

KDOT Translines

Bureau of Transportation Information

January 2004



Joint project will provide Marysville huge benefits

By Stan Whitley

The City of Marysville must be thinking it hit the trifecta with a \$75 million project that provides solutions to three problems that have plagued the city for years.

Winning combinations for the city are a railroad relocation, grade separations and a levee to control its flooding problems. All

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At left, a US-77 bridge that will carry traffic over Spring Creek, the Union Pacific Railroad, and a levee is being constructed as part of the \$75 million project in Marysville.

KDOT celebrates major milestone

By Kim Stich

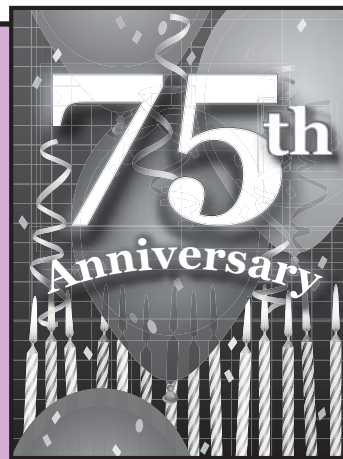
Did you know that for the first 12 years after the Kansas State Highway Commission (now KDOT) was created, it did not have control of the highways in the state?

Kansas as well as KDOT has quite an interesting history when it comes to roads.

On April 1, 1929, former Governor Clyde Reed signed a bill giving the highway commission responsibility for the State Highway System and allowing continued federal funding of road projects. Although this was not the beginning of the agency, it was the "birth" of how the department has functioned for the past 75 years.

The signing of this bill was a major milestone and has had significant

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Church new Chief of Traffic Engineering

KDOT was looking for young engineers and fortunately David Church needed a place to call home in 1995.

Church was working as a Transportation Engineer in Design for the California Department of Transportation eight years ago. The state had financial problems and was faced with employee lay-offs.

With just four years of service,



David Church

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- ◆ NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

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Miller's Time

By Secretary
Deb Miller

New year, new opportunities

We're heading into a critical Legislative session for the future of the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP). The good news is that state revenues have rebounded a bit, but it still promises to be an extremely tight budget year. I don't envy the position in which the Governor and state lawmakers will find themselves: plenty of essential needs, but not nearly enough resources to cover them all. Some difficult choices will be made, and we need to be prepared for that.

With this in mind, I've had the KDOT number crunchers take a closer look at exactly where we stand in the CTP and what it will take to complete the promised projects. We've also been able to realize some savings by doing what many homeowners have done and take advantage of lower interest rates to refinance our debt.

But if what we've done on our end is going to be effective, we'll need the full support of the Governor, state legislators, and Kansans. At the Governor's request, I have already provided her with several options for keeping the

CTP intact.

Lawmakers serving on the House and Senate Transportation Committees will head into the session brimming with KDOT information. We are presenting four information sessions to share KDOT's story with these lawmakers. Topics will include real examples of how KDOT is:

- ◆ Helping spur economic development;
- ◆ Using innovation and research to use limited resources wisely;
- ◆ Fostering a multi-modal program that's helping communities with essential services;
- ◆ Working with lawmakers to preserve the commitments they made when the CTP was passed.

Do these topics sound like things that people outside of the Transportation Committees need to hear? After my travels across the state this summer, I know that there are many community and civic groups that would have an interest in this information. So, the plan is to make parts of these presentations available for others in KDOT to use. We have an important story to tell about the positive impact that a strong transportation program like ours makes in the state and we should be telling it.

Maybe it's part of our prairie spirit, but it seems to me that Kansans (including us here at KDOT) are reluctant to say much about our accomplishments and the positive difference we're making in people's lives. Now more than ever, we need to change that way of thinking.

Back in November, Paola Mayor Floyd Grimes invited people including the Governor and me to a ribbon cutting to mark the new four-lane US-169 in Miami County. It was a fantastic event and a great opportunity for the communities to come together to celebrate putting "Heartbreak Highway" to rest with the enhanced safety and economic development this new highway would bring. I think these are successes

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KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation
Information
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NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact the KDOT Bureau of Transportation Information, Docking State Office Building, Room 754, Topeka, Kan., 66612-1568, or phone (785) 296-3585 (Voice)/(TTY).

Calendar of Events

- January 9** - 9:30 a.m. Highway Advisory Commission meeting, Seventh Floor Docking State Office Building.
- January 13** - 11 a.m. KDOT Employees' Council Meeting, Seventh Floor Conference Room, Docking State Office Building.
- January 14** - 2 p.m. - Construction Bid Letting, Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka.
- January 19** - State employees off for Martin Luther King holiday.



Members of the District Six, Area Three, and Meade Subarea team pose with Secretary Deb Miller at a gathering in Dodge City honoring their example of excellence.

