

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

March 4, 2020

Celebrating KDOT's commitment to T-WORKS



Trisha Purdon, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Action Council; Mark Bettis, with Bettis Asphalt and Construction; Secretary Julie Lorenz; and District Four Engineer Wayne Gudmonson break ground for the upcoming U.S. 169 project. Photo by Larry Katsbulas, Headquarters

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

KDOT, state and local officials and highway advocates attended a groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 21 for the previously delayed U.S. 169 project in Anderson County at Welda.

“This U.S. 169 project is a true connection point between delivering on the promises of our past transportation program, T-WORKS – and serving as a

guidepost for the work we want to do under our next program, FORWARD,” said Secretary Julie Lorenz.

Starting in March, KDOT will reconstruct and rehabilitate 7½ miles of U.S. 169 from Welda north to the roundabout south of Garnett. Bettis Asphalt & Construction is the primary contractor on the \$21 million T-WORKS project, which will add 10-foot shoulders to the roadway and provide a 32-foot clear zone off the highway. The project also will improve the vertical alignment of U.S. 169 to provide more opportunities to safely pass slow-moving vehicles.

Two more T-WORKS groundbreaking ceremonies set

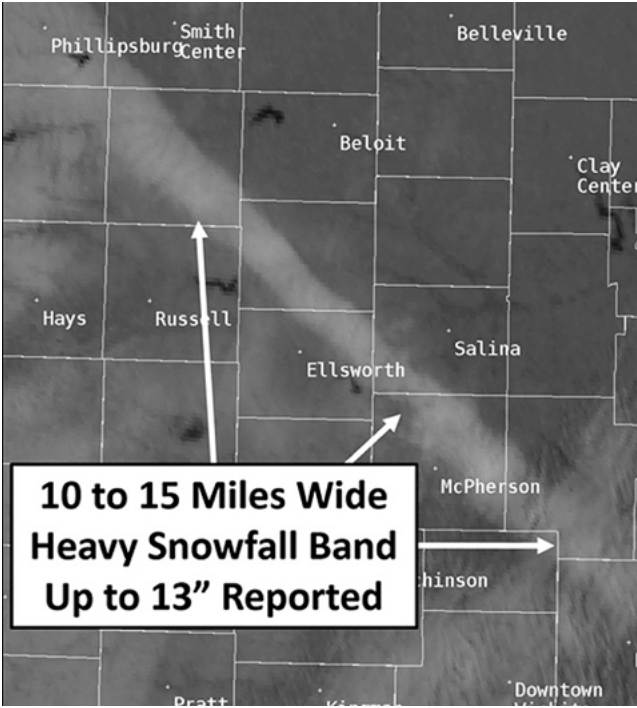
A ceremony to highlight the project to expand U.S. 54 from two lanes to four lanes east of Liberal will take place northeast of Liberal at the former rest area at 9 a.m. on March 6. This \$27 million project also includes the construction of a second bridge over the Cimarron River.

A second groundbreaking ceremony will take place that same day at 2:30 p.m. on the north side of Russell to celebrate an upcoming four-mile project to reconstruct and rehabilitate U.S. 281 north of Russell. The \$9.8 million project will widen the roadway and add turf shoulders.



A narrow band of snow that hit north central Kansas on Feb. 25 can be seen from the sky. Photo courtesy of Leigh Marts

During that same Feb. 25 storm, some areas received several inches of snow, such as Lincoln. In fact, Sylvan Grove received amounts reaching up to 13 inches. Other areas only 30 minutes away did not have a trace of snow. This was due to a narrow band of heavy snow drifting across parts of Marion, McPherson, Saline, Ellsworth, and Lincoln counties.



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Firefighters and citizens in Sherman County pay their respects to Donald Stratton on Feb. 29 as the motorcade passed through their area. Photo courtesy of the Donald Stratton family

World War II veteran honored during motorcade

By Lisa Mussman
District Three

Hundreds of people lined routes in northwest Kansas on Feb. 29 to pay their respects to World War II navy veteran Donald Stratton. Stratton was one of the few remaining survivors of the attack on the USS Arizona during the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The Red Cloud, Neb., native sustained serious burns to more than 70% of his body during the siege and was medically discharged in 1942. Determined to continue fighting for his country, Stratton reenlisted in 1944 and served out the war before his final discharge in 1946. Stratton passed away on Feb. 15, at the age of 97.

