

# KDOT Translines

Bureau of Transportation Information

November 2004

## Ceremony marks the launch of Scout

KDOT officials, their Missouri counterparts and others formally launched Kansas City Scout during a ceremony September 27 at Scout headquarters in Lee's Summit, Mo.

Against a blue sky, Secretary Deb Miller, Rep. Dennis Moore, D-Kan., and Missouri and federal highway officials sent dozens of red, yellow and blue balloons aloft to mark the unique, bi-state partnership.

Scout is a congestion-management



*Congressman Dennis Moore talks about AMBER Alert on September 27 during a ceremony at the Lee's Summit, Mo., headquarters of Kansas City Scout.*

and traveler-information system that uses sophisticated technology to provide drivers in the Kansas City area a safer,

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## KDOT expands flexible work time policy

By Stan Whitley

KDOT has moved to address the changing needs of agency employees by expanding its flexible work time policy.

"Flexible scheduling often showed up in surveys as one of the benefits that employees valued the most," said Allen Humphrey, Bureau Chief of Personnel Services. "Flex-time can result in a commitment to productivity because of support the agency has shown for personal work style preferences."

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## Headquarters Building named for Eisenhower

KDOT's new headquarters is now a tribute to the Kansan who authorized the nation's vast Interstate highway system.

Governor Kathleen Sebelius announced on October 14 that the former Harrison Center will be known as the Dwight D. Eisenhower State Office Building.

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### EISENHOWER FACTS

- ◆ Born October 14, 1890, at Denison, Texas.
- ◆ Raised in Abilene, Kansas.
- ◆ Appointed supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force on December 24, 1943.
- ◆ Elected as the 34th president of the United States on November 4, 1952, serving until January 20, 1961.
- ◆ Signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which authorized the Interstate system, on June 29, 1956.
- ◆ Died March 28, 1969, in Washington, D.C.



*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

### Inside ...

- ◆ SUBAREA SUPERVISOR CREATES LABOR-SAVING TOOL
- ◆ HABITAT RESTORE BENEFITS FROM HIGHWAY PROJECT

- ◆ 511 BROADCASTS FIRST AMBER ALERT
- ◆ AGENCIES WORK TO PUT THE BRAKES ON FATALITIES
- ◆ DEFERRED COMPENSATION - SAVING FOR THE FUTURE



## Miller's Time

By Secretary  
Deb Miller

# Employee initiative

There are many things that contribute to an organization's greatness.

There must be vision. There must be direction and leadership. There must be support and funding.

But most importantly, there must be people in the organization, from top to bottom, who not only can complete tasks, but can see new, better and more efficient ways to do their jobs.

At KDOT, we have benefited from a work force that takes great pride in what they do and takes initiative to do the things that make us better.

The dictionary defines "initiative" as "the power, ability or instinct to begin or to follow through energetically with a plan or task." I applaud the many people at KDOT who could be the second definition of "initiative." But I'm going to single out two of our employees as examples of what I'm talking about.

While I was away in early October, these two employees gave presentations at the successful Operations meeting in Great Bend and I have been told of their stories. One of those individuals, Randy McAnulty, is featured on Page 3 of this Translines. The other is Paul Mutschler, Subarea Supervisor in District Two – Minneapolis.

Randy, the Subarea Supervisor in District Four – Iola, had an idea of how to make an old job more efficient, less labor-intensive and faster. The job is the physically-demanding task of reopening the smashed ends of metal culvert tubes along our rural roads. With some creativity, scrap

metal and \$26, he and his crew built a device to attach to a backhoe that can quickly reopen the culverts so they can do the job for which they were intended.

No one told Randy to find a better way to complete the task (there are thousands of these tubes throughout the state). He took it upon himself – showed the initiative – to take his idea to his supervisor and find the means to build it.

I also want to applaud the supervisors who allowed Randy and his crew the time and freedom to construct the device.

Paul and his crew were faced with a monumental task of clearing tons of trees and trash that had been deposited under the K-106 Solomon River bridge at Minneapolis during a time of high water in 2003. The debris was putting pressure on the bridge supports and could have led to some very serious problems. The nine-day project was a great success. But what I really congratulate Paul on was showing the initiative to approach the city of Minneapolis and get them to partner with us to complete the project. It was a conscious decision that Paul, not the Area Engineer, would work with the city.

In the end, the city replaced fencing that needed to come down so our equipment could get under the bridge. And, to Paul's surprise, the city also brought a truck-load of grass seed to complete the job.

A number of years ago, one of the overused workplace buzz words was "empowerment." Despite the fact it was spoken of many times, there was less evidence that it actually happened. Making true empowerment happen is a shared responsibility. A supervisor must provide the opportunity for it; an employee must step up and take it.

Randy and Paul, like so many of our employees at KDOT, stepped up and took it.

Author Stephen Covey has written, "An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success."

I can't say it any better than that – except to add "Thank you."

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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### Calendar of Events

**November 9** - 11 a.m. KDOT Employees' Council Meeting, Third Floor, Eisenhower Building.

**November 11** - State employees off for Veteran's Day Holiday.

**November 17** - 2 p.m. Construction Bid Letting at the Airport Hilton in Wichita.

# Subarea Supervisor creates labor-saving tool

*“To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile junk.”*

--Thomas A. Edison

By Steve Swartz

Randy McNulty possesses a good imagination and has access to a pile of junk.

So it was probably inevitable that he would invent a better way to do an old job.

