KDOT Computer Training

– from the KCTC

FEBRUARY ROAD TRIP

Trainer Misty Rodriguez has been on the road delivering Windows and Microsoft Office classes to Districts Three, Four and Six in February and finishes the classes in early March. The KCTC is pleased to make these classes more accessible to KDOT employees across the state.

SPECIAL PROJECTS…

Misty is slated to help with the development and training of some special projects starting in late March. We will be scheduling a few high demand classes in early March. Misty's regular full schedule of KCTC classes will resume in June if not sooner. The KCTC will keep you informed!

DID YOU KNOW?

Tips & Tricks:

♦How to access your KDOT mail from home?
Launch Internet Explorer and type the following address in the URL: https://mail.ksdot.org, hit enter. Enter your KDOT user name and your KDOT password (the same you use to log on at your KDOT computer). Do not check remember my password, click OK and you will go to the KDOT email system from home!
This tip brought to you by the Bureau of Computer Services.

Enroll by e-mail kctc@ksdot.org or call Ingrid Vandervort 785-296-8993. ***Questions are welcome!*** Supervisor's approval to enroll is necessary.

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Eric Anderson, Engineering Associate III, Design
William Daugherty, Professional Civil Engineer I, Construction and Maintenance
Corey Jennings, Engineering Technician Senior, Design
Karen Rogers, Public Service Executive II, Construction and Maintenance
Debbie Tanking, Professional Civil Engineer I, Traffic Engineering

District Four – Southeast

Carl Maley, Equipment Operator Specialist, Garnett
Mitchel Hoag, Engineering Technician Senior, Iola
Jim Pickett, Professional Civil Engineer I, Iola

District Five – Southcentral

Mark Logan, Equipment Operator Specialist, LaCrosse
Brent Terstriep, Professional Civil Engineer I, Wichita
Samuel Wingert, Engineering Technician Specialist, Wichita

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

KDOT golf season starts

KDOT golf's first outing for 2006 will be the "Blueballs," a two-person scramble at Ozawkie, on Saturday, March 18, with a 9 a.m. shotgun start.

Season passes will be discounted $5 off the current cost of $25 for anybody who has not had a season pass in the past three years. Also, the single tournament fee of $5 will be waived for the first event entered by any golfer who has not played in a KDOT golf event in the past three years.

Questions or to enter an event, call or e-mail Karen Peterson (6-0799) or Kevin Adams (6-5297).

Kansas Department of Transportation
Bureau of Transportation Information
Eisenhower State Office Building
700 SW Harrison, Second Floor, West
Topeka, KS 66603-3754

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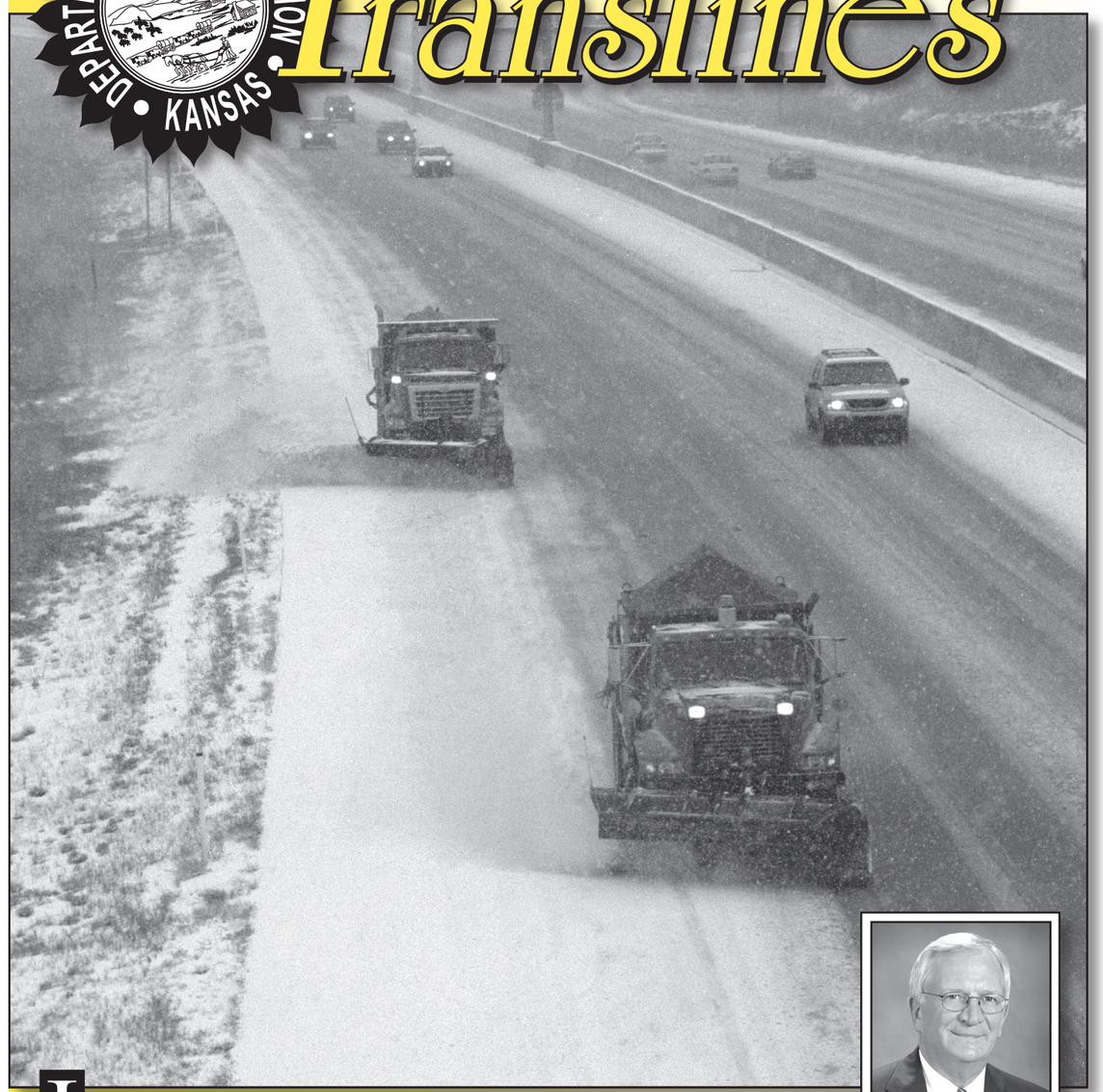
Kansas Department of Transportation
Monthly Employee Publication
March 2006

