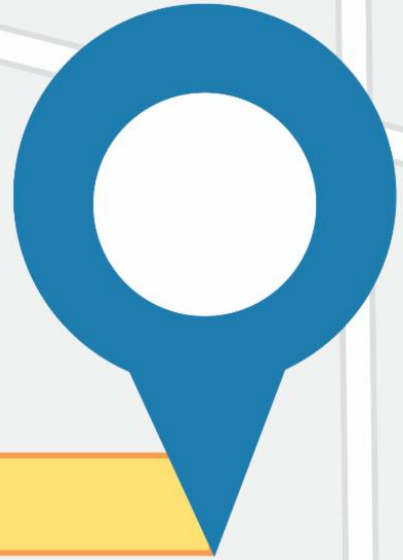


Friday April 24, 2020

EN ROUTE TO **FRIDAY**



HAPPY FRIDAY!

National Work Zone Awareness Week



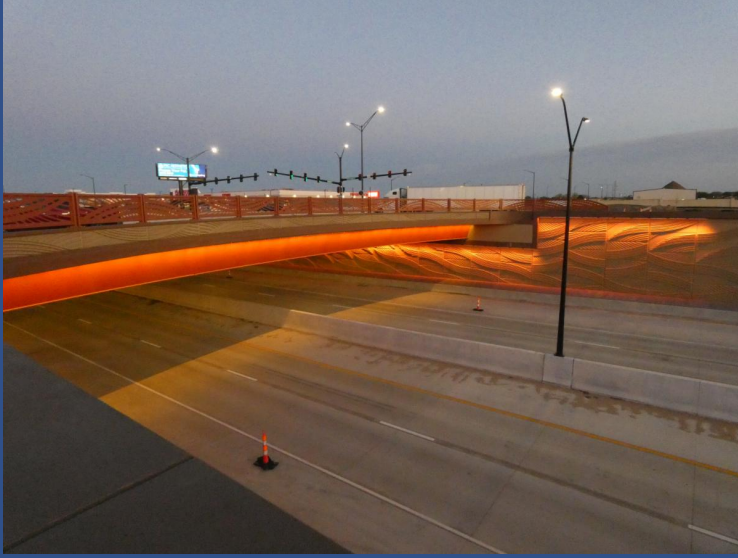
National Work Zone Awareness Week

Go Orange at www.ksdot.org

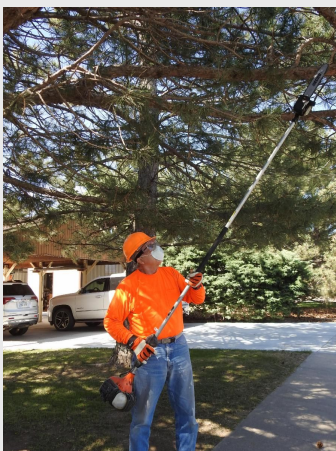


This week, KDOT and many transportation partners have participated in **National Work Zone Awareness Week**.

Even though the campaign was modified



due to the COVID-19 crisis, that didn't stop KDOT employees and retirees from doing what they could to show their support for highway workers. Employees and retirees across the state wore orange while working or relaxing at home. Check out the photos below:



Steve Baalman



Ron Berglund



Scott Swanson



Carla Anderson

Ray Macintosh



Danny Martin



Bill Barton



Catherine Patrick



Topeka City Hall



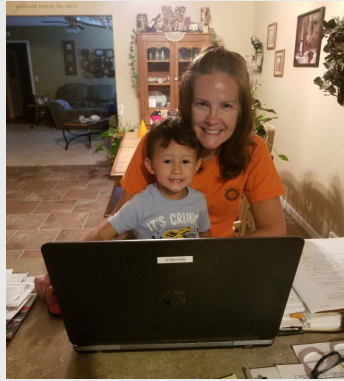
Beloit



District 1 Headquarters,
Topeka



Hector Torrones



Burt Morey.



Kelly Meierhoff



Ron Hall



Lisa Mussman

Michael Moriarty



Mallory Goeke

KDOT KUDOS!



LCECC - Lyon County 911 @LyonCounty911 · 49m

Thank you KDOT crews and highway workers! You are appreciated. 🙏
#MoveOverKS

KDOT @KDOTHQ · 3h

Today is the start of National Work Zone Awareness Week! We want to remind everyone that you can help keep yourself and our highway workers safe if you focus and pay attention ALWAYS, but especially in work zones.

#NWZAW #MoveOverKS

KDOT crews depend on YOU.

