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The background of the slide is a light gray map of Las Vegas, showing the city's street grid and major highways. The map is oriented with the city center towards the top left. The title 'INTRODUCTION' is in a bold, dark blue font, and 'GREEN MEANS GO' is in a larger, bold, dark blue font. The text is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the slide. The text is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the slide.

## INTRODUCTION

# GREEN MEANS GO

NDOT's current communications plan focuses on project oriented communications, addressing all governmental regulations and requirements. We believe there is an opportunity to make NDOT a positive presence in the community outside of a project setting. This is a strategic communications plan with energetic, yet practical tactics to reach the public everyday – a proactive plan that highlights the good things the department does for Nevadans.

Our findings show many people do not know what NDOT does. Be proactive and fill that void with positive images. You do not want to let negative coverage or the opinions of a few determine the public's perception of your organization.





The background of the slide is a light gray map of a city street grid. The grid consists of various rectangular blocks and winding roads. A dark blue vertical bar runs along the right edge of the slide. A white box with a dark blue border contains the text for 'EXTERNAL' and 'INTERNAL'.

## **EXTERNAL**

It makes sense to focus on consistently communicating to build a strong relationship with your constituents. You should encourage an open conversation with the public based on mutual trust.

## **INTERNAL**

Your employees can be strong advocates for the organization. They should be informed about the work NDOT does and be able to share that information with their neighbors. Consistent internal communication can instill a sense of pride and enthusiasm in every department, employees will be better educated on NDOT activity and become better ambassadors for the company.

The background of the slide is a stylized, light gray map of a city street grid. The map features various street patterns, including a prominent circular intersection in the upper left and a winding road on the right side. The map is overlaid on a dark blue vertical bar on the left and a white rectangular box containing the text.

## HOW THEY COME TOGETHER

NDOT needs to control the conversation surrounding their organization by sending out positive and strategic communications. If the communication with your employees is strong, the communication with constituents will benefit. You employ over 1,600 people in every region of Nevada. Those people have access to the public on a personal level because they are Nevadans as well. If employees' neighbors see them as positive representatives of NDOT, their interactions will naturally reinforce your brand.



# THE GOAL DESTINATION

Improve the public's perception of NDOT.





# THE STRATEGY GETTING THERE

Our strategy is to show the public how NDOT keeps them safe and connected by:

- Developing a unifying brand.
- Creating new community outreach programs.
- Improving social media use.
- Enhancing the public meetings experience.
- Seeking positive media coverage.



# POSITIONING MAKE A STATEMENT

**“Nevada Department of Transportation keeps Nevadans safe and connected by building and maintaining highways.”**

This positioning statement describes how you want to be perceived by your audience. All NDOT communications should support this statement.

Research shows the public values safety and road maintenance above all other NDOT services. This positioning statement addresses their concerns and invites them to see NDOT as more than just construction zones.



# KEY MESSAGES **SAFE AND CONNECTED**

Key messages expand on your positioning statement by strategically connecting what NDOT does with how you want to be perceived. The following messages are reinforced throughout this plan in various ways.

1. NDOT takes a proactive approach to safety in the community.
2. The roads and highways NDOT builds connect all Nevadans.
3. NDOT is accessible to the public.

A light gray map of Nevada is overlaid on a dark blue background. The map shows the state's outline and internal county boundaries. The title text is positioned over the upper portion of the map.

# **MORE THAN ORANGE CONES AND HARD HATS... NDOT'S BRAND**

We want NDOT to be perceived as a positive presence in the community - one that promotes road safety and is in touch with its public.

NDOT's communications with the public, including employees' interactions, social and traditional media and any advertisements, should demonstrate that you care about Nevada and work hard to ensure the safety of its drivers and pedestrians.

The opportunity to brand NDOT and reinforce a positive image of the organization exists outside of projects, roadwork and standard procedures. We want to reach people on a personal level by reminding them of all the positive ways NDOT impacts their day to day lives.



