

## **Moneme, Emeka (DDOT)**

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**From:** Tangherlini, Dan (DDOT)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 21, 2002 1:10 PM  
**To:** DDOT/Personnel; DDOT/MANAGERS  
**Cc:** DPW/Personnel; DPW/DDOT/DMV - OCFO  
**Subject:** We Are Now the Department of Transportation

### **We Are Now the Department of Transportation**

I am enormously proud and pleased to announce that today, May 21, 2002, the District Division of Transportation is no longer; we are now the Department of Transportation, the cabinet-level agency that is charged by the Mayor, the City Council and the citizens of the District of Columbia with guarding and improving the city's transportation system.

On this important day, I want to take note of some of our major accomplishments over the last two years and look forward to what we need to do, both in the short and long term.

We have many achievements we can be proud of. With the support of the Mayor and Council and funds from the Congress, we repaved over 1,500 blocks of neighborhood streets all over the District in the last two years - improving neighborhood road quality by 15-percent. During that time we also started the performance-based contract for our National Highways; resurfaced stretches of South Capitol Street and New York Avenue with minimal traffic disruption; and we have cut the number of structurally deficient bridges down to half the national average. And we have just completed the long-standing project to widen the New York Avenue bridges at South Dakota Avenue, NE.

Two years ago, uncontrolled utility cuts had reached a crisis stage, ruining our streets and disrupting travel across the city. Now, our current management program, while still undergoing improvements, is a model for other jurisdictions.

Accomplishments in other areas are no less important. These include the increase in output of our sign shop; our safety program for pedestrians, work zones and schools; a renewed emphasis on neighborhood traffic calming; the start of building an intelligent traffic management system; the revitalization of our bicycle and traffic planning capabilities; increasing the funds and personnel to start restoring the District's tree canopy; and the establishment of our Neighborhood Infrastructure Maintenance Officers (NIMOs) to inspect our public space and transportation infrastructure. We have doubled our street and bridge maintenance staff and cut pothole response time from nine to less than three days.

Many of these improvements came together as we launched The Georgetown Project, the simultaneous rebuilding of the major utility and streetscape infrastructure in close cooperation with businesses and residents to minimize disruption in this very busy, 24-hour community.

We have also built our capacity to respond to emergencies. This includes dealing with the effects of severe weather, particularly on trees, and traffic accidents. Our response to the attacks of September 11 was notable. Working with other District, federal and neighboring agencies, we dealt with the completely unexpected demands of having to empty the downtown area in record time under totally unforeseen circumstances. But we have not settled for "pretty good." In striving for excellence, DDOT has worked hard on cooperative planning with Maryland and Virginia to deal with such contingencies as well as the myriad other regional transportation issues. This planning paid-off when DDOT led the effort that included the Departments of Public Works and Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and the Emergency Management Agency, to reach out to our neighbors in need by sending equipment and personnel to La Plata, MD to help it recover from the recent tornado.

While our accomplishments are real and many, we have many challenges ahead. We must continue to rebuild streets, highways and bridges and support systems. However, even this is not enough; we have still larger tasks. These include helping to implement the Mayor's Anacostia Waterfront Initiative; bringing streetcars and other forms of light rail to the District while improving present-day bus service; strengthening our bid for the 2012 Olympics; reducing congestion and improving mobility; and renewing New York Avenue and other gateways.

We have also invested in our staff through expanded training and we have brought in new talent, including a new chief engineer, a new state forester, a new chief technology officer and a new deputy director to implement the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

I want to thank Mayor Anthony Williams for his encouragement and support. This was necessary for our successes as we moved to becoming a department. The members of the City Council, particularly Councilmember Carol Schwartz, chair of the public works committee, have also been invaluable partners and we look forward to their continued backing and advice.

I know that all of the members of the Department of Transportation will continue the hard and creative work that will make this department a model transportation agency for the nation and I look forward to working with all of you as we increase transportation safety, enhance infrastructure stewardship and improve mobility.

Let's roll.