Inside ...

- Blasting, bridge work progressing on U.S. 59
- Budget trimming cuts across agency
- Buckle up every trip, every time
- Blogs on KTOC highlight safety
- Statewide meetings cancelled
- Construction continues in WaKeeney

Scenery around Kansas
See page 6
Budget trimming cuts across agency

By now everyone should know that KDOT’s budget has taken some mighty big hits over the past year. As soon as we figure out how to absorb one cut, another follows.

Finding places to trim spending certainly isn’t the rewarding part of this job. And, I know it can be frustrating to you, too. But the one thing about all of this budget-cutting that gives me some satisfaction is that we’ve been able to do it without layoffs or furloughs. Not all state agencies have been as fortunate. Some of our fellow state employees have lost their jobs due to budget-driven layoffs.

We will continue to look at every reasonable option before we consider such measures. That means we won’t buy as much equipment as we’ve been buying. It means we’ll leave positions vacant. And it means that we may suspend some of the programs we have enjoyed providing.

As KDOT leaders have traveled throughout the state this summer visiting with many of you, we’ve talked about what we’re doing to keep the budget balanced. Some of the measures we’ve taken include:

◆ Holding most vacant positions open for the next six to 12 months.
◆ Cutting back on overtime costs as much as is feasible.
◆ A reduction in fuel usage.
◆ Suspension of the tuition assistance program and a $100 reduction in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) benefit.
◆ A delay in purchasing of equipment.
◆ A 30 percent reduction in travel budgets for fiscal year 2010 for all divisions and districts, including the Secretary’s office.

When we talk about these things in the districts and areas, we see the heads move up and down in understanding that these steps make sense in these extreme times. Those who have been here for 20 years or more remember what it was like before the CHP and understand we are in much better shape today – from both an equipment standpoint and the condition of our system – to weather this storm. And they appreciate that we’ve been able to preserve some popular programs, such as the EO and ET Progression Programs.

But this crisis won’t last forever. Once we get back to the budget comfort level that we’ve had in the past, we intend to restore some of these programs, including the tuition assistance program and the full PPE benefit.

I’m not entirely confident we’ve seen the last of the budget cuts. If there are more cuts and they’re significant, everything is back on the table as we look for ways to trim the budget. While we can continue for a time to operate at this level, it won’t take long before our equipment and roads begin to look like they did before the past two programs were passed.

There was some good news about the budget in July when state revenue collections, while still down, were better than expected. It’s too early to know whether the encouraging July numbers are the start of a trend or just a blip. But I’m holding my breath, hoping that we’ve seen the last of the cuts.

Calendar of Events

Sept. 8 - 11 a.m., KDOT Employees’ Council Meeting, Third Floor, Eisenhower State Office Building.

Sept. 11 - 9 a.m., Highway Advisory Commission meeting.

Sept. 11-20 - KDOT booth at the Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson. See page 10 for more details.

Sept. 16 - 1 p.m., Construction bid letting, fourth floor auditorium, Eisenhower State Office Building.
Three statewide KDOT meetings have been cancelled this fall and their schedule in the future is uncertain. The first one is the Maintenance Expo that is held in Salina in September. The next is the Operations Meeting that is usually set in Salina in October.

“For now, the next Operations Meeting would not take place until October of 2010 and is contingent on availability of funds,” said Mark Morrison, Assistant Director of Operations.

The final one to be cancelled this fall is the Leadership Conference that is normally scheduled in Topeka in November.

According to Chief of Personnel Services Lea Ann Curtis, the tentative plan is to have the Operations Meeting in 2010, then the Leadership Conference in 2011, and alternate these meetings each year as funding is available.

“Statewide meetings are important to the on-going development within our organization,” Curtis said. “I expect to see them return as soon as money is available.” -K.S.
The Garnett construction office has been inundated with work, according to District Four Engineer Mike Stringer, handling nearly $520 million in construction projects during the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

For their efforts, members of the Garnett Construction Office team were honored as an Example of Excellence for the second quarter of 2009. Secretary Deb Miller attended the event on July 22 in Mound City.

