

KDOT

Translines

Bureau of Transportation Information

March 2005

Rural transit facility at Hays dedicated

By Steve Swartz

HAYS – The first building to be constructed in Kansas specifically as a rural public transit facility was dedicated February 7 in Hays.

Secretary Deb Miller and Congressman Jerry Moran of Hays joined federal and local leaders to celebrate the opening of the building owned by Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas (DSNWK). The 14,000-square-foot facility will house eight ACCESS buses.

ACCESS provides rural public transportation in

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Secretary Deb Miller helps four-year old Brad Mathewson become properly restrained in a booster seat during a Child Passenger Safety Week demonstration. For more details, please see story on page 7.

US-69 expansion projects celebrated



Governor Kathleen Sebelius speaks at a ceremony celebrating the first of many projects on US-69 in Louisburg.

LOUISBURG – Hundreds of students joined Governor Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary Deb Miller on February 4 in celebrating the opening of the first of eight expansion projects that will create a US-69 freeway from Louisburg to Fort Scott by 2009.

Nearly 11 miles of the highway from Louisburg south were opened to traffic in January. The Governor, Miller, and state and local officials marked the occasion before students and state and local leaders at Louisburg High School. Also speaking to the crowd of more than 400, which included about 300 Louisburg elementary, middle and high school students, were Rep. Jene Vickrey, R-Louisburg, and Sen. Pat Apple, R-Louisburg.

“It is our hope that this new highway will not only save lives,

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Miller's Time

By Secretary
Deb Miller

Measuring performances

“You should examine yourself daily. If you find faults, you should correct them. When you find none, you should try even harder.”

—Israel Zangwill, “Children of the Ghetto”

The English writer Zangwill knew the value of self-examination to find one’s strengths and weaknesses and to set ways to improve. He maintained that it was an essential process if one was to grow and advance.

While Zangwill, who lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was writing of personal growth, there’s a lesson in his words for KDOT, as well. The initial steps have been taken by our senior leaders to formalize our own process of self-examination – performance measures.

There are three reasons – at least – to develop performance measures:

- 1) It is the only way we can know if we are getting the best value from taxpayer’s dollars. Without quantifiable ways to measure our work, how can we be sure we are doing the best we can?
- 2) While I think we have every reason to feel good about the quality of our work, the public and Legislature demand accountability when we are dealing with taxpayer money. That’s entirely appropriate but we can’t be sure we are spending tax dollars most effectively without some sort of measurement.
- 3) When we spend our dollars wisely, we need to be able to demonstrate that and communicate it. But again, without valid measures, how can we make our case?

This spring, performance measures will be discussed in

internal focus groups throughout the agency. As we identify our strategic goals and develop the means and methods of measuring our progress, we should all keep in mind that the aim is to strengthen our agency through accountability. Even if legislators aren’t asking for these performance measures at this time, we are better off if we tackle this on our own initiative and at our own time. We don’t want to wait to do this until someone is mad at us and is demanding justification for what we are doing.

Already, we have some performance measures in place, such as our state of the art pavement management system, which is used extensively in our decision making. But other DOTs have been operating with sets of performance measures for years. One of those DOTs is in Washington State. Daniela Bremmer, Washington’s director of strategic assessment, has been studying her agency’s performance measurement practices. I want to share a little of what she had to say in a recent interview:

“In the past, performance measurement was mostly done to support planning – to help us understand how to meet short-and-long-range system needs. That has all changed in the past three to four years. Now, agencies are facing credibility and accountability issues. Taxpayers and state legislatures are taking tough stands. . . ‘Before we give you any more money, tell us what you are doing with the current money.’”

Bremmer also said that her agency’s leaders “have the ability to use these measures in different ways for different audiences, and the measures that we have communicate well.” So well, she notes, that she refers to the approach as “Performance Journalism.”

So what shape will our performance measures take and how will they affect you? Those are questions I don’t have answers to just yet. And I would expect that the answers will evolve over time. But one thing I can tell you is that our performance measures will be result-oriented, rather than procedure-oriented.

Taxpayers are demanding accountability today in ways unlike 10 years ago. I expect that future allocation of state resources will be linked to performance and we need to be ready.

The development of performance measures will help us chart a long-term and successful direction for KDOT. I think that KDOT processes will stand up well to our self-examination and where they don’t, we’ll improve them. After all, that’s what successful organizations do and this has always been a successful organization.

KDOT, city, and contractor find solution for Cimarron flooding issue

By Kim Stich

SYRACUSE - During the spring and summer of 2004, the City of Cimarron experienced street flooding on US-50. The flooding was unusual and apparently due to a plugged storm sewer that ran east and west for a half block under the US-50 pavement. KDOT, the City of Cimarron, and J-A-G. Construction partnered together to find a solution to the problem.

