Strive to ‘put the brakes on fatalities’ every day

By Kim Stich

In the next 13 minutes your life probably won’t change much. But during that time, a person somewhere in the United States will die in a vehicular accident. That adds up to more than 41,500 traffic fatalities a year.

This startling fact is why numerous transportation organizations across the country participated in the first “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day” on October 10. The goal was to encourage everyone – whether as a driver, passenger, pedestrian, or cyclist – to take extra caution each and every day, and especially October 10, to prevent crashes from occurring.

“Whether it’s always wearing a safety belt, paying extra attention while driving, passengers minimizing distractions in the vehicle, or creating safer roadways, everyone can make an effort to reduce traffic fatalities,” said Secretary E. Dean Carlson. “If even one life...”

Emig’s safety idea spread across U.S. on October 10

Several years ago, Chief of Local Projects Larry Emig was having a cup of coffee with a friend at the Transportation Research Board meeting. During the discussion, they talked about traffic safety in general and specifically about a day without any deaths on American highways.

Emig continued to think about the conversation and introduced the idea to the National Society of Professional Engineers who became the initial sponsor of the event. The event was later named “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day.”

With support from AASHTO, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and other transportation-related organizations, the idea to have an event...
From Where I Sit
by E. Dean Carlson

Remaining committed to the American way of life

At the beginning of this month, I had the pleasure of speaking at the annual dinner of the Operations Meeting in Great Bend. I talked about the impact of the atrocities that took place in our country on September 11, 2001.

More precisely, I spoke about the impact we need to have on our country now. What I suggest most of us do now is to try to get back to routine as much as possible and continue to do what we have always done. To do less is to surrender to the terrorists - it is after all our freedom that so offends them.

So I say we shove it in their faces - we remain free to move about our country, free to enjoy our freedom.

Yes, this is a war. But even in a war, life goes on. Those of you old enough to remember life during World War II here on the home front know that’s true. I was a kid and I remember the sacrifices that had to be made, but I also remember that school, and chores, and church, and, yes, playtime continued to exist even then. The war was always in the back of people’s minds, but it didn’t stop them from doing what had to be done… and this war shouldn’t stop us either.

So, don’t cancel your vacation plans, don’t sell all of your mutual funds, don’t put off buying that new computer, TV, car, house, or whatever. Continue to live and work not in spite of the tragedies, but because of them - because one of the best memorials we can give those who gave their lives is to remain committed to the American way of life.

I can think of no better bunch than the men and women of KDOT to help lead the way. Day in and day out, you’re out there doing your jobs, making the state’s transportation infrastructure one of the finest in the nation. You don’t let much stop you!

I know you’ll continue doing that, and I just wanted to take a moment to let you know how important your role is, whether it’s in a truck cab, office chair, or work zone. So keep up the good work, and thank you!

Calendar of Events

November 9 - 9 a.m. - Highway Advisory Commission meeting, conference call.

November 12 - State employees off for Veteran’s Day holiday.

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

November 14 - 2 p.m. - Construction Bid Letting, Wichita Airport Hilton.

November 22 and 23 - State employees off for Thanksgiving holiday.
Kansas’ Flint Hills Scenic Byway Overlook recently received national recognition as an exemplary project showing the best practices for scenic byways. The Flints Hills project is located on K-177 south of Cottonwood Falls.

The Scenic Byway Overlook was one of eight projects nationwide that were honored in the competition titled, The Road Beckons: Best Practices for Byways. The competition was sponsored by AASHTO, FHWA and the America’s Byways Resource Center. Twenty states submitted 41 applications for the inaugural competition.

Richard Ross, KDOT Landscape Architect, along with Deborah Divine, State Scenic Byways Program Manager, and Jan White, Flint Hills Management Committee member, accepted a plaque recognizing the accomplishment during the National Scenic Byways Conference in Portland, Ore., on August 29.