As Subarea Supervisor at Iola in District Four, McNulty oversees, among many other things, the repair of metal culvert tubes.

Found mostly along rural stretches of highway, the tube openings frequently are crushed by farm equipment, trucks, and sometimes even a KDOT mower when they drop a wheel into the ditch when turning.

Periodically, crews are sent out to reopen the smashed culverts. The crews have done the job by using a jack and blocks. In some areas, the damaged ends have been removed with a cutting torch. McNulty, who has worked on dozens of metal tubes in his eight years at KDOT, had an idea for opening the tubes that would be faster and more efficient.

“I didn’t like the way they looked, not to mention the restriction of their purpose,” said McNulty, who said

KDOT is responsible for thousands of metal culverts throughout the state.

“I just got to thinking there’s got to

be a better way to open the tubes than what I’ve seen in the past,” he said.

Opening the tubes is a labor intensive job, said McNulty’s supervisor, Sheldon Caudell, Area One Superintendent in District Four, who said there are hundreds of metal tubes in his area alone.

“I thought there ought to be a way you can attach something to a backhoe,” said McNulty, “to make the process faster, less physical and unaffected by the ditch conditions.”

That’s where his imagination took over.

McNulty’s idea was to take three lengths of pipe, weld them together to



Randy McNulty

device then could be inserted into the smashed end of the culvert and manipulated to reshape the round opening.

McNulty shared his idea with his crew, Raymond McNeal, Derrick Shannon, and Mark Crystal, who had ideas about how to refine the original concept.

Instead of using pipe, they suggested using a piece of scrap 10-inch H-beam, which they had in the shop. By heating the end of the beam, the corners could be folded down, creating a rounded end.

After working in the shop on rainy days and an expenditure of only \$26 at an Iola welding shop, the crew was ready to test its customized culvert end opener. It worked just as McNulty had imagined it would.

“It just saves a lot of time and work. You don’t even have to get into the ditch,” said Caudell.

“It speeds it up and does a better job. You can round the whole radius.”

Now, McNulty is showing the device to other Subareas when there is time. And, he made a slide presentation about his invention before more than 300 people at the Operations meeting in Great Bend on October 5.

The modest McNulty was quick to praise his crew.

“The guys took an idea and made something work out of nothing,” he said. “The more people put into it, the better you can make it. This can be made

even better.”



*This highly-effective, custom-made culvert end opener was created in the Iola Subarea shop using scrap metal and an expenditure of only \$26 for welding.*

form a triangle, and then affix the device to a steel plate that could be hinged and attached to the arm of a backhoe. The

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## Operations meeting a place to share information

More than 30 speakers made presentations on topics ranging from safety to sign posts at the Operations meeting in early October at Great Bend.

The 1 ½-day meeting was an opportunity for more than 300 KDOT employees from across the state to share information from their Areas and Districts on a broad range of issues.

“This is a chance for construction engineers, maintenance supervisors, people in the field and others to share what’s going well and not so well in their areas. The benefit comes from everyone not having to go through the same learning curve,” said Dennis Weinrich, Assistant Bureau Chief in Construction and Maintenance, who was in charge of the gathering.

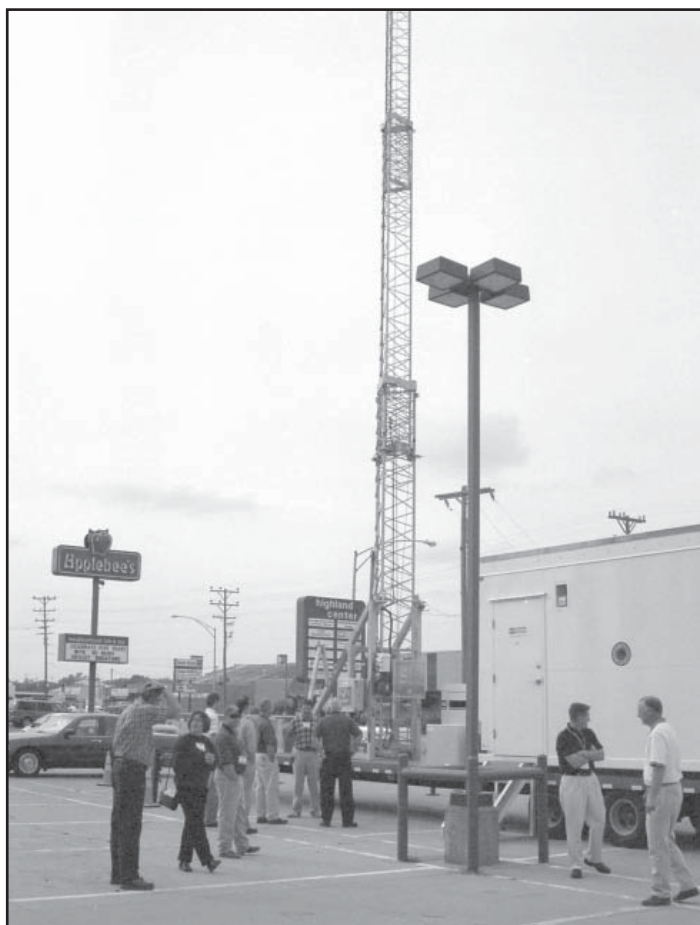
This year’s meeting, which took place October 5 and 6, followed a two-year hiatus, which gave organizers more fresh topics to choose from when planning the agenda, Weinrich said.

