

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

Aug. 3, 2022

K-99 improvements in Chautauqua County wrap up

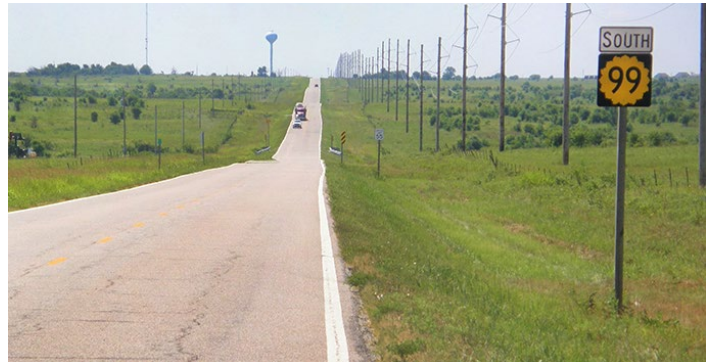
More work on K-99 expected in the future

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

Work on a project to add 3-foot shoulders to a 13-mile stretch of K-99 from Sedan north to the Chautauqua-Elk county line is now complete.

“I am delighted with the width of the highway,” said Jim Beason, policy chair of the Chautauqua County Farm Bureau and an ardent supporter of the K-99 improvements. “The widened highway will save lives and probably already has. Thank you KDOT and Secretary Julie Lorenz.”

The shoulder widening project began in the summer of 2021, following earlier road work to install delineators along K-99 and improve the slopes at the intersection with Quivira Road. Both projects were the outcome of a series of meetings with local officials and the public held in 2019.



Above, K-99 before the improvements. Below, the driving surface of K-99 is 6 feet wider following a project to add shoulders from Sedan north to the Chautauqua-Elk county line. Jeff Sims’ road squad and Brad Rognlie’s bridge squad designed the project. Photos by Steve Gibson and Priscilla Petersen, District Four

During the sessions KDOT staff heard concerns expressed about crashes stemming from wheels dropping off the edge of the narrow pavement, frequent semi rollovers, and the steep ditches along parts of the corridor.

Several box culverts on the section are still without shoulders. According to Beason, “The promised 3-foot shoulders won’t be complete until the narrowed shoulders over the box culverts are full width.”

In response, Independence Area Construction Engineer Geryd Erbele said that KDOT is already planning a project to raise the guardrail at one of the culverts and is looking ahead to add shoulders to the bridges within the next several years.

Cornejo & Sons LLC was the contractor on the \$8 million K-99 shoulder project. Later this year or early in 2023, said Erbele, a mill and overlay will occur on the widened corridor.



As President of MAASTO, Secretary Julie Lorenz took to the stage at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines to welcome more than 700 delegates to the organization's 2022 annual meeting on July 25-27. Photo by Steve Hale, Headquarters

Secretary Lorenz completes term as MAASTO president

Secretary Julie Lorenz concluded her tenure as president of the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials (MAASTO) at the organization's 2022 annual meeting. The Iowa DOT hosted the event in Des Moines for MAASTO's 10 states from July 25-27.

Secretary Lorenz provided remarks at the opening and closing session, moderated a panel discussion with numerous DOT commissioners and leaders and presided over the Board of Directors meeting.

The importance of Secretary Lorenz's role as MAASTO president was elevated during her tenure with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and its significance in enabling infrastructure improvements at state, regional and national levels. Among her accomplishments was initiating a HomeField Advantage Heartland Conference, a first-ever virtual conference bringing together stakeholders from agriculture, transportation and technology to optimize regional strengths.

Also during Secretary Lorenz's MAASTO presidency, the organization's member states proactively agreed to expedite the movement of emergency supplies across state lines during presidentially declared major disasters. The first-in-the-nation initiative involved a unified permitting approach that improves coordination for critical loads traveling across multiple states.

Elected president of MAASTO for the 2022-23 year was Nancy Daubenberger, Commissioner of the Minnesota DOT.

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Employee spotlight: Eric Smith, Hutchinson Construction

What's your job title?