The Garnett office has provided contract administration for:

- 96 projects less than $1 million
- 26 projects from $1 million to $5 million
- four projects from $5 million to $10 million
- four projects from $10 million to $20 million
- four projects from $20 million to $30 million
- two projects from $30 million to $40 million
- four projects from $40 million to $50 million
- one project that totaled over $56 million

This list includes only C, K, KA and U jurisdiction projects, Stringer said, and does not include any railroad projects or contracts for consultant inspection services.

“That’s more than was let statewide in 2008 and approaches the total amount let statewide during several other years of the CTP,” he said.

Stringer said the leadership of Construction Manager Brian Schafer and Engineering Technician Specialist David Weirich as well as dedication from the entire construction staff provided quality inspection and contract administration during this busy time.

Members of the team are: David Baldridge, Ed Clark, Bobby Davis, Rusty Drake, Don Lile, Ian Stringham, Ben Tush, Schafer and Weirich.

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 fourth quarter due to Transportation Information by Sept. 30. -K.S.

Above is construction on U.S. 69, one of the many projects the Garnett Construction office handled.
Safety week encourages everyone to buckle up every trip, every time

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children age 3 to 6 and 8 to 14 nationwide. In 2007, 6,532 passenger vehicle occupants 14 and younger were involved in fatal crashes. Although all 50 states have laws requiring children to be restrained in a proper seat, three out of four child safety seats are improperly installed, according to research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

For that reason, Child Passenger Safety Week (Sept. 12-18) is a time to remind parents and caregivers to have their child safety seats inspected, according to Phyllis Marotta, Program Consultant in Traffic Safety and Technology and also a certified child passenger safety technician. Special events will be held nationwide where certified technicians are available to provide on-site child safety seat inspections and provide education.

In Kansas, the statistics tell the story. In 2008, there were five children ages 4 – 13 who were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Of those, none were restrained. Of the 1,007 children injured, 84.2 percent were restrained. The good news, Marotta said, is that of the 8,367 children who were not injured, 94.3 percent were properly restrained.

Kansas statistics also show that as the more stringent laws have gone into effect, restraint use has increased, and fatalities have decreased. According to the 2009 Child Occupant Protection Observational Survey, the 0-4 age group is buckled up at the highest rate, about 96 percent, followed by the 5-9 age group, with about a 73 percent belt use rate. Among 10-14 year olds, about 67 percent were observed to be buckled up.

Children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is also belted. If the driver is belted, about 92 percent of the children are also belted. If the driver is not belted, only about 23 percent of the observed children were also belted. This may be the most important finding in the observational study, as the disparity is huge, she said.

“The message is simple: buckle yourself, buckle your children,” Marotta said. “It’s the responsibility of every parent and caregiver to make sure children are safely restrained – every trip, every time.”

For more information on Child Passenger Safety, or to find a fitting station in your area, contact the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office at 1-800-416-2522 or Marotta at marotta@ksdot.org.

Dear Editor

To George Dockery (Area Engineer in Pittsburg):
Please tell the KDOT crew that did the east/west approach on Hwy 166/Spring River bridge that they did a great job! It is seamless and we appreciate it.

Kind regards,
Huey York,
Mayor of Baxter Springs

Note: The KDOT crew was the Pittsburg Area Crew and the Columbus Subarea crew. The Spring River Bridge on U.S. 166 is at the east city limits of Baxter Springs in Cherokee County.
Lots of things to see around Kansas include (from top to bottom) a day lily near U.S. 75, a Pony Express statue along U.S. 36, a tin man on K-99 in Elk County, a serpent in SarKo Par Trail Park, a snake near Pillsbury Crossing, a unique angle looking at barbed wire, a decorative mailbox near McPherson Lake and Monument Rocks east of U.S. 83. Photos by Support Services staff
As we have been told before, or discovered ourselves, you don’t have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing—and in the Kansas Department of Transportation, it blows, as it always has, toward safety. Each segment of what we do in KDOT has safety as its bedrock. We design roads, build them, overlay them, correct faults and erect signs—with one single overarching goal: the safety of people who use our roads.

Since the 1990s many in KDOT have championed the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology to provide improvements in roadway safety and capacity. Bearing that in mind let me tell you about one of KDOT’s ITS projects and programs to improve the safe passage of our users.

