

Translines



Work zone safety

See page 5

Inside ...

- ◆ First section of U.S. 59 expansion opens
- ◆ Final Recovery Act projects under contract
- ◆ Highway investment worthwhile
- ◆ Social media offers more ways to learn
- ◆ Kansas hosts scenic byway conference



*By Secretary
Deb Miller*

Knowing what should be done, then doing it

Sometimes I forget just how unique our style of governing is in this country. Even among the world's great democracies, ours is unlike the others.

I was reminded of that at a conference I attended in Bellagio, Italy, recently. The conference – “Transitioning to a Performance-Based Surface Transportation Policy” – was sponsored by the Bipartisan Policy Center, which paid all expenses of the attendees.

There were only 22 participants, most of them from the United States. But it was the comments of the non-Americans that stuck with me and the other Americans. The participants from Great Britain, Sweden and Australia were shocked to think that we have continued to struggle with implementing a performance-based transportation system.

(AASHTO defines performance management as an ongoing process that translates strategic goals into relevant and detailed measures and targets which, along with resources, are continuously monitored to ensure the goals are being reached.)

Our three colleagues all said that performance-based transportation was important to assure that their countries' resources were being wisely spent. But in all three cases, the countries have strong central governments. And that may be the rub here in the U.S., where we essentially have 50 relatively-independent states.

I was also struck by how business leaders in these countries – especially Australia – have recognized that a modern,

top-performing infrastructure is in their best interest and the best interest of the nation. We Americans were impressed with what we heard since we, as a nation, struggle to even recognize that we've been negligent about infrastructure investment. And there doesn't seem to be any alarm!

In Australia, it was business that sounded the national alarm about the state of their transportation system. Around the year 2000, Australia realized they had a serious problem with the Sydney shipping port. Ships were anchored off-shore, unable to unload goods in timely fashion, and it was having an impact on much of the country.

The port issue caused uproar about the same time the country was hosting the 2000 Summer Olympics, an event that was creating a lot of national self-awareness. The port issue wasn't acceptable to Australians, who wanted their country to be progressive, modern and move goods efficiently. The issue sparked a movement to approach transportation infrastructure differently and that's when they adopted performance measures.

Our Australian colleague said there was bipartisan support for a performance-based transportation system. When we told the Australian and Europeans why that wouldn't work in America, they were dumfounded. And we looked dysfunctional.

When we asked them “how did you make that happen?” they blankly looked at us and said, “It was a system that made sense so we implemented it.”

The Swede said transportation policy-makers in her country realized they didn't have enough money to do everything they wanted to do. That's when they concluded they needed a performance-based system to be sure they were getting both the desired performance out of their system and were spending their limited dollars in the absolute best way.

I hear that kind of language in our country, too. But we have so many competing interests that it becomes very hard not to sprinkle money around and keep everyone at least somewhat happy.

Knowing what should be done and then doing it are oftentimes impossible to pair up. But it's clear Great Britain, Sweden and Australia have figured out how to approach transportation spending with more logic than we do sometimes. They can serve as our examples; now we need the will.



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Calendar of Events

May 14 - 9:30 a.m. - Highway Advisory Commission meeting.

May 19 - 1 p.m. Construction bid letting, Fourth Floor, West Wing, Eisenhower State Office Building.

May 31 - State employees off for Memorial Day holiday.

Social media offers more ways to learn

By Patrick Quinn

KDOT Social Media Manager

KDOT's social media efforts received a big lift from the success of our recently launched YouTube channel.

Our videos are produced in-house, using KDOT facilities and staff. The latest agency video, a 30-second PSA released as part of our commemoration of National Work Zone Awareness Week, picked up 200 views in its first couple of days on the channel, and we're already planning a follow-up.

Stop by our channel at www.youtube.com/user/kansastransportation and subscribe.

Meanwhile, membership at the Kansas Transportation Online Community, <http://ktoc.net/news.aspx>, is

approaching 1,000—far beyond our expectations. Recent activity on the Community includes regular updates on the state budget by Legislative Liaison Lindsey Douglas, new blogs by Public Transit Manager Lisa Koch and Public Involvement Bureau Chief Abbey Luterick.

