

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

Feb. 19, 2020

Governor moves transportation plan FORWARD



Secretary Julie Lorenz and Gov. Laura Kelly share details on the FORWARD transportation program on Feb. 12. Photo by Larry Katsbulas

Gov. Laura Kelly and Secretary Julie Lorenz announced a new transportation program, FORWARD, at a Feb. 12 news conference as part of the Transportation Day activities at the State Capitol.

“Key features of FORWARD include a flexible, responsive rolling program where major projects are selected every two years rather than once a decade,” Gov. Kelly said.

“FORWARD also calls for completion of delayed T-WORKS projects; transit, aviation, rail, bike and pedestrian solutions that solve problems in rural and urban Kansas; and more partnerships with local communities to increase both local matches and the number of improvements we can make.”

FORWARD also will provide more resources to communities through new initiatives such as the Cost Share, Local Bridge Improvement and Strategic Safety programs to help address Kansans’ pent-up demand for transportation investments, Secretary Lorenz said.

Gov. Kelly and Secretary Lorenz stressed the need to end transfers out of the State Highway Fund. Over the past several years, more than \$2 billion has been transferred, causing the state highway system’s condition to decline. Gov. Kelly’s budget, with the Legislature’s support, began to reverse that trend last year.

“To pass FORWARD, we must close the ‘Bank of KDOT’ – and make sure that funding for transportation is spent on transportation,” Kelly said.

Gov. Kelly has pledged to close the “Bank of KDOT” by the end of her first term. The FORWARD program is a plan for Kansans, developed in

consultation with Kansans, that works for the whole state.

“Kansans are ready to build a better transportation system for themselves and for future generations,” Secretary Lorenz said. “With FORWARD, KDOT will be ready to deliver.”



In this edition: Spotlight on KDOT engineers as part of National Engineers Week

KDOT certifies 20 employees as commercial drone operators

Twenty KDOT employees from across the state were certified on Feb. 14 as Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) commercial drone operators.

Drones represent a number of opportunities for the transportation industry to become more efficient. KDOT's Division of Aviation partnered with K-State Polytechnic for 18 months to establish formal drone training for infrastructure inspectors.

This 20-person class included several Divisions at Headquarters and every KDOT District across the state. Participating KDOT employees included Jonathan Baker, Lynn Berges, Warren Ebberts, Logan Falletti, Colby Farlow, Rich Hamit, Kenneth Hallgren, Mervin Lare, Bill Legge, Bret Mathias, Sally Mayer, Erik Meyer, Tim Nichols, Thomas Nordling, Mike Orth, Karlton Place, Justin Shaw, Kristin Stein, Ian Stringham and Robert Brooks

"We are proud of the teamwork represented by this diverse class and look forward to leveraging new technologies to enhance the effectiveness of our Kansas transportation system," said Secretary Julie Lorenz.



Stone was used often in construction in Lincoln County as seen in this photo by KDOT Geologist Neil Croxton. This is near the Post Rock Scenic Byway along a county road.

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Chainsaw safety: Right stance is one part of it

By Tim Potter
District Five

When you think of highways, you might not think of chainsaws.

But KDOT maintenance workers use chainsaws to keep encroaching trees back from roadways and to clear drainage areas and right of way along highways.

District Five employees recently got chainsaw training. Part of the message: "You always stand outside the plane of the blade," says District Five Safety Specialist Paul Thomas.

Another way to think of it: Keep yourself on the left side of the saw to protect yourself if the blade were to kick back on you.

The training Thomas gives includes safety tips from the chainsaw maker Stihl. One of those tips: Keep the body entirely outside "the plane of chain rotation." Envision a triangle with the narrowest point starting in front of the saw blade and extending along the ground behind the blade and angling up from behind the blade.

The training notes that chainsaw injuries can be severe. Many of the wounds occur to the legs, knees and left arm and wrist. Fatigue and complacency are key factors in accidents.

Speaking of stance and positioning: The proper way is to firmly grab the front handlebar with the left hand. For the best control, keep the left elbow straight, and keep the thumb under the handlebar.

With the saw running at top speed, start the cut at the base of guide bar. Don't cut with the nose of saw. Avoid pinching the blade.

Stand on firm ground. Balance your weight on both feet, with feet diagonal to each other.

