



TOWN OF UNION *Maine*

Training, training, training! We here at the public works garage have undergone a few staffing changes over the past 6 months. With staffing changes comes new opportunities for current employees. Chris Robinson has stepped into the position of primary excavator operator following the retirement of Bryan Paparello back in November of 2023. I (Tom Fontaine) have stepped in to serve the town as the Public Works Director following the resignation of Matt Elwell. Matt served the town exceptionally well in this capacity and we wish him well with his future endeavors. Corey Witham has taken on the motor grader operations to ensure that we keep our gravel roads meticulously maintained. On that note, I would like to thank Bill Packard of Union, for donating his time and knowledge in training Corey on gravel road grading. Bill brings a wealth of knowledge in this field, and we appreciate all that he has passed along to aid us in the grading process. Matt Russell was hired in February of this year. He has done exceptionally well learning our winter maintenance program and has now taken lead in our mowing operations. Ryan Fowler, our newest hire, started May 28th. He comes from a strong mechanical background as well as some machine and truck operation. He has a strong attention to detail and is always looking for a more efficient way to do things. I believe he will serve the town well for years to come. Additionally, we have registered as an in-house CDL training facility. We can study, train with equipment, and subsequently send drivers for their exam through the BMV. Matt Russell has recently obtained his CDL (B) permit. Corey Witham is studying to upgrade from a CDL (B) to CDL (A) license. CDL licensure makes the crew much more versatile in their capabilities within their job scope. This program is extremely cost-effective for the town and will save us thousands in CDL schooling fees.

Throughout the course of the month, we replaced two driveway culverts, a cross culvert, as well as ditching and shouldering on Guinea Ridge Road. The motor grader spent 83.5 hours in May getting our gravel roads reshaped. As always, the crew added gravel in the low spots to ensure that we maintained the crown and traveling surface. Due to being short-handed for much of the month, we've been doing our best to balance culvert work, gravel road grading, as well as lawncare simultaneously. Our crew has handled this challenge well!

You'll notice that there are two new trees on the Common! On May 23, 2024, Farley, Inc. assisted by Union Public Works, planted a fir tree near the southeast end of the gazebo as well as an elm tree in the green space at the corner of the Common Road and Burkett Road. We would like to thank Vick Pease for his generous donation of the fir tree and the Sestercentennial committee for providing the funds for the elm tree. They've certainly added a special touch to the Common.

We look forward to serving the town of Union with continued commitment towards safety, productivity, and integrity. As always, we welcome your input and encourage you to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Tom Fontaine

Public Works Director

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