

Translines EXPRESS

July 3, 2019

Example of Excellence



Congratulations to members of the Field Maintenance Manager Team for being selected as the Example of Excellence for the first quarter of 2019. The team was honored at a ceremony on June 26 in Topeka. The team worked together to create a new training program for Highway Maintenance Supervisors and other field managers to supplement on-the-job experience and provide information on work task improvements and uniform practices. Members of the team include, first row, left to right; Galen Ludlow, Dave Studebaker, Troy Whitworth, Jim Frye, Larry Rohr, Rodney Bencken; second row; Sharron Holliday, Jeff Tice, Denise Schwab, Johnnie Lira, Gelene Savage, third row; Max Dirks, Julie Lorenz, Burt Morey, Clay Adams and Larry Thompson. Photo by Support Services



Safety

A KDOT employee was involved in a rollover accident in District One in June. The driver was wearing his seat belt and received minor injuries. This is a good example of why wearing a seat belt is so important, said Director of Operations Larry Thompson. Always remember to buckle up for safety. Photo provided by District One

District Four



City, county and state officials cut the ribbon for the U.S. 69 expansion project on June 24.

By Priscilla Petersen, District Four

U.S. 69 expanded: The drive to Kansas City from southeast Kansas just got a little safer for students, truck drivers and travelers.

U.S. 69 is now a four-lane upgradable expressway from Fort Scott all the way south to the Bourbon-Crawford County line. Officials and citizens gathered to celebrate the completion of the latest highway expansion project on June 24 at the Cherry Grove Baptist Church along U.S. 69.

Gov. Laura Kelly, Secretary Julie Lorenz and many U.S. 69 advocates gathered in the church yard for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the finished project.

“Our roads allow us to carry our most precious cargo, our kids,” Gov. Kelly said. “Today’s expansion will make this stretch of highway safer and more accessible.”

Gov. Kelly added that the promise to complete the four-lane highway all the way to Pittsburg will be kept. Estimated completion for two projects that will complete those 11 miles is expected in fall 2022.

Prior to the ribbon-cutting, Secretary Lorenz thanked Gov. Kelly for her leadership and support of a high-quality modal transportation network. She said that U.S.



Secretary Julie Lorenz speaks to the media about the U.S. 69 project after the event.



Gov. Laura Kelly addresses the crowd at the U.S. 69 expansion celebration. Photos by Support Services

69 has long been a regional priority.

“Investments in roads help people and goods get to where they need to go today, and where they want to go tomorrow,” Lorenz said. “The outcomes are expected to be even brighter in this part of the state.”

Lorenz cited the findings of a 2010 study that showed the expansion of U.S. 69 to four lanes would create more than 4,000 new jobs and \$138 million in new wages.

“You can hear and see we expect increased truck traffic as industry is added and more jobs are created,” Lorenz said. “Four lanes of highway will increase safety and reduce congestion.”

KDOT began construction in 2017 on the six-mile Bourbon County project. Two lanes were added to the previously existing U.S. 69 alignment. At-grade intersections were constructed at Arrowhead, Birch, Cavalry, Deer and Fern Roads. Koss Construction of Topeka was the primary contractor on the \$21.8 million project.

To see video highlights of the event, click [here](#).

Trivia!

Apples

1. What is the only apple native to North America?
2. About how many apples are needed to make one nine-inch pie?
3. What state has the apple blossom as its official flower?
4. How many varieties of apples are grown in the U.S.? In the world?
5. What is the science of apple growing called?
6. Apples are the second most valuable fruit grown in the U.S. What is the first?

KTA



Above, crews raise the vertical clearance of a bridge located at mile marker 102 on I-35/KTA. Photo by KTA

Brief - Each month, the KTA spotlights a construction project along the Turnpike. This month, Shannon Moore, discusses the two-year bridge project in Shawnee County. Watch the video [here](#) to learn more.

*Have a safe and
happy Fourth of July*

All state offices will be
closed on Thursday, July 4.

Retiree

The following employee retired on July 1 from KDOT.

Headquarters

Ruby Hilton, Engineering Technician Specialist, Structures & Geotechnology Services

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. The crabapple.
2. About two pounds.
3. Michigan
4. 2,500 varieties in the U.S., 7,500 variety in the world.
5. Pomology.
6. Oranges.

In Memory

♦Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee John Waller who recently passed away in Topeka. Waller began his career with KDOT in 2008 and was most recently the Special Bridge Inspection Engineer, a position he had held since 2012.

♦Condolences to the family and friends of retiree Verlin "Lee"



John Waller

Schroeter, who passed away on April 30 in Topeka. Schroeter retired in 1998 after 35 years of service. He was an Engineering Technician Specialist in the Bureau of Local Projects.

♦Condolences to the family and friends of retiree Clifton James Combs who passed away on May 17 in Kansas City. Combs retired in 2014 after 35 years of service. He was an Engineering Technician at the Olathe office.

