

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

June 9, 2021

Sign along K-18 shows appreciation

By Kate Craft
District One

The Wildcat Creek Bridge replacement project on K-18 in Manhattan entered its third and final phase in April. Traffic was switched to the newly constructed westbound lanes to complete the south half of the bridge and the eastbound lanes. Phases one and two involved setting up median crossovers to switch traffic and the construction of the north half of the bridge and lanes. To date, traffic control has consisted of reduced and redirected lanes, reduced speed limits and temporary traffic signals and detours.

A project of this magnitude can cause frustration for motorists. So it's a nice change when a local property owner takes the initiative to post their appreciation on the business' roadside sign.

Mark and Shanna Laurie's storage unit business is on K-18, next to the Wildcat Creek bridge, and it has



The sign at the Manhattan Self Storage business has a nice message for KDOT and contractors working on the K-18 bridge project.

been directly impacted by the project. Despite the inconveniences, they had a positive message for everyone to see.

Matt Mackeprang, Wamego Area Engineer, sent an email to Mark and Shanna, thanking them for the sign.

"In this line of work there are not a lot of positive comments, and it is very nice when you do get them," Mackeprang said. "To get something on a sign for all to see is like icing on the cake for all the workers out on the project."

Mark responded to Mackeprang and said he had been impressed with KDOT during the project.

"The bridge looks great and will be a huge improvement when finished," Mark said. "We really appreciate the communication on this project, we have been kept in the loop, and all of our questions have been answered during construction. Thank you!"



Construction on the K-18 bridge in Manhattan is in the final phase. Photos by Joe Haug, District One

U.S. 75 project celebrated



Secretary Julie Lorenz, Lt. Governor David Toland and other officials celebrate expanding a section of U.S. 75 at Caney. Photo by Priscilla Petersen, District Four

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

Secretary Julie Lorenz and Lt. Governor David Toland, along with state and local officials, cut the ribbon dedicating the newly expanded section of U.S. 75 at Caney on May 20.

Before the event, Secretary Lorenz said among the special aspects of the project was that “KDOT construction staff never stopped work and our contractors were right alongside us the entire time” during the COVID-19 pandemic. She thanked the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for their collaboration and financial support of the project.

The one-mile U.S. 75 expansion starts at the south city limits of Caney and joins the existing four-lane section of U.S. 75 south of the Kansas-Oklahoma border. According to KDOT project manager Kris Norton, ODOT paid 100% of the costs of right-of-way, utilities, engineering and construction for the Oklahoma portion of the project.

Emery Sapp & Sons was the primary contractor on the \$6.2 million improvement. Work started in the project in the spring of 2020 and was completed in December.

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

Published by the
**Kansas Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
Eisenhower State
Office Building
700 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS

Transportation Secretary
Julie Lorenz

Deputy Secretary
Burt Morey
Maggie Doll
Lindsey Douglas

Administration
Allison Sedore

Aviation
Bob Brock

Communications
Steve Hale

Engineering and Design
Calvin Reed

Field Operations
Clay Adams

Fiscal & Asset Management
Ben Cleeves

Innovative Technologies
Mike Floberg

Planning & Development
Chris Herrick

Policy
Joel Skelley

**Program & Project
Management**
Mark Taylor

Project Delivery
Greg Schieber

Safety
Troy Whitworth

Cleeves named Fiscal and Asset Management Director

After nearly 11 years at KDOT, Ben Cleeves has been promoted to Director of the Fiscal and Asset Management Division.

Cleeves has served as KDOT's Office Chief of Finance and Budget during this time to develop KDOT's annual budget and coordinate the legislative fiscal note process. Now he will oversee this office as well as the Bureau of Fiscal Services, Office of Inspector General and the Cost Share program. He also will oversee and work with the new Bureau of Performance Management on the continuing development and implementation of an agencywide performance management system to align with the agency's strategic plan.

"I'm excited for this new role and the opportunity to do more for the agency," Cleeves said. "It's an honor to be able to lead a Division full of such great staff."

