

KDOT Translines

Bureau of Transportation Information

April 2005



Heartache motivates students to take part in safety program

By Amy Link

MERIDAN - There's no place like home, and for the J-Dub Road Crew, nothing is more important than getting there safely.

In just 18 months, members of the Meriden community lost two Jefferson West High School students and the mother of two other students in separate traffic crashes along K-4. Faced with these losses, students, staff, and administration at Jefferson West

Members of the J-Dub Road Crew from Jefferson West High School work together to help their fellow students understand the importance of driving safety. KDOT's Ingrid Vandervort, far left, assists the program. Photo illustration by Photographic Services.

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Herrick tackling challenges as Planning Chief

By Stan Whitley

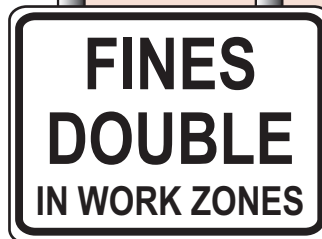
He's served his entire KDOT career in Planning and now Chris Herrick is enthusiastically tackling the challenges of his new position as Bureau Chief of Transportation Planning.



Chris Herrick

"It's helped that I've worked in Planning since 1991, but I've still been

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Work zone safety is a top priority

By Kim Stich

Work zones can be dangerous places for both highway workers and motorists, and increasing safety in work zones is a top priority for KDOT.

"It is always critical to pay attention and drive safely any time you're in a vehicle, but it is all the more important in highway work zones," said Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller. "I want to bring a spotlight to the problem of traffic

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- ◆ TEAM EFFORT APPRECIATED IN DISTRICT FIVE

- ◆ ITS CONFERENCE A 'HARD ACT TO FOLLOW'
- ◆ KDOT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF RARE OPPORTUNITY
- ◆ MARCH OF DIMES HELPS IN CRITICAL TIMES



Miller's Time

*By Secretary
Deb Miller*

Silence is golden

When I became Secretary of Transportation more than two years ago, it wasn't unusual for me to spend part of my working day taking complaints over the telephone from citizens, stakeholders, and lawmakers.

But over the past two years, the frequency of those complaint calls has decreased. And I have many of you to thank for that welcome change. There will always, of course, be some complaints to deal with. But, the relative silence of my telephone is music to my ears.

It's obvious to me and many of the persons we deal with that the people at KDOT are starting to think in a new way. I hear it from public works directors, city managers, legislators, and co-workers. You know the old line about a KDOT worker talking to an outsider: "The answer is 'no.' Now, what was your question?" That joke has just about run its course. One public works director recently told me, "That doesn't happen any more."

I have received some very nice letters that are testament to your great work and attitude. When a crash took the life of a high school student in Meriden this school year, we showed sensitivity, responsiveness, and inclusion in addressing the community's concerns in a responsible way, according to a letter from the local school superintendent.

When ice storms this winter were too severe for some cities' street crews to handle, we came in with our trucks and sand to make streets safe for travel. "It's comforting to know we can rely on KDOT during unusual times such as these rare and dangerous ice storms,"

wrote Eskridge Mayor Rex Kraus.

And, when citizens at a US-50 meeting at Newton needed a simple explanation of complicated work, Public Affairs Manager Martin Miller was there to provide understanding. Wrote Newton Public Works Director Suzanne Loomis, "He did an excellent job explaining things in simple terms for the people and I, for one, was very glad he was there."

It's clear to me that the Partnership Project is having an impact on how we operate as individuals and as an agency. On page 7 of this Translines issue, there is a chart of the initial P2 priorities and the progress that has been made toward achieving those goals. When you look at the priorities, you see that the common thread is an emphasis on nurturing relationships. We are finding already that such an approach is not only appreciated by our local partners, it is an effective way to do business.

Mike Crow, Director of the Division of Operations, said our people in the districts are thinking earlier about how to incorporate our partners in the decision-making process. "It's becoming KDOT culture," he says.

I know we're asking you to think differently, and sometimes there's up-front labor that we weren't doing before. But I hope that it's saving us trouble on the back end. This approach is making my job easier and I hope it's making your job easier, as well. Thank you for being the positive face of KDOT and for the good work you are doing.

The telephone calls I'm *not* receiving tell me a lot about how successful you have been.

Highway worker struck by motorist, knows danger can be part of the job

By Amy Link

ERIE - In his 37 years with KDOT, O'Neil Smith has seen a lot of things. But sometimes it's the things you don't see that make the most impact — like a Lincoln Town Car coming right at you.

Smith, Equipment Operator for the Erie Office in District Four, was flagging traffic west of K-47 near Galesburg. He and fellow highway workers were stopping motorists at intersections to allow them to detour their routes and avoid the accident up ahead. Smith was facing away from the highway when a motorist pulled up and stopped at the intersection. Somehow, the driver did not see Smith and began to turn right into him.

"We didn't see each other and she turned right into me," Smith said. "It knocked me down."

His co-workers immediately went to his aid, along with the police and the paramedics who were already on hand for the previous accident.

Fortunately the vehicle was moving very slowly so Smith was not hurt.

"It scared me a little, but I was fine," he said.

And after the paramedics checked him out, he returned to work.