“I had a lot of really good comments. I think we had a good variety of topics, and people enjoyed the presentations,” he said.

The Operations meeting has been taking place since 1980. Before that, similar meetings were conducted separately by Construction and by Maintenance.

Next year’s Operations meeting will return to Great Bend on October 4 and 5.

A story about one of the presenters – Randy McAnulty – appears on Page 3.



*Attendees at the Operations meeting in Great Bend view KDOT’s communications on wheels, an emergency communications apparatus purchased this year.*

**All KDOT employees, Retirees, and Agency partners are invited to attend The Kansas Department of Transportation’s**

**OPEN HOUSE**

**700 SW Harrison  
Wednesday, December 1  
1-4 p.m.**

*Please take this opportunity to come visit your KDOT partners and see our new home. No need to RSVP - this is a very informal event to give people a chance to drop by and chat. Hope to see you there!*

# Habitat ReStore benefits from highway project

Upcoming highway improvements are helping to provide quality homes for low-income families. The City of Overland Park, KDOT, Pyramid Contractors, Inc., and Habitat ReStore have teamed up to salvage building materials from homes being affected by the Focus435 highway project in Overland Park.

In 2006, major construction will begin on the Focus435 highway improvement projects in Overland Park. As a part of those projects, 15 homes along 107th Street, which parallels I-435, were purchased to accommodate the highway improvements. In response to the 15 homeowners' desire to have the acquisitions done as soon as possible, the City of Overland Park and KDOT moved up a portion of the project.

In June of this year, KDOT let the portion of the project that involves removing the 15 homes and constructing a noise wall along I-435 from about Bond Street east to US-69. Pyramid Contractors, Inc. is the contractor that was awarded the project.

Before the homes were removed, the City of Overland Park and KDOT decided to partner with Habitat Restore and allow them access into the homes to salvage building materials. Merchan-

dise at Habitat Restore is priced low in order to give homeowners an opportunity to maintain their property.

All money that is made from sales at Habitat Restore is used to fund Kansas City Habitat for Humanity's

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***'That diverted material became \$26,000 worth of merchandise in Habitat ReStore and went back into the community as home improvements for our customers.'***

**Don Reck**

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mission of providing quality homes for low-income families in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Had the partnership with Habitat Restore not been formed, the salvageable materials in the homes would have most likely ended up in the landfill.

"Because of this partnership, we were able to divert over 36 tons of material from the landfill. That diverted material became \$26,000 worth of merchandise in Habitat ReStore and went back into the community as home

improvements for our customers. This type of collaboration can make a huge difference for the environment and for the families that are able to improve their homes with the materials," said Don Reck, Director of Habitat ReStore.

"The City of Overland Park and KDOT felt that it was important to not let the quality materials in these homes go to waste and that Habitat Restore was a good fit to help accomplish that goal," said Tim McEldowney, Project Manager, City of Overland Park. "While the City and KDOT understand the impact this project has and will have on the homeowners and neighborhood affected by the demolition of these houses, we believe that teaming up with Habitat Restore is one of the many good things that will come of this project."

The remainder of the Focus435 projects will begin as scheduled in 2006. Those projects include:

- ◆ A new interchange at I-435 and Antioch Road
- ◆ Widening I-435 from six to eight lanes between Metcalf Avenue and US-69, with auxiliary lanes between interchanges
- ◆ Partial reconstruction of the US-69/103rd Street interchange
- ◆ Construction of noise walls.



## Step Back in Time



*A snow plow is used to clear US-50 east of Garden City following a heavy snow storm in November of 1952.*

# Program provides students valuable training

By Kim Stich

Employees in KDOT's Print Shop are participating in the Transition Program at Seaman High School. This mentoring program offers high school students exposure to different work environments in the community and helps them to develop the skills they need for work after graduation.

Von Unruh, Coordinator of the program, works with students to give them training and to help simulate work experiences. Pam Besser, a teacher at Seaman, assists with the program and contacted KDOT to see if a mentoring opportunity was available for one of her students, Dwayne Bates.

"I was looking for something different for him to try and working at a state agency seemed to be a great opportunity," Besser said.

Besser met with Nancy Fleeker



*Pete Domme, Process Supervisor in Support Services, shows Dwayne Bates how to stitch documents in the Print Shop.*

Daniels, Assistant Bureau Chief in Personnel Services, and Bill Crooks, Print Shop Manager. Together, they determined the Print Shop would provide Dwayne a variety of training opportunities.

"Dwayne really likes working at KDOT," Besser said. "He is gaining excellent work experience and he is proud of his work. It's a positive atmosphere and a great learning experience for him."

Crooks and his staff set goals for Dwayne and he works hard to achieve those goals each day. Dwayne works on different projects such as assembling *Translines*, padding DOT forms, stitching, hand collating, making copies, and

working with the booklet maker.

"Dwayne is helping us with projects while gaining on-the-job skills," Crooks said. "He's such a nice young man and we enjoy working together. It's a great experience for all of us."

Crooks and Pete Domme, Process Supervisor in Support Services, attended a luncheon on October 20 in Topeka to recognize the importance of mentoring and to thank businesses and organizations for their ongoing support. The luncheon was in conjunction with National Mentoring Day, which celebrates students having the opportunity to explore different careers and a chance to receive direction and motivation in different fields throughout the year. **-K.S.**

## Road warrior

Continued from page 3

and giving the crew time to work on the project on days when they couldn't be out on the road.

"They allow you to help out," McAnulty said of his supervisors.