Other tips, reminders:

- Use the right protective equipment: Safety glasses, face shield, hard hat, ear plugs, earmuffs, leather gloves, chainsaw chaps, KDOT approved work boots.



District Five Equipment Operator Chris Blume, left, wears protective clothing during recent chainsaw safety training provided by Safety Specialist Paul Thomas. Photo by Chris Collins, District Five

- There should be a minimum of two people working at the chainsaw site.
- Operators should keep a safe distance between each other.
- Engage the chain brake when moving a short distance. Turn off the saw when moving from one spot to another. Carry the saw blade pointing back behind you.
- Don't get in a hurry. Assess before you cut.
- Have an escape route, clear of debris, before downing a tree.
- Doing aerial or bucket-truck work requires special training.

Don't operate within 15 feet of a power line. Call the utility company to clear limbs or cut power. Then KDOT workers can safely complete the job.





KDOT employee E.R. Redburn points out parts of the snowplow to the students.

Students get first hand look at snowplow

By Lisa Knoll
District Six

Dighton Elementary School recently invited Dighton Subarea crew members Perry Wilkinson and E.R. Redburn to visit with third grade students about KDOT and the work that KDOT does. The students had been studying what cities and counties do.

Their teacher, Anissa Wilkinson, wanted the students to understand the state's role in their community and county. Wilkinson and Redburn brought along a fully-equipped snowplow, giving students the opportunity to see first hand what KDOT does and how the equipment operates. They also shared a PowerPoint presentation with the students explaining KDOT's responsibility to maintain the roads, signs and ditches.

Ron Hall, District Six Engineer, recognizes the



KDOT employees Perry Wilkinson and Redburn talk to the students about KDOT's responsibilities. Photos by Lisa Knoll, District Six.

importance of participating in community events.

"These events help students understand who KDOT is and what we do. In addition, it exposes students to career paths they don't see or hear about every day," he said.

See related photos on page 6

RWM improves the work flow at KDOT

By Kim Stich
Headquarters

Records and Workflow Management (RWM) is not something most employees think about. But everyone in KDOT uses RWM whether it's signing timesheets, looking at employee or medical files, processing forms, analyzing high accident areas and more.

"People will ask me what's in document management, and I respond, what's not in document management," said Cindy Wade, RWM Supervisor. "With about 5 million documents in OnBase, there is a lot of information."

RWM includes three types of electronic forms: fill and print forms; ad hoc routed forms that use the computer to fill out or to choose who to route to; and workflow enabled forms that are integrated with other systems to automatically pull and update data or provide information for tracking and reporting.

Generally, there are about 3,800 active forms in process at one time, being routed to and from different offices across the state. Making all these forms electronic has multiple benefits.

"For example, field employees used to have accident-related forms in the glove box, and every time something happened, they had to pull out all these forms, fill them out and send them to someone," Wade said. "Now it's a one-stop shop – you complete the Accident and Loss form, it tracks everything and is automatically forwarded to workers comp, legal and getting repairs made."

The forms also improve efficiencies. "As we implemented the automated routing of forms, we saw about a 60 percent decrease in the time it takes to process a form," she said. "And that's not the time it takes to do the work – it's the time of mailing from office to office, processing, filing, etc. When the workflow is finished, the form is stored in OnBase for long-term retention."

With the electronic system, paper is no longer needed to fax files from office to office or to retain records. Quality is also improved – the form knows when something is wrong and can't be submitted until all the data is entered correctly.

Wade said her team is continuing to improve and add new forms to help KDOT employees complete tasks in a timely manner.

Thank you for your service

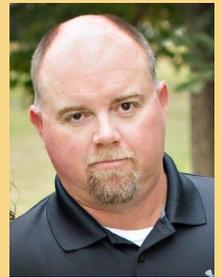
The following employee is retiring on March 1.

District Five

Gregory Delaney, Equipment Operator Senior,
Coldwater

In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Trevor Thornton, who passed away Feb. 6 in Osborne. Thornton joined KDOT in 2000 as an Equipment Operator at the Osborne Subarea and promoted to Supervisor in 2011. He also served on the District Three snowfighter training committee and the CDL training committee.



