

TRANSLINES EXPRESS

April 5, 2023

Bureau expands services to improve safety



Congratulations to the Bureau of Transportation Safety Team for being selected as the Example of Excellence for the fourth quarter of 2022. They were honored for their efforts the last year, part of which involved overseeing more than 200 traffic safety campaigns. The bureau also launched several new safety initiatives, completed data projects to improve crash data, established a safety engineering project pipeline for set-aside funds and created two new program manuals, in addition to other efforts. Team members include, from left to right - first row: Wenjun Yang, Amy Smith, Maura Fitzgerald, Jeannie Brown, Kaitlyn Meader, Kim Ortega, Ruby Bradley, Theresa Havenstein, Michael Ronin; middle row: Noel Schneider, Amy Sims-Shonka, Roberta Bradbury, Haley Dougherty, Loralie Brandt, Carla Anderson, Robyn Meinholdt, Alana Scharth, Ingrid Vandervort, Vanessa Spartan; back row: Maggie Wilcox, Lane Butterfield, Chris Bortz, Chase Null, Greg Schieber, Calvin Reed, Jim Hollingsworth, Dave Schwartz, Gary Herman and Chris Herrick. Photo by Multimedia Services

National Work Zone Awareness Week 2023 - coming April 17 to 21



Three Go Orange photos from 2022 - see inside for more details on this year's safety campaign.



Major construction continues in District Six



Above, a retaining wall is being constructed as part of the four-lane expansion project on U.S. 50 in Ford County. The wall is needed to preserve the historical “Point of Rocks” location near the westbound lanes. Thomas Husa’s road squad and Brad Rognlie’s bridge squad designed the project. Below, new concrete is placed for U.S. 54 expansion in Seward County. Steve Rockers’ road squad and Peter Tobaben’s bridge squad designed the project. Photos by Tim Nichols, District Six



TRANSLINES EXPRESS

**Kansas Department of
Transportation**

Eisenhower State
Office Building
700 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS

**Acting Transportation
Secretary**
Calvin Reed

Interim Deputy Secretary
Greg Schieber

**Interim Senior Director/
Fiscal and Asset
Management**
Pam Anderson

Interim Senior Director
Vanessa Lamoreaux

Administration
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Aviation
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Communications
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Peter Van Sickle

Project Delivery
Tony Menke (Interim)

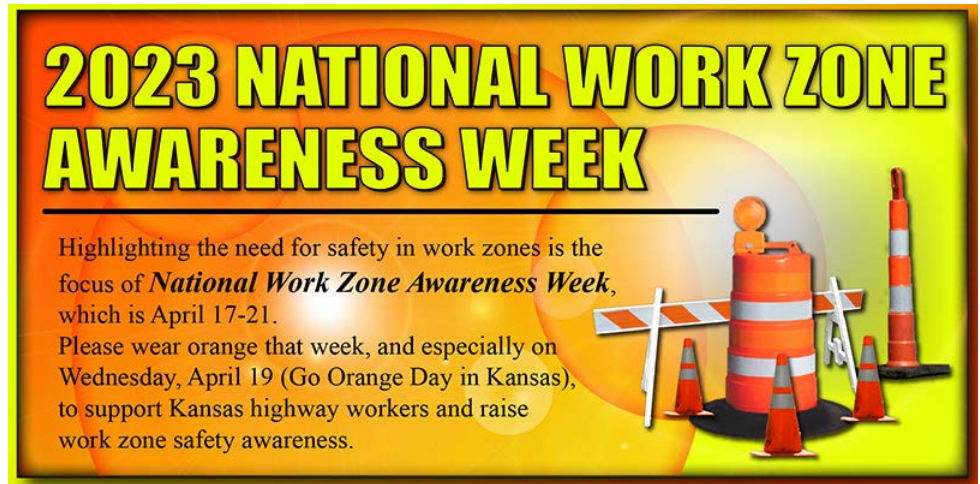
Safety
Troy Whitworth

Work zone safety campaign increases awareness

KDOT and other transportation organizations are working together on activities to highlight National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is April 17 to 21.

Three video blogs, with stories from KDOT and KTA highway workers, will be featured during the safety week. Another video will have KDOT employees showing work zone safety improvements made the past several years.

In addition, there will be numerous buildings (including many KDOT offices) and locations illuminated in orange at night. Also: digital signs with safety messages, a new statewide TV public service announcement, a safety coloring page and daily social media messages posted with this information and more.