"They have these meetings on teamwork. Instead of ignoring what they're preaching, they allow you to do something. They're real open and willing to help you however they can."

Caudell was appreciative of the initiative shown by McAnulty and his crew.

"We pretty much give them the freedom to do what they want to do," he said. "As long as it's within a reasonable price range, they can do things like that."

"*Road Warrior*" is a new, monthly *Translines* feature that focuses on the employees who are the face of KDOT along highways and other public places. If you have a story suggestion, please send your idea to Public Information Officer Steve Swartz, [stevesw@ksdot.org](mailto:stevesw@ksdot.org), or call 785-296-3585.

# P2 recommendations available for KDOT employees to review

The surveys have been conducted, the data collected, subteams have met and recommendations made.

And now it's time to find out what our employees, stakeholders, and partners think about the ideas that have been developed through the Partnership Project.

Julie Lorenz, Director of Public Affairs, said a target date of November 1 has been set for the subteam fact sheets and recommendations to be posted on KDOT's Intranet web site.

"It is important that we hear from our employees what they think of the recommendations before they are finalized and priorities set for implementing the recommendations. Comments will be incorporated into a final P2 report, which will be completed early next year," Lorenz said.

KDOT employees will be notified by an agency-wide e-mail when the recommendations have been posted. The work of each subteam has been summarized on a single sheet of paper, front and back, which includes purpose, background, recommendations, implementation, barriers, and benefits.

"If our employees have thoughts about the recommendations, please contact subteam members or myself."

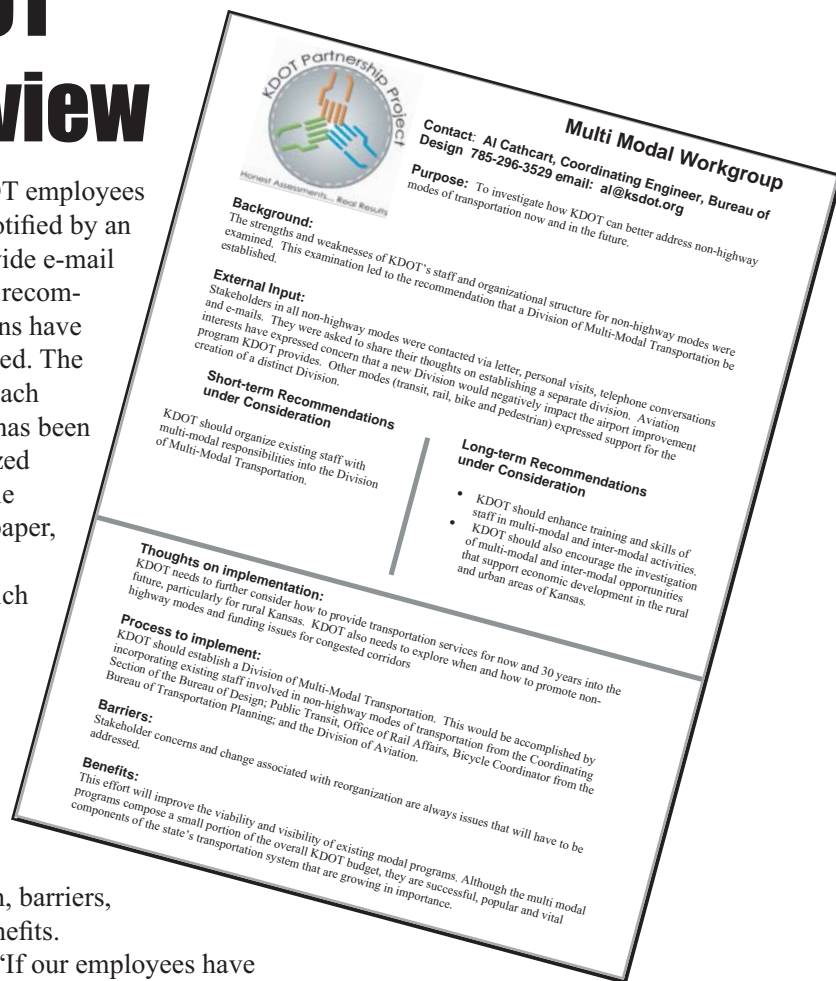
Comments are also being sought from KDOT partners and stakeholders on the external P2 recommendations.

Beginning in late October, District and Area Engineers began a series of District Input Meetings throughout the state to get feedback on the subteam recommendations. The fact

sheets on the external topics will be distributed at the district meetings.

The size of the meetings will vary from district-to-district. Some will be district-wide, others in Areas, and some will be one-on-one.

Following the District meetings, comments from the sessions will be summarized and categorized so responses can be developed. These public comments, like the employee comments, will be incorporated into the final P2 report. **-S.S.**



Honest Assessments...Real Results

# Agencies work together to Put the Brakes on Fatalities

Traffic crashes claim 117 lives a day in the United States and have become the leading cause of death for people four to 34 years of age.

To focus attention on the often preventable traffic crashes that extract such a tragic toll, KDOT and numerous transportation partners sponsored events across Kansas. The events coincided with the national observance of Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day (Pbfd), October 10.

“Reducing preventable traffic crashes is the number one goal of the Kansas Department of Transportation,” said KDOT Secretary Deb Miller. “Our agency, with the help of the law enforcement community, is committed to accomplishing that goal through enforcement, education, and awareness.”

