

Most Work is Under Way, but There's Still Plenty to Do

2006 Construction in Full Swing

Downtown bridges are gone at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, the eastbound Interstate 70 bridge over Manchester Trafficway is fixed and new lanes are open in the Triangle.

Mark it up as another busy construction season in the Kansas City area.

There's still plenty to do, and most work is under way, but three big projects are drawing the most attention from motorists and the public:

- Interstate 435 Bridge at the Missouri River – Rehabilitation of the bridge deck is completed on two of the three northbound lanes and progressing on the third southbound lane. The work has reduced traffic to two narrow lanes in each direction throughout the spring and summer. All lanes are expected to be open late this fall.
- The Triangle – New alignment of southbound Interstate 435 to southbound Route 71 and a third eastbound lane of Interstate 470 opened late this summer. Access at Red Bridge Road is scheduled to open in the next month, and by late this season, all Route 71 traffic between Red Bridge and Blue Ridge Boulevard will shift to collector ramps now under construction. That will set the stage for the last Triangle project, reconstructing mainline 71 from Red Bridge to Blue Ridge. The massive project is on schedule for completion by late 2008.
- Downtown Loop – Rehabilitation of pavement and bridges on Interstate 670,

Interstates 29/35 and replacement of bridges over Interstate 670 closed northbound Interstates 29/35 on the west side of the downtown loop from Interstate 35 to Interstate 70 through the fall. Construction has begun on new bridges over Interstate 670 at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, while milling and resurfacing of Interstate 670 in the south leg of the loop will be done during off-peak and nighttime hours. Completion of all loop work is scheduled for September 2007.

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Kearney Mayor Bill Dane, MoDOT Area Engineer Kirsten Munck, Clay County Commissioner Craig Porter and Missouri Representative Doug Ervin are joined by Kearney community members who cut the ribbon celebrating the opening of an improved Route 33. The late June ceremony marking the \$4 million, 1½-mile project was held in conjunction with Kearney's sesquicentennial. *Photo: Steve Porter*

Public Input Helps Plan

A Better Route 150 Project

MoDOT has learned that it designs better roads when the department has a dialogue with the public. So how best to go about designing a new, four-lane Route 150 between Routes 291 and 71? First have a talk, well, lots of talks, with the public.

Since May, MoDOT and its consultants have met with 16 stakeholder groups and conducted four community coffees to seek input on the \$30 million project. That input is helping to direct the new highway design, which is quite different than initially posed during the environmental process in 2001.

More than five years ago, the department held a public meeting on the rapidly developing corridor and came away with a concept to build a rural four-lane highway with a wide, depressed median and paved shoulders. Design speeds would be 60 mph and right-of-way acquisition would have cut a wide swath, taking many homes.

But in the ensuing five years, development along Route 150 kicked into overdrive,

changing the texture of the corridor. During this spring and summer's meetings, MoDOT asked stakeholders if they would consider a narrower, urban four-lane design with a 45-mph speed and limited access.

People living along the most densely developed segments, in Lee's Summit to the east and Grandview to the west, are generally more supportive of the narrower corridor. Kansas City stakeholders, who are sandwiched in the middle, also saw the change as less intrusive and more forward-thinking. The narrower footprint also allows designers some flexibility to build on either side of the current two-lane alignment, avoiding problematic issues such as a water tower or dense residential development.

More public input is scheduled this fall as the project moves toward a preliminary design. By November, MoDOT expects to have a plan in place for a public hearing. In 2008, construction is expected to begin and the project could be completed in 2010.

Public Meetings, Survey Provide Route 45 Study Feedback

MoDOT is performing an environmental location study for Route 45 from Interstate 435 east to Route 9 in Parkville, Mo. and parts of Platte County, and the surrounding community has definite opinions regarding how this important roadway should function.

In early May, 350 area property owners and area residents were surveyed about existing Route 45's access, mobility and safety. More than one-third of recipients returned their surveys providing the study team with valuable feedback.

And, more than 120 people attended a public meeting held May 25 to offer input on the existing corridor's conditions.

Finally, more than 100 people attended a Sept. 7 public meeting to offer comments and input on three proposed reasonable alternatives that would widen Route 45 to four lanes on its existing alignment.

The location study is scheduled to be complete in December 2006, with design of improvements from Route 9 to K to begin in January 2007.

New Laws Effective August 28

Work Zone Signs Send Strong Signal

Reckless drivers take heed. Injure or kill a highway worker and you could be fined \$10,000 and lose your license for a year.