Help keep them safe by paying attention in work zones. Slow down and give them room to work. #MoveOverKS



Secretary Lorenz hosts second Thru the Distance webinar



On Thursday, Secretary Julie Lorenz hosted a second Thru the Distance webinar. During her

talk Secretary Lorenz shared an update that included:

1) How various KDOT groups are working through COVID-19; 2) safety precautions we've implemented and will continue to implement as we bring more people back to work; and 3) the latest information on the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program.

Reflecting at work

By Tim Potter, Public Affairs Manager, District Five

We now work in a world where work and home intersect. With coronavirus distancing, my home KDOT public affairs workstation faces a china cabinet. I inherited the cabinet from my mother, Betty, who died at 85 in 2011.

It might seem like that cabinet has nothing to do with my public affairs job. But in some ways now, they're intertwined.

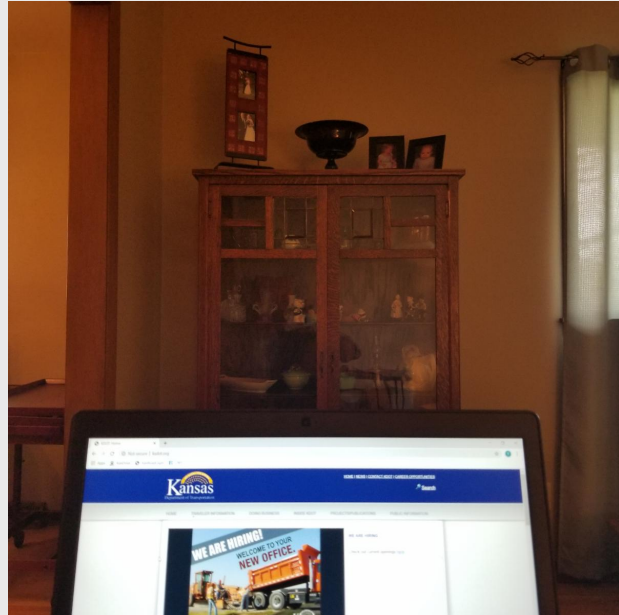
The story passed on by Mom: Her mother's parents, John and Dorothy, married a few years before the stock market crash of 1929 and bought the cabinet at a second-hand store around Kansas City, Mo. The cabinet appears to be Mission-style, dating from the early 1900s. It's oak-frame but mostly glass on the front and two sides, with two leaded-glass panels at the center top. Three of the four almost full-length glass panels are original old glass – they're a little wavy, with bubbles.

The cabinet survived. Through the Great Depression and my grandfather losing a series of jobs because the economy collapsed. And through World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Kennedy's assassination and me -- an uncontrollable child, running through my grandparents' small retirement living room, spinning recklessly close to the glass cabinet panels as I skidded past, pivoting sharply into the kitchen where Grandma baked bread and cobbler and rolled out dough for noodles. She fretted, worried I would get more stitches than I already had by crashing into her cherished cabinet.

Inside the cabinet, she amassed a humble collection, beginning with her parent's and grandparent's hand-me-down china, including an 1800s cut-glass vinegar container with glass stopper to Made in Japan knick-knacks she bought at dime stores from the 1930s through the 1950s. Many of those items remain in the cabinet.

When my parents inherited the cabinet after Grandma died in 1971, Dad painstakingly removed the old, black, gummy varnish on the cabinet, using steel wool to expose every oak grain. Maybe he should have left the original varnish. Anyway, he had good intentions.

To me, the cabinet is something that endures. No matter what is happening in



my work world or private world. It embodies generations of people I've loved, so it's comforting in these times. As I type this, I see my reflection in the old glass.

Safely covering KDOT employees

A team effort between KDOT employees and retirees to make face masks is helping bring maintenance crews back to work.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needed for the employees at the Subareas has been ordered but the arrival is delayed.

To start getting offices back to work, Industrial Hygienist Tammi Clark knew that co-worker Natalie Durkin, Senior Administrative Assistant at the Materials and Research Center, was a quilter and asked her the week of April 13 if she could make some masks.

“They had no elastic anywhere,” Durkin said. “I ended up taking the elastic off fitted bed sheets that were purchased.”

Durkin made 15 one day and 25 the next. But more were needed, so Director of Operations Larry Thompson emailed Informational Specialist Kim Stich on April 16. Stich said she could provide some and she then reached out to KDOT retirees Jill Burton and Sandy Tommer who jumped in to assist. The three together provided 50 masks to Thompson a couple days later.

“It’s great to see everyone come together on this project,” Thompson said. “KDOT is like a family and we help each other whenever we can.”

