KDOT celebrates finishing move to Eisenhower

It’s been a long time coming. After 15 years, all KDOT headquarters offices are once again all under one roof in Topeka. The agency celebrated this milestone at an Open House at the Dwight D. Eisenhower State Office Building on December 1.

Numerous retirees took advantage of the opportunity to visit their former coworkers as well as check out the new building.

“I think it’s beautiful, but I’d get lost in here,” joked Helen Fisher, who retired from

Watts ends long, distinguished KDOT career

By Stan Whitley

A long, distinguished career is coming to an end for an important member of the KDOT family. Bill Watts, Office Chief of Management and Budget, is retiring after a 38 ½ year career spent entirely at Headquarters.

“This agency offered me a lot of challenging opportunities for career growth and learning over the years,” said Watts. “The challenges were there as I continued to mature so it made my job exciting. I’m proud to have worked with many KDOT

Inside ...

◆ Relocation Team reaches goal in Eisenhower
◆ Meriden School official expresses thanks
◆ KDOT employees benefit from STARS savings
◆ Social hosting law aimed at under age drinking
◆ KDOT announces local partnership projects
I was recently on a radio talk show in Topeka and the host began by complimenting KDOT for successfully working with a Jefferson County community that had lost a 16-year-old high school student in a crash on K-4.

Our willingness to work with the people of Meriden and the Jefferson West School District, who wanted traffic changes on the road, was noted and praised by the radio host. I already knew that our people had responded to the grieving community in a way that was sensitive, direct, and responsible, but it was gratifying to hear it spoken to a radio audience.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Meriden situation, it was great example of KDOT taking a proactive approach in addressing an issue and collaborating with a community to improve the outcome. In the aftermath of the young girl’s death, many in the community demanded that KDOT lower the speed limit and install flashing lights along the road. While we wanted to be sensitive to the community’s requests, we were concerned that lowering speed limits without appropriate accompanying measures could create a more hazardous situation along the road.

So, led by Topeka Metro Engineer Jerry Younger, a team of KDOT representatives, including traffic engineers who oversaw new traffic studies, formed a small working group of people from the town and school. We shared the results of our studies, explained our concerns, outlined some options and asked them their opinions.

After meeting with the working group twice, a gathering of the larger community was called and we outlined a series of possible measures, including dropping the speed limit, restriping the road, closing some access points and more. The response was very positive and most of the recommendations have now been implemented.

There are a number of reasons for the successful resolution – a quick response to the community’s concerns, an open mind to their suggestions, a responsible engineering response from KDOT, shared solutions, and empathy for the town’s struggle to wring something positive out of its sorrow.

In early December, I received a letter from the school superintendent, Dr. Rob Little. It was the kind of feedback that makes the frustrations or challenges we face in our jobs all worthwhile. Although I appreciated the radio host’s kind words, nothing could match what the superintendent – as one of our partners and as one with so much vested in a positive outcome – wrote. I want to end this column with his letter because it’s something that all of us, whether we were involved with Meriden or not, can be proud of. I can’t say it any better than Dr. Little.

Dear Secretary Miller,

This note is intended to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to you and the Kansas Department of Transportation for the exemplary service provided regarding the difficult issues clustered around our recent tragic happenings on K-4. I also want to take a moment and praise the KDOT staff who were assigned to interact with our parents, patrons, and communities while trying to find the best possible answer to extremely complex issues.

To a person, they were sensitive, professional, and impressive in their preparation and knowledge. They always balanced their focus with compassion, and in many years in the field, I have rarely experienced the level of professional skill and interactive sensitivity that was demonstrated throughout the process. I clearly understand the commitment of resources that level of personnel skill requires and I am grateful to you for having done exactly that.

The on-site leadership of the group was excellent and it was clear that compassion was present, opinions were valued, and solutions were being considered from the very first contact.

If you ever need a person to address KDOT’s commitment to making things work in a careful and sensitive manner, I would be proud to offer my voice in support. Also, if you experience a similar condition in the future, please allow me to act in support of the process we experienced here.

Thank you, again. KDOT came through with flying colors.

Sincerely,
Rob Little
Preparing and implementing a plan for the relocation of KDOT’s headquarters from the Docking and Thacher buildings as well as the KDOT library from the Materials and Research Center to the Eisenhower Building was truly a team effort. Work to accomplish this goal began more than four years ago.

The Headquarters Relocation Committee was honored as an Example of Excellence for the third quarter of 2004 for their efforts on this project. Secretary Deb Miller attended the ceremony in Topeka on December 1, which took place as part of the Open House for the Eisenhower State Office Building.

