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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Jan. 22, 2014

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## **Parking Areas to Remain Open at I-70 Rest Areas East of Russell**

After weighing public input and the water conservation concerns of city officials, Kansas Department of Transportation officials have decided to keep the parking areas open at the Russell rest areas along I-70.

“The parking areas will remain open to give travelers a place to get out and walk around, but the buildings and water services at this location will be removed,” said KDOT Maintenance Engineer Joe Finley.

Prompted by persistent drought conditions in the region, the city of Russell asked KDOT, as one of its larger non-commercial, non-industrial water users, to review water practices and conservation. After doing so, KDOT developed plans to close the rest areas.

Much of the water used at the rest areas is required to keep waste water lagoons operational during times of low usage and extreme summer heat when there is significant evaporation. Thousands of gallons of fresh water must be pumped directly into the lagoons.

Approximately a month ago, KDOT solicited feedback on plans to close both the east and westbound facilities two miles east of Russell (Exit 184).

“We received considerable feedback,” said Finley. “It is positive when the public provides input and helps shape the outcome.”

Beginning the week of March 3, the rest areas will be closed for one week while the buildings are removed. After that, the parking areas will be reopened.

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