Trevor Thornton

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Valentine "Tim" Torrez who passed away on Feb. 9 in Dodge City. Torrez joined KDOT in 1989 as a Mechanic's Helper and later served as an Equipment Operator. He was serving as an Engineering Technician III in the Dodge City Construction Office.



Tim Torrez

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Charles "Chuck" Miller who passed away on Feb. 16 in Topeka. Miller worked for the Kansas Department of Administration for 17 years, retiring in 2010. He then came to KDOT later in 2010 in the Bureau of Fiscal Services as a Procurement Officer III.



Chuck Miller

Trivia!

50-year anniversary of the “Mary Tyler Moore Show”

1. Who was originally invited to audition for the role of Lou Grant?
2. Who was first offered the role of Ted Baxter?
3. What non-actor was seen in every episode of the show?
4. The success of the show created three spin-off shows. What were they?
5. How many years did the show run? How many Emmys did it receive?
6. What was the name of the MTM kitten?



Lawrence Subarea Supervisor Mark Mestagh and District One Public Affairs Manager Kelly Kultala spoke to kindergarteners at Eudora Elementary School on Feb. 12 about how weather affects the roads and what KDOT does to clear the roads. Then the students came outside to look at the snowplow. Mestagh answered questions and explained to them what the different parts on the truck do during snow and ice events.

Trivia answers

1. Gavin MacLeod. Afterward, MacLeod thought he would be a better fit for Mary’s co-worker, Murray Slaughter.
2. Jack Cassidy (an actor who was also David and Shaun Cassidy’s father). The role eventually went to Ted Knight.
3. Hazel Frederick. She was shopping in downtown Minneapolis and saw a lady stopped and toss her hat into the air (Mary Tyler Moore). The film crew was using hidden equipment to keep the scene more natural and didn’t even stop traffic.
4. “Rhoda,” “Phyllis” and “Lou Grant.”
5. It ran for seven years and won a total of 29 Emmys.
6. Mimsie. They visited animal shelters and picked an orange kitten with the loudest “meow.” The kitten was adopted by a crew member and lived to be 20 years old.



In March, KDOT plans to start construction on a previously delayed T-WORKS project to reconstruct 7½ miles of U.S. 169 from Welda north to Garnett. The south section, from Welda to the U.S. 59 junction, will be fully reconstructed with 12-foot lanes and 10-foot shoulders. The existing two lanes will be rehabilitated and 10-foot shoulders will be added to the section north of U.S. 59, pictured. Bettis Asphalt & Construction Company, Inc., of Topeka is primary contractor on the \$21 million project. KDOT is holding a groundbreaking for this project on Feb. 21 at Welda. Greg Gonzales' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the project. Photo by Priscilla Petersen, District Four

Kansas Turnpike Authority

Upcoming projects

Bids have been approved and contracts awarded on two upcoming KTA construction projects. Both projects are expected to begin in March with scheduled completion in December, weather permitting. Learn more about the projects in the latest news release [here](#).



Work zone safety contest

KTA is hosting its fifth annual National Work Zone Awareness Week design contest for Kansas students in grades 8-12. The winning teen will win \$200 and their work will be published in VYPE Magazine, the high school sports magazine for central and northern Kansas. Details can be found at www.ksturnpike.com/contests

Widening projects to improve U.S. 183, K-14

By Tim Potter
District Five

Going north on U.S. 183 from Coldwater, county seat of Comanche County, it's about 7 miles to the Kiowa County line. That two-lane stretch cuts a straight path through vast crop and pastureland.

But there's a challenge: That stretch is a significant freight-hauling corridor. But there's virtually no shoulder

to help keep a vehicle from losing control if a tire veers too far past the edge line.

That's going to change. Around late summer, KDOT expects that crews will begin work on a nearly \$1.3 million project to mill and overlay that stretch and add 2-foot paved shoulders.

Those shoulders also will help to reduce the chance of accidents, says District Five District Engineer Brent Terstrief.

In anticipation of the shoulders being added, Coldwater Subarea has been widening culverts along that stretch that will allow the shoulder work, said Martyn Howard, Highway Maintenance Supervisor for that Subarea. The expanded culverts offer another safety advantage: "It gets it a little further from the travel way," Howard said.

Howard noted that with the planned shoulders, people who get distracted with cell phones and drift off the road will have an additional safety factor beyond the edge line.

