

Traklines

Monthly Employee Publication

Kansas Department of Transportation

Office of Transportation Information



MAY 2000

2000 Legislature a mixed bag for KDOT

By Marty Matthews

When Kansas lawmakers headed home after adjourning the 2000 legislature, they left in their wake an assortment of actions that will ripple across KDOT. Some will be beneficial, some won't, but every one of them will affect how we do business in one way or another.

One of the biggest "successes" for KDOT was the repeal of the 'three-for-four' provision. The statute, originally passed in 1993, was a way to control the number of state employees by mandating that only three employees could be hired for every four who retired. Though perhaps necessary when enacted, the statute was beginning to have a detrimental effect. This effect was felt especially hard at KDOT because we are fortunate enough to have so many long-tenured, experienced workers. The 'three-for-four' rule was costing KDOT anywhere from a dozen to two dozen positions each year.

"Those kinds of losses were eroding the agency's ability to carry

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KDOT workers help direct traffic and remove debris from the roadway after the tornado that struck the Parsons area on April 19.

KDOT crews respond quickly after tornado hits Parsons

KDOT employees made their usual lightning-quick response after tornadoes devastated portions of southeast Kansas the night of April 19. The city of Parsons took a direct hit from a powerful twister that whirled its way through the business district and a number of residential areas. The communities of Erie and Walnut also sustained extensive damage to homes and

vehicles. Citizens rushed to shelters away from the winds and miraculously no lives were lost.

Once the storms had passed, KDOT crews were out searching for damage, according to George Dockery, Area Engineer at the Pittsburg Area office. At

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Balancing computer needs, capacity

Computers have gone from an added plus to a vital necessity at work in the last 10-15 years. What used to be just an easier system to do word processing has blossomed in ways to organize vast amounts of information, research all kinds of

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From
Where
I Sit

by E. Dean Carlson

My life as a firefighter

This column's title may lead you to think that I've just returned from Los Alamos, New Mexico, but that's not the case. I'm talking about fire fighting to describe what it can be like around here during the legislative session.

We spend a great deal of time planning our legislative agenda -the issues we'd like the legislature to address in their session - and discussing how we'll present it. But, despite all this careful planning, we invariably face issues that are driven by a legislator's, or a group of legislators', specific concerns. Their agenda often has very little to do with our agenda. It's a legislator's job to help his or her constituents, but sometimes they try to help in a way that would adversely impact KDOT's ability to do its work. At times like these, trying to stop a bad law becomes even more important than trying to get our agenda passed.

This is what I mean by fire fighting. I think the analogy is apt for a number of reasons: these issues can spring up as quickly as a brush fire, can spread as rapidly as a prairie fire, and force you to drop everything else because little else matters until the fire is out. All of a firefighter's efforts are geared toward one thing: starve the fire of the fuel it needs to burn. In our case, the fire's fuel is usually either misinformation or lack of


understanding or a combination of both. We have to find ways to convince lawmakers not to do what they want to do, or to do something they don't want to do, without making them mad. Our most critical tool in this effort is information.

Often we have very little lead-time to prepare this information and sometimes we have none at all. This can result in abrupt changes in plans and tersely worded demands. (The phrase, "If I wanted it tomorrow, I'd ask for it tomorrow" comes to mind.) Those of you who have been enlisted in these fire fighting battles know all too well how urgent things can be. Often, our ability to stop legislation that would negatively affect us hinges on quickly providing accurate information from the field.

Let me give you a prime example from this last session. A number of legislators kept talking about using KDOT's "windfall" to help fund other programs even though the "windfall" didn't exist.

This is a perfect illustration of how educating lawmakers can pay off. The "windfall" was in some official projections that neglected some key concepts. The projections didn't take into account payouts that would have to be made after the ten-year CTP ended, nor did they reflect the impact of advanced construction on the budget. In essence, it was a projection that diligently showed receipts without duly considering expenses. By taking the time to explain these issues to lawmakers, using information compiled quickly and accurately by KDOT staff, we were able to convince them of the truth - that there is no windfall. It's just one example from the many issues that required rapid responses from many of you.


