Three-year expansion effort on I-435 begins

By Maggie Thompson

OVERLAND PARK - Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary Deb Miller, Overland Park Mayor Carl Gerlach, and Bill Clarkson, Sr., president of Clarkson Construction, broke ground Sept. 6 on an extensive project to build a new interchange at Antioch and I-435, and enhance and expand I-435 and US-69 highways.

When completed, the four-year $127 million Focus435 project is expected to improve safety and the flow of traffic for thousands of motorists each day. In addition, state and city leaders anticipate Focus435 will boost local economies.

“Johnson County is the fastest growing county in the state and it’s important to continue investing in its infrastructure,” said Gov. Sebelius. “This project will not only improve transportation but it will boost economic development, which means

Secretary Deb Miller, Overland Park Mayor Carl Gerlach, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and Bill Clarkson, Sr., President of Clarkson Construction, break ground on I-435 in Kansas City on Sept. 6.

Continued on page 10

High fuel prices concern agency

By Kim Stich

Higher fuel prices are a concern for everyone, including KDOT, but it’s too soon to panic, said Construction and Maintenance Chief Roy Rissky.

“Prices are starting to go down, but you really need to wait and let it settle out a bit until you know what the

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◆ Promoting safety message has new game plan
◆ Office’s dedication saves state money
◆ All change is painful
◆ Mentors to play a key role
Mentors to play a key role

It seems that every week or two, I receive an e-mail about a retirement reception for one of our long-time workers. A few weeks ago it was the reception for Jerry Brumley, a Project Management Engineer who retired after 50 years at KDOT.

Jerry came to the agency (then the State Highway Commission) after graduating from high school and spent his entire career here. He began working at KDOT when headquarters was located in the Masonic Temple in Topeka, moved to the Docking State Office Building when it opened and made the move to our new headquarters in the Eisenhower State Office Building last year.

At the time Jerry began working at KDOT, it wasn’t unusual for a person to spend his entire career – or most of his career – at the same agency. After the other members of Jerry’s generation retire, the number of people who start and end their career for the same employer will become much smaller. We’ve already seen that trend at KDOT.

But many employers have either failed to recognize this trend or are slow to respond to it, according to Claire Schooley, a senior industry analyst for Forrester Research Inc., headquartered in Cambridge, Mass. They see gray haired people and know they will retire sometime, but they don’t know when, she says.

As part of her research on retirements in the private and public sectors and in Europe, Claire contacted one of our agency leaders to ask questions about how we are addressing issues related to succession planning. I’m pleased to report that she was very impressed with what we are doing in that regard at KDOT.

In the past year we created an inspector/mentor position in each of our six districts to more quickly develop our newer, less experienced road and bridge inspectors. The position emerged from a Partnership Project subteam championed by Lon Ingram. The thought was that we simply couldn’t sit back and watch our experienced inspectors leave the agency and not have able replacements ready to step up. Since we can’t always compete with the salaries offered by the private sector to some of our most experienced people, we came to the realization that we’d have to compensate through better, quicker training.

To date, inspector/mentors are in place in Districts One, Three, Five and Six. Not everyone has embraced the idea. Some have expressed some suspicion of the mentors’ true motives, and others think this task should be performed by the construction engineer. But generally the response has been positive and the need for making inspectors more proficient has been recognized.

Schooley said that the private sector, as well as the public sector, is facing the same dilemma of losing their best, brightest or most experienced workers. It is also happening in Europe, where there is the added problem of a declining population. Of the organizations that recognize the need for mentorships, most have simply assigned it as an additional duty to an existing position.

No one is doing what KDOT is doing, Schooley said. No one is investing dollars.

I expect that our investment will pay important dividends to KDOT. We know that the employees we hire today won’t work for us for as long as the employees hired back when Jerry Brumley was beginning his career. Or even half as long as Jerry did. So it is increasingly important that those new workers be productive as quickly as possible.

