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Snow crews perform heroics

I think all of us at KDOT appreciate and understand the vital role our field crews play in keeping us safe and moving when winter storms blow across Kansas. But because those crews routinely do such a good job, I suspect most Kansans take for granted that snow won’t keep them from highway travel.

Now and then, something extraordinary happens that drives home just how indispensable these workers are. That’s what happened during the Dec. 19-20 blizzard that dropped up to 15 inches of snow on Western Kansas and closed a number of highways. When a 44-year-old Scott County rancher and father of four suffered two heart attacks in close succession at Scott City Hospital the night of Dec. 19, he needed to be transferred as quickly as possible to the closest hospital that could perform cardiac surgery. Without the surgery, his doctor told us, his chances for survival were slim.

The closest facility that could perform the needed surgery was Hays Medical Center – more than a hundred miles away. By this time, there were white out conditions along the entire route and it was getting worse by the minute. Air ambulance was not an option and it was questionable whether ground transport to Hays was possible.

Fortunately, an ambulance crew member called KDOT for assistance. A snow plow relay was quickly organized to lead the patient and medical team to Hays. The patient arrived in time for the life-saving surgery and was home in time to spend Christmas with his family. His story and the heroics of our crews are detailed on pages 4 and 5 of this issue of Translines. A video and photos about the trip are posted on KDOT’s YouTube channel and Flickr account. I recommend you take a few minutes to look at all of it.

While there is plenty of public attention given to road closings during storms, and how quickly roads are cleared, you don’t often hear about the great things our crews do for travelers. Over the course of any winter, our crews perform much-needed services many times, even if they aren’t always so dramatic. We’ve assisted in many other ambulance runs, we’ve made sure high school teams got back to their towns after away games, and we’ve come to the aid of many travelers who have gone off the road.

During the December blizzard, hundreds of our people plowed snow. Area staffs worked together beautifully to make sure there was enough snow removal equipment on the roads and in the right places. Drivers worked around the clock to keep Kansans and commerce moving. The 12-hour shifts that are worked during snow events are exhausting and the work can sometimes be dangerous.

As you will hear in the video, our crews take great pride in what they do and in the welfare of their fellow citizens. Kansans should never get so accustomed to their great work that we take for granted how much we depend on them. Who knows? The next time they’re asked to perform heroics in a blizzard, it could be for one of us or one of our loved ones.
Substantial maintenance projects set for U.S. 50

Two projects to provide substantial maintenance on U.S. 50 in Reno County highlight construction work that was awarded by KDOT in its December bid letting.

The related projects will allow for U.S. 50 to receive improvements from the Stafford-Reno county line east 23 miles. Two inches of the existing roadway will be milled and a seven-inch overlay will be constructed. Shoulders will also be improved and passing lanes constructed.

APAC Kansas Inc., Shears Division, Hutchinson, will be in charge of the two projects totaling $13.6 million.

In Pratt County, U.S. 54 will receive substantial maintenance work from the Pratt-Kiowa county line east to Pratt. The 14.2-mile project will involve a six-inch overlay. Venture Corporation, Great Bend, will be in charge of the $8.4 million project.

Overall, 27 projects were awarded in the December letting. A list of all projects awarded in the recent KDOT letting can be found at www.ksdot.org under news releases. – S.W.

Historical markers get updated

By Kim Stich

An effort to update wording on 35 of the historical highway markers across the state is under way.

The Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) and KDOT have cooperated on the highway marker program since it began in 1934. KSHS identified the events and sites, researched the history and wrote the text. KDOT built turnouts, paid for the markers and installed and maintained them.

KDOT established numerous roadside parks along the roadways to provide travelers a place to stop in the 1930s and 1940s, which was perfect timing as these parks were a good place to put the markers, Shields said. “It was a win-win situation.”

However, wording on some of the signs is not politically correct and a request was made to update them, Shields said. The project was approved for funding through the Transportation Enhancement program.

The new signs began being placed in mid-January by KDOT field crews and should be completed in early March. The look of the signs has been updated a little, Shields said, with a new color, but they are the same size and still have the sunflowers at the top.

Kansas has a total of 117 historical highway markers.

Burditt selected to serve as Acting Inspector General

Bruce Burditt, the Chief of the Bureau of Financial and Investment Management, has agreed to serve as KDOT’s Acting Inspector General until a permanent Secretary of Transportation is named by the governor. Burditt will continue handling his OFIM duties during this time.

