

# Translines EXPRESS

Dec. 3, 2014

## District Five

**U.S. 54/400 railroad bridge removed:** An abandoned railroad bridge over U.S. 54/400 highway, located between Wichita and Augusta, was removed in mid November. U.S. 54/400 was closed two evenings to facilitate this demolition project. The removal of this unused railroad bridge removed a height restriction that limited some oversized truck shipments and also resulted in a widened clear zone after the bridge abutments and center pier in the highway median were removed. This project was administered and inspected by the El Dorado Area Construction Office.



*Taking out the abandoned railroad bridge allowed a height restriction for vehicles to be removed from this section of U.S. 54/400.*



## Research

**Excellence through research:** KDOT received recognition on Nov. 24 at the AASHTO annual meeting in Charlotte, N.C., for one of its research reports titled "Evaluation of Innovative Traffic Safety Devices at Short-Term Work Zones."

The report provided KDOT insight into what recent innovative products were found to be beneficial to other states, minimizing the need for KDOT to experiment with each product. Each year, AASHTO's Research Advisory Committee collects High Value Research highlights from member states across the nation. These highlights showcase projects that are providing transportation excellence through research. From these submittals, each of the four RAC regions selects its top four projects to form the Sweet Sixteen Awards.



*Secretary Mike King, center, poses with newly-elected AASHTO President John Cox, left, and retiring AASHTO President Mike Hancock after receiving recognition for a research report at the AASHTO annual meeting on Nov. 24 in Charlotte, N.C.*

## District Three

**Back from the ashes:** Less than a year after a fire destroyed their building, the Oakley Subarea crew has already settled into a brand new space.

Shortly before midnight on Jan. 15, 2014, fire crews were dispatched to a fire at the Subarea building, located at the junction of U.S. 40 and 83 in Oakley. The Oakley fire department, along with departments from surrounding communities and several KDOT employees were on the scene to fight the blaze. The building and its contents, including three dump trucks, a loader and a pickup, were a complete loss.

In the days following the fire, aid from KDOT crews around the state started coming in. KTA and District Four each provided dump trucks and the District Three shop provided a pickup and riding lawn mower. All debris from the destroyed building was hauled to the landfill within five days of the fire.

The Oakley office complex was scheduled for a remodernization project in spring 2014, so plans were



Above, a fire destroyed the Oakley Subarea office last January. Below, the new office was opened in October.

modified to include a new office along with the new shop. Construction on the buildings began in May of this year and was completed in October, just in time for the upcoming winter season. In the interim, the Subarea crew shared space with the Area office.

Thanks to all who helped out during the reconstruction.



## Personnel

**Planning ahead:** Full-time state employees will receive two and a half days off for the Christmas holiday this year. Starting on Wednesday, Dec. 24, four hours of holiday pay will be given that day, then employees will have Dec. 25 and 26 off as well. Don't forget that employees must use their 2014 Discretionary Day by Dec. 20 or it will be lost. The 2015 Discretionary Day is available to use starting on Dec. 21.

**Bonus:** State employees will see the one-time \$250 bonus payment on their paychecks this Friday, Dec. 5. Full-time employees who have been continuously employed on a full-time basis with the state since late November 2013 will receive this. There are other requirements and exclusions - if you have any questions, please contact your human resource staff.

## General

The Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, is conducting a nationwide survey about how drivers use social media for travel planning. To complete the survey click this link - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/THCM72R>

## In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Gary Howell who died on Nov. 27 in Chanute. He retired in the late 1990s as the District Paint Crew Supervisor at the Chanute office.

## Trivia!

### Misc. Games – Part Two

1. Backgammon is one of the oldest board games for two players – how old is it?
2. What is Hypergammon?
3. Parcheesi is adapted from the Royal Game of India that began about 500 A.D. How was it played?
4. What is a blockade in Parcheesi?
5. How was the game Battleship originally played?
6. Battleship was one of the earliest games to be produced as a computer game. What year was the first version released?