Area Three-Cimarron Storm Sewer Repair team members were honored for their efforts in KDOT's Example of Excellence employee recognition program for the fourth quarter of 2004. Secretary Deb Miller attended the event on February 7 in Cimarron.

Cimarron City Superintendent, Don Ratzlaff, contacted KDOT Area Superintendent Mark Davis in Dodge City, and the two groups worked together to find out what was wrong with the pipe. "They discovered that a considerable length of the storm sewer pipe was damaged and packed full of dirt," said District Six Engineer Larry Thompson.

The pipe had been damaged during either the original installation in 1967 or during a Geometric Improvement project in 2002. KDOT

and the City removed 44 feet of concrete pavement and 96 feet of 20-inch concrete pipe. The pipe was replaced and backfilled with flowable fill.



Members of the Area Three-Cimarron Storm Sewer Repair team as well as partners from the City of Cimarron and J-A-G Construction pose with Secretary Deb Miller at the Employee Recognition ceremony on February 7.

Scott Riederer, Vice President of J-A-G. Construction Co., Inc. of Dodge City, agreed to provide labor and equipment to replace the pavement at no cost to the City or KDOT.

KDOT placed traffic control to begin this project on August 2 and by August 17, US-50 was open to unrestricted traffic.

"I feel that this project is not only an Example of Excellence but an excellent example of partnering with our local city and contractor," Thompson said. "Everyone working together was definitely the best solution – together we took a problem and turned it into a win-win situation for everyone."

'I feel that this project is not only an Example of Excellence but an excellent example of partnering with our local city and contractor.'

Larry Thompson

Housman, Rocky Indiek, Bob Kugler, Matthew LaPorte, Elmer Malone, Robert Martin, Steve Shinogle, Roy Trisler, David Ubel, Mel Watson, and Steve

Zimmerman.

Other partners who were part of the team include: Riederer; Don Ratzlaff, City Superintendent, City of Cimarron; Glenn Mayhew, Water & Wastewater

Superintendent, City of Cimarron; Dennis Rohrbaugh, Street and Parks Superintendent, City of Cimarron; and John Rohrbaugh, Mayor of Cimarron.

Do you know of a KDOT group, team, unit, or office that has gone above

the call of duty? Then nominate them for the Example of Excellence award. All KDOT employees are encouraged to suggest ideas and can now fill out Form DOT 1204. Once it is filled out, the nomination is sent to the selected Division Director, Bureau Chief, District Engineer, Area Engineer, or Subarea Supervisor who can then sign the form and submit the nomination to Transportation Information.

Hard copies of the form are still available by calling Transportation Information at 785-296-3585 and require the signature of one of the supervisors listed above.

Nominations for the first quarter are due by March 31.

KDOT
Employee
Recognition
PROGRAM

Bridge inspector has his share of comedy, close-calls

By Amy Link

Ever picture yourself in an action movie?

Edward Burdick doesn't have to. While inspecting a bridge, he had an experience a little too much like a Bruce Willis movie.

Burdick, Bridge Inspector for the Bureau of Design, was doing a routine bridge inspection on K-99, when his life was put in danger. A driver accidentally struck KDOT's maintenance truck, which was parked on the shoulder of the bridge. This caused the truck to hit the bridge inspection crew's Suburban that was directly in front of the truck. Burdick, who was below the bridge inspecting, looked up to see the suburban flip on



Ed Burdick

its side and skid towards the edge of the bridge.

"It was like being in a Bruce Willis movie. The Suburban skidded into the guardrail and onto the deck blocking the road," Burdick said. "It was enough to scare the hell out of me."

Kansas has about 5,270 bridges that are under KDOT's jurisdiction, and federal law requires that they be inspected every two years. The primary responsibility of inspectors is to check for problems in the deck, superstructure, substructure, and sometimes inside the bridge.

Burdick started in the Special Bridge Inspection Department, which oversees the inspection of about 700 bridges. Bridges classified as special have unusual features, such as being very tall or having footing underneath a lot of water.

"Being a Special Bridge Inspector really requires a lot of courage," Burdick said. "Some days you're 90 feet in the air, and other days you're SCUBA diving 20 feet below water."

Now, Burdick is in the Routine Bridge Inspection Section, which is not without its own share of danger. For instance, during routine inspections, traffic is not restricted on the

bridge, thus inspectors are right along side the vehicles.

"Some of the bridges in the Kansas City area have 130,000 vehicles going over them in a day," he said. "And while they're going by they can throw up a lot of gravel at you."

And that's just the top of the bridge; underneath it is where the real danger can be.

Burdick said that crews have found several methamphetamine labs underneath bridges.

"I would say about 25 percent of our bridges have, or have had, meth labs underneath them," Burdick said.