# “YOUR HIGHWAY HOME”

Here is how Nevadans reacted when we showed them this tagline:

“Reminds me of ‘Home Means Nevada’”

“Something my mom would like”

“Makes me feel safe”

“It makes sense”

“warm fuzzies”

“sentimental and nostalgic feelings”



# HOW DID WE GET HERE?







## RESEARCH

- Audience
- Public Surveys
- NDOT Employee Interviews
- UNLV Survey
- Other DOTs

## METHODS

# AUDIENCE

For this communications plan, we want NDOT to focus on reaching the 95% of people who do not attend public meetings, as we found through public surveys.

This group includes the driving population of the state, particularly ages 30 to 60 with families, active members of the work force and commuters who are not necessarily affected by specific projects.

Other areas of interest include new drivers ages 16 to 18 and Hispanic groups within each district.



## FROM THE PUBLIC

## SURVEYS

From a survey we conducted online and at Northern Nevada grocery stores we found out that:

95%



Never attended a public meeting

Discovered current road project only after driving through it



32%

24%



Never heard of NDOT

\*Majority of individuals surveyed assumed NDOT operated the bus system

## INTERVIEWS WITH NDOT EMPLOYEES

We called employees in each district to ask how they receive information on NDOT projects and news. We found a desire among employees to be more connected to each district and department. Employees want to know what is going on with the company throughout the state.



“The times I do receive information via email, (which is not as often as it should be) I physically hand out that news or info to my team, because they don’t have NDOT emails.”- Maintenance Supervisor- District III



“I benefit by having the director only a few feet away, where his door is always open. But the line of communication should be open throughout all districts, and sometimes it’s just not.” - Design Division- District II



“Significant activities report should be going out to everyone (in all districts and departments) to know status updates.” - Construction Head- District I

## MOVING FORWARD

- All employees should be encouraged to regularly check for company emails.
- The SAR (significant activities report) should be sent out to everyone more often and more consistently.
- Every piece of employee communications should reach every employee, whether they work in an office or on site.

## MORE STUDIES

### UNLV | HOWARD R. HUGHES College of ENGINEERING

The 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey from the UNLV College of Engineering studied overall public impressions of congestion, construction, maintenance, safety and funding as well as the differences between regions in Nevada.

Their research showed the following:

#### **Current Strengths**

- Residents are highly favorable of increasing public transit options.
- Majority of residents are satisfied with transportation in Nevada.

#### **Key Findings**

- Safety is the public's most pressing concern.
- Building new roads is less of a priority.
- Improving safety, reducing congestion and maintaining the existing infrastructure are more important tasks to the public.





## Observations

- Residents in District I are not satisfied with the delays caused by construction and maintenance.
- Congestion is a critical issue in the south. It is caused by poor freeway interchange design, merging, construction, poor streetlighting and lack of shoulder and passing lanes.
- Lack of community involvement during planning and implementing projects in their area to give positive or negative feedback.
- Recommend that residents should be given warning about new projects in order to voice their opinions.
- Residents would like a convenient outlet to provide comments.
- Residents would like immediate access to traffic and weather conditions, through phone app, electronic message boards, 24-hr phone lines, & radio updates.

## OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION

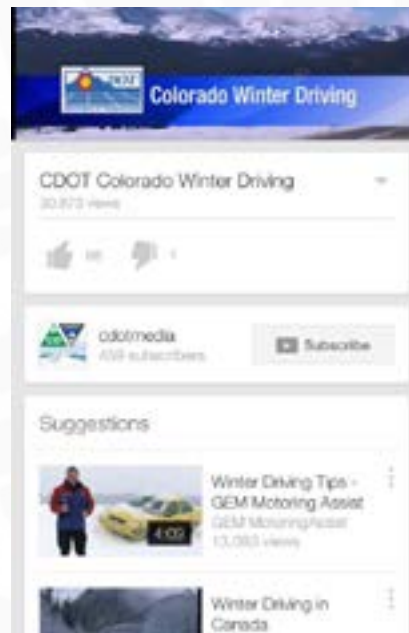


“Parked OSP Patrol car hit during freezing rain in Pendleton @OregonDOT drive carefully.”

“Adtl info: Crashed SBI-15 at Center St Clearfield, MP334 right lane is closed.”

Our neighboring states with similar population sizes use their social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels, to promote awareness about specific road safety topics.