District Five

By Tim Potter, District Five

Quick repairs: Driving on K-14/K-96 about two miles south of Sterling, you would never know there had recently been a huge hazard caused by flooding.

A KDOT crew tackled the monster hole.

KDOT's Randy Miller remembers how startled he was when he stuck a broom handle down into the murky floodwater that had filled the void.

Miller, Area Four Maintenance Supervisor in Lyons, wanted to see how deep the water stood in the hole, gouged out by flooding. The hole began at the edge of the pavement. The broom plunged down 52 inches.

KDOT discovered the void after May flooding receded. It took up to 20 workers about eight hours to fill the hole – 20 feet wide, 30 feet long, up to 6 feet deep. It took roughly 150 tons of fill material.

It's an important highway stretch for "every kind of traffic imaginable," Miller said.

And there was a risk for any motorist who might have encountered the hole. "If they (drivers) had dropped off, they would have dropped off into the void," he said.

No accidents occurred, thanks to crews closing the highway while high water crossed the road and flagging traffic safely around the damage until repairs could be finished, said Area Four Area Engineer Michelle Burnett.

KDOT made sure the erosion didn't extend under the highway, replacing some asphalt.

Fixing the hole required help from KDOT workers from Larned, LaCrosse and Great Bend. Burnett said she was proud of all the teamwork.

It was just part of the flooding repairs. Workers also fixed damage three miles south of Lyons. Crews used about 100 tons of material on about 2,000 feet of shoulder.

"We did what we had to do," Miller said, "to make it safe for the traveling

At right, you would never know there had been a hole there now. It took roughly 150 tons of fill material.



Above, is the monster hole KDOT workers tackled south of Lyons along K-14/K-96. Flooding gouged out the hole next to the pavement. The hole was 20 feet wide, 30 feet long, up to 6 feet deep. Photos by Randy Miller, District Five.



General

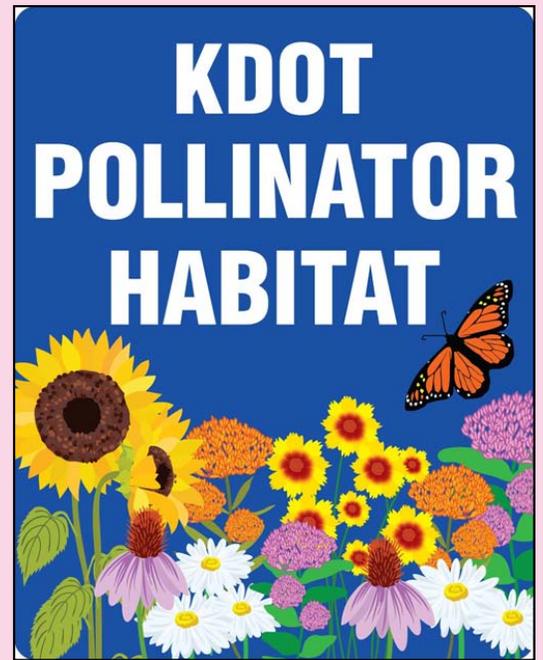
By Mallory Goeke, Headquarters

Bee productive: Pollinators are vital to Kansas' economy as about three-quarters of the world's flowering plants and many of the food crops eaten in North America depend on pollinators. In the U.S., pollination produces nearly \$24 billion worth of products annually.

Unfortunately, bee and Monarch butterfly populations are on the decline. In order to help change that, KDOT crews will be busy planting native wildflowers and grasses along the roadways for the fourth year in a row thanks to a partnership with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

Last September, KDOT was awarded a \$65,000 grant by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the restoration and enhancement of rights-of-way for Monarchs. The grant will provide 125 acres of pollinator habitat to be completed within the next two summers.

About 100 acres will be planted this year at the I-35/U.S. 59 interchange, the Linn County rest area, the I-35/Homestead Lane interchange and the Montgomery County rest area. Next year, an additional 22 acres will be added in Franklin County.



District Two



At left: Donnie Burkholder, Equipment Operator Senior in Salina, removes debris from the ditch. Below: Terry Shank, Equipment Operator Senior in Salina, stops traffic while motorists travel east through the work zone. Photos by Ashley Tammen

By Ashley Tammen, District Two

Excavator clears drainage area: Road work signs were set up on June 19 and work began on the drainage ditch along the North side of K-140 between Brookville and Bavaria in Saline County to allow the water to flow freely down the ditch. Scott Allen, Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Salina, said the excavator was used to clear a large amount of built-up dirt and debris from the ditch. He said doing this should help prevent the road from flooding. This area of K-140 is a flood-prone area that the crew is frequently called out during heavy rainfall.



District Three



By Lisa Mussman, District Three

I-70 reconstruction: A multi-year reconstruction project on I-70 in Gove County in northwest Kansas has kicked into high gear for the summer.

Project work includes pavement replacement on both the eastbound and westbound lanes on a nine-mile stretch starting one mile west of the K-23 spur near Grainfield and ending four miles east of K-211. Work began last fall with the installation of temporary crossovers in preparation for the new pavement, with the eastbound lanes scheduled to be completed in 2019 and westbound lanes in 2020.