Smith said in his 37 years working for KDOT, this is the first time he or any of his coworkers have been struck by a vehicle. However, it is something that they have to be concerned with every time they're out on the highway.

"We're always cautious, but the fact that we haven't had any other incidents is more luck than anything else," Gene Erickson said.



KDOT employee O'Neil Smith said the number one threat to highway workers is inattentive driving.

Erickson, who has worked with Smith for eight years, said the number one threat to highway workers is inattentive drivers.

And Smith agrees with him.

"In the last year and half, we see more and more people talking on their cell phones, which is very dangerous for us," Smith said.

But cell phones are not the only danger because, in

Smith's case, the driver was not on a cell phone. Erickson said the driver was an older woman who may have been confused about where she needed to turn, or just did not see Smith.

Regardless of what the distraction to the driver is, for a highway worker it is always dangerous, Erickson said. And though these kinds of accidents are rare, they are always in the

backs of crew members minds.

"You're always aware something like this can happen," Erickson said. "All you can really do is be careful and hope that it won't happen."



Projects get started throughout Kansas

Projects in District Four, District Five, and District Six are featured in this edition. Articles written by Priscilla Petersen, District Four Public Affairs Manager; Martin Miller, District Five Public Affairs Manager; and Kirk Hutchinson, District Six Public Affairs Manager.

DISTRICT FOUR

The first of eight projects to expand US-69 to a four-lane freeway between the communities of Louisburg and Fort Scott were opened in early January. Governor Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary Deb Miller were among the many notables who gathered to dedicate the newly opened stretch of highway during a February 4 celebration in Louisburg. The four-lane segment extends south from Louisburg for almost 11 miles, where it joins a second project that continues south for 4.7 miles to the Miami-Linn county line. That project should be completed later this year. Ideker, Inc., St. Joseph, Mo., is general contractor on both projects. The Garnett Area Office

is overseeing the construction of the projects, which carry a combined cost of approximately \$50.2 million.

According to District Construction Engineer Gary Plumb, the US-69 expansion projects are "... much-needed improvements due to the increasing traffic volumes resulting from continuing development of the areas along the corridor."

Last June KDOT awarded two more projects for the US-69 expansion from Fort Scott north for almost 16 miles. The Iola Area Office is in charge of the projects, which have a combined cost of \$46.5 million. Koss Construction Co. Inc. and Subsidiaries, Topeka, is the primary contractor. KDOT also awarded Koss the newest expansion project from the Miami-Linn county line south for 6.4 miles. The low bid for this project was approximately \$26 million. The Garnett office is managing the project and the work is scheduled in early February.

The three remaining projects will be let through 2007. US-69 advocates anticipate the smooth flow of traffic along

the 54 miles between the two cities in late 2009, the projected completion date for the corridor expansion.

DISTRICT FIVE

"Kitchen Table" meetings were conducted for the System Enhancement Projects for US-54 (Pratt to Kingman) and K-61 (Hutchinson to McPherson). These projects will not be let for construction until 2008 for US-54 and 2009 for K-61, but continuing input from local citizens and public officials has been an important project component as the design work is finalized. The "Kitchen Table" meeting format provides

an opportunity to meet one-on-one with affected landowners to show the current highway alignment design and to gather more detailed information about local property use and characteristics.

US-50, from the K-61/K-14 intersection west of Hutchinson/ South Hutchinson continuing east 7.8 miles, will undergo a major modification project. This project includes a new ramp that will

merge northbound K-61 traffic into the combined US-50/K-61 roadway. This ramp will eliminate a US-50/K-61 "at grade" intersection with a stop sign on K-61 that has been the site of past fatal accidents. This new intersection configuration was suggested by Bob Cook, District Engineer.

US-77, from the north city limits of El Dorado continuing north 9.6 miles to DeGraff Road will also receive a major modification project. This project includes a one-mile section of four-lane road north of El Dorado and the remaining two-lane roadway will be rebuilt on offset alignment with six-foot shoulders (three feet bituminous and three feet turf). Seven new bridges will be constructed as part of this project.

DISTRICT SIX

This year District Six will launch more than \$24 million worth of construction projects, not counting the almost



Construction continues to expand US-69 to a four-lane expressway between Louisburg and Fort Scott.

Team effort appreciated in District Five

Dear Don Brittian (District Maintenance Superintendent):

This just a note to thank you very much for your help and the help of the crew after last month's ice storm.

Your assistance was sincerely appreciated.

Thank you,
John Mitchell
Mayor, City of Haven



KDOT employees from the Pratt Area Maintenance crew, Kingman Subarea, and Anthony Subarea worked to help communities clean up debris after the ice storm in January once the roads were clear.

Dear KDOT:

The City of Pretty Prairie would like to thank you for all of the work that your department did for our residents following the recent ice storm. The tree damage was almost overwhelming, and would have been a problem for a long time, if not for your assistance. Our city staff and volunteers enjoyed providing their lunches, and working with your staff. We hope that it made the day's work a little easier.

Please let us know if we can ever return the favor.

Sincerely,
Patti Brace
City Clerk

To: Robert Cook; Scott Mullen; Jon Sharp

I spoke at the Kansas Association of Airports meeting today and saw Cheryl Beatty. She expressed her appreciation to me for all of the help that KDOT has given in the City of Kingman in hauling away tree limbs and cleaning up after the ice storm. She seemed very sincere and thankful for the help. I wanted to let you know that you earned some brownie points!