Following a memorial service in Colorado Springs,



Nearing the homestretch, the procession makes its way on to U.S. 36 in Phillipsburg. Photo by Lisa Mussman, District Three

Stratton's motorcade traveled along I-70, U.S. 183, U.S. 36 and U.S. 281 to its final destination in Red Cloud.

Procession photos and video are on Stratton's Facebook page - www.facebook.com/ussarizonasurvivor/.

Vehicle locators could help improve employee safety

By Kelly Kultala
District One

To continue improving safety, Maintenance Bureau Chief Clay Adams and Field Maintenance Manager and Emergency Coordinator Jim Frye implemented a trial AVL/GPS program in one Subarea in each District and an extra Subarea in District One.

An automatic vehicle locator (AVL) is a device that uses the Global Positioning System (GPS) to enable a business or agency to remotely gather vehicle fleet information by using the Internet. About a month ago, 44 dump trucks, eight pickup trucks and one car were equipped with an AVL device from one of three chosen vendors. Each vendor has a different trial period and will capture different information.

The District Maintenance Engineer and Area and Subarea Supervisors are able to install an app that provides basic information such as where the vehicle is located and how fast it is moving. It can also relay more advanced information, such as if the driver is wearing a seat belt or reporting the material spread rates from the back of a dump truck.

One of the primary reasons for KDOT to consider using one of these systems is safety.

“If a supervisor is unable to contact a driver in a vehicle they will be able to locate it on a map or if a vehicle has been idling a long time, the supervisor can



The device gathers various vehicle information and can also help improve safety.

check to see if the driver is alright,” Adams said. “Also, an alert will be sent to the supervisor if a seat belt is not being used for some reason.”

Other states and municipalities are already using an AVL system. KDOT locations that are a part of the trial program are Oakland, Gage, Mankato, Oakley, Altoona, Winfield and Dodge City. It will be up to the field operations in these locations to determine if there is a benefit and whether to continue an AVL program long term.



KDOT receives honors for paving projects

KDOT projects received paving awards in three different categories at the MO/KS Chapter, American Concrete Paving Association's 40th annual Portland Cement Concrete Pavement Conference that took place Feb. 24-26 in Kansas City, Mo.



Divided Highways (rural):

- ♦ U.S. 69 in Bourbon County
 - ♦ \$30.1 million project to expand six lanes of U.S. 69 to a multi-lane divided highway
 - ♦ Primary contractor - Koss Construction
- KDOT employees include Greg Gonzales (second from left), Warren Ebberts (second from right) and Darrin Petrowsky (right).



State Roads:

- ♦ U.S. 169 in Allen County
 - ♦ \$16.7 million project to remove and replace seven miles of U.S. 169
 - ♦ Primary contractor - Emery Sapp & Sons
- KDOT employees, from left, include Ryan Barrett, Darrin Petrowsky and Steve Gibson.



Concrete Pavement Rehabilitation:

- ♦ U.S. 56/U.S. 77 in Marion County
 - ♦ \$3.9 million project to remove and replace 3.1 miles of two-lane pavement on U.S. 56/U.S. 77
 - ♦ Primary contractor - Emery Sapp and Sons
- KDOT employees, from left, include Kody Henrichs, Sherri Pankratz and Thomas Hussa.

A SNICE slice of life: scouting out the highways

By Tim Potter
District Five

Even with endless weather data, it's hard to know what wintry weather will do: Will big wet snowflakes, diving down from low-hanging clouds, turn to slush and ice on the highway? If so, when?

Chris Craig faced those questions as he left the District Five maintenance shop in Hutchinson at 2:47 p.m. Feb 25. A moderately strong winter storm was descending on south central Kansas with varied forecasts depending on the location.

"It's whenever Mother Nature decides," said Craig, one of the Highway Maintenance Supervisors.

