

# TRANSLINES EXPRESS

May 4, 2022

## KDOT assists after tornado hits Andover area

By Tim Potter  
District Five

KDOT District Five crews began around-the-clock work on U.S. 54/400 after a tornado caused major damage in the Andover area the night of Friday, April 29.

Area Five Maintenance Superintendent David Lechner recalled what he saw just after daylight Saturday: “just a big field of debris as it went across 400 and took out the high lines on the north side of the road.”

For a time, all U.S. 54/400 lanes were closed for KDOT to clean the highway and utility workers to do repairs.

At the west end of the closure, Area Five crew members manned the Yorktown intersection at the highway starting at 1 a.m. Saturday. On the east end of the approximately 6-mile-long closure, Area Two crew members directed by Maintenance Superintendent Tom McCartney had barricades up at Santa Fe Lake Road and were diverting traffic to the north.

On Saturday, KDOT set up portable message boards in different locations, including farther east in Butler County, to alert drivers to the westbound closure.

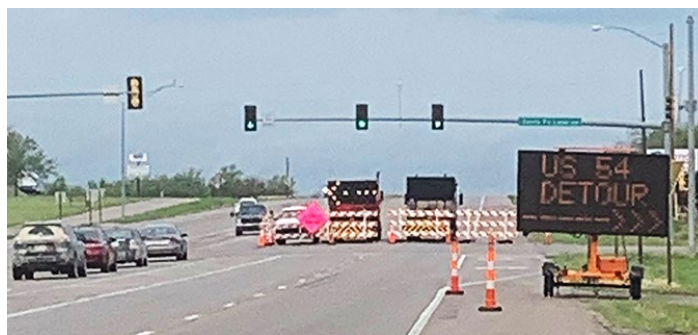
“I just appreciated our people being out there around the clock,” said District Five Engineer Brent Terstriep.

KDOT announced Saturday that eastbound lanes had



*Amber Snavelly, a neighbor of KDOT employee Mark Johnson, took this photo of the tornado in Andover. It was 2 miles away, but looks much closer.*

been reopened. Westbound lanes remained closed so utility crews could continue repairing power lines. KDOT reopened one of the westbound lanes Monday morning.



*Views of KDOT traffic control set up Monday morning at Santa Fe Lake Road, on the east end of a U.S. 54/400 closure caused by tornado damage. Photos by Tom McCartney, District Five*

**Inside - weather causes more damage across state, KDOT goes Go Orange and much more - check it out.**



## Blowing in the wind

Vehicles across western Kansas were blown over throughout April. The first photo was taken on I-70 on April 22. The second photo was taken on U.S. 50/400 on April 12. The third photo was taken on K-156 on April 23. The fourth photo was taken on U.S. 50 on April 9. Photos by Trooper Tod Hileman and District Six employees Hector Terrones and Scot Addison



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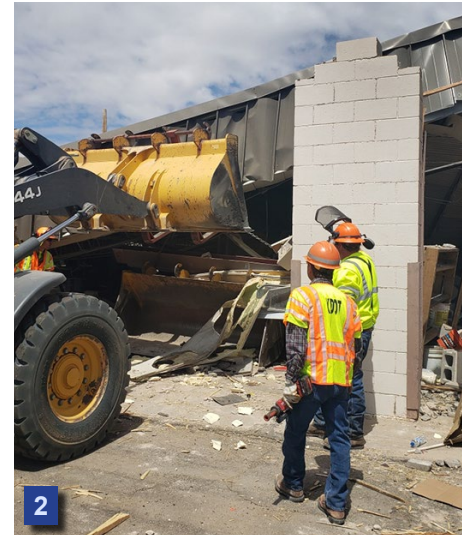
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1. The KDOT Subarea complex was one of the hardest hit areas in Sharon Springs after a tornado struck on April 22. According to the National Weather Service’s preliminary damage survey, maximum winds were estimated around 110 mph. Photos 2, 3, 4. KDOT employees quickly start the clean-up process. Photos by Thad Vincent, District Three

# Tornado damages Sharon Springs Subarea

By Lisa Mussman  
District Three

An EF-1 tornado touched down in Sharon Springs late evening on April 22, causing significant damage to the KDOT subarea.

The equipment bays and a pole shed were completely destroyed, and several pieces of equipment were heavily damaged including a pickup and loader that were stored in the bays. The subarea office and wash bay also received minor damage but are still usable.