On the... COVER

The 2012 Legislative session is under way in the Kansas Statehouse. See page 9 for information about safety corridor legislation.
KDOT snow crews play key role in saving heart attack victim

By Steve Swartz

A Scott County man who suffered a heart attack during the Dec. 19-20 blizzard may not be alive today if not for the heroics of Kansas Department of Transportation snow crews.

When Chad Griffith, 44, a farmer/rancher and father of four, had a heart attack at 9:45 p.m. Dec. 19, he needed to get to the closest hospital that could perform life-saving surgery as quickly as possible. But that was Hays Medical Center, 120 miles away, and air ambulances were grounded. As the blizzard worsened and 12 to 15 inches of snow piled up, a number of state roads were being closed, limiting travel options. That’s when workers at Scott County Ambulance called KDOT for help.

Oakley Area Superintendent Jerry Glassman took the call and immediately began collaborating with other superintendents to arrange for KDOT snowplows to clear the way and lead the ambulance to Hays. After conversations with Superintendents Mark Davis, Dodge City; Ron Munyan, Syracuse; and Max Dirks, Hays, a route was mapped and the trip began.

Four different snow plows, driven by Burke Koehn, Jason Lawrence, Larry Kjellberg and Jason Gerstner shared the escort duty as the ambulance traveled from one KDOT area to the next. North of LaCrosse on U.S. 183, the snow plow escort got stuck as the storm worsened and had to be pulled out by two KDOT road graders, driven by Tim Weigel and Brent Little. Five-and-a-half hours after it began the journey, the ambulance reached the hospital. Within minutes Griffith was in surgery. Later Dec. 20, KDOT plows driven by Tom Plummer and Ron Hopkins had to lead the ambulance back to Scott City from Oakley.

Griffith, who had been Christmas shopping in Garden City with his wife earlier in the day, had “a 99 percent blockage in the artery of the heart, (a condition) commonly known as the ‘widow maker.’” His only chance at survival was getting to a larger facility with cardiologists,” Griffith’s physician, Dr. Elizabeth Hineman, wrote in a message to KDOT.

“Because of you, he made it, as did my staff, and I will forever be grateful for the service you provided.”

Doctors at the Hays hospital performed a heart catheterization on Griffith and inserted a stent. He was home several days before Christmas and is now back tending to his cattle, preparing for calving.

“I think a lot of times we take those guys for granted. They went above and beyond because that blizzard was just raging,” Griffith said.

“The doctors, the EMTs and the KDOT guys are just giant people to me. They all played a role in saving my life.”

See page 5 for more photos and letter.
Below is a letter written by Dr. Elizabeth Hineman thanking KDOT for its efforts.

“I would like to thank the Kansas Department of Transportation for your role in our transfer of a patient December 20, 2011, from Scott City to Hays Hospital. You played an important part in saving a young man’s life. As we all are aware, that night gave us harrowing road conditions, and we would never have been able to make the trip without you.

Our patient is a young father of three and an integral member of our community. He was found to have a 99 percent blockage in the artery of the heart, commonly known as the ‘widow maker.’ As you can see, his only chance at survival was getting to a larger facility with cardiologists. Because of you, he made it, as did my staff, and I will forever be grateful for the service you provided.”

Blessings, Dr. Elizabeth Hineman

Chad Griffith and his wife shared a group hug with the ambulance crew that worked with KDOT to transport him through a blinding snow storm to Hays Medical Center. From the left is Griffith, Bob Cooper, Rusty Lindsay, Pam Lindsay, Griffith’s wife Suzanne, and Larry Turpin. The Griffiths’ son Gui is in front.

Three members of the KDOT team that helped get Chad Griffith to Hays met with Griffith and his wife, Suzanne. From left, Griffith, Burke Koehn, Ron Munyan, Jason Lawrence and Suzanne Griffith.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 14 – 11 a.m. KDOT Employees’ Council Meeting, Third Floor, Eisenhower State Office Building.

Feb. 22 – 1 p.m. Construction Bid Letting, Fourth Floor West Wing, Eisenhower State Office
AE Bridge is moving up

Construction work on the Amelia Earhart (AE) Bridge in Atchison has been gearing up these last few weeks. The structural steel components began to arrive in mid-December. Crews resumed installation work on the arch span section on the Kansas side of the bridge and will continue as weather allows.

See ongoing construction progress of the new bridge via the live project webcam located online at: www.ksdot.org/aebridge. Photos can also be seen on KDOT’s Northeast Kansas Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/NEKansas-KDOT.