Signs warning of the stiffer penalties went up throughout District 4 and Missouri beginning Aug. 28, when the new laws became effective. MoDOT unveiled a small version of the new signs during a news conference at District 4 offices, hammering home key points in an effort to get drivers to slow down, pay attention and eliminate distractions when driving through work zones.

MoDOT District Engineer Beth Wright reminded those gathered for the event that two highway workers were killed earlier this month in Missouri work zones.

Greg Kaaz, vice president of the Heavy Constructors Association, said workers are out there to help motorists, and rely on drivers to pay attention.

Captain Vince Ellis, commander of Troop A of the Missouri Highway Patrol spoke about losing a trooper only a couple of years ago on Interstate 70 because of an inattentive driver.

The new signs read: Hit a Worker, \$10,000 Fine, Lose Your License.

The new law includes these provisions:

- Imposes a fine for killing or injuring a highway worker up to \$10,000 and loss of license for a year.
- Creates two new crimes – endangerment of a highway worker and aggravated endangerment of a highway worker.
- Sets a \$75 fine for a person convicted of a subsequent moving violation within a work zone; a person convicted of a subsequent

speeding or passing violation in a work zone gets a \$300 fine.

- Expands the definition of a highway worker to include suppliers and delivery personnel to a construction site.
- Repeals a sign-covering and uncovering provision – informational signs will now remain unveiled in work zones.

Between 2000 and 2004, 104 motorists were killed and 5,327 motorists were injured in Missouri work zones. Since 2000, 214 MoDOT employees have been injured and seven killed in work zones.



Steve Porter

District Engineer Beth Wright, Motorist Assist Operator Scott Banes and Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Mark O'Dowd unveil a scaled-down version of the new work zone penalty signs.



Jennifer Benefield

Construction

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Although there are dozens of preventative maintenance projects ranging from asphalt overlays to chip seals, and more than 30 Smooth Roads Initiative projects to diamond-grind, mill and resurface state routes, a score of projects are already completed at the season's midpoint.

Route 58 in Belton finished early this year, widening to three lanes with four roundabouts. Route 33 in Clay County also was widened to three lanes in Kearney, and Route 150 was resurfaced between Routes 291 and 71 in southern Jackson County, all completed before the end of July.

Also completed are:

- Six new bridges and new highway lanes of Route 13 between Richmond and Lafayette County
- A new bridge on Route A over Wakenda Creek in Ray County

- Slide repairs and resurfacing of Route 58 two miles south of Route 50 at Centerview in Johnson County
- Resurfacing of Route 18 from Business 13 to Pennsylvania Street at Clinton in Henry County
- Diamond grinding east- and westbound lanes of Route 45 from Cosby Avenue to south of Chatham Avenue in Platte County
- Resurfacing of Route C from Route 92 to Cookingham Drive in Platte County
- Resurfacing and shoulder sealing of east- and westbound Interstate 70 from Route Z to Johnson Drive in Lafayette County.

Much of this season's work has been scheduled for nighttime hours, but because of the high volume of projects, contractors have been given flexibility to work various hours to stay on pace for completion by the end of 2006.

MoDOT Assistant District Engineer Linda Clark, former Riverside mayor Betty Burch, and Sen. Kit Bond (l-r) break ground April 18 on an interchange at Interstate 635 and Horizons Parkway in Riverside, Mo. The project is funded by the City of Riverside and \$5 million secured by Sen. Bond.

Neighboring Districts Lend a Hand with Sign Replacement

District 4 Signing Supervisor Darrell Daugherty is getting by with a little help from his new friends.

The Smooth Roads Initiative presented the Kansas City District with a tall order: Bring 17,000 highway signs across the district up to current standards. For the last 14 months, Daugherty's D4 crews have been supplemented by a variety of MoDOT personnel from Districts 1, 2 and 5.

The extra help has kept the sign-replacement project right on schedule. "We've replaced well over 10,000 signs to date, so

we're well on our way," Daugherty said in late July. "I see no problem in being finished by the end of the year."

Daugherty said unsolicited offers of help came in almost as soon as District 4 received its marching orders. District 5 workers went to work on Route 50 in Johnson County, and crews from the Carrollton maintenance facility in District 2 took on Interstate 35 signs in Clay County. District 1 personnel, including traffic and bridge crew workers, replaced signs along I-29 in Platte County; they'll also work on Route 291 in Clay County.



Southern Com (left) presents holders for the project. Hickr Williams (right)

Proof Positive That the Triangle is Untangling

Motorists driving eastbound Interstate 435 into the Triangle during afternoon rush hour probably already know this: The Triangle is, indeed, untangling. But how can we prove it?