The year’s observance of Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day included staging alcohol-related mock crashes at Kansas high schools in Topeka, Oakley, and Bonner Springs. Students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officers, rescue workers, firefighters, and other emergency personnel participated in the demonstrations.

Other Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day events included:

- ◆ From Friday, October 8 to Sunday, October 10, people attending the FanWalk area at Kansas Speedway visited a transportation-safety booth where safety materials and promotional items were distributed. Also featured was the Kansas Highway Patrol’s roll-over vehicle.

- ◆ Child safety seat check lanes were set up in six Wal



*Kansas Highway Patrol officers console a family member at the crash scene just like they would in a real life situation during the mock crash at Washburn Rural High School in Topeka on October 6.*

Mart parking lots throughout Kansas. In addition, winners of the Pbfd poster contest were presented their awards during the events. A total of 467 children entered the poster contest in Kansas with 17 regional winners and three statewide winners being honored.

- ◆ A Public Service Announcement produced by the Kansas Highway Patrol was broadcast in all Wal-Mart stores across the country from September 27 to October 10. The 30-second PSA stressed safety whether you are in a car, on a bike, or when walking across the street.

- ◆ Approximately 25,000 Pbfd brochures were distributed at various safety events throughout the summer and fall as well as to motorists on the Kansas Turnpike at the service areas and service area restaurants.

- ◆ Governor Kathleen Sebelius signed a proclamation naming October 10, 2004, as Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day in Kansas.

Vehicular crashes in Kansas during 2003 resulted in 469 fatalities and nearly 25,000 injuries. Factors that typically contribute to fatal traffic crashes include driver inattention, failure to use a seat belt, inexperience, drowsiness, driving while impaired, and speeding.



*A teenager is placed in a body bag at the mock crash at Washburn Rural High School to help illustrate to those watching the realities of a vehicular crash. In 2003 in Kansas, 119 teens died in vehicular crashes.*





*A total of six safety seat check lanes like this one in Topeka (left) and Chanute (above) took place across the state in conjunction with Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day.*



*At the six safety seat check lanes, 17 Kansas kids were awarded bicycles and helmets for their winning entries in the Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day poster contest. Some of those winners are shown at their presentations which took place at Garden City (above), Salina (top right), Phillipsburg (below), and Wichita (bottom right).*



# Deferred compensation plan helps employees to save for the future

## 1. How does the deferred compensation plan work?

- ◆ The employee decides how much money they want to defer.
- ◆ The amount is automatically set aside from the employee's pay check and invested for the employee in the investment options chosen by the employee.
- ◆ The employee currently pays no federal or state income taxes on the deferred amounts or on any of its earnings.

## 2. How much money can an employee put into deferred compensation each pay period?

The employee may defer a minimum of \$11.54 per biweekly pay period or a maximum of the lesser of 50 percent of taxable income up to \$11,000. During the last three years prior to the employee's normal retirement date, they may be eligible to defer up to \$22,000 per year.

## 3. Can an employee increase or reduce the amount they put into deferred compensation?

If the employee wishes to increase the amount they currently defer, they may do so up to the legal maximum. The employee may increase, reduce, or restart their deferral once every 90 days. They may also stop their deferral prior to the beginning of any pay period, however, they must wait 90 days to restart.

## 4. How many investment options are available through the deferred compensation plan?

At the time the employee joins the deferred compensation plan, they choose any one or a combination of investment options. A combination of options may offer a balanced investment, both guarantees and opportunities for inflation hedge, and some preservation of capital and

potential for growth.

While it is the State of Kansas that owns the annuity contract, the plan assets are set aside for the exclusive benefit of the participants and beneficiaries as required by law. The employee selects the investment options that will determine their plan benefits. This flexibility gives the employee the best opportunity for sensible retirement planning.

The employee may change his or her investment selection for both accumulated funds and current deposits. Funds in the fixed account and the guaranteed accumulation account may be transferred with certain limitations.

## 5. Can an employee only receive a deferred compensation payout at retirement?

The plan offers several payout options. Generally, these are a lump sum, periodic payments, or payments for life. If the employee wants to withdraw money from their account before retirement or separation from service, they must demonstrate an "unforeseeable emergency." IRS code defines unforeseeable emergency as "severe financial hardship to a participant resulting from a sudden and unexpected illness or accident to a participant or a dependent." It further states that this does not include the use of funds to buy a home or to send children to college.

If an employee stops working or changes employers, the value of their deferred compensation account may be paid to them when they leave or at any time in the future.

At separation from service an employee could choose to roll their deferred compensation plan to an IRA, 403(b), 401(a) 401(k) or 457(b) plan. There are no surrender charges in the event of financial hardship or separation from service. In addition, there is no IRS penalty for withdrawal other than the payment of income taxes.

## 6. Who should an employee contact if they have additional questions about deferred compensation?

For additional information, contact the Deferred Compensation Plan Office at 1-800-232-0024 outside Topeka or 296-7095 in Topeka. Website address: [www.ingretirement-plans.com/custom/ks](http://www.ingretirement-plans.com/custom/ks). -S.W.

# Personnel Policies and Procedures

Highlights of your benefits as a State employee

# 511 broadcasts first AMBER Alert

By Barb Blue

The Kansas 511 system broadcast its first AMBER Alert on September 15.

The missing child from Topeka was found in Wyoming hours after a truck driver reported the location of the suspected vehicle in Nebraska. She has been returned to Topeka. The trucker responded to information provided in the alert, although it is not believed he obtained alert information via 511.

