

# TRANSLINES EXPRESS

July 14, 2021



## *\$776 million in highway projects announced across Kansas*

Governor Laura Kelly and Secretary Julie Lorenz announced 24 Expansion and Modernization highway projects - totaling an investment of more than \$776 million - have been committed to construction as part of the Kelly Administration's bipartisan transportation plan.

"Expanding and modernizing our highways will enhance accessibility and road safety to recruit new businesses and families to every Kansas community," said Governor Kelly. "Since day one, we've honored our commitment to ending the practice of using infrastructure dollars for projects they were never meant for – instead using these dollars to fix our roads, bridges, and expand broadband access. These 24 projects are further proof that good stewardship of these funds is benefitting our communities, taxpayers, and businesses."

**Click [here](#) to see the list of 24 highway projects and other information on the IKE website.**

After hosting local consult meetings throughout fall 2019, KDOT staff worked with community leaders to help identify regional transportation priorities and determine cost-effective ways to deliver them.

"Announcing this first round of projects for construction as part of the Kelly Administration's transportation plan is the next step in KDOT's commitment to invest in our state," said Secretary Lorenz. "These statewide improvements support

Continued on next page



*Governor Laura Kelly (top photo) and Secretary Julie Lorenz (bottom photo) speak at the event in Wichita on July 7 announcing improvement projects in central Kansas. Photos on pages 1, 2 and 3 by KDOT staff, Governor's staff and City of Overland Park.*



From left, Secretary Julie Lorenz, Overland Park City Council President Curt Skoog, Governor Laura Kelly and Deputy Secretary Lindsey Douglas listen to U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids speak at the Overland Park event. The U.S. 69 project area is in the background.

# Highway projects announced

Continued from page 1

communities and help meet current and future transportation needs.”

Projects were announced in Dodge City and Wichita on July 7 and in Topeka and Overland Park on July 8 that will help relieve congestion and enhance safety. Urban projects include the first express toll lane on U.S. 69 in Overland Park, a new Polk-Quincy viaduct in Topeka, a new diverging diamond interchange east of Lawrence and major improvements to the I-235 North Junction in Wichita.

In rural areas, 20 projects across the state will focus on adding or extending more than 26 miles of passing lanes on numerous highways, rehabilitating and adding shoulders on more than 40 miles of highway and widening/adding shoulders on more than 22 miles on sections of K-7.

KDOT will also keep its promise to let for construction one phase of all T-WORKS projects before construction begins on highway improvement projects.

KDOT will host Local Consult meetings this fall to identify additional regional priorities to be added to the development pipeline and continue working on those projects placed in development in May 2020.

## TRANSLINES EXPRESS

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**Safety**  
 Troy Whitworth

Photos from announcement events across the state



At left, Dan Watkins looks at the signs in Topeka. At right, Jerald Kemmerer, CEO, Pride Ag, speaks in Dodge City.



Above, State Rep. Richard Proehl chats with Governor Kelly in Topeka. Above right, State Rep. Shannon Francis talks with Secretary Lorenz in Dodge City. Below, Governor Kelly speaks to a crowd in Wichita. Below right, Overland Park City Council President Curt Skoog speaks at the event.



# Longe selected as Performance Management Chief

Tope Longe has been named the KDOT Bureau Chief of Performance Management. The bureau was recently created to help the agency focus on strategic planning and improving overall processes. Longe began in her new role June 1.

“The idea is to refine the reporting of existing operations and performance measures for the agency and make sure they are aligned with KDOT’s goals,” Longe said. “We measure it so we can showcase what we have achieved and find ways to make continuous improvements.”

Longe previously worked for the Department of Transport for Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, as a Management Consultant, focusing on the management of the performance of major public transport and parking contracts of the organization. After eight years, she joined the Office of the Chairman of the Department



*Tope Longe*

to support the strategic organizational development and advice on executive affairs. Previously, she was the head of Enforcement Services at the Transport for London, working on the strategic road network for London.

In addition, Longe served two terms as a Board Director for the International Parking and Mobility Institute, which is headquartered in Virginia. “The board sets the standards and performance measures for advancing the parking and mobility industry on an international platform,” she said.

Longe moved to Kansas in March 2020 when her spouse, Dr. Sanmi Areola, was named the Public Health Director for Johnson County. She describes herself as a lifelong learner; she is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership.

