

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

March 1, 2023

Officials break ground on U.S. 69 Express

Governor Laura Kelly, Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt, Rep. Sharice Davids and other state and local representatives broke ground on 69Express, the state's first express toll lane project, on Feb. 16 in Overland Park.

"69Express will ensure that commuters can travel quickly and safely to their destinations and move freight efficiently throughout the state, further cementing Kansas as critical to interstate commerce," Governor Kelly said. "This is a smart investment for our state, and I'm so glad we're finally moving dirt and getting this done."

This project is funded in part through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed in 2022.

"KDOT and the Kansas Turnpike Authority are excited to get this first-of-its-kind project for Kansas underway," Acting Secretary Calvin Reed said. "69Express will help manage congestion and keep traffic moving in all directions well into the future."

Pre-construction work is underway, with construction slated to begin in the spring of 2023. The express lanes



Governor Laura Kelly was one of several people who spoke about the improvements in reducing congestion and increasing safety at the groundbreaking event for the U.S. 69 project in Overland Park. Photo by KDOT Multimedia Services

are scheduled to open by the end of 2025.

Traffic on U.S. 69 is expected to increase 45% by 2050.

The 69Express project extends from 103rd Street to 167th Street and will add two new lanes to U.S. 69 – one northbound and one southbound. The new lanes will be tolled using dynamic pricing, which manages congestion by maintaining a free flow of traffic in the express lanes and reducing traffic in the two non-tolled lanes.

For information on the 69Express project, visit www.69express.org.



At left, from left, Acting Secretary Calvin Reed, Governor Laura Kelly, Rep. Sharice Davids and Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt broke ground with celebratory confetti on Feb. 16 during the event. Photo by Governor's staff

Self-defense skills improve safety

By Kate Craft
District One

Self-defense isn't an everyday skill, and it's not an essential requirement to work at KDOT. It is, however, a skill that can protect you in an assault and, potentially, save your life. On Feb. 1, more than 20 employees from District One and the Eisenhower State Office Building attended a class in Topeka to learn about the basics.

The three-hour course was instructed by KHP Trooper Jodi Clary and included four modules: awareness, assertiveness, weapons of the body/prime target areas and basic kicks. Discussions included how to maintain awareness of one's surroundings, using assertive body and verbal language and other ways to decrease one's potential for becoming a target of assault. Participants also learned about and practiced some basic self-defense techniques with different punches, releases and kicks.

"Nobody plans on being assaulted," said Tammi Clark, KDOT Industrial Hygienist, "but it's something that can happen to anyone. It's always better to be prepared so you can protect yourself."

Another class on May 9 is currently open for enrollment in LMS to District One and ESOB employees. The Division of Safety is planning to schedule trainings outside of District One in the future. If a district is interested in hosting, contact Clark at Tammi.Clark@ks.gov.



KHP Trooper Jodi Clary demonstrates a self-defense technique with assistance from Paul Wilcox, District One Safety Specialist, during a safety class on Feb. 1 about ways to protect yourself in an assault. Photos by Adriane Creviston, Headquarters

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

**Kansas Department of
Transportation**

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Topeka, KS

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Secretary**
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Interim Deputy Secretary
Greg Schieber

**Interim Senior Director/
Fiscal and Asset
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Vanessa Lamoreaux

Administration
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Gelene Savage

Communications
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Engineering and Design
Scott King (Interim)

Field Operations
Clay Adams

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Shawn Brown

**Multimodal Transportation
and Innovation**
Cory Davis

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Chris Herrick

Policy and Legislative Affairs
Joel Skelley

**Program and Project
Management**
Peter Van Sickle

Project Delivery
Tony Menke (Interim)

Safety
Troy Whitworth

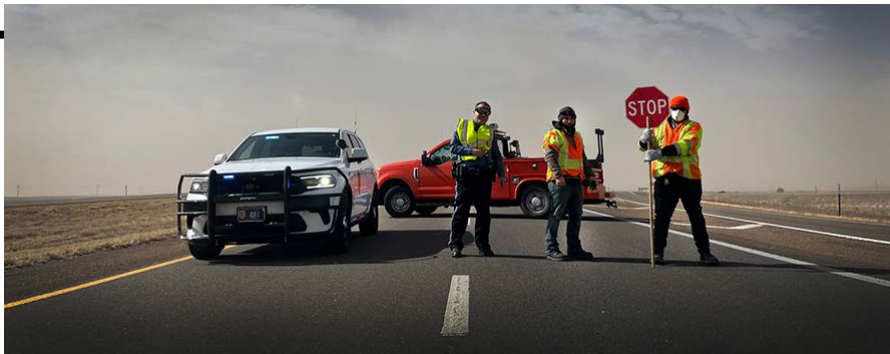
Tornado, dust storms hit southwest Kansas



