

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Easing stresses on state's transportation infrastructure calls for multi-modal approach** *National report highlights rural capacity issues*

WICHITA – Pressures on Kansas' transportation infrastructure caused by growth in agriculture, energy production and military expansion cannot be eased simply by building more roads.

“Solving our rural capacity challenges must also include non-highway modes, including aviation, public transit and rail,” Kansas Transportation Secretary Deb Miller said Monday in Wichita.

Secretary Miller, along with Kansas Agriculture Secretary Josh Svaty, was responding to a national report, “Connecting Rural and Urban America”, that was released at events in Wichita, Arkansas and Wyoming. The report was prepared by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which represents state transportation departments in all 50 states. Growth in agriculture and energy, as well as increases in trade between the U.S. and Canada and Mexico, will require the nation to expand its highways and transportation options, according to the report.

“Rural Kansans, like our urban neighbors, need reliable transportation options to connect them to their communities, to vital services and to markets for their agricultural products,” said Secretary Svaty.

“Because we are a predominantly rural state, it’s even more important that we focus on the quality and extent of our rural transportation infrastructure because it is the foundation on which our economy and the security of our people rests.”

The majority of agricultural product in Kansas moves by truck and the state is fortunate to have a strong, viable trucking industry, Secretary Miller said. But the state must also have a strong rail link to regional and national markets to ease the stresses that come with economic opportunities and expansion, she said. Kansas’ short line railroads move an annual average of 175,000 carloads of goods throughout Kansas.

“When you consider that each carload can haul an amount equal to three or four truckloads, you understand that railroads also save our highways a tremendous amount of wear and tear,” she said.

“And that alone is worth hundreds of millions of dollars.”

The report also cited rising congestion in the nation’s popular tourist destinations and emerging cities that aren’t connected to the interstate system as issues often overlooked in national transportation policy discussions. To view the entire report, visit the AASHTO web site at <http://ExpandingCapacity.transportation.org>.

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