Other states have posted hundreds of videos dating back as much as six years. Most of the videos feature driving tips and project updates, but what makes them effective is a unifying idea. NDOT has the re-sources to produce similar videos. For specific recommendations see our video section.



# PUBLIC MEETINGS

We do not recommend spending a lot of time or energy trying to increase public meeting attendance simply because the people who are not attending are not likely to start. However, it is possible that if this communications plan is successful, more people will attend.

That being said, we see some opportunities to improve the public meeting experience and reach out to more people in the community.





## U.S.A Parkway Public Meeting

Many attendees learned about this meeting through community organizations such as co-ops, schools and other clubs, as opposed to direct communication from NDOT. Let trusted community leaders share NDOT information with their groups.

You should promote interest and awareness of public meetings to ethnic and youth organizations in each region to reach those groups and possibly increase interest and awareness in those groups.



# TRAIN YOUR SPEAKERS

A well done presentation could prevent misunderstandings between NDOT and constituents. The more clearly the information is presented, the more productive the conversation surrounding the project can be.

Speakers at public meetings should be knowledgeable, charismatic and patient with constituents. They should be able to answer all questions relevant to specific meetings or be ready to defer questions to accessible sources.

We suggest speakers hold practice sessions with the communications staff before they give presentations at public meetings.

**INTERNAL**

**SUGGESTIONS**



# SHIFT INTO HIGH GEAR

Jumpstart your social media use by focusing on **ENGAGEMENT**. Stories and information shared should demonstrate how NDOT keeps Nevadans safe and connected. Show your followers how accessible NDOT is by putting a human voice behind your posts.

Employees posting for NDOT should be familiar with these guidelines to maintain uniformity throughout platforms and to send a clear message to followers.

## ETIQUETTE TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT

1. All posts should have a clear, consistent voice.
2. If possible, include a link or image to enhance your post.
3. Respond to all comments whether they are good, bad, or ugly.
4. Hashtags are useful tools to link posts together and to trending topics, but use them cautiously.
5. Posts should be a balance between fun, informational, and promotional topics.
6. Only ask people to like your status if you are doing a poll.
7. Link all social media accounts to one another to broaden your scope.
8. Retweet and share other relevant information from local entities to show community involvement.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

We think a monthly contest urging followers to submit pictures of their favorite roads is a great way to engage your audience.



Google Hangouts can be scheduled to supplement public meetings in real time for constituents who cannot attend them.

Asking a question is a good way to start a conversation with your followers.

“How are you celebrating #NevadaDay this weekend?”

“What’s your favorite road in Nevada? Post a picture using #NVRoads”

# TAKE ACTION

Take advantage of your videographer and make shareable and engaging videos. They should be connected to your positioning statement by the **unifying idea** that NDOT works hard to ensure safe and convenient commutes for Nevadans.

These are some examples of videos you could produce that feature different NDOT services that keep Nevadans safe and connected:

The video we produced highlights NDOT's rest stops. They provide an alternative to drowsy driving, and most Nevadans do not realize NDOT's role in building and maintaining them. Share this video to remind them.





NV Roads Video: NDOT keeps constituents on schedule with easy access to traffic and weather updates.

# REACHING OUT

The “Street Smarts” program would bring NDOT professionals into Nevada classrooms or student assemblies. It would introduce safety tips to new drivers, educate them on the risks of driving in the snow, inform them of NV Roads and further highlight what the students can do to stay safe as they begin driving. “Street Smarts” speaks to NDOT’s commitment to a proactive approach to road safety. This is an opportunity to look for federal grants or special funding.





Zero Fatalities freebies, similar to the bike reflectors given away at the USA Parkway meeting, are easy ways to promote safety in the community. Distribute them on the UNLV campus in District I, at the Reno Bike Project in District II and at service clubs in District III. Partnering up with local organizations would allow NDOT to reach specific audiences.

## **DESIGNATED DRIVER**

Your highway home.



