

# TRANSLINES EXPRESS

Jan. 4, 2023

## Record wind chills hit state during storm

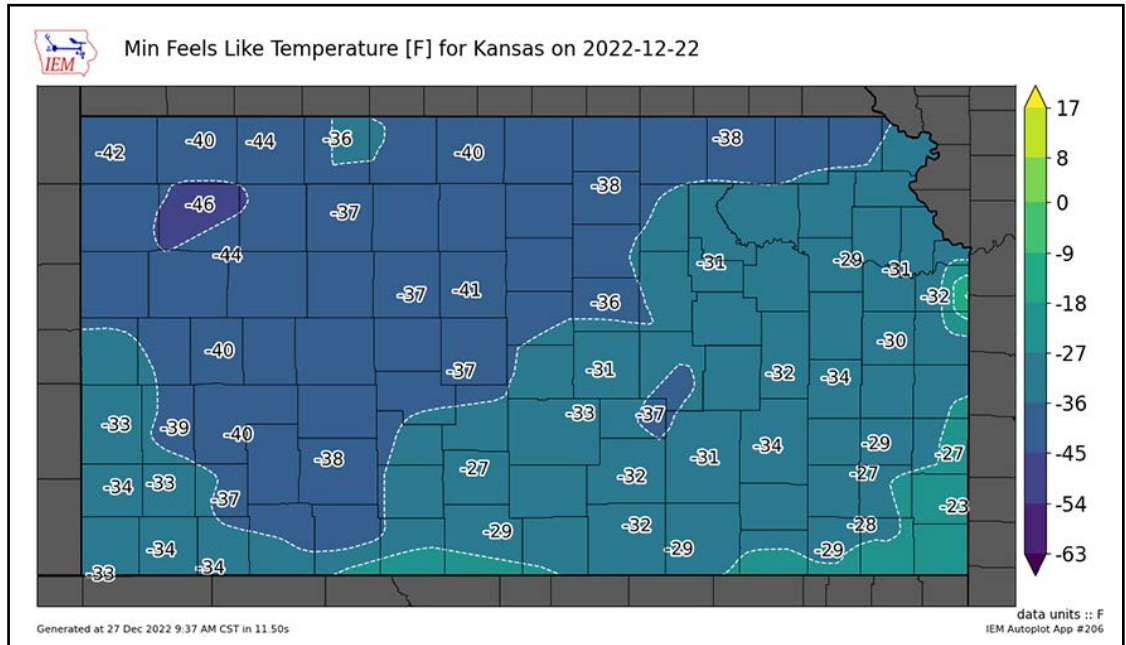
A storm hit most of Kansas late on Dec. 21 and early Dec. 22. Most areas received 1-2 inches of snow, with a few spots more or less across the state. But the low temperatures and wind chills, combined with the large wind gusts, were the main problems.

KDOT crews immediately responded as their areas needed, with the extremely low temperatures altering some procedures. High winds also affected roads being cleared, with snow blowing back on the highways again and again. Many of the highways were partly or fully covered by snow and/or ice for a time.

Wind gusts were at a minimum of 30 mph on Dec. 22. Most of the state encountered wind gusts in the 40-mph range, with areas in southwest Kansas receiving the worst. Ford County had the highest gusts that day at 58 mph. Wind gusts continued on Dec. 23, but were more in the 20-30 mph range.

The wind gusts caused parts of the state to experience white-out conditions on occasion. In fact, a section of I-70 from exit 184 at Russell to exit 206 at Wilson had to be closed for about two hours the morning of Dec. 22 because of multiple crashes blocking the roadway.

In addition, on Dec. 22 and 23, the state was impacted by some of the lowest recorded wind chills since the



The lowest recorded wind chills across Kansas on Dec. 22 are shown in the chart above. Courtesy of the National Weather Service in Topeka

late 1980s. On Dec. 22, wind chills of -30 degrees or lower were seen in every region.