Everyone is encouraged to wear safety colors throughout the week, and orange on Wednesday, April 19, for Go Orange Day in Kansas. For more information, go to KDOT's work zone safety page [HERE](#).

High school students show interest in 69Express project

By Delaney Tholen
District One

As the 69Express project advances in Johnson County, local residents, including high school students, are taking note of increased construction activity in the area.

On March 30, Steve Rockers, KDOT Project Director for 69Express, joined Tiger TV, the Blue Valley High School student-operated media outlet.

In the interview, Tiger TV student journalists asked numerous questions, including what the project team views as the challenges and benefits of the project.

"Reconstructing KDOT's busiest four-lane highway in the state is a challenge," Rockers told them. "Crews are doing night work to minimize traffic impacts. Benefits include improving safety and reducing congestion in the area; that helps everybody."

Rocker said he enjoyed talking with the students. "It's important to share project information so that



Steve Rockers talks with Blue Valley High School students about the 69Express project. Photo by Delaney Tholen, District One

the community understands why KDOT is doing the construction activities they are seeing."

The design-build project includes widening U.S. 69 from four lanes to six lanes from 103rd Street to 151st Street, constructing 11 noise walls and improving the U.S. 69/167th Street interchange. The new lanes will be tolled, and the project is expected to be completed in 2026, with new lanes open to traffic in 2025.

Employee spotlight: Katie Wille, District Four office

What's your job title?

Senior Administrative Assistant.

What sort of duties do you have at work?

My biggest duty, personally, is to help where help is needed, no matter if it's within my job description or not. I've always taught my boys in our personal lives that it doesn't hurt us to go out of our way to help someone. And I think that can be applied in our work lives as well.

What kind of music do you like?

I haven't found any music that I DIDN'T like.

What's the most exciting part of your job?

I enjoy meeting KDOT employees from other areas. We see a lot of names come across our desks, but to officially put a face to the name is really nice.

What's something you're proud of?

Being a mom of two extraordinary boys.

What's your favorite food?

Stuffed crust pizza.

What's your favorite movie?

I am a sucker for horror/thrillers, so "What Lies Beneath" wins this one.

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?

I officiate weddings in my down time. I love to hunt, fish and hike. I do a lot of woodworking, and I love raising chickens.

Do you have any pets?

Yes, but I live on a farm so I am an animal hoarder. And yes, they all have names.



Katie Wille in her office at the District Four building in Chanute.

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

I love watching football and basketball, but I have favorite players, not favorite teams.

Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Both? I only sleep 3-4 hours a night.

Are you a coffee, tea or pop person?

Most definitely coffee.

What's something you enjoy at your job?

I love the people I work with.

GETTING TO KNOW

OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.

What's your favorite season?

No doubt, summer.

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

Compound bow/arrows, a cooking pot and a massive box of matches.

Seismograph benefits engineering through Geology

By Ashley Perez
District Two

KDOT has never owned its own seismic equipment, but it does now as the Geology Section recently received a new seismograph in Salina.

Three employees from Geology across the state will use the seismograph to measure seismic waves. They include Jim Burns and Kyle Leistikow, Engineering Technicians in Chanute, and Neil Croxton, Regional Geologist in Salina. Croxton is leading the project. Before acquiring this seismograph, KDOT had to hire a consultant or the Kansas Geological Survey division of the University of Kansas to perform seismic investigations.

Seismic exploration has been around since the 1920s but up until recently, only used for oil exploration. The seismograph measures three general types of seismic waves - primary, shear and surface waves. Then the department uses the data from the seismograph to learn about the subsurface.

“Primary waves bouncing off bedrock can show us how deep it is, and sometimes see into the different rock layers,” Croxton said. “Shear waves are the type of waves that damage bridge foundations during earthquakes, so learning how fast those waves travel at a proposed bridge site helps our structural engineers design for quakes.

“And surface waves can be analyzed to give fine details about the soils properties and bedrock,” he said. “We are also hopeful that

surface waves can be used to help us better predict bridge pile penetration in soft shales.”

Other main tools that geologists in the state use are drilling, electric resistivity and occasionally microgravity. Croxton said they’ve had an electrical resistivity outfit since 2007, and they have received good information from it. However, that equipment should be used with the new seismic data for the best results.

The additional data from the seismograph will benefit KDOT in multiple ways, as it will provide better subsurface profiles for new road and bridge geology investigations and help engineers when planning and designing infrastructure. By using this method with other noninvasive methods, geologists are able to pick where they need to drill, saving time and money.