Cleeves has an extensive background in finance. Before coming to KDOT, he served at the State Division of the Budget, reviewing numerous agency budgets



Ben Cleeves

then making recommendations to the Governor, and then as the Budget Manager at Social and Rehabilitation Services.

"I am excited to promote Ben to this position right at the beginning of the IKE program," said KDOT Deputy Director Lindsey Douglas. "With the potential for a new federal transportation program and IKE resources, Ben's experience and

leadership skills will help us maximize the impact that transportation investment can provide for Kansans."

In his free time, Cleeves enjoys lounging in the pool, binge-watching TV and spending time with his two cats, Ike and Mamie.

Wadley selected as Chief of Research

Dan Wadley has been named the Chief of the Bureau of Research for KDOT.

He started with KDOT in 2001 in the Bridge Inspection unit, performing in-service routing and fracture critical inspections on bridges and 500 series structures across the state. Wadley then worked in Bridge Set-Aside for several years until fully transferring to Bridge Design for new structures. Wadley was promoted in 2017 to the Research Operations Engineer where he coordinated research for the bureau. He became the Assistant Bureau Chief for two years before being selected Bureau Chief.



Dan Wadley

KDOT Research works with outside agencies and industry partners as a resource to the agency and region overseeing the K-TRAN research cooperative, Ad Hoc research, Pooled Fund research as well as in-house research, construction assistance, specification development and training for DOT and local governments.

"We look at materials and processes beyond the current KDOT specifications, seeing what works and doesn't work so we can incorporate the best practices into future KDOT specifications," Wadley said.

Wadley enjoys canoeing or kayaking the Kansas River, gravel bike riding, trail running, volunteering, helping others with their DIY projects and building things out of concrete. He and his wife, Amber, have two children and reside in Topeka.

Flooding damages K-18 shoo-fly detour



In the photos above and below, floodwaters completely submerged the shoo-fly detour on the K-18 bridge project near Luray, washing away a portion of the roadbed and pavement.



By Lisa Mussman
District Three

Flooding from a storm system dropped upwards of eight inches of rain in Osborne, Rooks and Russell counties on Sunday, May 16, and caused considerable damage to the shoo-fly detour on the K-18 bridge project over Coon Creek near Luray.

The shoo-fly was completely covered by floodwaters and closed to traffic early Sunday morning. Crews from the Russell and Lincoln subareas were mobilized to flag traffic and remained on location until a temporary detour was established the following afternoon. Because of the bridge's location on the state route detour for the U.S. 281 closure in Russell County, a coordinated repair effort between KDOT and the project contractors quickly began, and the route was reopened to through traffic the afternoon of Wednesday, May 19.

The flooding also impacted K-18 in Rooks County. The Stockton subarea crew was called to flag high water near Natoma, however no damage to the highway was reported.



Crews from KDOT and Stone Sand Co. of Great Bend were able to quickly repair the damage with a mixture of stock granular and AS-1 materials. Photos by Hays Construction office and Penco Engineering

Celebrating the importance of pollinators

By Tom Hein
District Five

Hooray for Pollinators!

Pollinators are such an important part of propagating beauty and helping increase our food supply. And during the week of June 21 - 27, people can celebrate the importance of pollinators making the world a better place.

What has KDOT done to help pollinators? The agency has adjusted construction seed mixes, planted wildflower seeds and plant plugs, created rotational mowing policies, joined the six-state Monarch Butterfly Highway coalition, and provided showcase pollinator plots at the I-35 Homewood Rest Area and other locations across the state.

What can we, as individuals, do to help pollinators? Plant flowers, wild or tame, that pollinators feed from, use integrated pest management strategies, allow that clover in the yard to bloom, learn about native pollinator species, turn a fear of flying insects into an appreciation... the list is long.

For more information on pollinators, read this Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism ON TRACKS newsletter [here](#) (scroll to Plight of the Pollinators, Vol. 24, No.1), visit the K-State Research & Extension page on native plants and pollinators [here](#) or check out the Xerces Society [here](#), an organization that encourages positive actions to help non-vertebrates.