KDOT's Bridge Maintenance crews have had some instruction with how to handle the meth labs, but usually the inspection crews notify the authorities and then continue with their inspections.

These labs are not only a threat to the inspectors if one of them were to explode, the fire could cause serious damage to the bridge.

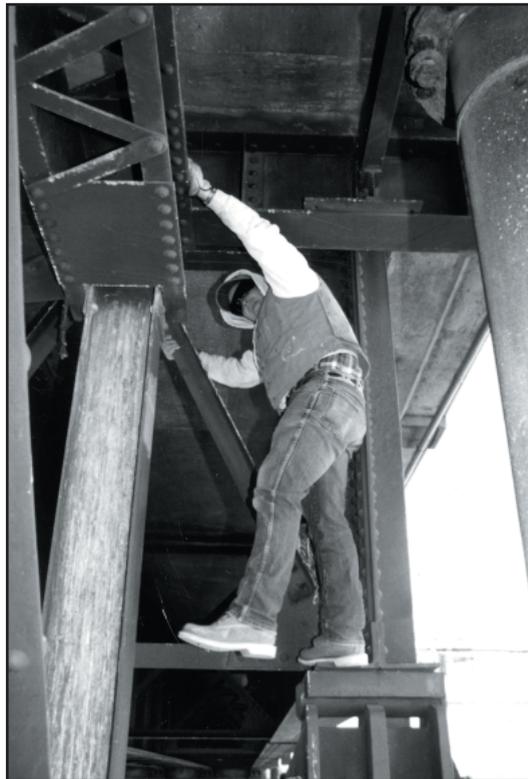
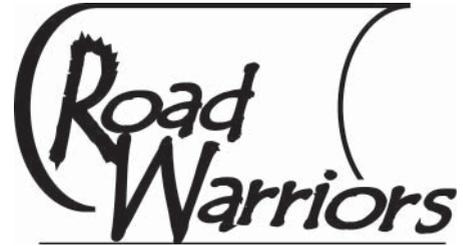
"Some people think that a fire can't harm a bridge but the heat from the fire can cause the concrete to pull away from the steel, which can cause serious damage," Burdick said.

Although Burdick said he doesn't know of an instance where a meth lab fire has harmed a bridge, he does know bridges have been damaged as the result of a homeless person's fire getting out of control.

In urban areas, homeless people building homes under bridges are a common occurrence that the inspectors have to deal with. Burdick said he has surprised several people who have built homes under bridges. Though he always yells "anybody home" before entering what looks like a home, often people don't want to reveal their presence. This led to him once walking in on a naked man.

"You really have to have a sense of humor in this job, because you end up in a lot of situations that make funny stories later on," Burdick said.

One of those includes a time when he and his crew caught



Burdick goes to great heights in order to examine a bridge near Kansas City.

Communication is a two-way street

By Maggie Thompson

“You sure do talk a lot.” How many times have I heard that one before? Trust me; I’ve heard it my whole life. I’ll admit I talk a lot, maybe even too much - this isn’t something new. My family and friends joke that I’ve never met a stranger and I could regale you for hours with stories. I love to make people laugh - I’ll talk to anyone. I guess the ole’ adage about ‘don’t talk to strangers’ never really took hold.

As much as I talk though, I haven’t always been a good listener. Sure, I thought I was - I listened as my parents explained why in high school I couldn’t stay out until 3 a.m. I listened when a friend explained to me his crazy opposing political views. But I wasn’t listening - I didn’t hear what they were saying. Instead I was preparing to tell my side of the story, explain my point of view. We often get caught up in the need to defend

our position, the need to explain ourselves. While this is important - it’s not nearly as important as actually listening to what someone else has to say.

Communication is a two-way street. You have to listen to what the other person is saying before you can effectively communicate with them. That can be hard - especially when you don’t like what the other person has to say. We all need to do a better job of effectively listening to others by understanding what that other person is saying.

On top of all of this we also need to hear what people are saying. Hearing means that we not only understand what’s being said but that we’re also willing to change our feelings, opinion, or course of action based on the message. That doesn’t mean we implement everyone’s ideas. That’s not the answer. This simply means that we’re accepting of finding new ideas and that we’re willing to really look at what people are saying. It doesn’t always mean that we’ll move an interchange, place a new sign, or add shoulders because someone has asked. It only means that we understand what they’re asking for and be willing to make changes if they’re responsible.

I’ve been trying to listen more these days and hear what people are saying. It hasn’t always changed my mind, but at least I know where others are coming from and I’m more open to new ideas. As for talking too much - that probably won’t change but at least now when someone says, “Are you listening to me?” I can say “Yes I am.” -Maggie Thompson is a Public Involvement Liaison at Headquarters

**Communication:
A Key to Success**



Kansas Department
of Transportation



Jude Butler, Information Resource Specialist, (sitting) shows Jane Barton-Greig and Doug Elliot, both of British Columbia, KDOT's Truck Routing Information System.