Craig drove out in a KDOT pickup to see up close what Mother Nature was doing to pavement on K-96 toward Wichita and on K-14 south of K-96. Since earlier in the day, SNICE (snow and ice) crews had been spraying ice-melting brine on bridges, ramps, curves and intersections where slick spots could pose the biggest problems for motorists.

It was Craig's job to monitor and determine whether crews could come back in or should keep treating and be in position to quickly react if conditions worsened.

Out on the highway, Craig could see the pavement was so far just wet, not icing up. The air temperature was 32 degrees – freezing -- but the surface temp was 33 degrees – just warm enough.

Craig kept driving through narrow bands of snowfall. It would be snowing hard for a mile or so – as thick as a fog if you looked out across the fields. But in the next half mile, it would be virtually clear.

He was helping direct the efforts of three dump trucks laying down brine or salt on K-96 from South Hutchinson to Maize Road in west Wichita and on K-14 going south between K-96 and U.S. 54.

Between South Hutchinson and Haven, Craig closely watched tires on vehicles passing him -- to see whether the wheels were kicking up water, meaning it wasn't freezing.

So far, the temperatures and the brine were holding up. By the time he passed from Reno County to Sedgwick



Highway Maintenance Supervisor Chris Craig monitors the weather and checks road conditions. Photos by Tim Potter, District Five



County, he noticed that the air temperature was a little higher – 34 degrees.

By 3:23 p.m., the snowfall had disappeared. The ground was wet, but not white, not glazed.

"It's still at that point where we just need to watch it and see what's going to happen," he said.

By late afternoon, replacement crews were lined up and ready to respond through the night. A night supervisor would take over. Overnight, ice did form on some bridges, and crews attacked it with more brine. For some KDOT workers, it was a long night, just another part of the job.

Thank you for your service

The following employees will retire on April 1.

Headquarters

Brian Jemison, Public Service Administrator III, Materials/Wichita

Scott Lein, Program Consultant I, Civil Rights

JoAnn Phillips, Administrative Specialist, Right of Way

District Four

Wade Park, Engineering Technician, Iola

Kevin Ryan, Highway Maintenance Superintendent, Garnett

District Five

Kent Davis, Welder, Hutchinson

David Hutfles, Engineering Technician, Wichita

Doreen Mitchell, Engineering Technician Senior, Great Bend

Information on the coronavirus, from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. The first case in the United States was announced on Jan. 21.

People in the United States commonly get infected with human coronaviruses and there are four types that are the most common. Sometimes coronaviruses that infect animals can evolve and make people sick and become a new human coronavirus. An example of this is the newly identified COVID-19 first detected in Wujhan, China.

For more information, please review the FAQ sheet from KDHE's website [here](#). Other details on the virus can be seen on KDHE's page [here](#).



Neil Croxton, KDOT Professional Geologist in Salina, discovered this old Case tractor that can be seen along U.S. 36 east of Washington.

Trivia!

60-year anniversary of “The Andy Griffith Show”

1. The characters for this show were originally introduced on another show – what was it?
2. What’s the name of the opening theme song?
3. What month always appears on the calendar in Floyd’s barber shop?
4. What did Barney carry in his shirt pocket?
5. What was Barney’s middle name?
6. What was the one thing Aunt Bee could not cook well?
7. Who always ran around town knocking out windows?
8. What was Barney’s favorite saying?
9. It was one of three shows that left the air while number one in ratings. What were the other two shows?