Flowers are blooming at the Homewood Rest Area, such as Blue Wild Indigo, above, and Dames Rocket, below. Photos by Melissa Davidson, Headquarters



Rain welcome, but can delay highway repairs

By Lisa Knoll
District Six

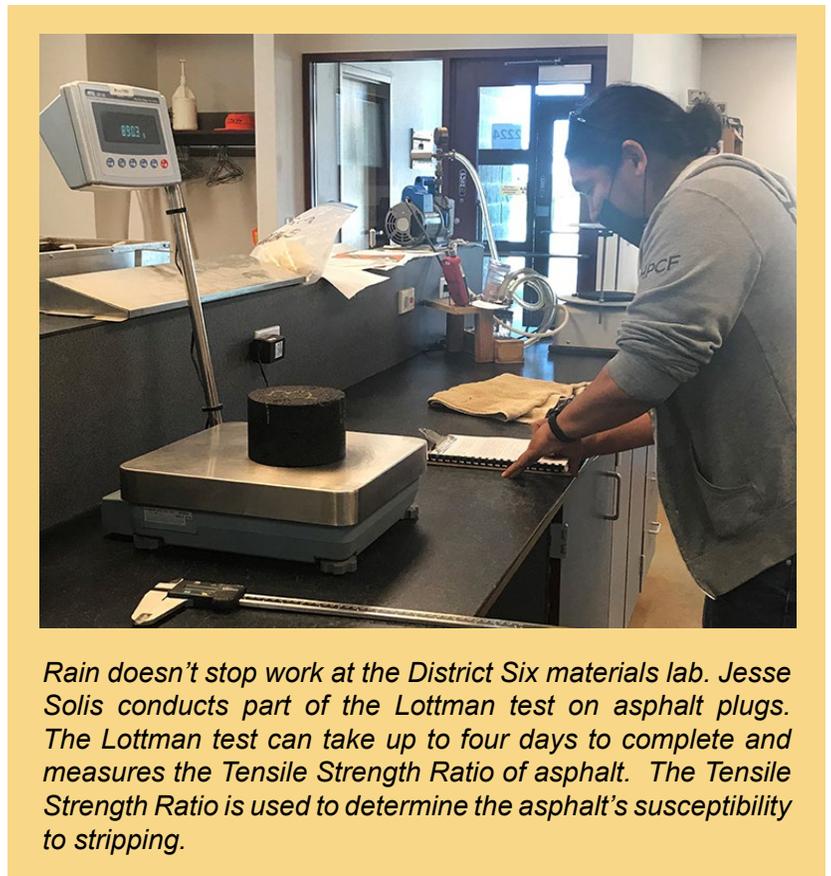
Those traveling through District Six this spring may not recognize the lush green plains the prairie has become thanks to Mother Nature. According to the National Weather Service (NWS) in Dodge City, some District Six areas have received twice the normal precipitation for this time of year.

Garden City, for example, has received up to 6.31 inches of rain in May 2021 compared to an average May rainfall of 2.52 inches. South of Dodge City, NWS recorded 7.76 inches of rain in May compared to average May rainfall of 2.99 inches. In addition, Garden City had 11 days in May with rainfall compared to an average of four days while Dodge City had 12 days of rainfall compared to an average of five days.

While the moisture is definitely welcome and needed, it has made mowing, pothole repair and summer maintenance more difficult for crews to keep up with. Pictured here, the Rolla Subarea crew takes advantage of a dry day to make some much need repairs.



Above, Kent Hall, Equipment Operator at Rolla, fills edge ruts on K-51 in Morton County. Bottom left, Subarea crew members, including Michael Edmondson, Calvin LaMaster and Joseph Ethridge, repair signs on U.S. 56 at Rolla. Photos by Lisa Knoll, District Six



Rain doesn't stop work at the District Six materials lab. Jesse Solis conducts part of the Lottman test on asphalt plugs. The Lottman test can take up to four days to complete and measures the Tensile Strength Ratio of asphalt. The Tensile Strength Ratio is used to determine the asphalt's susceptibility to stripping.

