



KDOT Tuition Assistance program improved

By Stan Whitley

Enhancing your education is becoming an easier assignment thanks to KDOT's improved Tuition Assistance Program.

"KDOT has had a program to provide tuition assistance for the past 20 years, but the latest changes make the program even more attractive," said Noble Morrell, Assistant Bureau Chief in Personnel Services. "The main changes provide for increased financial assistance and greater flexibility in the types of classes KDOT will approve."

The new program, which became effective July 1, also covers costs of class books. Morrell said books were not covered under

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This I-135 bridge south of Mentor Road is getting ready for the deck to be placed.

Adams receives AASHTO National Design award



KDOT Road Design Engineer Richard Adams has been honored by AASHTO as one of two recipients of the 2001 National Design award from the Subcommittee on Design.

Adams was presented the national award during the Subcommittee's annual meeting in June. The

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Progress on I-135 continues

By Kim Stich

The remaining two projects to reconstruct I-135 in Saline County are in full swing, according to Jean Istas, Construction Engineer in Salina.

The first project is the replacement of the I-135 bridges near Bridgeport. The southbound bridge will be constructed this year with work on the northbound bridge set for 2002.

The second project extends from the McPherson/Saline county line north 9.5 miles to just north of the I-135/K-104 interchange. Reconstruction work includes removing the existing pavement and replacing with concrete pavement, two bridge replacements, two deck

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INSIDE ...

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- ◆ THIS PLACE IS A ZOO!

- ◆ DISTRICT FOUR EMPLOYEES THANKED FOR EFFORTS
- ◆ "SAFE DRIVING SEMINAR" SESSION A SUCCESS
- ◆ AREA RESIDENTS CHECK OUT PROPOSED US-54 ROUTE



From
Where
I Sit

by E. Dean Carlson

Broadening horizons

They say travel can be broadening. My duties as President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) have had me traveling quite a lot the past few months. Thanks to sitting in airports and on airplanes and eating hotel food, I understand a bit too well about that “broadening” aspect!


But, as comedian Henny Youngman used to say, seriously folks, this travel has been educational. It’s given me the opportunity to compare the experiences of other DOTs and I’ve really enjoyed that. Even with four decades of experience, I’ve been learning things. I dealt with many state DOTs when I was with the FHWA, but in that role I was somewhat removed from the intricacies of

the daily operations and the ensuing challenges they create. In my current capacity, I can more easily relate to the stories I hear - both good and bad.


And those stories give me the chance to bring home ideas to our folks here at KDOT. Some of them get laughs but most of them get serious discussion and help us compare what we’re doing to what others are doing. I’m pleased to say that Kansas ranks highly and is more of an idea exporter than importer, but there’s always room to learn from others.

The reason I bring all of this up is to say thanks to the stellar staff here at KDOT that allows me to travel without having to worry whether the transportation program is in jeopardy. I have complete confidence in their outstanding abilities and competency. He’ll hate me for putting it in print, but a special thanks to Assistant Secretary/State Transportation Engineer Warren Sick. A lot of the headaches come his way when I’m gone, and he handles them all deftly. (And with just a couple of Aleve!)

Warren would be the first to tell you he doesn’t do the job without a lot of help from a lot of other capable people, and I know that well. So, my heartfelt thanks to all of you who keep things running so smoothly, when I’m not here, and when I am. You make KDOT such a leader that I have plenty to talk about when I’m on the road.



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

Calendar of Events

August 10 - 9 a.m., Highway Advisory Commission meeting telephone conference call.

August 14 - 11 a.m., KDOT Employees’ Council Meeting, Seventh Floor Conference Room, Docking State Office Building.

August 15 - 2 p.m. - Construction Bid Letting, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka.

September 7-16 - 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. - KDOT booth at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. Booth located in the Eisenhower Building.

Leadership in QC/QA Superpave experiences recognized

For the past five years, KDOT has been letting Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QC/QA) pavement projects. The Certified Inspection and Testing Training program, Independent Assurance Program and the Superpave program are just three of several initiatives underway to provide a complete QC/QA effort.

