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## **Officials welcome new K-14 realignment in Reno, Rice counties**

**NICKERSON** – Local officials and representatives of the Kansas Department of Transportation held a ribbon cutting today for the new K-14 realignment between Hutchinson and Sterling.

The new highway opened this afternoon, after the ribbon cutting.

The realigned K-14 provides a 15-mile asphalt freeway with 8-foot paved shoulders connecting Hutchinson to Nickerson to Sterling, through Reno and Rice counties. Right of way has been secured to enable future expansion to four lanes.

The new alignment is more efficient for motorists because it avoids the stops, changing speed limits and sharper turns involved in the old alignment, which in places dated to World War I.

Access to the new K-14 is limited to ramps at three new interchanges: at 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue near Hutchinson, at Nickerson Road near Nickerson and at Broadway Avenue near Sterling. Ramp access is intended to reduce the risk of collisions.

Speaking at the ribbon cutting, at the new K-14 interchange at Nickerson, were KDOT Acting Secretary Calvin Reed, Nickerson Mayor Peggy Ruebke, Sterling Mayor Bob Boltz, Hutchinson Mayor Jon Richardson, Reno County Commission Chairman Daniel Friesen and Rice County Commission Chairman Clay Thomas.

Secretary Reed said: “Now we open the door to the convenience and opportunity this newly constructed highway represents. The new K-14 will make travel easier and more expedient. ... The convenience of the new K-14 will be an additional selling point in attracting – and keeping – new residents and new businesses to Rice and Reno counties.”

Mayor Richardson said: “This is a big deal for everyone in Reno County and Rice County. ... It takes a lot of time off our travel.”

The other speakers echoed those sentiments and said the new highway helps bring together the communities within the two counties.

This KDOT realignment project started in the spring of 2021. Bob Bergkamp Construction Co. Inc., of Wichita, is the primary contractor for the \$82 million project.

In Reno County, the 7-mile project included five bridges and 24 reinforced concrete boxes. Earthwork involved more than 2 million cubic yards of fill and more than 100,000 tons of asphalt. The project in Rice County is about 8 miles long and required the construction of six bridges, 19 concrete boxes and a similar amount of fill and asphalt as in Reno County.

**The map below shows the new highway alignment, shaded in blue, and the existing route, shaded in yellow.**



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