Quick thinking saves life of KDOT coworker

By Kim Stich

October 12 seemed like just a normal workday for Frank Ortega, Equipment Operator at the Subarea office in Topeka. He and coworker Larry Walters, Equipment Operator, were unloading traffic barrels that had just been taken down from a temporary detour area. But a moment later, Ortega, “had a real sharp pain in the bottom of my chest” and knew that something wasn’t right.

The pain wouldn’t go away and Ortega told Walters. “He seemed like he didn’t feel good when we were unloading the trailer so I told him to sit down,” Walters said. The pain didn’t go away after a couple minutes, and Walters decided

Continued on page 9

KDOT employee Larry Walters’ (right) quick thinking helped save the life of coworker Frank Ortega.

Red Ribbon Campaign

Tie one on for safety

By Melissa Takata

The holiday season is nearing and with the celebrations also comes the need to protect ourselves, our friends and our family from the dangers of drunk driving. Typically, more drunk driving crashes happen during the holiday periods of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s.

KDOT and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) want to encourage all KDOT employees to become involved in having a safe and joyous holiday season. Tying a red ribbon to a visible place on your vehicle actively promotes and supports the annual Project Red Ribbon public awareness campaign. The Tie One on for Safety campaign serves as a reminder to

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Inside …

Airport Improvement Program Soars to New Heights

New Video Shows Strategy for Smoother Concrete

Communities See Railroad Crossing Improvements

KDOT Projects Honored by KAPA

First SE Agreement Signed for Parsons Bypass
From Where I Sit
by E. Dean Carlson

Don’t forget the power of one

“It doesn’t get any closer than this!” Sounds more like a sports announcer’s phrase than a description of an election, but it certainly fits this year. The general election of 2000 will go down in the history books as one of our nation’s tightest presidential races. I’m hoping it may also be written up as the election that triggered increased voter participation in the following years. If ever anyone needed proof that every vote counts, this election provided plenty of it.

The presidential contest is just one example. Let me tell you about a few here in the Topeka area. An incumbent state Senator was defeated by 250 votes out of about 25,000 cast. (That’s 1 percent, folks!) An incumbent State Representative held onto his seat by just 79 votes out of almost 8,000 votes. (That’s less than 1 percent!) In Wichita, an incumbent state Senator lost by fewer than 100 votes out of almost 18,000 cast. (That’s a little more than one half of 1 percent!) Or, how about the candidate who won a House race by seven votes! (Forget the percentage- that’s razor thin no matter how you cut it!)

These may be unusual but they are not rare. There are “nail-biters” every major election- dozens around the state and hundreds, if not thousands, around the nation, and none of them is decided by the people who stay home on election day.

So I’m surprised that so few of us do get out there and vote. Nationwide, voter turnout was about 51 percent. This is higher than the dismal record of four years ago when only 49 percent of eligible voters and lower than the 55 percent turnout we saw eight years ago. But I’d love to see the numbers start a climb back up to where they were in the 1960s- with percentages in the low sixties. Or imagine getting back to where things were at the turn of the century- with percentages in the 80 to 90 percent range!

I may be just dreaming, but it would be a terrific thing for our country if this dream came true. If you did get out and vote - thank you for remembering what makes this country so special. If you didn’t, think of the chorus you’ve listened to since Election Day and realize that your voice is missing from it.

On another note, the holiday season is here and, like most people at this time of year, I look back at the year that’s passing. I’d like to take this moment to thank you for all you’ve done for KDOT this year and extend you and yours best wishes for happy and healthy holidays.

Calendar of Events

December 12 - 11 a.m. KDOT Employees’ Council Meeting, Seventh Floor Conference Room, Docking State Office Building.

December 13 - 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting at the Airport Hilton in Wichita.

December 19 – 1:30 Highway Advisory Commission meeting at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka.

December 25 — State employees off Christmas holiday.

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).
New video promotes Kansas highway smoothness

By Stan Whitley

Achieving success often comes from emulating a leader. That’s why KDOT is being used as a model for developing ultra smooth highway pavements.

KDOT implemented smoothness specifications for concrete pavement 15 years ago. Now a new video, “Smoother Roads Playbook,” is providing insight into the successful strategies the agency used to achieve smoother concrete pavements. The smoothness specifications have resulted in Kansas gaining national recognition for its innovative techniques.