“The relocation of KDOT’s headquarters office was a monumental task which involved the efforts and cooperation of many individuals and organizations over an extended period of time,” said Director of Public Affairs Julie Lorenz. “I feel that recognition of these efforts by so many dedicated employees is very much deserved.”

The Headquarters Relocation Committee includes employees representing various offices in KDOT and outside members from the Department of Administration and Gould Evans Associates (GEA).

Through the course of the four-year project, various subcommittees addressed specific issues such as telecommunications, parking, and food services. Relocation workgroups assisted the Headquarters Relocation Committee by providing specific information pertaining to each bureau or office.

“Many Move Coordinators and Move Liaisons provided extensive efforts in making sure that more than 800 individual offices and cubicles were moved,” said Dick Bauman, Facilities Operation Manager. “This last effort usually involved weekends or evening hours late into the night. Overall, there were in excess of 60 employees that dedicated significant time to make sure the relocation was successful.”

High points of the effort included:
- Completion of space programming in May 2001.
- Moving begins in May 2004.
- Completion of move in October 2004.
- Review of KDOT library needs and design of library layout by a Materials and Research Paper Chasers Committee.

Members of the team include: Dick Bauman, Ken Gudenkauf, Peggy Hansen-Nagy, Jim Howard, Ron Kasper, Bill Kritikos, Steven Magee, Gary Mutschelknaus, Curt Niehaus, Connie Nordstrom, Heather Salerno, and Dennis Slimmer. Team members not from KDOT include: Gary Hibbs, Roy Laster, Jim Malloy, Larry Oppitz, and John Wilkins.

Do you know of a KDOT group, team, unit, or office that has gone above the call of duty? Then nominate them for the Example of Excellence award. All KDOT employees are encouraged to suggest ideas and can now fill out Form DOT 1204. Once it is filled out, the nomination is then sent to the selected Division Director, Bureau Chief, District Engineer, Area Engineer, or Subarea Supervisor who can then sign the form and submit the nomination to Transportation Information.

Hard copies of the form are still available by calling Transportation Information at 785-296-3585 and require the signature of one of the supervisors listed above. -K.S.
Working as Right-of-Way agent is an ‘acquired’ taste

By Amy Link

She’s been greeted at the door by a strange man wearing only boxer shorts, fought off an aggressive elderly man wanting to clip her fingernails, and been led out to abandoned fields for meetings.

While many people would consider these experiences bizarre or the stuff nightmares are made of, it’s just another day at the office for Nancy Shepard.

Shepard is an Appraiser and Acquisition Agent for the Bureau of Right of Way, which requires her to travel to the homes of people whose land is being acquired by KDOT. Since she has to meet them where and when they want, Shepard said, she never knows what she’ll find when she knocks on a door.

“There’s never a dull moment in this job,” she said. “I have so many stories that you wouldn’t believe.”

Shepard said one story that always comes to mind involved an elderly couple. She was sitting at their kitchen table going over the engineers’ plans for their land. As she was explaining the plans, the man kept trying to grab her hands.

“I wondered if he was senile, because I couldn’t figure out what he was doing,” she said. “I kept pulling my hands away, but he kept reaching for them. Then I noticed he had fingernail clippers in his hand.”

Finally, his wife told him to leave Shepard alone. The man replied, “Her fingernails are too long they need to be cut.”

Shepard said, “I told him that I liked my nails long. And he said, ‘Well I don’t, they’re too long.’”

“To do this job you really have to have a sense of humor or you won’t last.”

Fortunately, Shepard has a sense of humor, which is part of the reason she loves her job and KDOT itself.

Shepard, 54, started working for KDOT in 1979, in Personnel Services. After two years, she transferred to the Office of Chief Counsel where she worked as a legal assistant until 1990.

Then, Shepard got married and moved to Las Vegas for about three years, before returning to KDOT.

However, in 1997 she decided to move back to Las Vegas where she worked as a manager for Walgreens. Shepard refers to this time as her stint in the “real” world; because working in the private sector is much different than state government.

“In the private sector you’re not asked if you want overtime, it’s just expected,” she said.

Shepard decided to return to Kansas and received a transfer to a Walgreens in Overland Park. It would not be much longer until she grew tired of all the long hours and decided to return to KDOT. In 1999, she took a job in the Bureau of Right of Way where’s she’s been since.

“I know it was a little crazy going back and forth for a while, but this time I’m here to stay – I’m sure,” Shepard said smiling.