Preparedness stopped what could have happened

By Troy Whitworth
Division of Safety Director

You have probably seen a video I recently sent out that talked about 'wow moments.' You know, the moments that really get your attention. Shortly after I sent out the video, I was discussing safety with Max Dirks, Area Superintendent in Hays. He shared with me a wow moment that he experienced, and I asked if I could share it with others.

Max told me that a few Sundays ago, he was working at home in his yard and needed to cut some bamboo that was growing in his backyard. He explained that he always cut the bamboo with a chain saw.

At that time, he had on some shorts and a pair of work boots. He had bought some chainsaw chaps a few years ago after being persuaded by his wife to make the purchase. The conversation at that time was Max telling his wife that he had never had a chainsaw incident in all his years of using one. She gave him some things to consider, and then he went and bought the chaps.

So, on this particular day, Max decided to stop and put on the chaps and other chainsaw safety gear before

beginning to cut the bamboo. Everything went well up until the last cut of the morning. Max had the chainsaw idling down and the chain was slowing to a stop when the chain contacted the fabric of the chaps. Max said that the chain stopped instantly when it contacted the chaps. That was the 'wow moment.'

Thinking about all the things that could have happened suddenly ran through his mind. What if he hadn't purchased the chaps? What if he hadn't attended KDOT's chainsaw safety awareness training? What if he hadn't taken the extra two minutes to put on the chaps? There is little doubt that without the chaps on, the chain would have sliced through his clothes and into the flesh below. Fortunately, the chaps did exactly what they needed to do - they immediately stopped the chain.



In Max's story you can see, two minutes to put on the chaps kept him out of a visit to the Emergency Room, or worse. As you prepare to start any project, whether at home or at work, think about any hazards involved with the work and ways to reduce or eliminate those hazards. For your family and mine.

Click [here](#) to watch a short YouTube video from "Ask This Old House," that shows why you should wear chainsaw chaps.

Trivia!

White House

1. How many rooms are in the White House?
2. Who designed the White House?
3. What was the original name of the White House?
4. How many Presidents died in the White House?
5. When was electricity installed in the White House? When was plumbing installed?
6. What unique rooms have been added in the mid-1900s?
7. When did the original White House burn down? When was the new structure completed?

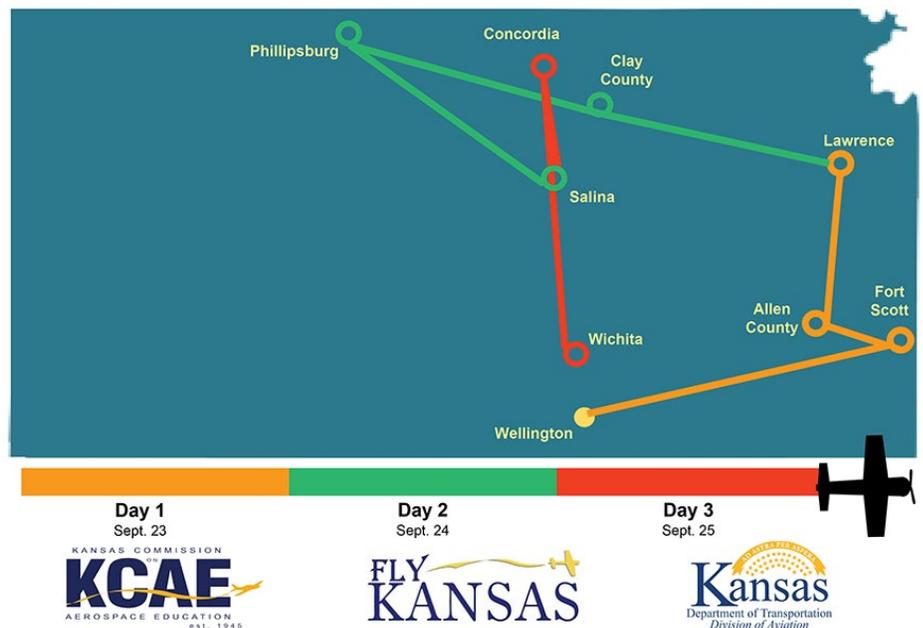
2021 Fly Kansas Air Tour set for Sept. 23-25