The video, produced by the FHWA and KDOT, features Kansas pavements and construction procedures. John Madden, former NFL coach and well-known football commentator, provided introductory and closing remarks for the video.

The introduction of pavement smoothness specification was “the single most important impact on concrete paving that I’ve seen in my career,” said Mike Lackey, former KDOT State Transportation Engineer, who was interviewed extensively for the video. “The bottom line is we get our money worth because we have pavements that last longer and require less maintenance.”

Smoothness has been promoted in Kansas not only by the specifications, but also through an incentive-disincentive program. The program and smoothness specifications have generally been well received by contractors because it allows them compensation for their extra efforts.

“We don’t think our quality costs a lot of money,” David Wittwer, President of Wittwer Paving commented on the video. “In fact, I’ve told our people quality doesn’t cost – it pays.”

Eight practices and techniques used in Kansas to achieve smoothness with portland cement concrete pavement are highlighted on the video. The list includes:

- Precise stringline
- Watching pavement speed and delivery rate
- Building from the ground up
- Controlling the concrete head
- Striving for mix consistency
- Minimal hand finishing
- Using good equipment
- Motivating the workforce

The stringline is the primary guidance system for most paving equipment. It must be set precisely and protected from damage during paving. It should also be checked for proper grade and elevation before each paving operation.

The video noted that “the stringline has the greatest potential to affect smoothness.” Maintaining a consistent paving speed and avoiding stopping or slowing the paver was also cited as being very important.

To accomplish this objective, contractors must have an adequate supply of concrete delivered to the paving sites and have delivery vehicles that can move quickly and easily through a site and then back to the concrete plant.

The impetus for producing the video was the results of a 1995 survey conducted by the FHWA. The survey found that smoothness of ride was one of the most important factors in increasing public satisfaction with the highway system.

KDOT’s innovative techniques are illustrated in a new video “Smoother Roads Playbook.”

Former NFL coach John Madden provides remarks for the video.
The Kansas Airport Improvement Program is soaring to new heights with 48 public-use airports receiving funding in the past two fiscal years.

“We get calls almost every day from communities that want to know what is possible under the program,” said Director of Aviation Mike Armour. Funding is limited to basic airport needs such as construction of all new runways; runway rehabilitation and/or extension; crack sealing and slurry coats; construction or rehabilitation of taxiways or ramps; lighting, communication or navigation systems; and installation of Automated Weather Reporting Systems.

Since the CTP began, significant progress at airports can be seen. “Before the program, the average runway surface condition was at 48 on a scale of 0 to 100, which is a fair rating. At the end of the second year, we’ve already got that up to a 62, which is a good rating,” Armour said.

One of the projects that began this summer and has recently been completed is a 60-foot by 4,700-foot concrete runway at the Norton Municipal Airport. The program provided $500,000 for the $1.3 million project. “They were very serious about wanting to fix their runway,” Armour said. “It should serve Norton for a number of years and be almost maintenance free.”

Prior to the CTP, the only nonlocal assistance for airport improvement in Kansas was provided by the federal government through the Federal Aviation Administration’s Airport Improvement Program (AIP) that yearly assisted less than 5 percent of the 132 public-use general aviation airports across the state. The new program’s $3 million a year in state funds, along with local matching funds, results in an estimated $4 to $4.5 million in improvements.

The program has been very popular in communities across the state. Right now the focus is on construction, but as the program evolves, there will be more emphasis on maintenance. “As we get some of these critical problems addressed and the condition of some of these runways improved, we’ll be able to participate in maintenance projects to keep them in good shape,” Armour said.

The key to the program, Armour said, is that the community sponsor has to initiate the action to apply for funding within the program. “No matter how much we’d like to do something, if the sponsor doesn’t come forward and apply, there’s nothing we can do,” Armour said.

Applications are due to the Division of Aviation office in September each year. Communities that will receive funding for Fiscal Year 2002 will be announced soon. For more information about the program or to receive an application, contact the Division of Aviation at (785) 296-2553. -K.S.
By Marty Matthews

A new KDOT program means people in six Kansas communities will see vastly improved and much safer railroad crossings in the years ahead. The Local Partnership Grade Separation (LPGS) Program will provide more than $27 million to these communities. (See table for locations and amounts.) This program allows KDOT, for the first time, to use state funds for improvements to railroad crossings that are not on the State Highway System.

