

Northeast District Office  
121 S.W. 21st Street  
Topeka, KS 66612-1429



phone: 785-296-3881  
fax: 785-296-3720  
[www.ksdot.org](http://www.ksdot.org)

Mike King, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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News Contact: Kimberly Qualls, (785) 640-9340 or [kqualls@ksdot.org](mailto:kqualls@ksdot.org)

# **U.S. 59 Douglas County Expansion Project to Provide Safety Benefits**

The Douglas County stretch of the long-awaited, Lawrence-to-Ottawa U.S. 59 expansion was dedicated today at a ribbon-cutting event at the U.S. 59/56 interchange.

The Douglas County phase will complete a five-year construction project that has been a topic of discussion for decades. The Franklin County phase was completed two years ago.

The Douglas County project, which won't be open to traffic until early October, includes realignment of the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane freeway. The combined construction cost of the 19-mile Douglas/Franklin county projects is \$145 million (\$82 million for Douglas County; \$63 million for Franklin County). When other costs are added in for preliminary engineering, right-of-way and more, the cost is nearly \$220 million.

"The new road will provide enhanced safety and economic benefits for years to come," said Kansas Transportation Secretary Mike King. "For years, U.S. 59 was considered by many to be one of the most deficient in the state and this new road will provide a smooth ride and greater peace of mind for commuters and their families."

In addition to those from KDOT, officials from Douglas County, Lawrence and Baldwin City helped to cut the ribbon at today's ceremony.

Approximately 23 bridges and three interchanges were constructed as part of the two-phase Douglas County project, which began in early 2009.

The U.S. 59 project was funded through Kansas' 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Program (1999-2009).

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