# Yorkey named Office of Finance and Budget Chief

By Kim Stich  
Headquarters

Brendan Yorkey joined KDOT as the Chief of the Office of Finance and Budget. He began his new position on June 14.

Yorkey has a background in performance measures and debt service/bonding issues. In addition, he was a Budget Analyst in the state’s Division of the Budget for 15 years, and in prior years, served as the principal analyst who reviewed KDOT’s budget.

“I have some familiarity with KDOT and a general knowledge of the agency’s budget,” he said. “I’m looking forward to learning the finer details and how the entire budget process works here.”

He says the office has been a steady and reliable

resource within the agency and wants to continue that effort by assisting KDOT divisions in making sure that preparing budgets is a smooth and efficient process.

“I’m excited to have this opportunity and to help implement the IKE transportation plan,” Yorkey said. “I was knowledgeable of the effort, and here I get to be a true part of it.”

Yorkey and his wife, Amanda, have two sons and reside in Topeka.



*Brendan Yorkey*

# Ways KDOT employees beat the heat

By Tim Potter  
District Five

For days in advance, the National Weather Service sent alerts warning people to prepare for a dangerous combination of heat and humidity on Thursday, June 10. And, of course, there have been and will be other days like that during the rest of the summer.

So on a dangerously hot day, how do KDOT employees who have to work in the elements deal with the heat hazards? A common theme was - prevention is crucial. Here is what they shared about coping with the heat and humidity on June 10:

●Dennis Senters, Beloit Subarea Supervisor, District Two: "I made sure they (his crew) had their water with them" – meaning extra water. "You could tell it was the first big heat of the year," Senters said. "And it was hard on 'em. When they came in, their tongues were hanging out. I tell them: When you need a break, you take a break." He also reminds his crew that some people can endure heat better than others, and not to assume that because you feel OK, your co-worker does as well. "We got a great crew in Beloit. We keep a close eye on each other."

●Daryl Dougherty, Engineering Technician, Phillipsburg Construction Office, District Three: His June 10 work schedule centered around inspecting a grading project north of Osborne on U.S. 24/281. Even with a breeze, at 2:24 p.m. the temperature where he was working was 94 degrees. But the "real feel," factoring in the humidity, was 103 degrees, Dougherty noted. He had been in the heat for about six hours at that point, but he was making sure he stayed hydrated. "Every time I go



*Equipment Operator Ken Vanatta with a stop paddle on a hot day. He is with the Medicine Lodge Subarea Crew. Photo by Eric Barnes, District Five*

back to the pickup, I make sure I drink a glass of water."

●Burke Koehn, Scott City Subarea Supervisor, District Six: Koehn tried to steer his crew to jobs where they could avoid the heat and sun that day. He noted that his area of southwestern Kansas had been unusually humid after weeks of regular rainfall. "The humidity is definitely something that makes it harder to cope with," Koehn said.

●Mike Loret, Facilities Specialist, part of the District Five HVAC crew: "My biggest trick is a spray bottle of water." He works outside in sweltering conditions so others can stay cool inside. So he sprays his face, head and neck -- sometimes every five minutes. "I spray my beard, and I call that my portable air-conditioning," he said, laughing. "I've got a big ol' hat, big ol' brim on it. I don't care what I look like -- I keep cool. You got to keep cool, and you got to keep hydrated."

●Dan Acridge, Wichita Area Crew Supervisor: Because of the extreme heat on June 10, Acridge had his crew finish painting stop bars by 2 p.m. "That's enough -- they've been out in the heat

all day," he said. While they worked, he had them take breaks in an air-conditioned truck. "It was really humid this morning, and the humidity burned off a little." Working directly over pavement intensifies the heat, Acridge noted. "Then, of course, we're always working in teams so we can keep an eye on each other."



*Mike Loret with his heat-coping device – a water spray bottle. He is a Facilities Specialist, part of the District Five HVAC crew. Photo by Nick Barringer*

# Tailgate meetings help improve awareness

By Ashley Perez  
District Two

Many Subarea Supervisors have daily safety awareness meetings with their crews at the beginning of each workday to review the work plan for the day and provide safety tips. These meetings provide critical safety reminders to new and seasoned workers.

