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NEWS RELEASE

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KDOT complying with EPA administrative order

The Kansas Department of Transportation is working closely with federal regulators to address issues of hazardous waste at a Miami County salvage/junkyard that is undergoing abatement.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an administrative order Thursday to “abate an imminent and substantial endangerment created by the past and current activities” at Truck Wholesale Inc. in Wellsville. The order also applies to property owners Mark Lambeth and Joel Lambeth, and to former salvage operator Danny Lambeth.

The EPA said there was an imminent concern that oil and other pollutants from the salvage yard could be discharged into Miami County’s Rock Creek that empties into Hillsdale Lake. The agency’s order requires KDOT and Truck Wholesale Inc. to address the hazardous waste issues and prevent discharges into Rock Creek.

“We have been working along side the EPA and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) for months to address environmental issues at this site,” said Joe Erskine, KDOT Deputy Secretary for Finance and Administration. “This has been a long and difficult abatement process that we’re taking very seriously.”

In January, a contractor hired by KDOT began removing hundreds of old trucks and other salvage materials from the 20-acre property. The removal of large items at the facility was recently completed and KDOT crews were on site today to begin removing old batteries. Final clean-up is expected in several months.

KDOT had been aware of probable environmental issues at the 30-year old site and contacted representatives of the KDHE and the EPA before starting the abatement process. Remedial measures had also been undertaken by KDOT before the order was issued.

An environmental engineering firm has been retained by KDOT to develop a plan to determine where hazardous materials have been disposed, the extent of any off-site migration of the waste, clean up of contaminated areas and prevention of oil and pollutant discharges.

KDOT began abatement action at the salvage yard in January because the business had been operating in violation of Kansas law since 2001. A Notice of Intent to Abate followed six years of legal efforts by KDOT and Miami County to have the owner comply with laws governing the operation of salvage and storage yards.

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