



Welcome to the first edition of *Connections*, the newsletter for the Elizabeth River Tunnels Project. *Connections* will feature updates to construction, traffic, community impacts, and other issues to keep you up to date on the progress of the Elizabeth River Tunnels Project.

Operations and maintenance duties transfer smoothly from VDOT to ERC

Friday, July 13, 2012, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) transferred operations and maintenance responsibilities of the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels to Elizabeth River Crossings (ERC).

"We have a great partnership with VDOT," said Greg Woodsmall, ERC CEO. "We coordinated and prepared well and the transition has been smooth."

"This partnership with Elizabeth River Crossings positions VDOT as a national leader in leveraging public dollars to advance critical infrastructure projects like this one," said VDOT Commissioner, Greg Whirley.

In addition to building a new tunnel, rehabilitating the existing tunnels, and extending the Martin Luther King Freeway ERC is responsible

for incident response, snow removal, and operations and maintenance of the tunnels and associated roadways.

Many of the former VDOT employees at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels were successfully hired by ERC, lending to the seamless transition. Drivers may have noticed the new name and logo for the project, Elizabeth River Tunnels, on maintenance, emergency response, and safety service patrol vehicles. Immediate enhancements include tunnel-lighting improvements, more frequent storm drain cleanings, sign replacements, pothole repairs, and a new toll-free number available 24/7 to respond to maintenance requests within the project boundaries (1-855-ERT-ROAD). ■



Greg Woodsmall, ERC CEO, accepts operations and maintenance responsibilities for the Elizabeth River Tunnels on July 13, 2012. Woodsmall is pictured alongside VDOT Commissioner of Highways, Greg Whirley, and VDOT's Hampton Roads District Administrator, Dennis Heurer.



Elizabeth River Trail modifications

In order to construct the new Midtown Tunnel, ERC is working closely with VDOT and the City of Norfolk to reroute a portion of the Elizabeth River Trail in West Ghent. The temporary configuration will be implemented next month and will be in place for approximately three years. The trail will be well marked and is scheduled to remain open during construction.

Currently the trail travels 9.49 miles along the Elizabeth River from the City of Norfolk to Norfolk Naval Base. The temporary reroute

eliminates a 1000-ft section on Southampton Avenue, but allows bicyclists and pedestrians to continue to enjoy the commute/recreational option. ■

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Connect with some of our team members



J.B. Chalmers

J.B. Chalmers, a 31-year United States Air Force veteran, is no rookie when it comes to leadership or traffic operations. With more than 15 years of experience on Virginia's highways, he easily fits the bill as Safety Service Patrol Supervisor for the Elizabeth River Tunnels project.

Chalmers started his new position in May, just before VDOT officially handed off the tunnels, MLK extension, and associated roadways to the ERC team.

With 41 service patrollers and five safety patrol units to oversee, he is a busy man. "I typically work about 50 hours a week, but I work more if necessary," said Chalmers. "Our executives ask that we provide quality service to drivers, and go above and beyond public expectation. I love that – it's the challenge and high standards that make this job so appealing to me."

Chalmers and his team are responsible for clearing roads and helping drivers. This work entails a variety of tasks such as moving disabled vehicles, assisting with traffic control at collisions, and giving fuel to stranded motorists.

"I'm happy and satisfied in this job," said Chalmers. "I'm really looking forward to seeing the completion of the new tunnel and the difference it will make for traffic in the area." ■

Meet our design-build contractors for the project



ERC has partnered with SKW Constructors as the

design-build contractor for the Elizabeth River Tunnels Project. SKW is a joint venture team comprised of Skanska USA Civil, Kiewit Construction Company, and Weeks Marine. All three companies are known for their innovation and successful accomplishments and have partnered on other projects in the past. In fact, Skanska USA Civil and Kiewit worked together to help deliver the world's widest underwater vehicular tunnel – the Ft. McHenry Tunnel – in Baltimore, MD. ■

Stay Informed

Berkley Bridge

Since September 3, 2010, the US Coast Guard has used temporary regulations to provide scheduled Berkley Bridge openings for vessels. There may be future changes to the Berkley Bridge Lift Schedule. Details and information about how to provide input can be found on VDOT's website. ■

Tidewater Express, Inc.



If you've driven through the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels recently, it's hard to miss the wrecker trucks with the uniquely painted flames on the front of them. You may have even been helped by one.

Those wreckers belong to Mike Pelfrey, President and Owner of Tidewater Express, Inc. Pelfrey founded the company in 1988 with a vision to make the roads safer for travelers and the Hampton Roads community.

Today that vision continues as Tidewater Express, Inc. works for Elizabeth River Crossings. Along with the safety and service patrols, Tidewater Express, Inc. is a part of the incident response team with four employees stationed at each of the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels. Developed

to keep traffic moving, Pelfrey's team of trained professionals works tirelessly to clear breakdowns, debris, accidents, and incidents that obstruct traffic at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels. "Minutes count," said Pelfrey. "We want to be quick and safe, and we have a plan in place to make that happen. We want to perform above and beyond public needs."

Tidewater Express, Inc. is a small women- and minority-owned business based in Hampton. With five wreckers designated to ERC, Tidewater Express, Inc. is contracted to provide the Elizabeth River Tunnels project with 24-hour emergency response, heavy duty towing and recovery, as well as lube and fleet services. ■