The subarea crew, along with crews from Grainfield, Hoxie, Oakley and district, mobilized to begin cleanup

efforts the following day. Trucks and equipment will be moved around from across the district and state while repairs are being made and replacements arrive.

The tornado was a culmination of what had been a wild weather day in northwest Kansas. Earlier that afternoon, I-70 was shut down between Goodland and Colby because of high winds, zero-visibility conditions and crashes blocking the roadway.

The winds also fueled a wildfire that started in northwestern Norton County and quickly spread into Nebraska. U.S. 283 between Norton and the Nebraska state line was temporarily closed as well because of blowing smoke and poor visibility due to the fires.





# Strong winds damage Ellsworth building

By Ashley Perez  
District Two

KDOT crew members jumped into action after an equipment shed at the Ellsworth Subarea was significantly damaged by strong winds sometime after midnight in the early morning hours of Saturday, April 23.

“There was no other damage at the area; it was almost like a microburst,” said Supervisor Tim Hays.

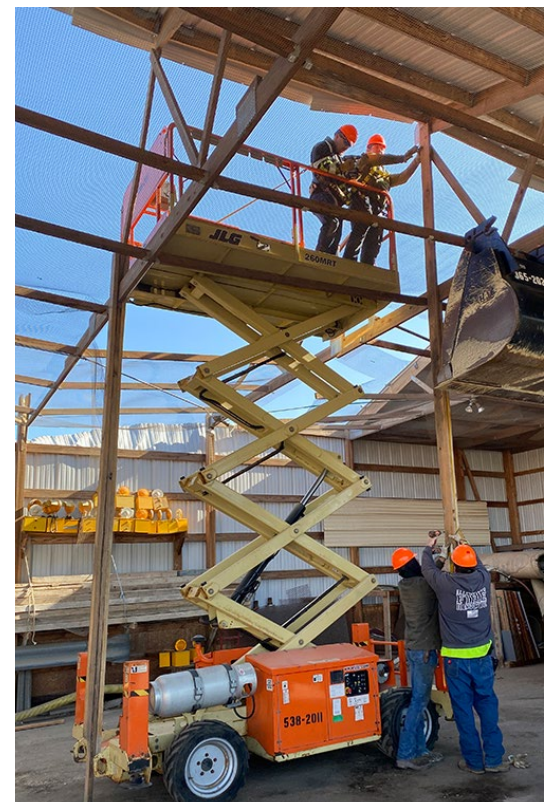
According to the National Weather Service (NWS) in Wichita, persistent winds between 30 to more than 50 mph occurred the day before, lasting into the night and the next morning. In fact, the NWS said the winds got stronger at night, with gusts of more than 50 mph at times, which is unusual. And high winds lasting for several hours can wear on structures.

After assessing the building and removing the equipment underneath, workers began steps to properly remove the mangled portion of the structure. They began by adding supports under the trusses that were ruined. Next, they removed the steel from the area that was impacted until new material arrives and can be replaced. Hays says once the roof has been repaired, they will work to reinforce it in hopes of preventing future damage.

*At right, Ellsworth Subarea workers use the cherry picker to remove damaged metal roofing. At far right, the crew members work to support the damaged trusses. Photos by Ashley Perez, District Two*



*Aftermath of damage to the equipment shed at the Ellsworth Subarea following high winds after midnight on April 23.*





## Employee spotlight: Chris Fasching, Bonner Springs Area office

*What's your job title?*

Area Three Superintendent in Bonner Springs.

*What sort of duties do you have at work?*

Oversight of all highway maintenance in Area Three, which involves highways in Wyandotte, Leavenworth, Jefferson, and part of Douglas counties. Work with the Area Engineer prioritizing work with maintenance supervisors, shop supervisor and contractors. Travel the entire region to inspect work and look at what needs repaired on our highways and work with sub-area supervisors to make plans to get it fixed.

*What kind of music do you like?*

I like a lot of different types. About any kind of rock, but also country and R&B. I don't really have a favorite band, but looking at the playlists on my phone there is a lot of Green Day and Pink Floyd on there.

*What's the most exciting part of your job?*

I wouldn't call it exciting, but when you're part of a team all pulling together to get a repair fixed it can feel pretty good when it's all done.