“By listening to the land and the locals, designers of the Flint Hills Scenic Byway Overlook, Bucher, Willis and Ratliff Corporation, celebrated and reflected elements of the surrounding landscape with an aesthetic design that complements the state’s tallgrass prairie,” said Ross.

The overlook is an earthen mound

A father and his daughter enjoy the beauty of Butterfly Milkweed wildflowers during a visit to the Flint Hills Scenic Byway Overlook.

Grand Opening

Lt. Governor Gary Sherrer, center, is surrounded by representatives from Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad, WATCO Companies, Wichita Chamber of Commerce, and KDOT at the official grand opening of the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad in Wichita on October 5. Monies from KDOT’s Rail Service Improvement fund were used to assist with the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad purchase of the Central Kansas Railway, saving about 300 miles of shortline railroad from abandonment.
A group of 115 people, including KDOT employees, two school groups, AARP members, and members of other transportation-related organizations, listen to First Lady Linda Graves speak at the “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day” event at the Expo in Topeka October 10. The group represented the average number of people who die in vehicular accidents each day across the country.

Put the Brakes
Continued from page 1

is saved because someone heeded the message, then the day will be a success.”

Substandard road conditions and run-off-the-road crashes are a factor in 30 percent of all traffic fatalities. Continuing roadway improvements across the state such as wider lanes and shoulders, reflective signing and pavement markings, lighting, and intersection upgrades are vital for highway safety, Carlson said.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in the U.S. for people ages 6 to 27. The cost to society, besides the tragic loss of life, is estimated at $150 billion a year, or 2.2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

“Following the speed limit and obeying all traffic regulations can greatly decrease your chance of being in an accident,” said Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent Col. Don Brownlee. “Last year, 461 people lost their lives in traffic crashes on Kansas’ roadways. ‘Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day’ is a welcome addition to initiatives already in place to make our roads safer.”

Safety restraints, whether they be safety belts or child safety seats, are critical for increasing motor vehicle safety. More than 50 percent of the children under age five killed in crashes in 1999 were completely unrestrained. Safety belts can also reduce the risk of fatal injuries to front-seat occupants by 45 percent. If all vehicle passengers over age four wore safety belts in 1999, an additional 9,500 lives could have been saved.

Do your part to participate in this national event every day. Buckle up. Be alert. Don’t drink and drive. Obey all traffic regulations. Coming home alive sure beats becoming a statistic.
Linda Graves speaks at event

First Lady Linda Graves was the featured speaker at the “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day” event October 10 at the Expo Center’s Exhibition Hall in Topeka. Events also took place across the U.S. that day to raise awareness of roadway safety.

Other speakers included Regional Administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Romell Cooks, Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator David Geiger, State Director of the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) Teri Graham, AAA Public Affairs Coordinator CHERIE SAGE, and Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent COL. DON BROWNLEE.

Also at the event, the KHP’s rollover simulator showed the effectiveness of safety belts, the Safe Kids Van demonstrated child passenger safety, and the FMCSA had a No-Zone display trailer with highway safety information at the event.

Numerous ways you can ‘put the brakes on fatalities’ every day

Reducing the more than 41,500 traffic fatalities a year starts one at a time, and that one can be you. Do your part to participate in “Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day” each and every day.

◆ ADULTS AND CHILDREN OVER AGE 4 – always wear your safety belt. Between 1975 and 1999, approximately 123,213 lives were saved nationwide by using safety belts, including 11,197 in 1999 alone.

◆ CHILDREN UNDER AGE 4 – should always be in a child safety seat. When used correctly, they are 71 percent effective in preventing fatalities.

◆ DON’T DRINK AND DRIVE – every 33 minutes, someone in this country dies in an alcohol-related crash.

◆ BE ALERT WHEN DRIVING – falling asleep while driving causes at least 100,000 auto crashes and about 1,550 fatalities each year.

◆ DON’T SPEED, ESPECIALLY IN WORK ZONES – On a 25-mile trip, driving 65 mph instead of 55 mph, you will save only about four minutes. Saving a few minutes is not worth risking your life.