KDOT Translines



Inside ...

◆ ***Training improves efficiency***
◆ ***Airport projects announced***
◆ ***KDOT goes live with Web conferencing***
◆ ***Operators contend with winter's worst***
◆ ***Construction gears up across state***

Sick retires from KDOT
pages 8-10

Miller's Time

By Secretary Deb Miller

A job well done

This month we are losing one of our leaders whose spirit of service to both KDOT and the State of Kansas is difficult to match.

Warren Sick, Assistant Secretary/State Transportation Engineer, will retire after a career with the agency that has spanned nearly 40 years. Not only is Warren's retirement a significant loss for KDOT, it is a loss for the entire state.

There are few people at KDOT who possess Warren's knowledge of planning, building and maintaining roads, or his institutional knowledge of this agency and state government. He knows that getting things accomplished in government sometimes means walking a line that stretches from politics to policy to practicality.

Warren was fresh out of North Dakota State University when he accepted a job at KDOT in 1967. While working his way up the career ladder, Warren spent time in Construction and Maintenance, Traffic Engineering, and Engineering and Design. He gained broad knowledge of the agency and highway building. And along the way, he earned the respect of those with whom he worked. Just as importantly, he respected his colleagues and instilled in them the confidence to make decisions. As a result, he claims he has one of the easiest jobs in state government.

For the past three years, it has been my good fortune to have the office next door to Warren's. He thinks he's late if he arrives at work after 7:15 a.m. (always before I arrive). He is positive, upbeat and easy-going. He sees the glass as half full, not half empty. Warren has been a stabilizing force for KDOT through both good and challenging times and we have all benefited.

I personally want to thank Warren for helping me when I became Secretary three years ago. His support made it easier for me as I learned to be the head of this agency. His ability to keep problems in perspective helped me keep them in perspective.

It's bittersweet when friends and trusted co-workers move on – wishing the best for them while preferring that life go on as it had. But Warren, I know you look forward to spending more time with BettyLou and your family – especially the grandchildren – and I wish you well in retirement. Enjoy yourself and don't worry about sleeping late.

Congratulations on a job well done!

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Information
Eisenhower Building, 2nd Floor, West
700 SW Harrison, Topeka, Ks 66603-3754

Governor: Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Transportation: Deb Miller
Chief of Transportation Information: Steve Swartz
Editors: Stan Whitley and Kim Stich
Phone/TTY: (785) 296-3585 FAX: (785) 296-0287

Calendar of Events

March 8-9 – Kansas-Missouri Highway Rail Safety Conference, Adams Pointe Conference Center, Blue Springs, Mo.

March 10 – 9:30 a.m. - Highway Advisory Commission meeting, Eisenhower State Office Building.

March 14 – 11 a.m. KDOT employees' Council Meeting, Third Floor, Eisenhower State Office Building.

March 15 - 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting, Fourth Floor West Wing, Eisenhower State Office Building

March 18 – 9 a.m. KDOT golf 2-person Scramble at Ozawkie. Questions or to enter call or email Karen Peterson (785-296-0799) or Kevin Adams (785-296-5297).

Fun Facts and Trivia

Do you know?

Interstate routes traversing the most states:

◆I-95, 16 states (including Washington, D.C.): Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

◆I-90, 13 states: Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts.

◆I-80, 11 states: California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

◆I-70, 10 states, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

◆I-10, eight states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

◆Check out Kansas Interstate information on KDOT's Internet at www.ksdot.org.

Transportation Briefs

KDOT presentations posted on Web site

Presentations given by KDOT leaders and experts last fall at the Sixth National Conference on Asset Management in Kansas City, Mo., are now posted on the conference Web site. Presenters whose work is posted include Deb Miller, Dean Testa, Rosie Ingram, Rick Miller, Ben Nelson and Dan Scherschligt. The presentations can be viewed at http://www.trb.org/Conferences/Preservation-Asset/Program.pdf. The posted presentations have highlighted blue links.