Thanks for the good work,
Deb Miller
Secretary of Transportation



The District Five Bridge, Paint, and Special Maintenance crews remove limbs from the streets in Haven.

KDOT staff takes advantage of once-in-a-century opportunity

Leslie Fowler and Al Cathcart know what it's like to work with the railroad all the live-long day.

Fowler, Contracts Attorney in Chief Counsel, and Cathcart, Coordinating Engineer in Design, spent about two years negotiating with the Union Pacific Railroad for lease of land on which US-40 is located, from Oakley to the Colorado border.

"Thanks to the hard work of many, we were able to take advantage of an opportunity we had never had for nearly a century," Fowler said. "In addition to the purchase of Highway 40, I wanted the railroad to agree to sell us land along Highway 24 when that lease came due two years later."

The Union Pacific would eventually agree to sell. This ended a nearly century long struggle between the railroad and KDOT over lease negotiations.

The lease, which dates back to 1926 and is up for renewal every 25 years, had expired in 2000. The following year, negotiations began between KDOT and Union Pacific. The last time negotiations occurred was in 1976, but this time the Union Pacific wanted something different.

"They wanted us to sign a rights document, rather than a lease," Fowler said. "None of us knew what that was, but after reading the terms of the document it would not have been a good deal for KDOT."

The rights document required KDOT to take out more railroad insurance when doing construction projects and any maintenance projects, even mowing the highway.

"The Rights Document wanted more money and fewer benefits for us, as well as increasing the cost of improving

and maintaining the highway," Fowler said. "It was unacceptable."

At one point in the negotiations, Chriss McDiffett, District Three Engineer, joked with Cathcart and Fowler that they should offer to give the railroad US-40 and let them maintain it.

"The lease had really put us in a box. Since we couldn't operate the highway without the use of the railroad land, we would have been forced to accept these terms and any future mandates they might want," Fowler said.

Tired of having to negotiate every time a lease came due, KDOT made an offer to buy the land on US-40 as well as land US-24 is located on in Pottawatomie and Shawnee counties, where the lease was to come due in 2003.

The railroad agreed, but they did not make it easy.

While the Union Pacific offered to sell the 330.12 acres in Wallace and Logan counties at the same price as the current lease, they wanted to make the deal final within 30 days. Fowler said they received a letter in December 2003 stating that Union Pacific would agree to sell, but wanted to make

the sale final by the end of the year.

"The railroad gave us such a short window of opportunity, that it took the quick work of many KDOT agencies to make this happen," Fowler said.

The work paid off when the US-40 purchase became final in December 2003 and when US-24 became final the following September; each nearly two years after the lease expired.

KDOT DOMAIN

Location	Acreage	Price
US-40, Logan County	161.52 acres	\$59,100
US- 40, Wallace County	168.6 acres	\$118,350
US-24, Shawnee County	120.1 acres	\$339,300
US-24, Pottawatomie County	73.1 acres	\$114,000

Negotiations nothing new

Lease negotiations between KDOT and the railroad go back a long way -- to the early 1900s.

The railroad had been given this land through land grants for the purpose of connecting the East with the West, Cathcart said.

"During the early 1900s, KDOT began leasing land along the railroad from the Missouri line to the Colorado border in order to construct Highway 40," Cathcart said.

Cathcart said KDOT had tried several times to purchase the land for US-40 from Oakley to Colorado border, but the operating side of the railroad would not approve such as sale. A change in railroad management regarding "excess" railroad right of way opened a window of opportunity that had not

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KDOT Partnership Project

Initial Priorities

	Champion	Percent Complete										Target
		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
1. Get KDOT field and local officials involved in earliest stages of a project.	Jim Kowach, Mike Crow	↑	↑		↑							
2. Draft an expanded local consult process and seek external input on expanded process.	Julie Lorenz	↑										Dec-05
3. Train Area Engineers/PA Managers on KDOT programs.	Mike Longshaw	↑	↑	↑	↑							
4. Philosophically shift KDOT's approach to allow more flexibility and input from city/county/area.	David Church	↑	↑	↑								
5. Locate first urban planning position in KC area.	Terry Heidner	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑						Jun-05
6. Examine and update position description of Area Engineer.	Mike Crow and District Engineers	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑						Jul-05
7. Establish an inspection mentor/reviewer position in each district office.	Lon Ingram	↑	↑	↑								Mar-05
8. Design and implement high level management training for key classifications such as Area Engineer and Design Squad leader.	Mike Crow, David Comstock	↑										Jun-05
9. Use ongoing meetings and other opportunities to mentor young employees to develop a better understanding of KDOT's business and decision making processes.	David Comstock and Bureau Chiefs	↑										Fall 05
10. Revise policy to reflect considering monetary settlements as an option to KDOT making the improvement for turnback miles.	Sally Howard	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑						Sep-05
11. Establish a division of Multi-Modal transportation.	Julie Lorenz											Sep-05
12. Revise policy to reflect consideration of investing in local roads that serve as detours.	Ron Sietz	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Jun-05

March of Dimes helps in critical times

It's four days before Thanksgiving, and Joyce Hodges, in her sixth month of pregnancy, is relaxing and watching the Chiefs-Raiders game, when all of sudden her water breaks. For any woman that would be startling, but Joyce wasn't due for another four months.

