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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2024

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Videos series brings voice to work zone awareness

TOPEKA – April 15 through April 19 is National Work Zone Awareness Week. But for Kansas Department of Transportation crews and contract workers, their lives depend on work zone awareness *every week of the year*.

In highway construction zones across the state, workers are especially vulnerable. Many times they work just inches from passing traffic. Flaggers stand before oncoming traffic with only a sign to get motorists to slow down or stop.

“I’ve had more close calls than I can count,” said a veteran KDOT construction zone worker. “I’ve had people come up and actually hit the flagging sign I was holding before they put on the brakes.”

You can hear about similar close calls – in the workers’ own words – in a National Work Zone Awareness Week video series produced by KDOT. The four-part series begins today and will continue throughout this week. Click on the link for each day’s video - <http://kansastransportation.blogspot.com/search/label/NWZAW%202024>.

One video features members of KDOT workers’ families, who implore motorists to slow down and be alert in work zones.

“I worry every day,” said the spouse of a highway worker. “I always get up in the morning and say a prayer he comes home, that everyone stays safe.”

It’s not only the workers’ lives at stake. Most people injured in work zone crashes are motorists. In 2023, nine people died in Kansas work zone crashes and 498 suffered injuries, KDOT data shows.

The top contributing circumstance of Kansas work zone crashes is inattention. Nationwide over the past several years, speed was a contributing factor in about one-third of fatal work zone crashes, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. About one-fifth of all deadly work zone crashes involve rear-end collisions.

Highway work zones span the entire length of the construction area. The work zone begins with a Road Work Ahead sign and ends with an End Roadwork sign. Work zones are marked with additional signs, including a reduced speed limit.

By heeding those signs, motorists can help protect a whole community of people.

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