Two KDOT employees from the Bureau of Materials and Research, Assistant Bureau Chief Rick Kreider and Field Engineer Rodney Maag, were honored June 18 by David Geiger, Kansas Division Director of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The honors were in response to assistance Kreider and Maag provided officials from other State DOTs and FHWA in understanding KDOT QC/QA Superpave experiences and successes at a conference May 29 to June 1 in Topeka.

Dennis Dvorak, FHWA Kansas Division Materials Engineer, organized the meeting and assisted Kreider and Maag in explaining how KDOT has implemented the AASHTO QA guidelines to meet the FHWA regulations. Implementation involved various test procedures and specifications contractors must follow that can improve the quality and extend the life of the pavement.

Kreider said KDOT was the first State DOT to implement both QC/QA and Superpave at the same time and the knowledge gained from these programs can help other state DOTs



Lon Ingram, Chief of Materials and Research (left) and FHWA Division Director David Geiger (right) pose with Field Engineer Rodney Maag and Assistant Bureau Chief Rick Kreider after the two were honored by AASHTO.

when implementing similar programs.

During the four days of the conference, Kreider and Maag made presentations and had question and answer sessions, then went to QC/QA construction projects that were underway in Manhattan and Hays to see firsthand the program in action.

Kreider said that soon the FHWA will be sending a report to all State DOTs detailing the agency's successes with the QC/QA program as well as areas of the program that have been improved. "The program surpassed my initial expectations," Kreider said. "It's been a pretty good success story and there's more to come." -K.S.



Step Back in Time



Fifty years ago, a flood in northeast Kansas caused havoc and made travel on city route US-75 in north Topeka impossible.

This place is a zoo!

By Ron Kaufman

This place is a zoo! Have you ever heard that comment? I cringe whenever I hear it. It is commonly used to describe a place in noisy chaos. I suppose it refers to the days when zoos had “monkey houses” that teemed with active, noisy primates and equally noisy visitors. Zoos are actually highly structured and efficient organizations that face the same challenges as any business or public agency. Some folks know that I spent nearly 20 years working at the Topeka Zoo. I have many fond memories of the animals, people, and events that made the Zoo a dynamic living community. I am proud to say that I knew many animals, and that many of the creatures knew me. There’s a certain humility in being recognized (and accepted) by things furry, feathery, scaly, or slippery.

Zoos mean different things to different people. For me, the Zoo was a celebration of the diversity of life. Part of my work at the Zoo involved helping people understand and appreciate the enormous variety of living things they could see there. It was especially rewarding to “educate” visitors who disliked certain animals or their behaviors solely based on personal notions of beauty or “proper” human manners. Animals don’t deserve to be judged as if they were people in funny suits.

Though it features animals and plants, a zoo is really a people place, a place to learn and socialize with family and friends. During its peak years, the Topeka Zoo hosted nearly 250,000 people annually, though the average was more like 175,000 people. The most heavily attended days saw nearly 10,000 people crowd through the gates. Working around that many people taught me patience and the importance of traffic

flow. I was learning about traffic issues long before I ever thought of working for KDOT!

It was at the Zoo that I came to recognize and respect the enormous diversity of people. Everyone is different and unique. Each of us approaches the challenges of life with our own inner directions. Few of us look alike and all of us do things a little differently, even identical twins. We all have different tastes, desires, priorities, and values. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be recognized and respected as a unique individual.

I also see remarkable diversity within KDOT and in the people we serve. It leads me to wax poetic about public involvement. Public involvement is all about two-way communication. Effective communication begins with recognizing that each person is an individual and with respecting the circumstances or values that they bring to a conversation. People (and animals, too!) tend to communicate about the things that matter most in their lives. Predicting what is important to animals is child’s play

when compared to predicting what is important to the people we serve. We can use broad strokes to craft a rough picture of other people’s concerns, but the details are often obscured with such an approach. The rich nuances are revealed through conversation, correspondence, and other forms of communication. Simply

asking people what is important to them is one of the best ways to find out what drives them. When we know what drives people, we can begin to understand and appreciate their lives and the things they say to us. With understanding, we come to realize that this place isn’t really a zoo. It’s really a people place and...