Widening project shows outstanding team effort

Construction and maintenance employees from District Six, Area Three, and from the Meade Subarea in Area Two worked together to widen a 6.3-mile stretch of US-160 in Clark and Meade counties. The widening took place in a very short time to help with a contract maintenance overlay.

Employees from Area Three and the Meade Subarea were honored for their efforts as an Example of Excellence for the third quarter of 2003. Secretary Deb Miller attended the event in Dodge City on November 17.

Construction technicians gathered detailed surface width measurements to begin the project, said District Six Engineer Larry Thompson. All the employees worked to stockpile material for three days and then place material for three days.

"In 100 degree weather, Area and Subarea crews from Dodge City, Ashland, Bucklin, Cimarron, Jetmore, Ness City, Meade, and the Dodge City construction office worked to place more than 4,000 tons of material in three days," Thompson said. "Of course, there were equipment breakdowns, and the two Dodge City mechanics were pushed to the maximum to keep equipment running."

Area Three Superintendent Mark Davis was very pleased by the extra efforts and all the employees working together. "Maintenance employees have flagged, taken tickets, and

inspected buildings for construction. Construction employees have flagged in storms, plowed snow, mixed salt brine, and in this project they drove trucks to stockpile material while maintenance placed material," Davis said. "Outstanding teamwork got this job done and shows that KDOT can do!"

Members of the team include: Scot Addison, Roger Austin, Margaret Bain,



Jeffrey Banning, Leslie Barnett, John Bauer, Doug Benear, Terry Borger, Mark Brown, Timothy Burlingham, Janet Byrum, Harry Craghead, Jr., Larry Craghead, David Chiles, Jerry Curry, Jr., Terry Dakan, Mark Davis, Fred Douglas, David Dye, Ronald Edwards, Pamela Foos, Jesse Gutierrez, Faye Gebhart, Kenneth Green, Stanley Hamilton, David Hapes, Travis Hearne, Michael Helean, Anthony Hirsh, Kelly Housman, Rocky Indiek, Sandra Jenkins, Wayne Johnston, Larry Kjellberg, Robert Kugler, Matthew LaPorte, Jeff Lathen, Roland Malone, Joseph Martin, Robert Martin, Dennis Michel, Gordon Miller,

Sam Moler, Tom Myers, Ted Orrison, Brette Province, Paul Petrowsky, Wilbur Phelps, Timothy Ramirez, Timmy Reid, Jacob Ring, Michael Ringle, Tom Roberts, William Rollins, Dale Rosenberry, Gregory Schlereth, George Schulte, David Scott, Steven Shinogle, Jesse Solorio, James Stegman, Larry Stephenson, Ron Stoll, Kris Stockton, Richard Squires, Milton Tacha, Valentine Torrez, Clifton Trisler, Donald Toles, Jeff Town, David Ubel, Melvin Watson, Terry Winget, Danny Wittman, and Steven Zimmerman.

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.

The award is given quarterly with nominations for the fourth quarter due to Transportation Information by December 31. **-K.S.**

KDOT launches new service in new year

Most people think of change and new beginnings at the start of a new year, and KDOT is no different. The New Year will bring 511, a new travel information system for the State of Kansas.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) handed down a ruling in July 2000 in favor of a petition filed by the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) to assign 511 as an abbreviated dialing code for national travel information services. Since then, KDOT has been at work to implement 511 in Kansas.

The goal has been to convert the current Road Condition Hot Line to 511, while improving the travel information provided to our customers. Planning, designing and building the 511 system has been a team effort, drawing expertise from KDOT, and other partnering agencies, such as KTA, KHP, and FHWA, working together to meet the goal.

Since the Kansas 511 system is fully automated and offers voice response or touch-tone options for users to request road specific travel information, new technology has been required to support the needs of the 511 system. According to Barb Blue, 511 Project Manager, "the greatest challenge has

been working with the new, emerging technologies used for the 511 system. There was no 'off-the-shelf' product that met the needs."

With the new voice technology in particular, KDOT knows that the 511 system can continue to be improved. However, after extensive internal testing, "we believe this cutting-edge technology is ready for public use and provides the best system possible for now," Blue said. The voice technology that KDOT has worked diligently to develop has been recently added to the already public 511 systems in North Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana, and has overall been well received by users. "Testers told us the voice technology definitely adds to the value of the system, and the users in other states agree," she added.

KDOT plans to make the system available to the public sometime in January 2004, although marketing and promotion to the general public is not planned until spring or summer. This will provide the opportunity for KDOT and our partners to try the system and provide feedback before it is widely promoted to the general public. KDOT feels

this is the most progressive system they can provide at this time that will also provide a good foundation for the future.

"We want to have the best system possible, so we encourage you all to try the system and tell us what you think, especially what you think we can do to improve it," said Blue. "We are excited about the improved information and service

511 will provide over our current Road Condition Hot Line," she stated.

Anyone who calls the system may provide feedback by leaving a comment on the Comment Line provided in the system by following the menu prompts.



511 Quick Facts

◆What is 511?