I can’t think of anything that we do that is more important than figuring out how to develop the work force that we need. We can’t be passive about it. And we can’t let both economic conditions and the changing work culture batter us about.

We need to take control and find creative ways to get what we need in terms of work force. And creating the inspector/mentorship positions is just one of the ways we are doing it.
Burroughs continues to improve

Gary Burroughs, Equipment Operator Senior in Emporia, is steadily improving after the August 1 crash that seriously injured him and killed co-worker Richard Cunningham.

As of mid September, Burroughs was sitting up and walking without a cane as well as doing physical therapy, according to Highway Maintenance Supervisor Ron Swogar.

During a recent visit, Burroughs told Swogar, “I got my work boots in the closet – let’s put ‘em on so I can go home and get back to work.”

Swogar and his crew members talk with Burroughs regularly and are anxious for him to return. “He’s greatly missed here,” Swogar said. “I think you’ll see this shop light up when he comes back.”

The tentative plan is that Burroughs will be able to go home from the hospital late September.

Tusk gets new home

WICHITA -- The mammoth tusk discovered during construction on US-54 in Wichita in August has a new home at Exploration Place. According to the Associated Press, restoration work will take place on the tusk and it will also be on display.

The chipped rings offer a clue to the age of the mammoth because the animals grew an ivory layer every year. Though an official count of the rings hasn’t been conducted, scientists estimate that the creature was 50 years old, 16 1/2 feet tall and weighed several tons when it died.

Concrete canoe competition

A team of students from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, won this

Promoting KDOT’s safety message has a new game plan

By Stan Whitley

KDOT has a new game plan to promote its safety message - utilizing the broad appeal of collegiate athletics.

Kansas State University, the University of Kansas and Wichita State University will join forces to help KDOT advertise and promote its safety messages at some of the state’s successful college athletic programs. KSU football, KU men’s and women’s basketball and WSU men’s basketball and baseball will serve as outlets used to reach thousands of sports fans at the games and through television and radio.

Kansas State football coach Bill Snyder, KU men’s basketball coach Bill Self and Wichita State men’s basketball coach Mark Turgeon are a few of the coaches who will assist in the campaign.

KDOT hopes that by using popular coaches at the three universities more people will pause to hear the safety messages and take them to heart.

Wearing your safety belts and never drinking and driving are important messages that will be stressed by the coaches to promote safety.

“Far too many families are affected every day by impaired drivers,”

‘Even good drivers are involved in crashes, that’s why everyone should be prepared and buckle up every time they get in a vehicle.’

Mark Turgeon

KDOT helps with hurricane efforts

Jake Bausch (left) and Timothy Baker, KDOT Equipment Operator Seniors at the District One Crew Shop in Topeka, secure the two Kansas Bureau of Investigation vehicles being taken to Louisiana for the hurricane relief efforts onto a KDOT trailer. Bausch and Baker drove the trailer to Louisiana on Sept. 15 and will return later to pick it up.
The Office of Chief Counsel’s dedication and concern for KDOT is above reproach, according to Director of Operations Mike Crow. The office has saved the state an enormous amount of money and works hard to educate KDOT employees on how to avoid lawsuits.

The office was honored as an Example of Excellence for the second quarter of 2005. Secretary Deb Miller attended the event in Topeka on Sept. 13.

Crow said the entire legal staff has provided outstanding service. Some examples of this are:

◆ Sally Howard is always available for consultation and provides professional, accurate advice.

◆ Vicky Johnson spent many weeks traveling the state to instruct the district personnel on the importance of documentation and constructing a project according to plan.

◆ Johnson and Gelene Savage have spent many hours and many overtime hours defending KDOT and negotiating settlements.

◆ Leslie Spencer-Fowler has worked many hours on personnel problems and her dedication is admirable.

Legal will always advise the proper person if they observe a problem that could make KDOT liable and will make appropriate suggestions of ways to remedy the problem.