◆ WATCH FOR PEDESTRIANS – 13 pedestrians a day are killed in a traffic crash.

◆ BE CAUTIOUS NEAR BICYCLISTS – In 1999, 750 bicyclists were killed in traffic-related accidents, including 193 children ages 14 and under.

◆ KEEP VEHICLES IN TOP CONDITION – Do regular maintenance on your vehicles. Check for proper tire air pressure and worn windshield wipers and replace burned out lights.

◆ DRIVE AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT – because the truth is, it does.

Emig

Continued from page 1

became a reality.

October was chosen for the event because it was one of the months with a higher rate of fatalities. October 10 was designated as the day, and events took place in numerous states as well as a national event in Washington, D.C. Secretary E. Dean Carlson, also serving as AASHTO President, was the emcee at the national event and Emig was one of several speakers.

In Kansas, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Kansas Turnpike Authority, AAA, and the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration passed out brochures across the state in addition to the event in Topeka. It was reported that no fatalities occurred on Kansas highways this day.

Emig hopes to build on this year’s success and find more ways to spread the safety message. “If everybody will support our exist-
Getting around at the Kansas Speedway

A recent open house gave members of the media and transportation officials the opportunity to view the Traffic Command Post for the new Kansas Speedway located at KDOT’s Bonner Springs office. The Intelligent Transportation System technology helped coordinate traffic management for the races. FOX TV in Kansas City shoots footage of information being entered on variable message boards, while Matt Volz, KDOT’s ITS Coordinator, explains the overall traffic plan to transportation officials.

Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters
Jeremy Bartlow, Applications Programmer I, Computer Services
Barbara Blue, Project Coordinator, Transportation Information
Lori Coder, Program Consultant I, Public Affairs
Mike Dillner, Engineering Technician Associate, Design
Glenn Larson, Engineering Associate III, Planning
Randy Long, Engineering Technician Associate, Design
Ann Sharp, Secretary II, Traffic Safety
District One
Chad Heston, Equipment Mechanic I, Olathe
Sean Neel, Engineering Technician Associate, Wamego
District Two

Supplies information to Translines.

Michael Alkire, Engineering Technician Associate, Belleville
James Assink, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion
Sarah Donley, Office Assistant II, Salina
Tyson Grimmett, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion
John Vinduska, Engineering Technician Associate, Marion

District Four
Michael Steinbrook, Engineering Technician Associate, Iola
Walter Lero, Engineering Technician Associate, Pittsburg
William Price, Engineering Associate I, Garnett

District Five
Theryne Schimke, Office Assistant III, Pratt

District Six
Leon Dinkel, Installation Service Technician III, Garden City
Eric Gilbert, Engineering Technician Associate, Garden City
Lucille McDermott, Engineering Technician Associate, Syracuse
The Bureau of Personnel Services
‘I understand’

By Ron Kaufman

Finding the right words with which to speak or write is at best a challenge and often a struggle. Expressing ideas or concepts in language that others can understand is not easy. We often wonder if we are using words that are sufficient in their meaning or intent for others to adequately grasp what we are trying to say. Even more difficult is the effort necessary to convey deep emotional feelings. When you are sad, angry, fearful, or frustrated, what can you say that will make another feel the same depth of emotion you are feeling? The phrase “I am sad,” for instance, seems woefully inadequate to truly express a deep feeling of sadness.

Add the word “very” to the front of “sad” and you are still left with an empty feeling. Try adding underlining, bold face, all caps, an exclamation point, and italics to the mix. **I AM VERY SAD!** That still does not do it justice, does it?

We often see this struggle in public involvement. There are many other people in KDOT who also witness it. It happens with people who are angry, frustrated, sad, or fearful about something they think KDOT has done to them. People who are struggling to convey the depth of their feelings use a variety of ways to try to get us to understand. I want to focus here on just those who are deeply hurt and saddened by a KDOT action. Perhaps you have been the one to whom they address their words.