*What's something you're proud of?*

My wife Tamara (Tami) and my two sons Jesse and Emmanuel (Manny).

*What's your favorite food?*

Just about any BBQ.

*What's your favorite movie?*

World's Fastest Indian – with Anthony

Hopkins. I like anything that involves speed and it's based on a true story about a man in New Zealand who buys a brand new Indian motorcycle in 1920 and for the rest of his life keeps trying to get it to go faster. He ends up setting world land speed records on it in the late 1960s or early 1970s as an old man, and I think one or two of his land speed records still stand.

*Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?*

My wife and I took up golf last year, but I wouldn't call it a talent. I have been into cars, motorcycles, jet skis and boats my entire life.



Chris Fasching and his family.

*Do you have any pets?*

We have one dog – an eight-year-old Shetland sheep dog named Tug.

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

I like the Chiefs, Sporting KC and whatever team my kids are playing on at the time.

*Are you a coffee, tea or pop person?*

Mountain Dew is what I use to get going in the morning.

*What's something you find challenging about your work?*

Computers are probably what I am least comfortable with. I started as an Equipment Operator in 1990 and we just didn't use them very much. I am sure there are still EOs out there who haven't looked at their email in weeks or even months.

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

A full cooler, a radio and a hammock sound pretty good right now.

## GETTING TO KNOW

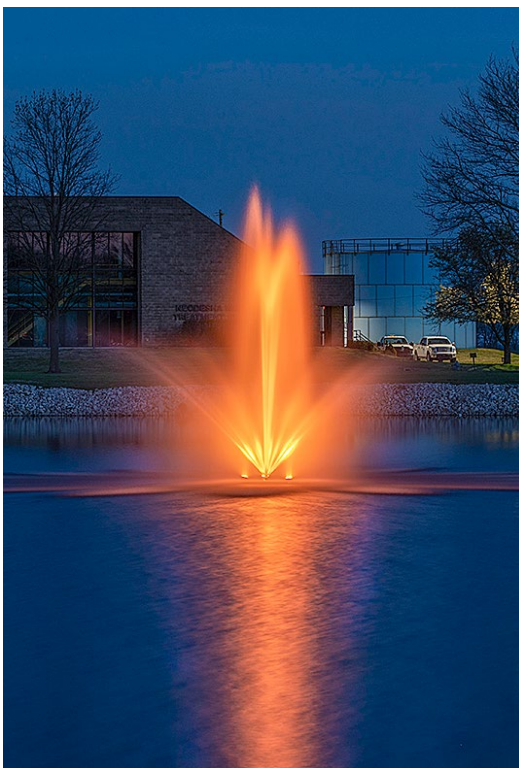
### OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.





# People, places go orange for work zone safety



Orange was the color of the week from April 11-15 highlighting safety during National Work Zone Awareness week. People and places across the state were decked out in orange to show support and appreciation for highway workers. To see more Go Orange photos, click [here](#).



# Close calls shared in work zone safety blog series

Four highway workers and a contractor shared stories during the annual work zone safety blog series to help raise awareness. Following are excerpts and links to each blog.

●Story [link](#) - The impact caused me to spin toward the bridge wall, and I was able to stop myself before falling over the side of the bridge. Pieces of the vehicle had scattered onto the highway.

**Tony Phillips**, KDOT Shawnee Subarea Equipment Operator Senior



Tony Phillips



Clint Shepard

●Story [link](#) - "...I don't think he saw me until the last second which caused him to crank his wheel and spin out. As he spun, his passenger side hit my back passenger side bumper practically ripping the side of his car off."

**Clint Shepard**, KTA Highway Maintenance Foreman



Chris Collins



Scott Gofourth

●Story [link](#) - "The truck ended up striking the attenuator square in the middle, no brake lights or defensive steering."

**Chris Collins**, KDOT District Five Maintenance Superintendent

●Story [link](#) - "All of this because we wanted to answer that text or take our focus from our driving. Because we were in a hurry and just couldn't wait. Because we have driven through there a thousand times, and nothing has happened before."

**Scott Gofourth**, KDOT District Four Safety Specialist

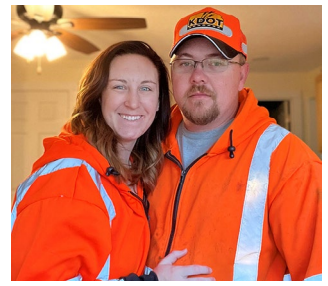
●Story [link](#) - "It became obvious to me that we needed to make everyone understand they are part of the safety culture, and what could happen if they did nothing or said nothing when witnessing unsafe working conditions."