Uh oh.
I’m afraid that reminds me of my years at the ____.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To: Roger Alexander, District Four Engineer

On June 20, I worked an accident involving a truck-tractor, semi-trailer, on K-99, at milepost 14.7 in Chautauqua County.

I am not sure by name which of your employees were on the scene. But I wanted you to know I was happy to see the big orange KDOT truck arrive at the location. The northbound roadway was completely blocked, location was somewhat on a hill, and it was raining part of the time.

Your personnel, without being asked, started setting up around the accident scene and started traffic control. Without them on the scene, there could have been more accidents.

Please relay my personal thanks to each of them for a job well done.

Yours truly,
Capt. Galen Pape
KHP, Wichita

Tuition

Continued from page 1

the former program.

“We have three levels or tiers of approval for tuition assistance,” said Morrell. “An employee may apply for assistance in more than one tier, but the employee will be limited to a maximum amount of \$1,300 in the fiscal year.”

The three tiers are:

Tier I - For graduate level courses that directly and specifically fall within the scope of agency operations, KDOT will provide up to \$1,300.

Tier II - For undergraduate or other adult educational programs that directly and specifically fall within the scope of agency operations, KDOT will provide up to \$1,100.

Tier III - For courses, including GED programs, that reasonably contribute to KDOT’s mission, KDOT will provide up to \$500.

Employees must complete courses taken with a letter grade of ‘C’ (or a passing grade in a pass/fail course), stay employed with KDOT for one year following the class, and send their grade to the Bureau of Personnel Services within 60 days of completing the course. KDOT S.O.M. 2.7.4 will provide detailed information about the program. The S.O.M. is being published and will be distributed in September.

The application for tuition assistance is available on KDOT’s intranet site. The DOT form No. 28 can be found in the Forms Warehouse or by clicking on the Employee Information icon and then the Training link.

Morrell said tuition assistance can also be provided for on-line courses. One resource for on-line courses is EduKan, Kansas’ first online educational consortium. EduKan provides opportunities for higher education through distance learning to students enrolled in one of six western Kansas community colleges. More information about the program can be found at www.edukan.org.

Questions about the Tuition Assistance Program can be directed Anne Willcoxon, 296-0936, in Personnel’s Organizational Development section.

BROWN BAG LUNCH

Topic: Support Services

Date: Wednesday, August 1

Time: Noon to 1 p.m.

Place: Room 481, Docking

*All employees are invited
to attend.*



Area Two Engineer Bob Bowden poses with some of the students from the Driver Safety classes who attended the “Safe Driving Seminar” in Osage City. The program is designed to teach driving safely and responsibly from the start.

Safety session a success

Osage City High School students in the Driver Safety classes got an earful and an eyeful of information to help them become better drivers at the school’s annual “Safe Driver Seminar” on June 21.

Bob Bowden, Area Two Engineer in Osage City, and John Swihart, District One Public Involvement Liaison, answered questions and spoke to students about the need for safety on highways, especially in work zones. All students were given a “Safe, Not Sorry” glove box holder and other safety-related information.

Other activities included:

◆The Kansas Highway Patrol’s Rollover Simulator showed students firsthand what could happen in an accident when seatbelts are not used.

◆The Alcohol Beverage Commission spokesperson explained some of the many consequences when people drink and drive.

◆The car insurance industry spokesperson outlined the financial consequences for a driver who does not drive safety and then must pay extra for “high risk” insurance.

◆The Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad, the Osage City Police Department, and the Osage County Sheriff’s Office also provided safety information.