To encourage all offices to have these meetings, Safety Director Troy Whitworth created a video, with KDOT Multimedia staff and employees from District Two. "I had been discussing some of this with Doug Newquist and I asked if he had some folks that were willing to get involved," Whitworth said. "He said he would be glad to help us out."

The tailgate briefings are not a new concept, but are meant to help improve situational awareness of employees.

Whitworth said the goal of the video is to show how these tailgate meetings can improve job site awareness of safety hazards and to get everyone on the same page. "We want people to speak up if something



*At right, Kade Cooper, Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Belleville, conducts a tailgate meeting with his co-workers on June 16. Photo by Ashley Perez, District Two*

changes and affects the safety of the team," Whitworth said.

The meetings do not need to be a formal process that is difficult to do, Whitworth said. "It can be done with several people or just a couple," he said. "The key concept is that we communicate safety with our co-workers so everyone makes it home safe each day."

The video will be available to view later in July - Whitworth will include it in one of his safety emails.

## Reminder for all employees -

### Check voice mail, email responses for accuracy

All KDOT employees are reminded to check their voice mail greetings and email responses to make sure they have been updated to current work locations.

Many voice mails still say employees are following Governor Laura Kelly's directive from

March 2020 to work at home, or have other dated information.

Please make sure you check and update your voice mail message regularly to provide co-workers and the public the best information and ways to communicate with you.

# One Kansas River in the U.S. Marine Highway System

By Tom Hein  
District Five

A national network of navigable waterways – rivers, bays, channels, coasts, the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence Seaway – form America’s Marine Highway. The goal of this U.S. DOT designation is to expand use of these waterways thus reducing pressure on our land-based system of highways and interstates.

And believe it or don’t, Kansas is a part of this system! While it’s true that only 120 miles of the “Big Muddy” touch Kansas, the Missouri River between Sioux City, Iowa, and Kansas City is designated as M-29 in the Marine Highway System.

There are two other navigable rivers in Kansas – the Kaw and the Ark – though not in the marine system.

The Kaw (or Kansas) River flows 173 miles east from the confluence of the Smoky Hill and the Republican rivers near Junction City to Kansas City where it meets the Missouri River.

The Ark (pronounced Arr – Kansas) River originates in a rocky crevice near Leadville, Colorado, flows through the Royal Gorge, is thinned considerably in eastern



*The Ark River northwest of the I-235/K-96 interchange in northwest Wichita has enough flow to float your boat – if it’s a canoe or kayak. Photo by Tom Hein, District Five*



Colorado then travels 192 miles in Kansas (mostly underground in District Six).

Also not in the U.S. Marine Highway System are more than 10,000 miles of Kansas rivers, streams, creeks, intermittent streambeds, and many small “cricks.”

Outside of Kansas, the system includes coastal ocean routes, the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway, and many large rivers like the Mississippi, Missouri, and Columbia. South of Tulsa, the Arkansas River is designated M-40 but the pronunciation is a little different than the Kansas version and so is the amount of flow.

U.S. DOT Maritime Administration cites numerous advantages of the system including relieving highway congestion, reducing maintenance costs on roads and bridges, and improving U.S. economic competitiveness by using cost-effective freight movement (cost per ton per mile).

“The Marine Highway is part of our multi-modal transportation system,” said John Maddox, KDOT Freight and Rail Program Manager. “It is utilized primarily for heavy cargo that does not require a tight timeframe for delivery. Barge transport is a low-cost shipping method that is often used to move large quantities of Kansas grain.”

## Trivia!

### Famous bridges in the U.S. and Canada

1. Completed in 1883, this is one of the oldest suspension bridges in the U.S. It's also a National Historic Landmark.
2. It only has one lane, but it is the world's longest covered bridge.
3. This bridge took four years to build, cost \$35 million and opened in 1937. It is one of the most recognizable bridges in the world.
4. Opening in 1997, it is the longest bridge over ice in the world, spanning the Abegweit Passage of Northumberland Strait.
5. This is the world's highest suspension bridge at 359 meters above the Arkansas River.