"It was pretty traumatic, because I knew this wasn't supposed to be happening," Joyce said. "The game wasn't that exciting."

Despite efforts to prolong her pregnancy, Joyce, Senior Administrative Assistant for District One, gave birth to a son, Avery, just 23 weeks into her pregnancy on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2003. Weighing only 20 ounces and just 11 inches long, Avery's condition was critical. Joyce and her husband, Brian, would spend the next five months in and out of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit hoping that someday they would get to take Avery home.

Avery finally made it home and, now, he and his parents will serve as the 2005 Ambassador Family for the Topeka Division of the March of Dimes. March of Dimes is an organization dedicated to improving the health of preterm babies through research, community services, education, and advocacy.

Joyce said March of Dimes was responsible for the specialized treatment that saved Avery's life, and she was excited to be part of the organization. One of the Hodges' responsibilities will be to speak at WalkAmerica, a fundraiser for the organization.

"The benefits to being an ambassador are the chance to be part of events like WalkAmerica, which



Joyce and Brian Hodges pose last Christmas with their son, Avery. Below, Avery is just shown four days after he was born. He weighed 20 ounces at birth. The ring on his arm is Brian's wedding band.

emphasizes March of Dimes mission to save the lives of premature babies," Joyce said. "Hopefully, in some small way, sharing our story will make a difference."

And what a story it is. Avery

had to undergo three surgeries during the five months he spent in intensive care. Each time Avery underwent surgery, Joyce and Brian knew there was a good chance he might not survive.

"I believe my worst day was the day after Christmas. My husband was having surgery on his nose and while he was under, I went up a floor to see Avery. Suddenly Avery had to be rushed



into emergency surgery," Joyce said. "So I had both of my guys in surgery."

About five inches of Avery's small intestine had not developed properly and had to be removed. The surgery was successful and today at 15-months-old, he is doing well.

"Avery is a wild man. He's crawling all over the place," Joyce said. "He's saying a few words – though he still refuses to say Mommy."

For Joyce and Brian, Avery will always be their own personal reminder of the importance of March of Dimes. But there are so many more babies who need help, Joyce said.

"In Kansas alone, there are 10 premature babies born each week on average," she said. "Everyone is affected by this, so please walk for someone you love." -A.L.

'In Kansas alone, there are 10 premature babies born each week on average.'

Joyce Hodges

WalkAmerica 2005

6 p.m., Friday, April 29

Topeka Zoological Park, Gage Park

Interested in being part of the WalkAmerica Campaign? Contact KDOT's co-captains of the campaign: Peggy Hansen-Nagy: (785) 296-3285, or Deana Taylor: (785) 296-3461.



Project Topeka

Ernie Miller, Senior Administrative Assistant in Transportation Planning, displays locks of his hair that were cut off to help raise funds for Project Topeka. The event, plus others throughout the year, including a summer social, silent auction, chili feed, flower sale, and Miller's time off, raised \$5,378.47 to support Project Topeka.

ITS conference a 'hard act to follow'

With a record attendance and the hard work of many, this year's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Heartland and Missouri Valley Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (MOVITE) Conference on March 15 and 16 in Topeka was a great success.

"KDOT should feel very good about what was accomplished by a number of dedicated volunteers who went above and beyond their normal duties to get this accomplished," said Mike Floberg, ITS Engineer for KDOT. "I have always said that KDOT has super people working for them and once again I wasn't disappointed."

Floberg said the goal of the conference was to give participants the opportunity to hear what other states are doing with ITS and view cutting-edge equipment from vendors. And with a record 383 attendees, 30 vendors, and 20 spon-

sors, there was plenty of opportunity to do just that.

Some notable guests included the President of ITS America Neil Schuster, the Director of the Nebraska Department of Roads John Craig, MOVITE President Nicci Turner, and KDOT Secretary Deb Miller.

KDOT attorney Leslie Spencer Fowler, president of ITS Heartland, thanked ITS Heartland board members Steve Rockers, Bureau of Design, and Stan Young, Bureau of Materials, as well as many other KDOT employees, for developing a high-quality, two-day agenda that included concurrent sessions and a fiber optic workshop.

"The next few states hosting this event have a very hard act to follow and I am sure they will be asking how we did it," said Floberg.

Kudos to KDOT employees

Three KDOT employees were honored by the Topeka Chapter of the Kansas Society of Professional Engineers on February 25.

Jim Brewer, Engineering Road Manager in Design, was named the Engineer of the Year.

Larry Emig, Chief of Local Proj-

ects, was recognized for his service as the National Society of Professional Engineers Vice President for the North Central Region.

Kim Stich, Informational Specialist in Transportation Information, received the Journalism in the Field of Engineering award.

Kansas map receives international award

The state of Kansas is literally on the map thanks to the work of Transportation Planning's Cartography section.

That map is the 2003-2004 edition of the Kansas State map that was produced by KDOT in cooperation with Travel and Tourism at the Kansas Department of Commerce. The map was judged as the overall champion in the "Battle of the Maps 2004" international competition.