Canadian province looks to KDOT for truck routing ideas

By Amy Link

At first glance, British Columbia, Canada, and Kansas couldn’t be more opposite.

British Columbia has four mountain ranges; Kansas has Mount Sunflower. The BC has about 16,787 miles of coastline; Kansas is land-locked. The BC has avalanches; Kansas has tornados.

So what could these two possibly have in common? Answer: the need for a state-of-the-art truck routing system.

To meet the trucking demands of an emerging global economy, DOTs of states, provinces, and countries are searching for more efficient ways to route the increasing amounts of truck traffic. This common goal brought leaders of British Columbia’s Commercial Vehicles Safety and Enforcement Branch to Topeka on January 20 and 21 to view KDOT’s Truck Routing Information System up close.

Doug Elliot, Manager of Commercial Transportation for the BC Provincial Government, said his office had first learned about KDOT’s system at a conference in Las Vegas, and later saw two online presentations about Truck Routing Information System or TRIS. Impressed with the presentations, Elliot and Jane Barton-Greig, Project Manager for CVSE, contacted KDOT to set up a visit.

“Whenever a vendor presents a program, they always

Continued on page 11

Construction getting in gear across Kansas

Projects in District One, District Two, and District Three are featured in this edition. Articles written by Joe Blubaugh, District One Public Affairs Manager; David Greiser, District Two Public Affairs Manager; and Gina Mastin, District Three Public Affairs Manager.

DISTRICT ONE

There are several large projects in District One that will be initiated and continued during the 2005 construction season. Two of the biggest are the realignment of US-75 in Brown County and the 87th Street and I-35/US-69 interchange in Johnson County.

The realignment of US-75 will take place from about 1/2 mile south of Fairview to 1 1/2 miles north of Sabetha. The 7.35-mile project will allow traffic to travel straight north on the new facility from the east junction of US-75/US-36.

The project includes two new diamond interchanges - one at the junction of US-75/US-36 and one just east of the city of Sabetha at the US-75/Main Street intersection.

Work that has been completed includes widening US-36 from the east junction of US-75/US-36 and lowering US-36 near the new interchange by 16 feet to take the highway under US-75.

One interesting aspect of the project is three 305-meter test sections of perpetual asphalt pavement. The sections vary in thickness from 275 to 325 millimeters and will include sensors embedded just below the pavement to monitor the asphalt. This project is a joint effort between KDOT, Kansas State University, the Kansas Asphalt Pavers Association, the National Asphalt Pavers Association and the Asphalt Institute.

The two-season project started in September 2003 and is scheduled to be completed by November 18, 2005. Dobson Brothers Construction of Lincoln, Neb., is the contractor on the \$24 million project.

The 87th Street and I-35/US 69 Interchange project in Johnson County is designed to improve traffic flow along the I-35 corridor near 87th Street and US-69 and address the continuing traffic congestion problems in this area. The project involves design work for bridge improvements and one mile of reconstruction along the highway from Quivira Road to Goddard Street through Lenexa and Overland Park.

The bridge improvements and reconstruction will provide a 50 percent increase in lane capacity. Improvements will include an additional through lane in each direction on 87th Street and a new single point urban interchange (SPUI) with dual left turns to replace the diamond interchange. The SPUI will be the first in the Kansas City area.

The 87th Street and I-35/US-69 project is a \$50 million System Enhancement Project being carried out in partnership between KDOT, the City of Lenexa, the City of Overland Park, and Johnson County. It will be completed in fall 2006.

Please visit the project website at www.87th-i35.org to learn more about this project.

DISTRICT TWO

2005 in District Two should show little let up in construction. This is the first year of an I-70 reconstruction project in Dickinson County. The eight-mile project will see the east-

bound lanes and ramps replaced this year. Next year westbound lanes will be reconstructed along with new westbound ramps, and a new bridge at the Solomon interchange. Koss Construction Company of Topeka is the contractor on the approximately \$34.4 million project.

Another major project starting in

2005 is a Major Modification project on US-77/US-56 from the Florence city limits north to a point just south of the US-56/K-150 junction. The total project length is 8.3 miles. The project involves grading, asphalt resurfacing, several box culverts, and a span bridge over the Cottonwood River. Traffic will be detoured from Florence east and north on US-50 to K-150 then west to the US-56/K-150 junction a distance of 36 miles. The project is scheduled to start in March with a completion date on or about September 29, 2006, weather permitting. Venture Corporation of Great Bend is the contractor on the \$11.5 million project.