One recent situation comes to mind involving a woman whose home was at risk of being purchased for a new highway. First, there was a phone call. The call was followed shortly by a letter. Soon, another letter arrived that was salted with little diagrams, underlined words, and exclamation points. Later, still more letters arrived. Each expressed nearly the same emotion, but each was written anew in a fresh attempt to convey how badly she felt. Each time, I was struck by how hard she was struggling to find ways to express her pain and grief. How could she get us to understand? Was it even possible to understand what she was trying to say?

Everyone has their own life stories and could talk about trying to convey their feelings to others. How often do you think others really understood what you were feeling? The morning of September 11 changed all that. In one morning of unqualified terror, millions of Americans shared the same feelings at nearly the same moment. That day, we all belonged to one close family as thousands of our parents, children, and siblings were wrenched from our arms in a series of horrifying attacks on our nation. For most, there were no warnings, no loving farewells. Suddenly, we were able to feel similar emotions and we understood each other’s feelings. We were no longer from Mars or Venus or Generation X or Y. We were all from one planet, of one mind, and one heart. Still, have you found it hard to describe the intensity of those events? Remarks like “It was just awful” seem to lack substance, yet they are true.

It is hard to put such tragic events into words, even when others have shared the same experience. Maybe we do not need to use words this time. Maybe we should not even try. Perhaps having shared the experience is enough. This may be the one of those memorable times when we can look at each other and truthfully say, “I understand.”
The District Headquarters/District Crews at Salina won the District Two safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector Allen Vinyard are District Superintendent Howard Reece, District Shop Superintendent Mack Villalpando, District Maintenance Engineer Gerry Montgomery, and District Office Coordinator Bill Kaempfe.

Area One at Horton won the District One safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector Allen Vinyard are Area Superintendent Brian Feldkamp, Area Engineer Kenneth Massingill, and Engineering Associate I Kevin Palic.

Area Two at Atwood won the District Three safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector Allen Vinyard are Construction Engineer Donna Binning, Area Engineer Eric Oelschlager, Area Superintendent Marvin Withington, and Engineering Associate II Jennifer Shane.

Area Four at Pittsburg won the District Four safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector Allen Vinyard are Area Superintendent Butch Mills, Area Engineer George Dockery, and Engineering Associate II Jack Amershek.

Area Four at Great Bend won the District Five safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector Allen Vinyard are Area Engineer Barry McManaman, Area Construction Engineer Scott Mullen, and Area Maintenance Superintendent John Clayton.

The District Headquarters/District Crews at Garden City won the District Six safety award. Accepting the award from Safety and Health Inspector I Michael Patton, District Engineer Larry Thompson, District Maintenance Engineer Ron Hall, District Maintenance Superintendent Gerry Pearson, and District Equipment Shop Superintendent Vic Michel.
New system helps reduce congestion in Kansas City

The Kansas and Missouri departments of transportation showcased the future of highway travel in the KC metro area with a kick-off celebration for Kansas City Scout on September 25 in Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

Secretary E. Dean Carlson, MoDOT Director Henry Hungerbeeler, and FHWA Kansas Division Director David Geiger were among featured speakers at the event. People who attended got to see a “mini-course” featuring some of the key elements of Kansas City Scout.

Kansas City Scout is a congestion-management and traveler-information system designed to offer area drivers the latest in technology and communication to help make their daily commute safer, faster, and more manageable. Elements include various traffic sensors, closed-circuit video cameras, electronic message boards, highway advisory radio, traffic updates via the Internet, and Motorist Assist and emergency-response services.

Those elements will merge in a Traffic Operations Center (TOC) that monitors traffic on 75 miles of Kansas City’s most congested freeways and responds to roadway incidents. The TOC will be

Step Back in Time

Young and old were present to see the first brick laid for a highway construction project in Reno County during a ceremonious event on September 11, 1919.
New Milestones documents recent KDOT history

By Stan Whitley

It was one of the most significant periods in the Kansas Department of Transportation’s history. Now, those years between 1987 and 2001 have been documented through the second volume of the publication Milestones.

