

# Translines EXPRESS

March 23, 2016

## District Four



*The deck of the new bridge over Pottawatomie Creek takes shape on U.S. 59 north of Garnett. Traffic is being carried on the existing bridge, at left. B&B Bridge Company of St. Paul is contractor on the \$5.5 million project. Steve Rocker's road squad and Brad Rognlie's bridge squad designed the projects.*

## Legislature

**March 16 note from Deputy Secretary Jerry Younger** - I've heard from a number of KDOT employees with questions/concerns about House Bill 2725 which was heard in the House Appropriations Committee last week. HB 2725 is the latest proposal to, presumably, limit "pension spiking" – which, in simple terms, is adding some sort of additional payouts into the final salary calculation. This same subject was discussed last fall in a KPERS interim committee with no real action taken at that time. And in fact, much of the same information that was presented to the interim committee was also shared in last week's committee meeting. You may recall from my #KDOT email last fall that the analysis showed that eliminating the sick and vacation leave payout add ons had an insignificant effect on the current KPERS unfunded liability. Different from the proposals floated out in last year's session, HB 2725 did allow payouts of sick and vacation leave to be included in final salary calculations but only up to whatever had been accrued

as of July 1, 2016. The existing cap on payouts of vacation leave (240 hours) and sick leave (480 hours maximum) remained in place for state employees and would become the cap for non-state KPERS covered employees (frankly, the examples of abusing the pension spiking system were happening on the non-state side, anyway). So, no effect on those of us who already have the max numbers on the books right now but not so good for those who intended to be at the max numbers at the time they retired.

There was also some very confusing language in the bill regarding how much vacation leave could be accrued beyond the 240 hours max. Not sure what the intent of that language was and it never really got addressed or answered in last week's committee. Bottom line – there was no action taken in last week's committee and I don't get the sense there is any real momentum on this specific bill. We'll continue to monitor and if there seems to be any movement, we'll keep everyone posted accordingly.

## Trivia!

### NCAA Final Four

1. What team leads all D-1 programs with the most NCAA tourney appearances – 29 – without ever reaching a Final Four?
2. Of Duke's last three title-game appearances (1999, 2001, 2010) what other team was part of that Final Four each time?
3. Coaches with previous Final Four experience have won how many championships games in the last 28 years?
4. Thirty-four of the past 36 national champion teams had at least one of these.
5. Since the field expanded to 64 teams in 1985, how many teams have won the title after losing the opening-round of its conference tournament game?
6. In the past 12 years, how many times has the No. 1 overall seed won the title?
7. How many teams seeded 7th or lower have reached the Final Four?

## District Six



*The first of three projects along a portion of U.S. 54 in Seward County will begin this spring.*

**Ready to start:** Work begins this spring on a 3.5-mile stretch of new alignment for U.S. 54 in Seward County to expand the highway to a four-lane expressway. This is the first of three projects that will transform about 10 miles of U.S. 54 east of Liberal into a four-lane divided highway and will include an additional bridge across the Cimarron River.

Originally selected as a single T-WORKS expansion project, the work has been broken into three segments to allow construction to begin as early as possible. The

first project, which is actually the middle of the three segments, will also improve access to the Arkalon Ethanol Plant located near Hayne.

Michels Corporation of Madison, Wis., is the primary contractor on the \$14.7 million project. The other two project segments are currently scheduled to be let in 2018.

Steve Rocker's road squad and Mark Hurt's bridge squad designed the projects.

## Work Zone Fatality

According to Better Roads, a road worker in South Carolina died on March 14 after he was electrocuted while loading asphalt into a paver.

Javier Lopez-Lira was working with a crew on Shadow Wood Drive in Richland County when the incident occurred. Lopez-Lira was loading asphalt into the paving machine from a dump truck when the bed of the

dump truck somehow came in contact with or close to a power line.

First responders transported him to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead within an hour. A similar incident occurred in October when a worker in Oklahoma was killed as a dump truck bed emptying asphalt hit a power line and electrocuted him.

## Senate Bill 245



*Rep. Mark Hutton, Wichita, speaks this morning at a ceremony recognizing the passage of Senate Bill 245, which authorizes a DUI memorial sign program for Kansas highways. He is joined by Gov. Sam Brownback, right, other legislators and family members impacted by drunk drivers.*

**DUI memorial bill passed:** A bill signed into law by Gov. Sam Brownback today will create visual reminders of the catastrophe of impaired driving.

The bill, known as the "Kyle Thornburg and Kylie Jobe Believe Act," directs the Kansas Secretary of Transportation to establish and implement a DUI memorial sign program for the state highway system. Memorial signs, which KDOT will build, install and maintain with private funds, will display the names of victims of DUI and impaired driving crashes.

Kyle Thornburg, 22, and Kylie Jobe, 20, both of Wichita, were killed five years ago today when the car in which they were returning from a Colorado ski trip was struck

by a pickup truck driven by a drunk driver. The driver of the truck, who also died, was headed the wrong way on I-70 near Wilson when he struck the car.

Under the bill, an application for a memorial sign must be filed by an immediate family member of a victim of an impaired driver crash.