ARTBA predicts record year

The U.S. highway construction market should grow 5.4 percent in 2006, according to the chief economist for the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA). The value of construction work performed on highway and bridge projects nationwide is projected to be a record $70.3 billion in FY 2006, up from $66.9 billion in FY 2005. Most of that increase is due to increased costs, rather than additional projects. *–Midwest Contractor, Jan. 9, 2006*

Former FHWA administrator honored

Mary Peters, former administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, has been given the 2005 Leadership Award from the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships. Peters, national director for transportation policy for the Omaha-based consultant HDR, was recognized for her efforts to promote the use of public-private partnerships to help finance and deliver transportation projects. *–PublicWorks, January 2006*

Roads taken back to the future

Some local agencies are reversing a decades-old trend of paving roads in hopes of better controlling the type of traffic traveling on their surface. In West Marlborough Township, some local roads are being returned to gravel to reduce non-local traffic. The New Jersey DOT is downgrading an expressway to a boulevard to discourage high speeds and big trucks. And in Orlando, Fla., asphalt on five miles of streets has been torn off, exposing the original brick surface. The result has been 10 percent less traffic and lower speeds. *–Better Roads, February 2006*

MILESTONES

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in February

10 YEARS

Rachel Bennett . . . . . Topeka
Edward Ford . . . . . Topeka
Larry McGraw . . . . . Leavenworth
Kenneth Tabor, Jr. . . . . Leavenworth

20 YEARS

Ben Nelson . . . . . Topeka
Michael Sheets . . . . . Olathe
Robert Stroda . . . . . Salina
Douglas Welch . . . . . Horton

30 YEARS

Richard Davis . . . . . Osage City
Alvin Gillespie . . . . . Hutchinson
Richard Moreno . . . . . Sedan
Gary Mutschelknaus . . . . . Topeka
Charles Zerbe . . . . . Eskridge

The following employee celebrated 30 years of service in January.

Michael Ellison . . . . . Shawnee

40 YEARS

Ken Hurst . . . . . Topeka

The following employee celebrated 40 years of service in January.

Franklin Heck . . . . . Emporia

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

Work to improve K-383 near the city of Jennings will be finished in October.

Construction

Continued from page 4

Jennings will have a Major Modification project beginning this spring.This project will take place on existing alignment. The dirt shoulders will be widened six to eight feet in conjunction with a milling and resurfacing of the current driving surface. The project begins at the west city limits of Jennings and extends east about seven miles on K-383.

Venture Corporation of Great Bend is the prime contractor on the approximately $6.5 million project. It is scheduled to be finished in October.

DISTRICT FIVE

A Major Modification project is scheduled to be let for construction in August on US-50 in Reno County. This project will provide four-lane improvements from the west junction of US-50/K-96 in South Hutchinson east to 0.1 mile west of the east junction of US-50/K-61 in Hutchinson.

All driveway and side road access will be closed in this section of US-50 to provide full access control. A new diamond interchange will be constructed at the intersection of US-50 and Scott Boulevard. This new interchange will serve the South Hutchinson Industrial Park.

Additional right of way will be purchased from the east junction of US-50/K-61 west to the US-50 intersection with Airport/Yoder Road. This right of way will preserve the US-50 corridor to provide for future four-lane improvements and interchanges to be constructed at the east junction of US-50/K-61 and at the US-50 and Airport/Yoder Road intersection.

US-54 in Kingman County, from the start of the four-lane section west of the City of Kingman to 0.10 mile east of the K-17 junction, will also receive a Major Modification project. This project involves patching of the existing concrete pavement, overlaying the concrete with a reflective crack interlayer, and then placing a 2.5-inch asphalt overlay. The existing rock shoulders will also be paved with asphalt. This 6.4-mile project is scheduled to be let for construction in March 2006.

Dear Editor — Letters to the Editor

The property owner contacted KDOT's Area Four office in Pittsburg about plugged ditches on an old segment of abandoned US-59. Below is her response.

Dear KDOT:
I want to thank you and your highway department workers for cleaning out my ditches. I really appreciated your attitude and swift action.

Sincerely,
Shirley Haddan
Stark

Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters

Robert Bartron, Engineering Technician, Traffic Engineering
Amber Everhart, Engineering Associate I, Transportation Planning
Douglas Hilmes, Engineering Technician, Materials and Research
Lou Ann Hughes, Management Systems Analyst I, Construction and Maintenance
Danni Stallbaumer, Administrative Assistant, Local Projects

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for new hires to Translines.

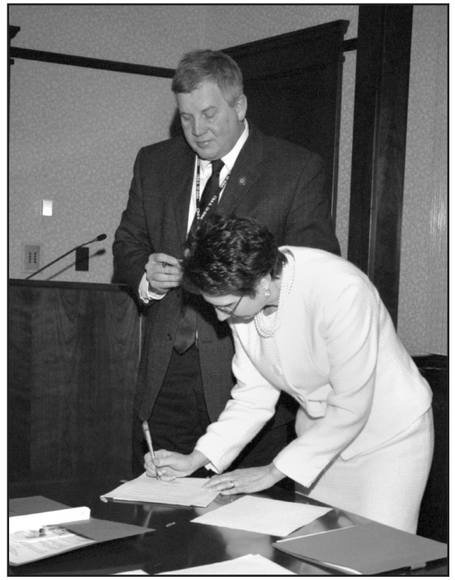
Training improves efficiency for counties

Developing technical and management skills in county transportation employees will greatly improve efficiency for both county government and KDOT.

To that end, Secretary Deb Miller signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Feb. 7 in Topeka with the Kansas County Highway Association to provide five courses in the Executive Development Program. This program will help transportation employees to receive training and work together on county roadways.

"KDOT's Bureau of Local Projects regularly works with counties on road-related issues and funding," said Secretary Miller. "By providing these employees an opportunity to learn important skills, county governments can operate more efficiently and provide improved service to the traveling public."

Continued on page 10



J.F. McMahon, President of the Kansas County Highway Association, watches Secretary Deb Miller sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Feb. 7 that will help provide training to county employees.