Comanche County Road Supervisor Dennis Hernandez said of the shoulders: "Two foot on each side is going



Photos show a section of U.S. 160/183 south of Coldwater before and after 2-foot shoulders were added. Now, KDOT plans to add shoulders on U.S. 183 north of Coldwater, in Comanche County, and continuing into Kiowa County.

to add a lot ... because we've got a lot of big, oversized loads that come down through there. It would be a tremendous help."

Besides the shoulder work in Comanche County, a related KDOT project will add 2-foot shoulders continuing north on U.S. 183 -- from the Comanche County line for about 7 miles into Kiowa County, on the way to Greensburg.

A third, similar project will add 2-foot shoulders in Kingman County for almost 13 miles going north on K-14 from the junction with K-42 near the town of Rago.

The safety enhancements are also part of a statewide KDOT program called Strategic Safety Initiative.

SSI is designed to reduce the potential for crashes by improving segments of rural, two-lane highways, says Steven Buckley, State Highway Safety Engineer at KDOT. The SSI program has a budget of about \$10 million per year.

Under SSI, improvements also can include adding centerline rumble strips, turning lanes or roundabouts.

Highlighting KDOT engineers

National Engineers Week is Feb. 16-22. According to the National Society of Professional Engineers, it's dedicated to ensuring a diverse and well-educated future engineering workforce by increasing understanding of and interest in engineering and technology careers. A few KDOT engineers from across the state are highlighted in this edition.



By Tom Hein
Wichita Metro

Tina Powell took the long way round to become an engineer. She moved between a number of universities, changed her major a few times, started a family, lived in Belgium for five years and experienced other life events before she graduated with a mechanical engineering degree from Wichita State University. Now she loves her work at the Wichita Hillside construction office.

Powell believes that her unique path has contributed to the way she thinks, the questions she asks and her approach to engineering challenges. She believes that a diverse, creative environment where people share their ideas freely generates solutions that would not otherwise be found.

"I really like working with KDOT people from all walks of life," she said. "There's not a lot of arrogance and there's a genuine feeling of teamwork. I like that."

By Lisa Knoll
District Six

Growing up in Lamar, Colo., Craig Schlott is a natural outdoorsman. Most weekends, you can find him hunting, fishing, camping and occasionally four wheeling. And for as long as he can remember, he's always been interested in bridges and roads.

After attending the Colorado School of Mines, Schlott knew he wanted to be close to his family and friends in Colorado and he wanted time to hunt, fish, camp and enjoy the outdoors. KDOT offered both, and Schlott joined KDOT's Garden City Construction Office as an Engineering Associate in 2000. Twenty years later, Schlott serves as the Area Construction Engineer in the Garden City office.

"KDOT offers the life-work balance I want with limited travel and few weekends. I have time for the outdoor activities I enjoy," he said.



Highlighting KDOT engineers

By Ashley Perez
District Two

For many, engineering may seem difficult or boring but for Joe Palic, Area Engineer in Marion, it's quite the opposite. Palic says for him, engineering has never been hard - it's like second nature and has always been fun.

Engineering wasn't Palic's first choice when he began college in Fort Collins, Colo. Palic began his education in wildlife biology and after speaking to his advisor his junior year, he changed his major to engineering. He had always gravitated toward math and science and found it interesting.



Joe Palic

Palic says a former roommate went to graduate school at K-State and convinced him to move to central Kansas, where he began at the KDOT office in Marion. He says his strong biology background works well with engineering at KDOT.

"We don't just build highways, we manage rights of way too and with that, you're always looking at habitats," he said.

Palic is happy he stayed in Marion and at KDOT. "Family is very important

to me," says Palic. "KDOT affords me the opportunity to have a life outside of work."

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

Engineering runs in Geryd Erbele's family. His father, Garland, is an environmental engineer. As a child, Erbele spent many hours tinkering with and building things such as go-karts and treehouses. Each Christmas, his mother complained about him dismantling gifts to see how their parts worked.

A native of South Dakota, after graduating from high school Eberle enrolled at the University of North Dakota. A class in 3-D design helped him realize that, "I was a natural engineer." He switched his major to engineering and graduated from the University of Wyoming.

Erbele is an Engineering Associate II at the Independence office. Although his background is in mechanical engineering, he noted that, "Mechanical does cover a lot of construction," such as the importance of using quality materials. "I had worked several years in construction to help pay for school," he added. "It was kind of an easy transition."