DISTRICT THREE

Numerous projects will be under way during the 2005 construction season in all four areas of District Three. Two of these include the final phase of the two-year Interstate 70 project west of Russell and the US-36 project west of Norton.



The new US-75 bridge over existing K-246 and the Missouri Pacific Railroad is located just east of Sabetha and is part of the project to realign US-75.

Child Passenger Safety Week designed to increase awareness

It only takes a matter of seconds and proper restraint in a vehicle can save a child's life. That was the important message delivered by transportation officials during National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week in Kansas, February 13-19.

"Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week has a very important ongoing mission – to increase safety and reduce vehicular fatalities involving children," said Secretary Deb Miller. "Studies show that only 60 percent of Kansas children are restrained in any fashion while traveling. That means almost half of all Kansas kids are put into very dangerous situations when riding in a vehicle."

Secretary Miller, Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent Col. William Seck, along with representatives from the Kansas Motor Carriers Association, Kansas SAFE Kids, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration gathered to encourage child passenger safety during a media event at the Kansas Expocentre on February 14.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children. But children ages 4-8 who use booster seats and safety belts are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt. Special emphasis was placed on reminding adults that children under 4'9" should be in a booster seat while traveling in a motor vehicle.

"Many parents are under the false impression that children who have outgrown child safety seats can move right into safety belts, but nothing could be further from the truth," said Miller. "Safety belts, which are designed to fit adults, won't fully restrain a child in a crash."

National Child Passenger Safety Week is an appropriate time to remind all parents, grandparents, child care providers, and other adults in charge of children that if kids are under

4'9" tall, they need a booster seat.

Most toddlers are now regularly restrained, but the problem is not enough kids ages 4-8 are properly and safely restrained. Only 10-20 percent of kids ages 4-8 who should be using booster seats are actually in them. This puts children at an unnecessary risk of being killed or injured in crashes because they are simply in the wrong restraint for their size.

Proper usage of restraints drastically helps to reduce severe injury and death. In fact, studies show that when correctly used, child restraints reduce infant fatalities by 71 percent and toddler fatalities by 54 percent.

"In Kansas during 2003, more than 600 kids ages 4 to 8 were injured in vehicular accidents and five children were killed," said Miller. "KDOT has developed a four-pronged strategy to address this problem, encouraging adults to make sure kids are properly restrained."

The strategy includes:

- ◆ **Seat Distribution** - Two times each year KDOT furnishes more than 1,300 child safety seats and booster seats to child passenger safety technicians across Kansas for distribution to lower income families.

- ◆ **Education** – KDOT continually works to educate the public on the importance of proper restraints for children.



Crash test dummy Vince interacts with children from Quinton Heights Elementary school during a Child Passenger Safety media event in Topeka.

The agency also provides education to Kansans through the Booster to Belts program, which has reached approximately 10,000 people in 23 Kansas counties to date.

- ◆ **Collaboration with Law Enforcement** through the Special Traffic Enforcement Program, or more commonly known as the STEP Mobilization. This includes the Kansas Highway Patrol and other law enforcement officers who look specifically for children who are riding unrestrained without child safety restraints or seatbelts.

- ◆ **Media effort** – An aggressive two-week radio campaign was mounted to promote Child Passenger Safety, with 7,504 ads running statewide. KDOT also ran 554 of the ads in Spanish.

It is a primary law in Kansas that all children under age 14 must be protected by a safety belt and that all children under four must be in a federally-approved child safety seat.

Retirees

The following employees will officially retire from KDOT on April 1.

Headquarters

Richard D. Elliott, Professional Civil Engineer II in Design – 39 years of state service

Robert L. Wandel, Professional Civil Engineer II Design – 27 years of state service

District One - Northeast

Fredrick A. Stone, Equipment Operator Senior at Council Grove – 25 years of state service

District Four – Southeast

Sharon S. Greve, Custodial Worker at Chanute – 18 years of state service

Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters

Eric Finney, Engineering Technician, Materials and Research

Shari Hilliard, Engineering Associate III, Transportation Planning

Nathan Marshall, Engineering Associate II, Design

Adam Teal, Engineering Associate I, Bureau of Design

District One

James Metcalfe, Engineering Associate III, Emporia

Don Wilson, Engineering Associate I, Seneca

District Four

Susan Zentner, Administrative Assistant, Garnett

District Six

James Mangan, Equipment Mechanic, Garden City

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for new hires to Translines.

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in February

10 YEARS

Steve Black Altamont
Jon Evans Chanute
Kathy Lile Ottawa
Dennis Grubbs Lakin
Thomas Palmer Minneapolis
Donald Snyder Hutchinson
Charles Thimesch Pratt
Mark Weiser Norton

20 YEARS

Roger Huff Norton
Oren Johnson El Dorado
Susan Maxon Topeka

40 YEARS

Dean Testa Topeka

This information is compiled by each Office, Bureau, Division, and District.