On the... COVER

Snow is removed from I-70 in Topeka by crews from the Area Four office during a recent snow storm.
Photo by Sonya Scheuneman

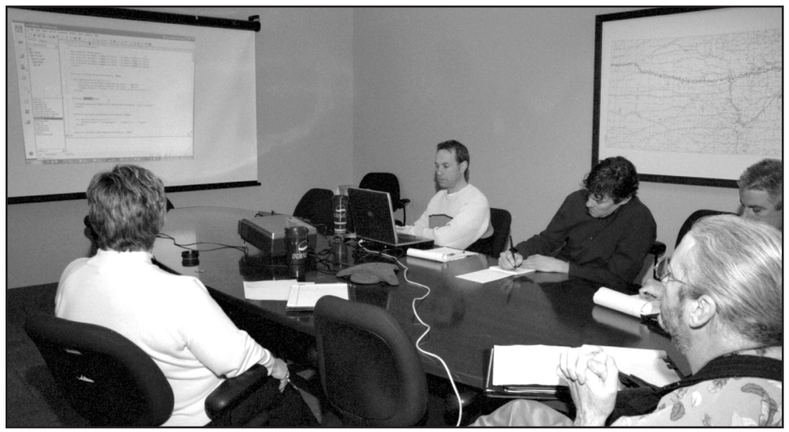
'Driving Force' seeks safer roadways

Traffic crashes are the number-one killer of children in Kansas, the number-one killer of teenagers and the number-one killer of adults under the age of 34. To help reduce these fatalities, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has announced the creation of a new group devoted to making Kansas streets, roads and highways safer.

The Driving Force is a task force made up of more than 20 leaders from across the state. The task force is

Continued on page 5

KDOT goes live with Web conferencing



Live Meeting is used by the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) unit at KDOT to collaborate with consultants in real-time at different locations.

By Stan Whitley

Web conferencing technology that gives you the power to work with people in real-time at diverse locations is a valuable tool available to KDOT.

The technology is called 'Live Meeting' and it makes collaborative meetings to large-scale presentations possible online. It's technology that allows you to stay in touch with people all over the globe.

"Live Meeting helps business professionals conduct effective meetings with virtually anyone, any where," said Sue Swartzman, Technical Support Manager in Computer

Continued on page 12

Construction gears up across state

Highlights of major construction projects in Districts One, Three and Five are featured this month with information provided by Public Affairs Managers Joe Blubaugh, Kristen Brands and Martin Miller. Projects in Districts Two, Four and Six will be printed in the next edition.

DISTRICT ONE

The Focus435 construction in Johnson County, let for $127.4 million, represents the single largest project ever let by KDOT in terms of cost.

Construction got under way last fall on the improvements to the I-435 corridor in Overland Park. This season's phase will mainly focus on I-435 between US-69 and Metcalf Avenue. I-435 will be expanded from six to eight lanes from Indian Creek Parkway to Metcalf Avenue this year, which will help ease traffic congestion during the remainder of the project.

Another major focus during phase one will be completing the east half of the new I-435/Antioch Road interchange. As part of the new interchange, the existing Antioch Road bridges will be replaced one at a time to allow traffic through construction.

The impact on traffic this year is expected to be minimal. Brief lane reductions on I-435 and US-69 are expected along with two nighttime closures of I-435 during the demolition of the existing Antioch Road bridges.

For more details about this project, go to http://www.focus435.com/.

Around the CONSTRUCTION Districts

The K-18/K-113 interchange in Manhattan is another important project in District One.

Deteriorating bridges on K-18 and the expansion of K-113 to four lanes prompted the $7.5 million project in Manhattan. It features the replacement of the two K-18 bridges over K-113 with longer, post-tensioned structures to accommodate the expansion.

The project also calls for the reconfiguration of the existing interchange to a typical diamond. Currently, the interchange has a half diamond, half folded diamond configuration with a very tight off ramp. The new interchange will be controlled by a traffic signal on K-113. The current schedule has a November completion date.

DISTRICT THREE

A Major Modification project on US-36 west of Norton will continue this spring. The project involves rebuilding US-36 on new alignment - from the US-36/K-383 junction to Reager. The new highway will be built north of the existing roadway. From Reager to the Decatur County Line, the new roadway will be built along the south side of the current corridor.

The $17 million project is nine miles in length. Dobson Brothers, of Lincoln, Neb., is the prime contractor in charge of the project. When completed, the new roadway will have 12-foot driving lanes with three-foot paved shoulders and five-foot turf shoulders. There is also a large amount of dirt to be moved on this project.

Work began on this project in November 2005 and is expected to be completed in 2007.

K-383 in the city of

Continued on page 14

Reconstruction work on US-36 continues this spring west of Norton.

Snow

Continued from page 6

blade and started doing 360s (circles) for 300 yards. It's amazing I didn't hit anything," he said.

"The big truck holds the ground better than smaller vehicles, but when you lose it, its worse."

The Big One

This winter got an early start for the crews in northwest Kansas when heavy snow and high winds swept out of the mountains and across the high plains. Many miles of roads in District Three were closed for several days because of drifting snow and a shortage of motel rooms from Salina to Denver. For the first time in several years, the district's huge snow blower was used to open some roads buried under many feet of snow.

'As I was approaching an intersection, I raised up the blade and started doing 360s (circles) for 300 yards. It's amazing I didn't hit anything.'
Darrick Meyer

As severe as the storm was, it pales next to those of 1987, when separate storms each dumped more than a foot of snow on consecutive weekends. Some of the drifts, McDiffett said, were 15 feet high. Ray said crews worked 16- to 18-hour shifts nearly every day for two weeks.

"It stopped everything," said Ray. "We finally got one-way traffic through everywhere and then the other storm hit and blew everything shut again.

"Some cars were completely covered up. The only thing that kept us from hitting them was the radio antenna sticking up out of the snow."