The most downloaded document in the history of K-TOC is the T-Works Fact Sheet, which can be accessed from any page in the community by clicking on the T-WORKS icon on the right side of the page.

KDOT also launched a Flickr page to showcase some of the agency's many photographs. We opened the page with pictures devoted to orange-vest events publicizing work zone safety awareness. Check us out at www.flickr.com/photos/kansastransportation/.

First section of U.S. 59 expansion opens

By Priscilla Petersen

District Four Public Affairs Manager

Following weeks of anticipation and frustrating weather-related delays, the Franklin County section of the new four-lane U.S. 59 opened on March 30.

The 7.6-mile section runs from I-35 northeast of Ottawa to the Franklin-Douglas county line. Although the concrete pavement had been in place since the first of the year, the contractor was unable to install the pavement markings necessary for opening the highway until the 50-plus degree temperatures and clear days of early spring arrived.

The new roadway is a four-lane freeway with access control at the interchanges. Franklin County interchanges have been constructed at I-35, Reno and Montana roads and Stafford Road.

A crossover under construction at the north end of the project will connect the new section with the existing two-lane roadway in Douglas County. The old two-lane section in Franklin County will be restricted to local traffic for an estimated two months until the crossover is completed.

Work started in June 2007 on the U.S. 59 expansion between Ottawa and Lawrence. Ames Construction of Burnsville, Minn., was the contractor for the grading and bridge



A 7.6-mile section of U.S. 59 in Franklin County is now open to traffic. Photo by Kurt Weaverling

work. In December of 2008, KDOT awarded Koss Construction of Topeka the paving contract for the Franklin County section. Construction on the 11.1-mile Douglas County section began in 2008, with the surfacing contract scheduled to be let in June.

Estimated construction cost for the entire expansion is \$185.4 million. The overall cost is estimated at \$240.4 million, which includes construction, right of way, construction engineering and utilities.

**On the...
COVER**

Top photo: Pavement is repaired on I-435 in Wyandotte County. Bottom photo: Highway Maintenance Supervisor Tony Trower talks about close calls in work zones at the National Work Zone Awareness Week event on April 20 in Topeka. For related article, please see page 5. Photos by Kurt Weaverling



Step Back in Time



*Workers
construct a
bridge on
Interstate 35
near Ottawa
in 1958.*

Final Recovery Act projects under contract

By Stan Whitley

Contracts for the last of Kansas' five major state highway projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 have been awarded.

In addition, 77 of the 78 local government projects expected to total approximately \$35 million have been awarded. Bids on the final local project were opened at the April letting.

"It took some heroic efforts by both KDOT employees and local governments to get these ARRA projects under contract," said Deputy Secretary Jerry Younger. "Many pre-construction activities had to be accomplished before the projects could even reach the bid letting stage. We hit the ground running and the hard work helped us exceed all the ARRA federal deadlines."

Three days after the bill was signed into law by President Obama, KDOT announced how it would distribute its ARRA funds. Within one month, KDOT's district engineers had evaluated more than 400 local projects and announced its selected list of projects throughout the state.

"Most people aren't aware of how much time and work

goes into a road or bridge project before dirt can actually be turned," said Secretary Deb Miller. "It can take months or years, and that's why I'm so impressed that KDOT and all of the nation's state transportation departments were able to meet the Recovery Act's tight deadlines. It not only speaks to the dedication and good work of many, it's telling of the great infrastructure needs in our state and nation."

The fifth major highway project – initial work on the construction of a four-lane K-18 freeway between Ogden and Manhattan – was recently awarded by KDOT. The project is divided into three phases with the first phase awarded to Sema Construction Inc. of Centennial, Colo. at \$64.9 million. Runner-up on the first phase bidding was Koss Construction of Topeka at \$65.1 million.

