

## Director's Vision: Focus on Customer Service, moveDC

**D**DOT is just over a decade old. In that short time, much has been accomplished by the agency. I know that expectations are high, and I have witnessed the diligence and passion that has gone into progressing the agency thus far. My predecessors have addressed the real challenges of a growing city. Through their vision and leadership, DDOT has grown into a successful, innovative agency focused on customer satisfaction and accountability. But for all of our achievements, there is still work to do to make DDOT even more successful.

*Below are what I believe to be key elements for moving the agency forward:*

### Advance moveDC

We've engaged thousands of residents and other transportation users to develop moveDC. Our goal now is to take this transformative plan, and begin to implement it. The moveDC plan includes both short- and long-term goals. Some, like a new downtown Metro loop, require

a large amount of funding and will take consistent, long-term focus. Others—like educating motorists about safe interaction with bicyclists, continuing to address bridge rehabilitation projects and improving the sidewalk network—can be advanced now.

### Efficient Customer Service

Under the leadership of my predecessors, service delivery has improved. But I believe even more can be done to further improve the level of delivery, and also to provide information to residents about services they request from DDOT. Right now we are beginning to focus on improving two of the most requested services in detail—parking sign issues and sidewalk repair requests. We will take what we learn, improve those processes, and apply that to other services we provide as well.

### Meeting Expectations

It is clear to me the successes of the past have heightened the expectations of our residents. The District of Columbia is a



Acting Director Matthew Brown stops for a minute after listening to President Obama on July 1.

world-class city and our residents expect the highest standard of service, planning, and program delivery. We've made great strides in that direction, however we must strive even harder to meet the demands of our residents.

I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward with these and other initiatives and continue the ongoing evolution of DDOT.

*-By Matthew Brown*

## Lead Story

### Obama, Biden Call on DDOT During Two Events

**F**our DDOT employees enjoyed a lunch consisting of burgers and milkshakes on May 16...with President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden. The four who worked on DDOT's First Street NE project dined at a local Shake Shack. Although initially nervous about meeting the leader of the free world, and the second in command, Abdullahi said he thought they were disarmingly "friendly, down-to-earth and easy to talk to."

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In another event, several DDOT employees sat in extremely hot weather on July 1 at the Georgetown Waterfront to listen to President Obama encourage the U.S. Congress to fully fund the Highway Trust Fund in a [speech](#) on the economy. The employees were joined by Mayor Vincent Gray and DDOT's Acting Director Matthew Brown.

*For the perspectives of two Summer Youth Employment Program interns who attended the event on July 1, and their overall impressions of DDOT, please turn to page 3.*



President Barack Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden with (L-R) IPMA's Aidin Sarabi, Abdullahi Mohamed, Meredith Upchurch, and Antonio Byrd.

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## Welcome to d.



**Michelle Phipps-Evans**  
**Communications Specialist**

Please welcome Michelle Phipps-Evans to DDOT as a communications specialist in the Office of Communications. A lifelong communicator, Michelle holds a master's in journalism, and has earned awards for writing and publishing. She has developed a passion for social media and website design during her 20-year career, while holding positions in journalism and in government communications. A Ward 7 resident, Michelle is married and has a college-aged son and two young daughters. Come by and say hello to her on the 7th floor.



**Donte Felder**  
**Wage Compliance Specialist**

Welcome Donte L. Felder to the DDOT family as a permanent wage compliance specialist. Donte is a born-and-bred Washingtonian who studied mass communications and television production at the University of the District of Columbia for two years after graduating from Woodrow Wilson Senior High School. After serving as a student intern at DDOT in 2009, he returned as a term employee in the Davis Bacon Compliance division on the 7th floor. As of July 2014, he became a permanent employee. In his spare time, he works on his newly-purchased home and is a recording engineer.

## What's News @DDOT

### Transit Subsidy Program—Tap it; Don't Flash it

The transit subsidy program will be accessible for school-aged children, between 5 and 22 years, in the District starting Aug. 18. District public, charter and private school students need to register and confirm eligibility in the transit subsidy program at [DC.One Card](http://DC.OneCard) before using their DC One Cards to purchase a transit pass or using the Kids Ride Free on Bus pass. Starting late August, children who use the Metrobus or DC Circulator system must tap the DC One Card at all times to board the bus for free. This is a departure from the previous policy when students could board if they flash the cards. Residents requesting information on the new rules should be directed to [ddot.dc.gov/page/school-transit-subsidy-program](http://ddot.dc.gov/page/school-transit-subsidy-program).