511 is the new, easy-to-remember telephone number for travel information

◆What kind of travel information will 511 provide in Kansas?

511 in Kansas will provide fully automated, near real-time, route specific weather (both current and forecasted) conditions, road condition information, and road construction, closure and detour information for the entire Kansas State highway system. Since 511 is a national travel information number, callers will also be able to receive road condition information for Nebraska (which has already launched 511).

◆How will 511 work?

To use 511, callers will simply dial 511 from a landline or cellular phone and be connected to a computerized voice message system. The system will offer voice response and/or touch-tone options for users to request road

specific information. 511 information will also be accessible at the following web addresses: www.kanroad.org or www.safetravelusa.com.

◆Will there be a charge for 511?

Information will be provided free of charge (or no more than the cost of a local call)

◆When can I call 511?

511 will provide information 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, 365 days/year

◆How will 511 be different from the current Road Condition Hot Line?

In a short period of time, 511 will replace the Road Condition Hot Line. 511 will increase the frequency for reported road conditions, and improve the accuracy and detail of information provided. Hot Line information is basically provided regionally whereas 511 will provide route-specific information in approximately 60-mile segments.

Fire damages portion of chemistry lab

Work underway to get lab back in business

A small fire at the KDOT Material and Research Center on November 23 damaged a portion of the chemistry lab. No one was injured. However, repairs must be made quickly so that the accident does not have a negative impact on the upcoming construction season.

The fire happened late Sunday evening with the heat and fire damage isolated to a small area in the lab, said Lon Ingram, Chief of Materials and Research. Smoke damage was prevalent throughout the entire chemistry lab and part of the research geology lab. Most of the smoke and soot damage occurred because the fire burned stored asphalt cement samples. The cause of the fire and the cost to make repairs is undetermined at this time.

Lab testing of materials is a critical part of the construction process. "Our greatest risk will be in losing the ability for testing the asphalt cement," Ingram said. "Our risk is increased because we buy large quantities of asphalt cement at significant cost. If we don't have the capability to test asphalt cement samples, the risk is we may not get the product we think we're buying. So we need to restore the testing capability before the construction season starts to verify the quality of the products we are purchasing."

Ingram explained that KDOT buys asphalt cements based on quality. "We define what quality we want by where we put it," Ingram said. "If you put it where there are a lot of trucks,

it needs to have stronger properties and be more durable than if you put it on a low volume road. Higher quality comes with a higher price."

The properties in the asphalt can only be verified in the lab. "You can't tell by looking at it. You have to test it to determine that you're getting high quality asphalt," Ingram said. "We don't want to be in a position where we can't test the material or have to delay projects."

Ingram would like the chemistry lab to be back in business by February. Some damaged equipment from the asphalt section has been sent out for repair and cleaning if possible, work to clean the lab has begun, replacing the air handling duct work is underway, and electrical repair work will start soon. "We have a lot of equipment in the lab that we think will have no damage

other than require cleaning," Ingram said.

There was very little damage to the structure, Ingram said. The roof was fine and the concrete walls were not affected. Some of the fire-rated sheet rock with the foam board insulation will need to be replaced.

Employees will be busy for the next several weeks helping with the cleaning. "There are a lot of chemicals that have to be handled and moved," Ingram said. "There is going to be plenty to keep everyone busy until full laboratory capacity is restored." -K.S.

'We don't want to be in a position where we can't test the material or have to delay projects.'

Lon Ingram

Miller

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we need to celebrate. As we move forward this year, we'll be looking for more opportunities to do just that.

A special event that you'll begin hearing about this month is the 75th anniversary of the state highway system being placed under our control. Once upon a time, counties and townships had this responsibility, but in order to make things more consistent across the state, Kansas formally centralized decisions about the state highway system in April 1929. It was a major milestone for our organization and since that time, we've had so many more. So over the next four months, we'll take some time to remember where we've been, celebrate how far we've come, and work on charting where we want to go.

By taking the opportunity to be more open about the good work we do, we will help people see us as the public servants we are: ready to help whenever and wherever a crisis hits, responsible stewards with our resources, and leaders in our communities.

Step Back in Time



A KDOT survey party gathers important field data at work in February 1957.

Key partnership goals set course for KDOT

Leaders from across KDOT heard firsthand from Secretary Deb Miller about her vision for KDOT based on the Partnership Project's top-to-bottom review of KDOT at the annual Leadership Forum in November. She shared that vision with the Advisory Group in December when they met for the final time to review the recommended improvements that the agency will make in the months and years to come.

Miller said the focus has been narrowed to three important goals:

1. Make KDOT a more desirable place to work;
2. Nurture better relationships with local governments;
3. Develop KDOT's Roadmap (or plan) for continued success.

"These three goals will allow us (KDOT) to target improvements that will provide real and lasting benefits to the state and to the agency," said Miller.