In 1996, nine-year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The area's Association of Radio Managers and the region's law enforcement agencies reacted by developing a program to promptly distribute information when a child is abducted. The AMBER Plan is limited to cases that could be life threatening. It is not intended for runaways or child custody cases.

Former Kansas Attorney General Carla J. Stovall formed a Task Force in March 2002 to implement the AMBER Plan statewide in Kansas. The AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert Plan in Kansas is coordinated by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI). When

a local law enforcement agency decides to activate the AMBER Plan, it sends the relevant information to the KBI, which disseminates the information to law enforcement agencies and media/communication outlets across the state, including KDOT's 511 system.

In the event of an AMBER Alert, information is broadcast immediately after the opening introduction. 511 callers must listen to the information and cannot bypass the message.

Each alert is routinely broadcast for six hours; however, alert information can be deleted, changed and/or extended as needed. The alert includes pertinent information about the missing child and details about the suspected abductor and vehicle. In addition to broadcasting alerts generated in Kansas, alerts initiated in other states can also be broadcast, if requested.

An important part of the AMBER Alert process is citizen response. When a caller hears an AMBER Alert, they should listen closely to the information, particularly the descriptions of the child, the suspect and suspect's vehicle. Anyone having any information that might be helpful should call their local law enforcement agency or 1-800-KS Crime immediately.

## SCOUT FACTS

- ◆ Covers 75 miles
- ◆ Includes portions of Interstates 435 and 35, US-69 and K-10 in Kansas; Interstates 435, 35, 470, 670 and 70, US-71, US-169 and Route 9 in Missouri
- ◆ Components include 36 electronic signs, 75 cameras, in-pavement sensors
- ◆ Operating hours: 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., M-F; increases to 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week in January; increasing to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in May 2005
- ◆ Web site: [www.kcscout.net](http://www.kcscout.net)

## Scout

Continued from page 1

faster and more manageable freeway commute. Elements of the system include traffic sensors, closed-circuit television cameras, electronic message boards, highway advisory radio, a real-time traffic Web site, and Motorist Assist and emergency response services.

The Scout system has operated under a test basis since January. Since then, Scout staff have fine-tuned operating procedures and policy while also debugging the complex, fully-integrated technology.

The Federal Highway Administration has funded 80 to 90 percent of the \$43 million project with the remaining cost shared between KDOT and the Missouri Department of Transportation. -S.S.



*Secretary Deb Miller, far left, and Missouri and federal officials unleash dozens of red, yellow, and blue balloons to celebrate the formal launch of the Scout traffic management system.*

# A scorching October tale

By Ron Kaufman

Public Involvement Administrator

When I was very young – a very long time ago – my grandparents gave me a wood-burning set for Christmas. As we were surrounded by a huge variety of wooden things to burn, Mom and Dad were very, very trusting to let me keep it. My gift was more than your basic strike-on-the-edge box of incendiary matches which prehistoric cavepersons would have used for their wood-burning. No, my modern marvel was a fancy, cork-handled, plug-in-the-wall kind of electric tool made just for artists like myself. It even came with instructions and sample drawings of fun images a creative artist could inflict on things. If you've followed the recent news stories about the four-year-old girl whose paintings are selling for thousands of dollars, you know the upside potential that a gifted, young, wood-burning artist like yours truly would have had in those days.

My parents were quite impressed by the impressions I burned into blocks of scrap lumber, pieces of driftwood, and sides of orange crates. I was especially proud of the little scorchings I applied one day to the underside of the coffee table. Of course, every artist should keep some of his works in reserve, so I never told anyone about the coffee table art. Shortly after that, my wood-burning set disappeared. Dad said it broke when he tried to use it the day before and that we were too poor to drive it to France to fix it. Later, he sadly reported that the United Nations had

outlawed wood-burning sets so he couldn't get me a new one, although I know he tried. He was very sorry and I admired his honesty for admitting that he broke my wood-burning set.

The fragrant memory of that singed coffee table nearly brought me to tears recently as I drove along a Kansas highway. There, alongside the road, an enterprising hay merchant had stacked bales of hay into a tall column. Burned into the sides of the column were the charred words "For Sale – 555-555-5555." That's a fake phone number. I can't recall the real one. Speeding by, I admired the skill of an accomplished wood-burning artist who could sear a message into a hay bale without setting it ablaze. I was especially

struck by the creative way with which this person conveyed their "For Sale" message.

Farther down the road, someone else had artfully painted yet a different message on the roof of a barn. A little farther

along, a sun-bleached, cardboard "Yard Sale" sign languished on a roadside fence post.

Hay bales, barns, fence posts, billboards, silos that look like beer cans (or was I just thirsty?) are all creative ways to deliver a message. I remember thinking that people find interesting ways to convey their messages and I told myself that we at KDOT should do the same. The people who used the roadside mediums were communicating without using the old standbys – TV, radio, e-mails, or skywriting. I also recall thinking that I should point out such creative communication mediums for a future Translines article. Perhaps I will do that someday. For now, I'm just sitting here at my wooden desk, gazing out my wood-trimmed window, and wondering if the U.N. still bans artist's wood-burning sets like the one I had long ago. Ahhh, memories.

## Communication: A Key to Success



Kansas Department  
of Transportation

# Forgotten password easy to fix

Employees encouraged to obtain forgotten passwords on access Kansas

You've gone to the access Kansas Self Service Center on your computer and want to find out paycheck or other benefit information, but you can't remember your password. Don't call the state help desk; you can get a new password on your own.