Necessity can be the mother of invention

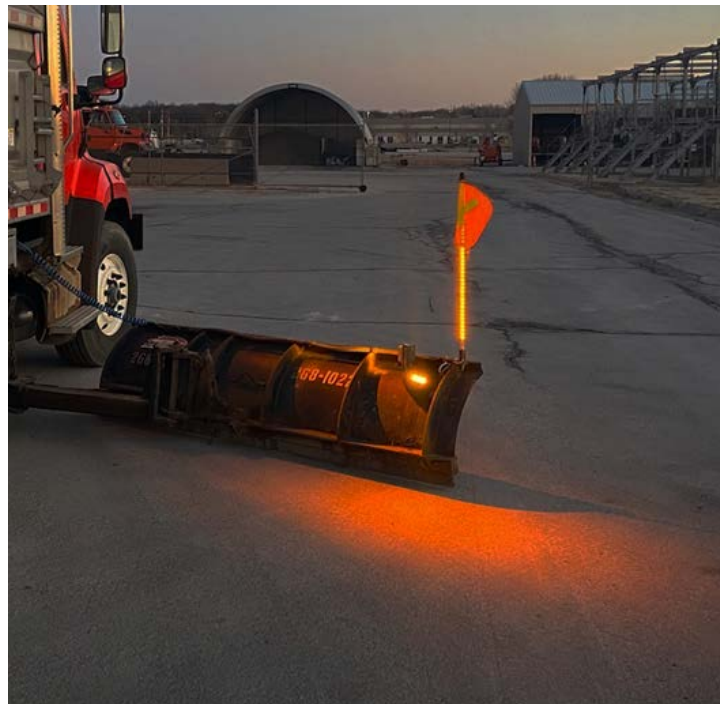
By Kelly Kultala
District One

At the Troy Subarea this winter, necessity was most definitely the mother of invention.

After a wing plow was hit twice during a couple of snowstorms, Braden Grossman, Equipment Operator at the Troy Subarea, knew he had to do something.

He created a lighted stick from rope lights he found in a pickup truck utility box and whips that were laying around the shop. Grossman took the cap off of the end of the whip and threaded the lights inside the whip and through a hole he drilled in the other end, then wired it to the wing plow.

Grossman originally made four light sticks that didn’t cost anything to make and all four have stayed on the wing plows and are still working.



Equipment Operator Braden Grossman created a lighted stick to help make the wing plow more visible. Photo by Keith Snyder, District One

Trivia answers

1. “Make Room for Daddy.”
2. “The Fishin’ Hole.”
3. February.
4. A single bullet.
5. In one episode it was Oliver, and in another, it was Milton. Also once he used the initial P.
6. Homemade pickles.
7. Ernest T. Bass.
8. Nip it in the bud.
9. “I Love Lucy” and “Seinfeld.”

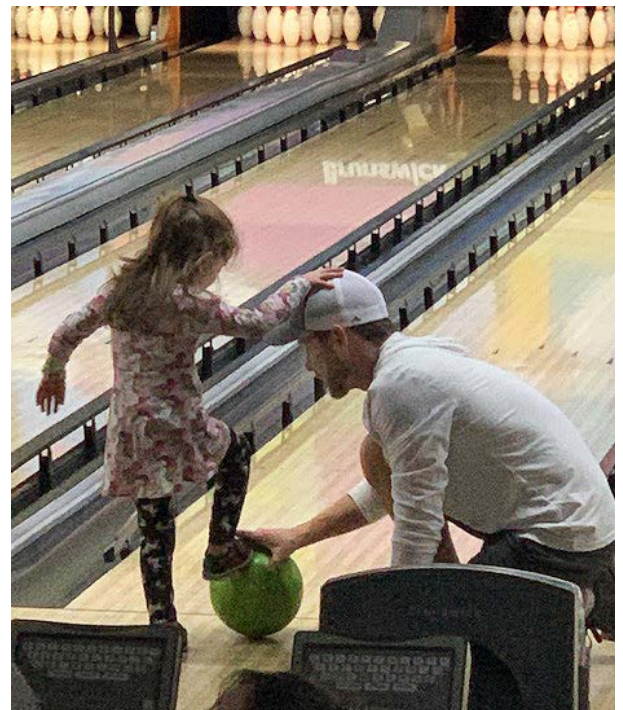
Kansas Turnpike Authority

KTA has announced its 2020 construction plans. The plans include 10 new projects and four projects carrying over from the 2019 construction season. You can learn more about these projects in the latest news release [here](#) or by watching the 2020 Construction Preview [here](#).



Work zone safety contest

There is still plenty of time for students in grades 8-12 to enter the KTA's 5th annual design contest as part of National Work Zone Awareness Week. The winner will receive \$200 and get their work published in VYPE Magazine, a high school sports magazine for south central and central Kansas. Full details are available at www.ksturnpike.com/contests.



