

Tennessee Department of Transportation



The Civil Rights Division celebrates Women's History Month by spotlighting some amazing women in our department .



Employee Spotlight: Dawn Schneider

TDOT TMC Technician
Region 1, TMC Knoxville

She enjoys working on old houses, and training and rescuing dogs.

Diversity quote: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." - Frederick Douglass

Joined TDOT Family October 1989



What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

Women's History Month is important to me because many women have given their lives so I can have the freedom that I and others enjoy.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

Margaret Mahler, the former ADA Coordinator that has since retired, had the biggest influence on my career because she provided me with mentoring and helped me through hard times .

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

EPIC has allowed me to use my education and skills to bettering my career. It also has provided a different perspective to problems and issues that can occur in the type of work that I contribute to TDOT.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

I believe seeing more diversity education and/or awareness, are ways that the department can support diversity, equity, and inclusion.



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Employee Spotlight: Mary Alice Halfacre

Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 2, District 18 Newport

She enjoys music, reading, camping, and her pets (cats & dogs).

Diversity quote: "I hear a lot of people saying, when talking about girls' empowerment and women as well, 'You're helping them find their voices', I fundamentally disagree with that. Women don't need to find their voice. They need to feel empowered to use it and people need to be encouraged to listen." - Meghan Markle

Joined TDOT Family November 1989

What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

When I was in elementary and middle school women weren't allowed to even wear slacks. In high school, the girls' basketball team could only go to half court with part of the team. Women have come so far and continue to move forward. Women's history, to me, is an example of never giving up, never surrendering to the pressure the world puts on us. Just look at what can be considered a stereotypical man's work field and see how many women are breaking into them, even here at TDOT. When I first started working at TDOT I only saw women in offices and now I get to see them working in field jobs side-by-side with men.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

My love and dedication to my job, to any job I do. My own personal thirst for knowledge and to continue to learn is what drives me and influences me.

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

Women are no longer being forced into stereotypical office roles and we are finally beginning to acknowledge one another regardless of race, gender, orientation, etc. When a young woman just starting her career comes into the building and sees that I have been here for so many years, and that I find joy in what I do, that can give them the power and hope to strive for their own dreams. Whether that be at TDOT or somewhere else.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Continuing to educate people on the fact that no matter how you look or sound we are all equal. Without that education and without first acknowledging we are all different but equal, no workforce can thrive. We can promote equal pay for equal responsibilities, no matter the gender and create a safe space for everyone to voice their opinions and not feel judged or persecuted for them.

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Employee Spotlight: Mary Howard

Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 1, Knoxville

She enjoys reading, hiking, gardening, boating, and swimming.

Diversity quote: "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it" – Maya Angelou.



Joined TDOT Family July 1999

What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

I believe that it highlights contributions that women have made that have impacted the world around them. It shows that women can make change for the good of others.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

My mother has had the biggest influence. She was a secretary as well. She had a strong work ethic. She taught me to always do my best in everything I do – Do it right or don't do it at all!

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

The new opportunities to employees under the EPIC initiative will provide advancement. Previously, the ability for promotion was limited to open vacancies. TDOT choosing to empower people by offering strategic mobility for advancement within their own career path. I expect greater retention and improved employee satisfaction. I'm excited for these changes.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

I've worked for TDOT for 24 years. All those years it's felt like family. Families learn to accept each other's individualities, beliefs, ideals, strengths, and weaknesses. My hope is that everyone can treat one another with respect and as a human being whether they agree or not agree with that individual's individuality, belief, ideals, etc. I was taught that we are all equal.



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Employee Spotlight: June D. Dishman

Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 2, Dunlap County Construction Office

June is a member of the American Business Women Association, and their mission is to bring diverse businesswomen together to help them grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.

Joined TDOT Family October 1989



What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

Women's History Month recognizes women that have had success and longevity in their careers. One goal is to encourage others to persevere and prepare for their future.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

I have worked with so many great co-workers over the years and under six different supervisors and all of them have been a great influence on my career. Our office has always had a family atmosphere which is the reason I have never dreaded going to work.