That's the advice being provided by the state Department of Personnel Services.

"Because KDOT is a large agency we have a high computer usage of access through the self service center," said Nancy Fleeker Daniels, Assistant Bureau Chief in Personnel Services. "Employees who can't access the system because they have forgotten their password can easily obtain a new one by following simple instructions on line."

Fleeker Daniels said that because of a reduction in staff at the help desk, state Personnel Services is

encouraging employees to obtain new passwords on their own if they forget their current password.

Employees can follow these simple steps to obtain a new password.

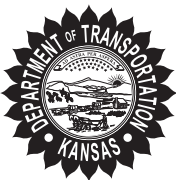
- ◆ Click on "Forgot your Password"
- ◆ Type your 11 digit Kansas employee ID number (the first letter of your employee ID must be upper case or capitalized) then click "Continue." If you don't know your ID number, your personnel clerk will have it.
- ◆ Answer your secret question and enter your birth date, then click "Display New Password"

You will be given a new password immediately. Be sure to copy the password carefully as all letters are case sensitive. After you sign in you must change your password to one of your choice before you will be allowed to obtain paycheck or benefit information. — S.W.

What a great gift idea!!

# KDOT COFFEE MUGS

**--ARE ON SALE!!!!--**



*These microwavable mugs are clear glass with a gold rim on top and a blue KDOT seal on one side.*

Cost: \$5 per mug

### To Order:

**Headquarters:** contact your Employees' Council rep.

**Districts/Retirees:** mail completed form (or photocopy of form) and checks to: Ruby Hilton, Bridge Design, 700 SW Harrison, 13th floor, Eisenhower Building, Topeka, KS, 66603.

**Checks payable to KDOT Employees' Council.**

**Starting November 1: Buy 3, get 1 free!!**

**4 coffee mugs for only \$15!! (while supplies last)**

Number ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Work

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Retirees: home address)

For more details, call Ruby Hilton at 785-296-0603

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Dear Secretary Miller:**

I would like to congratulate you and the Kansas Department of Transportation for the recent progress that has been made in reducing motor vehicle deaths in Kansas. Recently there have been statistical indicators that prove Kansas is moving in the right direction.

1. 7.1 percent decline (38 people) in persons killed in Kansas from 2002 to 2003.
2. 9.3 percent decline (21 people) in alcohol-related fatalities from 2002 to 2003.
3. 4.7 percent increase in safety belt usage from the previous year.

I am extremely pleased to see that Kansas is making positive strides in the safety belt and alcohol program areas. I truly believe this progress is a reflection of new leadership and programs in Kansas.

Randy Bolin and I look forward to working with you, Terry (Heidner), and Pete (Bodyk) in the continued struggle to reduce death and injury as a result of motor vehicle crashes in Kansas.

Congratulations again, and let's all keep Kansas moving in the right direction!

Romell Cooks  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

**Dear Secretary Miller:**

We are writing to express our thanks for the fine job performed constructing the bridge on K-99, just outside of Westmoreland.

The work was completed in a timely manner with every effort made to prevent inconvenience and disruption of the town businesses.

We appreciate the efforts of KDOT and the sensitivity shown for the benefit of our community.

Sincerely,  
Beverly Davin  
President, Westmoreland Chamber

*The following letter was sent to KDOT's web site.*

**To: KDOT**

**Subject: I-70**

I spent the better part of this past Tuesday traversing Kansas via Interstate 70 from the Colorado border all the way to Missouri. I would like to remark what a pleasure it was to drive on your fine highway.

There was plenty of signs along the way that helped us figure out where we were along the route as we left our altas back home. It was very convenient to have clean rest areas every 45 miles or so to stretch our stiff limbs and tend to personal business. The pavement was quite smooth and even - perhaps you could give the Buckeye State DOT people some pointers on that subject. Please keep up the good work.

Keary Henkener

**Flexible hours**

**Continued from page 1**

There are now three flexible options available throughout the agency. They include:

◆ 5-8s and 4-10s. Employee works five eight-hour days in one week and four 10-hour days in the other week in the pay period. This new plan allows for one Friday off during a pay period with the option of either the first Friday or second Friday off.

◆ 4-10s. Employee works four 10-hour days with the same day off each week. In the past, this has only been available for positions that traveled full-time.

◆ 4-9s and a 4. Employee works four nine-hour days and four hours on

the same day each week. This has been used in some areas already.

"It should be emphasized that this plan is based on business operations," said Humphrey. "Employees need to understand that flexible scheduling may not lend itself to all positions."

There are flexible plans to choose from, but Humphrey stressed that when you decide to switch to a flexible schedule that becomes your permanent work schedule. Any change in the plan needs to be submitted to your supervisor for approval.

If an employee is seeking a flexible schedule, they must first complete a request form and have the request reviewed by their supervisor. The request then goes to the KDOT Senior Manager for a decision. If the organizational unit

has not previously been approved for flexible schedules, that approval must be obtained from the Executive Manager prior to the Senior Manager making a decision.

Final paperwork is submitted to Personnel Services. Personnel's role is to ensure the request follows the parameters established in the flexible work time policy.

Flexible work scheduling can have benefits to both the employee and employer. Studies have shown that the advantages of flexible work time scheduling can include enhanced retention and recruitment, reduced absences, and tardiness, and reduced stress through the ability to better balance work and personal responsibilities.

## Retirees

The following KDOT employee officially retired from KDOT in October.