“We are excited about this opportunity to further help our local partners,” said Secretary Carlson. “Railroad crossing safety is a vital concern statewide, and this program allows us to improve more of these crossings by adding grade separations.”

The 1999 legislation authorizing the Comprehensive Transportation Program created the Local Partnership Grade Separation Program. KDOT sought authorization for the LPGS program because of the enormous number of railroad crossings that are not on the State Highway System. Kansas has more than 6,100 at-grade railroad crossings, but only 325 of these are on roads under KDOT’s jurisdiction.

Here’s how the process worked. KDOT sent notices of this program, along with requests for letters of interest, to cities and counties in Kansas with eligible highway/railroad crossings. Eighteen communities responded and asked for applications. KDOT then received 11 project applications from eight communities for the LPGS funds.

A KDOT committee reviewed the applications using criteria such as the site’s Design Hazard Rating; what impact the improvements would have on traffic; the community and emergency services; and the project’s cost effectiveness. The committee recommended six projects for funding. These projects represent LPGS funding for FY 2000 through FY 2006. Applications will be sought again in FY 2003 for LPGS projects to be funded within the final three years of the CTP (FY 2007-FY 2009).

No timetable has been set yet for construction of these projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Location</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Total Cost (000’s)</th>
<th>KDOT Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salina</td>
<td>Build overpass at Ohio Street over UP and C KR tracks. College Blvd overpass of BNSF tracks.*</td>
<td>$18,290</td>
<td>$12,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>College Blvd overpass of BNSF tracks.*</td>
<td>$7,901</td>
<td>$5,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Funding amount is capped but KDOT will allow city to decide whether to apply this funding to the College Blvd. project or to the Santa Fe Ave. underpass that it requested.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburg</td>
<td>Overpass of 23rd street over KCS tracks. Close 14th street. Close Walnut Street crossing and extend Trapp Street over UP tracks.*</td>
<td>$3,392</td>
<td>$2,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herington</td>
<td>* * Discovery Phase first to investigate all alternatives, then construct best solution.</td>
<td>$6,920</td>
<td>$6,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emporia</td>
<td>Discovery Phase to address issues along Weaver Street rail corridor and investigate feasibility of constructing an underpass.</td>
<td>$10,949</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>Discovery Phase to look at rail corridor.</td>
<td>$9,498</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Don’t dump on dump trucks

By Ron Kaufman

I had the pleasure of attending the Operations Meeting in Great Bend in October. Each time I’ve attended (all of two times, so far), I’ve learned something. Well, actually, I’ve learned several things. It’s just that some things stand out more than others. For instance, I’m very impressed with the innovative things that can be done with a dump truck. No longer are KDOT dump trucks simple orange beasts used to haul sand and gravel. They can be modified to accept a wide variety of implements, racks, lifts, and other creative devices. Each time they’re changed, they become more useful in a wider variety of ways. Each modification I’ve learned about is designed to improve safety, save time and money, extend the service life, and create added value for the public.

What’s even more impressive is the way many of the devices came about (that includes the others that weren’t meant for dump trucks). They were created by dedicated teams who recognized a need and carefully researched, designed, built, tested, modified, and implemented a solution. To their credit, the teams often sought advice and input from others in their work group, or even from another Subarea, Area, or District! They integrated the feedback and advice into their decisions. Then, they shared information about their creations with others who might benefit from the knowledge. I bow to those who worked so hard.

Why do I care about all this? I care for several reasons. First, I enjoy learning about talented, creative people finding ways to make their lives safer, more efficient, or more effective. Second, and maybe it’s a guy thing, but I like to see the hardware. Trucks! Power! Torque! Many of you will understand. Another reason I care is because the teams, their creations, and the work it took to build them are shining examples of public involvement. Public involvement, you see, is more than reaching out to the public (our external public) and seeking input into our decisions. It also includes the things we do within KDOT to involve our own staff (our internal public) in the decisions we make or in the work we do.

Here are people looking for ways to solve a problem or fill a need who engage others to help find a workable solution! Bingo! Public involvement!