US-69

Continued from page 1

but also save businesses and create jobs,” the Governor said. “We can’t accomplish our goal of a truly healthy Kansas without new jobs.”

The project expanded the former two-lane stretch of highway to four lanes and cost \$40 million. One other section of the road continuing south for 4.7 miles will be opened later this year.

The entire project, which will create a 55-mile, four-lane freeway from Louisburg to Fort Scott by 2009, will cost approximately \$275 million to construct. It is part of the 10-year, \$13.2 billion Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) that was passed by the Legislature in 1999.

Bill Pollock, president of the US-69 Highway Association of Kansas that has advocated for an improved highway for decades, said the entire project will enhance safety, stimulate economic growth, and bolster population.

“I think we will see a stabilization

of our population and an end to our decline – maybe even see a slight growth,” said Pollock.

Secretary Miller recognized the US-69 group for its long-term pursuit of the highway expansion and thanked the Governor, legislators, and others for supporting the project.

She also thanked the Governor and the 2004 Legislature for preserving the CTP when the state’s economic downturn and other factors threatened the funding for the program. But she cautioned against complacency.

“We should all recognize there are enormous pressures on the Legislature to find a solution for school finance. Some may think that tapping the highway fund could be part of the fix,” said Miller.

“However, I am confident that since it was only last year that the Legislature renewed their commitment to this program, they won’t consider raiding the highway fund a viable option.”

The lead contractor for the 11-mile project is Ideker, Inc., of St. Joseph, Mo. - *S.S.*

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Darleen Bernhardt, Senior Administrative Assistant, Materials and Research

Brad Henry, Engineering Technician Senior, Traffic Engineering

District One – Northeast

Larry Rohr, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Topeka

District Four – Southeast

Mandy Burtnett, Engineering Technician Senior, Iola

District Five– Southcentral

John Berndsen, Equipment Operator Specialist, Winfield

District Six– Southwest

Jeremy Groth, Engineering Technician, Garden City

Dale Luedke, Professional Civil Engineer I, Dodge City



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following letter was sent to the KDOT web site.

This acknowledgement is long over due. However, I want to make you aware of how helpful David Church was when I was in communication with him about my concerns about the safety of K-4. He always returned my calls and was always pleasant. I also want to thank you for the positive steps KDOT took to improve the safety of K-4 in Meriden. I know some think it was a small gesture to change the road markings in Meriden. That minor change has made a big improvement! Thank you for lowering the speed limit, too. I know you didn't do it alone; however I want to recognize your contribution.

Thanks,
Pam Vandervoort, Ozawkie

The following letter was sent to the KDOT web site.

I just wanted to commend you on the quality of the 2003-2004 Kansas State Transportation Map. I travel all over the country and have seen so many maps that look much like a pile of spaghetti thrown at a piece of paper—the lines for the roads are so wide they obliterate the towns they connect! The older Kansas map I had, from the late 1980s or 1990, was much like this, so I was pleasantly surprised to see all the improvements in the new map when I visited Kansas this past autumn.

Being a biologist, I was especially delighted to see the physiographic regions outlined on the map, easy to recognize (that is, the colors were sufficiently distinct) but without obliterating any other details.

Your creation certainly serves as an excellent example of what a state map should be!

Sincerely,
Bob Jacobson

Dear Secretary Miller:

Recently, I am sure you are aware that we have had some rather unusual weather conditions. The ice storm that hit us a few weeks ago paralyzed our ability to cope with the thick hardened ice coating on our side streets. Our attempt to remove the ice had very little or no noticeable effect as it was definitely beyond the capabilities of our snow blade that had been all we needed up till now.

I was not made aware until days later that KDOT was offering assistance to rural communities with similar problems and after having found this out, we joined these other communities by submitting our plea for help as well. We submitted our request via telephone for a sand spreader to help lessen the possibility of a bad accident or in case of an emergency, the emergency vehicles may travel the streets safely. Shortly after making these calls for help, the KDOT dump truck with sand and spreader was fulfilling our request.

Speaking for myself and for the Eskridge City Council, I would like to thank KDOT personnel who took part in answering the call. Personnel such as Jeff Romine and his crew of the Eskridge Subarea Office who has done a wonderful job of making sure our highways are treated in and around the city of Eskridge, he got our first phone call. Roy Rissky, District One Engineer, who got our second phone call and also, we are grateful for the cooperation that Area Two Engineer Earl Bosak has given us as well.

Small cities generally have small funds to work with and they can't possibly afford all that is needed in equipment to fight mother nature, especially conditions as rare as these have been in the recent past. It is comforting to know we can rely on KDOT during unusual times such as these rare and dangerous ice storms. Once again, you have our sincere gratitude for coming to our aid.

