Radio tower takes a tumble

Winds reportedly up to 100 mph caused the radio tower at the KDOT Subarea/construction office in Liberal to be converted from a 120-foot to a 60-foot structure in a matter of seconds. Half of the tower went down during a severe storm on the afternoon of March 7, said Ron Hall, District Six Maintenance Engineer. “It was a pretty good wind that definitely did some damage,” Hall said. “If the tower would have gone to the northeast, it would have come down completely.” The tractor at the Liberal Subarea/construction office was damaged when the radio tower was knocked over by high winds. No one was injured and communications were restored in three days.

Adopt-A-Highway program celebrates 10-year anniversary in Kansas

By Kim Stich

The traditional gift to mark a 10th anniversary is made of tin or aluminum. What a coincidence - the Adopt-A-Highway program in Kansas, where volunteers pick up thousands of pounds of tin and aluminum along the roadways, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this spring.

Volunteer groups across the state began participating in the Adopt-A-Highway program in 1990 and continuing efforts by nearly 2,000 groups help to keep Kansas highways free of litter and debris.

Shawn Emerson, Officer Manager in Winfield, believes the program is very beneficial. “If you get involved, you will find it’s a very enjoyable way to give back to the community.”

Keep children safe

A 1999 KDOT Observational Survey indicated 81 percent of Kansas children were secured in child safety seats, but only 57 percent of children age 4 to 14 were secured with safety belts. Over the last three years, 8,876 Kansas children age 0-14 were killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 71 percent of the children killed or seriously injured were not properly protected by a child safety seat or by...
From Where I Sit

by E. Dean Carlson

Don't let geography stand in the way of good communication

As a parent and grandparent, I often see distance as an obstacle that prevents me from seeing my family as often as I’d like. On the other hand, there are times when I see its advantages. It is certainly a two-edged sword. The distance reduces the number of visits yet, by doing so, also makes each visit more precious. When I do see the grandchildren, I appreciate my time with them all the more. I notice changes that I may have missed if I had seen them every day. The flip side is that I miss out on all the little moments that are so special if you’re there to share them but that don’t seem all that wonderful or momentous when recounted.

About now, I can hear you asking: what on earth does this have to do with KDOT? Patriarchal musings aside, I do have a point to make. I sometimes have similar feelings about the geographical size of our agency. At times the distance is an obstacle that prevents me from spending more time in the district offices. Then again, it makes each visit that much more worthwhile. The less-frequent visits also keep me from sharing the day-to-day challenges and successes that you all have, but they also give me a chance to notice changes that you may have forgotten about because you live with them everyday.

I know some of you are thinking I should not worry about this at all; that the fewer visits you get from Topeka the better. I understand that sentiment, too. When I was serving as the FHWA’s Division Director in Minnesota my boss was in Chicago. The cities are about 300 miles apart, which is really “backyard” distance in a nationwide agency. This was a mixed blessing. I was highly visible to my boss, both when I made the right decisions and when I made poor choices. This pressure made my job tougher at times. Believe me, there were days when the last thing I wanted was another visit from Chicago. Yet, there were also days that I was thankful that I had such support so nearby. Another case of double-edged swords.

I have not made as many visits around the state lately as I’d like, but I remain very interested in the work that is going on in each of your districts, areas, and subareas. When I do make it out to your part of the state, please don’t hesitate to brag about your accomplishments or to voice your concerns. Having said that, I also ask you to let me know about things that are vitally important to you at any time. Let’s make sure that we enjoy the benefits distance can provide without stumbling over the obstacles it can create.
Leon Cziske, District Five Maintenance Superintendent, has been taking on a few high-flying hobbies in his spare time. Ski, as he is known by his coworkers, became an FAA certified glider pilot in July 1999 and took his first static line skydive in February 2000. These new hobbies will come in handy when he reaches his anticipated retirement date in August of this year.

Ski’s interest in gliding began during his career as a Sergeant in the United States Air Force. In 1973, he was stationed in England and participated in glider training with the Royal Air Force. Upon leaving the Air Force and coming to work at KDOT, a fellow coworker talked about a glider club located at the old Naval Air Base near Yoder. He joined the club, took the training, passed the FAA test and as he likes to jokingly say, “a year ago I couldn’t even spell glider pilot and now I am one.”

His skydiving hobby has a much shorter life span. He attended the ground training the morning of February 17 at the airport in Lyons and made his first jump later that day. His comment describing his physical reaction during his training and skydive was, “I lost my spit (extreme cottonmouth) at 10:30 a.m. and didn’t get it back until 4 p.m., after a successful landing.”

