

# D4 WESTport

**November 2005**

Welcome to the November edition of **WESTport**, MoDOT District 4's newsletter to our Missouri General Assembly members, city and county officials, and other transportation partners from the west central region.

You will receive monthly updates of District 4 projects and activities throughout the regular General Assembly session, and periodic updates during the rest of the year. We hope you will find the information useful and enlightening.

Our District 4 staff is always available to answer your questions and address constituent concerns. See our list of contacts at the bottom of this newsletter for telephone numbers and other information.

## **Five-mile Interstate 70 Reconstruction Wraps Up**

Two construction seasons of narrow, reduced lanes and congested traffic ended Monday, Oct. 24 when all lanes of Interstate 70 from I-470/Route 291 to Route 7 were reopened to traffic.

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn and District Engineer Beth Wright thanked elected officials, area businesses, APAC-Kansas, Inc., and its sub-contractors who gathered in the parking lot of Blue Ridge Bank and Trust October 21 to mark the completion of the 5-mile, \$40 million project.

"We are extremely pleased to deliver this project on time," Wright said. "We appreciate the cooperation of the cities of Independence and Blue Springs and the patience of the traveling public while the project was constructed."

The project began in Fall 2003 with earth and retaining wall work. It included total pavement replacement of east- and westbound lanes; construction of auxiliary lanes between I-470 and Little Blue Parkway; construction of 12-foot shoulders designed to accommodate future expansion; widening, rehabilitation and redecking of the east- and westbound bridges over the Little Blue River; widening and rehabilitation of the east- and westbound bridges over Kansas City Southern Railways; and the incorporation of Kansas City Scout's traffic management system.

Scott Gammon, Vice-President of APAC-Kansas, Inc. said his company was pleased to be a part of the project and complete the work with 59 days still left in the contract. He described the large amount of concrete needed for the newly constructed lanes. "For all you football fans, that's like paving Arrowhead 26 times."

Blue Springs Mayor Steve Steiner, Independence City Councilman Jim Schultz, State Rep. Gary Dusenburg and Blue Ridge Bank and Trust president Bill Esry thanked MoDOT for completing such a large project with minimal disruption to the area.

Steiner, who was elected mayor about the same time the project started, said the City of Blue Springs had anticipated a much larger impact to traffic and commerce. "It wasn't all that bad," said Steiner.

Rahn said MoDOT hopes to one day improve the remaining 200 miles of Interstate 70 between Kansas City and St. Louis, but currently there is no funding for the overall project. "It could cost \$3.5 billion," Rahn said. "Right now we have zero."

## **Route 152 Opening Completes Four-lane Corridor**

Following sign installation, the new Route 152 lane additions from Amity Avenue to Hampton Road opened to traffic on Monday, Nov. 7, 2005.

The project began in March 2005 and consisted of constructing 2.25 miles of westbound lanes and one new bridge. Route 152 is now a four-lane divided facility stretching 18 miles from Interstate 35 in Clay County to Interstate 435 in Platte County.

MoDOT and the prime contractor, Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc., hosted a ribbon-cutting event Wednesday, Nov. 2, on the new westbound bridge. District Engineer Beth Wright said construction of Route 152 began in October 1982, and lanes, bridges and interchanges were added over the years as traffic increased and funding became available. The cost to construct Route 152 to date is \$84.3 million.

"This is a great day," said Wright. "Route 152 will play a vital role in the economic prosperity of Platte and Clay Counties."

Wrap-up work will continue through late November as crews make repairs to eastbound pavement, install drains and guardrail, and stripe the pavement.

### **Another Opening: South of Downtown KC**

A new bridge to replace the southbound Broadway/West Pennway bridge over the Interstate 35 on-ramp from Broadway has opened. The bridge is a single-span structure with concrete surfaces textured to simulate the stone masonry on the existing bridge, which is in the corner of Pennway Park. New pavement was constructed about 200 feet on each end of the bridge. The southbound lanes of Broadway between 26th Street and 27th Street and the entrance ramp from northbound Broadway to northbound I-35 are now open following months of closure to build the new structure.

## **Kansas City Scout Marks First Year of Full Service**

Just one year after its public launch, the Kansas City Scout traffic management system has become an integral component of the region's transportation network and a valued resource for metropolitan area motorists.

The Kansas and Missouri departments of transportation acknowledged the one-year milestone at a September 27 press conference inside Scout's Traffic Operations Center in Lee's Summit.

Scout system operators monitor freeway conditions with closed-circuit television cameras and traffic detectors. Those devices help operators determine traffic flow and the location of incidents such as an accident. Operators also post messages on Scout's electronic freeway signs to notify travelers about traffic conditions ahead of them and send updated traveler information to the Scout web site.

The Scout system began limited operations in January 2004 with 75 miles of coverage on portions of Interstates 70, 435, 35 and a handful of other Kansas and Missouri freeways. Since then, Scout has expanded services -- including its recent transition to operating seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and during holidays.

MoDOT System Management Director Don Hillis acknowledged the anxiety that accompanied the startup during his remarks at the anniversary event.

"We also knew Scout had the potential for success, and it's appropriate that we celebrate this milestone," Hillis said. "Reducing traffic jams and enhancing response times to incidents makes Scout an important part of MoDOT's commitment to safety."

Since its official launch, Scout has activated its network of message boards more than 4,000 times and broadcast more than 7,700 messages. Those messages range from information about roadwork and acci-

dents to AMBER Alert notifications.

“Those numbers can do nothing but go up with 24/7 operation,” Hillis added.

KDOT Planning and Development Director Terry Heidner acknowledged the planning, transportation and emergency service partners who help the Scout system thrive. He said investing in Scout should pay long-term dividends.

With expansion of Scout’s coverage area already under way, Traffic Operations Center Manager Ray Webb said that the system had “initiated new dialogue for traffic management in the metropolitan area.”

And Scout has caught the attention of its peers. In recent months, the system has received a Governor’s Award for Quality and Productivity, and was cited at the National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop.

## **Route DD Bridge Replacement Under Way in Platte County**

Construction to replace the Route DD bridge over Holland Branch, located about four miles east of Dearborn and one mile south of the Platte/Buchanan County line, began in October.

MoDOT contractor Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc. has until May 1, 2006, to finish the \$425,000 project but will expedite the work, weather permitting, to earn an additional \$25,000 early completion incentive.

“We took extraordinary steps to add this bridge replacement to our construction program and accelerate its construction,” District Engineer Beth Wright said. “We are hopeful a new bridge will be in place by the end of the year.”

The bridge’s west lane was closed after a Sept. 29, 2004, routine inspection revealed deterioration on the west side of the south span. The bridge was closed to traffic after a Dec. 10 follow-up inspection revealed additional deterioration that included cracks in the bridge’s center span. Such cracks are characteristic of early stages of failure.

The concrete slab bridge, built in 1958 and designed for a 20-year use, exceeded its expected life span by 26 years. It carries about 100 vehicles per day.

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