Pilots will take to the skies on Sept. 23 to Sept. 25 for the annual 2021 Fly Kansas Air Tour. The Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education (KCAE) and KDOT's Aviation Division set the route this year to include stops in Wellington, Fort Scott, Ottawa, Lawrence, Clay Center, Phillipsburg, Salina, Concordia and the Beech Factory Airport in Wichita.

Online registration opens July 1 at www.flykansas.org.

The Fly Kansas Air Tour has been a fall staple for Kansas pilots since KCAE reconvened the event in 2008 to commemorate the original 1928 tour. The tour has expanded from the original four planes to dozens of pilots visiting local airports across the state.

2021 FLY KANSAS AIR TOUR



Trivia answers

1. 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms, including 412 doors, 28 fireplaces, eight staircases and three elevators.
2. James Hoban, an Irish architect who began a career in the U.S. in Philadelphia in 1785.
3. Executive Residence. President Teddy Roosevelt changed it in 1901.
4. Two. Presidents William Harrison and Zachary Taylor.
5. Electricity was installed in 1891. Plumbing was installed in 1833, but all the bathrooms did not have hot and cold water run to them until 1853.
6. President Harry Truman commissioned the first bowling alley. President Franklin Roosevelt had a cloakroom transformed into a 42-seat movie theater.
7. The British burned the White House down in 1814. The new building was finished in 1817.

KDOT grant attracts manufacturer to SE Kansas

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

The State of Kansas scored an economic win when Governor Laura Kelly recently announced Sicut Enterprises Ltd., a London-based manufacturer and supplier of recycled plastic railroad ties, had selected the state as the site of its North American manufacturing hub. Smiles were especially broad in the southeast Kansas community of Neodesha, where the Sicut plant will be located with the expectation of bringing 135 jobs to the area over the next five years.

But prior to Sicut selecting Neodesha, there was uncertainty. Not all the prerequisite site specifications were in place. Sicut committed to Kansas only after KDOT stepped up with an Economic Development Program grant to give Neodesha the edge it needed to attract the manufacturer.

“We thought we had reached a point where it wasn’t going to happen,” said Neodesha Community Development Director Jeri Hammerschmidt. “Sicut needed a rail spur, and the city did not have the funds to do it. KDOT came to our rescue.”

In collaboration with the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Watco Companies, a railroad enterprise based in nearby Pittsburg, Hammerschmidt turned to KDOT and its Economic Development Program, a component of the 10-year Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program, or IKE. IKE was approved with strong bipartisan support by the 2020 Kansas Legislature and signed into law by Governor Kelly.

“Funding for Economic Development grants through

IKE improves critical infrastructure so new and existing Kansas businesses can compete across the world,” said Secretary Julie Lorenz. “This project is another example of infrastructure investment growing the Kansas economy.”

The \$343,000 in grant funding as provided by KDOT will be used to build a rail spur to the Sicut site, allowing raw materials to be shipped into the plant and the finished products sent to customers throughout the United States.

Michelle Needham, Economic Development Programs Manager at KDOT, said awarding the grant was contingent on Sicut locating in Neodesha. According to Needham, selection criteria evaluated the “cost per job” and also took into consideration investments from both the community and the private sector.

Watco, which operates the South Kansas & Oklahoma (SKOL) Railroad, announced plans to construct the rail spur this year. The spur will connect to the SKOL tracks behind the Sicut plant.

“Everybody we talked to was just amazing to work with,” said Hammerschmidt. She had warm words for the support of Watco Commercial Manager Chris Goodwin, who “got the right people involved” in the endeavor. Hammerschmidt also credited KDOT’s Needham for guidance and encouragement.

