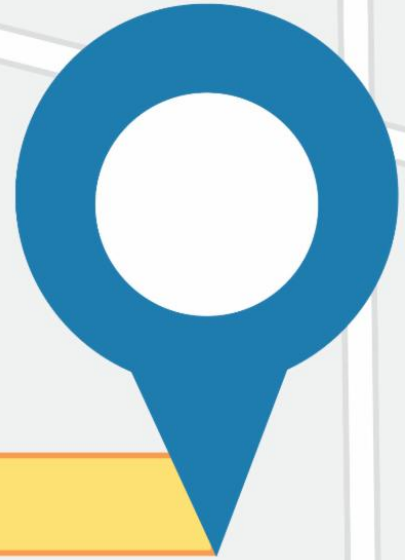


Friday May 1, 2020

EN ROUTE TO **FRIDAY**



HAPPY FRIDAY!

Keeping commerce, supplies moving

*By Ann Melton,
Community relations
manager*

Like many, Mike Cohen is working from home during the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. “It’s been challenging providing the same resources as if we were in the office, but we’ve managed,” he said.



Cohen, Senior Administrative Assistant in the Bureau of Structures & Geotechnical Services, works for the Kansas Central Permit Office and serves as a first line of connection for motor carriers and the general public. He provides answers to many questions related to oversized vehicle permits, including information on registration, oversize vehicle routes, state laws and the weather forecast.

Cohen and his team are especially critical to KDOT’s external network of moving commerce and supplies across the state. Semis and large trucks must have permits to travel, and because some Kansas highways and bridges have

weight/width restrictions, trucks need help finding different routes to move across the state.

Throughout the day, Cohen is on the phone keeping lines of communication open. Since the staff moved to working from home, the office's phone system has not been as reliable. "While we try our best to conduct business by phone when possible, we have been handling a lot more recent business by chat and email," says Cohen.

Cohen spends time on the phone or email helping answer the many questions about permitting and oversized loads. He's been caught a time or two talking to himself, but only when he needs an expert opinion!

"It's quiet chaos working from home, and sometimes very challenging," he said.

Cohen shares his home with his spouse who also works from home and three kids - Isabel, Ben and Sam, along with their dog, Daisy, and cats, Meeps and Whiskers.

"If the weather is bad, we all go stir crazy," he said. "When the weather is nice, our family is able to move around and not be in such close quarters."

Cohen says his routine has stayed the same for the most part. He enjoys being close to his family and pets, but he does miss his commute to work and time to unwind at the end of the day.

Traffic control for a work zone is no simple task

By Tim Potter, Public Affairs Manager, District Five

Even though the work zone awareness campaign is past, work zone safety is always a priority. Setting up traffic control for a KDOT work zone is a vital job. It requires attention to detail for everyone's safety.

District Five employees received training in Hutchinson in March by Safety Specialist Paul Thomas using a new method where workers manipulate table-top



models to simulate typical highway work zone situations. The hands-on models prompt trainees to visualize and think and talk through how to correctly set up signs, cones and other equipment depending on different work zone configurations.

KDOT Safety Coordinator Mark Johnson summarized five key points in traffic control: 1. Public safety. 2. KDOT employee safety. 3. Correct traffic control installation every time. 4. A firm understanding of

procedures. 5. A reminder: “Don’t hesitate to do more for your protection.”

What becomes clear is that setting up proper traffic control for a work zone is a little complicated the first time through the training. Cones and signs aren’t haphazardly set up. KDOT’s traffic control procedures for work zones are based on federal guidelines and spelled out in a thick manual.

“Let’s do it the right way. No shortcuts,” Johnson told the employees gathered. The typical motorist probably doesn’t realize the engineering – much of it based on the physics of speed and distance -- that goes into traffic control for a work zone. Signage and traffic cones are spaced and tapered differently depending on the work zone. The traffic control site is strategically designed and built: It includes a buffer zone to help stop an out-of-control vehicle from causing harm. There is an advanced warning area, transition area, activity area and termination area.

