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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 10, 2014

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KDOT marks 10th anniversary of Kansas 511 phone system

Nearly 4 million calls later, the Kansas Department of Transportation is observing the 10-year anniversary of the Kansas 511 traveler information phone service.

Launched on Jan. 15, 2004, 511 replaced the toll-free Kansas road condition hotline. The new system offered route-specific road conditions, construction/ detours, incidents and travel weather information. Kansas 511 became the eleventh 511 system in the U.S. when launched. Today, 38 states provide 511 services.

"Tens of thousands of travelers have been able to access reliable road and weather information from 511 before they left for trips," said Transportation Secretary Mike King. "This is important information for safety and efficiency, especially when weather creates hazardous travel conditions."

The 511 system has been a work in progress since its deployment. It was expanded in December 2012 to include Kansas City metro traffic information (both sides of the state line). New features also include call transfers to transit, tourism and motorist assist across the state. Also provided is free personalized information (email/text alerts by subscription).

Similar information is also provided on the 511 map website (<http://511.ksdot.org>) and on mobile devices at <http://511mm.ksdot.org>. The websites also include camera and electronic sign images.

KDOT's field staff enter the road condition, construction and incident/event information that feed 511. In addition, other personnel at headquarters assist with system management and operations.

For everyone's safety, drivers should avoid distractions such as talking or texting on their cell phone or accessing travel information while driving. In addition, please buckle up, don't drink and drive and properly secure children in safety seats.

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