'Some cars were completely covered up. The only thing that kept us from hitting them was the radio antenna sticking up out of the snow.'
Rich Ray

The cars weren't the only vehicles being stranded in 1987. A couple snow plow operators from Oberlin traveled to Norton to help clear the roads. On the way back home, their trucks got stuck and they were stranded for several days.

"They had radios. We knew about where they were. But it just took a few days to get through to them," said McDiffett.

Equipment always Evolving

Better equipment has made fighting snow and ice storms a more efficient battle.

"Our equipment is great compared to the day when we used to use the old pull-type blades and V-plows that you jacked up by hand," Ray recalls.

"Those old Minneapolis Moline loaders had small buckets and didn't have cabs, power steering, or lights. This made our job harder at night, trying to load when you couldn't see anything in the dark."

Above and beyond

Sometimes, when conditions are extremely poor, just getting to work can be a hazard for the equipment operators. Meyer said his pickup truck spun out three times on his way to work during a recent storm.

McDiffett says he knows of at least one equipment operator who lives in the country who rented a motel room in town when a storm was approaching so he would be sure he'd get to work. Taking that dedication a step further, there is the operator who could not get to work because of the snow, so he walked two miles to the shop so he could get on a snow plow and do his job.

Ray, who is reluctant to say much about his own contributions, was much more comfortable praising the efforts of others.

"We really have a bunch of good people out here, from our District Engineer to the Area Superintendent to our Subarea and District supervisors," said Ray, who equally praised all of the operators and mechanics.

"All of these guys deserve a pat on the back. They really do."

Deaths

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

Winifred M. Wise, 80, died Feb. 4 in Topeka. Wise worked for KDOT 31 years before retiring in 1982. She is survived by a sister, numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to Midland Hospice Care, Inc., 200 S.W. Frazier Circle, Topeka, 66606.

Wanda M. Hinson, 78, died Feb. 1 in Topeka. Hinson worked for KDOT 36 years before retiring in 1991. She is survived by a daughter, a brother, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Heartland Hospice, American Diabetes or the charity of the donor's choice and sent in care of the VanArsdale Funeral Chapel in Eskridge.

Floyd O. Duell, 84, died Jan. 26 in Topeka. He worked for KDOT and was responsible for the installation and operation of radio equipment. He is survived by his wife, Betty, two daughters, two sisters, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Memorials contributions may be made to the Shriners Hospital for children and sent in care of the Arab Shrine Temple, 1305 S. Kansas Avenue, Topeka, 66612.

Step Back in Time

US-56 at Lyons is under construction during this photograph taken in 1947.

Live Meeting

Continued from page 3

Services. "The purpose of Live Meeting is to allow the ability to work together when each party is in different locations without leaving your desk. You have the ability to share a Power Point presentation, documents and applications. You may also share with others the ability to update documents in real time."

The technology was first brought into KDOT at the end of 2004 and by the beginning of 2005, the agency had a 60-day pilot of the product led by Microsoft. Live Meeting was licensed for KDOT usage last March.

Anyone in KDOT can use Live Meeting with the limitation that there is a 50-room limit capacity, thus 50 users can be connected at one time.

"There are numerous advantages of using Live Meeting," said Swartzman. "You can certainly save time and money by meeting online and avoid the hassles of business travel. You also can increase productivity by spending your time wisely and avoiding downtime associated with getting to and from your meetings."

Swartzman said there is easy collaboration using Live Meeting with a familiar and easy to use environment. All you need is a computer with an Internet connection to conduct your online meetings.

The GIS unit at KDOT uses Live Meeting to conduct meetings and training with consultants. They have communicated with consultants this year in Missouri, Georgia, Alabama, Texas and Colorado.

"The meetings are efficient because we create an agenda or outline before the meeting and participants then follow the agenda," said Mary Beth Pfrang, KGATE Project Manager. "Since our project is Web based development, we need hands on during discussions and training. Live Meeting provides us that opportunity."

Pfrang said the GIS team can discuss issues and formulate questions during the meeting.

"We all see the same thing and can resolve issues quickly," said Pfrang. "Anyone can take possession of the meeting, share their desktop and display files."

Anyone in KDOT has authorization to schedule a live meeting through Outlook or the Web. A good place to go to get started is the Live Meeting link on the KDOT intranet page: http://kdotweb.ksdot.org/LiveMeeting/index.html.

Personal assistance for a first time Live Meeting setup can be obtained by contacting the Help Desk at 6-0315. The Help Desk also has live meeting manuals and quick reference cards that they will hand out on request.

Retirements

The following employees will officially retire from KDOT April 1.

District Two

Robert A. Bergman, Engineering Technician at Salina – 40½ years of state service

District Four

Marge Dickens, Senior Administrative Assistant at Chanute – 16 years of state service

Earl Johnston, Maintenance Superintendent at Independence – 42 years of state service

District Five

David N. Fosberg, Public Service Administrator II at Pratt – 25 years of state service.

I-70 bridge damaged

An excavator being hauled Feb. 13 on Interstate 70 on the west side of Hays caught the bottom of a bridge, punching a hole in the deck and producing these unusual sights. The excavator arm was removed by cutting it from its base while stabilized by cranes. The tracked vehicle was pulled away from the bridge and the arm was lowered onto the road for removal. Eastbound traffic was detoured around the south side of Hays while westbound traffic was unaffected. The bridge was closed to all traffic. At Translines press time, engineers were still assessing the situation to determine a solution.

Photos courtesy of Kevin Zimmer, KDOT Area Engineer in Hays.