Sincerely,
Rex Kraus, Mayor of Eskridge

Burdiek

Continued from page 4

a group of unsuspecting teenagers skinny dipping.

"Those girls were so surprised by us that they took off running and left their class rings and wallets on the bridge," Burdiek said. "I wondered what their parents thought when the Highway Patrol called and told them that some bridge inspectors had found their kids' jewelry."

People are not the only surprises, bridge inspectors find.

"You'd be amazed at what people will throw over a bridge," he said.

During his 15 years as a bridge inspector, Burdiek has found empty beer kegs, pornography, needles, stolen purses (some with IDs and credit cards still inside), and countless other items.

But, perhaps Burdiek's greatest find is a profession he enjoys.

Sure the funny situations make the job interesting, but the most rewarding

and challenging part of bridge inspection are being responsible for the safety of the traveling public, Burdiek said. This responsibility makes being chased by dogs, bulls, or getting a dose of poison ivy (or our state flower as Burdiek calls it) tolerable.

That's why whether it's a comical day or a Bruce Willis kind of day, Burdiek lives by one motto.

"In this job, you always have to think no matter what the situation is — you can make it," Burdiek said.

*Fun Facts
and Trivia*

Do you know?

1. It's the oldest U.S. Army fort in continuous existence west of the Mississippi. It is located on the bluffs of the Missouri River and was established in 1827 as a frontier post to protect trade on the Santa Fe Trail. What fort is it?

2. A fort to protect travelers on the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails was needed. Built as Camp Center, this fort was established in 1853, and in 1866, became the site of the formation of the 7th Cavalry Regiment under Lt. Col. George Custer. During the next three decades, soldiers used this fort as a staging area to protect the expanding frontier. What fort is it?

Do you know some fun KDOT facts or trivia?

Send them to Shanna Anderson at shanna.ksdot.org.

1. Fort Leavenworth
2. Fort Riley

Answers



**Step Back
in Time**

Workers pour concrete during deck construction on a bridge built over the Arkansas River in 1955. The structure was just over 1,000 feet in length and spanned the flood control levee carrying the Arkansas River located between the city of Hutchinson and South Hutchinson.

Construction

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Last year the sinkholes in Russell County were filled and a county bridge spanning I-70 was impressively removed in just seven hours using explosives during the first phase of the two-year project. This year milling and in-place cold recycling with a bituminous overlay will take place on both the eastbound and westbound lanes. The Hays Construction office in Area Three is overseeing the I-70 venture. The 13.25-mile project begins at the Russell/Ellis county line and proceeds east to near the Pioneer Interchange exit. APAC Kansas Shears Division – Hays Division is the contractor on the \$14.8 million project.

The road will be closed to one lane of traffic in each direction one section at a time. The contractor was given a completion date of November 18, but is expected to be finished before then. Grading, also under the direction of APAC, will be done concurrently once the asphalt is built. K-257 from I-70 into the City of Gorham, as well as a county road, will be paved

in conjunction with the I-70 project.

In Area One, work will resume in early spring on 6.4 miles of US-36 west of Norton. The \$5.7 million project includes replacing the Prairie Dog Drainage Bridge. Reece Construction, of Scandia, will be replacing the bridge one half at a time with a prestressed concrete beam bridge. Traffic will be reduced to one lane over the bridge using traffic signals during this period.

The shoulders along this stretch of highway will be redone with a fly ash treated subgrade while a cold in place recycle with five inches of asphalt overlay will be done on

the mainline. A pilot car will be used to direct traffic through construction while this work is being completed. Venture Corporation of Great Bend is contracted for this portion of the project. Grading will be done simultaneously by Adams Construction, of Arapahoe, Nebraska. Prior to the asphalt paving, B & H Builders of Kingman will add curb and gutter as well as place concrete ditch liners to help control drainage and prevent soil erosion. Work is expected to last through October.



Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of two KDOT employees who recently passed away.

Tim L. Mutschelknaus, 47, died January 18 in Topeka. He was an Assistant Bridge Engineer in the Bureau of Design. He is survived by his wife, Susan Barker, two sons, his father, one brother, and two sisters.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Ian and Drew Mutschelknaus Scholarship Fund and sent in care of Credit Union One of Kansas, 610 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, or the America Cancer Society, 1315 SW Arrowhead, Topeka, 66604.

Wayne F. Minner, 60, died January 25 in Topeka. He worked for the Bureau of Design for 41 years. He is survived by two sons, two daughters, his mother, two brothers, three sisters and seven grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Wayne Minner Memorial Fund and sent in care of the Mercer Funeral Home, Holton, P.O., Box 270, Holton, 66436.

Calendar of Events

March 2-3 - Kansas-Missouri Highway/Railroad Safety Conference, Doubletree Hotel, 10100 College Boulevard, Overland Park.