The goals were developed using survey data from more than 1,800 participants, including input from KDOT employees and external stakeholders and Miller's personal convictions. As the consultant ETC Project Manager Chris Tatham explained, "In addition to the statistically valid information ETC developed, more than 95 percent of senior managers support these three goals. By combining information from so many people along with the strong support you have from managers across the agency, you (KDOT) have the widespread support needed to bring about real improvements."

To make progress toward these goals, Miller said it will take employees across KDOT working together. She has already put together a group to lead the improvement efforts (see chart on opposite page). Miller said the leaders will have about 18 months to put plans in place.

"I know that's not much time, but we need to keep the momentum going. I've been very encouraged by the way these goals resonate with employees as well as with our external partners. I look forward to the specific steps each of the sub-teams will recommend to implement improvements," Miller said.

Jim Kowach, Bureau of Design Chief, will lead the team working on making KDOT a more desirable place to work. Kowach said among the work for his group is to examine state classifications, overtime pay, and look for ways to re-establish a sense that KDOT employees are public servants.



Honest Assessments...Real Results

That sentiment was expressed by Miller this way: "We need to rekindle the notion that there is an honor to public service. Our employees make the lives of the public we serve better and they should be recognized for that." Miller said part of the plan will be to find new ways to partner with the media to highlight the good work employees are doing.

Mike Crow, Director of Operations, has been selected to lead the effort to nurture better relationships with local governments. Crow said the Area Engineers (AE) can be the critical link with local governments, so part of his team will be examining the role of the AEs. He said the group will also look at ways to help the AEs,

Superintendents, and Construction Engineers work more effectively as a team. Other issues that will be examined include the agency's City Connecting Link policy and how to make using the local project process easier. Finally, the role of Public Involvement Liaisons will be expanded to that of a Public Affairs Manager.

Miller said this goal came through loud and clear in the Partnership Project research. She said, "There are changing expectations on the part of cities and counties about the way they interact with KDOT, and it is imperative that the agency finds ways to meet those expectations to remain a successful organization." Advisory Group member Ken Johnson, Vice President, Hays branch, APAC-Kansas Inc., said KDOT also needs to remember that it is a two-way street. He said, "When you (KDOT) hold meetings with communities, don't just communicate what KDOT can do, but also what KDOT needs."

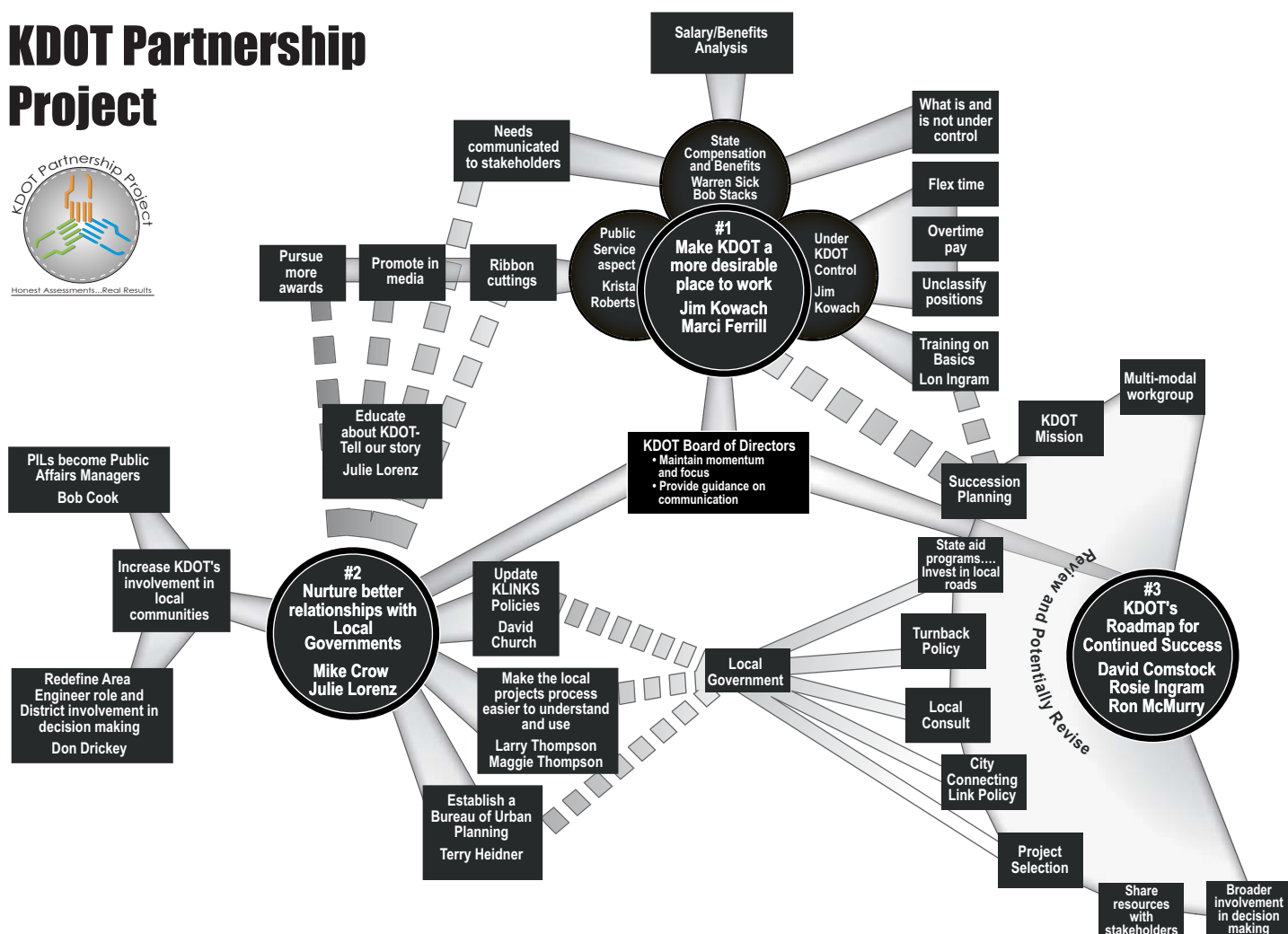
"By getting out and developing these relationships early, we'll save time later," said State Transportation Engineer and Assistant Secretary Warren Sick. "It's hard to do when we're already busy and have less staff, but it will pay off in the long run."