Driving Force

Continued from page 3

charged with recommending ways to reduce the number of fatalities. These recommendations will encompass the areas of education, enforcement, legislation, and road engineering.

"On average, we're losing more than one Kansan a day to traffic accidents. These are moms and dads, sons and daughters, friends and loved ones," said Sebelius. "We need to find ways to reduce the number of deaths and injuries that happen on Kansas roads."

Jeff Boerger, president of the Kansas Speedway, and Darlene Whitlock, Trauma Project Coordinator with Stormont-Vail TraumaCare, will co-chair the Driving Force.

'On average, we're losing more than one Kansan a day to traffic accidents. These are moms and dads, sons and daughters, friends and loved ones. We need to find ways to reduce the number of deaths and injuries that happen on Kansas roads.'

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius

Boerger and Whitlock are both leaders in the state and have shown a dedication and passion for this issue. Other members of the Driving Force come from the public and private sector representing many different fields including medicine, education, law enforcement, insurance, media, and public advocacy.

Reducing the number of traffic fatalities is also one of the aims of a unique cross-agency endeavor that has just been initiated. KDOT, led by Secretary Deb Miller, the Kansas Highway Patrol led by Col. Bill Seck, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment led by Secretary Rod Bremby have joined together to promote safer driving and safer roads. Driving Force is intended to complement this effort.

The first meeting of the task force will be Friday, April 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Kansas Highway Patrol Training Academy in Salina.

Taking on Mother Nature

Operators contend with winter's worst

Darrick Meyer, Equipment Operator, contends with snow and heavy traffic when plowing in the Wichita area.

By Steve Swartz

The telephone poles in Northwest Kansas do more than carry conversations.

On occasion, when the snow drifts so high that the roads and fences disappear, the poles become guide posts for the people we depend on to keep highways passable and safe.

Through whiteouts, high winds and icy roads come KDOT's snow plow operators, carving out roadways when sensible people are at home. It's not that these men and women lack common sense; they take seriously the fact that the rest of us are depending on them.

"From bottom to top, they are a dedicated group of employees" said District Three Engineer Chriss McDiffett.

One of that group is Rich Ray, an Equipment Operator Specialist in the Norton Subarea, who has been plowing snow for KDOT for 42 years. He's seen just about everything winter can throw at the Midwest, but he talks about his experiences in a typically Kansas understated way.

Road Warriors

In the worst conditions, visibility can be reduced to just a few feet, he said.

"You go into them (whiteouts) fairly slow and hope there's nothing in there that's going to hurt you," Ray said.

"I've been real fortunate and so have most of the guys I work with. But I've had some close calls, which later became learning experiences."

Rich Ray, Equipment Operator Specialist in Norton, has seen a lot of snow storms in his 42 years at KDOT.

Spinouts and speeders

Darrick Meyer, who works out of the North Hillside shop in Wichita, has also had some close calls over the years. But unlike Ray, who encounters some stretches of drifted, desolate highway, Meyer contends with the hazards of a nine-mile section of heavily-traveled, multi-lane I-235 on Wichita's northwest corner.

"There are people who still think you can drive at 70 miles per hour when the roads are icy or snow packed," Meyer said. "You have to worry about them passing you and spinning out, creating havoc for you and the others."

Meyer, who has worked at KDOT only for two years but has driven snow plows for private contractors for much longer, said he has seen a lot of vehicles spin off the roadway. During one snowstorm in the late 1970s, it was the snowplow he was driving that was doing the spinning.

"As I was approaching an intersection, I raised up the

Continued on page 13

By Larry Thompson

TRANSPORTATION TALK

'Got milk?'

That was the second question I asked the group at New Employee Orientation. The first question was "What your job was about – yesterday?"

"I did office paperwork."

"I was flagging traffic for a road repair."

"I was working on a dump truck."

"I was doing inspection on a project."

The response to the second question was universally "Yeah, in the refrigerator."

"Did you go out to the barn and get it out of the cow yourself?"

"No"

"So, where did you get your milk?"

"From the store."

We agreed that the milk actually came from a dairy, possibly one of those that dot the southwest Kansas landscape. "What is the job at the dairy?"

"Get the milk out of the cow."

"What do they do with that milk?"

"Put it in a truck."

"Correct, they take raw milk from the cow, quick cool it, and put it in a trailer. When the trailer is full, what happens?"

"A truck takes the milk to a processing plant."

"How does the truck get to the plant?"

"On the highway."

"Correct, they use public roads and highways, planned, designed, constructed, inspected, and maintained by you or people like you. You told me that you were doing those tasks yesterday, road repair, inspection, personnel paperwork."

"Are there workers at the dairy? How do they get to the dairy to feed, doctor and milk the cows?"

"They drive."

"Correct, on public roads and highways, planned, designed, constructed, inspected and maintained by you or people like you. When the milk leaves the processing plant, how does it get to a distribution warehouse?"

"On a public road or highway."

"Correct, a public road or highway planned, designed, constructed, inspected and maintained by you or people like you. How does the milk get to your store?"

Now they have the rhythm – "In a truck, on a public road or highway; planned, designed, constructed, inspected and maintained by me or people like me! "Exactly, how do you get the milk?"

"I drive on a public road or highway; planned, designed, constructed, inspected and maintained by me or people like me!"

"So, you are telling me that you cannot have that milk in your refrigerator if you do not do your job? Actually, you cannot have the refrigerator, you would be cutting blocks of ice from the pond, if you or people like you did not plan, design, construct, inspect and maintain our public roads. Therefore, you can see that jobs like ours are important! Our job is not just our individual tasks; it is the accumulation of that effort that 'provides a statewide transportation system to meet the needs of Kansas.' If we do not do our job, things do not move across Kansas. Our effort is a vital component of the $144 billion dollars of product (1998) that is able to move in and through Kansas each year. Be proud of that fact! Be PROUD to be a public servant working for the Kansas Department of Transportation!"

