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MAGIC camp shows girls new career opportunities

They aren't pulling a rabbit out of a hat, but the high school girls attending the MAGIC summer camp in Topeka are learning some new tricks about career opportunities in construction and transportation fields.

MAGIC (Mentoring a Girl in Construction) introduces high school girls age 14 or older to trade skill occupations such as carpentry, safety, electrical and highway construction and gives them a chance to learn from women already succeeding in these jobs. The event is taking place this week and is sponsored by the Kansas Department of Transportation.

"It's important to let young women who will soon be entering the work force know about career opportunities in these previously non-traditional fields," said KDOT Civil Rights Administrator Doria Watson. "This camp shows the students new career possibilities they may not have considered before."

Students will visit places such as Westar Energy's Kansas Education and Science Park, Foley Equipment, Burlington Northern, Billiard Airport, Topeka Metro Transit Authority and KDOT's Research Lab in addition to listening to several speakers in different transportation careers. They will participate in hands-on training and basic construction as well as learn about various modes of transportation and safety.

"All these activities are designed to build self-confidence, leadership and team-oriented skills as the students explore occupational options they may not otherwise have had a chance to learn about," Watson said.

A total of 28 high school girls from the Topeka area are taking part in the camp, which will end Friday.

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