Now that the flames have died and the smoke has cleared, I can take a minute to say thanks to all of you who helped out in the many fire fighting efforts this past session. It won't be long before the alarm sounds again, so my thanks in advance to all of you who'll be called into service next year.



KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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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

June 9 - 9 a.m. Highway Advisory Commission telephone conference call from 8th Floor Planning conference room.

June 13 - 11 a.m. KDOT Employees' Council Meeting, Seventh Floor Conference Room, Docking State Office Building.

June 13 - Summer 2000 Kansas Work Zone Signing Workshop in Salina Contact Rose Lichtenberg, (785) 864-2594.

June 21 - 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka.

June 27-28 - Transportation Safety Conference, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka.

Making the American dream pay off

"He's living the American dream."

That's how Johnnie Lira, Area Superintendent in Ulysses, describes Victor Ledesma, a ten-year KDOT employee. Victor came to the United States from Mexico 24 years ago to join his sister, Maria, who was living in Ulysses. He knew almost no English and had a limited education.

"I only went through the sixth grade in Mexico," he says.

His future might have seemed as limited as his education. But 24 years later, Victor is an American citizen, a Subarea Supervisor with KDOT, and the proud father of three sons, the oldest of whom will graduate from Kansas State University this month with a degree in civil engineering. Victor has never stopped learning either. He went back to



Subarea Supervisor Victor Ledesma works at his office in Ulysses. He has worked hard to make his dreams come true since coming to the United States 24 years ago.

school a couple of years ago and just recently earned his GED.

"I wish I knew more," he says.

He started at KDOT as an equipment operator on the same crew with Lira.

"He didn't know much English then," Lira says, "but he learned. He's worked really hard."

"I like working," Victor says.

He's worked his way up under Lira's tutelage, but Victor wasn't sure he should apply for the Supervisor position when it opened up.

"I don't speak English very well," he says.

According to Lira, "There was some question about his communications skills and how well he'd be able to do the paperwork. But, he came in and worked with me to learn what he needed to know. He got the job because he's a hard worker and he's done what was asked."

The extra work has paid off. Victor has been the supervisor in Ulysses for a

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A big thanks to KDOT's business partners who donated \$5,400 to the "Give 'Em A Brake" highway work zone safety campaign. Secretary E. Dean Carlson (center) accepted the donations at the April letting in Topeka from: Marvin Zielsdorf representing the Kansas Aggregate Producers Association (\$200); Joe Marney representing the Kansas Ready Mixed Concrete Association (\$200); Todd LaTorella, Missouri-Kansas Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association (\$1,000); Chuck Grier, President, Board of Directors, Kansas Contractors Association (\$1,000); Ed DeSoignie, Executive Director, Heavy Constructors Association of the Greater Kansas City Area (\$2,500); and Tony Moreno, President, Board of Directors, Kansas Asphalt Pavement Association (\$500).

Halter bestowed honor from Missouri-Rolla

By Stan Whitley

Mick Halter, KDOT Kansas City Metro Engineer, has received the distinguished honor of being inducted into the University of Missouri-Rolla Academy of Civil Engineers.

Halter and six other civil engineering alumni were inducted into the UMR academy during the group's annual meeting April 30 in Rolla. The academy recognizes outstanding civil engineers for their contributions to the profession and their involvement with UMR students and faculty. The academy also serves as an advisory group to the civil engineering department.

"I'm very honored to be selected as a member of this prestigious academy," said Halter, a 1971 UMR graduate. "I'm joining a group of three current UMR engineers at KDOT that have already received this award."

KDOT engineers that were previously inducted into the academy include David Comstock, Division of Engineering and Design; Rosie Ingram, Program Management; and Mike Crow, Traffic Engineering.



Mick Halter

1977.