## U.S. 169 pavement project progressing

*Following the July 6 closing of U.S. 169 south of Chanute, the contractor immediately began milling the highway shoulders. The closed section runs from 130th Street north to 35th Street at Chanute, and is part of the 13-mile U.S. 169 pavement construction project in Neosho and Allen counties. During the second phase, which will begin late this year or early in 2022, the highway closure will switch and extend north of K-39 into Allen County. The entire project, which started in March of this year, should be finished and open to unrestricted traffic by mid-November 2022. KDOT has signed a detour on K-47, U.S. 59, and K-39 for the current phase. Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc., of Kansas City, Mo., is the primary contractor. Brian Kierath's road squad and Paul Kulseth's bridge squad designed the project. Photo by Priscilla Petersen, District Four*



## Trivia answers

1. Brooklyn Bridge, New York City.
2. Hartland Bridge, New Brunswick, Canada.
3. Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco.
4. Confederation Bridge, Prince Edward Island, Canada.
5. Royal Gorge Bridge, Colorado.





## U.S. 54 project continues to advance

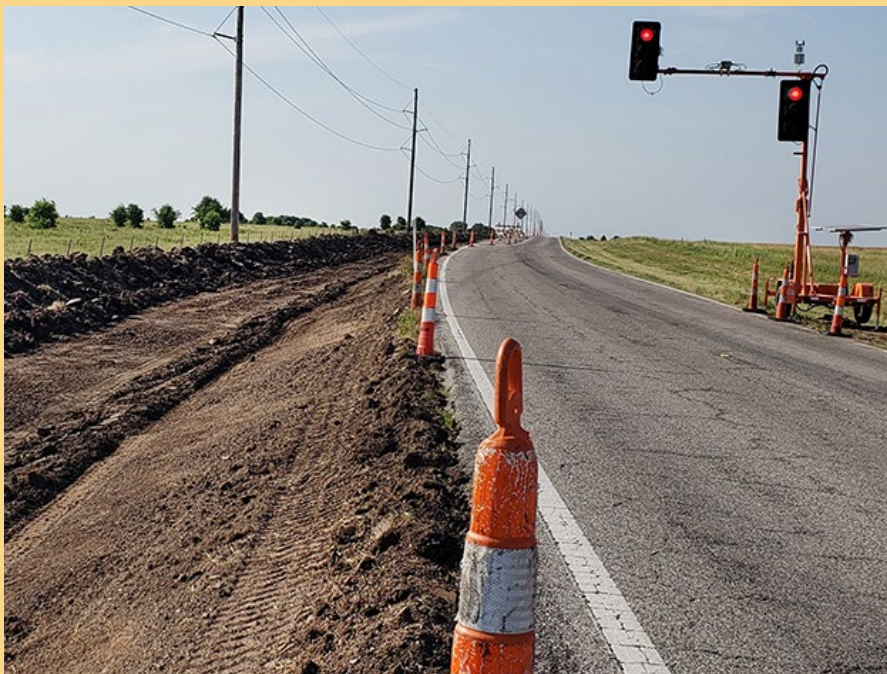
*Koss Construction completes a night pour on the new eastbound U.S. 54 lanes approximately 10 miles east of Liberal in Seward County. This \$28 million project includes expansion of three miles of U.S. 54 from two lanes to four lanes and includes construction of a second bridge carrying traffic across the Cimarron Valley. Steve Rockers' road squad and Paul Kulseth's bridge squad designed the project.*



*Above, the newly built bridge on the U.S. 54 project in Seward County will carry westbound traffic across the Cimarron Valley. The original bridge which is being resurfaced as part of this project will carry eastbound traffic. At left, the newly constructed eastbound lanes are shown here next to the original two lanes and the sub-grade for the new westbound lanes. The project is expected to be completed in 2022. Photos by Kyle Campbell, Kirkham Michaels Consulting*

## U.S. 281 project on track

*The U.S. 281 modernization project in Russell County continues to make good progress towards completion later this year. Crews from Sporer Land Development have been working on excavation and compaction on the offset alignment portion to bring the new roadbed up to grade. Paving is expected to begin in August. Greg Gonzales' road squad and Paul Kulseth's bridge squad designed the project. Photos by Dean Jay, District Three*



## K-99 expansion

*Work started in May on a year-long project to widen K-99 between the north city limits of Sedan and the Chautauqua-Elk county line. This is the second improvement on this narrow 13-mile corridor, following a project to post delineators during 2020. Activities include adding three-foot shoulders to the roadway, pavement patching, and replacing a box bridge. Signals are directing one-lane traffic through two work zones on K-99. KDOT awarded the \$8 million construction contract to Cornejo & Sons, LLC, of Wichita. Brian Kierath's road squad and Brad Rognlie's bridge squad designed the project. Photo by Priscilla Petersen, District Four*

# K-14 realignment in Reno, Rice counties takes shape

By Tim Potter  
District Five

Anyone who works around District Engineer Brent Terstriep knows he likes to see District Five projects up close.