"The Kansas map was named the winner for its extensive application of CADscript, cartographic excellence and aesthetic appeal," said Brian Logan, KDOT Cartography Manager. "We are very proud to receive this award and it serves as a testament to the high quality of work done by the people in the Cartography section who were involved in the production of the map."

There were 50 worldwide entries submitted in the competition held by Corporate Montage. The Sydney, Australia, based software company specializes in Computer Aided Design (CAD)



KDOT Cartography workers proudly display their plaque as the champion in the "Battle of the Maps 2004" international map competition. Standing are (from left to right) Brian Logan, Danny Bahre, and Carl Gile. Front row, Fred Holthaus, Jan Nicol, and Bridget Martinez.

graphics, GIS and document management for the Engineering/Construction, Public Utility, and Oil/Exploration industries.

"The high caliber of entries submitted made selecting a winning entry extremely difficult," said Corporate Montage representative, Steve Sims. "We received many outstanding entries from the United States, Australia, the Middle East, Germany and New Zealand."

Sims said that the extensive use of CADscript by KDOT created an impressive state map that made it stand out from other maps entered in the competition.

Entries were competing in seven separate categories to fit in with the different industries/disciplines CADscript

is used in. In addition to being the overall winner, the Kansas map was also first in one of the specific categories taking top honors in the transport field.

The Kansas state map is produced every two years and is distributed free of charge to the public.

"It costs 16 cents to produce each map with the majority of the cost going toward printing and distribution," said Fred Holthaus, Assistant Cartography Manager. "Only two cents of the cost to produce each map goes toward salaries."

KDOT will be receiving a plaque from Corporate Montage in honor of the accomplishment. More information about the competition can be found at <http://corporatemontage.com> - S.W.

**Welcome
new KDOT
employees!**

Headquarters

Rick Bixler, Research Analyst III,
Materials and Research

Suzanne Knorr, Program Consultant
II, Public Affairs

David Sommer, Applications Program-
mer Analyst III, Computer Services

District Two

Bill Gantt, Equipment Operator Spe-
cialist, McPherson

District Four

Janet Sandusky, Administrative As-
sistant, Independence

District Five

Dalton McEachern, Engineering Tech-
nician Senior, El Dorado

Work zone

Continued from page 1

fatalities and injuries in work zones and focus on reducing these tragedies.”

Across the state, a total of 25 motorists died and 755 people were injured in work zone crashes in 2004.

National Work Zone Awareness Week (April 3-9) focuses on educating the public on the hazards that can be encountered in work zones and ways to increase safety for highway workers and the traveling public.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius recognizes the importance of work zone safety and will sign a proclamation on April 4 to kick off National Work Zone Awareness Week in Kansas.

KDOT also is celebrating its 12th year of participating in the Give ‘Em A Brake campaign which focuses on improving work zone safety. The Give ‘Em A Brake signs lead the list as the most-recognized signs along roadways in Kansas and help remind motorists to drive safely in work zones.

A part of this campaign is a joint effort between KDOT and the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) to increase enforcement in selected work zones across the state.

“Work zone safety is a high priority for the Patrol,” said Colonel William Seck, Superintendent of the Patrol. “Strict enforcement of traffic laws is crucial to the welfare of those working in and traveling through highway work areas.”

KDOT and the KHP encourage all motorists to follow these safety tips:

- ◆ Pay attention and dedicate your full attention to the roadway
- ◆ Don’t speed, tailgate or change lanes in work zones
- ◆ Watch for workers and drive with caution
- ◆ Minimize distractions
- ◆ Expect delays, especially during peak travel times
- ◆ While traffic is stopped in a work zone, turn on flashers to alert approaching motorists

Close calls are common in work zones *‘Flaggers are not replaceable’*

LOUISBURG - He had no where to go.

KDOT employee Kevin White was flagging traffic for a maintenance project taking place on K-68 about six miles west of Louisburg and a truck coming towards him showed no signs of stopping.

“I started moving the paddle around trying to get the driver’s attention, but she wasn’t slowing down,” White said. “I had vehicles stopped in the westbound lane and when she finally saw me, the driver veered to the right. She barely missed a car that was stopped and went around me going about 45 mph.”

With moving traffic on one side, stopped traffic in front of him and the truck passing on the other, “I was in a little eight-foot area with no place to go,” White said. “The lady in the stopped car was also very concerned. It was a close call.”

White and his co-workers know the importance of work zone safety and support National Work Zone Awareness Week. This campaign highlights the need for safety each and every time motorists enter a work zone.

“All the training in the world won’t protect if motorists don’t pay



Kevin White

attention,” White said. “It just takes one to wipe you out.”

White, an Equipment Operator Senior, has worked at KDOT for 14 years and has seen or heard about other close calls. “Two weeks before that, we had a motorist drive through a job site,” White said. “Unfortunately, these close calls happen too often.”

***‘We’re here doing a job.
We’ve got wives and children,
just like the motorists,
and we want to be able to go
home to them at night.’***

Kevin White

All work zones are clearly marked with signs warning motorists of the upcoming work area, speed limit or lane reductions, and other possible traffic conditions,

but it’s vital for motorists to be alert and obey these signs.

“Some people just don’t seem to look past the hood of their car and you can tell they are not paying attention,” White said. “They are only six car lengths away before they see you and react.”