NDOT could distribute these at different events and venues:

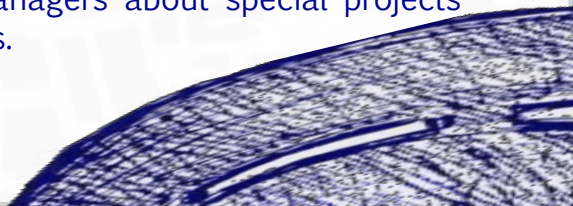
- On campus, at local bike projects, in schools, the DMV and public spaces.
- T-Shirts could be thrown out at college sporting events.
- Concession stands can hand out “Designated Driver” pins at events where alcohol is sold.

# TAKE CREDIT

Tell your audience when NDOT is doing something good. Earning media coverage will allow NDOT to tell your story through different outlets and control your image. Do not let others fill the void of information with negative feedback.

Show the public how hard you work to keep Nevada's roads safe and how committed you are to each neighborhood and community by:

- Partnering with radio stations.
- Taking time to send press releases about NDOT activity outside of project settings.
- Continue submitting editorial pieces from project managers about special projects and topics.



## Partnerships

Promote partnerships with local radio stations in all three regions. In exchange for NDOT sponsored traffic updates, weather advisories and driving tips the stations would get to attend NDOT events. We are talking peak commute hour coverage, here.

During projects the stations will run “NDOT project updates.” You should prepare messages to run during adverse weather conditions. **“Don’t forget your tire chains”** or **“watch out for black ice”** are subtle ways of showing the community that NDOT cares about their road safety.

You could go about this a couple of ways: either ask stations to run it as a PSA, or allow them to seek sponsorships of the segments.



# MEDIA ATTENTION

You already put out press releases on each project. What if you also put them out anytime NDOT is involved in a sponsorship, begins a community outreach program or holds an event? Strategic coverage of the work NDOT does promoting safety and maintaining roads will reinforce your brand's image and let the public know you are proactively addressing their top concerns.

For example, the Street Smarts program would attract positive media attention. News coverage of your involvement in school would strongly reinforce the image that you take a proactive approach to safety.

Having project managers submit editorial pieces discussing issues surrounding projects allows the public to develop a personal connection with your organization. With a human voice representing the project, NDOT as a whole becomes more accessible to the public. These recommendations are not far off from what NDOT already does. We want media coverage to emphasize NDOT's role in keeping the community safe and connected.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE**

**Nevada Department of Transportation  
Meg Ragonese, Public Relations Officer  
Email: [mragonese@dot.us.nv](mailto:mragonese@dot.us.nv)  
(775) 888-7122 / (775) 443-5926**

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION VISITS LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS  
WITH NEW ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMS**

**Reno, Nev.: TBD** – Representatives from the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) will begin visiting high school health classes this week as a part of their “Street Smarts” program, a statewide effort to promote road safety among teens. Students will receive tips on driving in adverse weather conditions, be familiarized with the various tools like NV Roads and learn how to stay safe as they take to the roads for the first time.

“This is a crucial time for these students,” said Sean Sever, NDOT Director of Communications. “We want to help them feel comfortable on the roads and be sure that they have all of the knowledge and ability to keep themselves safe on the roads”.

The programs will be implemented in high schools throughout the state, engaging students in highway safety tips.

# TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

A key element in a strategic communications plan is being able to track your progress. To gauge the effectiveness of new communications tactics, we suggest setting measurable objectives. To aid in tracking progress we suggest the following:

- Monitor social media analytics. You can find this information in your page settings of the social media platform you are using.
- Implement a system to keep track of customer feedback from phone calls and other.
- Observe changes in public meeting attendance as a result of your new efforts.
- Consider getting an account with a media coverage tracking company, such as TVEyes, to monitor TV and radio coverage.



# CONCLUSION

NDOT should position itself as more than a government organization. You should help the public recognize the important role you play in keeping them safe and connected to each other as well as opportunities around the state.

Becoming more strategic with communications internally and externally will help shape this image in the eyes of constituents.

NDOT's new communication plan creates a positive relationship between the driver and NDOT, reminding the public of what keeps them moving everyday.

# THE TEAM



Lindsay Honaker



Ginny Allen



Kenzie Taylor



Lindsey Fullerton



Brooke Heroy



Bri Ruddy



Brooke Hansen



Robin Jones



Mary-Kate Reilly