**Bob Fry**, Field Operations Chief at Clarkson Construction



Bob Fry speaks at a safety lunch.





Go Orange across Kansas



Lots of orange was seen across the state during National Work Zone Awareness Week to help the public recognize and understand the importance of safety in work zones.





# Where's Waldo? And other Kansas map observations

Wichita Public Affairs Manager Tom Hein shares his thoughts on unique place names across Kansas.

I find place names, often those little bergs that never quite hit the big time, to be fascinating. Swamp Angel, Herkimer, May Day, Utopia (really?), Paradise (for some), Tyro, Agenda, Lost Springs (that could be troublesome for thirsty folks), Talmo, Hackney and Stark (did the name of the town have something to do with its future?).

I also like the double consonant names like Skiddy, Stull, Thrall, Goff and Kipp. Kansas animals are represented with Bison, Buffalo, Wolf, Antelope, Partridge, and La Cygne. Trees: Ashland, Burr Oak, Cedar, Cherryvale, Cottonwood Falls, Lone Elm (is there ever just one?), Mapleton, Mulberry, Oak Hill and Walnut.

And there are some great Native American names: Mahaska, Muscotah, Ozawkie, Ogallah, Geneseo, Netawaka and Mankato, just to name a few.

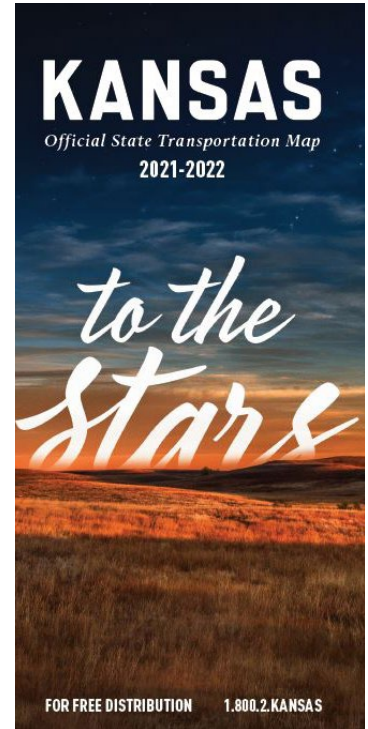
In a very unscientific way, here's my Top Ten List of Kansas town names:

- #10 Plevna      #9 Altoona
- #8 La Harpe    #7 Jarbola
- #6 Le Loup     #5 Piqua
- #4 Coyville    #3 Bazaar
- #2 Kismet      And the #1 Kansas town name, in my humble opinion... Buttermilk.

It's now an unincorporated community in Comanche County that is no longer on our official state map... but a great name nonetheless.

Of course, there are quite a few honorable mentions: Kimeo, Paxico, Yocemento, Bucyrus, Narka, Niotaze, Delphos, Zeandale, Formoso, Throon, Axtell, Minneola, Agricola, Viola, Spivey, Penalosa, Vassar, Admire, Bazine, Zenda, Bogue, Iuka, Glade, Speed, Sparks, Mingo, Jingo and Ringo.

And Waldo? It's in Russell County, hiding in plain sight on K-18.



Kansas Official State Transportation Maps are available to be picked up in the Eisenhower building or at District offices across the state. To order a map, click [here](#).



## KTA design contest winner

Natalie Ellenberger of Central Christian Academy in Wichita is the winner of the Kansas Turnpike Authority's seventh annual design contest. This contest celebrates National Work Zone Awareness Week and encourages teen drivers to be aware of safe driving behaviors through work zones.

Contestants submitted an advertisement focused on work zone safety. Ellenberger's work will be published in VYPE Magazine. View her work, as well as the other finalists, [here](#).



# Trivia!

## Total lunar eclipse

1. A total lunar eclipse will take place on May 16. What is a total lunar eclipse?
2. What happens during a total lunar eclipse?
3. What other colors can a lunar eclipse be?
4. How do total lunar eclipses occur?
5. A total lunar eclipse usually happens within a few hours. What is the range of the totality for a lunar eclipse?
6. How often do total lunar eclipses occur?