Perhaps it’s that flexibility that Shepard exhibits in her own life that allows her to handle whatever the landowners throw at her. For instance, there was a time when she was meeting a man for a scheduled appointment and he arrived at the door wearing only boxer shorts.

“I just handed him our packet and left,” Shepard added jokingly, “He didn’t even have nice legs. If he did, it might not have been so bad.”

But it isn’t always laughs.

Shepard remembers a time when a single man asked her to come out to the land site and go over the plans with him.

“This wasn’t unusual. A lot of landowners request this,” Shepard said.

However as she began to drive further away from the road and deeper into the wilderness, Shepard began to get

Continued on page 10
KDOT employees benefit from STARS savings

By Amy Link

With the holiday season putting a strain on our bank accounts, everyone can appreciate a discount. Thus, helping state employees keep a little more money in their pockets and recognizing the valuable services they provide is the goal of the State Thanks And Recognition project.

On December 9, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius implemented the STARS Employee Discount Program, in which all state employees can receive discounts on products and services from vendors throughout the state. There are more than 50 vendors who have agreed to take part in the program.

“We’re looking to add more vendors over time,” Terry King, Human Resource Specialist in the Bureau of Personnel Services, said. “The more state employees take advantage of the program, the more likely other businesses will want to be involved.”

The list of vendors can be viewed at the STARS website, www.da.state.ks.us/star.

King has been a part of the program’s creation for about a year and half. He was formerly the Chair of the Employee Recognition Team, which developed the program. The team’s goal was to find a non-monetary way to reward employees.

“We thought that the next best thing to giving people more money was saving them money,” King said. “And this is a program that will benefit all state employees. Whether it’s a discount on a meal or hearing aids, there is something for everyone in the program.”

Another feature of the program is that it is Web-based, making it easier for all employees to access the updated list of vendors. However, King said that they are planning to have a hard copy list of vendors for those who may not be comfortable using the Web site. And, another way to learn about vendors will be to look for the STARS logo on the doors of businesses.

King said the idea for the program was borrowed from a similar project in Colorado, which has been successful. However, one complaint in Colorado’s program has been that there are not enough vendors in rural communities.

“This concern is being addressed,” King said. “We’ve had team members traveling to western and rural Kansas communities trying to recruit more vendors.”

To find vendors in their communities, employees can search by their cities or counties on the STARS Web site. King said employees will want to make sure they view the restrictions of some of the discounts, which also are available on the web site. A side from that, all discounts should now be available.

“The STARS program is in full effect, so employees should start taking advantage of it,” King said.
Dear Editor

(Editor’s Note: The following e-mail was sent to Kevin Schorzman, KDOT Area Engineer at Wamego. Doing the good deed was Kevin Walters, Equipment Operator Senior at Manhattan)

Kevin,

Yesterday morning when I was coming from Blue Rapids to Manhattan to work I had a flat tire near Randolph at the K-16, US-77 intersection. I did not want to change the tire along the wet highway so I caught a ride up to a station in Randolph to look for an air bubble. While I was there a KDOT snow plow truck stopped and asked me if I needed any help. He had an air hose with him that he could hook on to his air brake tank and aired up my tire so I could get to Randolph and off the highway to change the tire.

I didn’t get his name, but he said he was from Manhattan and was a younger man. If you get a chance to thank him for me I would certainly appreciate it as he represents KDOT well.

Thanks again,
Dan Petr

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KDOT announces Local Partnership projects

State and local funds totaling $24.5 million were approved recently for 26 construction projects in communities across Kansas through the Kansas Department of Transportation’s Local Partnership Program.

“The Local Partnership Program has been very popular in the state and these improvements couldn’t have happened without local partners and KDOT working together,” said KDOT Secretary Deb Miller. “Over the past six years, 133 economic development and geometric improvement projects totaling nearly $114 million have been initiated through this program with KDOT funding approximately $79 million in improvements and local governments $35 million.”

The program financially assists local governments in making needed road improvements on city and county roads. Projects were awarded under the categories of Geometric Improvements and Economic Development.

Geometric improvement projects are designed to help cities widen pavements, add or widen shoulders, eliminate steep hills or sharp curves and add needed acceleration and deceleration lanes. Economic development projects are intended to enhance economic development in the state.

Most cities with City Connecting Links of the State Highway System within their boundaries are eligible to apply for Geometric Improvement funds. Any local unit of government or state agency may be considered for Economic Development funds for a highway or bridge construction project that has the potential to enhance and increase the area’s income, employment and land values.