Locations in western Kansas saw wind chills of -40 degrees or lower that day, especially in the extreme northwest corner of the state, including –

- Cheyenne County: -42
- Rawlins County: -40
- Decatur County: -44
- Thomas County: -46

Wind chill temperatures on Dec. 23 were cold, but not quite as severe, mostly ranging from -19 to -34 degrees.

Information for this story provided by the National Weather Service in Topeka and KDOT news release.



*Above, the new highway features a wider driving surface as well as 6-foot paved shoulders. At right, new pavement and profile on K-383 near Woodston. The hills in this area were cut down to help improve motorist visibility. Photos by Lisa Mussman, District Three*



## K-383 opens to traffic in Phillips County

By Lisa Mussman  
District Three

K-383 in Phillips County reopened to traffic on Dec. 20, just in time for holiday travelers. The 6-mile stretch east of Long Island to the U.S. 183 junction was the first phase of reconstruction on the 26-mile K-383 corridor in Norton and Phillips counties.

Construction began in November 2021, and the road had been closed since March 2022. Project work included reconstructing and widening

the highway on existing alignment into a 24-foot mainline surface with 6-foot paved shoulders.

Improvements were also made to the side slopes, and several sections of hills were flattened to help increase visibility for drivers.

A final asphalt overlay on the road is planned for spring 2023. Venture Corp., of Great Bend, was the primary contractor for the \$11.8 million project.

Stephen Bass' road squad and Shawn Schwensen's bridge squad designed the project.

### **TRANSLINES EXPRESS**

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# Sothers named Chief of Innovative Technologies

Mitch Sothers has been selected as the Bureau Chief of Innovative Technologies for KDOT. This bureau is part of the newly created Division of Multimodal Transportation and Innovation.



*Mitch Sothers*

Sothers graduated with an electrical engineering degree from Kansas State University in 1992. Following graduate level education in civil and agricultural engineering, he spent four years at the Kansas Department of Agriculture in the Division of Water Resources, permitting dams and stream obstructions. In 1998, he came to KDOT's Bureau of Transportation Planning in the Geometrics and Accident Data Unit.

After 10 years, Sothers was promoted to Coordinating Engineer in the Bureau of Road Design. He oversaw the Coordinating Section that works with railroad and utility companies to develop agreements necessary to allow KDOT projects to move forward and let for construction.

The section also manages the federally funded railroad safety program, which focuses on improving safety at public at-grade railroad crossings. Sothers had served 14 years in this position until his recent promotion.

"I'm excited; it's a good opportunity to promote innovative technologies and their many uses in improving the Kansas transportation system," he said.

Sothers has two adult children. In his free time, he enjoys motorcycle rides and archery hunting.

## Traffic now flowing on U.S. 59/160

*Below, the barricades were pushed away, and traffic began flowing over the new Labette Creek bridge on U.S. 59/160 on Dec. 8. The work zone, located approximately 6 miles northwest of Oswego, was closed in late March for replacement of the previous bridge (seen at top right). A.M. Cohron and Son Inc., of Emporia, was the primary contractor on the \$3.2 million project. Jeff Sims' road squad and Shawn Schwenson's bridge squad designed the project. Photos by Priscilla Petersen, District Four, and Google Earth*



## Employee spotlight: Tammy Wilson, District Materials office

*What's your job title?*

Technically, it is Engineering Technician Specialist, but I just say District Materials Supervisor.

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

I supervise seven people, four in Topeka and three in Holton. In addition to all of the supervisory duties, I approve concrete mix designs for projects, make sure we are doing the necessary sampling/testing of materials for projects, work on equipment needing repair, purchase and keep track of equipment and various other things.

*What kind of music do you like?*

Any kind of rock, from the heaviest, to 80s hair bands, to classic rock and southern rock. I like country too.

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

Meeting all of the people I have met over the years from KDOT, contractors, consultants, city and county.

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

My three kids and my grandson!

*What's your favorite food?*

Prime rib and lobster.