One key consideration is proper placement of flaggers – the gatekeepers. Their role is critical because they control the flow entering and leaving a work zone. They must communicate with each other.

There are limitations: When a pilot car is not involved, the speed limit through the work zone can be reduced no more than 15 mph.

Referring to motorists, Johnson said, “They’re still whizzing by our work zone, so we’ve got to do everything we can ... and protect our guys. You never assume that the traffic’s going to see you and they’re going to stay out of your way.”

Photo: Trainees refer to guides that include correct placement of traffic control signage in work zones.



in the field, while following appropriate safety precautions. Many projects are underway in north central Kansas. Various locations of U.S. 81 in Republic and Cloud counties will receive a face lift as old pavement is removed and replaced with an asphalt overlay. The overlay will repair any surface cracks or potholes in the roadway and create a smoother drive for motorists traveling along the route.

The new U.S. 81 overlays will require fewer repairs, allowing maintenance crews to have more time to focus on other tasks in District Two.



In District Three, mill and overlay work continues on 10 miles of U.S. 283 in Trego and Graham counties starting at Barclay Avenue in WaKeeney and ending approximately 3 miles north of the Graham County line.

Work began in mid-March and is expected to be completed by the end of May.

In District Six, the Garden City Subarea repaired guardrail on U.S. 50 west of Garden City last week.

The guardrail was damaged during the last SNICE event.

Another job, another section of recycled pavement

By Tim Potter, Public Affairs Manager, District Five

Dustrol workers have been doing a surface recycle job on U.S. 281 in Barton and Stafford counties.

The operation uses a series of heaters and milling machines on trailers followed by a paver.

Existing pavement gets heated and milled, rejuvenating oil is added and it all gets laid back down, says Neisha Vetter, Engineering Technician Specialist in Great Bend.

The process “makes asphalt fresh again,” says District Five Construction and Materials Engineer Nick Squires.

Each year, pavement gets recycled in similar ways on hundreds of miles of Kansas highways, says Blair Heptig, Field Materials

Engineer.



Safely First, for Your Family and Mine phone wallets to be distributed

By Kim Stich, Information Specialist

As a thank you and a reminder that safety at work is a top priority, orange phone wallets will be given to each KDOT employee in the coming few weeks.

The phone wallets attach to a cell phone and can hold a couple things like a credit card, driver's license, cash – things that are small and flat. On the top is KDOT's safety message – Safety first, for your family and mine.



The Division of Safety ordered the wallets in February for all KDOT employees as part of National Work Zone Awareness Week, but they were delayed because of the COVID-19 response.

“We believe in our safety message and want employees to have that safety message with them in their hands every day,” said Director of Safety Catherine Patrick. “That way it can be seen by employees as well as others as a reminder of what's important – safety and family.”

Each District will take care of distributing to their employees and the Division of Communications will dispense them at HQ. The distribution timeframe is unknown at the time with many employees working from home.

Social media access available for KDOT employees

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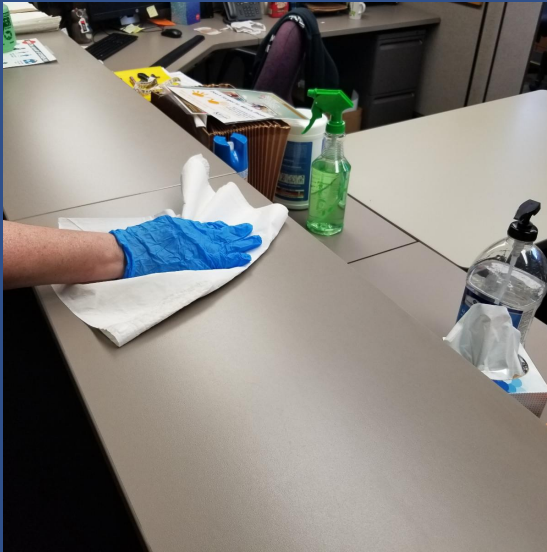
Information and news are shared with the public and employees in many ways. As part of this, KDOT employees now have access to view Facebook and other social media sites on KDOT computers.