Improving relationships with local governments can't happen without more involvement from the Districts according to Miller. She said, "We need to find a better way to use the wealth of local knowledge that the Districts have. Our most successful projects are often the ones that have the most input and cooperation from the Districts."

David Comstock, Director of Engineering and Design, has remarked that with data from more than 1,800

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KDOT Partnership Project



Goals

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people there's so much information that it feels a bit like drinking from a fire hose. But, more seriously he's said, "This is the opportunity of a lifetime. It's not often people get the chance to set the direction and policy for their company's future." He will lead the group charged with crafting KDOT's Roadmap for Continued Success. He said it will be important for his group to provide a long-range vision for the agency and that will include taking a new look at how KDOT defines success, selects projects, and involves more people in decision-making. He also said KDOT's succession planning will be reviewed. Comstock said it is not that KDOT should pick out and groom the next Bureau Chief or Division Director, but that KDOT should focus more on how to mentor all employees and help them grow in their careers.

Advisory Group member Ann Charles, Parsons Sun Publisher, said the roadmap needs to look beyond what KDOT is doing now. She said, "KDOT needs to be responsive to demographics. How will people move around in the future? We

need to be making plans for that today."

As KDOT's Executive Staff, District Engineers and Bureau Chiefs assessed the plan, they provided key input, including:

- ◆ Make sure employees are informed every step of the way;
- ◆ Consider adding a Board of Directors to help maintain momentum and focus;
- ◆ Training on basic work skills is needed because employees don't stay in positions as long as they used to;
- ◆ Districts need to have an expanded role in decision making.

Moving forward, work teams will be set up to assist the team leaders. To facilitate the process, some groups will begin their work immediately and others will be phased in through the course of 2004.

To keep up on the progress of this next phase of the Partnership Project, look for updates in Translines, e-mails, and new information on the project's internet and intranet web sites.

Telling the truth

By Joe Blubaugh

I think I have finally figured out why God made children...to test the patience of their parents! Mornings in my household are usually pretty hectic. No matter what time I get my daughter up, she is continually running late. The more I try to hurry her, the more frustrated she gets and the less she gets accomplished. The other day, my daughter, who is nine years old, found a way to save a little time. Well, at least she thought she did.

One of my daughter's chores in the morning is to brush her teeth. But as it is with many nine year old kids, my daughter knows way more than I do about everything under the sun. Therefore, she decided that brushing her teeth took too much time and it really wasn't that important.

On this particular morning, she was done with all her chores and was quietly reading when I checked in on her. I was pleasantly surprised, but suspicious. I questioned her about brushing her teeth, and of course she said she did. Unfortunately for my daughter, she is absolutely terrible at telling lies. She always does the same thing when she is lying. First, she won't answer the question. Then, after being asked several times, she mumbles something you can't understand. By the time she does say something, you can bet your last dollar it is going to be so far from the truth it would make a

crooked politician look trustworthy.

After a rather colorful description of a trip to the dentist's office to get a cavity filled and being grounded for lying, she found out she spent more time trying to get out of brushing her teeth then actually doing it in the first place, not to mention the trouble she got in and the trust she lost. I can only hope that she learned a valuable lesson from this experience.

As KDOT employees, we are all in the same position on a daily basis as we work with the public, legislators, and the media. KDOT allows each of us to be a spokesperson for the agency. Therefore, it is extremely important that we continue to be open and truthful as we

communicate with both our customers and each other.

If asked by a member of the public for information, be as up front and open with them as possible.