### Headquarters

**Condie Erwin**, Engineering Technician in Materials and Research – 27 years of state service.

### District Two

**Vernon R. Koch**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor at McPherson – 35 years of state service.

## Welcome new KDOT employees!

### Headquarters

**Brian Anschutz**, Program Consultant I, Planning

**Phyllis Elder**, Accounting Specialist, Traffic Safety

**Mary Gehrt**, Office Assistant, Materials and Research

**Ben Hagen**, Engineering Associate I, Design

**Michael Hernandez**, Installation Service Technician II, Construction and Maintenance

**Thomas Ryan**, Systems Software Programmer Analyst III, Computer Services

### District Two

**Steven West**, Installation Service Technician III, Construction and Maintenance

### District Three

**Gina Mastin**, Program Consultant II, Norton

### District Four

**Jerod Kelley**, Engineering Associate, Iola

### District Five

**Joseph Taylor**, Equipment Mechanic, El Dorado

### District Six

**Krista Bezona**, Administrative Assistant, Ulysses



*Lane Wilton, Chanz Vath (accompanied by Jaycee Vath), and Bailey Wilton drive their mini trucks and loader during the Post Rock Festival parade at Lincoln.*

## KDOT theme impresses parade officials

One of KDOT's big messages was delivered in little packages September 4 at the annual Post Rock Festival parade at Lincoln.

Miniature versions of KDOT's heavy equipment were driven by the children of two KDOT employees and a wagon pulled by the moms carried the message "KDOT Kids Give 'Em A Brake." The parade officials were so taken with the entry they awarded it first prize.

With the help and support of the Ellsworth Area Office and District management, the families of Jeremy and Angel Vath, and Lance and Paula Wilton, decided to make a KDOT entry for the

parade. Jeremy is the District Equipment Body Mechanic at the District shop, and Lance is an Equipment Operator Senior at the Lincoln Subarea.

A tiny electrically-powered jeep was transformed into an official-looking dump truck. The mini-truck was driven by Chanz Vath, who was accompanied by his little sister Jaycee. A tiny skid loader was operated by Bailey Wilton, and Lane Wilton drove a Cat dump truck.

Angel and Paula handed out Kansas maps and key chains to the spectators who lined the six-block-long parade route on Main Street. *-By David Greiser, District Two Public Affairs Manager*

## M I L E S T O N E S

### KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in October

#### 10 YEARS

Jon Beeman . . . . . El Dorado  
 Michael Bergeron . . . . . Iola  
 James Clark . . . . . Topeka  
 Kevin Hennes . . . . . Topeka  
 Ruby Hilton . . . . . Topeka  
 Glenn McCall . . . . . Hutchinson  
 Richard Milner . . . . . El Dorado  
 Shawn Ploutz . . . . . Ellsworth  
 John Ritter . . . . . Medicine Lodge  
 Scott Swanson . . . . . Topeka  
 Corwyn Trump . . . . . Junction City

#### 20 YEARS

Walter Blount, Jr. . . . . Strong City  
 Charles Huscher . . . . . Salina  
 Richard Martinitz . . . . . Abilene  
 Robert Revel . . . . . Lyons

#### 40 YEARS

Bobby Gassmann . . . . . Oakley

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

## Promotions/Transfers

### Headquarters

**Alisa Babler**, Professional Civil Engineer I, Traffic Engineering

**Jim Bernica**, Engineering Technician, Materials and Research

**Jeff Henry**, Engineering Technician Specialist, Traffic Engineering

**Robert Kelley**, Engineering Associate III, Materials and Research

**Lawrence Madrid**, Engineering Technician Specialist, Right of Way

**Melanie Stone**, Administrative Assistant, Fiscal Services

**Deana Taylor**, Administrative Specialist, Secretary of Transportation

### District Two

**David Fisher**, Installation Service Technician III, Salina

### District Three

**John Engel**, Equipment Mechanic Specialist, Norton

### District Four

**Susan Riley**, Program Consultant II, Chanute

### District Five

**Don Snyder**, Professional Civil Engineer III, Hutchinson

### District Six

**Michael Maxwell**, Engineering Technician Senior, Liberal

*The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies promotion/transfer information.*

## Eisenhower

### Continued from page 1

“President Eisenhower led the world in the battle to defeat fascism in World War II, then came home and changed the face of America by creating the greatest transportation system the world has ever known,” Sebelius said.

“It is so fitting that this favorite son be recognized in the capital of his home state by having the KDOT headquarters bear his name.”

The former Security Benefit Group building has been known as the Harrison Center since it was purchased by

the state in 1999. The move from the Docking State Office Building has been in progress since May.

“The Interstate highway system is the largest public works project ever undertaken anywhere,” said Secretary Deb Miller. “Kansans have always been proud of President Eisenhower, both as a soldier and a president. And now we have another way to show our appreciation for what he did during his long, incomparable career in public service.”

On June 29, 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, creating the Interstate system. It established that the federal

government would pay 90 percent of the cost of the system and also set road design standards.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has declared the Interstate system one of the “Seven Wonders of the United States.” In 1990, President George H.W. Bush redesignated the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways as the “Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.”

A dedication ceremony is being planned for next spring. **-S.S.**

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

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NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact the KDOT Bureau of Transportation Information, Eisenhower Building, 700 SW Harrison, 2nd Floor West, Topeka, Kan., 66603-3754, or phone (785) 296-3585 (Voice)/(TTY).