Halter's career advancement continued in 1979 when he was promoted to the Field Engineering Administrator at Olathe. In 1987, Halter was promoted to his current position as KC Metro Engineer where he oversees all construction, maintenance, and materials activities. He is responsible for more than 1,600 lane miles of highway and a staff of about 250 employees.

Halter's list of civic contributions include serving on the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Surface Transportation Committee, the Johnson County Community College Civil Engineering Advisory Committee, and the city of Lenexa Storm Water Management Plan Committee. He is also a member of the Engineer Club of Kansas City.

Halter's involvement with KDOT began in January of 1972 when he joined the agency as an engineer-in-training. He began as Project Engineer at the Olathe Construction Office in 1973 before being promoted to the Resident Engineer at Paola in

Welcome
new KDOT
employees!

Headquarters

Jill Cushing, Office Assistant IV, Right of Way
Walter Hislop, Engineering Associate II, Materials and Research
Amy Kenney, Engineering Technician, Transportation Planning
Marsha Lyle, Office Assistant II, Personnel

Dennis Miller, Right of Way Agent I, Right of Way
Laura Rullman, Accounting Specialist, Fiscal
Joshua Schroeder, Engineering Associate I, Traffic Engineering
Brian Sevy, Research Analyst III, Traffic Safety

District One

Richard Allen, Engineering Technician Associate, Seneca
Michael Hinz, Equipment Operator III, Topeka
Jason Smith, Engineering Technician Associate, Topeka
Kathleen Walters, Engineering Technician, Topeka

District Three

Randy Most, Engineering Technician Associate, Atwood
Shane Schumaker, Microcomputer Systems Support technician II, Norton
Brett Waggoner, Engineering Technician Associate, Hays

District Four

Justin Lange, Engineering Technician Associate, Independence

District Five

Donald Snyder, Engineering Associate III, Winfield

District Six

Virgil Dale Harrold, Engineering Technician, Liberal

Checkpoints help check out drunk drivers

By Kara Stamm

With warmer weather here, don't be surprised to find Sobriety Checkpoints throughout the state. The Sobriety Checkpoint Program geared up once again this April. The program operates year-round but picks up during the holidays and warmer seasons. This year, KDOT, KHP, and numerous local law enforcement agencies will join forces once again to protect Kansas motorists from drivers under the influence of alcohol.

"The statewide program is intended to target drunk drivers," said Pati Pomeroy, KDOT's Assistant Bureau Chief of Traffic Safety. "We also want to prevent alcohol related crashes and the resulting injuries and fatalities."

The sobriety checkpoints will be conducted in many counties across Kansas with seven local agencies funded by KDOT, including the counties of Reno, Riley, Miami, Brown and Barton and the cities of Bonner Springs and Shawnee. The checkpoints are mainly operated on weekend and holiday evenings and usually only delay drivers 30 to 60 seconds. If the officers suspect a DUI, the vehicle is

removed from traffic immediately and the driver is subject to a standard field sobriety test. In this short amount of time, the law enforcement agencies take drunk drivers off the roads and save the lives of countless motorists.

According to a study conducted by the

'Today we have a schedule of checkpoints all year, not to mention the other statewide programs and projects in effect that offer information and education to promote the prevention of drunk driving. This contributes to the lower number of alcohol related crashes.'

Pati Pomeroy

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an average of 107 drunk drivers had been involved in fatal accidents each year between 1988 and 1996 in Kansas. During that same period, 43 percent of all alcohol-related fatalities involved a drunk driver under the age of 26. The 1997 statistics revealed that 18 percent of motor vehicle fatalities in Kansas involved alcohol, compared to the national average of 38 percent.

Programs like the sobriety checkpoints

are helping to reduce instances of drunk driving by making the drinking driver believe that their chances of getting caught are greatly increased. Pomeroy believes the more awareness motorists have the better.