## Repairs underway on U.S. 400



*KDOT employees from the Independence office make full-depth concrete repairs on a section of U.S. 400 in mid-April. Photo by Priscilla Petersen, District Four*

## Trivia answers

1. A total lunar eclipse takes place when the Earth comes between the Sun and the Moon and its shadow covers the Moon.
2. Eclipse watchers can see the Moon turn red. When sunlight passes through the Earth's atmosphere, it gets refracted towards the Earth's surface. Parts - the colors with shorter wavelengths - get scattered and filtered out, while the rest, colors with longer wavelengths like orange and red, passes through the atmosphere.
3. Yellow, orange or brown - because different types of dust particles and clouds in Earth's atmosphere allow different wavelengths to reach the surface of the Moon.
4. Total eclipses of the Moon happen at Full Moon when the sun, Earth and moon are aligned to form a line. The astronomical term for this alignment is syzygy, which comes from the Greek word for being paired together.
5. Anywhere from a few seconds to about 100 minutes.
6. On average, a total lunar eclipse can be seen from any given location every 2.5 years. About 35% of all lunar eclipses in a year are total lunar eclipses.



# Improvements coming to U.S. 166 in Sumner County

By Tim Potter  
District Five

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The first part of improvements to a 9-mile section of U.S. 166 in Sumner County has begun.

And when it's all completed next year, the \$9.84 million District Five project will provide a wider highway that's easier to maintain, said Area Three Engineer AJ Wilson.

As it is, he said, "It's one of the narrowest highways that we have." Wilson was referring to the 9-mile portion of U.S. 166 from the U.S. 81 junction, on the north side of South Haven, east to 400 feet past the Rock Road intersection.

The project will transform a 24-foot-wide concrete roadway with only limited rock along the edge into a 30-foot-wide asphalt roadway with paved 3-foot shoulders on either side.

The overlay portion of the project next year will add 3 inches of asphalt and 1 inch of RCI, or reflective crack interlayer. Wilson explained that RCI is an oil/sand mix that prevents cracks underneath "from reflecting up; it's a buffer between the surface layer and existing layer."

The wider highway, with paved shoulders, will provide a safety enhancement, he said. The addition of rumble strips will also offer a safety improvement, said District Construction and Materials Engineer Nick Squires. Another benefit: The new roadway will keep maintenance workers from having to add rock along the edge.

Area Three Construction Engineer Dean Boatright detailed this year's portion of the project, which started this month. It includes concrete patching, work on bridge approaches and installation of 10-foot shoulders in some places around the U.S. 166/U.S. 81 junction. The 10-foot shoulder will be on the westbound side,



*A view of some of the early work on the U.S. 166 project, at the west end, near the junction with U.S. 81. Photo by Therone Askins, District Five*

extending for 765 feet east of the junction, and it will be on the ramp from the southbound Kansas Turnpike to westbound U.S. 166.

U.S. 166 carries heavy truck traffic, Boatright said.

During this year's portion of the project, traffic is being controlled by a pilot car and traffic control signals. Motorists should expect delays of up to 15 minutes.

Cornejo & Sons, of Wichita, is the primary contractor for the project.



# Proper tools for the job at hand can save lives

By Troy Whitworth  
Director of Safety

Recently, a couple of KDOT maintenance employees were tasked with picking up trash along the right of way. As you know, this is a common duty for our maintenance crews to do. While these employees were out on their route, they spotted trash up along the right of way fence.

The driver made the decision to drive the pickup truck closer to the trash. Most of the time, this decision would have no negative consequences. But in this instance, it had previously rained for several days, and the ground was wet. While driving on the right of way, the pickup ended up getting stuck.

So now, with the truck stuck in the mud on the right of way, the employees had a decision to make. Should they call their supervisor and advise them on the situation? The employees may have believed their supervisor would be unhappy with them getting stuck and believed they might get in trouble.

The potential for getting into trouble with their supervisor may have been what prompted them to instead make a call to another crew member for

help. When the other crew member showed up, they assessed the scene to decide the best way pull out the pickup.

All they had at that location was a dump truck and a couple of “road find” cargo straps that were in the back of one of the trucks. They tied the cargo straps together to get the length they needed to reach the pickup. Once they were hooked up to the pickup and the dump truck, they began pulling. That’s when the straps stretched, then broke loose. The broken strap shot like a slingshot toward the pickup, with its metal end shattering the truck’s windshield.