The K-18 project is needed to support the significant population and economic growth taking place in the region. The new freeway is designed to connect rapidly growing Fort Riley to the City of Manhattan, site of the new National Bio Agro-Defense Facility, and provide a new connection to the Manhattan Regional Airport.

Total cost of the project, which is estimated to support 2,900 jobs, is \$140 million. There are currently no funds available for Phase II and III construction.

"We were pleased that the K-18 project came in at about \$19 million under the estimated cost of \$84 million," said Younger. "In fact, all five of our major state highway projects were under estimate by an average of 21 percent."

Four ARRA state highway projects are already under construction. Included in the list is the four-lane expansion of K-61 in McPherson County and improvements to U.S. 69 in Overland Park, the I-135 and 47th Street interchange in Wichita and K-23 in Gove County.

KDOT estimated the costs on all five projects at \$297 million, but the actual awarded total was \$235.3 million.



From left to right, Karen Wagaman, Kansas Contractors Association; Forrest Erickson, American Council of Engineering Companies of Kansas; Wendy Harms, Kansas Aggregate Producers' Association; Mike Crow of the Kansas Asphalt Pavement Association; and Todd LaTorella of the MO/KS Chapter, American Concrete Pavement Association, present Secretary Deb Miller a donation for the Give 'Em A Brake work zone safety campaign.



Too many close calls in work zones

By Kim Stich

Close calls happen all too often in highway work zones.

"A lady was coming through our work zone on I-70 and she was wiping out all our traffic cones," said Tony Trower, Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Topeka. "When I got her stopped, she was just 10 feet away from going around the equipment where our employees were working."

Trower has seen his share of inattentive drivers in work zones during his 20 years at KDOT.

"I pulled eight or nine cones out that were stuck under her van – she had no idea she had even hit the cones," Trower said. "She started crying when she saw the cones and the signs because then she understood what she had done and what she was about to do to the highway workers in front of the truck."

The need for safety in work zones was stressed by Trower as

well as Secretary Deb Miller, Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent Terry Maple and KDOT Highway Maintenance Supervisor (Overland Park) Brian Hoke at the National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week event in Topeka on April 21.

Educating the public on the hazards of work zones and how to increase safety for highway workers and the traveling public was the goal of National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 19-23). In Kansas, five people were killed and 490 people were injured in work zone crashes last year.

Inattention, following too closely, not yielding, fatigue and driving too fast – all driver-related - are the top contributing circumstances of crashes in work zones. More than 85 percent of all the people killed in work zone crashes are motorists.

"It can be pretty scary out there," Trower said. "People need to be aware of their surroundings in work zones and be alert. We're out there trying to make the roads safe for them, but they're not always making it safe for us."

Tips for driving in work zones include - pay attention to the signs and obey road crew flaggers, don't tailgate and don't speed, expect the unexpected, stay alert and be patient.

To view a public service announcement on work zone safety, which was created by KDOT, go to www.youtube.com/user/kansastransportation.



KDOT Highway Maintenance Supervisor Brian Hoke spoke at the safety event about some of the close calls he has had in work zones.



Safety is the top priority in work zones such as the one above where guard rail is repaired along I-70 in Russell County.



Cleaning up

Members of the Tecumseh Kiwanis Adopt-A-Highway group remove trash along U.S. 40 east of Topeka as part of the annual Clean Up Kansas campaign in April that recognized the efforts of groups across the state. Adopt-A-Highway is celebrating its 20th anniversary in Kansas.



Kansas hosts scenic byway conference

By Sue Stringer

The Kansas Scenic Byways committee hosted the Heartland Regional Scenic Byway Conference in Great Bend from April 7-9 featuring the Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway.

Conference attendees from Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, North Dakota, Minnesota and other states toured the Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivera National Wildlife Refuge along the byway. They also participated in sessions at the Kansas Wetlands Education Center.

In a welcoming address, Secretary Deb Miller expressed her support of the Kansas Scenic Byway program and told of the Painted Byways promotion with the Kansas Lottery, Department of Commerce and artist Stan Herd. She also talked about the initiative to plant wildflower mixes along the roadsides across the state.