Bowden said this is the fourth year he has attended this event and believes it is helpful in teaching kids the need for safety when driving. “It hits a good note with the kids early in their driving days and they seem receptive to the information,” Bowden said. “Hopefully they realize driving is a serious responsibility and a privilege.” *-Story and photo by John Swihart, Public Involvement Liaison*

Public Transportation program unique among states

Ever wondered who makes sure that the person driving the bus is drug-free? In Kansas, that responsibility falls to KDOT's Office of Public Transportation. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires any provider that receives funds under its section 5311 program to follow FTA Drug/Alcohol testing regulations. The section 5311 program, formerly known as Section 18, provides federal monies under the Federal Transit Act to support rural and small urban (under 50,000 population) transportation programs that serve the general public as well as the elderly and persons with disabilities. The dollars can be used for both capital and operating expenses.

Kansas has more transit providers that receive '5311' funding than any other state. Our 116 agencies easily eclipse second place California, which has between 70 and 80 providers funded under the '5311' program.

Janet Blue has been KDOT's Drug and Alcohol Program Manager since August

1999 when the position was created. She is the oversight authority to make sure the 5311 program providers comply with the FTA's drug and alcohol testing regulations. Her position in Kansas is unique - no other state has a Drug and Alcohol Program Manager within their DOT that manages the program 100 percent. Other states have contracted oversight authorities that manage their program who are not employees of the DOT of that State.

A key part of her job is to work with a Third Party Administrator (TPA) to manage the drug-and-alcohol-testing program for the 5311-funded General Public Transportation providers. The TPA contracts with collection sites, substance abuse professionals, and Employee Assistance Programs across Kansas to provide the services that are needed to meet the FTA Regulations.

Blue has given training sessions for providers to understand the FTA regula-

tions. New FTA regulations will be implemented August 1 for both the provider of general public transportation and for all collectors of Department of Transportation drug testing. Collectors are also being trained to be in compliance with the new regulations.

Blue has also helped establish a national group called the Substance Abuse Program Managers Alliance (SAPMA). Its mission is to establish, promote, and communicate the highest standards for state Departments of Transportation substance abuse professionals in administering FTA drug and alcohol regulation compliance.

This will be done through networking, technical assistance, standardization of state oversight, and training. This group works closely with FTA to help with national forms, policy, and procedures and peer-to-peer technical assistance. She is on a com

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Welcome
new KDOT
employees!

Headquarters

- Michael Beale**, Engineering Technician Associate, Topeka
- Denise Gibson**, Staff Development Specialist I, Personnel
- Cara Katzer**, Engineering Associate III, Traffic Engineering
- Robin Long**, Office Assistant III, Management and Budget
- Kristina Rizek**, Engineering Associate III, Planning
- Dianna Tharman**, Office Assistant III, Fiscal Services

District One

Diane Handke, Office Assistant II, Horton

District Three

- John Flanagan**, Engineering Technician Senior, Oakley
- Shawn Mortensen**, Information Technology Consultant II, Norton
- Denise Schwab**, Office Assistant IV, Norton

District Four

Rhonda Brixley, Human Resources Professional I, Chanute

District Five

- Brenda Cikanek**, Human Resources Professional I, Hutchinson
 - Dale Pitchford**, Engineering Technician Associate, Hutchinson
 - Sherry Witt**, Engineering Technician Associate, Hutchinson
- The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.*

I-135

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replacements, five bridge repairs, and reconstruction of the ramps at three interchanges. The shoulders will be replaced with concrete pavement as well.

Approximately 13,000 vehicles a day use I-135 in southern Saline County with traffic estimated to rise to around 20,000 vehicles a day by 2020. With this section of roadway originally being built in 1966, a total reconstruction project is the best solution to provide motorists with a safer, more efficient roadway for years to come.

BRB Contractors of Topeka is the contractor on the \$2.6 million project on the bridges near Bridgeport. Koss Construction is the contractor on the remaining \$26.8 million I-135 project.

Istas said most of the existing roadway has been removed along the southbound lanes. Traffic has been reduced to one lane in each direction using the northbound I-135 lanes since March.

