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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

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## **Kelly Administration's Emphasis on Safety Saves Kansas Taxpayers Nearly \$1 Million**

*~~Department of Transportation Safety Division Has Significantly Reduced  
Work-Related Injury Costs Since 2019~~*

**TOPEKA** – Governor Laura Kelly today announced that her Administration has substantially reduced work-related injury costs by nearly \$1 million at the Kansas Department of Transportation.

In 2019, Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz created a new Division of Safety. Since then, KDOT has seen a steady reduction in costs resulting from decreased injury-related incidents. Numbers from Fiscal Year 2022, which concluded on June 30, show more than \$968,000 in total savings across three years.

“These savings show that our work to improve on-the-job safety is benefiting both workers and taxpayers,” **said Governor Laura Kelly**. “By prioritizing the wellbeing of our highway workers and emergency responders, we haven’t just reduced injury costs – we’ve also decreased the number of work hours lost and the severity of injuries themselves. These workers do so much for us – we must do everything we can to protect them.”

In 2006, while serving as a state senator, Governor Kelly supported and advanced passage of Senate Bill 411, which became the Kansas Move Over Law. The law requires drivers to move over for an emergency response vehicle on four-lane roads and highways.

KDOT work-related injury costs, including workman's comp, have seen steady improvement since the Division of Safety was formed:

FY 2019 \$1,453,885

FY 2020 \$1,240,039

FY 2021 \$534,113

FY 2022 \$485,861

“A safe work environment helps build employees’ trust in their work unit and organization,” **KDOT Director of Safety Troy Whitworth said.** “It’s important for our workers, because at the end of the day, they just want to go home safely to their families and friends.”

New policies the Division of Safety has implemented include “tailgate safety briefings,” in which field crews briefly gather at the beginning of a task to create situational awareness and identify possible hazards throughout the project. New safety procedures for department employees also include pre-meeting safety messages, in-house safety videos, and bi-weekly email reminders.

Added emphasis is placed on safety training for new employees. Data shows employees with less than five years of experience are more likely to be involved in incidents involving injury.

Whitworth said KDOT’s work-related injury numbers are trending consistently downward in the midst of uniquely challenging times, including a pandemic and crews which are often short-handed. Of particular note, the reduction in accidents was accomplished while KDOT increased construction lettings by 300%.

Secretary Lorenz said it is important to protect and respect those who have a hands-on role in maintaining the state’s highway system.

“Field employees, especially Equipment Operators, are the heart and soul of KDOT,” **said Secretary Lorenz.** “The Division of Safety’s ongoing mission is to find innovative methods to increase employee safety, with the resulting savings in money being an added benefit to taxpayers.”

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