Sick

Continued from page 9

that started on a District tour about 25 years ago.

"We were driving and saw some sheep and I joked, 'where the men are men and the sheep are nervous.' And ever since then I've been receiving sheep gifts," he said. "A few years ago at a contractor's convention, I had sheep sitting on my car in the morning. And I've received sheep cards from people all over the country – I think it's been from KDOT people when they're traveling. Roger Alexander used to call me up and go 'baaaaaaaa.'

"Every year I get a sheep at Christmas – I think it's my daughter – but she'll never admit it. It was a joke that started early in my career, and I've lived with it ever since. It's been fun."

'Warren listens, comprehends and offers his point of view on issues when asked to make a decision. These traits make him a leader whom I respect and like. I have also heard that he is an accomplished sheep herder (does he listen to the sheep as well?).'
Co-worker Ron Balsters

Sick plans to travel with his wife, BettyLou, and spend time with his two children, Rochelle and Jarret, their spouses and three grandchildren. He also wants to visit other family members such as his twin brother, Wes, and sister, Jolene.

"I also want to convince my wife that there are some interesting places in western Kansas," he said. "She doesn't see what I see in western Kansas. But there are lots of things I haven't seen and I want to take some time to travel around the state."

Reception for
Warren Sick
•1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.•
Friday, March 10
Eisenhower Building
Fourth floor auditorium
700 SW Harrison
Topeka

ONE LAST TIME

Sick is ending his career at KDOT by attending all of the District meetings.

"I like to visit the people in the Districts," he said. "They're always so nice."

And he has many good memories of District meetings.

"I remember some of the old guys I used to go to Norton and Garden City with and play cards," he recalled. "I like to play poker. When we played in Norton, people would go crazy over the game – we had more fun.

"And I remember going to Norton one year when it really snowed and I spent the night in Hays," he said. "Lackey gave me hell the next day because I didn't make it to Norton and I told him I'm from North Dakota and I'm smarter than that."

Sick's sense of humor, his knowledge and easy-to-approach style earned him many admirers in Kansas transportation circles. He characteristically offered thanks to his KDOT coworkers, contactors and consultants for supporting him during his career.

"It was a combination of everybody's doing that made it so enjoyable and so worthwhile," Sick said. "I want to thank everybody for the opportunity and the chances they gave me and I hope I didn't disappoint them."

'Warren to me is like a fatherly figure, he is in charge of a great highway system that gets no vacation, no holidays, no sick days and he, just like his highway system, doesn't get much more of a break. When the phone rings at midnight and there's a problem or when the elements threaten, he is off and running. A job like that is stressful, but I know Warren loves it.'
Co-worker Benny Tarverdi

Road Scholar

Continued from page 3

Currently, the focus is to provide a training program for county employees. In the future, the goal is for the program to also include city and state employees.

There are four parts to the program – Road Scholar: Technical Skills; Advanced Road Scholar: Supervisory Skills; Master Road Scholar: Executive Development Program; and County Engineer: Certificate Program. KDOT will provide five of the 10 courses in the Master Road Scholar section with the first KDOT workshop to take place later this month.

The cost is $35 to register for each level of the program and approximately $100 for each workshop. For more information or to register for the program, contact Rose Lichtenberg, Local Transportation Assistance Program, at 785-864-2594.
-K.S.

Airport improvement projects announced

Twenty-three public use airports in the state have been selected to receive safety and service enhancements thanks to the KDOT's Airport Improvement Program.

These projects will address maintenance, geometric improvement and facility and equipment needs at non-primary public use airports. These are airports in the state that are classified as having less than 10,000 passenger boardings per year.

"KDOT funds $3 million in airport projects annually and we have seen dramatic improvements in air transportation across the state since the program's inception seven years ago," said Secretary Deb Miller. "All Kansans are now only 30 minutes away from emergency air services and runway pavement conditions have improved from a 49 (fair) rating to a 72 (very good) rating."

Recognizing the importance of air service to the Kansas economy and emergency health care services, KDOT established the Airport Improvement Program in 1999 with funding authorized as part of the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

"These improvements couldn't have happened without local partners and KDOT working together," said Miller. "The program is designed to stretch state dollars by requiring participation from local units of government. Over the past seven years, KDOT has contributed approximately $21 million to help fund 161 airport improvement projects throughout the state."

Under guidelines of the program, project sponsors are required to pay a minimum of 10 percent of the total project costs or a maximum of 50 percent of the total project cost based on population.

Prior to passage of the CTP, Kansas was the only state in the country that did not provide state funding for airport improvements. Miller said that commerce, air ambulance service, agriculture and law enforcement have been key benefactors of the airport improvement program.

The following is a list of the FY 2007 selected airport improvement projects.

Allen County – Runway widening; **Anthony –** Taxiway repair; **Atchison –** Automated weather information system; **Benton –** Extend taxiway; **Chanute –** Repair taxiway joints; **Emporia –** Repair taxiway joints; **Hillsboro –** Construct taxiway; **Hugoton –** Overlay runway; **Leavenworth –** Repair ramp; **Lyndon –** Reconstruct runway; **Mankato –** Sea1 runway; **McPherson –** Airfield markings; **Neodesha –** Lighting; **Osborne –** Construct taxiway; **Rawlins-Atwood** – Automated weather information system; **Rose Hill** – Construct taxiway; **Satanta** – Reconstruct trafficway; **Sedan** – Repair lights; **Smith Center –** Precision approach path indicator; **Syracuse** – Two projects - lighting and phase II runway; **WaKeeney** – Construct turnarounds; **Tribune –** Beacon and lighted cone; **Wichita Cessna –** Reconstruct runway. ***– S.W.***

Before and after pictures show the dramatic improvement at the Benton airport thanks to KDOT's Airport Improvement Program.

