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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Danger lurks in highway work zones

Rick Looper, Kansas Department of Transportation Supervisor in Kansas City, Kan., has seen many close calls in work zones during his 24-year career.

“At one location we had three different drivers come into our work zones and either they drove into our open holes or drove through our freshly poured concrete,” he said. “In all these situations, if we wouldn’t have been paying attention, we would have had five to 10 workers run over.”

Carl Wolf, KDOT Superintendent in Ellsworth, was flagging traffic in a work zone when a motorist failed to stop.

“The car went into the ditch to the left of me and went right on by,” he said. “Other traffic was going by me on the other side. I had nowhere to go.”

Looper and Wolf shared these and other stories at a statewide safety event today in Topeka. They were joined by Transportation Secretary Mike King and Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent Col. Ernest Garcia.

The safety event was one of several activities taking place in Kansas as part of National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 7-11, which raises awareness of the hazards and dangers highway workers and motorists face every day. Last year in Kansas work zones, 379 people were injured and six people were killed.

To raise awareness of the safety effort, public buildings were illuminated in orange, including a portion of the Visitor’s Center in the Capitol, the Eisenhower State Office Building, the Kansas Contractors Association’s office and all Kansas Department of Transportation’s District offices in Topeka, Salina, Norton, Chanute, Hutchinson and

Garden City. The Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge in Atchison is also bathed in orange this week.

Information about National Work Zone Awareness Week can be found on KDOT's website, www.ksdot.org by clicking on the Go Orange logo. It includes safety blogs, photos of people wearing orange in support of highway workers, various videos and more.

When traveling through a work zone, motorists should:

- ♦ Follow traffic control
- ♦ Stay alert
- ♦ Watch for workers
- ♦ Expect delays
- ♦ Allow ample space between you and the car in front of you
- ♦ Change lanes when directed to do so

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