"We began the check-points in the late 80s as part of federal funding offered to states," Pomeroy said. "Today we have a schedule of checkpoints all year, not to mention the other statewide programs and projects in effect that offer information and education to promote the prevention of drunk driving. This contributes to the lower number of alcohol related crashes."

Local law enforcement agencies, including KHP, receive funding administered by KDOT from NHTSA to conduct the sobriety checkpoints.

"Local law enforcement agencies with high incidents of traffic problems who are interested in having their own DUI checklanes can apply for funding support," Pomeroy said. "KDOT will administer the project, and KHP will provide the support and the equipment, including the Breath-Alcohol Testing van for the agencies who need it."

Dream

Continued from page 3

year-and-a-half. He credits Lira with much of his success.

"He's a good boss and, inside, a good person."

Victor met his wife, Margarita, ("Maggie") soon after moving to Kansas and they've been married 23 years. Their son, Victor, Jr., will be the first college graduate in either of their families. He's already landed a job with Burlington Northern-Santa Fe. Their second son, Juan, attends Fort Hays State University and the youngest, Alex, is in the eighth grade. "I'm very proud of them," he beams.

Lira says everyone should be proud of Victor Ledesma, Sr. "He's a great asset to KDOT. He came to this country and made the American dream pay off." -Written by Kirk Hutchinson, District Six Public Involvement Liaison.

Retirement seminar planned

A KDOT Retirement Planning seminar is set for June 28 and 29 at the Kaw Area Vo-Tech in Topeka. The seminar is for all KDOT employees across the state but preference will be given to those more than 50 years old.

Announcements concerning the seminar were sent to all offices in April. Supervisory approval is required to attend.

The set-up of the seminar is basically the same each year so all employees receive similar information. Some of the topics to be covered include deferred compensation, medical insurance, fitness and nutrition, financial/legal considerations, successful retiree experience, consumerism and fraud, social security, and the state retirement process.

Seating is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. To attend, contact Becky Crawl in Personnel Services at (785) 296-3721.

'Netiquette' necessary for electronic messages

By Christy Cain

E-mail is becoming a way of life at KDOT. Everyday more and more business is done electronically. Employees across the agency from headquarters to the districts, areas, and subareas are using their computers to communicate. And with more business being done in cyberspace it's important that we brush up on our cyber etiquette, or "netiquette."

All too often, e-mail authors do not follow the same common sense rules that apply to other printed material. Business e-mails should be as carefully constructed as their paper counterparts. Bear in mind that e-mail can easily be forwarded, attached to another message, or kept indefinitely in an electronic filing system. The following guidelines will help you successfully navigate communications in cyberspace.

First, don't forget the basic rules of writing. Good grammar, precisely placed punctuation, and strong sentence structure are just as important in the cyber world as on paper. Your written words, in any form, convey an image about you and KDOT. We want that image to be a professional one. Proofread with care and utilize spell check to make certain there are no silly, easily avoidable errors.

Keep in mind that few people like spam. We're not talking about the canned meat here; spam means junk mail in "cyberese." When you're sending out an e-mail, consider whether it holds value for the recipient. If there is not a valid reason for the recipient to receive the information, it is likely that the person will delete the e-mail and the information will go unread.

In the same vein, you can save yourself, your coworkers, and customers time by taking a few minutes to think through your distribution list before you click send. For example, there are very few e-mails that truly apply to everyone at KDOT. So use that address in GroupWise (i.e.: To: KDOT) judiciously. The same guidelines apply for people to whom you copy e-mail as an FYI.

Likewise, don't abuse or fail to use the subject line.

The subject line is what readers use to determine the topic of the e-mail as well as its urgency. If your messages are mislabeled, you will likely waste your readers' time, and you take the chance of failing to communicate your point. Many people who receive a lot of e-mail will simply delete ones that don't appear to apply to them. Conversely, your recipients will not take kindly to you or your correspondence if you routinely tag all of your e-mails "URGENT."