“More uses for the seismograph and better results are being developed rapidly,” Croxton said.



KDOT Regional Geologist Neil Croxton, above, shows new seismograph equipment being used to gather information to plan and design infrastructure (above right and below). Photos by Ashley Perez, District Two



K-383 work in Norton, Phillips counties

By Lisa Mussman
District Three

Work has started on Phase II of the 26-mile K-383 modernization project in Norton and Phillips counties.

This phase will consist of reconstructing another 6 miles of the highway, this time in Norton County starting at the east U.S. 36 junction and ending at the Prairie Dog Creek bridge near Almena. The road was closed to traffic on March 13. Construction crews are currently working on removing the existing pavement and replacing the concrete box structures along the route.

Finishing work is also wrapping up on the 6 miles of Phase I in Phillips County that was reopened to traffic in late 2022. Final surfacing and shoulder work is being completed and will be followed by installation of pavement markings and rumble strips.

Stephen Bass' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the Phillips County project. Greg Gonzales' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the Norton County project.

Crews work on pavement removal (right) and box structures (top right) on K-383 in Norton County. Photos by Dan Moore, District Three



Trivia!

100th anniversary of the opening of King Tut's tomb on Feb. 16, 1923.

1. What was his full name?
2. How long did he rule Egypt?
3. Who discovered the tomb?
4. What are two theories on how he died?
5. An iron dagger was one of the hundreds of items found in his tomb. Why is this unique?
6. How many pairs of sandals were found in the tomb?

When trimming trees and brush, safety is key

By Tim Potter
District Five

One important highway maintenance task – especially from a traffic safety standpoint – is trimming brush and trees in highway right of way.

That's because vegetation can obscure motorists' visibility, or it can block traffic signs.

When maintenance supervisors go out monitoring the highways, they check that visibility, said Wichita Area Superintendent David Lechner.

Keeping up with brush and trees is "time and labor consuming," Lechner said. "It can sneak up on you. The growth becomes hard to handle."

Late winter and early spring is prime time to tackle the growth – before trees and vegetation leaf out, he noted.

And there's an added benefit: By trimming earlier, it makes it easier for mowing equipment to maneuver



Equipment Operator Senior Gary Werth monitors a chipper used to turn trimmed trees into mulch during trimming along U.S. 54 west of Garden Plain. Photo by Ryan Wallace



Wichita West Equipment Operator Jeremy Woll, with a chainsaw, works in a tree line along U.S. 54 west of Garden Plain. Photo by Ryan Wallace

around trees and brush during the busy mowing season.

Most of the work on trees is devoted to trimming rather than removal.

To help with the enormity of the task, Wichita area crews use a 65-foot boom truck when needed and a large chipper to reduce cuttings to mulch on site. That way, the cuttings don't have to be hauled away.

El Dorado Area Superintendent Tom McCartney said his crews use a brush cutter attached to a skid steer to do a lot of their trimming. Still, the equipment can't reach all the limbs and brush that needs attention. And in those spots, "it's all hand work, and it's hard," McCartney said.

One advantage of doing hand work in the late winter/early spring is the poison ivy isn't as much of a threat.

McCartney called trimming one of "most safety sensitive" parts of maintenance work – because of all the powerful cutting tools used. Without precautions, he said, "that chipper is a dangerous piece of machinery."

U.S. 169 improvements continue in Neosho County

By Priscilla Petersen
District Four

Following closely on the heels of U.S. 169 widening and pavement improvements in Anderson, Allen and Neosho counties, two more projects will start in April on U.S. 169 south of Thayer. Clarkson Construction, the primary contractor, will replace the rutted asphalt with concrete pavement and also add passing lanes.

The work zone begins north of the Labette-Neosho county line and continues north for 7 miles to the Thayer south city limits. The project schedule includes a 90-day closure of U.S. 169 at the work zone, with traffic detoured on state routes.

In conjunction with the improvements to the south, Clarkson Construction began work the last week in March to add passing lanes on both sides of U.S. 169 north of K-47. Kris Norton's road squad and Jeff Sims' road squad designed the projects.

All three IKE projects are expected to be finished late this year – easing congestion and providing a smoother ride for motorists.