Janet, his English-born wife of 42 years, described Ski’s new skydiving hobby as “a bit bonkers you know, but the worst part is after watching Ski, now our daughter and daughter-in-law are planning to jump.”

Ski says skydiving is the second best thing he has experienced. When asked what was the best thing he had experienced, he said, “a good landing.”

As for future skydiving, challenges were issued, comments were made, options were looked at, consequences were examined, Ski jumped first – but watch future Translines editions for additional District Five skydivers.

*Story by Martin Miller, pictures by Martin Miller and Lori Glamann.*
Think before you speak

Words can have a lasting impression

By Christy Cain

I’d like you to imagine a scene with me. It’s lunchtime and a local restaurant is buzzing with hungry patrons. Included in the mix: several people who are sitting at a table in the middle of the room complaining about work. Their conversation includes a laundry list of gripes about their jobs and their organization. Here are some of the highlights: the training program for their unit is poor, no one on their team has experience in their field, they don’t have the educational background needed to perform the tasks they’re doing, and they feel inadequately prepared to perform their jobs.

Each of us has used lunch hour or break time as an opportunity to blow off steam during a difficult day. But this brings up an excellent opportunity to remind us of the important role we play as KDOT ambassadors. We’re representatives for the agency even when we’re not officially at work.

We’ve talked about the role of the ambassador before and the three ambassador guidelines you should keep in mind when you’re talking with a customer, friend, or family member about KDOT.

♦ Always give a balanced perspective (don’t focus on or get caught up in negativity).
♦ Use easy-to-understand language when you’re explaining a concept (don’t use technical jargon).
♦ Don’t speculate or guess if you don’t know the answer to a question. It’s easier to say, “I don’t know” than to have to go back and correct misinformation later.

These are excellent rules to remember.

But there’s another aspect of ambassadorship that shouldn’t be ignored. Think back to the restaurant scene. None of the patrons in the restaurant asked for information about the group’s work environment or their organization in general. They were just there to grab a bite to eat. But it’s likely that anyone who overheard the exchange left with some very unflattering images of the group’s organization.

What impression did you take away from the scenario described earlier? Did you feel confidence in the company for which the people work? What if it had been a state agency that the group was describing? What if a taxpayer overheard the discussion and decided to call his or her legislator? What if a local reporter was present and decided to do a story based on hearing the conversation? As you can see, this seemingly innocent exchange could actually have some very damaging consequences.

The same concepts apply at KDOT. People form their impressions of KDOT based on your words and actions regardless of the time of day. They form those opinions whether they’re soliciting information or just happen to overhear part of your conversation.

We need to watch out for one another in this ambassador role. It can be tricky stuff. As we learned from the restaurant exchange, it’s easy to get caught up in the cycle of negativity. The issues are often exaggerated when we’re upset or frustrated, and people who weren’t initially upset tend to jump on the complaint bandwagon. Try to provide balance to the conversation if it’s taking a negative turn. If you’re with a group in a public place and the discussion becomes negative, you should gently remind your group that it’s best to save the discussion for a more appropriate and private venue.

The point cannot be stressed enough - you are a representative of KDOT all the time. You may not realize it, but you are a very powerful person. What you do and say has a more lasting impact than any speech the Secretary gives, any news release about KDOT’s good work, or any positive strides made with concerned citizens at a public meeting. You are vital to KDOT’s success - what you do and say does matter. Keep this in mind the next time you want to blow off some steam. It’s better to think hard about what you say and where you say it now, than to have to eat your words later.
Secretary, KDOT project honored by Topeka KSPE chapter

Secretary Carlson was bestowed the Government Engineer of the Year Award recently by the Topeka Chapter of the Kansas Society of Professional Engineers during their annual awards banquet.

“KDOT Secretary Carlson was the leader in educating legislators about the importance of passing a comprehensive transportation bill,” said Joe Caldwell, Chairman of the Topeka awards committee.

“House Bill 2071 will provide $12.9 billion in funding for all transportation modes in Kansas through 2009.”

Caldwell praised the Secretary for being instrumental in getting a comprehensive program passed that will consist of “preservation of the existing system, modernization to provide improved safety and capacity, substantial maintenance and system enhancement projects.”

Carlson was presented a certificate by Chapter President Amy Martens to recognize his achievement.

A KDOT project in Topeka was recognized for the Engineering Achievement Award. Sited for outstanding achievement was the I-470/ KTA interchange/Topeka Boulevard connector project.