So it was no surprise that on July 8, he took his hard hat and safety vest and went on a two-hour tour of the early stages of a 15-mile, \$81.7 million realignment of K-14 in Reno and Rice counties. The work stretches from Hutchinson, to Nickerson, to Sterling. The project is expected to be completed by June 16, 2023. Bob Bergkamp Construction Co. Inc., of Wichita, is the primary contractor.

It's not every day that KDOT builds a new highway across a sea of remote farmland and back roads where meadowlarks – and yes, buffalo – roam between farm fences. This is soybean-fields-and-grain-truck country. It's not every day that you see a large section of



*A view atop a berm at the future interchange north of Sterling. Photo by Brent Terstriep, District Five*



*District Engineer Brent Terstriep measures a new box culvert during his tour of the K-14 project. Photo by Tim Potter*

highway rise, piece by piece, out of the earth, previously undisturbed except by farmers and ranchers.

Driving on the existing alignment, which dates to around World War I in places, you wouldn't know that beyond the green hedge rows, seemingly countless tons of exposed earth – in every shade of brown, orange and gray -- are getting dug, scraped, hauled, dumped and molded by giant rolling machines with tall tires racing back and forth. The soil is supplied from nearby "borrow pits" from which a critical material – fill dirt -- is excavated, leaving what looks like an empty pond in the landscape that will eventually fill with grass or water.

Watching it all reinforces the fact that a highway isn't just made of pavement: It's scientifically tested soil, compacted and sculpted to precise measurements. It's reinforced concrete box culverts of various sizes and massive drainage pipe to divert rainfall from what will eventually be millions of passing tires bearing someone's loved ones. It's an engineer's decision, here or there, to spare majestic old cottonwood trees near where the new highway will run. It's new interchanges – with berms, bridges and access roads, that will give motorists access to Sterling and Nickerson.

Shawn Schwensen/Karen Peterson's bridge squads and Amy Rockers' road squad designed the project.

# Lawrence artist features KDOT maps in exhibit

By Delaney Tholen  
District One

Using maps and other papers, Lawrence artist Liza MacKinnon tricks the eye with her 3D and 4D creations with the materials she chooses. From afar, her work appears to be made of cloth; however, upon a closer look, it is paper.

MacKinnon has long been enamored with maps, and graduated with a degree in geography from the University of Colorado. To get the maps needed for her work, MacKinnon scours antique stores, calls public planning departments to purchase them and receives gifts of vintage maps from friends and family. She enjoys finding them, and calls maps “one of the most beautiful things out there - people always find something they know.”

MacKinnon finds a bonus in using Kansas maps, as the shape is a rectangle and ideal for translating to multi-dimensional art. She said KDOT maps are among her favorite to use because they are “strong, matte and made of flexible paper, and do not tear or have fragile creases like many other maps.”

Recently the Lawrence Public Library hosted an exhibition of her work titled, “A Kansas Childhood.” The collection featured child-sized dresses made from embroidered and painted Kansas maps. Each dress tells the story of a real Kansan (including Hattie Anderson Elliot, Lawrence founder, and Mamie Dillard, civil rights advocate) and connects historical figures to local geography.



*One of Liza MacKinnon's dresses created from a Kansas map. Photo by Delaney Tholen, District One*

## KTA briefs

- At right, the KTA recently broke ground in Topeka for a new administrative building. The new building will be located on the northeast quadrant of the S.W. Topeka Boulevard and Kansas Avenue intersection. This administrative building will house KTA's engineering department, legal counsel, an expanded Customer Service Center and training and meeting facilities. More photos are available [here](#).