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

Respect is very important in the workplace. In years past I would have never envisioned myself working in a male dominated workplace. During many years of my career, I was the only female in the unit and I was always shown respect and helped in anyway at work or outside of the workplace if needed. Respect and working together is very important in the success of a department.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Over the years TDOT has created a workplace that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion. There are many programs and group recognitions offered throughout TDOT to support women in the work force. During my tenure with TDOT I was recognized as Employee of the Year for Region 2. I am proud to have worked with a department that cares.

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Employee Spotlight: Carla Adams

TDOT Technician Supervisor
Region 3, Materials and Tests, Nashville

She enjoys traveling, spending time with family, watching softball games, and outdoor activities.

Diversity quote: "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but she was able to do it backwards and wearing high heels."

-Ginger Rogers

Joined TDOT Family June 1985



What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

It's a time to reflect on and appreciate the women that came before me in the workplace. It designates a time for us all to give recognition, not only to key leaders and influential figures, but all women and the small victories won in everyday life. This month provided us with an opportunity to reflect on their struggles, recognize their accomplishments, and raise the bar to where we can go in the future.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

One of the biggest influences on my career would have to be my mother. She showed me that it was okay to push boundaries and society norms allowing me to become the first and only female early in my career. However, I would like to recognize many of the strong TDOT leaders that provided influence throughout the years who recognized my potential, gave me the chance, believed in me, and treated me with respect.

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

I'm hopeful that EPIC will be able to fully deliver on its principles. I have tried to be a positive mentor for all my employees and build a successful program. I am excited to see EPIC provide new opportunities and pathways for me to become a stronger female leader by strategically aligning my knowledge and experience with new positions and providing new opportunities to grow and expand my abilities both contributing to a stronger more successful department.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

As of now I think TDOT does a great job of recognizing and providing avenues for women and other minorities. I hope we continue in the future to see each individual as just that, an individual, providing them the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of any classification.



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Employee Spotlight: Natalie Dyer

Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 3, Murfreesboro, TN Construction

She enjoys attending church and spending
time with family.

Joined TDOT Family December 1997



What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

I can relate Women's History Month to being treated fairly in the workplace. Especially in a field where the work is predominately considered to be "man's work." Fortunately, that attitude has dramatically changed over the years. We now see women in all types of jobs including jobs that were once considered "man's work."

What had the biggest influence on your career?

My career was influenced by my father. He always wanted me to succeed in everything I did. I got my work ethic from his example over the years.

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

It will be a great program once it is full swing. The most important part is how it will help employees financially. Most of us have felt the effects of inflation and know first hand that it takes more money to sustain our way of living than it did a couple of years ago.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

I think TDOT is doing a good job with promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Employee Spotlight: Cheryl Legions

Administrative Services Assistant 2
Region 4, Materials & Tests Department

She enjoys working outside tending to her plants.

Diversity quote: "In the future, there will be no female leaders, there will just be leaders." - Sheryl Sandberg

Joined TDOT Family December 1977

What does Women's History Month mean to you and why?

Women's History Month is important to me because it champions the achievements that women have made in all areas of life in today's world and historically. Recognizing the success of other women who came before us serves as an inspiration to me and to those young women who dream to be successful.

What had the biggest influence on your career?

My career was influenced by the people who took time to share their knowledge with me so that I could do my job well and help others.

Explain how you see EPIC (Empowering People and Influencing the Culture) creating your own success as well as the impact of your work contributing to TDOT's success.

Empowering people and influencing the culture provides for resources, training, and educational opportunities for me to learn, grow, and take on new responsibilities. It also encourages feedback and a place to work where ideas can be voiced.

How do you suggest we create a workforce that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion?

I suggest by promoting a mindset that focuses on the exchange of ideas among all employees, always allowing and encouraging individual differences of thought and style.