Numerous other employees across the state are making face masks for family, friends, co-workers, medical staff and others, and all efforts are greatly appreciated.

Pictured are a few of the masks Durkin created.

Equipping employees to work remotely

By Kim Stich, Information Specialist

A lot of KDOT employees are working from home or a different location now, and it took the efforts of many KDOT employees to make that possible.

One group that assisted is Desktop Support in KDOT’s Office of Information Technology Services.



Jeremy Walford, Desktop Support Supervisor, said there weren't enough laptops to support the users. They ordered some, took some out of surplus and got extras from other bureaus, then made various upgrades.

There still weren't enough, so some employees picked up their desktops. This required Jerry Clements and

Laura Miller from Procurement to order and pick up boxes to pack equipment for each user. Then forms detailing the items were completed to track everything. It was a lengthy process to follow procedures for employees to pick up equipment safely.

"We would bring one person into that room and make sure they could get logged into their laptop and connect to the VPN," he said. "After that user left, we wiped down everything and the next person would come in."

Walford said his team did an outstanding job imaging laptops, scheduling with senior managers and confirming devices worked. "The workload was tremendous for a while," he said. "At one time, we had over 200 tickets sitting in our queue."

Additional problems came up, but with help from the IT Security Management group, Bryan Drake and many others, a solution for each was found. IT Technicians from every District also had to handle similar issues for their employees, such as District Four.

"It worked out so much better than I imagined. It was a bit overwhelming at the beginning because of all the uncertainty, but with a great team of folks, we're making this work," said District Four's Jon Evans. "I'm very proud of the employees at how they've adapted to using technology at home and are getting the job done every day."

Things are back to normal in Walford's group. But it was hectic for a while. "Getting employees set up to work remotely was a group effort between numerous bureaus and districts," Walford said. "It took a bunch of people to make this happen."

The job goes on: High water watch

By Tim Potter, Public Affairs Manager, District Five

Here's another example of how -- coronavirus or not -- the calls come in, the KDOT workers go out:

Martyn Howard got the call from the Comanche County Sheriff's Office about 6:45 a.m. Wednesday: storm runoff rolling over K-1 about 4 miles north of the Oklahoma line.

By around 7 a.m., Howard was there – “I don’t hang around,” he says -- flagging drivers of smaller vehicles, advising them to take another route.

That spot is about 14 miles south of Coldwater in a remote expanse of crop fields and grass land, and a storm had “just dropped a bunch of water real fast there,” said Howard, Highway Maintenance Supervisor with the Coldwater Subarea. He and Equipment Operator Trainee Tyson Rosenberger flagged motorists there for about an hour and half, until the water receded.



Staying connected: Communication through the crisis

The current COVID-19 response shows us that we are capable of adapting and achieving goals, even while practicing physical distancing for work.

Many divisions are taking to the internet and video conferences to stay connected. And we are seeing positive results.



Ashley Perez, Public Affairs Manager in District two said they have two regular calls at the district level, between District Engineers, Superintendents, HR and other admin staff. The construction office out of Junction City also hosts calls.

"As a way to safely keep in touch, District Two is utilizing a weekly conference to discuss where we are as a district and where we are headed based on the information at that time, but also just to talk to each other and see how those in our work family are doing," Perez said.

Image: KDOT Communications team meets weekly to discuss updates and strategies for communicating important information to KDOT employees and the general public.

Spreading a little magic

COVID-19 has impacted our lives in unexpected ways. Times are difficult right now,

and our days are certainly not filled with unicorns and rainbows.

However, that didn't stop Communications Specialist Mallory Goeke from trying to bring smiles to hard working individuals who continue to go to work to keep Kansas families stocked and fed.

A few weeks ago, she bought an inflatable unicorn outfit online so she could wear it while grocery shopping or going out in public.

"I was inspired after I saw someone walking a dog in a dinosaur costume in my neighborhood," Goeke said. "It made me smile and I thought it would awesome if I could help make others smile too."



Goeke said while she wore the costume, she couldn't really see much but she could hear the laughter and several clerks asked for a picture.

"I just wanted them to feel special," Goeke said. "We are all going through a lot right now, and if a silly costume can brighten someone's day with a little magic, it's worth a try."

*If you have a unique story during the COVID-19 response we'd love to feature you!
Please send your stories and photos to Mallory.Goeke@ks.gov.*

Take care of yourselves and stay healthy!



A homemade banner, encouraging neighbors and people passing by, hangs outside Communication Specialist Mallory Goeke's home in Topeka.