Hammerschmidt said Sicut is in the process of modifying the building at the site of the plant and said production machinery is currently being shipped to Neodesha. The rail spur will be put in “pretty darn quick,” she added, with expectations the community’s newest industry will be off and running by this fall.

New highway signs to recognize Santa Fe Trail

By Tim Potter
District Five

The Santa Fe Trail – the heavily traveled route from the state’s distant past – will be recognized with new signs along Kansas highways.

In a program initiated in part by the National Park Service (NPS), KDOT will be installing about 54 Santa Fe Trail signs at about 22 sites, said Darrell Gwaltney, KDOT Permanent Signing Specialist. NPS is providing the signs, which are expected to arrive in the next few weeks for installation.

Some historical background from NPS: “Between 1821 and 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a commercial highway connecting Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico.” By 1880, with the spread of railroads across Kansas and other states, NPS said,



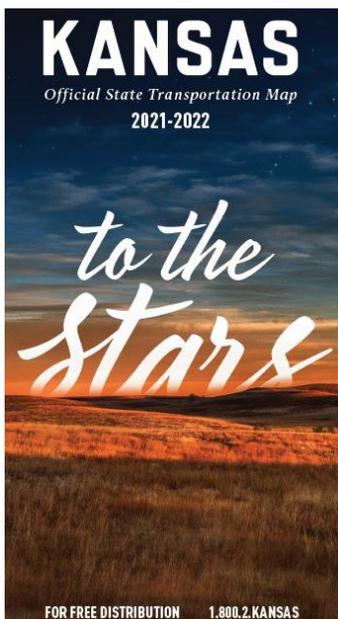
Design for new Santa Fe Trail signs that will be installed along Kansas highways.

“the trail faded into history.”

The new Santa Fe Trail signing will replace older signs recognizing the historic route. The new signs will be at spots within varying distances from where wagon wheels and hooves once cut ruts across Kansas.

The new signs will be installed in District One, District Five and District Six. In District One, signs will be on U.S. 56 from east of Baldwin City to around Overbrook. In District Five, signs will be on U.S. 56 and K-156 from near Great Bend to around Larned. In District Six, there will be signs along U.S. 400 from near Ford to the Kansas/Colorado state line.

The new NPS-branded sign design complies with national highway sign standards, Gwaltney noted.



2021-2022 Kansas maps now available

From a 91-million-year-old shark, to numerous delicious places to eat, to the world’s largest remaining Tallgrass Prairie and more, there are all sorts of adventures featured in the new 2021-2022 Kansas Official State Transportation Map.

The map, published by KDOT, highlights numerous tourist and scenic locations, including state parks and lakes, as well as recreation areas and Scenic Byways across the state.

Maps are available at various travel information centers, attractions and other locations across the state. They also can be requested on the KDOT website [here](#).

Area Engineer presented with Missouri Governor's Award

By Delaney Tholen
District One

When the project lead for a massive information technology project at the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) retired, Mike Rinehart was asked to step in and take the reins. Though his professional training and experience is in engineering, Rinehart entered what he calls "a new world" of software development. For his efforts, Rinehart and the project team were recently awarded the Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity by Missouri Governor Mike Parsons in a ceremony on May 13.

Rinehart is currently the Area Engineer in Olathe, where he has served for the past year. But previously he was with MoDOT for 25 years in various roles and knew many of the administrative and physical challenges his team faced, particularly the maintenance staff.



Award recipient Mike Rinehart with Missouri Governor Mike Parsons. Photo courtesy of Mike Rinehart

Having to utilize multiple software systems daily was redundant and frustrating. To improve processes and increase efficiency, Rinehart led a project staff (more than 50 MoDOT team members from across the state, and 16 contracted team members from RKV Technologies) to successfully create the proprietary Maintenance Management System (MMS), implement the system within MoDOT and train staff on its use.

Rinehart said one of the biggest obstacles his team overcame was tracking and managing "bugs," or flaws, in the software once it had been developed. "I quickly learned to embrace it," he said. "We just had to find out how to manage the

inevitable bugs and find a remedy."