Engineering Technician Specialist.

What sort of duties do you have at work?

Construction inspection and documentation of contractors' work. At this time, I'm acting Construction Engineer.

What kind of music do you like?

I'm not too picky. I don't care much for the current country, though.

What's the most exciting part of your job?

Watching a project get completed and opened to traffic.

What's something you're proud of?

Being involved in every portion of the K-96 corridor from the east Reno County line west to Sterling.

What's your favorite food?

Mexican and fresh seafood.

What's your favorite movie?

"Platoon."

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?

I enjoy boating with my family, water skiing, barefoot water skiing, wake surfing, wake boarding. Anything on the water.

Do you have any pets?

German shepherd named Larry, three laying hens and a pond full of koi.

Are you a sports fan? Who are your favorite teams?

I enjoy watching auto racing.

Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Neither.

Are you a coffee, tea or pop person?

Coffee and/or tea.



Eric Smith and his wife, Lysa, in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Photo courtesy of Eric Smith

GETTING TO KNOW

OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.

What's something you find challenging about your work?
AASHTOWare.

What's your favorite season?
Summer!

What three items would you take with you to a deserted island?

Fire starter, rope and a knife.

New KanDrive feature provides weekly regional updates

The KanDrive website has recently added a new feature that enables users to sign up to receive a weekly digest of upcoming construction activities in specific regions of Kansas.

Users can now select to receive emails pertaining to one or more metro areas or regions of the state. The weekly emails are sent out each Friday around noon and will include information about construction that will be active the following week. Each construction project in the email will include a link back to KanDrive to view more information.



Metro and regional updates are available each week.

“KanDrive has a wealth of road condition information. But some people want regular updates on projects in their area or regions where they drive frequently,” said Kevin Hennes, KanDrive Administrator. “This new option allows users to sign up specifically for that -

another way to know before you go.”

To sign up for regional or metro digests, go to the hamburger button to the right of the Help tab on the main KanDrive webpage [here](#) and click Sign up for Construction Weekly Digest.



U.S. 160 bridge construction

Crews on the Labette Creek bridge replacement project pour a pier cap for the new bridge. The bridge is on U.S. 160 approximately 6 miles northwest of Oswego. KDOT awarded the \$3.2 million construction contract to A.M. Cohron and Son Inc. Work started in late spring. Weather permitting, the new bridge will be open to traffic late this year. Jeff Sims' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the project. Photos by Priscilla Petersen, District Four



Highway blowup: a mix of moisture, heat and pressure

By Tim Potter
District Five

The recent heat can be hard on humans and pavement.

“Blowup” is a term KDOT maintenance workers use for incidents where concrete pavement buckles up from exposure to extreme heat. KDOT Wichita Area Superintendent David Lechner explained the factors involved in a blowup and how KDOT addresses it.

The cause: It’s “thermal expansion,” Lechner said. Water finds a path into and beneath the pavement. As the underlying moisture heats up with the temperature, the pressure builds, forcing the concrete up.

“Everything’s got to have room to move,” he said, “and if it doesn’t, that’s when your road will buckle.”

The need for expansion is why highways get built with expansion joints, Lechner noted. Over time, dirt and sand work down into those joints. That’s why maintenance crews try to blow debris out of the voids.

Older roads tend to be more vulnerable to blowups because with aging and weathering, cracks develop, letting in moisture and triggering the pressure-cooker condition that sparks a blowup.



A blowup, since repaired, that occurred in June on U.S. 81 in Haysville. Photo by Mike Luna

Lechner isn’t noticing more blowups than normal around Wichita this summer, and that could be partly due to it being so dry.

How blowups get addressed: Ideally, a crew doing road surveillance can feel a bump as they drive over it, where there previously wasn’t one -- before it turns into a blowup. They can follow up with a cut to relieve the building pressure, Lechner said. Otherwise, a crew needs to treat a blowup by going in and cutting out the bad spot and patching it.