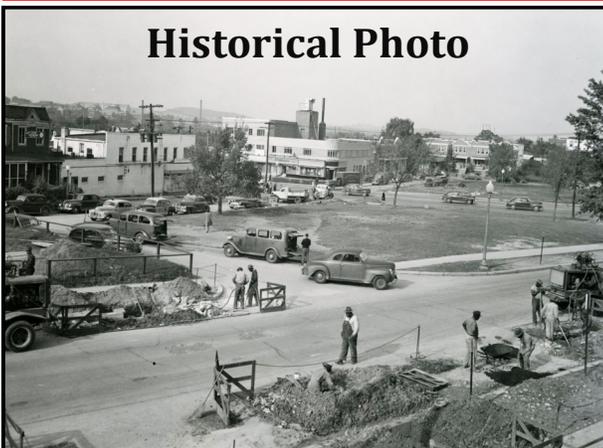
### DC Streetcar is rolling

For many DDOT employees, this was a long time in coming—the permanent placement of the streetcars on the H Street/Benning Road corridor. As of July 23, six cars were placed permanently on the corridor as DDOT

*(Continued on page 4)*

## d. Pictorial

### Historical Photo



**Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenues, 1946**  
Utility work near Pennsylvania Avenue and Minnesota Avenue SE, dated 1946. According to DDOT veteran William McGuirk, this picture probably captures a construction team installing traffic signals. This picture, and other historical documents and photographs, are featured on DDOT's new Library & Archives tumblr at [ddotdc.tumblr.com](http://ddotdc.tumblr.com).

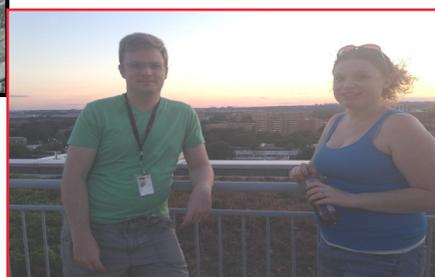
### July 4 with DDOT



Natalie Jones Best and husband Tony.



The breathtaking views from on top DDOT's building on 55 M Street, SE.



Charles Dingboom with his wife, Kristin Calkins.

A handful of DDOT employees accepted the invitation to use rooftop tickets to watch the Independence Day fireworks. Besides the main show, there were several smaller ones from around the neighborhoods. It was fun for everyone.

## Employee Spotlight

### John Thomas Dedicates Cafritz Award to Colleague DDOT' wins third award in three years

On June 4, DDOT's John Thomas was awarded for his excellence in service with a Cafritz Award as Urban Forestry Administration (UFA)'s associate director. Besides the prestige, the award carries a \$7,000 prize. John is the third DDOT employee to win this award in three consecutive years (Soumya Dey received one in 2012 and Jose Colon received one in 2013).

"It really isn't about me, but it is about how our team works so well together," said John. "Public service is often criticized by the public and media, but with the help of an amazing team, UFA is changing the perception of public service. We are a motivated and effective team." In a selfless act, John and the rest of his team dedicated his Cafritz Award to the memory of the late Regina Richardson, whom he hired in 2004. Her passion and her work are still appreciated and will never be forgotten, he said.



Associate Director John Thomas heads up UFA.

## Special Feature

*Quite the Experience:*

### DC Summer Youth Learn the Ropes at DDOT



(L-R) SYEP interns George Benton and Michael Phelps at the presidential event in Georgetown to promote infrastructural funding.

This year, DDOT hosted 85 summer youth through the Department of Employment Services' Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). The locally funded initiative provides District youth between 14 and 21 years old with constructive summer work experiences. Below are the opinions of two SYEP interns who worked in the Office of Communications for the five-week program.