Additional project work also includes pavement replacement at the eastbound and westbound rest areas near Grainfield, construction of new right of way fencing, lighting installation at exits 95 and 99, and reconstruction of the box structure carrying Gove County Road 62 under I-70 into two new span bridges.

Debbie Tanking's road squad and Brad Rognlie's bridge squad designed the project.

Updates on the project and current travel impacts can be found at www.I70Gove.com.

Top photo: The eastbound lanes have been milled down in preparation for new pavement to be installed this summer and fall. **Middle right:** Crews prepare the surface for a polymer overlay. **At right:** Construction crews work on the new span bridge that will carry eastbound I-70 over Gove County Road 62. Photos by Todd Anderson and Jon Corkins. District Three.



District Five

By Tim Potter, District Five

Dirt work: A KDOT geotechnical team recently gathered bulk soil samples and performed on-site testing at the U.S. 281/U.S. 50 roundabout construction site in Stafford County.

The Topeka team - Chief Geotechnical Engineer Luke Metheny, Geotechnical Specialist Bryan Pope and Engineering Technician Specialist Ed Eneihen – gathered soil and data to test how much load the soil will bear.

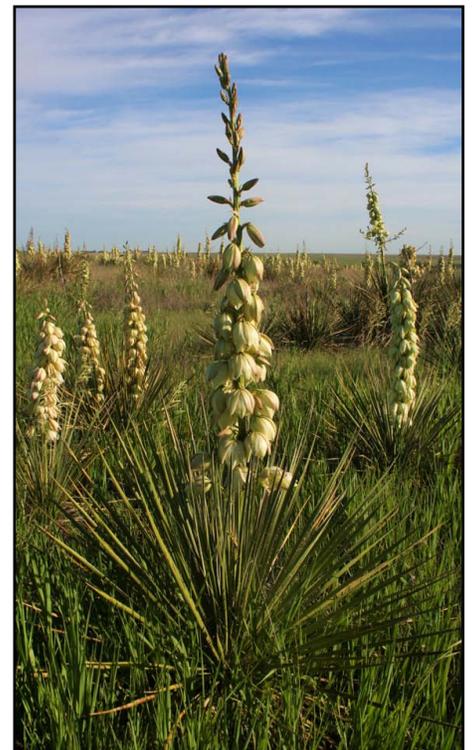
Venture Corp. of Great Bend is the contractor on the \$5.2 million roundabout highway interchange project south of St. John. Steven Bass' road squad designed the project.



A KDOT geotechnical team from Topeka works at the U.S. 281/U.S. 50 roundabout construction site in Stafford County. They include, from left, Chief Geotechnical Engineer Luke Metheny, Engineering Technician Specialist Ed Eneihen and Geotechnical Specialist Bryan Pope. Photo by Nick Squires, District Five

Scenic

Neil Croxton, Headquarters, took photos recently of a storm approaching a wheat field in Marion County and a yucca plant in Sherman County.



Do you know of a KDOT retiree not receiving the electronic KDOT newsletter Translines?

Please let them know that if they are interested in receiving it, send an email to Kim.stich@ks.gov

Kansas Transportation

Monday, July 1

Motoring Monday - Cimarron National Grassland

By Lisa Knoll, District Six

Travelers to the extreme southwest corner of Kansas will find the Cimarron National Grassland, one of only 20 natural grasslands in the U.S. A place that if you close your eyes for a few minutes can take you back in time almost 200 years to the gentle call of the Cimarron River, the quiet solitude of Middle Spring and the creaks and groans of the wagon trains as they bumped along the Santa Fe Trail.

With more than 100,000 acres, the Cimarron National Grassland is the largest area of public land in Kansas and home to the longest publicly-owned section of the Santa Fe Trail. Visitors will find Santa Fe Trail ruts still visible today, as well as Point of Rocks and Middle Spring. Point of Rocks is a large outcropping of rock that could be seen from miles around and marked the way for trail weary travelers to Middle Spring, one of only three reliable water sources along a 50-mile stretch of the trail.

Following its Santa Fe Trail days, the area was used extensively for ranching and grain production. However, the Dust Bowl in the 1930s heavily damaged the area with Morton County, which is home to most of the Grasslands. It was named the most devastated county in the nation. The Federal government began buying the land from bankrupt farmers and implemented aggressive conservation efforts that restored the Grasslands to their natural beauty.

Today, the Grasslands are home to three distinct ecosystems - the shortgrass prairie, sand-sage prairie and wooded riparian along the riverbed. Visitors will find deer, antelope and other wildlife on the grasslands and opportunities to enjoy bird watching, scenic driving, picnicking, camping and fishing.

Above, pretty flowers can be seen throughout the area. At right, Point of Rocks. Photos provided by Cimarron National Grassland

See more stories on the Kansas Transportation blog at <http://kansastransportation.blogspot.com/>