This unfortunate situation could have easily ended in tragedy. The force of that strap hitting and shattering that windshield could have instead seriously injured one of the employees. Thankfully, no one was injured or killed from this incident.

Supervisors, please remind employees of this story as you send

them out on field assignments and share with them your expectations. Help them understand the bigger picture. Yes, you may be disappointed in a poor decision, but don’t make the situation worse by trying to fix it without the proper tools for the job. It’s not worth it.

For your family and mine.



# Technology helps gain input for BIL

By Tracy Statton  
District Five

Recently KDOT hosted a series of meetings to provide updates on the new funding available for transportation under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Meetings were held across the state to preview some of the investment areas under consideration for new funding and seek input about what would be most helpful to communities.

During the meetings, KDOT used a special technology called interactive Poll Everywhere. It allowed participants in the meeting to answer questions in real time. The results were then displayed on a screen as they were being gathered.

This isn't the first time KDOT has used this type of technology: it's also been used successfully in previous local consult public involvement activities.

"It provides the audience a way to participate and enables the audience and KDOT representatives to see results immediately," said Grant Writer and Special Projects Manager Vanessa Lamoreaux. "It's also more environmentally friendly."

During the meetings audience members were asked to send a sign-up text. They were then connected to the platform where they could respond to questions on their cell phones.

"KDOT has a strong and rich history of public involvement activities. With the release of additional dollars through the BIL, engaging with the public to gain insight on local needs and how KDOT can most



*Secretary Julie Lorenz speaks at the meeting in Wichita on April 14 where participants were updated on new transportation funding. During the meeting people could answer questions in real time using a new technology that then immediately displayed the answer on a screen. Photo by Tracy Statton, District Five*

effectively and efficiently meet transportation goals that serve Kansans was a vital activity to inform how KDOT moves forward programming those additional dollars," Lamoreaux said.

Polling results will be used to inform decision making for programming additional dollars made available through BIL.

Lamoreaux says the polling results are not broadly available at this time, however a summary report is being prepared, which may be available in the future.





At left are the KDOT employees who talked with students and brought equipment to the 2022 NICE iBuild Showcase event on April 5 (as seen at right). Photos by Mickey Duerr-Nedrow and Delaney Tholen, District One.

## KDOT employees share work experiences with students

By Delaney Tholen  
District One

KDOT employees from Bonner Springs and Olathe answered questions and showed equipment and materials used for KDOT operations with students at the annual National Institute for Construction Excellence (NICE) iBuild Showcase on April 5 at Bartle Hall Convention Center in Kansas City, Mo.

“I enjoyed meeting young people that have an interest in doing the work we do,” said Mickey Duerr-Nedrow, Equipment Operator at the Speaker Road Subarea. “I told them we have long days, but it’s rewarding being able to help people. Everybody uses highways.”

Nearly 800 students from 26 school districts in Kansas and Missouri attended the event. Teachers, counselors and club sponsors attended with the students to help them focus on career opportunities, as well as learn about the built environment.



RCAT assists in evacuating residents.

## Kudos

Dear KDOT,

A gas explosion at Tenawa Haven Midstream gas facility earlier in the day caused a precautionary evacuation of the residents of Haven late Thursday night, on April 14. At the request of Reno County Emergency Management Director Adam Weisharr, Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) provided two buses and drivers to evacuate eight elderly residents of Haven House care facility and transport them 29 miles to Cheney Golden Age care facility.

The evacuation took place with law enforcement officers and began around 12:30 a.m. and concluded shortly before 3 a.m. The residents had varying levels of mobility impairment, which required the use of an accessible vehicle. Thank you KDOT U.S.C. 49-5311 rural grant program for providing the vehicles needed by the most vulnerable members of our community to escape from harm.

