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## **KDOT and KDA to host Ag Producer Workshops in north central and northwest Kansas**

*Focus on soil health and expanding high-speed internet access to farms*

The Kansas Departments of Transportation (KDOT) and Agriculture (KDA) will host workshops for ag producers to learn about an innovative new pilot program, Heartland Opportunities, Markets and Environment (HOME) that will provide high-speed internet access to farms located along Preservation + routes on U.S. 83 and U.S. 81 highways.

Fiber optic cable is needed to carry information to message boards across the state and allow for technological advancements to improve safety along Kansas highways. Through KDOT's new Preservation+ program, private internet service providers (ISPs) can install fiber optic cable concurrently with KDOT. By partnering on the installation of fiber, ISPs can save costs and increase high-speed internet access for Kansans.

The planned Preservation+ routes include U.S. 81 from I-70 north through Belleville and on U.S. 83 from I-70 north to Oberlin.

The HOME pilot takes this partnering effort a step farther by connecting farms located near the planned Preservation + routes. In exchange for receiving high-speed internet access, ag producers would implement soil health principles on at least one field. These principles can increase profitability, save water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, by ensuring a reliable high-speed connection, ag producers will be able to fully participate in potential carbon credit markets.

Producers will have the opportunity to learn more about these soil health principles and provide input about how infrastructure investments could better serve the ag industry at these workshops.

The dates and locations for the workshops include:

- **Hoxie** – 9 a.m. on **Thursday, Sept. 2**, at the Community Center (820 Main St.)
- **Concordia** – 9 a.m. on **Wednesday, Sept. 8**, at the Cloud County Fairgrounds Commercial Building (615 Industrial Rd.)

These workshops are free and open to the public. **Kansans interested in participating should register at [www.notill.org](http://www.notill.org) or [www.kssoilhealth.org](http://www.kssoilhealth.org).** Social distancing and masks are recommended for attendees.

The HOME pilot was made possible thanks to the bipartisan Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program (IKE), which is focused on improving highway safety, supporting economic growth and creating more options for Kansans and their communities.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the KDOT Communications Division, 700 SW Harrison St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.

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