Kansas City Scout, the regional intelligent transportation system, uses cameras and roadway sensors to monitor and measure congestion. One statistic popped out of their traffic report recently. Eastbound Interstate 435 sensors located just west of the Triangle indicated that peak rush hour weekday traffic averaged 22.7 miles per hour in July 2005. That was before two new eastbound Interstate 435 lanes opened up through the Triangle. One new lane was added for the northbound Interstate 435 movement and a second new lane was added across the eastbound Interstate 470 bridge. By December, several months after the new lanes opened,

average traffic speeds during afternoon rush hour were 51.9 miles per hour.

Not bad, but there's room for improvement. Expect flow to speed up even more next summer, after MoDOT opens an additional lane from eastbound Interstate 435 across the eastbound Interstate 470 bridge.

Not all eastbound Interstate 435 traffic will move as smoothly, however. Motorists exiting to southbound Route 71 will encounter slower speeds for the next two or three years while construction continues on Route 71 from Red Bridge Road to Blue Ridge Boulevard. MoDOT is scheduled to complete the outer roads along Route 71 by the end of this year, and in 2007 shift traffic onto those outer roads while mainline Route 71 pavement and bridges are removed, realigned and replaced.



The northbound Route 71 off ramp to Red Bridge Road remains under construction.

Photo: Steve Porter

Montgomery, Kinder Lauded for Triangle Efforts

Resident Engineer Mark Montgomery suspected something was up when he was asked to come to the second consecutive monthly meeting of the Southern Communities Coalition in mid-May.

Turns out he was right. The coalition of neighborhoods adjacent to the Triangle interchange project cited Montgomery and consulting engineer Jim Kinder of HNTB Corp. for their ongoing efforts to untangle the Triangle interchange.

Carol McClure, co-chairman of the Coalition, presented each an engraved, gold-plated card-holder with a clock. Montgomery's inscription reads: "In appreciation for your friendship & partnering with the Hickman Mills Community SCC - 2006."

Montgomery has been the resident engineer in charge of three of the first four contracts to build the new Route 71, Interstate

435 and Interstate 470 interchange. Kinder led the consultant's design team from the outset, delivering plans on time at each step of the way since taking on the project in 1998.

Montgomery's and Kinder's willingness to talk with stakeholders any time and answer questions or resolve issues endeared them to Coalition members. The two gave Triangle project updates about twice each year to the Coalition.

The last update, in April, kept Montgomery and Kinder answering questions until late in the evening. Montgomery thought every topic had been covered. So when McClure asked that they return for the May meeting, the resident engineer was perplexed.

"I couldn't figure out what else they wanted to know," Montgomery said. "Jim (Kinder) suspected something, too."



Steve Porter

Communities Coalition Co-chairman Carol McClure, Jim Kinder and Mark Montgomery card-holders work with the community on the Triangle Hickman Mills School District Superintendent Marge (nt) looks on.

One Elk Club Member Killed, Several Injured

D4 Team Responds to Clinton Building Collapse

A fatal building collapse in Clinton's downtown square brought dozens of rescuers to the site late Monday, June 26. Among them were MoDOT specialists in District 4.

The collapse of the three-story Elks Lodge trapped 10 of 55 people gathered in the building at mid-evening. Ron Faulkenberry, MoDOT maintenance superintendent, his oldest son, Jeff, and Steve Bryant, maintenance supervisor for the Clinton area,

were among many MoDOT workers soon on the scene. En route from his home 14 miles away, Faulkenberry called Assistant District Engineer Chris Redline to authorize trucks, equipment and manpower to aid in the rescue.

Bryant and other MoDOT workers helped establish traffic control with cones and barriers at several intersections near the collapse site. They switched signal lights from blinking to cycle to move traffic

on Business Route 13 and helped direct a steady flow of emergency workers toward the scene.

Faulkenberry also called D4 Bridge Maintenance Engineer Paul Russ, who arrived from

his Cass County home within an hour to help evaluate whether the fallen debris was structurally sound enough to send in rescuers. Russ and Faulkenberry set up transits to monitor the unsteady wall and detect any shifts that could spell trouble.

"I watched it all night and it didn't move at all on my side," Russ said. Faulkenberry was on the other side, checking his transit two or three times a minute to make sure workers weren't further endangered.

"It was boring, yet intense," he said of the vigil.

