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Staffing shortages could impact KDOT winter operations in northeast Kansas

Kansas Department of Transportation offices in northeast Kansas are committed to keeping the highways cleared whenever inclement weather occurs.

In line with workforce shortages across the nation, KDOT does not have enough equipment operators – the agency’s primary snowplow operators – in a number of areas across Kansas. These shortages create the potential for highways to not be cleared of snow and ice as quickly as in the past.

The agency has dealt with reduced staffing in the past, but the shortages are greater this year. Northeast KDOT offices are about 25% short of snowplow operators needed to be fully staffed, with a 30% shortage of needed equipment operators statewide.

“KDOT is facing significant staffing shortages in some areas and will work proactively to clear Kansas highways by shifting crews to affected areas and pretreating highways and bridges whenever possible,” said Secretary Julie Lorenz. “Our snowplow operators work 12-hour shifts and do their best to keep the roads open and the public moving.”

To help address the shortage, the agency will deploy all employees who have a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) to plow snow and hire seasonal workers. For people interested in working at KDOT, go to the state’s employment website at <http://jobs.ks.gov/> KDOT will assist selected applicants in obtaining a CDL upon hiring, including paying for training.

“It will be more of a challenge for our crews in northeast Kansas to keep that same level of service this winter,” said District One Engineer Leroy Koehn. “We encourage motorists to be aware before and during winter storms and possibly alter or delay travel plans if necessary.”

Before traveling, motorists can check www.KanDrive.org, KDOT's road/weather condition website. It is updated 24/7 for highway conditions, overall weather information, short-term closures and general alerts.

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