Enactment of the Comprehensive Transportation Program by the 1999 Legislature allowed continuation of the three local partnership programs, which have been in existence since 1986. As part of the CTP, funding for the local partnership projects increased.

Following is a list of approved cities, highways and Local Partnership Program projects.

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Continued on page 11
The surveys have been conducted, the sub-teams have made recommendations, and the priorities are set.

Keeping track of the next step in the Partnership Project – implementation of those priorities – will be simple. A progress chart showing the percentage of completion of each priority recommendation soon will be posted on KDOT’s intranet Web site.

“Much has been accomplished and I appreciate the hard work that has been done with P2,” said Julie Lorenz, Director of Public Affairs.

“Some recommendations have been implemented, some are in beginning stages and others still need to be reviewed. KDOT employees will be able to see which P2 recommendations have become the agency’s top priorities and where we are in the process of implementation.”

Lorenz said it is important to understand that during the implementation process, it is likely that the recommendations will evolve. Employee input will continue to be welcomed and encouraged. Using charts, the progress made toward each goal can be tracked.

“But, these are the bases from which we will proceed. When needed, recommendations will be refined to better serve KDOT’s goals of being responsive and responsible,” said Lorenz.

From the list of recommendations, 12 priorities have been selected to receive emphasis. As some of the priority recommendations are accomplished, other recommendations will become priorities.

“Some of the recommendations are more easily accomplished while others require on-going effort,” Lorenz said.

To see that steady progress is made toward achieving our priority goals, a “champion” has been assigned to each priority. The champions will decide what role the sub-team from which the recommendation emerged will play. In some cases the sub-team will continue its work, in others it will serve as an advisory group. The champion also has the option of forming a new group to implement the recommendation.

Progress charts are being finalized for each priority. The charts will identify the specific short-term recommendations, identify the champion, show the percent complete, and state revisions. Progress will be reviewed quarterly and charts updated.

The priorities, as set by members of the Executive Staff, will be posted by the first of the year.

Establish an inspection mentor/reviewer position in each district office.

• A draft position description has been prepared.
• After the final position description is approved, it will be forwarded to the District Engineers for implementation.
• Some districts will establish the position immediately while others will take more time to find a suitable position.
I was sitting in church on a recent Sunday morning. Don’t let that surprise you. It happens occasionally. The sermon was nothing short of lackluster, so my gaze began to wander about the pews, searching for one of those distinctly human moments that I find so intriguing.

It could have been a loving wife stroking the back of her husband’s neck, a fellow bleary-eyed parishioner nodding off, or an anxious mother engaged in a no-win battle to quiet her fidgety offspring. A few of the other worshipers were surveying the rows of people, also hunting for something to hold their waning attention. Noticeable, too, was a handful of babies draped over their parents’ shoulders and young toddlers standing up on the seats, securing their wobbly stances with firm grips on the backs of their pews.

Did you ever notice how the adults in church always dutifully face forward, eyes fixed somewhere along the front of the church, while the babies and toddlers face to the back? Furthermore, if they’re not crying or asleep, the little ones smile and make faces at the forward-facing adults they meet while facing backward.

One such sprite found my gaze that morning and we began a life-long relationship that lasted an entire hour and a half. She was dressed to the nines - as if she really cared how she looked - sported a cute pink ribbon tying up wisps of baby blond hair, and she drooooled. She was my kind of girl. Our eyes met, and when I smiled, she smiled back. Then she grinned and I was hooked. If a woman my own age “made eyes at me” and flashed a toothless grin, I would recoil. However, I can easily forgive the innocence – and toothlessness - of youth. If you want to lift a melancholy shroud, seek out a smiling baby. Babies are all about eyes and smiles, aren’t they? They work very hard to create smiling faces on the lucky adults they manage to draw into their world. Several other adults were as fortunate as me that Sunday morning. I noticed other babies coaxing the boredom out of their adult neighbors with playful grins and dancing eyes.

Eyes and smiles, dear reader, reminded me of public involvement. As babies, we are masters of this form of communication. Somehow, as we age, smiling and eye contact become ensnarled in social rituals that dampen their spontaneity. Still, even as adults, we can create friendly feelings in people that we greet by smiling and making eye contact. Eye contact without a smile can be threatening, but mix the two, and you have a powerful tool for communicating. When used together, they tell others that you are open, thoughtful, and interested. Smiling, alone, can be a powerful tool for connecting with others. Thoughtful telephone users know to smile when answering the phone or initiating a call because it warms the sounds of their voices. Try using the phone and smiling at the same time. You’ll notice the difference.