Transportation Project Manager Paul Boenisch and his wife, Donna, also responded to the scene. They are members of Missouri Task Force 1, which is among 28 federal urban search and rescue teams authorized through the Federal Emergency Management Administration. The team provides hazard assessment in building collapses and suggests ways to safely work in unstable debris. Although he has worked other building collapses, fires and vehicle crashes, Boenisch (who also serves as a firefighter) said this is the first incident he's assisted in which people were trapped.

Most of MoDOT's workers stayed throughout the night, leaving well after daybreak. Several are members of area volunteer fire departments, including Faulkenberry. By mid-morning Tuesday, all trapped victims except for one were rescued. Several were admitted to regional hospitals, flown there by helicopter ambulances.

Tony Komer, 32, the exalted ruler of the Elks group, died in the building collapse.



Paul Russ

Maintenance Superintendent Ron Faulkenberry secured MoDOT trucks, equipment and manpower to aid in rescue efforts when a three-story Elk's Lodge building collapsed June 26 in Clinton, Mo.

Arrive Alive Campaign Promotes Safety

Young Driving Students Learn All About Roundabouts

Nearly 500 students in three Cass County high schools now know why roundabouts are becoming standard traffic features in their communities.

The roundabout presentations to driver's education classes at Pleasant Hill, Raymore-Peculiar and Belton high schools in early June mark the second year District 4 employees have explained the new intersection designs to young drivers. Transportation Project Designer Lisa Stupps, Senior Community Relations Specialist Steve Porter and intern Jason Crain spent a morning at each of the three schools.

Four new roundabouts were built last year on Route 58 in Belton. Roundabouts also are in the design of improvements to Route VV in Pleasant Hill, and are being considered on Route C in Peculiar.

During the presentations, the young

drivers were quizzed regarding the differences between roundabouts and other controlled intersections. The most attentive students received Arrive Alive bracelets, Buckle Up t-shirts or safety posters.

Porter also urged students to buckle up and help reduce the fatality and serious injury accident rate in Missouri, the goal of Arrive Alive.



Steve Porter

Transportation Project Designer Lisa Stupps explains roundabouts to Raymore-Peculiar students.

D4 Testing Hybrid Bucket Trucks

MoDOT is the first government agency in the nation to test a new energy saving, environmentally friendly, diesel-electric bucket truck in Districts 4, 6 and 7. MoDOT expects the Utility Hybrid Truck Pilot Program to demonstrate the vehicle's ability to cut fuel costs and smog-producing emissions in half, while also reducing maintenance costs, reducing noise and providing an alternative power source in emergencies.

"MoDOT is proud to participate in a pilot program that will enhance our ability to protect the environment and realize substantial fuel cost savings at a time when gas and

diesel prices continue to rise," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "We look forward to learning more about how these vehicles will compare to the conventional trucks in our fleet and how they can help us make the best use of taxpayer dollars."

A bucket is used to lift maintenance workers in the air to install signs, fix traffic signals or replace streetlights. A conventional truck must remain running at a work site to operate the hydraulic arm that moves the bucket. New technology enables the hybrid truck's

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Cathy Morrison

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn showcases one of the new energy-saving hybrid bucket trucks.



District 4's public information efforts before and during the Paseo Bridge rehabilitation project in 2005 have been judged the best in the nation by The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials.

A two-year effort to prepare the Kansas City metropolitan region for the bridge closure earned top honors in the Issues/Crisis Management category at the 2006 National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop in Oklahoma City.

Pictured at the August 1 awards ceremony are (from left) Terri Angier, Public Affairs Chief for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation; Joel Blobaum, Community Relations Manager for District 4; Shane Peck, MoDOT Community Relations Director; and ODOT Director Gary Ridley.

Hybrid

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engine to be shut off at the work site, which significantly reduces emissions and saves fuel. Tests show hybrids use about 50 percent less fuel and reduce smog-forming emissions by almost half.

On average, a conventional bucket truck in MoDOT's fleet consumes 2,176 gallons of diesel fuel per year. Applying the fuel savings realized in earlier tests, a hybrid truck would only consume an estimated 1,088 gallons of fuel per year. With diesel fuel currently costing an average of \$2.88 per gallon in Missouri, MoDOT could potentially save approximately \$3,134 a year per vehicle by replacing conventional trucks with hybrid trucks in its fleet. State-wide, there are 106 conventional bucket trucks in MoDOT's fleet.

The department has received two out of three hybrids, which will be field tested for 18 months at district offices in Kansas City, St. Louis and Joplin. MoDOT will place the hybrid trucks in service along with comparably sized conventional trucks to assess performance, reliability and business benefits.



Missouri Department of Transportation

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