

Legislature

Legislative report: A bill that would place the Kansas Turnpike Authority under the KDOT umbrella was introduced Tuesday in the Kansas House



Appropriations Committee. Under the proposal, which was mentioned by Gov. Brownback in his State of the State address last month, the secretary of transportation would serve as the chief executive officer and chair of the KTA and would be responsible for the daily administration of the turnpike. The bill provides that the KTA would retain a separate identity under management of KDOT. "Duplication of effort, facilities and equipment shall be minimized by the authority and the secretary of transportation in operation and maintenance of turnpikes and highways of the state." A committee hearing on the bill is expected to be scheduled in the next couple weeks.

In Memory

Condolences to friends and family of KDOT retiree Vyrl "Dean" Evans who died on Jan. 24. He worked on the District Four paint crew.

FHWA Course



KDOT employees find out what it's like to travel several blocks while blindfolded, wearing reduced-vision goggles or in wheelchairs during a recent class to experience what people with physical challenges face.

Firsthand Experience: As part of the Designing Pedestrian Facilities for Accessibility course offered by the Federal Highway Administration, KDOT participants from across the state saw firsthand what people with physical challenges face as traveled several blocks in wheelchairs or with blindfolds during the class on Jan. 30 at the Eisenhower State Office Building. "It helped them to understand the issues people with disabilities face and also gave them a better idea of the

goals to designing, constructing and maintaining accessible facilities," said KDOT Road Engineering Manager Jim Brewer.

The course was taught from the perspective of the Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), a best practice for public rights of way. Participants were updated on laws and regulations and received guidance on various issues involving pedestrian facilities and access routes.

A Note from Secretary King

The 2013 legislative session is just three weeks old and already there's been lots of news coming out of the Statehouse regarding KDOT.

Deputy Secretary Jerry Younger and I have met with many returning and new legislators over the past few weeks and we are strengthening and developing good relationships. What we're hearing from them is that they have a high regard for KDOT, and I think that's due to the great people who work at KDOT and the broad support of Kansans. I'm sure you've been hearing about several proposals being floated in the Statehouse that would divert revenue away from the State Highway Fund. One of the proposals is included in the Governor's budget for fiscal years 2014-15 and calls for transfers totaling more than \$300 million from the State Highway Fund to the State General Fund. Yes, that's a lot of money. But it's an amount KDOT can handle thanks to big savings from low bids, little or no inflation, great bond refinancing rates



Mike King

and the restructuring here at the agency. Last week you may also have heard of a proposal that would shift away from the State Highway Fund the four-tenths-of-a-cent sales tax revenue scheduled to begin July 1. I want to assure you that the Governor continues to be a strong supporter of the program. He advocated for it when he campaigned for office, he included it in his Road Map for Kansas and he's reiterated his support numerous times over the past two years. Like most Kansans, he believes strong transportation infrastructure provides the basis for job growth here in the state.

A third item that's been getting a lot of attention early in the session is the Governor's proposal to bring the Kansas Turnpike Authority under the same umbrella as KDOT. I'm very excited about the potential for this partnership and I'll discuss it in my next letter.

To watch a video of this message, visit <http://youtu.be/ozABDI8bDWg>.

District Four



This unusual view of mountains of chat can be seen while driving on U.S. 69 in southeast Kansas.

No, it's not the Martian landscape. These windswept mounds of chat – pulverized rock containing lead and iron – can be viewed along U.S. 69 just north of the Oklahoma border. Adding to the eerie effect is the now “lost” town of Treece, once located just west of the highway. Treece and the neighboring community of Pitcher, Okla., were booming mining towns in the early 1900s, known for the rich deposits of zinc, lead and iron ore that lay underneath the ground's surface. As years passed and the mines closed, Treece and Pitcher sat surrounded by giant piles of contaminated leftover chat. The

Environmental Protection Agency first provided buyouts to the citizens and Pitcher, and finally to the residents of Treece in 2009 and 2010. Only one couple opted to stay on at Treece, living in a double-wide trailer. The rest relocated to other communities in the area. The buildings, streets, water tower and other utilities in Treece have been eradicated, leaving virtually no traces of this once close-knit community. The EPA is continuing to clean up the chat piles at both Treece and Pitcher. KDOT uses chat in asphalt and concrete mixes, where it is safely encapsulated.

District Four

Big improvement: Mark Hendrickson, Equipment Operator Specialist at the Eureka Subarea, manages a family farm and also runs a custom haying operation. He often fixes broken farming equipment using a torch and welder.

Throughout the years, KDOT maintenance crews have invented useful equipment attachments that include spreader racks, sign racks and a culvert end-shaper. These innovations ensure employee safety, provide extra storage, make various tasks more efficient and organize work spaces.

District Four has started using trucks with side wing plow attachments to remove snow. The Eureka Subarea received its first truck with a wing plow attachment in 2007. When the second truck arrived in 2011, the crew began experiencing problems with both handling and storage of the wing plows.

