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## **Preliminary engineering to begin for Great Bend shipping facility**

A consortium of city and rail interests has been given the go-ahead to begin preliminary engineering for a transload shipping center at Great Bend.

The Kansas Department of Transportation, which will contribute \$3 million for the \$6.8 million project, gave approval for preliminary engineering after reviewing the business plan and financial model proposed by the Great Bend group. The consultant HDR will do the preliminary engineering.

The entities that joined together to craft the development plans include the city of Great Bend, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad (K&O), and Kansas Transload Services.

“I’m extremely pleased how this group developed its proposal from concept to now beginning the preliminary engineering process and I’m anxious to get construction started later this year,” said Mike King, Kansas Transportation Secretary and Director of the Kansas Turnpike Authority. “This facility will have great business benefits for farmers and manufacturers, allow for reduced transportation costs and provide economic development opportunities for Great Bend and the region.”

Transloading is the process of moving goods from one mode of transportation to another, or in this case, from truck to rail and rail to truck. By blending the benefits of shipping by rail and local/short haul trucking, a transload facility can provide more

flexible, cost-effective solutions for customers who may not have local access to freight rail service or those who need expanded warehousing.

The transload facility will be built west of Great Bend at the airport.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to move forward with this transload project as it will provide a boost to the economy in central Kansas. The contribution from KDOT is what made this project possible,” said Mayor Mike Allison. “We are confident that K&O Railroad and Kansas Transload Services will develop a top flight transportation hub for Great Bend.”

The state’s \$3 million investment in the project will be used for rail improvements.

Pat Cedeno, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Sales of Watco Companies, which owns K&O Railroad, said his company is excited about the opportunity to work with KDOT, Great Bend and Kansas Transload Services to serve the central region of Kansas through a multimodal transload facility.

“Secretary King’s vision created this tremendous opportunity for the Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad to provide car supply and rail service to the facility. We look forward to building new relationships with the community and the customers we will be serving at the facility,” Cedeno said.

Great Bend is one of two communities that emerged from a group of seven selected to make a formal presentation in August 2015 before the Transload Facility Site Analysis Selection Committee, which includes private sector representatives. The other city selected for development of a transload facility is Garden City, which has yet to receive final approval for preliminary engineering.

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