Geryd Erbele

He's currently managing a bridge replacement project on U.S. 166 in Montgomery County. "On a bridge you're constantly doing new pieces of it," Erbele reflected. He appreciates the "variety in work" that KDOT offers, and the "variety in people" with which he works.

Highlighting KDOT engineers

By Kelly Kultala
District One

Mark Karolevitz graduated from South Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. He and his roommate saw a KDOT recruitment flyer and decided to call. KDOT arranged for them to fly to Topeka for interviews and they were both hired.

Karolevitz started in the Bureau of Road Design in January 1990, then moved to the Bureau of Construction & Maintenance at Headquarters. He served as the Area Engineer in Wamego for 10 years and is currently the District One Maintenance Engineer. He is responsible for the maintenance budget and maintaining the roads. He also oversees the budgets for the approximately 80 buildings in District One.

Karolevitz lives in Topeka and has been married to his wife, Christi, for 26 years. They have a son, Logan, 22, a senior at the University of Kansas and a daughter, Haley, 18, a senior at Hayden High School.



"Working for KDOT has given me the flexibility to spend time with my family and attend my kids' school functions and athletic events," he said. "It allows for a stable schedule."

By Kim Stich
Headquarters

Road Design's Assistant Bureau Chief Deb Tanking sees how engineers at KDOT can help people.

"We can help improve safety, increase capacity and bring economic development to communities," she said. "We are so fortunate to be able to fulfill that service. It's more than just roads – we can really increase the quality of life for communities and people."

Tanking followed her parents' advice to study engineering at Kansas State University, then worked in Salina and Kansas City. She started at KDOT when her son was 10 months old, and now he's 15. "I've been extremely fortunate to have that work/life balance, and now there's a total of three kids," Tanking said.

Working at KDOT is unique as every day is different and there are always new challenges, Tanking said.



"From roundabouts to interchanges to bridge replacements, we have them all going on at the same time," she said. "And whether it's co-workers in the Districts or others who need help, we're happy to provide it."

Highlighting KDOT engineers

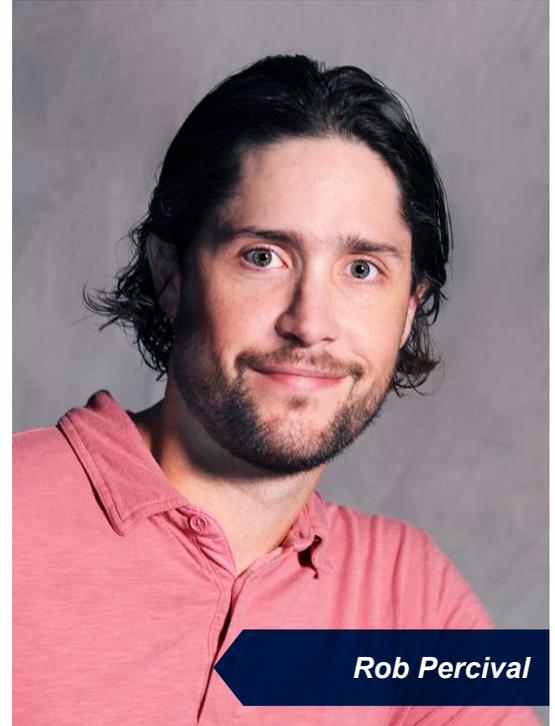
By Lisa Mussman
District Three

Having a strong interest in math and science made engineering a natural career choice for District Three Construction and Materials Engineer Rob Percival.

Percival began his career with KDOT in 2011 as an Engineering Associate I at the Atwood construction office. He promoted to Construction Engineer in 2013 before joining the Bureau of Local Projects in May 2016. He also served as the District Three Maintenance Engineer from October 2016 to January 2018.

Percival said he's appreciated the opportunities to be a part of many projects in different capacities. "Working in these engineering positions has helped me better understand the different areas of KDOT and how they work together to accomplish common goals," Percival said. "It's also allowed me to develop relationships with many internal and external partners."

Percival and his wife Sierra are the parents of Cohen, Avery and Denton and are expecting another in May. He enjoys spending time with family and pets, and playing softball and golf.



Rob Percival

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