“The Office of Chief Counsel is very well respected by the legal community and they deserve this recognition,” Crow concluded.

Office members are Russell Ash, Sharron Bohnenkemper, Glenda Brown, John Cassidy, Colleen Collette, Oswald Dwyer, Leslie Spencer Fowler, Rebecca Hewett, Sally Howard, Vicky Johnson, Daniel Kahler, Sally Langsdorf, Edmond Leboeuf, Maria Martinez, LaVonnda McCabe, Jessica McCormick, Sherri Perry, Nancy Rush, Heather Salerno, Gelene Savage, Sharon Smart and Amy Smith.

Do you know of a KDOT group, team, unit or office that has gone above the call of duty? Then nominate them for the Example of Excellence award. All KDOT employees are encouraged to suggest ideas and can now fill out Form DOT 1204. Once it is filled out, the nomination is then sent to the selected Division Director, Bureau Chief, District Engineer, Area Engineer or Subarea Supervisor who can then sign the form and submit the nomination to Transportation Information.

Hard copies of the form are still available by calling Transportation Information at 785-296-3585 and require the signature of one of the supervisors listed above.

The award is given quarterly with nominations for the third quarter due to the Bureau of Transportation by Sept. 30, and nominations for the fourth quarter are due Dec. 31. -K.S.
impact is going to be,” Rissky said.

It’s important to be efficient when performing maintenance duties, Rissky said. However, mowing, snow removal, pothole patching, placing rock on shoulders, sign maintenance, and striping on roadways are critical tasks that must be done.

“Everything has its consequences that you don’t do,” he said. “If we start to get behind, it’s really hard to catch up.”

KDOT is a big fuel user, “but we’re out there protecting the traveling public and we need to make it safe, so we can’t cut back much of what we do,” Rissky said.

KDOT spent about $7 million on approximately four million gallons of fuel in Fiscal Year 2005. For every penny diesel fuel goes up for the following year, that’s $40,000 in additional costs.

Increased fuel costs could affect the construction lettings, Rissky said. The price KDOT pays for a project could go up because of increased costs to contractors.

Motorists may also begin to reduce the amount they travel in general. KDOT’s revenue from the fuels tax could be impacted.

“If everyone starts buying less gas, then we have less money coming in and we have to pay higher bills – it hurts us both ways,” Rissky said.

Availability of supplies could be a problem as well. Asphalt is a residual byproduct of making gasoline and diesel production. According to Rissky, a significant portion of asphalt cement used in Kansas comes through New Orleans.

“If they can’t get it through, or their refineries can’t get it processed, then some of our supply goes away,” Rissky said. “It could really impact us in the future.”

But Rissky has seen a similar spike in costs for petroleum products. He was in Construction and Maintenance when the first Gulf War started, and a construction letting was planned the day after it began. The letting was canceled to allow things to settle down, he said. “Contractors didn’t know how to bid and we didn’t know what was going to happen,” Rissky said. “It turned out that it wasn’t much of an impact, but it looked like it was going to be serious.”

KDOT will continue to construct and maintain the 10,000 miles of highways in Kansas and monitor the effects on supplies and budgets. “We just don’t know what’s going to happen,” Rissky said.
Maintenance Expo ‘05

More than 800 people attended the 7th annual KDOT Maintenance Expo in Salina on Sept. 7 and 8, setting a record for the event. Numerous demonstrations, classes, and speeches took place, as shown on this page, to inform people of new technologies and techniques to keep motorists safe and provide better service to the traveling public. Jeff Beatty (middle right), an anti-terrorism specialist, spoke about transportation workers recognizing potential safety and security threats along highways and reporting them to authorities.
All change is painful

By David Greiser
District Two Public Affairs Manager

A wise man once explained to me how all change is painful. It is. Minor changes like misplacing your keys can cause pain in the form of frustration when you momentarily fear they are lost. A major change like the loss of a loved one causes great pain and an overwhelming sense of loss. When dealing with change such as the great loss that is New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf coast, we use words like tragedy and catastrophe to try to define the horror. Such a tragedy merits discussion but I’ll leave that to others to do in another time and place.