"It's not just about honoring Kyle and Kylie," said Barby Jobe, Kylie's mother. "Most important is to create awareness and have people take time to think about their choices. This didn't have to happen."

The bill, House Substitute for Senate Bill 245, can be seen [here](#).

## KTA

**K-TAG use increases:** The use of K-TAG, the KTA's electronic toll collection program, continues to grow. Over the past two years, K-TAG usage has increased 22 percent. Growth and customer feedback, sparked changes to the K-TAG web site.

Last month, KTA rolled out a new K-TAG account

management system. This system includes the long awaited ability to add a tag to an existing account as well as deactivate a tag and update account information.

Learn more at [www.myktag.com](http://www.myktag.com) and read the press release.



# New Online Account Management

## District Four



East of Parsons, a \$3.9 million project to add passing lanes on both sides of U.S. 400 and resurface the driving lanes began in early March. Temporary traffic signals have been activated at the location of a culvert replacement on the project. Shilling Construction of Manhattan is the contractor on the expansion, which should be completed by late summer. Steve King's road squad and Chris Meyer's bridge squad designed the projects.

## State Computer Use

**A note from Chief Counsel Barb Rankin:** We had a question from a district employee the other day about whether a KDOT computer could be used to contact a legislator, and the inquirer wanted a "yes or no" answer. Since it can't be answered yes or no, I thought it could be helpful to provide the appropriate response to all our employees.

First, state employees, like all Kansas citizens, have the right to express opinions on political subjects (see SOM 1.2.3). However, under SOM 1.15.2 (IT User Policies) KDOT email accounts can only be used for official state business. Employees can use KDOT computers for limited appropriate personal uses, such as sending personal e-mails while on breaks or non-work hours. Since contacting a legislator about an employee's concerns or comments about a legislative matter would be a personal matter and would not constitute official state business, the employee must use a personal email account

although it can be sent by an employee using a KDOT computer on his or her break time. Please remember, an employee has no expectation of privacy for personal business conducted on a state computer. If a KDOT computer is used for any purpose (even for a personal email communication) those emails are not covered by the same confidentiality rules that would cover the emails sent on a private computer or device. For example, any communications sent via a KDOT computer are subject to discovery in litigation matters or open records requests under KORA. Also, while it is fine to identify yourself as a state or KDOT employee when contacting your legislator, you should make it clear the email is not being sent on behalf of KDOT or represents KDOT's views. A statement such as the following would be appropriate: "The views expressed in this email are my own. They do not represent the views of KDOT or the State of Kansas."

## Work Zone Safety

**Work zone safety art contest:** Next Thursday, March 31, is the deadline for teens in grades 8-12 to enter the KTA's digital art contest highlighting National Work Zone Awareness Week. The winner will receive a \$200 Amazon gift card and have the ad published in VYPE magazine and Turnpike Times. Find full contest rules and details at <http://bit.ly/1PBBYSd>.