The conference keynote speaker, Lisa Brochu, of the National Association for Interpretation, said communities not only needed to share physical points of interest with travelers about the “stuff” along their byways, but also tell the story behind the “stuff” to give a greater meaning to the visitor.



Attendees of the Heartland Regional Scenic Byway Conference take a tour of the Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivera National Wildlife Refuge.

Other conference speakers, Cheryl Hargrove and Berkley Young of Hargrove International, told of byway trends across the nation and how to provide optimum hosting in communities for byway visitors. America’s Byways Resource Center trainer Wayne Ganaway provided several training sessions throughout the conference and the

Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway committee led panel discussions on their “best practices.”

The Kansas Scenic Byway committee includes representation from KDOT, Kansas Department of Commerce - Travel & Tourism, Kansas Wildlife & Parks, Kansas Historical Society and the Federal Highway Administration.

New Amelia Earhart bridge taking shape

After one year of construction, the new Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge in Atchison is taking shape.

Construction work on the U.S. 59 structure over the Missouri River began last May. The new bridge is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2011 with removal of the existing bridge in 2012.

"We're making good progress on the substructure with 11 piers completed and three only needing pier caps to be completed," said Michelle Anschutz, Area One Construction Engineer overseeing the project. "In addition, two other piers on the bridge are still being constructed."

Besides constructing the 16 piers, abutment work is completed on the Missouri side of the structure and 40 girders have been placed, also on the Missouri side. Anschutz said the girders are seven foot high and range in length from 128 to 144 feet.

By late July, work will begin on building temporary support towers that will soar to 110 feet in height. The

towers will be used in the construction of the bridges double steel arches.

The new four-lane, tied arch structure will stretch nearly 2,500 feet, distinguished by its double steel arches on the main river span and special aesthetic lighting. It will replace the existing two-lane structure, which was completed in 1938 and is too narrow to handle some of today's larger truck loads and farm implements.

Anschutz said the extra lanes also will accommodate the greater numbers of vehicles that now pass over the bridge.

The bridge replacement is a cooperative project funded by KDOT and the Missouri Department of Transportation.



Concrete is being poured on one of the 16 piers that will be constructed as part of the new Amelia Earhart Memorial Bridge.

To follow bridge construction progress, a Webcam was launched last October. Camera images, posted at www.ksdot.org/aebridge, are refreshed every 15 minutes and viewers are able to view the time lapsed images in sequential order for an extended period of time.

— S.W.

Deaths

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

Gordon P. Gustin, 73, died April 12 in Topeka. He was a longtime employee of KDOT and retired from the Bureau of Construction and Maintenance.

Survivors include one daughter, one son, one sister, one brother, seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to Seaman Congregational

Church, P.O. Box 8730, Topeka, 66608-0730.

Robert P. Slease, 93, of died March 28 in Wilmington, Del. He worked in the Public Information Office for many years rising to the role of Director before his retirement in 1981.

He is survived by one son, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, 100 W. 10th St., Suite 209, Wilmington, Del., 19801.

Lawrence E. Herbert, 77, died Feb. 19 in Long Beach, Calif. He worked as an Engineering Draftsman during his tenure with the State Highway Commission.

He is survived by his wife, Anita, two sons, one daughter and one grandchild.

The family suggests memorials to the American Diabetes Association or St. John Lutheran Church and they may be sent in care of Campanella-Gentry Funeral Home, 224 Missouri Ave., Alma, 66401.

District News...

U.S. 59 right on track

Construction on U.S. 59 in Douglas County is nearly a year in the making. The U.S. 59 project is being completed in two phases. Phase I includes grading and construction of 23 bridges. Phase II includes 11.1 miles of surfacing and pavement work.

A key component of Phase I includes the construction of 12 new bridges on U.S. 59, three new bridges on adjoining side roads and eight culvert boxes. Construction is complete on four of the 11 steel girder bridges and on all eight culvert boxes.