If you don't know the answer, tell them you don't know but help them

get in contact with somebody that can give them what they are looking for. If you know the information, but for one reason or another it can't be released, tell them that it can't be released.

Don't be afraid to tell people the truth and don't fall into the trap of telling somebody what you think they want to hear. At other times, it may seem easier to tell a little white lie over telling the truth, especially if the truth is damaging to the agency. However, as my daughter hopefully learned, it is easier and less damaging in the long run to be open and honest with our customers. It's also less painful!

Communication: A Key to Success



Kansas Department
of Transportation

Dear Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear KDOT,

Last month (October) we drove through Kansas, heading east. Going through unfamiliar areas is always a little scary for one driving a 34-foot motorhome.

However, of all the states we went through, Kansas was the number one in highway signing! As bad as it was around Kansas City, we never got lost at any time, (as we did several times in Utah).

Thanks for the great job!

R. McGuire
Emmett, Idaho

Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters

Debra Cooper, Administrative Assistant, Right of Way

Joyce Paynter, Administrative Assistant, Topeka

Sonya Scheuneman, Photographer Senior, Support Services

District One

Scott Nelson, Engineering Associate I, Traffic Engineering

Lucas Pape, Equipment Mechanic, Olathe

Joshua Reischman, Mechanic, Olathe
District Two

Jeremy Belleau, Installation Service Technician III, Salina

Rebecca Newbury, Office Assistant, Junction City

District Three

Brandon Weis, Information Technology Consultant II, Norton

District Five

Valerie Hamilton, Office Assistant, Wichita

Brian Schippert, Equipment Mechanic, Great Bend

District Six

Duane Heimerich, Equipment Mechanic, Ulysses

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

Safety improvements added to US-59

By Krista Roberts

Drive US-59 between Lawrence and Ottawa and you'll see some changes. They are safety improvements put in place by KDOT while it re-designs this part of US-59.

"KDOT felt it was important to look at what could be done now to improve safety on this heavily-traveled road while we work to design and construct a safer US-59," said Secretary Deb Miller.

KDOT estimates it will take about five years to complete the design process and begin construction of the new US-59. The estimated total cost of the project (in 2007 dollars) is \$214 million.

In the meantime, KDOT has identified and completed a number of improvements to enhance safety on the existing roadway.

- ◆ More signs have been placed at Zarco Road, US-56 and Sand Creek Road to raise awareness at key intersections along US-59.

- ◆ The sign posts on the stop signs at crossroads with US-59 now have reflectors.

- ◆ Rumble strips have been added to US-56 to alert drivers as they approach US-59.

- ◆ New signs on US-59 stating that "speeds checked by radar and aircraft."

- ◆ New airplane markers (radar symbols) on US-59.

- ◆ KDOT has partnered with the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, and Franklin County Sheriff's Department to increase traffic enforcement on this stretch of road.

- ◆ A portable speed indicator has been used at different locations along the highway to let drivers know how fast they are traveling.

- ◆ KDOT continues to monitor pavement edge markings to make sure that they are clear.

- ◆ Signs that say "Right Lane Must Turn Right" have been installed at the 1000 Road/County Road 458/Wells Overlook Road intersection.



One of several safety features includes a flashing beacon on a stop sign alerting drivers on US-56 that US-59 traffic does not stop.

"It's our hope that these improvements will increase the safety of US-59 until a new highway designed to modern standards can be constructed," said Miller.

US-59 was built as a two-lane highway in the 1920s to serve a rural population and to connect the towns of Ottawa and Lawrence. Today, US-59 remains a two-lane highway, but now it is traveled by up to 10,000 vehicles every day. As this number increases, so does the number of crashes, injuries, and overall safety concerns.

Although groundbreaking on the project is still about five years away, there's a lot of work to do before then. Field survey activities should be completed this fall. KDOT will use the information to begin designing the exact location of the new highway. The highway's location and right-of-way needs should be known by fall 2005. The appraisal and purchase of right-of-way is expected to begin by the end of 2005.

When the new freeway is completed, remaining portions of existing US-59 will be turned over to Franklin and Douglas counties. Many of the safety features added now to make this part of US-59 safer will stay to help enhance safety on the roadway for the counties.

Retirees

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

District One

Gerald P. Sigg, Engineering Technician Associate at Bonner Springs – 39 years of state service

District Three

Donna R. Severns, Administrative Assistant at Norton – 16 years of state service

District Five

Gloria R. Blea, Administrative Assistant at Hutchinson – 15 years of state service.

Robert Lacey, District Shop Supervisor at Hutchinson – 19 ½ years of state service

Gary L. Poleski, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Wichita – 18 ½ years of state service

Anthony A. Wohletz, Equipment Operator at Kingman – 37 years of state service

Anniversary

Continued from page 1

impact on the department's evolution. The change brought a statewide planning process for highways, increased funding, and increased efficiency for construction and maintenance, to name just a few.