Kansas City Scout
This regional traffic management system is one of the latest wrinkles in harnessing motor safety in the great Kansas City area. And it is succeeding! Originally begun in 2002 as a 75-mile project, this two-state partnership effort (KDOT and MODOT), now manages traffic along more than 125 miles of continuous freeway in the greater Kansas City metro area.

Recently, six new cameras and two dynamic message signs expanded Kansas monitors from Johnson to Wyandotte counties.

Scout has deployed some 135 cameras to monitor the highways and relies on sensors to gauge traffic flows. Some of you have probably seen live pictures from these cameras on television. For traffic times to approaching turn-offs, Scout currently uses 41 Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) to send traffic and safety messages to motorists along the metro highways. One such sign might tell you, for example, that it was three minutes to the next turnoff (by street or highway designation), and five minutes to the one beyond that. This is a major benefit to motorists and promotes congestion management.

Once again, safety is the major consideration (along with cost, of course) in the deployments. If there is an accident ahead, and traffic lanes are blocked, the message signs will post an alert to drivers. The notice permits the motorist to stay on the current route or change to an alternate route. And I’m sure some of you have seen DMS signs registering what is called an “AMBER ALERT,” notifying motorists of a child abduction and transmitting information about the abducted child, and a description of the vehicle of the abductor. The alert signals the number to call if the suspect is spotted.

Another benefit to motorists within the ambit of Kansas City Scout is the ability to log onto KC Scout’s Web site (www.kcscout.net) before leaving work or home to determine the best route and time to either location. The ability is particularly helpful during inclement weather or days when events (football or race days) create possible traffic congestion.

Since 2007, KC Scout initiatives have resulted in a 30 percent reduction in the time it takes for an incident (accidents usually) to clear. This progress has resulted in a decrease of nearly two hours in delays for Level 3 (over 90 minutes) incidents. This accrues substantial saving in time, fuel and dollars for motorists.

KC Scout clearly places near the summit for motorist safety, but, not resting on its laurels, is preparing to enter the realms of ramp metering. But that is a story, perhaps, for another time…

Leslie Spencer Fowler is Intelligent Transportation Systems Manager.
Blogs on KTOC highlight various ways to put the brakes on fatalities

Twenty people will blog about different ways to put the brakes on fatalities on KTOC (Kansas Transportation Online Community) starting Sept. 14.

The blogs will run Monday through Friday for four weeks, leading up to the national safety awareness day, Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day, which is Oct. 10. To see the blogs, go to http://ktoc.net/Default.aspx.

Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day focuses on all types of traffic safety, whether you are in a vehicle, on a bike, on a motorcycle or walking across the street and encourages everyone to take extra precaution to stay safe.

“I encourage everyone to follow the blogs on KTOC and post your own comments,” said Kim Stich, Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day Coordinator for KDOT. “The online community is a great way to learn about issues and share information.”

Anyone can read the information on KTOC, but to make comments and share information, you must log in and become a member.

Just a few of the people blogging include Secretary Deb Miller, KDOT retiree Larry Emig (Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day founder), Safe Kids Kansas Director Cherie Sage, Shirley McDonald (mother of KDOT employee Scotty McDonald who was killed in a work zone June 1, 2005), Trauma Nurse Darlene Whitlock, AAA Executive Vice President Jim Hanni, Tim McCool with the Kansas Highway Patrol, KDOT employees Phyllis Marotta and Priscilla Petersen and many others.

Other Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day activities include:
• A poster contest for all Kansas kids ages 5-13 (go to www.ksdot.org and click on the logo on the left side of the page) with bicycles and hotel stays as prizes;
• Prize and safety presentations at various schools for the 18 winners of the poster contest;
• Proclamation signing with Gov. Mark Parkinson naming Oct. 10, 2009, Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day in Kansas;
• Distribution of 20,000 brochures to people across the state including motorists on the Kansas Turnpike;
• Proclamation signings for city and county governments.
For more information, go to www.brakesonfatalities.org.

Check out the shared calendar: KCTC for on-going classes. Contact the KCTC at kctc@ksdot.org or call Ingrid Vandervort 785-296-8993.

KDOT Computer Training
– from the KCTC

Increase your efficiency!

Focus on Excel

Here is the process to extract a worksheet from a workbook and email it.