K-99 realignment project nearly complete

By Kate Craft
District One

The \$12.6 million realignment project on K-99 is nearing completion in Wabaunsee County. Work began in December 2020 to improve a 4-mile stretch of the busy two-lane corridor by constructing a wider and straighter roadway.

Three temporary detours were constructed in the project's first phase to maneuver traffic between the old and new alignments while the new road was built. Traffic was fully moved to the new roadway in July, and contractors have continued to work on connecting the existing roadway and side roads through the area. The new highway is expected to open without restrictions in August.

Another project is currently in the IKE Development Pipeline and includes widening K-99 from the southern end of the new alignment to I-70. Plans also call for guardrail replacements and the addition of turn lanes at the I-70 ramps, where the new Plaza of the Flint Hills service station is currently being built.

Jeff Sims' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the project.



Above, work continues along the new K-99 roadway. Below, old meets new as the second temporary road tied the old K-99 to the new alignment during construction. Photos by Kate Craft, District One





U.S. 50 work progresses



Dirt work is underway to build the foundation for the westbound lanes on the U.S. 50 four-lane expansion project from Cimarron to Dodge City, as seen in the photos at right. The project began this spring. It's usually windy in southwest Kansas, but in the photo at left, a unique-looking dust devil formed along the construction project on U.S. 50 in Gray County on July 28. Steve Rockers and Jeff Sims' road squads and Brad Rognlie's bridge squad designed the project. Photos provided by Kirkham Michael

Summer is busy season for District materials labs

By Delaney Tholen
District One

Though always busy, warmer temperatures and an increase in scheduled projects make for high-volume work at the District materials labs across the state. And many samples are currently being tested at the District One Materials Lab in Topeka.

Before a project can start, a mix design must be approved. Then throughout each project, materials are tested to confirm their integrity in the construction process.

For quality control, project material samples are submitted for pre-production tests and tested throughout the project. Samples are collected at the project site and then sent to the Materials Lab for continued testing.

Lab samples are subjected to severe temperatures, simulating weather conditions such as freezing and thawing, and monitored by the quality assurance team, who looks for various things including broken aggregate and stripping of oil.

District Materials Specialist Tammy Wilson, who leads the District One team, said summer is particularly busy. "In the summer, there are more projects, and we also do more work with asphalt, because it's not used during cold weather," she said.

Under the KDOT Bureau of Construction and Materials, the Materials Lab is operated by the quality assurance team and supported by three quarry monitors who work out of Holton.

The Materials Lab administers a number of tests throughout the year and verifies outside sample testing. The team also approves mix designs for asphalt and concrete. Once a design is tested and approved by the Materials Lab, it can be added to a pre-qualified list to be used on future road and bridge projects.



Asphalt samples ready for testing. Photo by Delaney Tholen, District One

Learning from those really poor decisions

By Troy Whitworth
Director of Safety

Growing up on a farm was a pretty cool experience. I spent a lot of time exploring all the nooks and crannies of my family's farm. Back in those days, we didn't have video games - the land was my playground. We had one television station that had programming like, "Hee Haw" and "Lawrence Welk." Although these shows probably helped me be more culturally rounded, I would have rather watched something else. So, since my mom could only handle so much of a bored kid, I ended up outside for the majority of my free time.

Many times, I would go on a long hike to explore nature. In the summer, I would take refuge from the heat under the canopy of trees along several streams. This helped to make the hot summers more bearable since we didn't have air conditioning. Those really were some good times and bring back fond memories.

The outdoors did have some drawbacks, though. Most of the time, after a long walk, I would spend time pulling ticks off my body. Other times when I had been trudging through the brushy trails, my ankles, arms and neck would develop an itchy rash from exposure to poison ivy. And, oh, did it itch. Of course, it didn't keep me from going back outside, but it did teach me how to identify some of the common poisonous plants and ways to make the itch more manageable.