District One

Grading work for Phase I includes the excavation and compaction of approximately 5.6 million and 3.3 million cubic yards of soil and rock material. As of February, crews have excavated and compacted 3.6 million and 2.1 million cubic yards respectively. Out of 25,000 cubic yards of concrete to be used on the project, 14,000 cubic yards have been poured. And more than 1.1 million pounds of structural steel has been used out of a total project quantity of 3.1 million pounds.

The scheduled completion date for both phases is late 2012.

West, Deitcher speak April 7

District Two Engineer Randy West and Eric Deitcher, Local Liaison for the Bureau of Local Projects, were guest speakers on April 7 in McPherson at the annual North Central Kansas County Highway Officials Association meeting.

West's comments focused on accomplishments under the CTP totaling and projects under construction that are receiving ARRA funding. He noted that while Kansas recently received recognition for having the best highway system in the nation, a shortage of funding threatens KDOT's ability to properly maintain the system. Deitcher

District Two

discussed federal and state funding challenges as well as the Bureau of Local Projects plans for the next year.

U.S. 281 work begins

Work began in late March to reconstruct U.S. 281/Fossil Street in Russell from East 9th street to Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, the project was submitted by the city of Russell and approved by KDOT engineers to reconstruct a portion of the U.S. 281 corridor.

"Traffic is currently being re-routed onto a detour while the work is under way,"

explains KDOT Area Three Engineer Kevin Zimmer. "Drivers who are heading north turn east on U.S. 40 Business/Wichita Avenue to 187th, then turn north on 187th Street.

Once at 15th Street they proceed west to get back on Fossil Street."

Local drivers are still able to access their homes and pass through 9th Street as the road is closed immediately north on 9th Street, said Zimmer.

Bryant and Bryant Construction, of Halstead, is the prime contractor on the \$228,000 project. Weather permitting, the project will be complete by June 1.

District Three

Historic bridges abound

With 33 bridges listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the District Four, one doesn't need to travel far to locate a fascinating structure in a specific truss, spandrel or arch design.

At the end of Burns Street in eastern Independence a person can spy the region's oldest bridge on the register, the abandoned Bowstring Bridge over the Verdigris River. Built in 1871 by the Wrought Iron Bridge Co., the bridge is surrounded by overgrowth but continues to inspire memories of a bygone era. The Onion Creek Bridge west of Coffeyville, built in 1911 and

District Four



The historic Onion Creek Bridge west of Coffeyville was built in 1911. Photo by Priscilla Petersen

now preserved beside a newer bridge on a county road, is an example of a Parker through truss.

The Osawatimie vicinity holds the southeast Kansas sweepstakes with four historic bridges. Baxter Springs has a gem in the Brush Creek Bridge, a Marsh Rainbow Arch structure on a section of old Route 66.

District News

Continued from page 8

Partnering awards given

Award plaques were presented for the 2009 Kansas Contractors Association/KDOT Excellence in Partnering for projects in District Five and also for the 2009 District Five Inspector of the Year.

For projects from \$500,000 to \$3 million, the award was given for the reconstruction of U.S. 281/Main Street in Hoisington. The partnering team was Pavers, Inc. (general contractor), Bucher, Willis & Ratliff (design engineering and inspection) and the KDOT Great Bend Construction Office.

For projects over \$3 million, the award was presented for the construction of the new alignment for the

U.S. 54 Bypass of Cunningham. The partnering team receiving this award

was Bergkamp Construction (general contractor), Wilson and Company (design engineering) and the KDOT Pratt Construction Office.

Annette Ratcliff, Engineering Technician Senior in the KDOT Wichita Metro Office, was the 2009 District Five Inspector of the Year. In 2009, Ratcliff oversaw the administration and inspection of 12 LPA projects, with contract amounts totaling \$52.6 million.