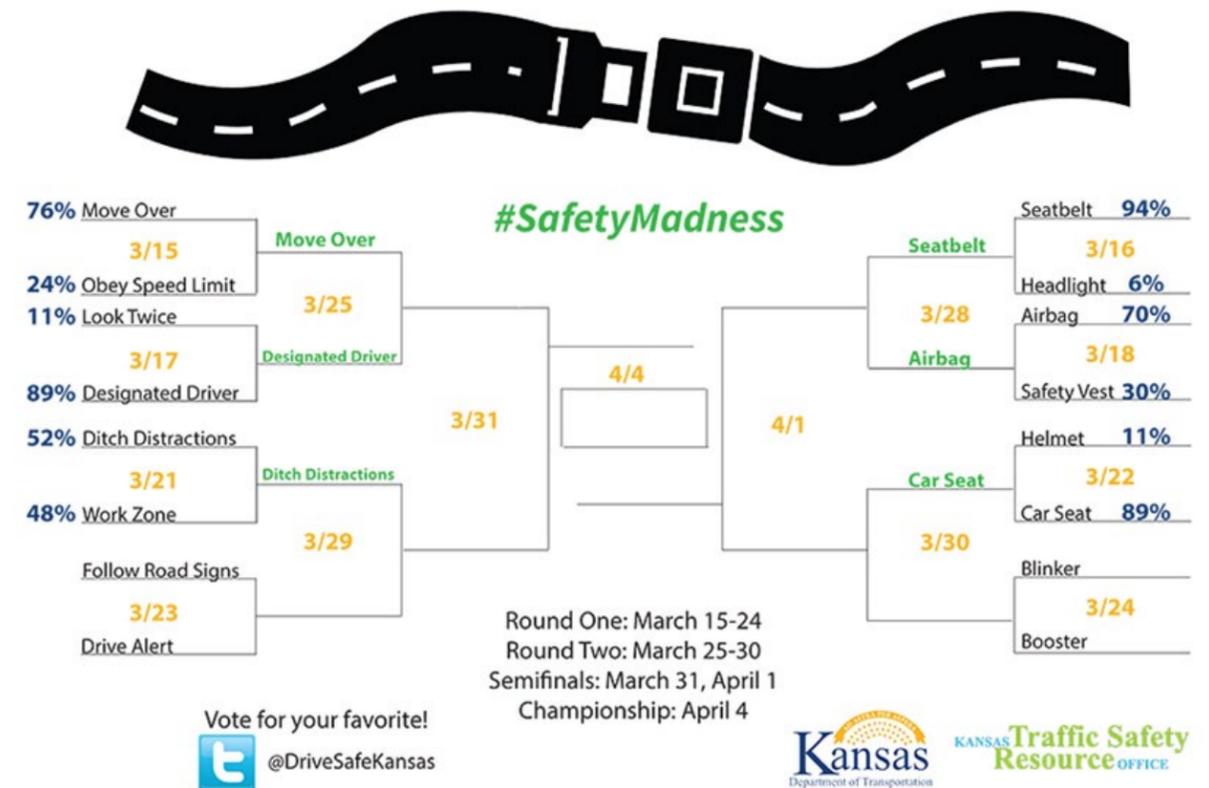
## KDOT Blog

### Kansas Transportation

Tuesday, March 15

#### Safety March Madness

Standings as of March 22



Our friends at the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office have put together a "Safety Madness" bracket. The matchups will be determined by which "team" gets the most votes on social media. You can learn more about each of the tournament teams by clicking [here](#).

Voting continues until April 4. Please cast your vote at <https://twitter.com/DriveSafeKansas>. To see more stories on other transportation topics, check out the regular posts on the Kansas Transportation blog at <http://kansasransportation.blogspot.com/>

## District One



**A view from the project webcam shows construction on the 95th Street/I-35 Diverging Diamond Interchange. Webcam photos and other information about the project can be found at <http://jocogateway.com/>.**

**Trio of I-35 corridor projects:** I-35 motorists will have additional travel delays beginning in late March 2016 as two major construction projects begin adjacent to the Johnson County Gateway I-35/95th Street Diverging Diamond Interchange project. The I-35 projects in Johnson County include:

**I-35 from Southwest Boulevard to 95th Street** - A concrete pavement repair and asphalt overlay project begins today on this 10-mile stretch of I-35, including adjacent interchange ramps. Crews will patch the concrete pavement, followed by a four-inch asphalt overlay on various sections. Work will take place weekday overnights and on weekends. It's scheduled to be completed in October.

**I-35/95th Street Diverging Diamond Interchange** - The I-35/95th Street interchange is closed until August and includes ramps to/from 95th Street and to/from I-35

as well as 95th Street. The interchange is scheduled to be completed by November. This work is part of the Johnson County Gateway Phase Two design-build project currently underway. Kelly Keele's road squad and Mark Hoppe's bridge squad designed the projects.

**I-35 from 151st Street to 135th Street** - Phase two on this two-mile stretch of I-35 started earlier this month. Work includes replacing the existing concrete pavement and sub-base. In 2015, the southbound I-35 lanes were reconstructed with work on the northbound lanes taking place this year. Northbound I-35 will be moved onto the southbound lanes and traffic will be reduced to two lanes each direction. Several exit ramps will be closed throughout the project. It's scheduled to be completed in September. Kelly Keele's road squad and Mark Hoppe's bridge squad designed the projects.

## TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Brigham Young University.
2. Michigan State.
3. 23 of 28.
4. McDonald's High School All-American on their roster.
5. None.
6. Three times.
7. 14 teams, but six have done so in the past six years.

*Have an idea for a news brief or picture that could be featured in an upcoming edition of Translines Express?*

*Please e-mail your suggestions to [translines@ksdot.org](mailto:translines@ksdot.org)*

## Safety

### **KDOT SAFETY TEAM (Together Employees Accomplish More)**

**Slow down:** On Jan. 29, I was preparing for the end of the day by parking my dump truck. Exiting the cab, my foot slipped. I had my three points of contact, so as I fell, my arm and shoulder were strained to keep me from falling down and hitting the ground.

Over the weekend, my arm and shoulder just didn't feel right. When I returned to work after the weekend, I told my supervisor again that I didn't feel right and decided to go to the doctor to get checked out. I am currently off of work as I cannot lift or raise my arm above my head due to the strain.

Every step can be taken to prevent accidents from happening but there are times things like this happen. Slow down and take your time to lower the chances of an accident.



**Sharing safety alerts - this safety series is being shared to help prevent similar accidents from happening.**

## Winter Weather

**Locating snow plows:** According to Better Roads, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has launched a system that will track and monitor snow plows in "near real-time" that will also allow the public to view vehicle location via an Automated Vehicle Location (AVL).

At this time, 860 of the 970 snowplows in CDOT's fleet are fitted with the AVL system. "One of the most frequent comments and questions that we get from the public is 'where are the plows'," says CDOT Director Shailen Bhatt. "This tool will help the public understand

where we are and how we are working to keep the traveling public safe."

Snow plow locations can be seen [here](#).

Vehicle location, travel speed and direction will be visible, but any plows that have not moved for more than 16 minutes will not be shown. The AVL system also shows real-time notifications to the agency on current plow functions, making it easier for crews to manage the fleet, direct plows to where they are needed most as well as making it easier to maintain and repair vehicles quickly.