The AE bridge was scheduled to be completed in fall 2011, but due to Missouri River flooding and structural steel fabrication issues, it is now scheduled for completion in fall 2012, weather permitting. The removal of the existing bridge is scheduled for early 2013.

The new bridge, a four-lane tied arch structure, will stretch nearly 2,500 feet, distinguished by its double steel arches on the main river span and special aesthetic lighting.

Interchange taking shape

With the new ramps opened and the structural steel in place, the Niles interchange on I-70 is beginning to take shape.

Workers are prepping for the new deck by building false work and installing sheeting. Work scheduled to be accomplished during the win-

New maps installed

Updated Kansas transportation maps have been installed throughout District Three at KDOT’s rest area kiosks.

The new maps are modified and laminated versions of the newly-created 2011-12 Official State Transportation Maps with some updates for travelers have been placed in kiosks throughout District Three.

2011-12 Official State Transportation Maps with some updates for travelers have been placed in kiosks throughout District Three.

Construction of the new deck of the Niles Road bridge near Salina over I-70 is continuing through the winter.

District News...

Continued on page 7
Bridge project continues

One bridge replacement project started in 2011 in District Six is still active and should wrap up this spring. The current bridge on K-23 over the Cimarron River in Meade County was built in 1965 and is considered structurally deficient. The original bridge was a two-beam design, making it fracture critical. Cracks in one beam had been repaired previously and KDOT has continued to monitor the bridge for several years.

The new bridge is being built on an offset alignment, about 125 feet west of the current bridge, with a total project length of 1.25 miles. The bridge is finished and all that remains is paving and connecting the approaches to the bridge, which is located approximately one-half mile north of the Kansas–Oklahoma state line. The construction cost is $4 million and Bridges, Inc., of Newton is the primary contractor.

U.S. 50 goes to 24/6

To make good use of the excellent winter weather, Dondlinger Construction, the prime contractor for the U.S. 50 four-lane expansion project in Hutchinson, has begun working 24 hours a day, and six days a week to speed completion of the dirt moving and compaction operations on this project. Work is progressing on the new U.S. 50/K-61 interchange. Earlier completion of the earth work in this area will accelerate bridge construction for this interchange.

The new K-23 bridge over the Cimarron River is close to being completed.

Good weather has allowed work on U.S. 50 to go round the clock.
Dear KDOT:

First off I want to apologize for the delay of this message as it slipped my mind until I bought new tires yesterday.

On December 20, 2011, my daughter and I were traveling south through Kansas to Oklahoma City going home for the holidays.

This day was rainy and cold. As we made our way through Kansas, we had a flat tire just north of Independence, Kansas, at about 5:30 p.m. As I was trying to figure out what to do as darkness set in a pick-up turned around and pulled in behind us to offer help.

This gentleman was very professional and his thoughtfulness was second to none. He changed our tire in pouring down rain with temperatures in high 30s at best and all he was concerned about was us not getting cold and allowed us to sit in his state pickup until the tire had been changed.

I commend Mr. Leck for delaying his time to get home from work and your organization for its efforts to help the public as they travel through your state. For this very reason along with much better roads is why I come to the west before turning south to go home to Oklahoma. Please pass along my sincere Thank You to Mr. Leck for his help on this day.

Melinda Barney
Warrensburg, Missouri

(Marcus Leck is the KDOT Superintendent in Independence)

Note: Later that evening after helping Barney, Leck came across another motorist near Neodesha who had a flat tire and helped that driver as well.

Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of two former KDOT employees who recently passed away.

Donald E. Tutt, 87, died Dec. 16 in Topeka. He worked for KDOT 17 years in the Cartography section before retiring in 1987.

Survivors include his wife, Frances, one sister, two nephews and two nieces.

He was a charter member of the Heart of Jackson Humane Society and memorial contributions may be made to that organization at PO Box 126, Holton, KS 66436.

Ralph E. Hicks, 70, died Dec. 6 in Liberty, Mo. He served as a Civil Engineer at KDOT before retiring in 2003.

Survivors include his wife, Vida, one son, one daughter, three stepsons, one sister, one grandchild and 10 step grandchildren.

Memorials are suggested to the Satanta Alumni Association and may be mailed to Haskell County Funeral Home, Box 607, Sublette, KS 67877.

It’s Wild, It’s Wacky, It’s Crazy!

■ When: Sunday, February 19, at 1 p.m.
■ Cost: $7 per person, free shoe rental
■ Deadline to sign up: NOON, Feb. 15
To sign up: Bring team money ($28) to Kim Stich in Transportation Information
■ Who: Teams consisting of 4 people (KDOT employees, friends and family members are welcome to participate - it is just for fun)
■ Where: Gage Bowl (On Huntoon Street just west of Gage Boulevard in Topeka)

What is “Crazy Bowl?”