Artwork showcased

The District Six shop crew in Garden City showcased their artistic talents by painting a mural in Equipment Operator Specialist Tim Deaver's office. The

crew painted a two-lane road going around the letters KDOT, which was painted in bright, bubble letters. The crew then filled the mural with pictures of KDOT



The interchange project at I-135 and U.S. 54/400 includes repair work on the ramp from northbound I-135 to westbound U.S. 54/400. Workers are preparing temporary scaffolding to be used in the replacement of the pin and hanger assemblies at four locations on the bridge. Photo by Tom Hein



Numerous photos are featured in the artwork created by the District Six shop crew. Photo by Calvin Carter

people and events from the past as well as the present.

Pictures in the mural include retirement parties, first days and many random pictures of employees at work.

KDOT Computer Training

— from the KCTC

Increase your efficiency!

Focus: PowerPoint

We've addressed the portable Pack and Go feature of PowerPoint 2007 before, but it is a common "How do I do it?" question. Plus, we think it is a pretty handy feature for anyone needing to transport and play a PowerPoint presentation. Package for CD will make sure all the fonts, pictures, sounds and movies work on any computer.

To do this, you need to be in the open PowerPoint application, then follow these steps:

- Click the Office button
- Click Publish
- On the right, click Package for CD
- Click Options...
- Make sure "Linked Files" and "Embed True Type Fonts" are both checked
- Click OK
- Click the Copy to Folder button
- Click the Browse button
- Select the place you want it copied (probably a flash drive) and click OK
- Close the Package for CD dialog box

It will now make a new folder called "PresentationCD" that has many of files in it. When you want to play the PowerPoint presentation, open the PresentationCD folder and double-click the PowerPoint file.

All the other things in that folder are support items, like movies, that you need to run the PowerPoint.

Check out the shared calendar: KCTC for on-going classes. Contact the KCTC at kctc@ksdot.org or call Ingrid Vandervort 785-296-8993.

Fun Facts and Trivia

Do you know?

Weather Safety

Tornadoes and overpass safety

♦Overpasses offer no protection from a tornado's direct hit, and should not be used as a shelter. Seeking shelter under an overpass puts you at greater risk of being killed or injured by flying debris.

♦Never try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle. Instead lie flat in a ditch, ravine or below grade culvert to protect yourself from flying debris.

Lightning safety

♦Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from where it is raining.

♦If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek shelter and avoid electrical equipment, indoor/outdoor pools, tubs and showers/other things connected to metal plumbing.

Flood safety

♦As little as six inches of fast moving water can sweep you off of your feet.

♦As little as 18-24 inches of water is enough to float a car and carry it away.

♦Do not attempt to cross flowing streams, you don't know how deep the water is.

From the National Weather Service, the Kansas Emergency Management Association and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management 2010 information packet

Safety efforts honored

Individuals and organizations were recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty at the Transportation Safety Conference on March 31 in Overland Park.

The winners of the People Saving People awards and their deeds are:

♦Lt. J.P. Thurlo, Fairway, Kansas Police Department

In 2007, Lt. J.P. Thurlo created a traffic enforcement team focused on reducing traffic crashes and increasing traffic law compliance. He's managed a successful program with minimal impact to the department budget and patrol schedule. Traffic crashes in 2007 were reduced by nearly 50 percent from the 2006 totals, and injury accidents were reduced almost half.

♦Officer Kenneth Garrett, DUI Officer, Kansas City, Kan., Police Department

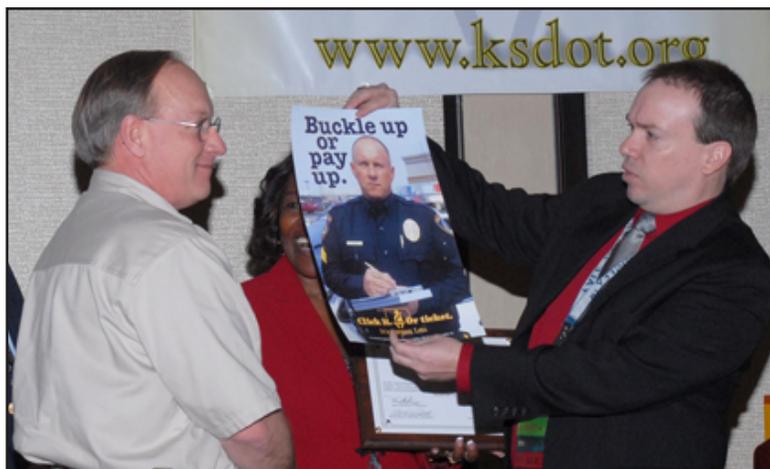
Officer Kenneth Garrett has been the DUI enforcement officer for the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department for 14 years. In 2009, Officer Garrett made 649 car stops, 474 DUI arrests and issued 2,433 other citations relating to DUI enforcement. He assists other officers on DUI stops during their street patrols by processing their DUI drivers and completing their paperwork.