And paying attention can mean the difference between life and death in a work zone. “Flaggers are not replaceable,” he said. “We’re here doing a job. We’ve got wives and children, just like the motorists, and we want to be able to go home to them at night.”

-K.S.

Retirees

The following employees will officially retire from KDOT on April 1.

Headquarters

Gary Biber, Engineering Technician Specialist in Design -33 years of state service.

Phillip J. Clouse, Engineering Technician in Materials and Research - 18 years of state service

John C. Kleinschmidt, Change Order Technician in Construction and Maintenance - 41 ½ years of state service

Fred C. Markham, Landscape Architect II in Design, 12 1/3 years of state service

Dennis Weinrich, Assistant Bureau Chief of Construction and Maintenance - 33 years of state service

John B. Wojakowski, Professional Civil Engineer in Materials and Research - 36 years of state service

District Three - Northwest

James A. Daggett, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Erie - 26 years of state service

Robert L. Virgil, Installation Service Technician II at Norton - 16 years of state service.

District Four - Southeast

Jake C. Saubers, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Yates Center - 32 ½ years of state service

District Five - Southcentral

Larry W. Griffin, Storekeeper Specialist at Hutchinson, 34 years of state service

Allen W. Morris, Area Superintendent at Wichita - 35 years of state service

Robert N. Raymond, Engineering Technician Senior at Wichita, 38 ½ years of state service

Joseph L. Yohon, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Newton - 35 years of state service

Step Back in Time



Girders are placed during construction of the K-16 bridge over the Big Blue River at Tuttle Creek in the early 1960s. A project was let earlier this week to make approximately \$7 million in repairs to the structure.

Railroad

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been available since the early 1900s.

And KDOT was very fortunate to make use of this opportunity.

Advantages of ownership

Both highways will benefit a great deal from KDOT owning the land in terms of doing maintenance. And with the US-24 purchase, KDOT was able to buy additional right-of-way.

"With the additional land acquired, we will be able to make needed drainage and shoulder slope improvements without having to consult with the railroad," Jerry Younger, Metro Engineer in District One, said. "The additional right-of-way will also provide some or all of the land necessary for future expansions of US-24."

And, Fowler added, "Along with allowing for transportation improvements, the purchase also sets a precedent for local units of government, who may also want to purchase the land from the railroad instead of leasing."

However, KDOT highway workers like McDiffet, who previously had to consult with the railroad before con-

ducting many highway activities on the railroad right-of-way, will perhaps gain the most out of this purchase.

Or as McDiffet said, "Put simply, owning the land will make life a whole lot easier."

KDOT Team

The purchase of land was made possible by several KDOT employees.

Program and Project Management: Rosie Ingram provided necessary project funds to acquire the right-of-way.

Fiscal Services: Dale Jost and Rhonda Seitz prepared the vouchers and final check to meet the railroad deadline.

Environmental Services: Scott Vogel and Kevin Adams did the necessary environmental review.

Right of Way: Mike Stock confirmed the sale price was the fair market value.

Design: Gary Farlow and Jill Burton did the review of legal descriptions for the sale.

Chief Counsel: Glenda Brown and Fowler also reviewed the legal descriptions for the sale.

Area Four: Robert Weiss did an on-site inspection with Cathcart.

Area Five: Kevin Schorzman also did an on-site inspection. -A.L.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dean Testa:

Re: 281-84 K 8751-01

This is the first time I have written a letter like this to KDOT, as you are aware.

On the above project on US-281, the road was shut down during construction, so the time allowed was short, and there was an incentive for getting done early.

John Riggins was the Construction Engineer over the project, and Kevin Zimmer was the Area Engineer. Both gentlemen took an active interest in this project, visiting the project on several occasions and keeping up the enthusiasm for completing the project on time so that the public would have access to the highway as soon as possible. They were great "partners" all the way, and I want to let you know how proud I

am that Kansas has public servants of their caliber working in KDOT. They were professional, enthusiastic, supportive, and team players.

After we completed the project ahead of time, the final paperwork was sent in. Never in my life have I seen any public body finalize the paperwork so quickly and get us paid. This is strong evidence that they work hard, and are more efficient than the best public servants. I hope that they stay with KDOT and keep it a great organization. Hopefully, they will make their way to Topeka one of these days.

Please pass our thanks and congratulations on to these gentlemen for a job well done.

Very truly yours,
Michael Welch

President, BRB Contractors, Inc.

Herrick

Continued from page 1

learning about the many aspects of Planning from Bureau Chiefs and by attending committee meetings," said Herrick. "In my previous job as Statewide Planning Engineer, I managed six people in one unit. Now I oversee a Bureau that has 95 employees in seven different units."

Herrick will oversee a Bureau that has responsibilities in traffic and field operations, geometric and accident data, cartography/geographic information systems, intelligent transportation system technology (ITS), metropolitan planning organizations, transportation and land use, statewide planning, public transportation, rail affairs, and statewide bicycle and pedestrian issues.

Herrick has a business degree from the University of Kansas and a Civil Engineering Degree from the University of Minnesota. After graduating from KU in 1985, Herrick worked as a sales representative for NCR Corporation out of Denver, Colo. After several years of sales, Herrick decided to pursue a career

in Civil Engineering.