Hector Terrones, Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Garden City, took this photo of one of the damaged electrical towers along U.S. 50 west of Garden City. Several towers were blown over by a tornado or damaging winds in the area.

The National Weather Service in Dodge City issued severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings for several areas in western Kansas on the late afternoon on Feb. 26. The high winds blew over several electrical towers

(a couple near highways), causing transmission wires to cover U.S. 50. KDOT closed a portion of U.S. 50 west of Garden City that evening, and the highway was reopened on the evening of Feb. 27.



A Feb. 14 dust storm closed a section of U.S. 54 for about four hours due to low visibility and numerous crashes that were blocking the highway. At left, from left, KHP Lt. Doug Reed and KDOT Liberal employees DJ Zuniga and Carlos Camacho stopped traffic at the Kansas/Oklahoma state line attempting to come into Kansas on U.S. 54. At left, law enforcement stopped traffic at the U.S. 54/Western Avenue intersection in Liberal. Photos by Yazmin Moreno, District Six



Employee spotlight: Bill Kritikos, IT Services, Headquarters

What is your Job title?

IT Security Officer.

What sort of duties do you have at work?

Keep all employees and IT system users safe from malware and information theft, encryption of KDOT data and making sure the statewide fiber communications network is functioning correctly. I have a team of two employees who mostly do the functions above.

What kind of music do you like?

Mostly 60s rock and roll, but I also sing in church choirs, have played in a U.S. Army band and was the president of the Lawrence Barn Dance association for many years.

What is the most exciting part of your job?

Getting the system back online and functioning correctly if something is not performing as it should.

What is something you're proud of?

My wife, and the four sons and nine grandchildren she made possible.

What is your favorite food?

Almost anything that I can eat. I am allergic to all mammal meats so it is a lot of turkey, chicken, fish and any non-meat foods.

What is your favorite movie?

I like non-fiction movies, but I don't usually like to see them more than one time.

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?

I can usually take apart anything, get it back together and have it function. Everything from a watch to a tractor.

Do you have any pets?

One dog and five cats.



Bill Kritikos has an area in his office with historical items such as his name in early Greek letters, his grade school diploma, a Chinese math calculator and two photos of his mother. Photo by Multimedia Services

Are you a sports fan?

Not so much, but I do like the KU basketball team.

Are you a morning person or a night owl?

It depends on what there is to be done.

Are you a coffee, tea or pop person?

Yes, I like water also.

What's something you enjoy at your job?

The people I work around and with.

What's your favorite season?

Summer. I like the sun and the summer flowers.

What three items would you take with you to a deserted island?

1. A boat. 2. Enough fuel to leave and get back home. 3. My wife.

GETTING TO KNOW

OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.

Cost Share Program aids transportation system

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

In January, work began on a Cost Share project in Chanute that will widen and help relieve congestion at a heavily traveled intersection. Plummer Avenue and 21st Street (Old 39 Highway) is currently closed for the construction of turning lanes and addition of concrete pavement. Conduit is also being placed for traffic signals, which the city plans to install at a later date.

Various industries line the 21st Street corridor, including Orizon Aerostructures. Plummer Avenue is a busy thoroughfare, carrying traffic to and from 35th Street on the south side of town. The Chanute High School and Sports Complex is located along the interchange of 35th Street and U.S. 169, along with other businesses.

When the intersection was announced as a Cost Share project during 2021, Chanute City Manager Todd Newman expressed excitement over the funding. "This is a huge addition to this intersection," he said. The City



Work is underway at the intersection of Plummer Avenue and 21st Street in Chanute.

of Chanute was awarded \$474,000, or approximately 25% of the overall project cost. Mission Construction, of St. Paul, is contractor on the project, which is expected to be finished this spring.

