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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 5, 2022

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National award-winning KDOT project fuels transportation scholarships for Kansas students

TOPEKA – A national award won by a Kansas Department of Transportation project will result in scholarships for Kansas students enrolled in a transportation-related program at one of the state’s public higher education institutions.

The Turner Diagonal interchange project on I-70 in Wyandotte County won the People’s Choice Award in the 2021 America’s Transportation Awards (ATA) competition. The award came with a \$10,000 cash prize. Pledges from KDOT transportation-industry partners boosted that amount to more than \$25,000.

Now, KDOT is directing the funds towards transportation-related scholarships at two- or four-year Kansas public colleges and universities. Applications for the scholarships are being accepted now for the 2023 spring semester.

“There has never been a better time to be in transportation in Kansas,” said Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz. “KDOT wants to encourage and assist students as they find their path in infrastructure-oriented professions at a time when resources and commitment are strong.”

The ATA People’s Choice award winner as presented by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AAHSTO) was determined through online votes from the public. The Turner Diagonal Project was among 12 state finalist projects selected from 80 nominations from 35 states. Finalist states included Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oregon, South Carolina and Utah.

Partnering organizations agreed to provide matching scholarship funds to promote online voting. They include Venture Corporation, Clarkson Construction Company, Wildcat Construction, Hamm Inc., TranSystems Corporation, Kansas Contractors Association, HNTB and Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City.

“While winners in the past have donated their winnings to scholarship funds, we have never before seen a state leverage their America’s Transportation Awards prize money to get matching contributions at this level,” said Maggie Kasperski, AASHTO Director of Communications and Marketing. “It is an innovative and really smart way to inspire and engage the next generation of transportation leaders. AASHTO is excited to be a part of that good news.”

To be eligible, students must –

- Be a Kansas resident attending a two- or four-year Kansas public higher education institution;
- Have a college GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- Be enrolled full-time in a transportation-related program in the spring 2023 semester.

Scholarships for \$5,000 are available for juniors or seniors in a four-year program; \$2,500 scholarships are available for those in the final year of an associate degree program.

The scholarship application can be downloaded at kansasregents.org/KDOTscholarship and also requires a resume and essay. Deadline for submission is Dec. 1. Email the completed information packet to vanessa.lamoreaux@ks.gov or contact her for more information.

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