Everyone involved with the teams deserves our kudos. The team members, their coworkers, their supervisors, the people who offered input, and the suppliers who provided materials or advice all demonstrate the value of good internal public involvement. They demonstrate that public involvement is more than something done only by someone at District Headquarters or from Topeka. It can be integrated into many things we do...even modifying a dump truck. Our coworkers and the general public all can benefit.
A total of 31 projects were nominated by nine hot-mix asphalt paving contractors for the 2000 Kansas Asphalt Paving Association awards program on November 9 in Lawrence. A team of three judges reviewed the projects.

According to the judges, changes in mix specifications and smoothness specifications, along with improvements in construction procedures, are providing much more uniformity in surface texture, smoothness, and joint construction. Very little segregation was observed on the projects.

KDOT was honored in several categories. Representatives from those offices are pictured on this page. Steve Woolington, Director of Operations, presented the awards.

**KAPA honors agency with several awards**

Ruben Noguera, Field Engineering Administrator in District One, accepts a second place Overlay award for the K-7 project extending from K-10 north to the Kansas River.

Merle Jensen, Engineering Technician Senior in District Two, accepts a first place Overlay award for the K-156 project extending from the east city limits of Holyrood northeast to the junction K-140/K-156 junction. Jensen also accepted a first place Director’s award for the K-156 project extending from the Barton County line northeast to the east city limits of Holyrood.

Ron Sherard, Area Engineer in District Three (right), and Kevin Zimmer, Construction Engineer in District Three, accept the second place Director’s award for the I-70 project beginning at the Gove County line east to the US-183/I-70 junction.
The first formal System Enhancement Agreement of the Comprehensive Transportation Program made “signature” rounds in two southeast Kansas communities on Monday, Oct. 23. Officials penned their names to the document with little hesitation – and lots of goodwill.

The written agreement specifies terms for building the 11-mile bypass around Parsons on US-400. According to the System Enhancement Agreement, the county will assume maintenance on portions of three state highways once the bypass has been completed and added to the state system. The full agreement is the result of a “grassroots endeavor” between Parsons, Labette County, and KDOT district personnel, said District Four Engineer John Leverenz.

Leverenz, accompanied by Pittsburg Area Engineer George Dockery and District Public Involvement Liaison Priscilla Petersen, briefly met in the Parsons City offices the morning of the 23rd to discuss sections of the agreement with City Manager Glen Weldon and city staff member Darrell Moyer.

The group of five then traveled 19 miles south to the county courthouse in Oswego, where Labette County Commissioners Dale McBride, Lonie Addis and Cecil Fish added their signatures to the contract. The party next headed back to Parsons to leave the agreement for Mayor Tommy McCarty to sign later that day. The Secretary of Transportation’s Office in Topeka was the agreement’s final destination.

Following the February 21 bid-letting, construction on the project is expected to begin in the spring of 2001. The eagerly anticipated bypass should finally be open to the traveling public during the fall of 2002.

The project is estimated to cost approximately $40 million. The previous state highway program, the Comprehensive Highway Program of 1989, funded the land acquisition and utility relocation components of the bypass project. - By Priscilla Petersen Public Involvement Liaison in Chanute.
Dear Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

They were going to go to the hospital.

“It’s possible for anybody, no matter what age you are, to have something happen to you,” Walters said. “It’s good to know what to do and to get help as fast as you can.”

Then the pain did go away and Ortega thought he was fine. But just as suddenly, the pain came back and he started sweating. “They say if you have a pain and start sweating, there’s a chance you are having a heart attack,” Ortega said.

Richard Munoz, Subarea Supervisor, arrived and talked with Munoz and they decided it would be best to go to the hospital. “He said he was hot and he didn’t look like himself,” Munoz said. “He was holding his chest and you could tell it was bothering him.”

Ortega had a heart attack, but because of the outstanding efforts of Walters and Munoz, there was very little damage to the heart. “The doctor said we got him in there in time for treatment,” Munoz said. “Always play it safe and if you have any problems like that, go to the hospital and have it checked out. Don’t take a chance.”

Ortega spent four days in the hospital and a month in physical therapy. His first day back at work was November 14. “Every time he sees me now he says thank you,” Walters said. “I just did what I thought was best.”

“I feel really good now,” Ortega said. “I’m grateful for Larry and Richard going into action so quick.”