Before/after on West Maple Street

Photos before (left) and after (right) improvements took place on West Maple Street at Independence. This Cost Share project was announced in 2020 and completed in 2022 between the Whiskey Creek Bridge and Peter Pan Road. Photos by Priscilla Petersen, District Four



K-14 realignment enters last construction season

By Tim Potter
District Five

The \$81.7 million K-14 realignment project in Reno and Rice counties is heading into its final construction season. Completion remains on schedule for June.

Great Bend Acting Construction Engineer Neisha Vetter recently said the new highway is three-quarters built.

The project will provide a 15-mile asphalt expressway, with paved shoulders, connecting Hutchinson to Sterling on a more efficient route for motorists. The new alignment is being built so that it could be expanded in future years. The work is moving south from Rice County to Reno County. The project began in May of 2021.

In summary, here's what's been done: All bridge work has been completed, and the earth work will be finished soon. Most of the surface pavement has been completed in Rice County; some of the base pavement has been installed in Reno County.

What's next: In Reno County, the new bridges over the new interchanges at Nickerson Road and 56th Avenue will be paved. Those two streets are expected to be reopened to traffic later this spring, Vetter said. Although the new highway at Nickerson Road and 56th Avenue interchanges and the ramps there won't be open until later, motorists will be able to use the new bridges over the new alignment.

Asphalt pavement constitutes the bulk of the remaining work. Moving into the spring, crews will start with base pavement because the surface layer requires warmer weather.

What could slow progress? Too much rain, she said. But as more of the base pavement gets completed, that should make the project less vulnerable to potential rain delays, she said. "As we get off the dirt, we're better prepared, in better shape when it rains."

Along with pavement, the new highway will need permanent signs, fencing and pavement markings.

Bob Bergkamp Construction Co. Inc., of Wichita, is the primary contractor.



Aerial views of the K-14 project from January show ongoing work at the 56th Avenue interchange (above) and at the Broadway interchange (below) just north of Sterling. Photos by Craig Schartz, District Five



Meeting opportunities expanded at new training center

By Ashley Perez
District Two

The nearly 90-year-old annex building was a familiar sight to District Two staff in Salina. It was originally built as the division building, then served as the Area Four construction building and lastly was used as the district annex building.

It provided offices for tech staff and some storage, but only offered a smaller meeting room upstairs, which was not compatible for district meetings as it was not ADA compliant. Age, upkeep and functionality made it necessary to replace, and the building was demolished and removed in October 2021.

After complete removal of the old building and site prep, work began for the new building in November 2021. Major construction for the new District Two Training Center was completed this past January.

The new ADA compliant building can easily accommodate meetings with up to 65 guests with one large conference room and offers six offices for district staff. The added conference space is a needed addition to the basement conference room at the main District Office. In the past month, the new building accommodated a large leadership meeting and a district annual construction meeting.

“The district looks forward to the capabilities this new building will offer and to hold more meetings here in the future,” said District Maintenance Engineer James Roudybush.



Top: Former annex building. Above: Demolition of the building. Left: New District Two Training Center in Salina. Photos by Ashley Perez, District Two



New staff to focus on public involvement efforts

Involving the public on transportation decisions has taken place since road construction began in Kansas. It has evolved, and in the late 1990s, KDOT began including public involvement efforts on many construction, maintenance and other projects to help address concerns from the public.



Vanessa Lamoreaux



Ames Howard



Char Norville

teams, Project Management Consultants and many others throughout the agency. Norville said she and Howard look forward to meeting co-workers across the state to learn more about project management, overall strategies and

A variety of internal KDOT staff and external consulting partners have had a part in public involvement through the years. To help with this undertaking, Public Involvement Specialists Ames Howard and Charlotte Norville have recently started at the KDOT Headquarters office.

“Public Involvement helps KDOT and its customers work together so that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered,” Norville said. “By fostering two-way communication between Kansans and KDOT, all those involved can help shape the overall decisions needed throughout the project.”

To facilitate citizen participation, it takes teamwork between District Public Affairs Managers, the Communications team, project managers, project

current community engagement efforts as they become involved in more projects.

“Public involvement is not only required, but also the right way for KDOT to do business,” Howard said. “Many great ideas come from the community and are incorporated into KDOT projects and programs. Not to mention, it can save a lot of headaches and dollars along the way.”

