

Translines EXPRESS

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Kansas Historical Society

From left, Crystal Douglas, Director of the Kanza Museum; Bob Hoard, archeologist for the Kansas Historical Society; Secretary Mike King; Tricia Waggoner, archeologist for the Kansas Historical Society; Elaine Huch, Chairwoman of the Kaw Nation Tribal Council;



Gov. Sam Brownback; and Jennie Chinn, director of the Kansas Historical Society, gather on Tuesday to unveil the latest state historical marker at Fool Chief's Village off of Menoken Road and U.S. Highway 24 in Topeka. This is the state's 120th historical marker. The Fool Chief's Village site was chosen as the 2012 Kansas Archeology Training Program field school because a KDOT project would affect large portions of the area. KDOT partnered with archeologists from the Kansas Historical Society and volunteers from Kansas Anthropological Association to study the area. The investigation uncovered new insights about the life of the Kaw at the time they had first contact with European Americans. KDOT reconstructed the intersection in 2013, and most of the village site was buried under the road.

Headquarters

Risch retires: After nearly 36 years of designing bridges, working on bridge software and the bridge manual, leading bridge units or being the Chief of Structures and Geotechnical Services, Loren Risch retired last week.

"Bridges have been my life at KDOT, I love them," he said. Risch started at KDOT in 1979 in Gene Utter's squad designing bridges and working in several areas before being named the Bureau Chief in 2013.

Looking back, Risch said once he graduated from South Dakota State University and joined the agency, his plan was to get training, get



Loren Risch

licensing and then go get a real job. But in the first five years, he figured out a few things.

"I like the people and I like the work, and I didn't want to be a salesman," he said. "I like that we do what's best for the bridges – if it takes longer or we need to spend more time, we can."

But the final thing was the key. "I love to serve the people of Kansas, and it's more important to me than I ever would have guessed," Risch said. "If you would have said coming out of school that's important, I would have said no way. But it's terribly important to me."

With that, Risch has decided to continue to serve the public and has accepted a position to design at Westar. He and his wife, Cindy, have three kids and live in Topeka.

Headquarters

Mark Hoppe started his duties as the new Bureau Chief of Structures and Geotechnical Services this week.

Hoppe replaces Loren Risch who just retired.

Hoppe has been with KDOT since 1989. His 26-year career has been in the structures area at the agency. Hoppe has been a Squad Leader in the bureau since 1998 and a Senior Squad Leader since 2011.

"We have an important job as far as getting plans out and completing T-WORKS," Hoppe said. "I think that this is one of the best bureaus in KDOT to work in."

Hoppe graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. He and his wife, Diana, have a daughter and son and reside in Lawrence.



Mark Hoppe

In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Bob Kennedy who passed away on April 28 in Topeka. He was an Applications Developer Supervisor in the Office of Information Technology Services. Kennedy worked for the state for more than 44 years at both SRS and KDOT.

Trivia!

Kansas native plants – part one

1. How many native species of sunflowers (Helianthus) grow in Kansas?
2. How many native species of goldenrod (Solidago) occur in Kansas?
3. What is the state grass of Kansas?
4. What problem weeds go by the genus name Ambrosia, "food-of-the-gods"?

General

Don't forget: Here are a few dates coming up to remember:

May 10 - Mother's Day

May 25 - Memorial Day

June 6 - last day to use vacation leave that is over an employee's maximum allowed in FY 2015.

June 14 - Flag Day

June 21 - Father's Day

KDOT Transportation Blog

Kansas Transportation

Thursday, April 30

Escape from Vietnam



The Hoang family today. Carolyn is the second woman from the right. Photo credit: Pilot Tribune

Carolyn Hoang, the wife of KDOT employee Abe Rezayazdi, shares her family's story of escaping Saigon in 1975 and eventually moving to Storm Lake, Iowa.

Abe was studying electrical engineering at Iowa State University during the summer of 1977 when he met Carolyn. They married three years later. Abe currently serves as KDOT's Construction Letting Engineer and has been with the agency for nearly 30 years.