I am only prepared to offer a little insight into lesser changes, changes in feelings toward others often caused by a disagreement or a misunderstanding possibly the result of a breakdown in communication. But the fact is, as a result of the conflict, we feel a form of pain nonetheless.

Every conflict represents a potential loss whether it is between spouses, co-workers, neighbors or total strangers. We realize the potential for loss (or the perceived potential for loss) and react positively or negatively toward the other person. A positive reaction moves us toward understanding. Through effectively communicating in an open manner we can get clarification or seek a compromise. A negative reaction causes us to take a defensive posture. We effectively shut down and dig in to defend our position. By choosing to be active (positive) rather than reactive (negative) when confronted, we place ourselves in a position to achieve that “win-win” situation we’ve all heard so much about.

In a recent article entitled “Resolving Everyday Conflicts Sooner,” written by Kare Anderson, she identifies four steps she refers to as the “roundtrip to resolution” which are worth remembering when faced with this type of situation.

1) Tell yourself the truth. We, being only human, tend to react defensively when we feel affronted. When facing confrontation we experience the most negative reaction we can summon. When we feel this happening it is time to slow down and seek clarity on what it is that we want. I’m not talking about wanting to win the fight and make a point. I am talking about whatever it is that we really want for ourselves. Keep in mind that when sharing the truth, either with yourself or another, it’s a good idea to remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “Whenever you have truth it must be given with love, or the message and the messenger will be rejected.”

2) Reach out to the other side. Ask yourself these questions. What is the other person’s greatest need? What is most important to them? Often times you will discover that what they need is not to defeat you but to put their own fears to rest and gain a clear understanding of the situation at hand.

3) Listen attentively to the other side. (I have to remind myself about this one but when I get it right, it really pays dividends.) Everyone needs to be heard before they’ll listen. You have got to listen to the other side and make sure they know that you have heard their concerns. By understanding the positions and concerns of those involved you become able to respond in an honest and effective way. This is no time for a power trip! This is the time to breathe deeply and slow down. No matter your feelings toward the position taken by the other side, it is imperative that you treat everyone involved with the patience and respect you want for yourself.

4) Prove you are fair. This is a tough one but it really does work. When offering up a possible solution, address the needs and concerns of the other person first. I told you it was tough didn’t I? It is imperative that you explain, in a way they can understand, the benefits to them which will come from your proposal. Only after this is done will they be prepared to accept the benefits you expect to realize for yourself.

The more opportunities you provide for others to participate along the way, the more likely they will work with you toward finding a solution.

I know this may strike some of you as just so much hooey but if you try it you’ll be surprised by the results. This is an excellent way to reduce the level of pain for all involved, whether talking to the public, your congressman, or even your child. Remember, it is essential that you are truthful with yourself as well as others. Besides, it’s easier than the alternative. As Mark Twain once said, “If you tell the truth you don’t have to remember anything.”
Retirees

The following employees will officially retire from on Oct. 1.

Headquarters
Norvell L. Washburn, Professional Civil Engineer I in Design – 35 years of state service

District One
Mary Elliott, Right of Way Appraiser II at Olathe – 20 years of state service

District Five
Austin R. Copeland, Engineering Technician Senior at Wichita – 43 years of state service
Larry N. Hoag, Engineering Technician Senior at El Dorado – 38 years of state service

ARE ON SALE!

KDOT INSULATED MUGS

White 22 oz. mugs with red lids feature this blue logo shown above.

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.

-Cost: only $6 per mug!-

Refills in this mug will be available in the Eisenhower cafeteria! Refills will be only 85 cents.