Crazy Bowl participants bowled together, standing on one leg or pushing the ball with a foot (with a little help) at the annual KDOT Employees' Council event on Feb. 23 in Topeka. Photos by Mike Daniel, District One, and Kim Stich, Headquarters

Programs offer new opportunities to work at KDOT

By Greg Hopkins
Headquarters

KDOT is developing new avenues to reach more candidates for job openings within the agency, including partnering with organizations in the state that have programs to assist individuals in attaining a job, internship or training.

“These types of partnerships create win-win solutions by providing a broader net for KDOT to attain new employees as well as provide employment opportunities for individuals who have been challenged with barriers,” said Director of Human Resources Maribel Manos. “The hope is that if the job and the individual are a good fit, the individual will continue working as a KDOT employee once the program ends.”

One new partnership is with the USD 501 Vocational Intervention Program (VIP) in Topeka. USD 501 receives annual federal grant funding from Heartland Works, Inc. under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Project. The funds are used to help young adults ages 16 – 24 access education and employment opportunities. Manos said this partnership is specifically utilizing grant money

to pay participant wages while engaging in real-life work experiences.

“The program affords an intern the ability to learn vital on the job skills they are interested in,” said Joe Kitchen, Facilities Operations Manager in Support Services. “This new program also teaches them how important each unit within KDOT is, in serving the public to best match the state’s goal.”

KDOT’s recruitment team worked with USD 501 VIP Director Misty Louderback to initiate the program and an interview was set up with the first Topeka High School graduate, 19-year-old Caleb Christian. Although Christian admitted he was a little shy, his previous internship as an Environmental Service Technician at Stormont Vail has helped him to overcome some of the nervousness.

Christian started at KDOT in February and is assisting the Facilities Support Unit in the Bureau of Support Services.

“Caleb is transitioning well, working with the Facilities Management team along with building and developing skills, knowledge and experience that he will be able to take with him and use in any future endeavors,” said Mike Lester, Labor Supervisor.

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KDOT grant helps industrial park switch into gear

Article from the Parsons Sun

State officials were on hand on Feb. 20 in Parsons to help celebrate the opening of Great Plains Industrial Park's railroad to the first loaded rail car in 50 years.

Transportation Partners & Logistics (TP&L) President Jim Orr, Secretary Julie Lorenz, Great Plains Development Authority Vice Chairman Gary Beachner and Secretary of Commerce David Toland threw the ceremonial rail switch.

TP&L provides transportation and logistics services to companies. The company has 11 locations and owns and operates the largest wind component distribution center in North America in Garden City. In late December, the company announced it would be creating a new site within the Great Plains Industrial Park, thanks to a \$1.64 million grant from KDOT for the rehabilitation and replacement of rails within Great Plains. Integrated rails that could hold heavy capacity cars from a Class 1 railroad were needed.

TP&L President Jim Orr spoke about Garden City starting on 10 acres, just like Great Plains. Now the company's site in Garden City is over 600 acres. They employ around 85 people, have anywhere from 7,000 to 8,000 components on the ground all the time and are loading an average of 100 trucks in and out a day.

It is hoped TP&L establishing a presence at Great Plains is the start to further economic development in the park for the benefit of Parsons, Labette County, southeast Kansas and the state as was the Kansas



From left to right, Secretary of Commerce David Toland, Secretary Julie Lorenz, Great Plains Development Authority Vice Chairman Gary Beachner and Transportation Partners & Logistics (TP&L) President Jim Orr cut the ribbon at the Great Plains Industrial Park opening. Photo by Larry Katsbulas, Headquarters

State Army Ammunition Plant long ago.

Secretary Julie Lorenz was introduced as someone interested in moving Kansas forward through strategic infrastructure improvements, such as those at Great Plains, helping the industrial park serve as an economic development engine for southeast Kansas.

"Transportation drives the Kansas economy and at KDOT we recognize the importance of partnerships, working with everyone in this tent, and we'd like to see tents like these all across the state to make sure quality investments are made to support a strong transportation network," Lorenz said. "Where we are ... in the center of the country we need to play to our natural strengths, our natural advantages. We are within two days' drive (to) 85% of the American population. We need to take full advantage of that."