In 1991 Herrick began his career working at KDOT as a Models and Forecasting Engineering Associate. He was promoted to an MPO Administration Engineering Associate in 1995 and held that position for three years before accepting the job of Statewide Planning Engineer in 1998.

Herrick said some of the favorite things about this new job include working with a great group of professionals and support staff, learning and supervising new technology, working with the public, and working for a Bureau that is critical to the agency.

Travel demand modeling, micro-simulation modeling, and intelligent transportation systems are examples of advancements in technology that are becoming increasingly important to Planning, according to Herrick. He said there is an increasing reliance upon technology to manage and analyze the tremendous flow of information.

"With the tight economy and more demand for state dollars there will be a greater reliance on technology to help increase the capacity of our roadways,"

said Herrick. We have been challenged to use technology, such as ITS, to help us manage our roadways."

Herrick said that he has long thought KDOT has been data rich and analysis poor. However, with the development of KGATE and the completion of the Geospatial Enablement Plan, KDOT can now access the enterprise and foster data sharing throughout the agency.

KGATE is the GIS web portal at KDOT which links the agency's geo-referenced data to a GIS interface, allowing multiple queries of tabular data while also referencing other pertinent data such as aerial photos, videolog, scanned images and reports. Point and linear data is displayed simultaneously on a map of Kansas with the KDOT state system linear network. Within the next year, the network will include all 137,620 miles of public roads.

Herrick and his wife, Susan, have been married for 18 years and have two children, Caleb, 13, and Ethan, 8. Herrick succeeds Jim Tobaben, who went to work for a private engineering firm last year.

Fun Facts and Trivia

Do you know?

1. How many Kansas bridges are listed on the National Register of Historic Places?
2. One of the largest cavalry engagements of the Civil War was fought on this battlefield, the only Civil War battle fought in Kansas, near Pleasanton. What is the name of the battlefield?
3. At what altitude do most jet contrails occur? (A contrail is the trail of water droplets you see in the sky that looks like a white line of clouds.)

Do you know some fun KDOT facts or trivia?

Send them to Shanna Anderson at shanna.ksdot.org.

1. 85. There are 38 metal truss bridges, 30 masonry bridges, and 11 rainbow arch bridges.
2. Mine Creek Battlefield.
3. Between 35,000 and 39,000 feet.

Answers

J-Dub

Continued from page 1

wanted to do something.

That "something" became the J-Dub Road Crew, a group of 13 students with the intent of reminding fellow classmates and community members to drive safely.

"Traffic safety is an important issue that needs to be addressed," Savanna Friend, senior at Jefferson West and Road Crew member said. "This group is one of the ways for us to do that."

The idea for a student safe driving awareness group came in part from KDOT. Ingrid Vandervort, Program Consultant in Traffic Safety,

said KDOT had been considering a pilot student safe driving program in Shawnee County high schools. Given the Meriden community's request for help and the support of Superintendent Dr. Rob Little, KDOT suggested the program focus on Jefferson West High School.

"The school and community rallied around this idea and their continued support has made it an honor to be involved with the J-Dub Road Crew," Vandervort said.

Vandervort, who attends J-Dub's monthly meetings as a safety ambassador, said that with KDOT's help the school's safe driving program received a \$22,600 grant.

J-Dub?

One of the first decisions the group had to make was what they would be called.

J-Dub is a nickname for Jefferson West High School, with the "Dub" standing for W -- similar to KU's Wayne "Big Dub" Simien or President George "Dubya" Bush.

"The students didn't want to be the safety committee, so I suggested the Road Crew and they came up with J-Dub," Mary Getto, the Crew's advisor said. "That was decided at our first meeting."

With the motto "Get Home Safely," the

Crew has arranged for speakers to give short, low-key presentations such as how to drive in inclement weather or on common distractions that can cause accidents. The Crew has also designed T-shirts, key chains, bracelets, balls, and other items that are given out to all of Jefferson West's students to remind students to be safe while driving. The grant money has helped all of these things be possible, with the remaining funds to be used in upcoming projects.

Paving the way for change

Crew members may get to be involved in projects outside their school, such as attending the Transportation Safety Conference in

Wichita. The success of the Crew could also serve as motivation for other schools to implement traffic safety programs, as well.

However, Getto hopes that if other schools develop a safety group it is for proactive reasons unlike J-Dub.

"I would not want any other school to know the heartache we have known, but it's nice to think our group may make a difference for other schools," Getto said. "I know our students would like that."

While it will be nice to help others who they've never met, Getto knows that the Crew's mission has

always been more personal.

"Our students have genuine concern for one another, and they tell each other to get home safely because they love each other," Getto said. "J-Dub members are leaders in the school and are involved in the community. This is such a dedicated group of students, and I am proud to be their advisor."

And being part of the group is something Crew members are also proud of.

As Aric Cherry, senior at Jefferson West and Crew member said, "Drawing awareness to traffic safety issues can help everybody, and it's nice we get to be a part of something like this."

J-DUB Crew

Savanna Friend

Aric Cherry

Austin Lee

Courtney Sutton

Curtis Tuck

Dan Bigham

Rebecca Rodecap

Maegan Galle

Miles Wulfekoetter

Nathan Martin

Nate Happer

Traci Bell

A.J. Pence

*Dana Boyer, Jefferson West SRO

*Ed West, JWHS Principal

*Ingrid Vandervort, KDOT

*Mary Getto, JW Dir.