Above, cones on the right side of the highway mark the spot where passing lanes will be constructed on U.S. 169 north of the K-47 junction. At left, KDOT will start a project on U.S. 169 south of Thayer this month to replace the rutted asphalt pavement with concrete. A second project will add passing lanes at the same location. Photos by Priscilla Petersen, District Four

Trivia answers

1. King Tutankhamun
2. For 10 years, until his death at the age of 19.
3. British archaeologist Howard Carter.
4. Scans showed he had an infected broken leg. Other tests showed evidence of multiple malaria infections.
5. Because he died several centuries before the start of the Iron Age, when technology started to allow for the forging of iron and steel.
6. More than 40 pairs, including one pair of solid gold sandals.



The District One Shawnee County project was selected as the Project of the Year. Pictured left to right are Tony Menke, KDOT; Craig Mattox, Finney & Turnipseed; Matt Kirkland, Wildcat Construction; Steve Baalman, KDOT; Michelle Anschutz, KDOT; Stuart Johnson, Wildcat Construction; and Brian Hansen, Dustrol Inc. Photo by Tracy Statton, District Five.

KDOT/KCA honor partnering efforts at conference

By Tracy Statton
District Five

KDOT and the Kansas Contractors Association formed a task force in 1991 to find ways to improve communication between KDOT and contractor personnel. Since then, collaborating through partnering efforts has been a priority on construction projects.

These efforts were highlighted at the annual KDOT/KCA Partnering Conference on Feb. 22 in Wichita. Scott Swanson, KDOT Partnering Coordinator, said partnering greatly improves the success of both current and future projects.

“It was very important for our industry to get together, in person and away from the office or field, to renew relationships and build new ones after the trauma and isolation of COVID,” he said. “Leaders needed to physically renew their commitment to partnering together so that as this season progresses, they will be more proactive in attacking the issues together.”

Excellence in Partnering awards also were presented, which help recognize the teamwork involved.

“Many of us take pride in pointing out award-winning projects, which we were a part of, to our family and

friends,” Swanson said. “Another reason is to show others what partnering really looks like under pressure and in the field with experienced professionals.”

KDOT offices and contractors on projects in each district were honored. The winners are:

District One - Bonner Springs Construction Office and Julius Kaaz Construction Co. Inc., Wyandotte County project. Also, Gage Construction Office and Wildcat Construction, Shawnee County project (named statewide winner).

District Two - Belleville Construction Office and Dustrol Inc., Mitchell County project.

District Three - Phillipsburg Construction Office and Venture Corp., Phillips County project.

District Four - Lola Construction Office and Killough Construction Inc., Bourbon County project. Also, Lola Construction Office and Bob Bergkamp Construction, Crawford County project.

District Five - Winfield Construction Office and APAC-Kansas Inc., Shears Division, Cowley County project.

District Six - Syracuse Construction Office and Venture Corp., Hamilton County project.

KTA - KTA and Dondlinger Construction, cashless tolling installation.

Beyond the public meeting

KDOT broadens methods to gain public input

By Charlotte Norville
Headquarters

Public meetings are the bread and butter of the public involvement world to garner community feedback. Typically, KDOT conducts open-house style meetings where attendees can stop by, talk to project experts and view project details. However, public meetings are just one tool in the toolbox of activities available to communicate with the public.

Virtual engagement

Some projects now offer a virtual open house on a project webpage where community members can review information and submit feedback. The 69Express project displays interactive maps and text using ARCGIS StoryMaps - click [HERE](#) to see the webpage.

The K-96 project deployed an interactive website platform called "Engagement HQ." Once a community member registers, they can mark their comments with exact locations on a map, complete project polls, compare their results to the larger group of users and

much more. View the engagement portal [HERE](#).

Virtual meetings and presentations using Zoom or Microsoft Teams became more common during the height of COVID-19. These platforms continue to be useful, particularly across large geographic regions. For example, Zoom meetings are being considered as a supplement to KDOT's in-person Local Consult meetings currently being planned across the state this fall. For more information about the biennial Local Consult process, click [HERE](#).

Project communications

KDOT also engages with the public through emails, social media, online comment forms, email project updates and phone hotlines. Community groups, HOAs, neighboring businesses and others also request focused, in-person presentations.

It takes a coalition from the community, KDOT and other partners to provide and receive feedback throughout the entire decision-making process. For more information, contact KDOT Public Involvement Specialists Ames Howard (Ames.Howard@ks.gov) and Charlotte Norville (Char.Norville@ks.gov).