KDOT’s public involvement efforts are directed by Interim Senior Director Vanessa Lamoreaux. Contact Norville and Howard at Char.norville@ks.gov and Ames Howard at Ames.howard@ks.gov. The KDOT publication “[Sharing the Future: Public involvement in the Kansas transportation system](#),” on the KDOT website, details the history and development of the agency’s public involvement activities.



STEP BACK IN TIME ...

This historic photo shows old paving steam rollers that were being used to improve streets in Topeka in 1887.

Bridge replacement planned on K-181

By Lisa Mussman
District Three

Work to replace a bridge on K-181 in Osborne County is expected to begin in mid-March.

The bridge, spanning Twin Creek, is located approximately 5 miles south of Downs. It was originally constructed in 1954 and will be replaced with a three-span, haunched slab bridge. The highway will be closed at the bridge during construction, and traffic will be detoured on U.S. 24, U.S. 281 and K-18.

Conditions permitting, KDOT expects the \$1.6 million project to be completed in November. Bridges Inc., of Newton, is the primary contractor.

Stephen Bass' road squad and Peter Tobaben's bridge squad designed the project.



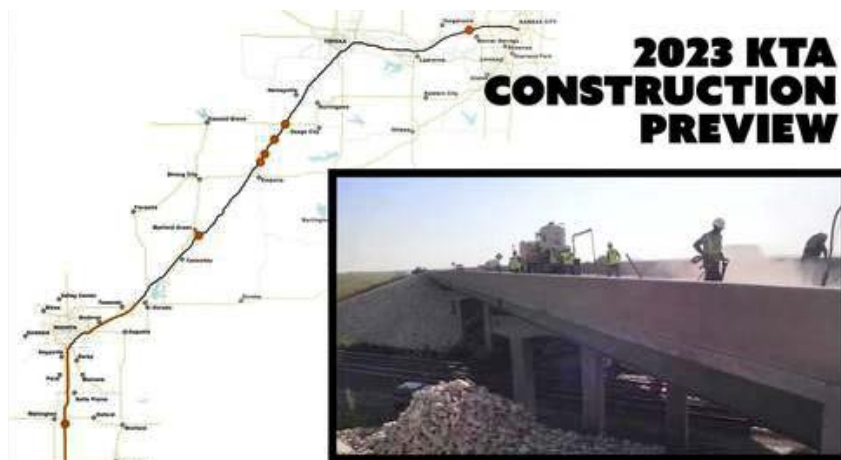
KDOT will replace the current continuous span structure, seen above and below, with a three-span, haunched slab bridge. Photos by Lisa Mussman



KTA briefs

The KTA has slated 18 roadway projects for the 2023 construction season, five of which carry over from the 2022 construction year. The construction season will begin mid-March and continue into late fall.

Watch this 2023 construction preview video [here](#), or read KTA's news release [here](#) for more information.



The KTA launched a new MyKTAG mobile app and redesigned website in early February. These new tools are part of KTA's move to become a cashless system in 2024 and were designed to optimize the customer experience. The app improves the process for customers to manage their K-TAG accounts. Learn more about the app [here](#).

KDOT job opportunities highlighted at career fair

By Tracy Statton
District Five

Wichita Metro Engineer Mike Longshaw and Wichita Area Superintendent David Lechner recently went back to high school to help promote career opportunities at KDOT. The co-workers spoke to the students at Wichita North High School during a career fair on Feb. 16.

Lechner said it's about making connections. "You need to be able to speak with them to pique their interest about all of the different things that we do. It's a great place for youth to learn many different skills."

He tells students to "try to become well-rounded in the skills that you develop, as you never know what you may do here."

He also encourages employees at KDOT to help spread the word about the variety of careers available at KDOT.

"We are the people who know more about the job than anybody," Lechner said. "We know all of the things that we enjoy, we know what successes we've had and we also know that it has provided for our families. We are giving the story firsthand, the good and even the not so good. We will tell them how it is. We need to be open and honest when we are talking to people about our jobs and what they have meant for us and our families



Wichita Metro Engineer Mike Longshaw and Wichita Area Superintendent David Lechner speak to Wichita North High School students about career opportunities at KDOT. Photo by Tracy Statton, District Five

throughout the years."