People participating in the Employees’ Council Crazy Bowl event bowl three games. The first two games are bowled normally. The third game is the “crazy” part. Each frame is different - one time you bowl backwards, the next time you bowl on one leg, etc. And the only rule is that you relax and have fun!

For more details or to sign up, contact Kim Stich at 296-3585 or your Employees’ Council representative.
KDOT Quick Facts

KDOT’s 2012 Annual Report and Quick Facts books are now available on the KDOT Internet.

The annual report outlines KDOT’s Performance Measures, T-WORKS, project selection criteria, financial compliance, projects listings for FY 2011-2020 and modal information.

The Quick Facts includes a variety of information such as Kansas statistics and rankings, taxes, revenue, personnel information and accident details.

Both publications can be found on the KDOT Internet at www.ksdot.org, then click on the Publications & Reports link.

Safety corridor program to be reviewed by 2012 Kansas Legislature

While there is no shortage of sweeping proposals being debated by the 2012 Kansas Legislature, KDOT’s agenda will be relatively modest.

At the request of the K-10 safety committee, KDOT will bring forward legislation that would create a safety corridor program. The intent is to address concerns about crashes or other safety issues along a defined route by implementing measures such as increased fines and stepped-up patrolling by law enforcement.

The program would be relatively simple: if a committee passes a resolution to establish a safety corridor on a highway that runs through their locale, KDOT would evaluate the corridor and make a recommendation to the Executive Safety Council. If the Council decides to designate a stretch of road as a safety corridor, signs will be placed along the route alerting motorists that they are entering a safety corridor where fines will be doubled – similar to a work zone. The additional fines will pay for increased patrols along the corridor in an effort to adjust driver behavior.

Similar programs in other states have been credited for significant drops in fatality and injury crashes. Advocates of the program think there are highways in Kansas that could benefit greatly from being classified as a safety corridor. This program would provide an additional ‘tool in the toolbox’ for enhancing the safety of Kansas highways.

Gov. Sam Brownback gives his 2012 State of the State address on Jan. 11 at the State Capitol. Acting Secretary Barb Rankin (top of photo) was among those attending.
Fun Facts and Trivia

Do you know?

Kansas Fun Facts

1. This trail ends in Abilene -
   A. Smoky Hill Trail
   B. Santa Fe Trail
   C. Chisholm Trail
   D. Shawnee Trail

2. Almon Stowger of El Dorado invented this item for fingers in 1889.
   A. Dial telephone
   B. Finger nail file
   C. The “grip”
   D. None of the above

3. In 2009, where did Kansas rank in the production of milk in the United States?

4. What’s the original release date of “The Wizard of Oz”?

5. Kansas is the nation’s leading producer of this product.
   A. Sorghum
   B. Walnuts
   C. Peanuts
   D. Purple cone flowers

6. How many Kansas counties have two words in their names?

7. Who is Franklin County named after?

Answers on page 11

Engineers see firsthand overnight bridge replacement project

Two of KDOT’s employees traveled to Nevada this month to see firsthand how an entire bridge is replaced nearly overnight.

The FHWA sponsored KDOT employees Dan Scherschligt and Terry Fleck to participate in Nevada’s West Mesquite Interchange Accelerated Bridge Construction Showcase, in which an old bridge was demolished and a new one placed into position overnight.

The new bridge was constructed under traffic adjacent to the old bridge, so “all” they had to do was demolish the existing bridge and slide in the new one. This was accomplished overnight using hydraulic jacks and Teflon rails, along with a common household item: liquid dish soap for lubrication.

Scherschligt says the Nevada project was perfectly timed for KDOT staff to get firsthand knowledge of accelerated bridge construction technology and design build methods. The traveling public expects construction delays to be fewer and shorter than in the past. Cutting-edge projects like this help meet those expectations.

The twin interstate bridge will be replaced in the same manner.

KDOT would like to recognize its employees who have returned home from military service. Employees are listed by district and their branch of service.

Brad McGregor, Equipment Operator, District Four, Army

Devra Harrison, Equipment Operator, District One, Army
Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters
Ronald Feldkamp, Global Positioning System Information Survey Records, Design

District One
Kristina Rizek, Professional Civil Engineer I, Materials and Research

District Four
Christopher P. Cavender, Equipment Operator Midpoint, Yates Center
Glen E. Cunningham, Engineering Technician Midpoint, Chanute
Scotty E. Slater, Equipment Operator Midpoint, Yates Center
Chas K. Wille, Equipment Operator, Iola

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for Promotions/Transfers to Translines.