The K-4 ramp from Lindsborg to southbound I-135 as well as the ramp from K-104 to southbound I-135 will be closed most of this year due to bridge construction, Istas said, with motorists needing to follow the signed detour. She also said other temporary ramp closures will be necessary at times but they are limiting them as much as possible to assist motorists.

Work on the southbound lanes will continue until November. I-135 will then be reopened to normal traffic for the winter. In spring 2002, this section of roadway will be reduced to one lane of traffic in each direction again while work on the northbound lanes takes place. The new roadway will be completed by November 2002 with permanent striping scheduled for the following spring.

Reconstruction of the roadway and bridges on the northern part of I-135 in Saline County, from near the I-135/K-104 interchange north to just north of the I-135/I-70 interchange, was completed last year. Clarkson Construction Company of Kansas City, Mo., was the contractor on the \$36.3 million project.



Area residents look at aerial maps outlining the proposed route of the System Enhancement project on US-54 at a public meeting on July 12 at the Municipal Building in Pratt. Most people were interested in seeing if the expanded highway would affect homes and businesses.

Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee **James Swanson**, who passed away June 17 following an automobile accident.

Swanson was an Engineering Technician at the Junction City Construction

Office.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Friends of the Animals at Junction City and sent in care of the Holmes-Pfeifley Funeral Home, 303 S. Broadway in Riley, Ks., 66531.

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in July

10 YEARS

- Carmen Bakarich Topeka
- Frank Blancarte Overland Park
- Matt Bond Topeka
- George Eisele Jr. Independence
- Vernon Lister Edwardsville
- Leonard Marcotte Stockton
- Eric Oelschlager Atwood
- Steven Walburn Garnett
- Marvin White Seneca

20 YEARS

- Timothy Hatch Topeka
- Linda Voss Topeka

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

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Shawn Finley, Information Resource Specialist II, Computer Services
Gerald Heller, Right-of-Way Property Appraiser II, Right-of-Way
Nels Just, Engineering Technician Senior, Design
James Peterson, Environmental Scientist III, Design

Bill Simons, Application Programmer Analyst III, Computer Services
Richard Spielman, Safety and Health Inspector II, Construction and Maintenance
Roger Wilcoxon, Engineering Technician Senior, Design
Richard Wiley, Engineering Technician Senior, Design

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

Adams

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other national award recipient was Wendel Ruff, Assistant Chief Engineer - Pre-construction, from the Mississippi DOT.

Representatives of each state DOT participated in selection of the recipient. The award has been given in seven of the last 12 years.

"I feel really honored to receive the award and it holds special significance since it was bestowed by my peers," said Adams.

The honor recognizes Adams' "exceptional contribution toward the subcommittee's accomplishment of its assigned responsibilities." Adams has served on various committees and task forces dur-

ing his KDOT career.

Adams began serving as chairperson on the AASHTO Task Force on Preconstruction Engineering Management in 2000 and has been a member of the task force since 1993. He has served as a member on the AASHTO Subcommittee on Design since 1984 and been a member of the AASHTO Task Force on Hydraulics and Hydrology from 1988 to 1992.

Adams has been involved with AASHTO since 1967 when he began working for the agency. He is the second KDOT employee to receive the national award from AASHTO. Jim Brewer, Engineering Manager of the State Road Office, received the honor in 1999. - S.W.

Training Opportunities

- ◆ **Writing Workshop**, August 8, Topeka.
- ◆ **New Employee Orientation**, August 31, September 27, and October 30, Topeka.
- ◆ **Leadership Basics***, September 18-20, Topeka.
- ◆ **Leadership Forum***, November 19-20, Topeka.

All classes, except BEST, are available to non-supervisors with supervisory permission and where space is available. *A comprehensive training calendar is on the KDOT Intranet under Personnel, Training.*

Public transit

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mittee that will rewrite the Implementation Guideline Manual for Drug and Alcohol Regulations in Mass Transit. Blue will speak at the AASHTO/FTA State Program meeting in Washington, D.C., July 30-August 2 to talk about the Kansas Drug/Alcohol program, as well as SAPMA's future goals and how this organization will help states.

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