Wichita North High School has more than 2,000 students. The career fair was held in conjunction with parent-teacher conferences - they hoped they planted the seed within students or even parents attending. "I think that we're definitely on the right track," Lechner said.

Trivia!

Paper Moon – 50th anniversary

1. Tatum O'Neal was 10 years old when she won an award for the movie – what was it?
2. Tatum pretended to smoke cigarettes – what were they made from?
3. Who was the relative that also starred in the movie with Tatum?

4. The movie script was adapted from a book – what was the book's name?
5. One of the locations used to film the movie was in Kansas, in the town of Wilson. What was it?
6. Name the actor and his daughter who were originally going to star in the movie.
7. Who starred in Tatum's role in the television series that ran in 1974?

Event celebrates Kansas aviation accomplishments

Aviation stakeholders from across Kansas discussed jobs, infrastructure and emerging technologies as part of Aviation Day at the Capitol on Feb. 16. KDOT and the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education sponsored the event.

Several organizations participated and had booths with information and demonstrations for visitors. Governor Laura Kelly, Acting Secretary Calvin Reed and other officials also spoke that morning in regard to the various opportunities the aviation industry provides to the state.

“Whether it be for farming, logistics, military, commercial or private use, aviation plays a vital role in Kansas’ economy,” Governor Kelly said. “From providing tax credits to encourage workers to join the field to investing in advanced aerospace research, I will continue to do whatever I can to ensure we remain the ‘Air Capital of the World.’”

Kansas has the third largest concentration of aviation workers in the United States, and the aviation industry contributes \$7 billion to the state’s gross domestic product annually.



Top photo: Governor Laura Kelly speaks at the Aviation Day celebration on Feb. 16 with (from left): Federal Aviation Administration Deputy Regional Administrator Debra Sanning, KDOT Aviation Director Bob Brock and Acting Secretary Calvin Reed. Middle and bottom photos: Visitors check out booths to learn different ways the aviation industry benefits the Kansas economy. Photos by KDOT Multimedia Services

Trivia answers

1. She won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.
2. Lettuce.
3. Her father, Ryan O’Neal.

4. “Addie Pray.”
5. The Midland Hotel.
6. Paul Newman and his daughter, Nell Potts.
7. Jodie Foster.

Ask questions when learning new things

By Troy Whitworth
Director of Safety

So, what does safety look like? I grew up around guns. My dad always had a shotgun – it was behind the door of my parents' bedroom. He made it very clear to me to not touch the gun. In fact, I wasn't allowed in their bedroom without them being there. One of my sisters is a few years older than me, and we were reminiscing about this. This requirement had been ingrained in her as well. Do not go in their bedroom without one of them being there, and don't touch the gun.

My first gun was a BB gun. I had hunter education in school. After that, my brother, who is 20 years older than me, gave me a .22 rifle and a 20-gauge shotgun. He spent time talking to me about gun safety. Even to this day, we get together several times a year to spend time together and to hunt. So again, I have been around guns all my life.

A few years back, I was teaching gun handling to someone new to the sport. And you know it's important to be thorough when teaching the processes and procedures of a new task. I was explaining the importance of not pointing the end of the barrel at someone when handling any gun. I went over the most important part first - the safety mechanism.

I explained, moving the safety mechanism to red means it's ready to fire. When the safety is moved off red, the safety is on. This is when a question came out that I didn't expect. Why doesn't red mean safe? For many things, red means stop. Which could be thought of as the gun is safe and will not fire. The concept didn't make sense to them.

For me, red means fire. How can that not make sense

to others? This did get me thinking, though. How easy is it for people to mistake something based off their previous life experiences? Not confirming this could have been an innocent mistake, but it easily could have cost someone their life. You sure don't want to make a mistake about whether the gun's safety is on or not. Of course, that is also why you never point a gun at someone, loaded or unloaded.

If the person I was training hadn't asked the question about the gun safety, they may have forgot the most important part of the answer the next time they picked up a gun. Whether the item you're learning about is a

gun, a tool, a piece of equipment, etc. - any technical things we do in our lives get better with repetition.