*What's your favorite movie?*

I watch so many movies. There are so many that I love, I couldn't pick a favorite. Top ones might be "300," "Frailty," "Life is Beautiful" and anything sci-fi or horror.

*Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?*

I have always loved cars, and I am pretty mechanically inclined. I can work on cars a little bit or fix things around the house.

*Do you have any pets?*

I am such a dog person, but I don't have any at this time. I do have a grand-dog who loves me.

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

*Are you a morning person or a night owl?*

I was always a night owl, but as I get older, I see that switching up.



*Tammy Wilson in her office in Topeka.*

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

I wish I wasn't, but I have to have my Dr Pepper every morning.

*What's something you enjoy at your job?*

All of the people. Even if I have had disagreements with someone in the past, I still like them all. They are all good people!

*What's your favorite season?*

Fall. The weather, the colors, hot cocoa, cinnamon and a fire.

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

A charged satellite phone, a very big knife and a very big boat.

### GETTING TO KNOW

#### OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.

# Inventions improve efficiency at KDOT

By Ashley Perez  
District Two

Many employees at KDOT look for ways to improve tasks or make their jobs easier and more efficient. When not busy working on highways or helping another area in District Two, Council Grove Highway Maintenance Supervisor Randy Kunc and his crew are pondering new ideas of things they can make to improve their jobs. In fact, Kunc is known for inventing new tools and techniques to get the job done more efficiently.

Kunc and his crew have retrofitted several items, such as a sign trailer to easily deploy temporary rumble strips, a guardrail sprayer to easily spray guardrails from the work trucks and a brine applicator valve made for the split applicator tanks on 2020 brine applicator trucks to equally fill both sides with brine without overflowing either side. In addition, nozzles for the old brine trucks have been adjusted so brine is applied on the center line and over the entire lane of travel.

They also have invented other things such as a salt screen. Salt from a loader is poured over this screen to filter the fines out of salt used to make brine, which vastly improves efficiency. The group has even made several screens for other subareas to use.

"I like to tinker with things," Kunc said. "The salt screen greatly reduces the frequency of brine tank cleaning. It allows workers to make up to 40,000 gallons of brine without cleaning."

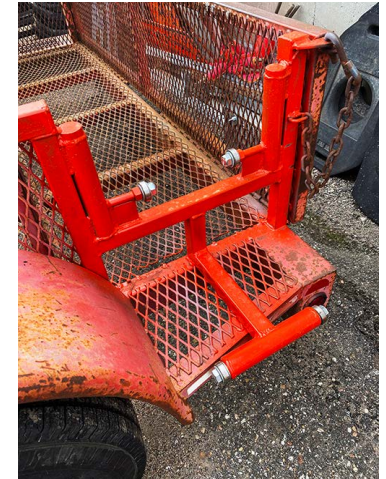
These different inventions or retrofits have saved manpower and time, made many tasks easier and improved the overall processes. Kunc and the crew in Council Grove plan to continue their efforts, and they are glad to share ideas.



*Above, salt is poured on a salt screen. Below, a guardrail sprayer. Photos by Ashley Perez and Randy Kunc, District Two*



*Above, nozzles for old brine trucks. Below, a sign trailer for rumble strips. Bottom, a brine applicator valve to fill both sides equally.*





### Dodge City project begins

Officials broke ground on Dec. 8 for the Dodge City Downtown Streetscape project. It was one of 30 Cost Share projects approved by KDOT in spring 2021. The project will revitalize Dodge City's existing 50-year-old downtown streetscape and its brick streets, which are more than 100 years old. The project focuses on the streetscape, infrastructure and pedestrian improvements along Front Street from Third Avenue to Central Avenue. Photos by Yazmin Moreno, District Six, and the city of Dodge City



### Kudos

A few comments from the public:

**On Twitter -**

- Shout out to the boys at @KDOTHQ those highways were exquisite! – Joe
- Arrived safe & roads were clear thank you @KDOTHQ – Lisa
- Thank you to all the @KHPDispatch KS Troopers on these frigid roads helping travelers. To @KDOTHQ and all the road workers, be safe and thank you. -Heidi
- Thank you @KDOTHQ and @KHPDispatch for all your hard work over the last 24 hours - Trooper Ben
- Thank you all @KDOTHQ – JP
- Glad to hear! Thank you to all of the KDOT and local

road crews clearing the roads and making them safer for drivers. You're appreciated! – AAKansasNews

**On Facebook -**

- I appreciate your efforts - Michael
- Stay safe and warm and you plow! Thank you for saving lives!!! - Sandy
- Thank you for all the hours spent in keeping roads clear. It is greatly appreciated - Gale

**Email -**

I had to go out yesterday and today for doctors appts. I want to tell you it was a pleasure to take the highway - it was clear of ice and snow and was wonderful to drive on. Thank you and KDOT for what you do for us!! - Kathy



*Visitors and staff view and discuss map details involving the proposed U.S. 77 pavement replacement project between Winfield and Arkansas City. Photo by Tim Potter, District Five*

## KDOT holds public meeting on U.S. 77 project

By Tim Potter  
District Five

KDOT District Five staff and consultants held a meeting Dec. 13 to share with the public plans for improving a nearly 9-mile section of U.S. 77 in Cowley County.

The pavement replacement project would be between Arkansas City, on the south, and the Walnut River bridge in Winfield, on the north. The project would have an estimated cost of \$58.4 million.

The two-hour meeting was held at the Terminal Building at Strother Field, between the two Cowley County cities. KDOT and consultants displayed maps of the proposed project design and were available to answer questions and receive written comments.

Besides pavement replacement, the project would realign the highway on the south side of Strother Field and replace decking on the southbound bridge over the BNSF railroad.

Also, at the Strother Field Industrial Park, a major regional employer, the project proposes intersection changes at 222nd Road and realignment of D Street to improve visibility. The First Avenue intersection would be closed as an effort to enhance driver safety near the industrial park.

KDOT expects to choose a contractor around June of 2024. Kris Norton's road squad designed the project.

KDOT anticipates the earliest construction could start would be the spring of 2025, with the project being completed around late 2026.

Those interested in the project can access the project webpage for more information as it becomes available: [www.ksdotike.org/US-77-Cowley-County](http://www.ksdotike.org/US-77-Cowley-County).

# Bridge deck replacement projects completed in KC metro

By Delaney Tholen  
District One

Ahead of harsh weather and the close of the year, bridge deck replacement projects were completed on schedule in December.

In Wyandotte County, a flyover ramp bridge deck was replaced at the I-70/I-635 interchange. This replacement followed a similar 2018 project on a companion flyover ramp at the interchange.

In Johnson County, the westbound K-10 bridge deck over Lexington Avenue was replaced. The bridge's eastbound deck had been replaced in 2021.

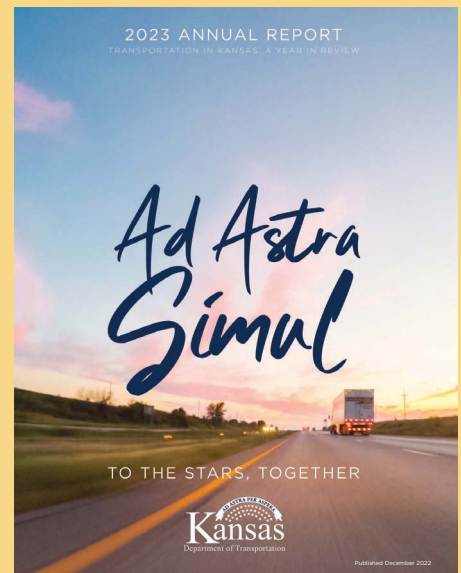
*Above, a file photo of the westbound I-70 to southbound I-635 bridge deck replacement. At right, the new bridge deck on westbound K-10 over Lexington Avenue in western Johnson County. Photos by Delaney Tholen, District One*



## KDOT, KTA annual reports available

KDOT and the KTA have released their annual reports.