“The bridge from I-470 over Topeka Boulevard was removed and reconfigured to an at-grade intersection with traffic signals,” said Caldwell. “The intersection improves the flow of traffic in the area, improves the overall safety and will fit with any future plans by the City of Topeka.”

Repair work also took place on the bridge over the Kansas Turnpike Authority as well as on the connection to and from I-470 at the KTA. Frank Coufal was the Design Squad Leader for KDOT and HNTB was the Design Consultant.

Assistant Secretary of Transportation Warren Sick was presented a certificate by Martens to honor the agency for its work on the $10.3 million project. - S.W.

Adopt-A-Highway

enough people out there picking up trash it doesn’t take that much time, but they can see they’ve actually accomplished something that’s good for the community,” she said.

Emerson said many groups in the area clean along the highways right before big events such as the Walnut Valley Bluegrass Festival and Kansa Days. It makes the community look so much nicer for all the visitors, she said.

The one thing the Winfield office is concerned about, Emerson said, is safety. “We continuously stress safety,” she said. “We encourage them to have their safety meeting every time before they start because it’s not always the same people out there.” The groups pick up lots of trash but they also find interesting things like hats and tools, she said.

Some smaller groups or groups with elderly members recruit other groups such as Boy Scouts or church organizations to help them clean debris. “It’s an excellent idea,” she said. “They get a lot more done and it gets so many more people involved.”

Adopt-A-Highway groups are gearing up for the annual Clean Up Kansas Campaign which will take place during the month of April. The event is sponsored by the Kansas Department of Transportation. All Adopt-A-Highway groups are encouraged but not required to participate in the statewide event.

New groups are always welcome to join the program. Any non-profit group that does not discriminate upon the basis of race, religion or sex can adopt a section of roadway. Groups with members at least 11 years old are also eligible.

Continued from page 1
New Highway Advisory Commissioners appointed

Governor Bill Graves has appointed five new members to the State Highway Advisory Commission.

The new members to the 12-person panel include C. Gage Overall, Caldwell; Charles Elsea, Salina; Robert Kreutzer, Garden City; Kevin Mitchelson, Pittsburg; and Al Shank Jr., Liberal.

Overall is Chairman of the Board and CEO of the Stock Exchange Bank and President of the Stock Exchange Financial Corporation. Elsea manages the Salina operations of the Scoular Company. Kreutzer is President of Tatro Plumbing Company. Mitchelson is an attorney with Wheeler and Mitchelson. These four appointees will serve terms expiring January 31, 2002.

Shank is President of Al Shank Insurance. He will serve a term expiring January 31, 2004.

Also reappointed to the commission are Rex Carlson, Clay Center; Don Hill, Emporia; and Jeffery Mason, Goodland. Their terms will also expire January 31, 2004.

The Highway Advisory Commission is made up of 12 members appointed from the six KDOT Districts. The commission is asked to meet monthly and provide reports to the Secretary of Transportation.

Retirees

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

Headquarters
Robert J. Walker, Engineering Technician Specialist in Design - 35 years of state service.

District Five
William E. Debes, Accounting Specialist at Hutchinson - 36 years of state service.

Glenn Fager, Bituminous Research Engineer (back to camera), shows members of the touring KDOT Highway Advisory Commission equipment used to test the strength and durability of asphalt.

A vendor for Railroad Controls Limited touts the importance of an automated horn system during the annual Highway/Railroad Conference held in Topeka on February 23.
Four agency projects receive top honors

The Kansas Department of Transportation captured four awards recently during the 20th annual Portland Cement Concrete Paving conference in Kansas City.

More than 600 engineers, highway officials, contractors, and consultants exchanged information and recognized exceptional concrete construction projects under the banner “Paving the Way to a Smooth Future.” The Missouri/Kansas Chapter of the American Concrete Paving Association (ACPA) hosted the conference.

Highlighting the event was the presentation of the 2000 Portland Cement Concrete Paving Awards. In determining the winner of the most prestigious paving awards, submitted projects were rated on smoothness, quality control, appearance, workmanship, contractor management, safety, and complexity.

The Missouri/Kansas Chapter, ACPA, the Missouri Department of Transportation, and the Kansas Department of Transportation evaluated the projects in their respective states as 1999’s best concrete pavements built in seven categories.

In the Interstate/4-lane divided highways category, the KDOT I-70 project in Wabaunsee County took first place. The project involved concrete paving in a 5.5-mile area between K-99 and the junction of K-138. Koss Construction Company was the contractor on the $21,208,918 project.