Hendrickson used his skills to build a special rack for the wing plow attachment. This rack allows an employee to pull the truck into the parking stall, use hydraulics to set the wing plow into the rack and then unhook it from the truck. Previously, two employees were needed to hold up the wing plow while a third operator maneuvered the truck into place. Now, one person can perform the entire task.

The rack has a top piece that slides along the rail and locks the top of the wing plow in place, keeping it from tipping over. The rack also allows the Subarea to store



KDOT employee Mark Hendrickson displays the wing plow rack he created that improves efficiency in operations and storage.

the plow next to the truck along an inside wall. The wing plow rack can be moved and stored along the front walls of the 10-bay building during the summer months.

Valentine's Day

Fun facts about cards

- ♥ Teachers receive the most valentines, followed by kids, mothers, wives, sweethearts and pets.
- ♥ More than 50 percent of all Valentine's Day cards are purchased in the six days prior to the holiday.
- ♥ The oldest surviving valentine dates from 1415. It's a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife.
- ♥ One billion valentines are sent each year worldwide, making it the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas.
- ♥ Women purchase approximately 85 percent of all valentines.
- ♥ Hallmark produced its first valentine in 1913.



Letter of Appreciation

Dear KDOT:

I wanted to send an email expressing my gratitude for KDOT employee Tony Trower (Highway Supervisor at the Topeka Subarea office) and his team for going the extra mile in getting my purse returned.

My purse was stolen on 1/9/13, on 1/18/13 I was contacted stating that KDOT had found my purse. They had to do some investigative work in locating me, but they didn't give up and I was able to get my purse back.

I appreciate their willingness to help out the citizens of Kansas by not just throwing items in the trash but working to get them back to their owners. They are a great group of people and should receive a huge pat on their backs for the work they do. Please extend to them my sincerest thanks for what they have done - it means a lot.

Kim Smith

District One



The District One, Area Six KDOT Olathe Metro construction staff, along with the Area Three Bonner Springs Metro staff, toured the Cretex Concrete Products plant in Shawnee on Jan. 23. Cretex makes concrete pipe, precast culverts and manholes for many KDOT projects inspected by the Kansas City Metro Area Offices. The hands-on tour allowed KDOT construction staff to understand how the concrete products are manufactured and the pros and cons of different class pipes and fitting types. The tour was conducted as part of the District One Olathe Metro Office's annual winter construction meeting.

Trivia!

1. The city of Caldwell is the Capital of the World of this unique animal – name it.
2. What unique structure can you find in Moline?
A. Kansas' oldest swinging bridge
B. A 72-foot high concrete circle
C. The tallest tree in Kansas
D. None of the above
3. You know the state flower, but do you know the Kansas State Soil?

Answers are below

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

U.S. DOT

No second term: Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood announced last week that he will not be serving a second term on President Obama's Cabinet. From the e-mail he sent to U.S. DOT employees, he said, "It has been an honor and a privilege to lead the Department ... Our achievements are significant. We have put safety front and center with the Distracted Driving Initiative and a rule to combat pilot fatigue that was decades in the making. We have made great progress in improving the safety of our transit systems, pipelines, and highways, and in reducing roadway fatalities to historic lows."



**Secretary
Ray LaHood**

In fact, Secretary LaHood has supported KDOT's safety efforts by participating in the Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day safety blog series for the past three years. Secretary LaHood said he will stay on until a successor is confirmed to ensure a smooth transition.

District Six



The junction of U.S. 83, U.S. 160 and K-144, about five miles north of Sublette in Haskell County, will be part of public discussions on Feb. 21 when District Six hosts a public open house and a public officials' meeting to lay out proposed improvements to U.S. 83 in northern Haskell County. Two projects being designed stretch from one mile south of the U.S. 83/160/144 junction to one mile north of the Haskell/Finney county line. Possible improvements include replacing the above junction with an interchange and adding passing lanes on U.S. 83. The project that runs from one mile south of the junction to about four miles north of the junction is scheduled for construction in 2015. The second project is funded for preliminary engineering only.

At right, a contractor took advantage of a few days of warm weather in January to finish striping a resurfacing project on U.S. 56 through Haskell County. This work finished a project from 2012.



TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Ornate box turtle
2. A. Kansas' oldest swinging bridge, a pedestrian bridge built in 1904.
3. Harney silt

Future City

Focused on engineering: Sixty teams of junior high students from Kansas, Missouri and Colorado schools participated in the 8th annual Great Plains Regional Future City competition Jan. 26 in Manhattan. The event helps students see engineering as a career possibility. This year's topic was storm water pollution control. The Manh Me Re team from Deer Creek Middle School in Littleton, Colo., won first place. Each team member will receive a \$1,000 scholarship in the engineering program to Kansas State University or the University of Kansas, and the school received a \$500 technology



grant. The Korewai team from Southwest Middle School in Lawrence took second place, and the school received a \$400 technology grant. The Manh Me Re team will go to nationals in Washington, D.C., Feb. 17-23 during National Engineering Week. Sixty judges from KDOT and other transportation organizations donated their time to help with the competition.

The American Society of Civil Engineers organize the event with Jeff Sims, KDOT Engineering Associate III, serving as regional coordinator.