♦Southwest Kansas Community Driving Day/Week

In an effort to make southwest Kansas counties a safer place to drive, BP began an annual event - the Southwest Kansas Community Driving Day. This event raises awareness of driving hazards and encourages seat belt use to the entire family. The event moved into Ulysses USD 214 last year to engage kids of all ages in learning more about safe practices in vehicles.

♦Rusty James, Incident Management Coordinator, KC Scout, Kansas City, Mo.

Rusty James became the Incident



Traffic Safety Program Manager Pete Bodyk (right) shows a photo of Rusty James from an old Click It or Ticket poster during the People Saving People awards presentation.

Management Coordinator at Scout in 2007. James organized communication summits, bringing together first responders from around Kansas City to establish the needs of each agency as they respond to on-scene incidents. In 2009, there were 201 fewer hours of lane closures from crashes than before the incident management program began.

♦Youth Leadership Butler

The community service project for the 2009 Youth Leadership Butler addressed texting and driving. With the help of a mini-grant from KDOT, they:

- put up street signs, "Stay Alive, Don't Text and Drive," at school driveways

- showed video clips of texting-related crashes to students in lunchrooms and passed out lanyards.

- scheduled the project in advance of the Kansas Legislature's consideration of texting and driving legislation.

- raised \$1,500 to match the state donation to meet their costs.

♦David Corp, KDOT Senior Law Enforcement Liaison, Topeka

The deaths of four teen girls in 2008 in Ulysses inspired David Corp to expand the Buckle Up Butler County teen driver program. With assistance from other agencies, he is creating similar programs in Neosho, Montgomery, Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Saline, Cowley and Seward counties, with a goal of all counties participating.

Ranking shows highway investment worthwhile

Editor's Note: *The following editorial was recently printed in the Hutchinson News*

Kansas is No. 1

Whether or not Kansas has the best college basketball team in the country this year, we have claimed best-in-the-nation in at least one category: highways.

Reader's Digest ranked the Sunflower State's highways No. 1 in the land in its April issue, a surprising honor considering that we have some

of the worst weather for maintaining roads. On the other hand, maybe we shouldn't be surprised. After all, Kansas has invested significantly in its roads over the past 20 years.

All those detours and orange barrels have paid off. Kansas has been noticed.

The magazine made its rankings based on Federal Highway Administration data on highway safety, congestion, and the condition of roads and bridges.

It isn't easy getting to the top of that list when dealing with our climate. Frequent freezes and thaws are brutal on roads. Arizona and Florida have it much easier, but they rank Nos. 13 and 14 on the list.

But Kansas builds its roads well, builds them wide and rebuilds as needed.

As one truck driver told the magazine: "Actually, in Kansas, all the highways are very good. Even the two-lane roads are great - smooth, with shoulders."

We agree. And it is a credit to back-to-back comprehensive highway improvement programs completed

over the last two decades.

The investment doesn't pay off just in national recognition for good roads. The two highway programs were designed in large part to have economic value. Expanding two-lane highways to four lanes - as was done with K-96 between Hutchinson and Wichita and is in the works for K-61 between Hutchinson and McPherson - is not just about handling traffic and improving safety.

These highways also are meant to improve the flow of commerce. And good transportation makes a difference when trying to stimulate new industry.

Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson and former Govs. Mike Hayden and Bill Graves noted the No. 1 ranking earlier this month to highlight the need to continue to invest in highways.

They are right. A No. 1 ranking should not be used as an excuse to divert resources away from highways. Instead, it should prove the investment worthwhile and encourage lawmakers to follow up with a new highway program once economic conditions allow it.

Upcoming KDOT Training Courses

Classes at Headquarters

- ♦BEST - Week 1, May 17-20
- ♦Transition to Leadership/Ethics, June 8-10
- ♦You'll Catch On, June 15-16
- ♦BEST - Week 2, June 21-24
- ♦Business Writing I, June 29
- ♦Business Writing II, June 29
- ♦You'll Catch On, June 29-30
- ♦New Employee Orientation, July 8
- ♦SMART - Day 1, 2, 3, July 27-29

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes employees celebrating state anniversaries in May

10 YEARS

- Debra Bailey Chanute
- Richard Dickson Great Bend
- Billy Lee St Francis
- Laura Miller Silver Lake
- Randy Most Ludell
- Robert Nichols Topeka
- Clark Royer Valley Falls
- Tod Salfrank Wamego

20 YEARS

- David Ely Chanute
- Gene Erikson Erie
- Debra Hepp Topeka
- Michael Huddleston Great Bend
- Lee Ann Legge Lawrence
- John Moore Hiawatha
- Terry Thompson Emporia

30 YEARS

- Alan Adkins Dighton
- Stephan Bortz Smith Center
- George Meisner Jr. Hutchinson
- Wendell Watts Jr Pratts

State service anniversaries are compiled by Personnel Services. Employees and home towns are included in this list.

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Rod Lacy, Professional Civil Engineer III, Bureau of Design
The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

**Welcome
new KDOT
employees!**

Headquarters

Andrew Kapp, Database Administrator III, Computer Services
Neil Sherman, Systems Software Analyst III, Computer Services
The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for new employees to Translines.

Kansas Department of Transportation

Bureau of Transportation Information
Eisenhower State Office Building
700 SW Harrison, Second Floor, West
Topeka, KS 66603-3754

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TOPEKA, KS
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NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact Transportation Information, Eisenhower Building, 700 SW Harrison, 2nd Floor West, Topeka, KS, 66603-3754, or (785) 296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired - 711.

Retirees

The following employees will officially retire from KDOT in May.

District Three

Richard L. Squires, Equipment Operator Specialist at Bucklin
Robert J. Warhurst, Equipment Operator Senior at Oakley

District Four

Kenneth L. Harris, Equipment Operator Senior at Pittsburg

District Six

Steven C. Zimmerman, Equipment Operator Senior at Dodge City

The following employee officially retired from KDOT in April.

Headquarters

Eilene L. Ramsey, Appraiser Reviewer, Right of Way

Employees who choose to have retirement reception information shared on the Internet can be found at www.ksdot.org, under News and Announcements.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear KDOT:

My name is Melissa Drake. My husband and I were coming back from Seymour, Texas, on February 22. We were traveling north on Highway 283. We had the misfortune of hitting icy conditions almost immediately upon entering Oklahoma. The conditions were horrendous! We couldn't go faster than 30 miles per hour and still at times could feel our pickup slide. We did pass one accident where a pickup had a rollover accident when it lost control. To say the least, my husband was white knuckle and tense while driving and he used to drive a truck.

Then we hit Kansas. Praise God for all of you! The highway had been de-iced and bladed. We were immediately on safer ground. I cannot

begin to describe the relief that swept through our bodies. You men and women save lives! My husband turned to me and said, "You were his new heroes!" This is a man who does not give compliments!

Thank you for going out in bad conditions so that we are safe! Thank you for what you do! You represent the best that this state has to offer in state employees! You go out in conditions that the rest of us avoid if at all possible.

I just want you to know how much you are appreciated and I apologize for taking you for granted. You literally saved our lives and I will from now on hold you in my highest regards!

Sincerely,
Melissa Drake