Safety protocols must be committed to memory. If someone teaches us something one time, do we remember all the details? In my experience it takes a minimum of three times to get things stored in my brain. But what if it's

months before I do this task again? I have to repeat it every so often to remember the finer details.

When teaching something new, give people hands-on training - just showing them doesn't work. Touching and working with the item helps to get a process to stick. Demonstrate the task as many times as needed, then allow them to demonstrate to you what they saw. They may be either slow or nervous the first couple times, but this gives them the opportunity to work through the process and learn in a safe environment.

You as the trainer can improve safety for the task by showing what to do and not to do. You also can share tips to help them gain confidence and experience, and it will most likely build a great relationship between you and them. For your family and mine.



Meetings across state help inform public on projects

By Delaney Tholen, District One,
and Ames Howard, Headquarters

Public meetings have taken place recently across the state to help inform concerned citizens on upcoming transportation projects.

To help educate the public about the first Restricted Crossing U-Turn being built in Kansas, a meeting took place Feb. 23 in Bonner Springs. The project is part of a KDOT Strategic Safety Initiative, and it is being built at the intersection of U.S. 73 (K-7) and Parallel Parkway in Wyandotte County.

The project includes grading and concrete resurfacing for the RCUT installation, which will restrict left turns at the intersection and direct traffic to the U-turn. Work is taking place in multiple phases and is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

An open house took place on Feb. 21 in Leavenworth regarding the new Centennial Bridge. More than 100 attended to learn more about the bridge features and environmental impact information.

Details on the K-96 improvements project were presented to the public on Feb. 2 in Wichita. The project



Visitors review project materials at a Feb. 23 public meeting held at the Bonner Springs shop. Photo by Delaney Tholen, District One

involves upgrades to K-96 between the I-135 and I-35 interchanges, including expanding the highway from four to six lanes, and improving seven interchanges.

“It was very encouraging that the public outreach on the K-96 improvements project was so successful. The project team visited with about 120 interested, engaged citizens during the two-hour event,” said Wichita Public Affairs Manager Tom Hein. “We continue to receive comments and suggestions at the project website (k96improvements.com).”



Check out the view

While inspecting a bridge on U.S. 400 in Cherokee County in early February, Engineering Technician Matt Bleier saw a bald eagle perched in a nearby tree and took this photo.

Thank you for your service

Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating state service anniversaries in March.

45 years

Jeffrey Nolting, Engineering Technician Senior, Lawrence

40 years

Debra Lang, Recruiting Manager, Topeka

35 years

Kurtis Kerns, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Quinter

30 years

Chris Hall, Acting Construction Manager, Augusta

Rick Lange, Equipment Mechanic Specialist, Marion

25 years

Chad Dexter, Engineering Technician Supervisor, Topeka

20 years

Elaine Bryant, Applications Developer III, Topeka

Joel Davidson, Applications Developer Supervisor, Topeka

Thomas Nordling Jr., Engineering Technician Specialist, Osage City

Chad Weyer, Engineering Technician Supervisor, Basehor

Ryan White, Equipment Mechanic Senior, Soldier

15 years

Brandon Brown, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Cherokee

10 years

Krista Neske, Accountant II, Topeka

Starting in 2023, KDOT will now highlight employees for every five years of service (beginning with 10 years) in milestones and statewide news releases.

In memory



Leonard Fishburn

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee **Leonard Fishburn**, who passed away on Feb. 18 in Salina. Fishburn worked for KDOT for more than 16 years, starting in 2006. He was an Equipment Operator Senior on the district crew in Salina.

Fishburn was also a Kansas Organization of State Employees representative for the district, and

he served as KOSE Vice President from 2018-2021. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, one son and other extended family members.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **James 'Jim' Farrell**, who passed away on Jan. 26 in Chanute. Farrell worked for KDOT for 36 years, and he retired in 1987. He was the District Four Construction and Materials Engineer.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Kenneth Charles Herin**, who passed away Feb. 2 in Topeka. Herin started at KDOT in 1977 and served for more than 25 years. He was a Conservation Program Specialist I in the Bureau of Design and retired in 2002.

Retirees

The following employee will retire on March 1.

Headquarters

James Shelton, Engineering Technician Senior, Construction & Materials

If you know a KDOT retiree who is not receiving Translines - have them email Kim.stich@ks.gov - thanks