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Dear Sirs:

We are writing to share with you our strong feelings of gratitude that resulted from an event that recently occurred.

While driving south on highway 169 near the Labette/Neosho county line, we experienced a “blowout.” As we pulled off the road and began to survey the damage, we noticed an orange truck come back to park behind us. Jim Dagett, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Erie, and Gene Erikson, Equipment Operator II at Erie, came to our rescue. They did it all – removed the damaged tire and replaced it with the spare tire.

We feel very fortunate to receive any help at all. The fact that the help came from two gentlemen, who were so eager to help two people in trouble, made it an almost unbelievable experience. It is comforting and reassuring to know that this kind of courtesy and attention is available.

Please thank Jim and Gene again for us.

Jerry and Norma Hamm
Coffeyville

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RISK FACTORS

- Cigarette smoking and tobacco smoke
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Personal medical history

Other factors may affect your risk of a heart attack such as unhealthy responses to stress, hormonal factors, birth control pills, excessive alcohol, and certain drugs.

Factors that can’t be controlled include age, gender, race, family medical history, and previous heart attack.

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SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK:

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck, or arms
- Chest discomfort with light-headedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

Not all these warning signs occur in every heart attack. If some start, don’t wait. Get help immediately.

For more information on signs/reducing risks of a heart attack, please contact the American Heart Association.
Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters
Deanna Bauer, Office Assistant III, Right of Way
Darleen Bernhardt, Secretary I, Materials and Research
Jeanette Branam, Information Resource Specialist III, Computer Services
David Brent, Information Resource Specialist II, Computer Services
Paulette Broadbent, Secretary II, Computer Services
Sharon Cabello, Office Assistant III, Chief Counsel
Debra Cormier, Program Consultant I, Engineering Support

District Two
Adam Collett, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion
Kent Smith, Engineering Technician Associate, Belleville
Richard Scheele, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion
Jerica Talcott, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion

District Four
Shanda Jeffries, Engineering Technician, Iola

District Five
Teresa Maslow, Office Assistant III, El Dorado
Steve Lamb, Mechanic’s Helper, Great Bend

District Six
William Goodman, Engineering Technician, Dodge City
Kristy McKellar, Office Assistant III, Ulysses

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for new employees to Translines.
Training Opportunities

- **Basic Effective Supervisory Training**, February 20-23, March 20-23, Topeka.
- **Leadership Basics**, December 5-7, Topeka; January 23-25, Chanute; February 6-8, Topeka; March 13-15, Hays; April 10-12, Salina.
- **Turning Around Poor Performance**, January 11 and March 8, Topeka.
- **Human and Emotional Intelligence**, April 26, Hays

*Meets the three-year management training requirement.

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

***Supervisory Continuing Education Credits.

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.

Deaths

Condolences to the family and friends of former KDOT employee Elizabeth Mercer, who died October 9 in Topeka.

Mercer, 77, worked as a Clerk for KDOT before retiring in 1985.

She is survived by three sons, two daughters, one sister, nine grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Lung Association of Kansas, 400 S.W. Drury Lane, Topeka, 66604.

Retirees

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

**Headquarters**

Sue Domme, Office Assistant III in Traffic Engineering – 31 ½ years of state service.

**District Four**

John Leverenz, District Four Engineer at Chanute – 9 ½ years of state service.

**District Five**

Glen Huddleston – Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Larned – 30 years of state service.

Claude Short, Equipment Operator III at Lyons – 35 years of state service.

Guy Small, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at Pratt – 17 years of state service.

MILESTONES

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in November

10 YEARS

Jerry Barker ..................... Topeka
Travis Beeman ................... Winfield
John Berndsen ................... Winfield
Denver Cox ....................... Hoxie
Chris Fasching ................. Leavenworth
Pamela Foos ..................... Ness City
Frederick Gebhardt .......... Pittsburg
Elizabeth Miracle .......... McPherson
Edward Niemczyk ............ El Dorado

20 YEARS

Raul Guevara .................... Topeka
Archie Patrick .................. Sublette
Michael Sheley ................. Colby
William Windholz ............. WaKeeney

30 YEARS

David Swank ..................... Topeka
Brian Thompson ................. Topeka

This information is compiled by each Office, Bureau, Division and District.
The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information for promotions/transfers to Translines.