Continued on page 8
The state and primary highways winner was the U.S. 77 Arkansas City bypass. This project involved 3.8 miles of concrete paving for the new bypass. Clarkson Construction Company was the contractor on the $3,207,186 project.

The honor for smoothest pavement was bestowed on the I-135 pavement reconstruction in Saline County. The 9.7-mile project involved major improvements on the roadway between I-70 and the junction of K-104. Clarkson Construction Company was also the contractor on the $38,131,593 project.

KDOT’s fourth award was in the concrete pavement rehabilitation category for work on U.S. 36 in Doniphan County. The project involved improvements on U.S. 36 from the Kansas-Missouri state line west 18.8 miles. Diamond Surface, Inc. was in charge of the $1,724,877 project.

Proper child restraint has become even more important now that air bags have become more common in passenger vehicles. According to investigations, almost all of the children involved in auto crashes who have died of air bag related injuries were completely unrestrained, or improperly restrained in the front seat.

In addition, to educate the parents of Kansas children, the Coalition is taking child passenger safety on the road with the new Mobile Car Seat Check-Up Van. The van, donated by GM’s Chevrolet division, is part of a new initiative by the Coalition and the KDOT Safety Belt Education Office. The van provides statewide access to life-saving safety information and hands-on car seat installation as a free public service to parents and automobile owners.

“We want people to pick up their local paper someday to see that Kansas is ranked number one in the nation in protecting child passengers.”

Colonel Don Brownlee

van, donated by GM’s Chevrolet division, is part of a new initiative by the Coalition and the KDOT Safety Belt Education Office. The van provides statewide access to life-saving safety information and hands-on car seat installation as a free public service to parents and automobile owners.

“The high rate of child safety seat misuse and the number of children injured and killed on our Kansas roadways tells us that many parents need this kind of hands-on assistance,” Governor Graves said.

“This new initiative will increase the awareness of child passenger safety in a manner that is convenient to families in our state.”

The new van adds a new dimension to the extremely successful Safe Kids Buckle Up Program sponsored by the Coalition, which includes bilingual educational materials, a public service campaign, workshops for health educators, and free Car Seat Check Up events open to the public. The van will visit shopping malls, daycare centers, and other community centers, and during the Child Passenger Safety Week, the van was available to assist with check-up events in both Topeka and Wichita.

The misuse of child safety seats is widespread and studies have found that as many as four out of five car seats are installed or used incorrectly. This information makes education on the correct choice of child restraint for the age and size of the child, correct installation, and correct placement of the seat vital to keeping Kansas’ child passengers safe.

Parents can receive free educational materials about how to properly use car seats and safety belts by calling 1-800-441-1888 or visiting www.safekids.org.
Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Robert Foresman, who died February 20 in Winfield.

Foresman, 30, had served as KDOT’s Area Three Construction Engineer at Winfield since May of 1997.

Foresman is survived by his wife, Laurel, his parents, and a brother.

Memorials have been established through the American Cancer Society and the First Christian Church. Contributions can be made through the Miles Funeral Service, 4001 E. 9th St., Winfield, 67156.

Condolences also to the family and friends of Maxine Spangler, who died March 11 in Topeka.

Spangler, 72, was a former Executive Secretary for the agency. She began working in 1948 for the State Highway Commission and served for almost 40 years before retiring in 1987.

Spangler is survived by two brothers, Herbert and Robert Huerter.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Midland Hospice Care, 200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, 66606.

Retirement events can be submitted to Translines

Starting next month, Translines will offer KDOT employees throughout the state who are getting ready to retire the opportunity to announce any type of gathering such as a reception, dinner, etc.

Things to keep in mind:

- It is up to the person retiring to let us know of his or her event. Some people may like to have their event published, some may not. Retirement information on posters/flyers will not be published unless the retiree has contacted the Office of Transportation Information in advance.

- Deadlines - any information on a retirement event must be submitted to Transportation Information no later than the 8th of the preceding month. This is necessary because Translines is printed at the end of each month.

For example, a retirement event set on July 10 must be submitted by June 8.

We are happy to help coworkers announce their retirement events but need your help providing the information and meeting deadlines.

Step Back in Time

Workers construct the K-13 Tuttle Creek Dam and outlet area north of Manhattan during this photograph 39 years ago. The 7,500-foot long dam was completed in 1962.
Drivesucceedsinraisingmoney,foodforProjectTopeka

By Kara Stamm

Dedicated and generous employees helped to make this year’s Project Topeka campaign a wonderful success at KDOT. The month-long drive raised $4,927 and 3,383 ounces of food, which combined together added up to a grand total of 101,943 ounces of food this February.