Curriculum & Instruction

Deaths

Condolences to the families and friends of one KDOT employee and two retirees who recently passed away.

David W. Druse, 58, died March 6 in Wichita. Druse was an Engineering Technician at El Dorado. He is survived by his wife, Virginia, two sons and one grandson.

Robert J. Seitz, 76, died Feb. 25 in Topeka. Seitz was an administrator at KDOT before retiring from state service in 1993. He is survived by his wife, Judy, one son, three daughters, one brother, one sister and eight grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. David's Episcopal Church Endowment Fund, 3916 S.W. 17th, Topeka, 66604, the Topeka Rescue Mission, 600 N. Kansas Ave., Topeka, 66608 or the Topeka Symphony, 2100 S.E. 29th St. Topeka, 66605.

Lyle D. Cherry, 70, died March 7 in Topeka. Cherry served as a Civil Engineer at KDOT for more than 40 years before his retirement. He is survived by two sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials contributions may be made to Heart of America Hospice, 3715 S.W. 29th St. Suite 20, Topeka, 66614

511 dating service

The 511 Advanced Traveler Information System has done a lot for Kansas motorists in the 16 months it has been operating. But, as one caller found out in March, there is a limit to the services it provides.

The woman caller commented that she was looking for directions to Big Ben's Liquor Store. She left her phone

number – twice – for someone to call her with the directions to the liquor store, and to be “hooked up” with the man whose “sexy” voice is on the system.

The 511 system doesn't provide travel directions. But, even more disappointing for the confused caller, the man's voice is electronically generated.

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in March

10 YEARS

Brandy Bearse Topeka
Daniel Bohme Atwood
Randall Chester Phillipsburg
David Eshelman Medicine Lodge
Michael Giffin Pittsburg
Theresa Havenstein Topeka
Travis Komarek Hutchinson
John Loehr Hutchinson
Steve McGlasson Topeka
Marvin Schneider LaCrosse

20 YEARS

Peter Domme III Topeka
John Fansler Junction City
James Fischer Scott City
Carl Wolf Salina

The following employee celebrated a service anniversary in February.

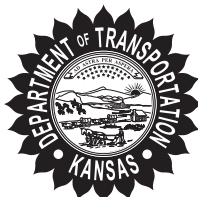
20 YEARS

Doreen Mitchell Great Bend

This information is compiled by each Office, Bureau, Division, and District.

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Information
Eisenhower Building, 2nd Floor, West
700 SW Harrison, Topeka, Ks 66603-3754



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Secretary of Transportation: Deb Miller
Chief of Transportation Information: Steve Swartz
Editors: Stan Whitley and Kim Stich

Phone/TTY: (785) 296-3585 FAX: (785) 296-0287

Calendar of Events

April 8 – 9:00 a.m. Highway Advisory Commission telephone conference call, Eisenhower State Office Building in Topeka.

April 12-13 – Transportation Engineering Conference, Kansas State Student Union, Manhattan.

April 12 – 11 a.m. KDOT Employees' Council Meeting, Third Floor Eisenhower State Office Building.

April 20 – 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting at the Topeka Capitol Plaza.

May 14 – KDOT Golf Tournament (four-person scramble) at Custer Hill Golf Course, Fort Riley. Call Kevin Adams, 296-5297, or Karen Peterson, 296-6468.

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Clem Boos, Engineering Technician Senior, Design

Glenn Larson, Professional Civil Engineer I, Planning

Christine Munz-Pritchard, Engineering Technician Senior, Right of Way

Roy Rissky, Chief of Construction and Maintenance

Joshua Schroeder, Professional Civil Engineer I, Design

District Four – Southeast

Wayne Nelson, Highway Maintenance Superintendent, Pittsburg

Tommie Phillippi, Administrative Specialist, Independence

District Five– Southcentral

Travis Komarek, Engineering Technician Senior, Hutchinson

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for promotions/transfers to Translines.

Construction

Continued from page 4

\$17 million construction of a four-lane divided highway east of Garden City on US-50/US-400 that started last spring and will continue through the coming fall.

The March bid letting includes an \$8.3 million reconstruction project on US-56 in Stevens County, from the Morton/Stevens County line to the west city limits of Hugoton. This Major Modification calls for a complete surface rehabilitation with approximately eight inches of new asphalt, widening the shoulders and adding acceleration and deceleration lanes at major crossroads. Five different segments require extensive grading and reconstruction, so shoofly detours will carry traffic through those sections.

This project allows for 270 working days, with an early start date of May 16, 2005, and a late start date of July

1, 2005, so construction should stretch into the summer of 2006. This 11-mile project picks up where another Major Modification on US-56 ended last year in Morton County. When this work is completed, KDOT will have rebuilt almost 20 miles of US-56 through Morton and Stevens counties.



District Six also has several ongoing and future bridge projects lined up across the region. A \$2.2 million bridge replacement project in Meade calls for replacing two bridges on K-23, one a few miles east of Meade State Park and the other about 11

miles north of Meade. In both cases the work will require routing traffic one-way across half of the bridge during construction. Signals will be used to control the flow of traffic. L & M Contractors, Inc., of Great Bend expects to start this project in late summer.

Kansas Department of Transportation

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