

February 16, 2011

011-013-01

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## **Kansas Students Unveil New Lane Freedom Trail Signs**

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) unveiled new highway signs commemorating the historic Lane Freedom Trail today at Royal Valley Middle School in Mayetta. Speakers at the signing event included:

- Governor Sam Brownback
- Kansas Transportation Secretary Deb Miller
- Nathan McAlister, History Teacher, Royal Valley Middle School
- Kassidy Dahl, Student Body Class President, Royal Valley Middle School;

along with a historical reenactment of Jim Lane by Tim Rues.

In early 2010, more than 65 Royal Valley Middle School 7th grade students, guided by their 2010 National History Teacher of the Year Nathan McAlister, initiated the idea and then worked through the Kansas legislative process to obtain approval for the new Lane Freedom Trail highway signing project.

“This was not only a lesson in Kansas history but as well a hands on experience in the Kansas legislative process for the students,” said McAlister.

The 7th graders researched the trail’s location and detailed history, as well as the locations where they would want to place the signs.

Letters covering the various signing subject matters were sent to Rep. Rocky Fund, Sen. Dennis Pyle, and former Gov. Mark Parkinson with a request to support and push forward their legislation. Rep. Fund took up the torch and introduced the legislation in the House. Eight students, along with McAlister, testified on behalf of the bill before the House Transportation Committee in spring 2010. The bill was passed by the House on a vote of 121-0.

The bill then moved onto the Senate where the students again testified on behalf of the bill. In the Senate, the bill was tabled early in the session. But then, in early May 2010, after more letter writing and more testimony by the students and teacher, the Lane Freedom Trail bill was passed by both the House and the Senate. Gov. Parkinson signed the bill into law on May 24, 2010. The students then worked for the next few months to raise the \$3,330 needed to produce the two signs and pay for future maintenance. The last donation was received in September 2010 and their portion of the project was completed.

The two new signs will be installed by the end of the week on northbound US-75 just north of the 46th Street interchange and on southbound US-75 approximately one mile south of K-16.

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