In 1986, the initial edition of Milestones was published documenting the history of the Kansas Highway Commission and the Kansas Department of Transportation. The new Milestones: A history of the Kansas Department of Transportation charts KDOT’s course through the historic Comprehensive Highway Program (CHP) and passage of the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

The publication also contains a brief summary of the initiatives and achievements at KDOT during the 15-year period. A particular emphasis is placed on advances in the use of new technologies and in the management of day-to-day business.

“The CHP was a major accomplishment for the agency,” said Terry Heidner, Director of Planning and Development. “An eight-year program was completed on time and on budget creating a very positive image of the agency. Milestones helps document the success of that program and the positive impact it had on passage of the CTP.”

Mike Lackey, KDOT’s former Assistant Secretary of Transportation/State Transportation Engineer, was instrumental in making the second Milestones a reality by initiating the project. He was also an important source for the publication providing valuable and cogent

Milestones Order Form
(Please Print)

Name: ___________________________________

Address:__________________________________

________________________________________

Note: Please allow up to four weeks for delivery.

Milestones is also available on the KDOT Intranet under Documents and Manuals.
Scenic Byway

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contained by a limestone retaining wall that replicates the old stone fences and the natural rock outcroppings visible along the byway. Wildflowers have been planted on top of the structure, giving visitors the chance to experience native vegetation while taking in the vistas of the prairie.

Other award winning projects were the San Juan Skyway Historic Preservation Project and Multimedia Package, Colorado; the Cumberland County Covered Bridge, Illinois; Memorial Point Overlook, Nevada; Lake Champlain Byways Interpretive Projects, New York and Vermont; Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail and Interpretive Panels and Preservation of Oregon Historical Coastal Bridges, Oregon; and Portraits in Time, Utah.

“These winning projects generate a sense of pride and enthusiasm for those involved and provide terrific destinations for byways visitors,” said John Horsley, AASHTO Executive Director. “Scenic byways are a key component in national tourism and by getting out and exploring America, we help build a stronger economy.”

A publication highlighting the winning projects will be released at the 2001 AASHTO Annual Meeting in Fort Worth, November 30 to December 4.

Over the net

Seven teams participated in the KDOT Employees’ Council sand volleyball tournament September 22 at Gage Park in Topeka

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in October

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

Retirees

The following employee officially retired from KDOT on October 1.

District Five

Donald J. Kober, Equipment Operator II at LaCrosse - 34 years of state service.

Brown Bag LUNCH

Topic: 1R Program
Date: Wednesday, November 7
Time: Noon to 1 p.m.
Place: Room 481, Docking

All employees are invited to attend.
Training Opportunities

◆ Employee Benefit Seminar, October 3, 17, 31, November 14, 28, December 12 - no enrollment needed.
◆ New Employee Orientation, December 17, Topeka.
◆ Basic Effective Supervisory Techniques, November 6-9, Topeka.
◆ Leadership Forum, November 19-20, Topeka.

All classes, except BEST, are available to non-supervisors with supervisory permission and where space is available. A comprehensive training calendar is on the KDOT Intranet under Personnel, Training.

Scout

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located inside MoDOT’s district headquarters in Lee’s Summit. Construction on the center should be completed next spring.

The installation of the Scout system is currently underway, and about 19 miles of it should be operating by late 2002. That portion will cover Interstate 435 from Interstate 35 in Kansas east to Missouri’s Grandview Road near the Triangle.

The remaining Scout system, scheduled to be complete in late 2003, includes portions of I-35, US-69, and K-10 in Kansas and portions of Interstates 35, 470, 670, 70; highways 71 and 169; and Route 9 on the Missouri side.

The Federal Highway Administration is funding 90 percent of the $35.5 million project, with the remaining cost shared between KDOT and MoDOT.

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