Also watch your words in the body of the e-mail. You may think what you write is easy to understand, but it's simple for the receiver to misconstrue your message. Your addressees do not have the benefit of body language or voice cues when they read e-mail, so you must choose your words carefully.

Be concise and to the point when you're crafting your message to eliminate any chance of misinterpretation. Reading the e-mail aloud before you send it might help you notice a negative tone that

you don't intend to convey.

It's a good idea to avoid using humor in e-mail unless you know the recipient(s) very well. Again, the person to whom you sent the message doesn't have the benefit of your body language or tone of voice to help him or her interpret the message. Humor - particularly sarcastic humor - might be offensive to someone who doesn't realize that you're trying to be funny. We don't want to alienate our recipients by insulting them.

Similarly, try to avoid "flames," or messages sent in anger. E-mails sent in the heat of the moment generally only escalate the situation. You'll have to use your best judgement to decide whether e-mail should even be used in certain circumstances. Face-to-face communication or a telephone call might be a more appropriate choice in particular instances.



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Retroreflective materials help show the way

By Kim Stich

Signs, signs, everywhere there are signs. In Kansas alone, there are about 750,000 signs along the roadways giving people needed information for a safe journey. Fortunately for us, those signs, as well as pavement markings, have retroreflective materials that help show the way at night.

KDOT hosted a two-day course on April 26-27 focusing on "Retroreflective Materials Used in Transportation" to help teach people how to measure the values of retroreflectivity as well as increase durability and effectiveness of these materials. "We see the signs and stripes very well in the daytime, but it's retroreflective light – light reflected back from a car's headlights – that allows us to see them at night," said Richard Schwartz, Chief Chemist at the Materials and Research Center.

KDOT employees Don Biege and James Lasher participated in the course as well as people from other state DOTs, cities, and materials manufacturers. "It's an awesome undertaking to measure these values," Schwartz said. "We want to get everyone up to speed on the principles and measuring of retroreflective materials."

At some point in the future, Schwartz said the Federal Highway Administration will set minimum values for reflectivity of signs and pavement markings. Currently those values are measured in the lab but not in the field.



KDOT employee Don Biege looks at the retroreflective materials on a section of a sign.

KDOT, and other organizations that work with the material want to be prepared.

The driving population is getting older, Schwartz said, and it's important to have the best products and materials to help those who may not see quite as well at night as they used to. "If we have brighter pavement markings and easier-to-read signs, that will hopefully help them to avoid accidents," he said. "It will benefit all drivers."

Justin Rennilson, President of Rennilson Consulting Services, was the instructor for the course. He also designed and helped build KDOT's light tunnel at the Materials and Research Center. "We're one of the few state DOTs that has this state-of-the-art system," Schwartz said.

Different types of glass beads and prisms are used to create retroreflectivity. In the light tunnel, there is a light source at one end and the retroreflective material at the other. The material is tested to see how effectively the light is reflected back to the source. Participants in the class had basic course work, then were able to tour the Materials and Research Center including the light tunnel.



Class participants examine different samples of retroreflective materials.

Computer

Continued from page 1

topics, send and receive information almost instantly, and much more.

The Internet and e-mail are extremely helpful tools, but it is important to know how to manage the use of these resources in relation to their effects to available bandwidth. According to Stan Young, Technical Support Manager in Computer Services, KDOT's available bandwidth (maximum capacity) to the Internet is in a pool shared by all agencies and is provided by the State's Division of Information Systems and Communications (DISC). Bandwidth is measured in bits per second. If the demand exceeds capacity, the systems which regulate Internet traffic must compensate and basically everything slows down. Instead of supplying good service to a portion and rejecting service to the remainder, the Internet will provide slow service to everyone.

So the question is, what affects bandwidth? Running video, downloading large files measured in megabytes, lengthy audio clips or streaming audio, and e-mail with attachments bigger than one megabyte. "Video is most bandwidth intensive and is difficult to support currently even during times of light Internet traffic. The bandwidth needed to support full

motion video similar to television broadcasts is measured in megabits per second," Young said. And using pure audio requires approximately 20 kilobits per second to be continuously available. This is why people should not listen to the radio over the Internet at work.