Upon implementation of MMS, maintenance staff saw heightened communication across the organization, highly reduced duplication and more efficiently managed consumable inventory.

KDOT's Cost Share program supports community's efforts

By Ashley Perez
District Two

The City of Ellsworth celebrated the completion of the 8th Street Cost Share project on May 14.

When cutting the ceremonial ribbon with KDOT Deputy Secretary Lindsey Douglas (seen at right), Ellsworth Mayor Mark Kennedy offered praise for the IKE program and expressed hope that Ellsworth would be selected for Cost Share funding in the future.

Deputy Secretary Douglas echoed the sentiment. "We can accomplish so much more together than we can on our own," she said. "That's what this Cost Share program is all about at KDOT."



KTA briefs

1. The fourth round of bridge raisings have begun on the Kansas Turnpike. The two-year project will increase the vertical clearance of 11 bridges crossing I-35 & I-335/KTA between mile markers 105-161 in Chase, Lyon and Osage counties. The first bridge to be lifted is at MM 114.6 on I-35/KTA south of Emporia. Learn more about the project [here](#). See photo at top right, and learn how KTA bridges are lifted in their video [here](#).



2. A bid has been approved and contract awarded on an upcoming Kansas Turnpike construction project for conversion to cashless tolling. The contract includes construction of five sets of cashless toll zones in Sumner and Sedgwick counties, including grading, paving, concrete pads, setting of equipment enclosure buildings, electrical work, concrete median barrier and installation of overhead sign structures, as seen at right. The toll zones to be constructed are the first five of several to be constructed as KTA makes the transition toward cashless tolling. For more information on the project, read KTA's news release [here](#).



Kansas waves of grain



KDOT's Neil Croxton took this photo recently of a wheat field in Clay County.

Thank you for your service

Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating state service anniversaries in June.

30 years of service

Eric Oelschlager, Professional Civil Engineer II, Atwood

20 years of service

Stephen Bass, Road Design Leader, Topeka

Jared Beary, Equipment Operator Senior, White City

Kristina Rizek, Professional Civil Engineer I, Topeka

Robin Schreiner, Asset Management Supervisor, Topeka

Shawn Thurmon, Equipment Operator, El Dorado

Aaron Zier, Equipment Operator, Lincoln

10 years of service

Thomas Trull, Utility Coordinator, Topeka

In Memory

Condolences to the co-workers, family and friends of KDOT employee Curtis Brown, Equipment Mechanic Senior at Pratt. Brown passed away on May 8. He had been fighting an ongoing medical condition, said District Engineer Brent Terstriep. Brown began his career with KDOT as an Equipment Operator in Kinsley in May 1998, transferred to Pratt as an Equipment Operator Senior in January 2009 and became an Equipment Mechanic in Pratt in October 2016.

Retirees

The following employees will retire from KDOT on July 1.

Headquarters

Carol Baldry, Information Systems Manager II, Information Technology

Jerry Barker, Engineering Technician Specialist, Construction & Materials

Gary Farlow, Engineering Technician Specialist, Road Design

Rudy Pfeifer Jr., Engineering Technician Senior, Construction & Materials

Daniel Rethman, Data Base Administrator III, Information Technology

Judith Tyner, Engineering Technician Senior, Local Projects

Lynn Whittlesey, Engineering Technician, Transportation Planning

District One

Lynn Gormley, Administrative Assistant, Horton

District Two

Douglas Lind, Engineering Technician Specialist, Marion

District Three

Gerald Griggs, Equipment Operator Senior, Colby

Sidney Ochs, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Grainfield

Alan Reuber, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, St. Francis

Michael Sheley, Equipment Operator Senior, Colby

District Four

Larry Castle, Equipment Operator, Iola

Vernon McClintock Jr., Engineering Technician Specialist, Chanute

Kevin White, Equipment Operator Senior, Louisburg

The following employee retired from KDOT on June 1.

District One

Shari Westfall, Public Service Administrator 3, Topeka