Barbara Lilyhorn MPH  
Director, Reno County Department of Aging & Public Transportation

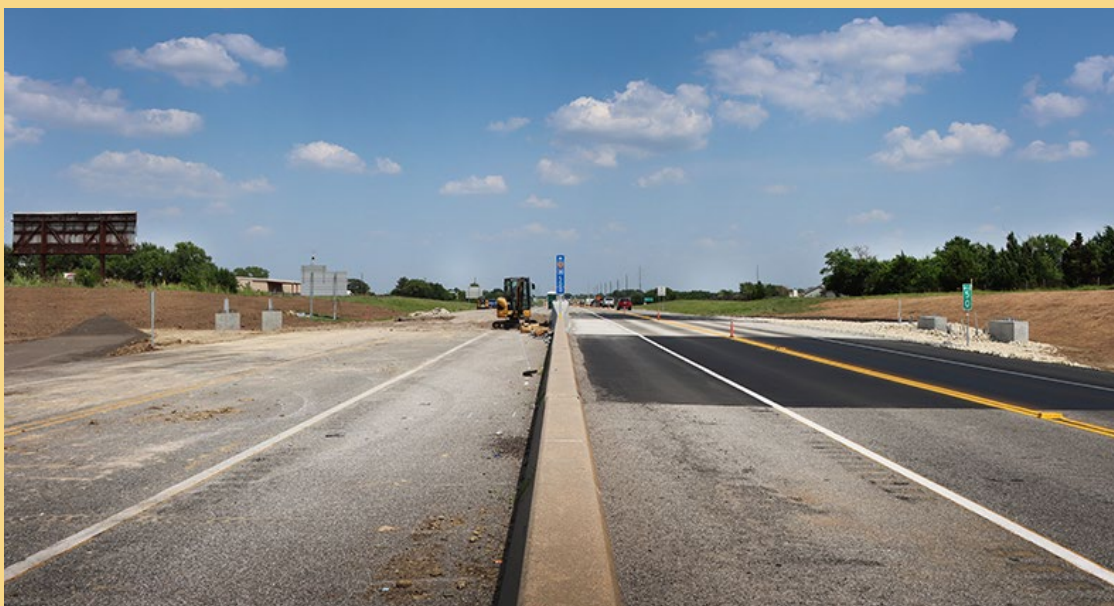




## Raised truck bed leads to bridge repairs



*A bridge repair project is underway on U.S. 75, just south of Topeka, as seen at right. The project includes replacement of the outside concrete girder, which was damaged when a dump truck ran into the overpass in August 2020 (left photo). The driver was unaware the truck bed was still raised before hitting the bridge, causing the bed to become pinned and raising the front end off the ground. Wildcat Construction Co., of Topeka, is the contractor on the \$280,000 repair project. Work should be complete by July. Photos by Kate Craft and Steve Baalman, District One*



## KTA contracts

*Three contracts have been awarded on upcoming Kansas Turnpike projects, including cashless tolling zones along I-70/KTA. These will be used when KTA moves to cashless tolling in 2024. See the full release [here](#) for more information.*



## Thank you for your service

### Retirees

The following employees will retire on June 1.

#### Headquarters

**William Simons**, ROW Property Appraiser Supervisor, Right of Way

#### District Five

**Kim Brownlee**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Wellington

The following employee retired on May 1.

#### District Three

**Ricky Rowison**, Equipment Operator Senior, Hays

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**If you know a KDOT retiree who is not receiving Translines** - please ask them to email [Kim.stich@ks.gov](mailto:Kim.stich@ks.gov) - thanks

### Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating May state service anniversaries.

#### 30

**Burke Koehn**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Scott City

**Matthias Mackeprang**, Area Engineer, Wamego

**Anthony Marstall**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Eskridge

**Doyle Tegethoff**, Equipment Operator Senior, Independence

#### 20

**James Ensley**, Management Analyst II, Topeka

**Kellie Miller**, Management Analyst I, Lyndon

**Daniel Ochs III**, Engineering Technician Specialist, Hutchinson

#### 10 years

**Jon Hoener**, Engineering Technician, Pratt

### In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Jim Yeager, who passed away in Garnett on April 3. Yeager began at KDOT in 1988 and worked at the Garnett Area office as an Equipment Mechanic Specialist. He retired in 2009, after more than 22 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Leroy "Dean" Jackson of Wamego, who passed away on Jan. 1 in Topeka. Jackson started in 1984 and was an Equipment Operator at the Alma Subarea office. He worked for KDOT for more than 33 years, retiring in 2017.

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



*And on a final weather note for this edition - it's not often KDOT is plowing roads in late April. The Phillipsburg Subarea had to break out the motor grader to clear hail off of U.S. 183 north of Phillipsburg after a storm rolled through on April 28. Photo courtesy Phillips County Sheriff's Department*