It's important to be aware of how big an attachment is when sending e-mail. Most attachments are not a problem. To check and see if it's a large file attached to an e-mail, open the e-mail box, click on file, and go to properties. Once in the properties box, check under file message size. The first number is the size of the text in the e-mail, the second number is the size of the attachment. "We've had problems in the past with people attaching

multimegabyte files on e-mails and trying to push them through with Internet mail," Young said. "That's just not the way to do it – it's very inefficient and has the potential to gag our mail system too."

Another problem is sending megabyte-sized attachments to a large distribution list. Young suggests limiting the distribution of these when possible. It's also important to know who's included in a distribution list. For example, the Topeka list includes just the offices in the city of Topeka, but the KDOT list includes all employees across the state. Other lists are available on GroupWise to fit different distribution needs or you can create a list and save it for future needs.

Some e-mail attachments or Internet sites have viruses and can be a big danger to your computer. There are two basic types of viruses that pose a threat to KDOT. Executable programs, such as the recent "ILOVEYOU" virus, can damage your system and any system you are connected to when run. The second type of virus is a Microsoft macro virus.

These viruses are attached to Microsoft documents and can damage your system if the file is opened in the associated Microsoft product such as Word or Excel.

All computers at KDOT should have Norton anti-virus software installed. In the latest version of software if a virus is detected on a computer, Norton can quarantine or delete the file, and will also notify a central console that a virus threat was detected. It is important to note that users should be cautious about what attachments they open. If you don't know the person that sent you the e-mail, delete it. If you think that your computer has been infected, call the BCS Helpdesk. The latest version of Norton Anti-Virus is 7.01. If you use floppy disks they should be manually scanned periodically.

If you have questions on the best ways to use resources without using excessive amounts of bandwidth, contact Stan Young at young@ksdot.org.
-K.S.

'We've had problems in the past with people attaching multimegabyte files on e-mails and trying to push them through with Internet mail.'

Stan Young

Tornado

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the request of the Kansas Highway Patrol, maintenance personnel placed barricades on all highways leading to Parsons. Crews then remained at key intersections to divert traffic around the ravaged city throughout the night and well into the next day. In addition to providing traffic control, KDOT staff patrolled surrounding routes to repair critical signs and remove debris from the roadways.

Major cleanup efforts began in Parsons on April 24. Phil Harris, Altamont Subarea Supervisor, said a six-person KDOT crew, outfitted with four trucks, a backhoe, and front-end loader, worked in Parsons most of the week. The debris to be cleared included "pieces of roofs, limbs ... trees are the big thing," said Harris.

Hundreds of volunteers from neighboring cities and counties converged on Parsons to give assistance in the



Some of the destruction of the April 19 tornado was near this roadway and overpass in Parsons.

aftermath of the tornado. Several Altamont Subarea equipment operators live in or near Parsons, according to Dockery, so the opportunity to help friends and neighbors rebuild their lives proved a "morale boost" for them.

Harris believed the tornado victims felt an added sense of security in the knowledge that KDOT was involved in

the recovery phase. "People see those orange trucks among the multitude of volunteers and other pieces of heavy equipment," he said. "Just knowing that we're up there doing something was a plus for both sides." -Written by Priscilla Petersen, District Four Public Involvement Liaison.

New digs



At left, Art Wolfe, Area Three Superintendent, chats with Dean Testa, Chief of Construction and Maintenance, outside the new Hays Area office on May 3 during the Open House.

Step Back in Time

*Workers
pour
concrete for
a four-lane
bridge on I-
35W in
Wichita
during
construction
activity in
1975.*



Translines obituary policy explained

Translines would like to explain its policy on publishing obituaries in the monthly employee newsletter and ask for your help to notify us when there is a death in the KDOT family.