The rash that develops from a poisonous plant comes from an oil produced by the plant called Urushiol. According to the Mayo Clinic, the body's reaction to

the oil can develop 12 to 48 hours after exposure. The rash from poisonous plants can show up as patches or streaks of red raised blisters. The rash can spread if the oil from the plant remains on the skin or clothes. The best thing to do is to wash exposed areas with soap and water. Clothes exposed to poisonous plants should be washed separately from other laundry items. If you are highly allergic to poisonous plants, you may want to run an empty washer load before washing any other clothes.

Experts say that you shouldn't pop any blisters that develop from poisonous plant exposure. You should

also refrain from scratching the affected area. If the rash starts oozing or you have scratched enough to create an open wound, cover it with a bandage. There are many home remedies for rashes that develop from poisonous plant exposure. My favorite is calamine lotion. It always seemed to reduce the itch and dried any of the oozing

that occurred after I scratched too much.

In most cases, these rashes will clear up on their own within a few weeks. In severe cases, the rashes can become infected. If you develop a fever over 100 degrees, itching so much that it interrupts sleep or have other worsening symptoms, contact your doctor.

Learn how to identify poisonous plants so the next time you are out hiking, sprucing up your yard or working along the roadway, you can avoid them. Click [here](#) and scroll down to see photos of poisonous plants. If you are exposed to poisonous plants, wash the exposed area with soap and water as soon as possible and reduce your chances of developing a rash. For your family and mine.



Federal infrastructure funds coming to Kansas

Governor Laura Kelly selected Secretary Julie Lorenz to lead the Kansas Infrastructure Hub, which will coordinate Kansas state agencies and local entities as they administer and apply for funding available through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Representatives from the Kansas Departments of Administration, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Environment and Transportation, the Kansas Corporation Commission and the Kansas Water Office will also serve.

The Hub will identify statewide and regional infrastructure priorities, strategize how to maximize investment opportunities and promote best practices in securing and distributing funding. Kansas is set to receive close to \$3.8 billion in direct funds for transportation, water, energy and broadband projects. Kansas could potentially receive more by applying for competitive grants.

“Infrastructure creates opportunities, powers businesses, keeps us safe and connects people to places and each other. It’s the backbone of a healthy economy,” Governor Kelly said. “By working to ensure we bring the most money possible to Kansas – and that, once we have it, we distribute it effectively and efficiently – the Kansas Infrastructure Hub will have lasting impacts on our state.”

As part of this effort, about 650 governmental, infrastructure and business leaders participated in person and virtually at the Hub’s Kansas Infrastructure Summit in Wichita on July 13 and 14. Attendees were able to learn more about the grant opportunities, discuss strategies for preparing winning grant applications and share input on infrastructure priorities in Kansas.



Governor Laura Kelly spoke at the Hub’s Kansas Infrastructure Summit in Wichita on July 13. Kansas is looking to maximize investment opportunities and promote best practices in securing and distributing funding the state is set to receive through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Photo by KDOT Multimedia Services

“BIL is an opportunity to solve long-term Kansas infrastructure issues,” Secretary Lorenz said. “We can do that by harnessing the power of collaboration between public and private sectors, eliminating red tape and strategically applying for grant funds. Working together, we’ll accomplish great things for all Kansans.”

The Hub members will meet in August to discuss the input provided at the summit, determine what actions are feasible for the Hub to take and discuss which actions will require additional state authority to pursue.

Trivia!

Highlighting a few of the hundreds of actors who served in the military – part two

1. Long before “The Golden Girls,” she enlisted as one of the first members of the United States Marine Corps Women’s Reserve in 1943.
2. His rock ‘n’ roll fans were sad when he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

3. He turned 18 on Sept. 11, 2001, and the attacks inspired him to join the military.
4. Following his Broadway performance in “Spring Again” and before launching his movie career, he served in World War II.
5. Characters in “Star Wars” and “The Lion King” wouldn’t have been the same without his voice.

K-123 improvement project begins in August

By Lisa Mussman
District Three

A project to reconstruct the entirety of K-123 in Decatur and Sheridan counties will be getting underway in early August.