'Warren is one of those rare individuals who brings everything to the table - professionalism, knowledge, experience and an unwavering calmness. He has been a wonderful supervisor, a great mentor and a true friend. I will miss him, KDOT will miss him.'
Co-worker Peggy Hansen-Nagy

Sick says farewell to KDOT

By Kim Stich

Conversations with Warren Sick about what makes KDOT successful almost always lead to the same conclusion – the people.

"I've always enjoyed the people. You couldn't ask for a better group," said Sick, Assistant Secretary/State Transportation Engineer. "They're dedicated, hard working and willing to move forward."

Sick says he is fortunate to have a staff who gets the job done.

"I've probably got one of the easiest jobs in the state and it's because you develop a process whereby people aren't afraid to make decisions," he said. "I've been a firm believer that there are experts in this agency who have a lot more expertise than I do and I let them make the decisions."

After a 38-plus-year career with the agency, Sick will retire on March 10. And he will be taking a lot of fond memories with him.

Secretary's office employees Peggy Hansen-Nagy, Deana Taylor, Warren Sick and Deb Miller (all standing) serve breakfast to the winners of the United Way auction in 2005.

"I remember when I came here, I wasn't going to spend that long here, but it's been a real blessing and a great opportunity," he said. "I don't regret one minute of it."

GETTING STARTED

Sick grew up on a farm near Elgin, North Dakota, and is a 1967 graduate of North Dakota State University. He spent his summers during college working for the Forest Service in Montana and, "if I wouldn't have gotten married right after I graduated, I probably would have gone back to the Forest Service – it was a fun job, but I was gone six days a week."

KDOT had a lot of Interstate work taking place in 1967, and working for a DOT appealed to him. Sick started in Construction and Maintenance working in various positions in that bureau for 20 years, then was named Bureau Chief of Traffic Engineering. After five years, he became the Chief of Design, then a year and a half later was named Director of Engineering and Design. In June 1999, he was chosen as Assistant Secretary/State Transportation Engineer when Mike Lackey retired.

'Warren was a man that always kept things in perspective. I always felt confident with Warren leading the team here at KDOT, or after hours in a game of eight ball.'
Co-worker Oscar Hamilton

Lackey played a big part in Sick's life. Sick's only time in the field was a three-month stint in the Engineer-in-Training program surveying the original sections of I-135 in 1967 while working for Lackey, who was the Project Engineer in McPherson. And for the next 30 years, they worked together whether it was in Construction and Maintenance or as Chiefs of different areas.

"Mike Lackey has been a mentor to me. He was

Continued on page 9

Sick (center) attended the Southeast Kansas Corridor bid letting on Nov. 17, 1994. Also pictured, from left to right, include David Comstock, Dan Ramlow, Dean Testa and Bob Totten.

Above, Sick was in the 1967 Engineer-in-Training program (he's in the back row, left).

'When I first met you in Hays in the early 70s, you were energetic and prepared to give KDOT and the state of Kansas your best, which you have done. It's been a pleasure knowing and working for you, and may you find life at its best in retirement.'
Co-worker Fonda Lawrence

supportive, and I consider him a good friend of mine," Sick said. "Mike could chew my butt out at 5 o'clock on a Friday, and that night I could go out and have a beer with him. When we were at work, we did work, and when work was over with, we had our fun time."

BUILDING HIGHWAYS

A highlight in Sick's career has been the two highway programs.

"I especially remember the first one because it went so well and we were fortunate," he said. "It took a lot of effort by a lot of people. When we started the first program, the thing that was so rewarding was that the Districts went out and designed projects because they didn't have a set of plans, but we got it done."

Interstates in Kansas greatly benefited from the programs.

"The decision to use maintenance money to improve I-70 from Salina to the Colorado line was just an amazing decision that improved our system substantially," Sick said. "Then we could dedicate our Interstate money to the rest of the system. Mr. (Dean) Testa did a great thing when he did that."

Kansas has a fairly good highway system now, Sick said, but it's vital to maintain it.

"I just hope the citizens of the state and the Legislature recognize that and continue to make that a priority in our state because it is so important," he said.

Sick has seen many changes during his career, especially with equipment.

"We've got a good maintenance staff and it's fairly well equipped now with the right type of equipment," he said. "I go to a lot of DOTs and AASHTO meetings and hear about how difficult it is to get the right equipment and have the staff to do it. We've been very fortunate and I think that's something our people ought to be proud of."

There was one job at KDOT Sick would have liked to have.

"When I first came here, my goal was to be a Resident (Area) Engineer, and it was one of the jobs I never had," Sick said. "And to this day, I still regret I wasn't a Resident Engineer. I thought it was the meat of the agency."

BAAAAAA MEMORIES

A story about Sick wouldn't be complete without explaining the sheep joke

Continued on page 10

'I remember when Warren came to work for me in McPherson, fresh from North Dakota, on the training program, and not sure what Kansas was all about. Most of our careers we worked closely together and with tongue firmly in cheek, "I taught him every thing he knows."'
Retiree Mike Lackey

Below, Sick honors Mike Lackey, former Assistant Secretary/State Engineer, at his retirement reception in 1999. Also pictured is Mike's wife, Vera.