We publish deaths of current and retired KDOT employees as a remembrance to their family and friends. Keep in mind, there are thousands of current and retired agency employees, so it's virtually impossible for our office to know each time there is a death.

Transportation Information is working with Personnel Services to be notified when a current employee dies. It's often difficult for us to know when a former employee has passed away, especially outside the Topeka area. This is where we can use your help.

You may contact our office to notify

us when a former employee has died and we will put the obituary in Translines. We have used the newspaper as our obituary source. Information we use includes the name, age, date and location of death, the employee's title at KDOT, survivors and any memorials that have been established.

You may send the obituaries to us by mail, phone, or fax and we will make sure it's put in Translines.

Mailing address: KDOT Office of Transportation Information, 915 Harrison - Room 754, Topeka, Ks 66612-1568

Phone: (785) 296-3585

FAX: (785) 296-0287

Also, if your retired KDOT spouse has passed away and you wish to stop receiving Translines, please notify us and we will make the change to our mailing list.

Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of former KDOT employee **Bill Krietemeyer** who died April 24 in Topeka.

Krietemeyer, 80, was a Civil Engineer at KDOT and served for 35 years before retiring in April of 1982.

His wife, Gale, one son, two granddaughters and a great-granddaughter survive him.

Memorials contributions may be made to Southwest Baptist Church, 2901 Eveningside Drive, Topeka, 66614 or to Gideons International, 1233 Saline, Topeka, 66604.

Legislature

Continued from page 1

out its mission," said Secretary Carlson. "This was a crucial bill for KDOT and I'm very pleased the legislators saw their way clear to pass it."

It wasn't just Topeka that was happy about the repeal.

"We were getting close to the point where we would have had to begin sacrificing some ET or inspector positions so that we could maintain our maintenance forces," said Larry Thompson, District Engineer, District Six. "And there was always the threat that when a really critical position retired you might not be able to hang on to that position. It created more paperwork as well as added anxiety and confusion, so I'm glad to see it gone."

Another key legislative success was a bill changing the way overtime is calculated. It reverses legislation passed in 1994. The 1994 law affected all employees and required only actual hours worked to be counted for overtime calculation purposes. This bill defines holiday hours as "time worked." The Kansas Department of Administration's Bureau of Personnel Services is currently writing the rules and regulations that will determine who is affected by this change.

Billboards and KDOT's budget were affected by passage of another bill, the Highway Advertising Control Act. The bill amends definitions for billboard control and those amendments spared Kansas from losing \$21.5 million in federal money in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000 and \$21.9 million in FFY 2001.

Lawmakers also gave KDOT the green light to start accepting motor vehicle accident reports via computer and they didn't have to pass a law to do it.

"KDOT was fortunate in that the Legislature felt we already had the authority to make these changes. They gave us their blessing and there was no need to go through the legislative process," said Nancy Bogina, Special Assistant to the Secretary/Director, Division of Public Affairs.

The agency had its share of legislative disappointments as well this session. The first setback was the legislature's refusal to pass a primary enforcement seat belt law. This is despite statistics showing that seat belt usage saves lives and that Kansas has the less-than-desirable distinction of being part of the

"Beltless Belt" (a string of states that have low seat belt usage rates). Those facts couldn't stack up against the many phone calls, faxes, and letters opposing the bill that lawmakers received. Most of the opposition was based on privacy issues.

Another disappointment happened in the waning hours of the session, when lawmakers did not pass a bill that would have strengthened repeat DUI offender laws. The bill called for installing ignition interlock devices in the vehicles of repeat offenders. These devices prevent a car from starting until the driver breathes into a blood-alcohol Breathalyzer and the person checks out as sober. The bill passed the House easily but lost by one vote in the Senate.

It's a costly defeat. The ignition interlock legislation would have brought Kansas into full compliance with Section 164 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Kansas is in compliance with three of the four criteria set out in this section regarding repeat DUI offenders. The defeated bill would have met the provisions of the fourth. States not in compliance face a penalty: a transfer from highway construction funds to the state's highway safety program. For Kansas, the transfer is \$3.3 million in FFY 2001, \$3.4 million in FFY 2002 and \$6.9 million each year after that. Over the life of the CTP, KDOT would lose about \$55 million dollars in construction funds.

