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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Ribbon-Cutting Marks Completion of US-69 Reconstruction Project in Johnson County**

City, state and federal officials today officially opened the nearly completed US-69 reconstruction project in Lenexa/Overland Park.

The US-69 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Reconstruction Project addressed safety concerns and capacity issues along the heavily-travelled US-69 corridor. Traffic volumes in the area are expected to increase from 78,000 vehicles currently to 165,000 vehicles by 2040. This project will remove a traffic bottleneck at the I-35/US-69 and 75th Street interchange area, and shorten overall commute times in one of the busiest corridors in the state. And, it promotes economic development opportunities for the cities of Overland Park and Lenexa and Johnson County – one of the fastest-growing regions in Kansas.

The \$83.8 million US-69 project began in June 2009 and is scheduled to be completed by early next month. It includes: the widening of northbound and southbound US-69 from two lanes to three lanes with all new pavement from north of 103rd Street to I-35, interchange improvements at 95th Street and 103rd Street, and the complete rebuild of Lenexa Drive from 84th Terrace to Farley Street.

The signature component of the project is the opening of the well-known “Tunnel to Nowhere” that was constructed in 2005 as part of the 87th Street and I-35 interchange project in Lenexa. The tunnel was constructed in anticipation of today’s project. The “Tunnel to Nowhere” has now joined the newly constructed “Tunnel to

Somewhere” to become the “75th Street Tunnels”. These tunnels are part of the new 75th Street collector-distributor exit ramp lanes that will now move exiting 75th Street traffic off northbound I-35 just before 87th Street. This traffic movement helps to alleviate the congestion issues on I-35 by providing a separate roadway adjacent to the interstate for traffic exiting at 75th Street.

The US-69 reconstruction project is a cooperative effort, funded in part by the Kansas Department of Transportation, using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 funds, and the cities of Overland Park and Lenexa.

Featured speakers at this afternoon’s event included KDOT Deputy Secretary & State Transportation Engineer Jerry Younger; Overland Park Mayor Carl Gerlach; Lenexa Mayor Michael Boehm; Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator J. Michael Bowen; and the project contractor, Bill Clarkson of Clarkson Construction.

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