1967. L-R, 1st Row: Riley, KS; Arman, NDS; Swartz, SDS; Hagaman, KU; Pat Donnelly, Washburn EIT; Walrafen, KU; Merritt, OU; LR, 2nd Row: Putnam, MU; Larsen, I; Dockery, AU; Terry, UN; Thompson, UN; Adams, KS; Neaderhiser, KS. L-r, 3rd Row: Boutwell, EIT, Stanton, Rolla; Plumb, KU; Laanson, Tex A&M; Brees, Col State; McCollom, KU; Lay, AU; Hershberger, KS. Top Row, L-R: Hallberg (Tng Off), Wieland, NDU; Sick, NDS; Cheney, AU; Shenkey, NDU; Metcalf, Tex A&M; Clennan, KS.

STEP BACK IN TIME ...

This historic photo shows the Engineers in Training at KDOT in 1967.

Plan and prepare to avoid slips, trips, falls

By Troy Whitworth
Director of Safety

Just the other day, I was walking my dogs by the lake and got tripped up by a vine. To make it worse, I was on a slope lined with rocks when it happened.

I couldn't re-establish my footing and subsequently hit the ground. What made the fall worse - I was on a slope, making the fall a bit further than if I was on level ground. Fortunately, I only sustained a few bruises. But this got me thinking about what our field folks go through every day when working along the right of way. These types of incidents can occur throughout the year. And many of our folks sustain lasting injuries from falls similar to mine.

When I was back at work afterward, I noticed that slips, trips and falls are the most commonly reported incident at KDOT. I then looked at a few other incident factors and was really surprised. I had preconceived notions of how age factored into incidents. I always thought that how old you were played a big role in employee incidents. However, the numbers showed that the first five years of service are when people have the most incidents, regardless of age.

Previous experience in a similar field can be a factor; if your previous job was in a completely unrelated field, you may have to learn from scratch. There is a learning curve with new jobs. Someone who spent time in a factory or had a sedentary job could potentially have

more issues with uneven ground.

It's important to assess a person's physical abilities as well as their skill level when assigning job duties. We want employees to have proper training and guidance. Incidents should not be taken lightly. I actually had someone tell one of my staff not long ago that sometimes people get hurt doing jobs - "it's just part of doing business." If we see potential for someone to get hurt, that is the time to stop, reassess what we're doing and determine if more training is needed. Getting hurt should never be thought of as the consequence of doing a job.

Many hazards new employees face are related to the physical exposure they will be dealing with. Highway right of way can be an unforgiving environment. Remind employees about how perilous terrain can be along the roadway to help prevent falls. It takes a while to

get used to walking on slopes and looking for hidden washouts. Even seasoned veterans can end up on the ground.

It takes a little time for employees to get accustomed to the rigors of their job duties. And don't forget, safety briefings are great to remind crew members of the job hazards they may face that day. It also helps to recognize, then remove, possible exposure to those hazards.

Remember, at the end of the day, we all want to make it home to the people we care about. For your family and mine.



KDOT announces aviation art contest winners

One of the nine winning entries in KDOT's 2023 Aviation Art Contest has won at the national level and now moves to international competition.

Elly Han, 13, of Altamont, and a student at Altamont Grade School, placed first in the Intermediate Category of the annual National Association of State Aviation art contest. National winners were announced on March 14. Elly's artwork and that of other national winners has been submitted for the 2023 International Aviation Art Contest, which will be judged in June by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.

Elly's entry finished second in her age division in the Kansas competition, the first-place state winner being her brother, Daniel Han.

The contest, co-sponsored by the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education, challenges young people to use creative expression through art to illustrate the importance of aviation. The theme for this year's contest was "Air Sports & the Environment."

Kansas artists ages 6-17 were divided into three age categories. The nine first- through third-place state winners received \$150 to \$250 Science Technology



Elly Han's artwork, which has won national recognition.

Engineering Art and Math prizes from KCAE. Each of the Kansas first-place winners and the state's national winner also received a drone from KCAE.

"With hundreds of entrants from across the state, it's obvious the passion for aviation still beats loud in the hearts of Kansas' young people," said Bob Brock, KDOT Director of Aviation.

For a list of all winners, click [HERE](#).

KTA briefs

- ♦ Florida travel just got easier for Kansas drivers. K-TAG is now accepted on most Florida toll roads - see the participating facilities [HERE](#).

In return, SunPass joined the list of electronic toll devices accepted on the Kansas Turnpike.

- ♦ New food options will be available to travelers later this year at four of the six KTA service areas.