March 8 - 11 a.m. KDOT Employees' Council Meeting, Third Floor Eisenhower State Office Building.

March 11 - 9:30 a.m. Highway Advisory Commission Meeting, Eisenhower State Office Building in Topeka.

March 14-17 - ITS Heartland Annual meeting, with MOVITE, Topeka Capitol Plaza. To register, contact vjohnsen2@unl.edu or Shari Hilliard, 785-296-6356.

March 16 - 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting at the Topeka Capitol Plaza.

March 19 - KDOT Golf tournament - Blueballs Event (two-person scramble), 9 a.m., Village Greens, Ozawkie. To enter, contact Karen Peterson at 785-296-6468 or Kevin Adams at 785-296-5297.

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Truck

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make it sound real good," Elliot said. "We wanted to see what the users actually thought about it, and if they got everything they expected out of it."

TRIS is a Web-based system that uses up-to-date data provided by Geospatial Information Systems or smart maps.

Since not all Kansas roads or bridges can support trucks with oversized loads, trucks carrying in excess of 80,000 pounds must have a permit and a KDOT-approved route. The routes are determined by using the Web-based TRIS program. Trucks taller than 14 feet, or more than 8 feet, 6 inches wide are also under TRIS's jurisdiction.

Prior to TRIS, this process involved paper maps and required lengthy time investment on the part of KDOT personnel. As a result, Traffic Engineering, Bridge Evaluation, GIS unit, and Computer Services formed a team and began researching other methods of truck routing in 1999, Jude Butler said. Butler, Information Resource Specialist, said the team then began developing the TRIS system, which was completed in September 2003.

And, for the most part, KDOT has been happy with TRIS.

"Users have three options when making their route selections: they can select by segment, by road name, or by their beginning and ending segments," Butler said. "TRIS then tells them where they can travel and the bridges or highways they must avoid."

Lynn Washburn, Bridge Evaluation-squad leader, said that of the state's 5,000 bridges, there are about 200 that pose problems for oversized loads. However, there are not enough to prevent drivers from getting to their destinations.

"We sometimes have to send them around the horn but they get there," Washburn said. "I'm sure they don't like the extra miles, but this is much safer."

This is an issue for British Columbia to address as well. And Barton-Greig mentioned it will be more difficult given British Columbia's terrain.

"Our country has many mountains and is very rocky, which means we have a lot of areas where there is only one road in and one road out," Barton-Greig said.

Both KDOT and British Columbia are dealing with increased volumes of truck traffic. Elliot said growth and expansion of the oil and gas industries has generated much of the increase in truck traffic. This increase has been a burden on their small staff, he said.

"Currently we have 136,000 permits for oversized loads," Elliot said. "And we only have three engineers who do routing analysis for the entire province."

Thus, it was time for a change. And, Barton-Greig said, KDOT's system seemed to be the right fit. "It's a state-of-the-art system, that is very cost-efficient," she said.

Barton-Greig also said she was very appreciative of KDOT allowing them to come and observe the system in action. "This way we'll know if the ends justify the means," she said.

DSNWK

Continued from page 1

Hays and Ellis County. Forty-five percent of its riders are disabled, about 25 percent are elderly, and 20 percent are the general public.

“Public transit is playing an increasingly important role in how we address some of the demographic changes we are experiencing in Kansas,” said Miller. “I would expect that many other communities will want to see what you have done here.”

In addition to providing a home for ACCESS, the DSNWK facility will be the home base for another transit service – an intercity bus that travels from St. Francis to Hays five days a week utilizing three different routes.

The building has a 16-bay parking garage, three work bays, and offices.

“This transportation facility is a great resource for Northwest Kansas. The service offered from this base is an example for other rural communities of a way to increase the quality of life of its citizens,” said Moran.

The property on which the building sits was once a Kansas Highway Patrol office and it was sold to DSNWK by



Secretary Deb Miller and Congressman Jerry Moran, left of Miller, applaud after DSNWK’s Ron Straight officially dedicates his agency’s new public transit facility during a ribbon-cutting ceremony February 7 in Hays. Straight, who is next to Moran, also is flanked by Mokhtee Ahmad, a former KDOT employee who now works for the Federal Transit Administration.

KDOT in October 2003. Construction of the \$1.85 million facility was funded through federal money administered by KDOT.

“This is an important service for the older population in Northwest Kansas,” said Ron Straight of DSNWK. “This facility will allow us to get our buses out of the elements, extend their service life,

and make the most efficient use of our funds.”

Later this year a computer dispatch system – Automatic Vehicle Locator – will be installed. The system, which tracks the location of ACCESS buses, will improve efficiency by assuring that the nearest bus always responds to a call.

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