Name _________________________________________
Work phone:_______________________
Address:______________________________________________________________________________________

Number ordered: ________    Amount enclosed: ____________

For more details, call Ruby Hilton at 785-296-0603
Riding for United Way

More than 80 people participated in the third annual KDOT United Way Flint Hills Kaw Valley charity ride on Sept. 11. Participants started in front of ESOB and rode 89 miles.

Deaths

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

Robert A. Johnson, 85, died August 24 in Wamego. Johnson worked as an Engineering Aide for KDOT and retired after 39 years of state. He is survived by his wife Eleanor, two daughters, one granddaughter and one brother.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Wamego VFW or the Harold Johnson American Legion Post 172 and sent in care of Stewart Funeral Home, P.O. Box 48, Wamego, 66547.

Shirley J. Florea, 59, died July 26 at Scandia. Florea worked as a Clerk for KDOT before retiring. She is survived by four brothers.

Safety

Continued from page 3

◆ “Seat belts save lives and it takes only a couple of seconds to click it,” said Self.
◆ “Even good drivers are involved in crashes, that’s why everyone should be prepared and buckle up every time they get in a vehicle,” said Turgeon.

“All of the coaches have eagerly demonstrated their commitment to safety,” said Pete Bodyk, Chief of Traffic Safety. “Their contributions are part of the Kansas Safe Driving campaign to lower fatalities on our roadways.”

The Kansas Safe Driving campaign got under way this year as an effort of KDOT, the Kansas Highway Patrol and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to raise awareness of the fatalities on the state’s roads.

Signing and public service announcements during the games and on video boards will promote safety messages. There will also be advertising on radio and television and other message opportunities throughout the games.

In 2004, there were 456 people killed in crashes on Kansas roadways. Sixty-six percent of people killed in traffic crashes weren’t wearing safety belts and 25 percent of fatalities were caused by drunk drivers.

MILESTONES

KDOT salutes its employees celebrating anniversaries in September

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<th>10 YEARS</th>
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<td>Timothy Baker . Independence</td>
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<td>Ronald Pillar . . . . . Columbus</td>
<td>Lynn Rethman . . . . . . . Topeka</td>
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This information is compiled by each Office, Bureau, Division, and District.

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<td>Robert Bergman . . . . . Abilene</td>
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more jobs for Kansans. Projects like this are planned across the state and I pledge my support to the current transportation program so that we can be sure that those projects are completed as promised.”

The Focus435 project is jointly funded by the federal government, KDOT and the City of Overland Park. KDOT funding comes from Kansas’ System Enhancement Program, a component of the state’s 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Program. Congressman Dennis Moore was instrumental in securing federal funding for the project.

“This critical project will enhance the quality of life for Kansans by reducing gridlock and traffic congestion,” said Congressman Moore. “Continued investment in our transportation infrastructure is vital to the future of our state. Improving our highways boosts Kansas’ economic development goals by creating jobs and positioning our state for continued growth.”

The Focus435 project includes construction of a new interchange at I-435 and Antioch Road, widening I-435 from six to eight lanes between Metcalf Avenue and US-69, building new, continuous auxiliary lanes along I-435 between the Antioch and US-69 interchanges, replacing the existing loop ramp in the southwest quadrant at I-435/US-69 with a southbound-to-eastbound fly-over ramp, partially reconstructing the US-69/103rd Street interchange and constructing four noise walls along I-435 and US-69.

“Projects such as this don’t happen without strong partnerships and we are pleased to have teamed up with the City of Overland Park and the federal government on these important improvements,” said Secretary Miller. “Without the support of Congressman Moore, Senator Roberts and Senator Brownback and their advocacy for transportation projects, this wouldn’t be possible.”

Work on the first phase of construction starts this September and is slated to continue in three phases through 2009. Impact on I-435 traffic is expected to be minimal this year, with only brief lane reductions expected. The hike/bike trail has been closed at Antioch while the interchange is being built.

“The City of Overland Park truly appreciates all the diligent work of past and current federal, state and local leaders who have played a significant role in this project’s development,” Mayor Gerlach said.