Activities include reconstructing and widening the pavement on the full 6 miles starting at the K-23 junction and ending at the K-383 junction. Asphalt shoulders will also be added. KDOT will close the roadway for the duration of the project, which is expected to be completed by the end of November, weather permitting.

McCormick Excavation and Paving of Colby is the primary contractor for the \$4.4 million project. Stephen Bass’ road squad designed the project.



Looking south on K-123 near the K-383 junction in Decatur County. The reconstruction project will widen the pavement to 26 feet, including 1-foot asphalt shoulders. Photo by Lisa Mussman, District Three

Trivia answers

1. Bea Arthur. She was one of the first members of the United States Marine Corps Women’s Reserve and served as a truck driver, dispatcher and typist for nearly three years.
2. Elvis Presley. He was offered jobs to serve as a recruiting model, but he enlisted as a regular soldier. He served in two different armor battalions and was also deployed to Germany. After two years, he then served in the Army Reserve for four years.
3. Adam Driver. He served for more than two and a half

- years as a Marine and was ready to deploy overseas. But he was injured in a vehicle accident, which ended his military career.
4. Kirk Douglas. He served for three years in the U.S. Navy as a communications officer. He was medically discharged in 1944.
5. James Earl Jones. He joined the Army during the Korean War. He served in several locations in the U.S. and was promoted to first lieutenant prior to his discharge.

Kansas state rail plan updated

By Tom Hein
District Five

A new state rail plan has been compiled, the public comment period has closed, and its release is coming in September.

“This plan updates information in the previous plan completed in 2017 plus offers much more detail,” said John Maddox, KDOT Freight and Rail Program Manager. “It includes data sets, a variety of maps, and an analysis of rail tonnage generated and shipped from locations across the state.”

Kansas is served by over 4,600 miles of active rail with four Class 1 railroads, 13 short lines and two switching and terminal railroads.

A Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis found that Kansas’ central location, its short line rail system, and steady passenger rail ridership were pluses, and future federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding offers many opportunities.

Negative factors included incidents at highway-rail crossings, extended times on blocked crossings, the need for more double track and longer sidings, and the fact that passenger rail service is mostly in the overnight



*The state rail plan for Kansas will be available in September.
Photo by Tom Hein, District Five*

hours. Threats included longer trains, increased customer demand and aging rail infrastructure.

“We received mostly positive feedback from rail stakeholders and look forward to partnering on future projects to enhance and improve rail service in Kansas,” said Maddox.

See the draft Kansas State Rail Plan [here](#) and visit the KDOT Freight and Rail page for all things railroad [here](#).

Kudos

Email below sent to KDOT -

Hello!

We were traveling from SD to OK when we had a flat tire. Before we were even able to call triple A. one of your employees stopped to help us. He was very kind and so helpful.

We stopped outside of Salina, on 7/22/22 around 9:30 a.m. and the employee’s name was Clyde (Clyde Thrush, Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Minneapolis). I hope this email finds you well and you know how great of an employee he is!

Thank you for all your hard work!

KDOT offers stipend for groups participating in AAH

By Tracy Statton
District Five

Volunteers participating in the Adopt-A-Highway program will now get a little more cash in their pockets due to an initiative to offer stipends for the program.

KDOT Director of Field Operations Clay Adams said it all started when a citizen suggested the idea to KDOT Secretary Julie Lorenz. The citizen was concerned about litter on the roadways and thought it would be a win-win for local organizations and KDOT.

“They suggested that it would be a way for groups to raise funds, because many of their fundraising activities were limited by COVID protocols,” Adams said.

It also helps out KDOT crews by freeing up time they would have had to spend picking up trash.

“It allows them to concentrate their work on items like pavement and shoulder maintenance, filling potholes and sealing cracks, signs, drainage and mowing,” Adams said.



**Keep Kansas Clean
EARN SOME GREEN**

Groups participating in
Adopt-A-Highway can earn a
\$190 STIPEND
per highway section.

Participants in the program will earn \$190 per highway section, which is about 2 miles long.

“It is a public service. It helps make Kansas look better to our citizens and to our visitors,” Adams said.