Employees receive AASHTO service awards

Eight KDOT employees have received 25-year AASHTO Service Awards in recognition of at least 25 years of public service and their service on AASHTO committees.

Congratulations to District Five Engineer Bob Cook, District Six Engineer Larry Thompson, District Two Engineer Randy West, Director of Engineering and Design Dan Schlerslicht, Local Projects Bureau Chief Ron Seitz, Transportation Planning Bureau Chief Dennis Slimmer, Right of Way Bureau Chief Bill Vicory and Program and Project Management Bureau Chief Mark Taylor.

District Four
John King, Equipment Operator Trainee, Pittsburg
Evan R. Ladewig, Equipment Operator Trainee, Garnett
Robert L. Wilson, Equipment Operator Trainee, Erie
David A. Haas, Equipment Operator Trainee, Ottawa

The Bureau of Personnel Services and Districts supply information for new employees to Translines.

Upcoming KDOT Training Courses

Classes at Headquarters
• PE Review, Feb. 27-March 1
• New Employee Orientation, March 8
• BEST Week I, March 12-16
• You’ll Catch On, March 27-28
• BEST Week II, April 9-13
• ART, April 24-26

Classes at District Offices
• Dealing With Difficult People, Feb. 7, Salina
• Difficult Conversations, Feb. 7, Salina
• MBTI, February 13, Hutchinson
• On Second Thought, March 6, Chanute
• Transition to Leadership/Ethics, March 20-22, Topeka
• Transition to Leadership/Ethics, April 3-5, Hutchinson
• You’ll Catch On, April 17-18,

Welcome new KDOT employees!

District One
Richard Barezinsky, Professional Civil Engineer I, Topeka

Answers
1. C. Chisholm Trail
2. A. Dial telephone
3. 16th
4. Aug. 25, 1939
5. A. Sorghum, growing between 40 and 50 percent of the nation’s crop annually.
6. None.
7. Benjamin Franklin

“I feel it is important to embrace one’s heritage while also having the willingness to understand the customs and traditions of others. The celebration of Black History Month allows us to highlight many meaningful African-American contributions not only just to America, but to the world as well.”

Charles Dilliehunt Jr. is a Program Consultant I and has worked for KDOT in the Office of Civil Rights since 2009.
KDOT Computer Training

More Organization with Outlook
Here are more tips to better manage your Outlook inbox and calendar. These are a few features from the new Outlook 2010 Level Two course.

Changing Desktop Alerts:
1. Click File - Options
2. Click Mail
3. Scroll down to Message Arrival
4. Click Desktop Alert Settings
5. Adjust the sliders
6. Click Preview to see if the duration and transparency are just right
7. Click OK

Automatically Empty Deleted Items on Exit (Upon Closing Outlook)
1. Click File - Options
2. Select the Advanced tab
3. Check Empty the Deleted Items folder upon exiting

Creating a Custom Calendar View:
Add More Columns to a View
1. Click the View tab of the Calendar
2. Click View Settings, Columns
3. Select the columns to add to the current view and click Add
4. Use the Move Up and Move Down buttons to rearrange the columns
5. After you have them situated the way you want, click OK

Add Holidays to Your Calendar:
1. Click the File tab
2. Click Options, select Calendar
3. Click Add Holidays

Deleting Old Appointments:
1. Go to the Calendar folder
2. Click View, Change view, List
3. Sort by End (Date) in Ascending order
4. Use the Shift and/or Ctrl keys to select several items and delete them

NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact Transportation Information, Eisenhower Building, 700 SW Harrison, 2nd Floor West, Topeka, KS, 66603-3754, or (785) 296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired - 711.

KDOT Facebook page replaces K-TOC

Since its launch in January 2009, the Kansas Transportation Online Community (K-TOC) has served as a showcase platform for KDOT’s transparency efforts.

However, with the successful launch of KDOT’s Facebook page in 2011, this same information is available and K-TOC was removed from the Internet last month. Discussions and blogs from K-TOC are being moved to KDOT’s Facebook page.

For more information about KDOT’s social media efforts, contact Patrick Quinn, KDOT Social Media Manager, at 785-296-5613 or at pquinn@ksdot.org.

Check out ongoing classes via the Outlook shared calendar - KCTC. Contact the KCTC kctc@ksdot.org or call Ingrid Vandervort 785-296-8993.