The friendly rivalry of the “What School Rules?” contest brought out the competitive spirit of many faithful KDOT fans for Project Topeka. The Kansas Jayhawks won the fund raising contest, raising more than 8,570 ounces of food. The Wildcats of Kansas State were a close second bringing in 8,174 ounces. The Nebraska Cornhuskers and other great schools came in third collecting 5,240 ounces of food for the worthy cause. Project Topeka’s purpose is to provide year round emergency food assistance to needy families in and around the city of Topeka.

Harvey Hofstetter, Graphic Designer in the Bureau of Support Services and coordinator for KDOT’s Project Topeka campaign, was very pleased with the 2000 totals.

“I think the amount shows that Topeka KDOT employees care about the needy in their community. The 101,943 ounces of food equals 107.31 ounces per KDOT employee in the Topeka area. That’s close to seven 16-ounce cans of food each. I think those are pretty good results,” Hofstetter said. “The volunteers really made this happen, they are to be commended for the hard work and enthusiasm they put forth to make Project Topeka 2000 a success.”

Ron Kaufman, Public Involvement Liaison, was the lucky winner of the Dean’s Honor Roll day off. Secretary Carlson drew the winning entry at an executive staff meeting at the end of February.

The Olive Garden spaghetti lunch was a popular attraction during KDOT’s annual Project Topeka fund raising drive. The luncheon brought in $440 to support the local campaign.

Continued from page 1

A look up at the radio tower that was damaged in Liberal.

Radio tower

through the roof of the Subarea. It was fortunate it went the direction it did.”

No one was injured at the KDOT office but the salt shed roof and doors were damaged as well as the tractor that was parked next to the tower. The office also lost phone and electrical service for a little while that day, Hall said. Southwest Regional Medical Center, located across the street from the Subarea, lost part of its roof.

Communications at the Subarea office as well as a secondary Kansas Highway Patrol relay were lost at that time. KDOT employees from Topeka headed to Liberal the next day to determine the extent of the damage and to restore communications.

Communications for KDOT and the KHP were restored on March 10 using the 60-foot tower that remained standing, Hall said. That tower will be used until the 800 MHz conversion is complete in District Six.
KUDOS to KDOT employees

Don’t forget about sending information concerning noteworthy accomplishments to Translines.

We want to publish brief highlights of you or your coworkers’ achievements such as winning an award, receiving a Professional Engineer license, being named to a post, or any feat you would like to share with other KDOT employees.

Please send the details to the Office of Transportation Information, 915 Harrison, Room 754, Topeka, Kan., 66612-1568. You can also send e-mail to Stan Whitley or Kim Stich.

This is a great way to recognize employees and family members, but it is up to you to supply the information. We need the person’s name, title, city of employment, and a brief description of the accomplishment.

MILESTONES

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in March

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UDOS to KDOT employees

Nick and Erika Bowser, children of Mike Bowser, Engineering Technician Senior in Local Projects, took the two spots at the recent Jackson County Conservation District’s Speech Contest.

Nick captured first place and Erika second place on the topic “In the New Millennium.” Both are students at Holton High School.

Lori Heigert, daughter of Tom Heigert in Fiscal Services, is a member of the Fort Hays State University team that was the seventh best academic cross country team in NCAA Division II in 1999. The team had a 3.66 average and Lori compiled a 3.51 average.
Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters
Cindy Broxterman, Right of Way Agency III, Right of Way
Michael Hernandez, Engineering Technician Specialist, Right of Way
Marion Johnston, Office Assistant IV, Traffic Engineering
Rodney Miller, Right of Way Property Appraiser I, Right of Way
Nancy Shepard, Right of Way Property Appraiser I, Right of Way

District One
Sandra Tommer, Professional Civil Engineer II, Topeka

District Four
Tim Farmer, Equipment Operator III, Iola

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

Training Opportunities

◆ Basic Effective Supervisory Training*, June 13-16 and July 11-14.
◆ Listening and Emotional Intelligence**, August 17, Topeka.
◆ Who Moved My Cheese (dealing with change)**, May 31, Topeka.
◆ Leadership Basics, April 11-13, Topeka; May 16-18, Salina; September 19-21, TBA).

*Meets the three-year management training requirement.
**Applies to the three-year management training requirement.

All classes, except for BEST, are available to non-supervisors with supervisory permission and where space is available. A comprehensive training calendar can be viewed on the KDOT Intranet.

KDOT
Office of Transportation Information
915 Harrison - Room 754
Topeka, KS 66612-1568