*My SYEP Experience*

By George Benton

Working with an agency like DDOT has been quite an experience like none other. Over the past couple of weeks, I've been given the opportunity to attend life-changing events such as watching President Barack Obama speak on making improvements within the transportation system. Before getting involved with DDOT, I thought my position would consist of making copies of worksheets and

sending emails. Instead, I created a survey for the DDOT newsletter, using SurveyMonkey. DDOT actually cares about providing a humbling experience for their interns. Working with DDOT has not only given me a chance to gain more experience within the communication field, but it has also taught me how to work in environments outside of my comfort zone.

*George Benton, 20, is a rising junior at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md., where he studies broadcast communications.*

*My SYEP Experience*

By Michael Phelps

Joining the DDOT team as a summer youth intern through SYEP has allowed me to expand my résumé and knowledge of the city I love. Several weeks ago, I was given the opportunity to attend an event with our 44th President Barack Obama. He discussed the much needed upgrades and funding for transportation in this area. As a DC resident, this was a very important topic to me because I use public transportation daily. Being able to witness President Obama address a topic that impacts me is an experience that is beyond memorable.

Another highlight of my internship was being able to pre-board the new DC Streetcar. I was always curious about how these plans were implemented and finalized. Working with DDOT puts me behind-the-scenes and I appreciate these meaningful experiences. The DDOT team keeps me busy with exciting and well-rounded work, not to mention trips that I will greatly benefit from as I prepare to enter college this fall. I am not just filing papers or distributing mail; I am building valuable skills that contribute to my professional development. Being able to see the work that I did on the agency's website strengthened my confidence in my work product and brought a smile to my face. I am truly thankful for this position, my supervisors, co-workers and SYEP.

*Michael Phelps, 18, recently graduated from Bishop O'Connell in Virginia and is heading to Penn State University this fall to study forensic science.*

## My Life Outside DDOT



**(L-R) Rick and Circe (in hat) visited Bolivia for seven days in July to connect with boys who live in an orphanage there.**

program.

Likewise, for the last two years Rick Kenney has been a program manager for Team 1 in IPMA, leading the efforts on infrastructure projects in Wards 1 and 2.

Beneath their work-life exteriors are two hearts of gold who visited Bolivia in early July on a mission trip with their church. The mission—a call to action from their church, National Community Church (NCC)—was to visit the Bolivia Life Center. The center houses and cares for 48 orphaned boys, ranging in ages from 7 to 18.

“Our church is an interdenominational one with a mission focus, to show God’s love,” said Circe who attends one of NCC’s seven locations on U Street, NW. “NCC has made 27 trips so far this year to various places in the United States and abroad.” The trip to Bolivia was designed to support the work of an NCC missionary who provides adventure therapy for the boys to process their trauma.

“Bolivia is the most impoverished country in South America,” said Rick who attends the 8th Street SE location. His wife, Kelly, joined him on this, their second trip to the Bolivia Life Center.

Rick and Circe joined a team of 13 people who were committed to an extended relationship with the boys. While in Bolivia, the team took the youngsters on various outings, hosted an adventure camp, played games, did arts and crafts, and encouraged them to continue pursuing lives that would lead them to succeed as men of character.

“Because this is my second year, I reconnected with a child I have sponsored, and I’m watching the boys grow,” said Rick. “The way they recognized us, I felt like a far-away distant relative.” Both Rick and Circe have said the boys have touched them, and have become a big part of their lives. The trip has allowed them to appreciate all they have been given even more.

“It’s amazing to see the boys growing—growing up into great young men,” Rick added.

### Employees visit Bolivia on a mission with a purpose

**F**or the past nine years, Circe Torruellas has worked at DDOT on many transit projects and initiatives; most recently as a citywide planner, supporting the Circulator



### DDOT IN THE NEWS

WJLA reporter Mike Conneen interviews Darren Buck about the park-its that will replace the zebras as deterrents for cars, which make illegal U turns on the bike lanes on Pennsylvania Avenue NW. See story [here](#).

#### What’s News @DDOT (Continued from page 2)

engineers go through a series of system integration and operator training in anticipation of the streetcars accepting passengers before year’s end.

### The Silver Line Opens



**On July 26, Mayor Vincent Gray and Acting Director Matthew Brown take the inaugural ride on the new Silver Line train to the Wiehle-Reston East Metro Station.**

# d. Report

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