Bill Ogan, former State Transportation Engineer for KDOT, retired in 1987 after a 41-year career at the department. He believed that state authority for operating the highway system was well worth while.

"The ability to construct roads that traversed the whole state was very important, and to do that we had to have centralized control of the highways in the state of Kansas," Ogan said. "It provided for continuity of highways through the state as well as on all sides of Kansas."

Looking back at Kansas history, local control of the roadways was a priority that began at the same time Kansas became a state and was part of the constitution approved by Congress on January 29, 1861.

The constitution stated that, "the state shall never be a party to carrying on any works on internal improvements." Cautious Kansans believed that "internal improvement" (highways, canals, railroads) had become a growth industry following the success of the Erie Canal. Entrepreneurs for improvement projects won charters for improvement projects and besieged their state governments for subsidies, and these Kansans wanted to protect state funds.

Because early Kansans needed mostly local roads, local authority suited them. Even as the roadways needs began to grow, the desire for local control did not change. At the turn of the 20th century, county commissioners in all 105 counties in Kansas were responsible for the roadway construction and maintenance in their jurisdiction. This made for a very hap hazardous system of selecting roads for improvement. It was possible that roads would not even match up from one county to another.

A state engineer's office was ap-

proved in 1909 to try and tie together the pieces of the state's road system. At that time, there was not one route that crossed the entire state. Even as late as 1915, some 9,000 officials of various sorts had a hand in road planning. Even though the office helped to begin some coordination, with no actual control, it was still a very limited effort.

The Federal Road Act of 1916 appropriated \$75 million of federal funding for road improvements but one of the requirements was that a state organize



a state highway department in order to receive funds and obtain the approval of the Bureau of Public Roads.

Getting some of the federal money demanded that Kansas overhaul its road-making structure. County commissioners wanted the money but they also still wanted control. On February 24, 1917, the Kansas Highway Commission was created. It consisted of the governor and appointees representing the east and west parts of the state, but it would serve only to pass federal funds along to the counties.

Federal aid was to go to only the states that placed their highway system under a central agency and matched federal monies with state funds. However, U.S. Senator Charles Curtis helped Kansas get a three-year grace period from this rule and was then able to extend that for another five years.

During those years, the highway department staff increased and continued to improved productivity in various

ways. The counties began to see that the state's engineers provided professional instructions that achieved good results in the field.

Growing acceptance by the public encouraged legislators to give the highway commission more muscle in 1927. The state was divided into six divisions, each represented by a commissioner. Changes in the formula for state funding gave the commission some control over the county and state road fund.

Kansas was the only state to not have a complete highway department with control of the highway system at this time. In 1928, the axe was dropped – no more grace periods. If Kansas did not establish a highway department by July 1, 1929, it could no longer obligate federal highway funds.

After a special legislative session and numerous amendments, the fight for state control of the highway system was won. The bill was signed three months early on April 1.

J.O. Adams, a 40-year KDOT employee who retired as the Director of Operations in 1982, said the bill equalized the control of the highways across Kansas.

"It coordinated the highway system all over the state and made it possible to plan construction and maintenance as a unit and not as 105 separate entities," Adams said.

The views were mixed on whether this change would be beneficial. But as the years progressed, the efficiencies in research, planning, design, construction and maintenance as well as improvements in other modes of transportation have become apparent.

"To start out with dirt and a few gravel roads and then build what we have today is really something," Adams said. "The highway system we have today is the best I've ever seen."

Upcoming articles in *Translines* will take a closer look at these improvements as well as other achievements that have taken place in the past 75 years.

Note: most of this historical information is from the book, "Milestones," published in December 1986, or from the April-May 1979 KDOT News newsletter.

Joint project

Continued from page 1

these are being accomplished through a joint project that began with a feasibility study in 1996. A recommended alternative from the feasibility study was selected for design and construction will be completed in 2005.



On the west side of Marysville, a US-36 bridge is being constructed over the Big Blue River, the Union Pacific Railroad and a new levee. Photos Courtesy Wamego Area Office.

Currently, heavily traveled US-36 and US-77 runs through the city of Marysville along with the Union Pacific Railroad's mainline. The UP has five at-grade crossings in the city traveling a coal train route to Wyoming.

"Marysville is a crew changing station for the Union Pacific so you have trains that are either beginning to slow down entering the city or speeding up to leave the city," said Al Cathcart, KDOT Coordinating Engineer in the Bureau of Design. "This creates a lot of traffic congestion and disrupts business activity in the city."

Making matters worse for Marysville is the fact nearly half of the city sits on the west side of the railroad tracks in the flood plain of the Big Blue River. With flooding a concern and train traffic projected at 135 per day by 2017, solutions were needed to help the city. The current project solves those problems.

First, the Union Pacific is constructing 16 miles of track that takes train traffic out of downtown and relocates it south and west of town. The project eliminates

four at-grade crossings in the city.