"This would be a major blow to the already tight budget of the CTP," said Secretary Carlson. "I hope lawmakers will act more favorably toward this next year. The sooner we can be in full compliance, the sooner we stop draining funds from construction."

If it's next year, it will have to be a completely new bill. Every two years, any bill that wasn't passed is removed from further consideration. When lawmakers return in January 2001, it will be literally a brand new ballgame. We'll have to wait until next May to see how well KDOT scores.

Editors note: As Translines goes to press, lawmakers are scheduled to return to Topeka for the normally uneventful "sine die" session on May 24. This year, all the lawmakers have been summoned to attend so that corrective action can be taken on a tax bill. Other issues may come up and, if any affect KDOT, we'll tell you about them in the next issue of Translines.

Netiquette

Continued from page 6

One of the most frequent netiquette abuses is e-mail typed in all CAPITAL LETTERS. Besides being hard to read, typing in all capital letters signifies that you're shouting. If your intent is to emphasize a point, you should do that by selecting your words carefully rather than relying on large type. Or, you could clearly state at the beginning of the e-mail that you're typing in all caps to emphasize a point, not because you're angry. Establishing the "ground rules" from the beginning will help ensure that what you're trying to get across is actually what's being communicated.

It has been said that e-mail is like fast food; you want it quick, and you want it full of taste. Keeping these simple netiquette guidelines in mind will help us communicate our messages effectively while maintaining our professionalism.

Training Opportunities

◆ **Leadership Basics****, September 19-21, (TBA).

◆ **Competency Based Interviewing****, June 22, Hutchinson.

◆ **Written Communication Workshop***, June 2, Hutchinson; June 6, 7, 20, Topeka.

◆ **Listening and Emotional Intelligence,*** August 17, TBA.

◆ **Basic Effective Supervisory Training***, June 13-16, July 11-14.

*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.*

Promotions/Transfers

Headquarters

Sandy Biber, Research Analyst II,
Engineering Support
Michael Briggs, Engineering
Technician Associate, Design
Rex Kraus, Engineering Technician
Specialist, Right of Way
Kathy Lucero, Public Service
Administrator I, Fiscal

District One

Jeffrey Henry, Engineering Technician
Senior, Topeka

Michael Law, Engineering Technician,
Olathe
Kathleen Ybarra, Accounting
Specialist, Topeka

District Two

Brice Goebel, Engineering Associate
III, Marion

District Three

Andrew Woods, Engineering
Technician, Oakley

District Four

Larry Foster, Equipment Operator III,
Iola
Michael Giffin, Equipment Mechanic
II, Pittsburg

District Six

Wesley Brock, Equipment Mechanic I,
Ulysses
Donald Hasik, Highway Maintenance
Supervisor, Syracuse

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.

M I L E S T O N E S

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in May

10 YEARS

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

Larry Dean Horton
David Ely Chanute
Bob Grochowsky Topeka
Carolyn Jones Seneca
Ron Kasper Topeka
Kurt Miyamoto Topeka
John Moore Horton
Larry Myers Independence
Terry Thompson Emporia
David Weirich Garnett

20 YEARS

Alan Adkins Dighton
Larry Carlson Pittsburg
Wallace Erikson, Jr. Chanute
George Meisner, Jr. Hutchinson
Benjamin Koerner Wichita
Wendell Watts, Jr. Medicine Lodge

30 YEARS

Shirley Florea Salina

Correction: In the
partnering awards story
last month, Marion St.
John, William Matos, Jane
Blackmore, and Pat
Haverkamp were listed as
being from District One.
They are from District
Two. Also, the person in
the picture accepting the
Inspector of the Year
award for District Two is
Frank Esterly.

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

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