“The Communications Division, which includes District Public Affairs Managers, are the employees in charge of posting on social media and responding on behalf of the agency,” said Communications Director Jeanny Sharp. “But this access will make it easier for employees to reference work-related social media messaging that KDOT posts as well as information from the Governor and other state agencies.”

All employees should review **SOM 1.9.1**, **SOM 1.15.2** and **SOM 1.15.7** on the intranet to update themselves on KDOT’s policies regarding social media access. Within these policies are reminders for employees including, “KDOT computer resources are provided to KDOT employees for use for official state business. An employee’s personal use of KDOT computer resources, to constitute other appropriate use, must have the approval of the employee’s manager or supervisor, must not interfere with the employee’s work responsibilities or agency productivity, or should be for a purpose that is incidental to an authorized use.”

Whether you are a regular user of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn or if you’ve never seen the need to give it a try, “It’s another way our Division interacts with the public and keeps them informed about the agency,” Sharp said.

During the next few weeks, we’ll share information through En Route to Friday about the different social media platforms and how KDOT uses them. To see all KDOT accounts, click [here](#).



KDOT field employees have been training recently on new safety measures. Now employees in KDOT offices across the state are also discovering new ways to work safely.

On Thursday, District Five office staff who have been working remotely came back long enough to learn how to work safely in the coronavirus era.

The first thing KDOT Safety Coordinator Mark Johnson told them: “Rules are going to change as we go through this.”

But for now, Johnson urged the 15 staffers to keep a 6-foot distance from one another and wear a mask if they came closer.

He also told them they would have their temperatures checked before they come into the Hutchinson building and when they leave.

He offered tips on how to spray and wipe down workspaces and shared spaces, especially high-touch surfaces.

Wearing gloves and masks, they used a 2% solution of cleanser/sanitizer on their workstations, focusing on counters, desktops and door handles. They cleaned bathroom fixtures and walls from 6 feet down. They let the solution set before wiping it away.

They used damp (but not too wet) wipes that were OK for use on computer keyboards. He warned them not to spray down keyboards and electronics. Johnson also gave a reminder: “Best thing you can do is wash your hands with soap and water.”

After Thursday’s training and cleaning, those working remotely away from the Hutchinson office will continue until further notice.



The Erie Subarea crew met on Tuesday -- keeping careful social distances and wearing masks – to train on how to take temperatures, clean and disinfect building and equipment surfaces as well as perform other safety measures in order to stave off the COVID-19

virus.

Subarea Supervisor Charley Baker reported cleaning operations went smoothly. The cleaning is routinely completed at the beginning and end of

each workday.

“There’s pros and cons” to the new methods of operation, according to Ottawa Subarea Supervisor Bruce Myres, recalling the April 16 cleaning and reopening of his office and shop. “Everyone is coping,” he added, although the need to keep employees in separate vehicles is “a bit of a challenge ... We are keeping the same people in the same trucks doing the same thing” to avoid possible cross-contamination.

Photo above: Chris Duling, Equipment Operator from Erie, disinfects the cab of a KDOT dump truck.

KDOT kitty keeps District Six safe

Sapphire, the District Six shop cat, joined the shop crew last summer as the shop’s pest control coordinator. She was recruited and vetted by District Mechanic Lee Perkins in an effort to control the mice in the shop.

Sapphire has earned her keep proving to be a skilled mouser with 10 kills this winter. She kept a watchful eye on the District Shop during the recent stay at home order by protecting it against a bunny, a bird and several mice.



We aren't playing around here

Keep on Smiling!

We will work through this together.



Take care of yourselves and stay healthy!