Please note that I am only suggesting eye contact and smiling. Of course, you must use your own good judgment. Refrain from tying up your hair in pink ribbon, unless you can carry it well. Don’t stand up in the pew at church and stare at the person behind you. And for heaven’s sake, please don’t drool at them. Save the drool for the dinner afterward.
leaders who gave me responsibilities and allowed me to earn their trust.”

Watts worked for four State Highway Commission Directors and 10 KDOT Secretaries of Transportation. He assisted in the development and passages of the two largest agency programs – the Comprehensive Highway Program (CHP) and the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

In 1987, Watts was appointed by then Secretary Horace Edwards to serve as Chief of Staff for Gov. Mike Hayden’s Highway Task Force. The task force studied concepts and the framework needed to develop an extensive highway program in the state.

“We laid the groundwork for the program that was eventually passed in 1989,” said Watts. “Major components we still use today – substantial maintenance, major modification, priority bridge and system enhancement – were all initially developed under the CHP.”

Watts was selected to fill the position of Management and Budget Chief in 1988. That same year he was given a temporary assignment as Project Manager for a KDOT management and productivity study. The study examined the manpower and management abilities KDOT would need to handle a potential highway program.

Watts started working for the agency in 1966 following graduation from Iowa State University. He served in the Engineer in Training program for one year before starting work as a Civil Engineer in Planning and Development. Watts worked in Location and Design Concepts from 1970-1978 and was an Assistant to the Chief of Engineering services from 1978 to 1982.

In 1982, Watts became Assistant to the State Transportation Engineer and was also given a special assignment to coordinate and manage a reorganization at the agency. Watts was promoted to Assistant to the Director of Planning and Development in 1983 and stayed in that capacity for five years before becoming the Management and Budget Bureau Chief.

A highlight of Watts’ early career was participating in the development of the original CANSYS highway database. Creating the computerized database on all state roadways and their features would prove to be a beneficial tool for the agency.

Watts helped the agency work closely with the Kansas legislature as he served as Legislative Liaison the past 15 years. He was responsible for providing testimony to legislators and helping prepare testimony for KDOT employees.

“I enjoyed working with the legislators and developed some close bonds,” said Watts. “However, it could also be a very demanding and stressful job, especially during the latter part of the legislative session.”

Watts’ wife, Freda, was also a long-time agency employee before retiring in 1999 after 29 ½ years of state service. She is currently the Executive Director of a large church daycare center in Topeka.

Fishing, reading, stamp collecting, and participating in various Christian support programs are activities Watts will be actively involved in during retirement. Watts will also have more time to spend with family, which includes one son, three stepsons, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
1. What was the speed limit on the turnpike when it opened for public travel in 1956?
2. When and where was the first cloverleaf built in Kansas?
3. What year did KDOT begin participating in the “Give ’Em A Brake” campaign?
4. When was the 3.5-mile-long, $44 million Oakland Expressway near Topeka opened to traffic?

Answers are at the bottom of this page.

Fun Facts and Trivia

Do you know some fun KDOT facts or trivia?

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

Shepard

Continued from page 4

uncomfortable. Finally they reached their destination, so she placed the plans on the hood of the car and began to go over them with the man.

“The man started making lewd comments and he just felt too close to me, so I kept moving backward the whole time,” she said. “I just kept thinking I don’t like this at all.”

She decided to hurry up so she could leave. Fortunately the job went fine, and Shepard admits the rule in her department is that anytime you feel uncomfortable it’s OK to leave.

Another difficulty is the anger and resentment some landowners have toward KDOT.

“You just have to remember not to take it personally,” Shepard said. “Many times the land has been in their family for years and they’re not ready to let it go.”

Shepard said she allows them to vent to her, because often they just need someone to listen to them. Usually after that, they become more willing to work with Shepard. She said she tells them that if they work with her, she’ll do whatever she can to come to an amicable agreement that is good for both them and KDOT. For example, Shepard said, if they have any concerns about entrances, she can discuss them with the engineers and usually work something out.

That’s the best part about working at KDOT, and why Shepard is here to stay.

Whenever I have questions about the plans or any other concern, all the departments are so helpful about answering them,” she said. “Everybody helps each other out here, like a family. It’s my family.”

