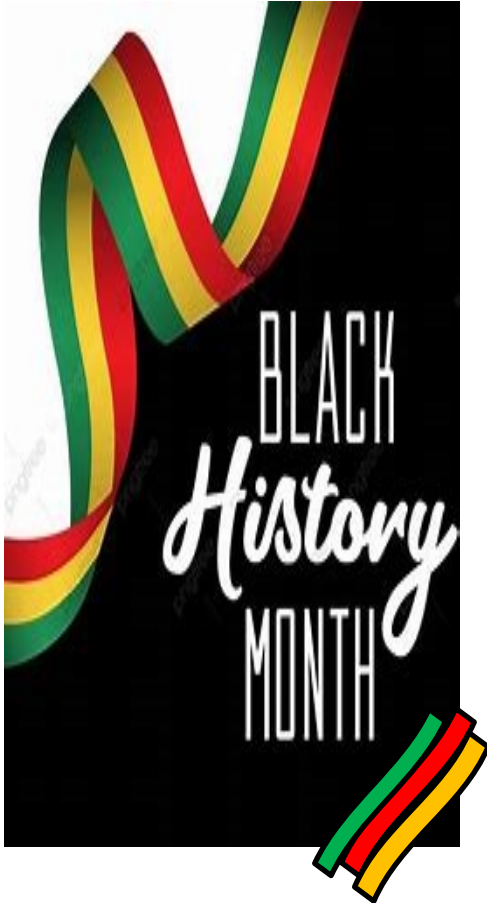
Black History Month, though I feel shouldn’t be confined to just a “month”, is important to me because it provides our world, our country, and our state with awareness, knowledge, and a real impacting presence of who we are as a people of color.



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The Civil Rights Division celebrates Black History Month by recognizing some of our employees.

Employee Spotlight: Patricia Davidson



TDOT Operations Technician
Region 4, District 47 Construction Office

She enjoys fishing and spending time with her grandchildren.

Joined TDOT Family June 1977

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

The Civil Rights March on Washington, DC in August 1963 was a pivoting event for me in my life. The march was for equity in employment and freedom. As the years passed, we were able to see small changes in the employment of Black Americans. As I reflect on, my career with TDOT, I am the only female Operations Technician that is a member of the Asphalt crew in my district, and I may be the only Black female in the whole region.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

I would probably say that collaboration and family resonate with me the most. As a member of the Construction crew, it is very important that we collaborate with each other and those who work for the contractors. Our safety and our lives depend on us always collaborating with each other. The members of my district office are like family to me. We must look out for each other.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

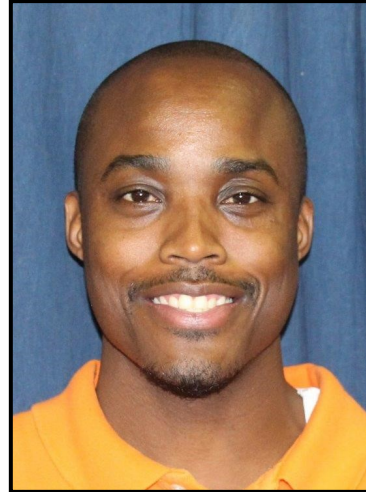
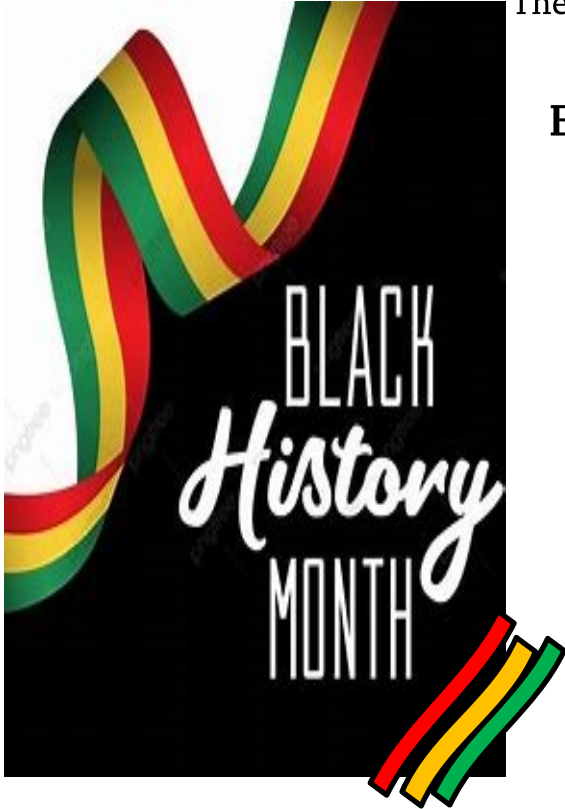
Black History Month is an opportunity for others to understand our history beyond racism and to spotlight Black Americans' achievement.



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Employee Spotlight: Willie B. Coleman



Transportation Project Specialist Senior
Region 4, Project Development
Utilities Division

He enjoys working on cars, hands on projects, woodworking, small building projects, and playing recreational basketball.

Joined TDOT Family June 2006

Tell us about a moment in Black History that influenced or shaped your career and life.

The moment in Black History that influenced my life was when Barack Obama was elected President of the United States of America. It was at this moment that I truly believed a person could achieve anything if they put their mind to it. I always knew that Black Americans could hold such a high office but felt it was unlikely to happen during my lifetime.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) resonates with you and give an example.

Reflecting on the type of work that I perform daily, I would say collaboration resonates the most with me. In my role in project development, collaboration is essential because it brings several teams together to complete a task or project. This teamwork of collaboration achieves a common goal of delivering services within a certain amount of time.

Why is celebrating Black History Month important?

Black History Month is important because it recognizes and showcases the many talents and abilities of African Americans. These talents and abilities have impacted the world in more ways than many may know.