## District Five



**City and state officials, consultants and contractors cut the ribbon to officially open the new I-235 and 13th Street Interchange in west Wichita on Nov. 21. The \$35 million project adds two new bridges over the Wichita – Valley Center Floodway and provides access to I-235 in two directions: eastbound 13th Street to southbound I-235 and northbound I-235 to westbound 13th Street.**



**The traffic improvement project also includes upgrades to adjacent city streets plus a new entrance to the nearby Sedgwick County Park. The project began in November 2012 and was completed on schedule and on budget. The City of Wichita designed and financed the project; KDOT's Wichita West Construction office handled administration and inspection. Kelly Cool's design squad and Mark Hurt's bridge squad designed the project.**

## TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. About 5,000 years old.
2. A variant of Backgammon in which players have only three checkers on the board.
3. Royalty played by using servants of the royal household adorned in colored costumes as pieces on large outdoor boards.
4. When two pieces occupy the same space, they prevent any pieces behind the two from advancing past the blockade.
5. Using a pencil and paper with a grid outlined on it where gray boxes were drawn, marking the location of the ships.
6. 1979

## Winter Weather

**KDOT crews ready for snow:** Kansas has already seen a little inclement weather, and KDOT is ready when bigger storms head this way.

This year KDOT implemented new snow fighter training courses to better educate new equipment operators on all aspects of roadway snow and ice control as well as how to maintain their equipment.

KDOT has a staff of 1,200 ready for winter weather, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; they have taken their dry runs and have stored 200,000 tons of salt in preparation for this Kansas winter.

Last winter, KDOT spent more than \$22 million and used 128,000 tons of salt to clear the state's highways while plowing approximately 2.8 million miles, effectively plowing the 25,000-mile state system more than 110 times.

"We are constantly fine tuning KDOT's operation based

on what we learned last year," said Peter Carttar, Assistant Bureau Chief of Maintenance. "We are always working to improve what we do."

Safety tips to follow while traveling include:

- ♦ Completely clean frost and snow off all windows, mirrors, and lights, and use headlights to provide optimum visibility.
- ♦ Slow down, accelerate and brake gently, and increase following distance between other vehicles.
- ♦ Don't use cruise control.
- ♦ Allow for more travel time.
- ♦ Always wear a seat belt, and secure children in the proper child safety seats.
- ♦ Slow down and move over for stopped emergency vehicles and maintenance crews.

♦ If involved in a traffic crash, or need assistance, call 911, or contact the Kansas Highway Patrol at \*47 (\*HP) from a cell phone. Call \*582 (\*KTA) on the Kansas Turnpike.

## Kansas Travel Information

(for road conditions and weather)

**By phone** - call 5-1-1 within Kansas or (866) 511- 5368 from out of state

**On the web** - visit the KanDrive website, <http://www.kandrive.org>, which also has maps, camera views of many routes and more

**511 mobile text only site** - <http://511mm.ksdot.org>

## Scenic



KDOT employee Neil Croxton took a photo of the old Mountain Dew sign on the Pepsi distribution building located on U.S. 36 in Marysville.

## KTA

**Record-setting travel:** The Wednesday before Thanksgiving 2014 was the biggest travel day in history for the Kansas Turnpike. On that day, 134,667 vehicles traveled on the 236-mile toll roadway (these numbers represent unaudited traffic counts - audited traffic numbers will be available later this

month and may be slightly different). The 2014 vehicle count broke last year's record by more than 2,000 vehicles. Total traffic for the Tuesday through Sunday holiday period was 675,478 vehicles. This marked a 1.5 percent increase over the 2013 Thanksgiving holiday.

## District Two



Attendees review proposed project plans on K-4 at the Nov. 18 open house.

**K-4 proposal:** Area residents were introduced to a proposed concept for K-4 on Nov. 18 at an open house in Salina. Plans call for construction on an off-set alignment beginning at the Smoky Hill River Bridge then east 4.9 miles to west of Niles Road. If constructed, the new section of K-4 would have 12-foot lanes and eight-foot paved shoulders along with improved sight distance along the route. There is currently no funding for

construction of the project. Public input from the meeting about the proposal was positive. K-4 safety along this route was a concern expressed during Local Consult meetings while developing T-WORKS. The meeting addressed community input from a survey and an open house in the fall 2013. Steve King's road squad and Mark Hurt's bridge squad are designing the proposed project.

## Quarterly Report

**Quarterly Report posted:** Check out the October 2014 Quarterly Report [here](#). This issue covers the latest national highway rankings, the Tiger grant recently awarded to Garden City, the latest T-WORKS progress numbers and more.

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)