- A bid has been approved and a contract awarded on an upcoming Turnpike construction project for drainage structure repair on I-70/KTA at MM 219.8 near Bonner Springs. More details on the approved bid can be found in the news release



# A decision that can affect the rest of your life

By Troy Whitworth  
Division of Safety Director

Some of my earliest childhood memories were of safety-related issues. Walk slowly down the stairs so you don't trip and fall, don't touch that hot pot on the stove and don't stand up in the front seat of the car. If you couldn't tell, I grew up in a time when seat belts were seldom worn, shoulder straps on seat belts were very rare and they hadn't invented vehicle air bags yet.

American vehicles have been required to have seat belts in their cars since the late 1960s. Kansas law has required seat belt use since 1986. Although it is a proven fact that seat belts save lives, people still don't always buckle up. Buckling up is one thing that takes less than a minute to do and can change your life. This thought reminds me of a poem by Dr. Benjamin E. Mays I read recently –

## **"It only takes a minute"**

I have only just a minute,  
Only sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me, can't refuse it.  
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.  
But it's up to me  
to use it.  
I must suffer if I lose it.  
Give account if I abuse it.  
Just a tiny little minute,  
but eternity is in it.

It's interesting to ponder how minutes, or even one minute, can shape our lives. Buckling a seat belt takes far less than a minute, but the decision to wear a seat belt can affect the rest of your life.

Let's talk about some of the reasons that people don't wear seat belts:

1. "I'm afraid of getting stuck in a crashed car." Without a seat belt, you're more likely to be knocked unconscious, thrown from the vehicle or killed.
2. "I'm too large to wear a seat belt. It doesn't fit." Seat belt extenders usually resolve this issue.
3. "I forgot." Most cars have a seat belt reminder that beeps when occupants aren't buckled.



4. "I'm only going down the road, or I don't have time." Figures provided by the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration say out of all collisions that occur in the United States, approximately 52% occur within a five-mile radius of home while 69% occur within 10 miles.

Seat belts should be worn every time you're in a vehicle, even on short trips near home.

5. "It makes me feel restrained." It should! Your seat belt is what keeps you in your seat, so you won't be thrown from the vehicle where it's more likely you will be killed.

We had a rollover accident a couple of years ago, where a KDOT employee was thrown from the vehicle and killed. The employee was not seat belted into the vehicle. Since that time, similar accidents have happened where employees were seat belted in and survived. I have had many people share stories about how seat belts have saved their life or the life of someone they care about. If for some reason you have the misfortune of being in a crash, I hope that someone wearing their seat belt is you.

Many times, people must learn about safety the hard way, ending up with a reminder of a scar or lingering pain. And some pay the ultimate price, with their life. Remember to take the time to buckle up, each and every time you get in a vehicle. For your family and mine.

# Thank you for your service

## Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating state service anniversaries in July.

### 30 years

**Kathy King**, Engineering Technician Specialist, Topeka

**Vicki Shanley**, Lease Program Coordinator, Silver Lake

**Susan Turner**, Professional Civil Engineer I, Viola

**David Weirich**, Management Analyst, Garnett

### 20 years

**Cameron Archer**, Equipment Shop Supervisor, Norton

**Beth Lee**, Administrative Assistant, Arlington

**Justin Luedke**, Equipment Operator Specialist, Colony

**Dale Pitchford**, Engineering Technician Senior, Hutchinson

**Arnita Wright**, Public Service Executive II, Topeka

## Retirees

The following employees will retire from KDOT on Aug. 1.

### Headquarters

**Mary Sanders**, Right of Way Property Appraiser II, Right of Way

### District Five

**Dale Pitchford**, Engineering Technician Senior, Hutchinson

The following employees retired from KDOT on July 1.

### District One

**Roger Anderson**, Equipment Operator Specialist, Wamego

### District Four

**Benton Wood**, Equipment Operator Specialist, Waverly

### District Six

**Lorenzo Rivas-Avila**, Equipment Operator, Garden City

## In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Charles "Bob" Verneti, who passed away on June 16 in Frontenac. Verneti worked for the agency for nearly 31 years, retiring in 1998. He was a Mechanics Helper at the Area Four Shop in Pittsburg.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Ross Weber, who passed away on May 11 in Topeka. Weber started at KDOT in 1953 and retired in 1995 as an Engineering Technician at the Oakley construction office.