The Adopt-A-Highway program started in December 1989. The first pickups started in April 1990.

Participation in the program ranges from church and civic organizations, clubs, families, youth groups, employees from businesses and more.

For more information on KDOT’s program, click [here](#).



KTA briefs

Work continues toward KTA’s conversion to cashless tolling in 2024. In this latest episode of “[On the Road](#),” CEO Steve Hewitt chats with Director of Engineering David Jacobson and gets answers about toll zones, the overhead gantries needed for this large-scale endeavor and more.

Construction on the new Topeka administration building progresses. In the photo at left, interior wall frames have been placed, and more interior and exterior work will continue. This administrative building will house KTA’s engineering department, legal counsel and an expanded Customer Service Center in preparation for KTA’s conversion to cashless tolling in 2024.

Thank you for your service

Retirees

The following employees will retire on Sept. 1.

Headquarters

Scot Keil, Engineering Technician Senior,
Transportation Planning

District One

William Irsik, Equipment Mechanic Specialist,
Olathe

District Two

Glenda Willis, Administrative Assistant,
Belleville

District Three

Randall Chester, Equipment Operator Senior,
Phillipsburg

District Five

William Harbert, Equipment Operator Specialist,
Hutchinson

Michael Huddleston, Highway Maintenance
Supervisor, Great Bend

The following employee retired on Aug. 1.

District Five

Michael Diffendal, Highway Maintenance
Supervisor, El Dorado

If you know a KDOT retiree who is not receiving Translines - ask them to email Kim.stich@ks.gov - thanks

Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating August state service anniversaries.

30 years

Neil Croxton, Regional Geologist Supervisor, Salina

Janette Eitel, Database Administrator III, Topeka

Gene Ingwerson, WinCPMS Administrator, Topeka

Debra Miller, Senior Administrative Assistant, Garden
City

20 years

Steve Allen, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Holton

Francisco Franco, Highway Maintenance Supervisor,
Liberal

Robert Griffin, Engineering Technician Senior, Osage
City

Michael Huettich, System Software Analyst III, Topeka
Barbara Montgomery, Human Resource Professional III,
Topeka

Derrick Shannon, Highway Maintenance Superintendent,
Humboldt

Brendan Yorkey, Office of Budget Chief, Topeka

10 years

Cary Bruce, Equipment Operator, El Dorado

Roger Martinez, Equipment Operator, Liberal

In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Terry Heidner**, who passed away on July 27 in Topeka. Heidner started at KDOT in 1967, serving as the Transportation Planning Bureau Chief and then the Planning and Development Director. He retired in 2007, after 40 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Dale Jost**, who passed away on June 22. He was from Hesston. Jost started in 1966 and served for more than 42 years. He was the Bureau Chief of Fiscal. He retired in 2008.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Kaye Sumner**, who passed away June 5 in Broken Arrow, Okla. She worked for KDOT for more than 30 years and retired from the Bureau of Local Projects.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **John C. Kleinschmidt**, who passed away on July 5 in Topeka. He started at KDOT in 1963 and worked in Construction and Maintenance as an Engineering Technician Specialist. Kleinschmidt retired in 2005, after more than 41 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Arthur Coghill**, who passed away on

June 24 in Syracuse. He started at KDOT in 1965 and worked as an Equipment Mechanic in District Six. Coghill retired in 1995, after nearly 30 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Donald Brungardt**, who passed away on April 26 in Garden City. Brungardt started in 1972 and worked as an Equipment Mechanic in District Six. He worked at KDOT for more than 34 years, retiring in 2006.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **John “JP” MacMillan**, who passed away on July 22 in Topeka. He started in 1958 and worked for KDOT for nearly 40 years. MacMillan was an Engineering Technician in the Bureau of Traffic Engineering. He retired in 1997.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Dennis “Denny” J. Harrington**, who passed away on July 29 in Osage City. He started at KDOT in 1960 and was an Engineering Technician Senior at the Emporia Subarea. Harrington retired in 1995, after nearly 35 years of service.