Additional information and background on the Focus435 project is available online at www.focus435.org.
year’s American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Concrete Canoe Competition this summer.

The contest, according to Public Works magazine, provided students with a practical application of the engineering principles they learned in the classroom.

The races, both endurance and sprint, counted for 25 percent of the teams’ overall score. The remaining 75 percent was comprised of an academic paper, an oral presentation detailing their design, and the final racing canoe.

Wildlife walkways are working in Virginia

Because the Virginia Department of Transportation is installing a wildlife walkway under the new Route 17 bridges and oversized culverts for animal passages, the question becomes if you build it, will they come? The answer, according to a study conducted by the Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC), appears to be yes.

Seven structures are being monitored to study the effectiveness of highway underpasses, according to Public Roads magazine.

Cameras recorded 1,600 photos in the first six months of the study from June to November 2004. Preliminary results indicate 775 deer crossings and more than 1,000 crossings of smaller mammals (raccoons, opossums, coyotes, groundhogs, cats, and even squirrels).

Kansas leads in reducing deaths

WASHINGTON - Kansas led the nation in reducing the number of alcohol-related fatalities in 2004, with a 29 percent decrease, according to an Associated Press article.

The state has targeted drunken driving through media campaigns, use of sobriety checkpoints and extra law enforcement patrols during weekends and at special events.

“We’re getting more and more local law enforcement involved in our mobilizations,” said Pete Bodyk, Traffic Safety Bureau Chief.

Nationwide, drunken-driving deaths declined slightly and fell in 32 states last year.

Research productivity

Faculty specializing in transportation in the departments of economics and civil engineering contributed to Kansas State University receiving a ninth place ranking in the world in transportation research productivity.

The article in the spring 2005 Transportation Journal examined which university’s faculty is most productive based on the number of articles published in academic journals that specialize in transportation, logistics and supply chain management. It also looked at author’s affiliations from 1999-2004 of the eight internationally most respected journals in these fields.

This is the first time K-State achieved a top 10 ranking since it was initiated in the late 1960s.

Welcome new KDOT employees!

Headquarters
Pamela Anderson, Accountant III, Fiscal Services
William Cavalieri, Applications Developer III, Computer Services
DeAnn Chandler, Administrative Assistant, Design
Tammi Clark, Industrial Hygienist, Construction and Maintenance
Frances McAdoo, Applications Developer II, Computer Services
District Three
Kristen Brands, Program Consultant II, Norton
Laura Washburn, Administrative Assistant, Norton
District Four
Denise Morgan, Administrative Specialist, Pittsburg
District Five
Brent Haynes, Engineering Associate I, Wichita
David Oberle, Equipment Mechanic, Hutchinson
District Six
Billie Hope, Safety Specialist, Garden City
Sidney Warner, Program Consultant II, Garden City

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.
Secretary Miller:

Thank you for the assistance that your staff extended to our staff at Cross Timbers State Park in trenching for utility lines serving the new log cabins at this park. In particular, we appreciate the extra effort from your staff including Gary Ward, Duane Utley, Gary Wiles and Danny Kraft. The rock saw provided by your agency saved us close to $4,000 in construction costs. The assistance that your agency and staff provided is an excellent example of state agencies working together to increase efficiency for the State of Kansas.

Enclosed you will find photographs of the two cabins. The first cabin just opened for rental on July 22. The second cabin will be ready for rental starting August 19. Thank you for your assistance in making these cabins attractive to Cross Timbers State Park.

Sincerely,
J. Michael Hayden
Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Dear Mr. Dockery:

The Neosho County Board of Commissioners would like to express their sincere thanks for the time and labor your employees expended on the cleanup in our county after the June 30th windstorm. We want you to know their able service was greatly appreciated. We greatly appreciate you sending them.

Respectfully yours,
Donnie Yarnell, Chairman; Royce Edwards, and Scott Parish

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