If you have a Road Warriors story idea, contact Public Information Officer Steve Swartz, stevesw@ksdot.org, or call 785-296-3585.
KDOT projects receive awards from KAPA

A total of 23 projects were nominated by 11 hot mix asphalt paving contractors for the 2004 Kansas Asphalt Paving Association awards program on November 4 in Lawrence.

KDOT was honored in several categories including:

- District Four employee Wayne Gudmonson accepted a second place Directors Award for the US-75 project in Wilson County.
- District Three employee John Riggins accepted a first place Directors Award for the I-70 project in Trego County.
- District Six employee Matthew LaPorte accepted a second place Full Depth Paving Award for the US-50 project in Ford County.
- District Five employee Charles Scott accepted a first place Full Depth Paving Award for the Airport Road project north of US-50 in Reno County.
- District One employee Ruben Noguera accepted a second place Overlay Award for the I-435 project in Johnson County.
- District Six employee George Dockery accepted a first place Overlay Award for the old US-400 project in the city of Parsons.

Program projects.

Geometric Improvement - 14 projects

- Lawrence – Intersection of K-10 and Harper Street, construct left turn lane on northbound Harper Street;
- Manhattan – Intersection of US-24 and Manhattan Town Center Shopping Mall entrance, additional left turn for westbound traffic;
- Rossville – US-24 from Pearl Street east to the east city limits and Orange Street, intersection improvement with Orange Street and curb and gutter;
- Herington – US-56B, Lime Creek Bridge east to Broadway on Trapp Street, reconstruction;
- Lindsborg – US-81B from K-4 (McPherson Street) to Swensson Street, pavement replacement, patching and curb and gutter;
- McPherson – US-56/US-81B, Ash Street to ½ block west of Cherry Street on Kansas Avenue, reconstruction.

Goodland - US-24B and Cherry Street, intersection improvement for turn lanes;

Hoxie - K-23 (Main Street) from Utah Avenue to Queen Avenue, reconstruction;

Louisburg – K-68 and East Crestview Circle, reconstruction;

Paola – US-24/US-40 between 155th and 158th Streets, intersection reconstruction to three lanes;

Garnett – Intersections of US-59 and 7th Avenue and US-169 and Main Street, intersection improvement and realignment;

Hays – 41st Street from east of Sherman Avenue east to Canterbury Drive, reconstruction to three lanes;

Emporia – I-35 eastbound exit ramp off of I-35 to Industrial Road, reconstruct exit ramp on new alignment;

Jackson County – Intersection of K-16/North Road, 2.5 miles west of US-75, intersection improvement;

Morris – County route 1618 from US-56 northeast 2.8 miles, surfacing;

Colby – Country Club Drive from Horton Avenue north to I-70, reconstruction.

Hays – 41st Street from east of Sherman Avenue east to Canterbury Drive, reconstruction to three lanes;

Enid – Intersections of US-59 and 7th Avenue and US-169 and Main Street, intersection improvement and realignment;

Paola – Industrial Park Drive from Hospital Drive east approximately 1,600 feet, asphalt surfacing;

Hutchinson – Halstead Street from 4th Avenue to 11th Avenue, reconstruction;

Maize – Junction of 53rd Street and Maize Road, intersection reconstruction;

Hodgeman County – K-156, eight miles west of Jetmore, intersection relocation and acceleration/deceleration lanes.

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Calendar of Events

December 31 - State employees off for New Year's Holiday.

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

January 14 – 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting at the Topeka Capitol Plaza.

January 17 - State employees off for Martin Luther King Holiday.
Social hosting

Continued from page 8

Besides being charged with furnishing alcohol to minors, under the new law, an adult could face charges if caught and convicted of unlawfully hosting a teen drinking party. Both are misdemeanors that carry a minimum fine of $200.

The law is commonly referred to as “Paul’s Law,” after Paul Riggs, a Lenexa teenager who was killed in an automobile crash after consuming alcohol at a party. Law enforcement agencies, judges, prosecutors and alcohol awareness educators supported the bill.

The new law was tested right after it was passed when a Lenexa mother was charged with hosting a party where five youths under the age of 18 were consuming alcohol. The mother was hosting a party for her daughter on the eve of her 18th birthday.

Despite its shortcomings, Bodyk believes the law is a much-needed tool in Kansas where 100 persons under 21 were killed in alcohol related crashes between 1999 and 2003.

“Advocates of the social hosting law believe it’s a step in the right direction, but they would like to see it further strengthened,” said Bodyk. “For example, some teeth need to be added in the provision which would allow authorities to prosecute those who host parties for persons 18-20 years of age.” - S.W.