

Press release: Innovative roadworks scoop top safety award

The equipment is used to install the road studs which help drivers stay in the right position on the road.

Traditionally, to ensure the work to install the studs can be done safely, two lanes of the road, and sometimes a whole carriageway, need to be closed, with the resulting disruption for drivers.

But the new machine does the job with just one lane closure, leaving extra space for drivers to get past.

Now the innovative piece of kit – used by WJ Group which has facilities in Staffordshire, West Yorkshire, Somerset, Buckinghamshire and Scotland – has scooped a top safety award from Highways England, the company responsible for the country's motorways and major A roads.

It was one of 23 initiatives rewarded at the first Highways England Awards ceremony, designed to recognise activities which further the company's imperatives of safety, customer service and delivery.

Other winners included the introduction of a vehicle brake system that improves road worker safety; ways to save water and minimise the environmental impact of construction sites; a partnership to share important vehicle safety check advice with new parents; and a collaboration with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) which has tangible benefits to the road safety of commercial vehicles.

Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England, said:

The people in our industry work hard to provide the roads that people most need. We face tough safety and cost challenges every day doing just that. These awards are our opportunity to take a step back from the action and recognise a few of the best things our people and suppliers have done this year and say 'thank you'. The whole roads sector sometimes get taken for granted and these awards go some small way to putting that right.

Teams from within Highways England as well as its supply chain partners were among those recognised in the awards. The winning entries were selected from more than 200 submissions.

Judges noted WJ Group's entry noted the innovative equipment went hand in hand with a culture change, and buy-in from the frontline workforce that will make a positive difference to roadworker safety and road users' experience.

Wayne Johnston, WJ Group Managing Director, said:

The roadmarking sector has been operating in much the same way as it did decades ago but the WJ Group have been determined to provide better and safer ways of delivering services.

This excellence in safety award has served to endorse us, not only for the extensive, ground-breaking initiatives and innovations employed to proactively embed an improved safety culture, but also for the part played in sharing our successes across the whole industry.

We are greatly encouraged, because it provides the reassurance that the time spent, and the significant financial investment is exactly what the industry and specifically Highways England require from us.

Given our high-risk environment it was imperative for us to champion these step changes to protect vulnerable operatives, whilst also considering disruption to other road users, our customer.

Now, with renewed vigour, we intend to continue our journey of continual improvement for the benefit of all.

Attendees also had the opportunity share ideas, discover the detail behind some of the featured projects and explore some of the safety initiatives Highways England has implemented and supported over the last year at the event.

In total 23 awards were presented:

Highways England Safety Awards

Excellence in Occupational Health and Wellbeing winners:

Excellence in Safety for Road Users winners:

- A14 Integrated Delivery Team for dynamic traffic management & exemplary recovery on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme
- Highways England joint working with the DVSA

Championing Safety winners:

Leading Behaviour Change for Safety winners:

- P. Flannery Plant Hire for Flannery Training
- Tim Burton, Highways England, changing and influencing health, safety

and wellbeing

Highly commended: Chevron for leading behaviour change

Highways England Delivery Awards

Excellence in Environment and Sustainability winners:

Leading Efficiencies and Continuous Improvement winners:

Project of the Year winners:

- telent Technology and Highways England for successful completion of the complex and challenging NRTS2 contract transition
- Highways England Severn River Crossing toll removal

Highways England Customer Awards

Excellence in Customer Service winners:

Improving Customers Journeys winners:

Improving Employee Engagement and Behavioural Change winners:

- A14 Integrated Labour Team for a game-changing approach to meeting the needs of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme
- Highways England Management Development Programme

Highways England's Chairman's Awards Winners

- Aggregate Industries UK Ltd for SmartBrake – driving improvements in behavioural safety culture and highways industry safety performance
- Highways England Driving Better Business – Highways England's approach to delivering improvements in Work-Related Road Safety

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.