Below is an excerpt of Carolyn's story that was published in the Storm Lake Pilot Tribune and the link to the complete column.

"This April 30 will mark the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the migration of the Vietnamese to this great country. I felt compelled to write my story of how we left our home country and the ordeals that my family endured along the way. We were the first foreign family to reside in Storm Lake. My journey to this promised land started on that fateful night of Tuesday, March 11, 1975. It was a quiet night but there were more sounds of the gun shots than usual."

Click [here](#) to read more. (Reminder - link works in attached PDF)

To see more stories on transportation topics, check out the regular posts on the Kansas Transportation blog at <http://kansastransportation.blogspot.com/>

District Five

During a recent tour of the new KHP headquarters in Wichita, Troop F Captain Dennis Marten (center) explains the building layout, construction status and schedule for completion to Wichita Metro Engineer Glen Scott, Secretary Mike King, KHP Colonel Mark Bruce and Lt. Colonel Randy Moon.



Traffic Safety

Motorcycle safety:

With warm weather finally arriving more motorcyclists will be on the roads. May is recognized as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month to remind drivers to share the road with motorcycles and to remind motorcyclists to make themselves more visible to others. "We are reminding drivers to look twice for motorcyclists – they may appear further away than they really are because

of the single headlight and smaller profile," said Phyllis Marotta, KDOT Traffic Safety Specialist. "We also remind motorcyclists that proper lane position is important to being seen and for protecting their riding space."

A proclamation for the safety month was signed on April



The six counties in Kansas with the highest number of crashes and fatalities now have 15 new Share the Road billboards to promote motorcycle safety.

21 by Gov. Sam Brownback with members of ABATE of Kansas and KDOT's statewide task force on motorcycle safety attending. In 2014, 48 motorcyclists died in crashes in Kansas. Of those, only about half had their Class M License.

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Eleven
2. Twelve
3. Little bluestem, Schizachyrium scoparium
4. Ragweed - there are seven different species of ragweeds that occur in Kansas

Have an idea for a news brief or picture for Translines Express? Please e-mail to translines@ksdot.org

District Two



Construction improvements to U.S. 56 near McPherson should be completed this fall.

U.S. 56 improvements: Phase two of the U.S. 56 reconstruction project on the east side of the I-135/ U.S. 56 interchange at McPherson is underway. The project extends the four-lane pavement east from the interchange through 17th Avenue, constructing a concrete median, adding turning lanes and an entrance to the new Love's Truck Stop. Traffic remains reduced to one lane in each direction on U.S. 56 from Centennial Avenue to 17th Avenue.

Phase three construction (removal and reconstruction of eastbound U.S. 56 and the median) is set to begin May 11. This includes closing the I-135 northbound off-ramp (exit 60) and detouring traffic on K-61, K-153 and Kansas Avenue. 17th Avenue will also be closed from U.S. 56 to Avenue A. This multi-phased project will include placing traffic signals at the top of the I-135 northbound ramp. The project should be completed in early October.

Headquarters

Getting involved: KDOT Staff Development Specialist Leslie Fisher mentored a team of girls from Topeka High School this spring as they participated in an annual program for girls ages 10-18 around the world called Technovation.

"I thought it was a good idea to get involved with females and technology because it's not typically targeted as a female career path," Fisher said. "Being able to mentor young people is always a positive experience."

The program encourages young women to get involved in technological careers. The students create mobile applications that solve a need in their community from initial design to implementation. They build a business plan, conduct a survey, prepare videos to demonstrate and promote the application. About 3,000 students from 28 countries have participated. Fisher's team created and submitted an application called Catch My Bus Topeka to help people learn how to use the Topeka Metro. Results will be released in mid-May. For more information on the program, go to www.technovationchallenge.org/home/.



Leslie Fisher

Nebraska

Former KDOT employee Kyle Schneweis was named the new Director of the Nebraska

Department of Roads last week by Gov. Pete Ricketts. Schneweis currently works as a partner at High Street Consulting Group, a transportation planning, policy, and financial consulting firm.