Second, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers has designed a levee between the Big Blue River and the Union Pacific that is being built to address the flooding issue. Third, KDOT is constructing two bridge overpasses. One will carry US-77 traffic over Spring Creek, the Union Pacific line and the levee at the south end of the city. The other will carry US-36 traffic over the Big Blue River, the Union Pacific line, and the levee at the west end of the city.

"This project will enhance safety by reducing rail grade crossings in the city and at the same time alleviate congestion on the highways created by the train traffic," said Cathcart. "The levee is designed to protect property on the west side of Marysville from a 100-year flood."

Rex Fleming, KDOT Project Manager for the Marysville project, said coordinating the work between four major stakeholders and the lead design consultant has been a challenge. The

coordination has been between KDOT, the Union Pacific, the Corp of Engineers, the city of Marysville, and the lead consultant Kirkham, Michael and Associates.

"This was not just a typical highway project," said Fleming. "There were many partners working together with many interests at stake. Everyone had to be flexible and dismiss any pre-conceived notions they might have."

The citizens of Marysville played an important role in the project before construction began. There was extensive citizen participation through focus groups and forums to access the needs of all residents regarding the affects of the project. Various interest groups, organizations, community leaders, elected officials, and interested citizens were extensively involved in the process.

"There's been a lot of effort and energy that's gone into this project," said Fleming. "The results for the city of Marysville, the Union Pacific, and the traveling public are going to be dramatically positive. Everyone involved

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in December

10 YEARS

Martin Arredondo Topeka
 Richard Bauman Topeka
 William Horyna. Garden City
 Ralph Tarter. Columbus

20 YEARS

Kirk Coulter Colby
 Thomas Moulding. Horton
 Mark Segelquist Topeka

30 YEARS

James Emery, Jr. Topeka
 David Johnson. Edwardville
 Wayne Thornton Topeka

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

BROWN BAG

LUNCH

Topic: Jacob's Creek and the KTA
Speaker: Tom Wurdeman
Date: Wednesday, January 7
Time: Noon to 1 p.m.
Place: 4th floor conference room, Docking State Office Building
All employees are invited to attend.

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Carol Baldry, Database Programmer Analyst III, Computer Services
Elaine Bryant, Information Resource Specialist I, Planning
David Church, Professional Civil Engineer III, Traffic Engineering
Nick Higley, Engineering Technician, Planning
Tammy Kerwin, Applications Programmer Analyst IV, Computer Services
Amy Rockers, Professional Civil Engineer III, Design

District One

James Tyner, Engineering Associate III, Emporia
Troy Whitworth, Highway Maintenance Superintendent, Olathe

District Three

Tim Weigel, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Hays

District Five

Jason Bryant, Installation Service Technician III, Construction and Maintenance
David Eshelman, Equipment Operator Specialist, Medicine Lodge
Jim Gray, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, El Dorado
Jason Wright, Equipment Mechanic, Wichita

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

Church

Continued from page 1

Church found his job in jeopardy. "Caltrans was making calls to other states trying to find employment for engineers," said Church. "KDOT was the only state interested in hiring. It ended up being an ideal situation for me."

Church has since worked his way up the ladder in the Bureau of Traffic Engineering and was recently selected to serve as the Bureau Chief. He succeeds Mike Crow, who was named the KDOT Director of Operations in November.

"I enjoy working on traffic engineering issues and I want to serve in a leadership role," said Church. "I'm looking forward to continuing our tradition of providing good service to both the public and our internal customers."

Church, a native of Salina, began working for the agency as a Traffic Engineer. He served in that position for 1 ½ years before being named as Senior Traffic Engineer in 1997. He was then selected as the State Traffic Signing Engineer in 2002 and served in the position for almost two years before being named the Traffic Engineering Bureau Chief.

"Two things I noticed coming to KDOT were the friendly people and the tools the agency gave you to get your job done," said Church. "It was refreshing that people would take the time to show you the ropes. I think I've built some good relationships, especially with

the folks in Traffic Engineering."

Traffic Engineering has accomplished many goals and initiatives since the mid 1990s. Church said it is a result of the hard work, dedication, and quality of the people working within the Bureau. Church said two major developments in Traffic Engineering during his tenure at KDOT have been the emergence of roundabouts and Road Safety Audits. The first roundabout in Kansas was constructed in Manhattan in 1997. Since that time, 22 roundabouts have been opened in the state and 40 are scheduled for construction.

"The idea was to place roundabouts at problem intersections to reduce accident occurrence and severity," said Church. "The public initially had mixed emotions about them, but once the seed was planted they began to take a life of their own."

Road Safety Audits began in 1998 and studies have been done on all the state routes in Kansas' 105 counties. Church said the second round of Road Safety Audits is now underway.

"I think the Traffic Engineering work can be very rewarding," said Church. "Our mission is to make the highways as safe as we possibly can for the traveling public."

Church is a 1991 graduate of Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Church and his wife, Lori, have one child, a four-year old son Hunter. — *S.W.*

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