Existing restaurants at Emporia, Towanda, Matfield Green and Topeka service areas will be temporarily closed during remodeling of the restaurant spaces and will reopen throughout the spring and summer. Restrooms and convenience stores will remain open.

See up-to-date information about available services using the interactive map on the website [HERE](#).

Thank you for your service

Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating state service anniversaries in April.

45 years

Kathryn Zeckser, Applications Developer III, Topeka

30 years

James Frye, Field Maintenance Administrator, Lebo

Allen Phillips, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Tribune

Lisa Zrubek, Human Resource Professional I, Hutchinson

25 years

John Culbertson, Professional Civil Engineer I, Lawrence

Kyle Malcom, Public Service Executive IV, Topeka

David Reamer, Engineering Technician Senior, Holton

20 years

Paul Kulseth, Assistant Director, Lawrence

Lelia Linder, Human Resource Professional I, Topeka

Erin McGrogan, Environmental Compliance & Regulation Specialist I, Lawrence

Phillip Robison, Equipment Operator Senior, Columbus

Julie Torkelson, Administrative Officer, Rossville

15 years

Michael Kabriel, Engineering Technician Senior, Topeka

Holly Taylor, Senior Administrative Specialist, Topeka

10 years

Scott Braddy, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Clay Center

Daren Wright, Equipment Operator, Dodge City

KDOT will now highlight employees for every five years of service (beginning with 10 years) in milestones and statewide news releases.

Retirees

The following employees will retire on May 1.

Headquarters

Leonel Alvarado, Engineering Technician Specialist, Construction & Materials

District Two

David Choitz, Equipment Operator Senior, Ellsworth

Ritchie Farrell, Engineering Technician Senior, Belleville

District Six

Stanley Nipple, Engineering Technician, Liberal

The following employees retired on April 1.

Headquarters

Carmen Bakarich, Manager of Special Projects, Office of the Secretary

Linda Fritton, Management Systems Analyst II, Project & Program Management

Erin McGrogan, Environmental Compliance & Regulations Specialist, Right of Way

Kevin Vaughn, Engineering Technician Senior, Structures & Geotechnical Services

District One

Patrick Finan, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Blaine

Gregory Handley, Equipment Operator Senior, Topeka

Linus Grollmes, Equipment Operator Senior, Horton

Keith Snyder, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Overland Park

Mark Webber, Administrative Assistant, Topeka

District Two

Michael Hahn, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Salina

District Three

Timothy Micek, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Goodland

Michael Terrell, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Norton

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

State service milestones



State employees celebrating 40 and 50 years of service in calendar year 2022 gathered in Topeka on March 30 to highlight their accomplishments. Engineering Technician Senior William Bartron, who recently retired from KDOT after 40 years of service, is pictured with Governor Laura Kelly and Acting Secretary Calvin Reed.

Two other KDOT employees, who were unable to attend the ceremony, achieved milestones in 2022 - Engineering Technician Specialist Charles Espinoza celebrated 50 years of service, and Engineering Technician Senior Kerry McDonald reached 40 years of service. Photo by KDOT Multimedia Services

Emergency repair project honored



The American Council of Engineering Companies honored KDOT with an Engineering Excellence Award for a spring 2021 emergency repair project on the eastbound I-70 Lewis and Clark bridge in Kansas City. Interim Deputy Secretary Greg Schieber, right, recently presented the award to Project Manager Dominique Shannon on behalf of Debra Briant, Embedded Bridge Set-Aside Engineer, and the rest of the team members. JEO Consulting Group also was honored for providing emergency engineering design services.

In memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Marvin "Mac" McDill**, who passed away on Jan. 19 in Belleville. McDill started in 1958 and worked for more than 37 years. He was the Highway Maintenance Supervisor in Belleville and retired in 1995.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Paul Dean Kuchera**, who passed away on March 7 in Topeka. He was from Lincoln. Kuchera started in 1978 at the KDOT office in Lincoln. He was an Equipment Operator II when he retired in 1993 after 14 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Charles (Chuck) Protasio**, who passed away on March 9 in Lawrence. Protasio started at KDOT in 1995 and retired in 2019 after 24 years of service. He was the Assistant Bureau Chief of the Division of Program and Project Management.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Vance Bruner**, who passed away on March 17 in Mound City. Bruner began in 1986 and worked at KDOT for 29 years. He retired in 2015. He was an Equipment Operator Senior in Mound City.