Check out the publications - [KDOT Annual Report](#) and [KTA Annual Report](#). In addition, the KTA has results of its Customer Satisfaction Survey available that outlines financial information and highlights positive customer feedback. It can be seen [here](#).





# All of a sudden - a slip, trip or fall occurs

By Troy Whitworth  
Director of Safety

Slips, trips and falls are one of the most reported incident categories. It is also the category that results in the most employee lost time days away from work. Many of these incidents are reported as caused by uneven surfaces. This seems accurate since many of our folks work along and near the roadway where uneven surfaces are very common.

Recently, I had experienced a slip, trip and fall myself from an uneven surface. It was while I was hunting

during deer season. My brother and I had been hunting from a box blind all morning. We had seen a few deer during our sit in the woods, but none that we wanted to take. Typically, we leave the blind to go get lunch from home as the clock approaches noon.

On this particular day, we left the blind and walked the quarter mile back to our vehicle. Along the way, we had to cross a gate. Usually, we climb over the gate since it is locked and a real pain to unlock, open, then close and lock again. For me, gun safety is critical when crossing a fence or gate. We unloaded our rifles, then my brother handed me his rifle and climbed over the gate. When he got to the other side, I handed him back his rifle and then my rifle. Then I climbed over the gate.

When I climbed down from the gate, I turned toward my brother and took a step as I reached for my rifle. The next thing I knew, I was on the ground. My feet had slipped out from under me as I slid on a windrow of gravel. There was no warning; it was like standing

on ball bearings. My brother recently had a pond built on this property. So, the ground around the gate had been scratched up a bit with gravel pushed into a few windrows. I had the misfortune of stepping on top of one of these piles.

Fortunately, I didn't break anything. I did end up with one of my knees going a direction that caused a little pain, but I was able to walk it off. Other than my bruised ego, that was the extent of my injuries. Thankfully, I didn't have the rifle in my hands yet. As violently as I went to the ground, I am sure I would have damaged it. This is also a good reason for unloading the rifle and handing it to someone before climbing over a fence.

This situation reminded me how important it is to practice good safety procedures. We need to take precautions by doing the safety basics. Just imagine if I had not passed off the rifle to my brother, or had a bullet in the chamber when I fell. The outcome of this situation could have been much worse. Especially if the rifle had gone off. It really is the

little things that matter when it comes to safety.

We are all subject to uncertain footing from time to time, and from my story you can see it can happen when you least expect it. Each of us has experienced something similar to this - the "before you knew what happened" moment. It can and does happen to us all when we least expect it.

That's why it is very important to look for ways to prevent a slip, trip or fall. But, when a fall does happen, it is good to know that you had good safety procedures in place to help protect you from an outcome with even worse consequences. For your family and mine.



# Trivia!

## Basic Greek Mythology

1. What is Greek mythology?
2. Where did the 12 most important Greek gods and goddesses live?
3. Who are the King and Queen of the gods?
4. Who was the god of the seas, water, storms, hurricanes, earthquakes and horses? Who was he married to?
5. What god is the city of Athens named after?
6. Zeus had twins, a son and a daughter – what were their names?
7. This Greek character was considered brave and that he was invincible, except for his heel. What was his name?



## A very merry Christmas dinner

*In the photo above, David Lechner, District Five, Area Five Maintenance Superintendent (standing at left), speaks to all the employees in the Wichita metro area attending the annual Christmas dinner. At right, employees go through the line to select a variety of holiday dishes. Photos by Tracy Statton, District Five*



## Trivia answers

1. The name given to the stories created by the ancient Greeks about their gods and goddesses.
2. On Mount Olympus, and they were called 'The Olympians.'
3. Zeus and Hera.
4. Poseidon. Amphitrite, who was Queen of the sea.
5. Athena, she was the daughter of Zeus.
6. Apollo and Artemis. Apollo was the god of light and the sun. Artemis was goddess of the moon and the hunt.
7. Achilles

# Annual KAPA awards

The Kansas Asphalt Pavement Association presented awards at its 66th annual conference on Dec. 8 in Lawrence. Pictured are KDOT employees and contractor employees accepting first place overlay awards in each district, with KAPA Director Dan Scherschligt, left, and State Transportation Engineer Burt Morey, center.