Part one: Extract a sheet from an Excel workbook.
• Right click on the sheet tab of the worksheet you want to extract.
• Click Move or Copy - the Move or Copy dialog box will appear.
• Check the Create a Copy checkbox.
• From the To book: dropdown, select (new book).
• Click OK.

Part two: To E-mail the new book, you’ll add the E-mail button to the Quick Access Toolbar:
• Click the tiny down arrow at the end of the Quick Access Toolbar;
• Select E-mail;
• The E-mail button will now be on the Quick Access Toolbar;
• Click the E-mail button to start a new email (your new workbook will be attached);
• Address the E-mail to the person who needs the worksheet, and click Send.

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Check out the shared calendar: KCTC for on-going classes. Contact the KCTC at kctc@ksdot.org or call Ingrid Vandervort 785-296-8993.
KDOT is seeking applications for intercity bus service on two new routes: Salina to Wichita and Wichita to Pueblo, Colo. (in cooperation with the Colorado DOT). Applications must be returned to KDOT by Sept. 18.

KDOT’s Office of Public Transportation is accepting funding requests for the 2011 state fiscal year as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Under ARRA, 15 percent of the rural transit allocation must be used for intercity transit, so KDOT will set aside $2 million for that purpose.

“These two additional routes will connect with the national intercity bus route network and will provide meaningful connections to various areas across the state, especially to under-served areas in southwest Kansas,” said Lisa Koch, KDOT Public Transit Manager. “It’s also a great way to partner with the state of Colorado to serve the public.”

The following cities in Kansas would gain intercity bus service with these two new routes:

Route 1 - Salina-Wichita.
•Salina, Lindsborg, McPherson, Newton, Wichita.

Route 2 - Wichita-Pueblo, Colo.
•Wichita, Hutchinson, Dodge City, Garden City, (Colorado stops) Holly, Lamar, Las Animas, LaJunta, Fowler, Pueblo.

Applicants seeking funding for any other routes will need to submit applications during the regular application period (starting Dec. 1, 2009).

Persons interested in applying should download the appropriate application from the KDOT Web site at http://www.ksdot.org/burtransplan/pubtrans/index.asp. -K.S.

**Construction continues in WaKeeney**

By Kristen Brands  
District Three Public Affairs Manager

Work to re-construct Barclay Avenue (U.S. 40 Business along U.S. 283) in WaKeeney began in May in the form of a Geometric Improvement project (some KLINK resurfacing funds are also being utilized.).

Occurring in four phases, separate closures will occur from First Street to 13th Street – throughout the project. Local and through-traffic are being detoured onto Interstate 70 during the second, third, and fourth phases of the project.

City Administrator Hardy Howard realizes the impact of the detour. “Local residents will have to find alternate routes around the work for a while,” he said. “But, this is an important project to improve one of the busiest streets in our community.”

According to Area Three Construction Engineer John Riggins, crews will be going down to the sub-grade of the roadway, all the older asphalt and concrete are being torn out. The scope includes working on the concrete curb and guttering and street approaches with 10 inches of new asphalt on the roadway.

Venture Corporation of Great Bend is the contractor on the $1.8 million project with the city of WaKeeney contributing $62,000.

Venture Corporation employees start milling along U.S. 40 Business in WaKeeney in mid August. Photo by Kristen Brands
**Labor Day**

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers.

**Founder of Labor Day**

Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those “who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold.”

But many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, founded the holiday.

**The First Labor Day**

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883.

*Source: U.S. Department of Labor*

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**Fun Facts and Trivia**

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**Safety laws, Scenic Byways spotlight at KDOT Kansas State Fair booth**

*By Kim Stich*

Three new traffic safety laws will be promoted and the Kansas Scenic Byways program will be featured at the KDOT booth at the Kansas State Fair.

The new laws include the Graduated Driver’s License (GDL) Law; the Drive Right, Pass Left Law and the Move It Law all focus on ways to improve safety:

**GDL** - gives teens more experience driving while supervised.

**Drive Right Pass Left** - requires all vehicles to travel in the right lane on highways outside the city limits and have two lanes proceeding in the same direction.

**Move It** - requires motorists who have a non-injury crash on any Interstate, U.S. or multi-lane/divided highway and have vehicles that can be driven to move them off the road.