From 1999 to 2010, Schneweis served in a variety of roles at KDOT including Travel Forecast Engineer, Metropolitan Planning Organization Administration Engineer, System Enhancement Program Manager, Long Range Planning Manager and Chief of Government Affairs.



Kyle Schneweis

District Three

KDOT Staff Development Specialist Patrick Firebaugh conducts a training session that took place in District Three.



Training sessions: District Three employees participated in a series of supervisory and leadership trainings hosted at the district office in Norton. The classes are part of an effort to bring more training opportunities to the districts. Classes involved new employees, supervisors and employees in progression programs as well as topics on leadership roles and opportunities. With retirement on the horizon for many employees, the trainings provided an opportunity to prepare employees for future roles. District Human Resource

Professional Denise Schwab said she hopes to bring classes to the district office more often. "With all of the new classes that have been developed, we hope to host a few weeks of training like we just did at least once or twice a year," Schwab said. "KDOT trainers Patrick Firebaugh and Shelly Kelley did an exceptional job with the trainings they provided and employees seemed to thoroughly enjoy the classes. I look forward to having them provide more classes to District Three employees in the future."

Parking Study

Parking study kicks off: A study on truck parking in Kansas got underway April 30 at the initial meeting of the Kansas Truck Study Advisory Committee at KDOT headquarters. KDOT and the KTA, assisted by HNTB, will study the state's truck parking capacity, trends and opportunities in order to develop a plan that will address existing and potential parking needs for trucks. The study includes recommendations for improving freight network safety, efficiency and competitiveness. The focus will be on the Kansas primary and secondary freight networks with a special emphasis on I-70, I-35 and the Kansas Turnpike. Rail and Freight Manager John Maddox said one of the first orders of business for the advisory committee will be to review a survey that will be sent to trucking interests in the state. Peer-to-peer interviews with neighboring states about their truck parking issues will also get underway soon.

District Two

Off-line at District Two: When District Two employees in Salina came to the office on Monday, they found the Internet was down. The issue continued into Tuesday when it was found there was a problem with the fiber optic cable. "Someone, presumably looking for copper wire, broke into the junction box and cut the cable," said District Two Public Affairs Manager David Greiser. Repairs were made and the Internet was back up late in the day at the office on Tuesday.

At right, fiber optic cables were repaired at the District Two Office after they were cut on Monday.



Traffic Safety



Secretary Mike King is joined by Lyndie Copeland and Shari Riley, who are Holton High School students and members of the Seat belts Are For Everyone (SAFE) education program, while announcing the record percentage of buckled drivers and passengers in Kansas in 2014.

Kansas seat belt usage at all-time high: The highest-ever percentage of buckled drivers and passengers in Kansas was recorded in 2014, said Secretary Mike King at a news conference last week in Topeka.

“Eighty-six percent of drivers and front seat passengers were buckled up. That’s a five percentage point increase from the previous year,” said Secretary King.

KHP Col. Mark Bruce said the future of safety is moving in the right direction.

“This tells us that we are doing something right,” Col. Bruce said. We are seeing progress in the form of more people taking the initiative to protect themselves and buckle up.”

“We still have 14 percent of our state’s population going unbuckled,” Secretary King said. “That’s far too many. We will keep working to educate and enforce Kansas law.

“The message is simple. Seat belts save lives.”

General

Support for infrastructure maintenance: According to an article in Better Roads, more than two-thirds of voters would be willing to pay more at the pump if it meant the money was going to pay for road construction. A poll from the Mineta Transportation Institute revealed that about 71 percent of the voters polled said they would support a 10-cent gas hike if the money were spent on infrastructure maintenance. Sixty-four percent said they would support raising the gas tax if the funds were used to improve road safety, and 59 percent would support it if the money was spent on projects to modernize the country’s infrastructure.

The poll found that 80 percent of voters think maintaining roads should be a high priority for the U.S. government, and another 70 percent said improving transportation safety should be a high priority.

However, only 31 percent support a gas-tax hike when the use of the funds raised by the tax was not specified.