*District Four, U.S. 59 in Labette County. Kyler Farmer, KDOT, TransSystems employee and Emery Sapp employees.*



*District One, U.S. 73 in Leavenworth County. Herzog Contracting Corp. employee and Chris Rottinghaus, KDOT.*



*District Five, U.S. 56 in Barton County. Venture Corporation employee and Neisha Vetter, KDOT.*



*District Two, U.S. 81 in Cloud County. Hall Brothers employees and Monim Adam, KDOT.*



*District Six, U.S. 54 in Meade County. Venture Corporation employee and Simon Valdez, KDOT.*



*District Three, I-70 in Sherman County. APAC Heavy Highway Branch employee and Todd Anderson, KDOT.*



*Director's award - K-99 in Wabaunsee County. Shilling Construction employee and Damian Rottinghaus, KDOT.*

# Governor announces \$40.5M for 33 bridge projects

Governor Laura Kelly and former Secretary Julie Lorenz announced on Dec. 13 in Westmoreland that \$40.5 million will support 33 local and off-system bridge projects across the state. This announcement comes as part of two local bridge improvement programs reshaped to take advantage of new revenue streams generated by the federally approved Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The KDOT bridge improvement programs include approximately \$137.5 million in BIL funds over the next five years.

“My administration is committed to improving Kansas’ transportation system, including city- and county-owned bridges in need of overdue repairs,” Governor Kelly said. “These bridge programs demonstrate how, by fostering partnerships among all levels of government, we can build a robust, responsive infrastructure system that provides efficient and safe transportation routes and boosts state and local economies.”

The amount awarded by KDOT to cities and counties greatly increases local bridge improvement funds available in these programs.

The Off-System Bridge Program (OSB) has been expanded from \$8 million in annual funding to \$20.5 million. Twenty-two projects – with awarded funds ranging from \$460,000 to \$1.4 million – were selected for Federal Fiscal Year 2024.



Attendees at the event announcing more than \$40 million in funding for local and off-system bridge projects across Kansas check out the complete list of projects. Photos by Multimedia Services



Governor Laura Kelly discusses the importance of improving Kansas’ overall transportation system at the Dec. 13 news conference in Westmoreland.

The Kansas Local Bridge Improvement Program (KLBIP) has increased from \$5 million annually to \$20 million. For State Fiscal Year 2023, the 11 selected KLBIP projects will replace 10 deficient bridges and permanently remove seven deficient bridges from the local system.

Both the OSB and KLBIP have similar-yet-different bridge eligibility requirements targeted for city and county bridges not on the state highway system and in need of replacement or repair. Click [HERE](#) for the news release, a full list of projects and a map of the projects.

## Thank you for your service

### Retirees

The following employee will retire on Feb. 1.

#### District Two

**Jamie Fischer**, Administrative Specialist, Ellsworth

The following employees retired on Jan. 1.

#### Headquarters

**Mike Shaver**, Program Consultant II, Right of Way

#### District Four

**Timothy Baker**, Equipment Operator Senior, Altamont

**David Schuster**, Equipment Mechanic Specialist, Garnett

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

### In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Ulyss "Paul" Reed**, who passed away on Dec. 7 in Topeka. Reed started in 1977 and was an Engineering Technician in the Bureau of Traffic Engineering. He retired in 1996, after nearly 20 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree **Dale Woodruff**, who passed away on Nov. 24 in Dodge City. Woodruff started at KDOT in 1949 in the Meade office. After more than 40 years of service, he retired in 1990 as an Engineering Technician Senior in the Dodge City office.

### STEP BACK IN TIME ...

This photo of a KDOT survey crew was taken in the 1920s.