Promotional items have been reduced this year, but visitors to the fair will still be able to pick up an official Kansas State map or a Drive Right, Pass Left note pad. Brochures on a number of KDOT programs or safety campaigns will also be available.

Part of the table display will be dedicated to the Scenic Byways program with brochures on all the byways as well as several Kansas Fun Fact brochures.

“Interest in the Scenic Byway program has increased with so many people taking trips closer to home as well as the promotional campaign featuring Stan Herd’s artwork on the Kansas Lottery tickets,” said Sue Stringer, Kansas Scenic Byways Public Involvement Liaison. “This has been a win-win for everyone who has had a part in promoting our state’s Scenic Byways.”

KDOT’s booth, along with the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office (KTSRO), will be located in the middle of the Eisenhower Building. District Five employees assist the Bureau of Transportation Information with the booth.

The state fair will take place from Sept. 11-20. The Eisenhower Building will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on opening day, then 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. the following nine days.
More postponements possible

Funding uncertainties cause project delay

By Steve Swartz
Uncertainty about federal funding has caused KDOT leaders to delay a recently-announced project in Johnson County.

And more postponements are possible if Congress fails, after returning from its summer recess, to quickly take action to approve the federal Highway Trust Fund budget for at least 2010.

Bids for the project to construct a new, $28.8 million interchange at K-7 and Johnson Drive/55th Street in Shawnee had been scheduled to be opened in September. But the project was pulled until there is certainty there will be adequate funds to pay for the project.

The federal law that authorizes transportation programs expires Sept. 30, the last day of federal fiscal year 2009. Earlier this month, Congress approved a $7 billion infusion to the federal Highway Trust Fund to keep the fund solvent for the final two months of the current budget year and to keep money flowing to the states for projects under way.

“Congress fixed the 2009 budget shortfall and that will help with the remainder of this fiscal year,” said Secretary Deb Miller. “But we need for them to fix the 2010 problem before we can proceed with the K-7 project.”

Quick action by Congress improves the chance the state will receive the lowest price possible for the project.

“Because of the down economy, contractors have been submitting lower bids in order to get work. We’d like to proceed quickly to take advantage of those competitive bids,” Secretary Miller said.

Since January, the contracts awarded by KDOT have averaged 6.6 percent less than the estimated costs.

In late July, Secretary Miller released the list of 2010 highway projects – significantly scaled-back from those of the past 10 years. The K-7 project is part of that list. Failure by Congress to take quick action on the 2010 budget means more of those projects could be delayed, she said.

Welcome new KDOT employees!

New Employees
Jason Bonar, Applications Developer II, Topeka
David Stoltz, Applications Developer III, Topeka

The Bureau of Personnel Services supplies information to Translines.
**Insulated Mugs**

**BIG SALE!**

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

Now you can get two mugs for just $6!!

**To Order:**
- **Headquarters:** contact your Employees’ Council rep.
- **Districts/Retirees:** mail completed form (or photocopy of form) and checks to: Chuck Protasio, Program/Project Management, 700 SW Harrison, 2nd floor, ES0B, Topeka, KS, 66603.
- **Checks payable to KDOT Employees’ Council.**

<table>
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Name __________________________

Work Address: __________________________

(Retirees: home address)

For more details, call Chuck Protasio at 785-296-0284

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**Deaths**

Condolences to the family and friends of a KDOT retiree who recently passed away.

**John J. Hart,** 63, of Topeka died Aug. 6, 2009. He worked for KDOT for many years in the Bureau of Support Services before his retirement.

He is survived by his wife, Delpha of the home; his son Stephen John Hart of Topeka; three grandchildren, Tristain, Kylee and Lexi Hart all of Topeka.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Southern Baptist Church, 1912 SW Gage Blvd, Topeka, KS 66604 or CAPPERS Foundation, 3500 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604.

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**KDOT monthly retiree meeting in Topeka**

KDOT retirees meet in Topeka on the first Tuesday of each month at the Coyote Canyon restaurant, 1251 S.W. Ashworth Place (Huntoon Street and Wanamaker Avenue). Lunch begins at 11 a.m., with a program that follows. All KDOT retirees are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Rodney Maag at 785-266-5449.

Do you know of other regular KDOT retiree meetings that take place across the state? Contact the Bureau of Transportation Information at 785-296-3585 to have it published in Translines.