

econnections



July 2007

The electronic newsletter of MoDOT District 4, Kansas City Area

Meetings/Training

Thursday, July 5

Resident Engineers
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Room 255

Monday, July 9

Directional Team
9 a.m. - 11 a.m., Boardroom

Tuesday, July 10

Maintenance Supervisors
12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m., Room 136

Wednesday, July 11 Room 255

Job Status, District 1, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Job Status, Group 1, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Job Status, Group 2, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Job Status, Group 3, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Job Status, Group 4, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 19

Management Team
9 a.m. - 11 a.m., Room 136

Thursday, August 2

Resident Engineers
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Room 255

Events

Wednesday, July 4

Independence Day
State Offices Closed

Driver's Ed Students Learn Roundabouts, Safety

by Steve Porter

How do you reach nearly 500 soon-to-be-new drivers who need to learn about traffic safety and the latest wrinkle in intersection design?

In a roundabout way, so to speak.

A handful of MoDOT engineers, a surveyor and a community relations specialist spent pretty much every Thursday and Friday morning for a month visiting Kansas City area driver's education classes to explain roundabouts and traffic safety. Armed with knowledge, wit, charm and dozens of giveaways to capture the attention of teenage eyes and ears, the presentation team visited Kearney, Liberty, Raymore-Peculiar, Belton and Pleasant Hill school districts.

For the past two years, Senior Community Relations Specialist Steve Porter and Transportation Project Designer Lisa Stupps have conducted an hour roundabout presentation for driver's education students. This year, Transportation Project Manager Randy Johnson and Traffic Studies Specialist Lindsay Hogan offered to join them with a traffic safety component. Also joining the presenters were Senior Highway Designer Jodie Puhr, Transportation Project Designer Susan Nelson, Highway Designers Jacob Wilson and Taylor Hill, Survey Instrument Operator Dennis Betz, and intern Joe Presswood.

"We started in Belton two years ago, hoping to help new drivers understand how to drive a roundabout and why we built four of them in Belton," Stupps said.

"Each community we visit has or will soon have roundabouts. By teaching the communities' youngest drivers, they become roundabout experts, sort of our ambassadors helping educate their parents and the rest of the community."

Belton has four roundabouts, one is under construction in Pleasant Hill, and there are roundabouts in each of the other communities – all added within the past three years.

For Puhr, speaking in front of an audience wasn't comfortable initially, but soon she had her young audience fully engaged and eager to participate.

"This was a valuable public speaking experience that helps me fulfill my job requirements, but there is more," said Puhr. "I enjoyed talking about my work and how roundabouts are safer, more efficient and cost-effective than a signal-controlled intersection."



Transportation Project Designer Lisa Stupps explains roundabouts to students in the Kearney High School driver's education class.

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News from Across the District

Condolences:

Our thoughts and prayers go to Scott Thurston, Certified Appraiser in Right of Way, and his family on the loss of his grandfather, Earl Walterman, on June 5.

Our thoughts and prayers also go to the family of retiree Dean Dolan for his passing June 7th. Dean was an Intermediate Materials Inspector when he retired on June 1, 1991.

Our condolences to Phyllis Filley, Construction Project Office Assistant in Riverside, and her family on the passing of her father, Richard Griffin June 14th.

Our thoughts and prayers go to Ron Eads, Equipment Specialist in Harrisonville, and his family on the loss of his 19-year-old daughter Ruth Eads in June.

Our condolences to the family of retiree "Jack" Sooter for his passing on June 18. Jack was the District Construction Engineer at the time of his retirement in August of 1986, and worked for MoDOT 38 years.

Awards Update: And the winner is...

Donna Madison received the Above and Beyond award in June for entering property damage claims for bill submittal, resulting in the best value for every dollar spent.

Belinda Fite received the One Team Award for taking the initiative to learn and perform higher-level tasks than required by her current grade level. She provided education to help managers and employees understand the MAPS process.

Mailbag

Thanks for a job well done on smooth roads. I-70 between K.C. and St Louis is now a pleasant drive.

Richard Montee

Thank you to everyone who has offered there assistance in helping us move the cement blocks to our Beacon Lot.

Blue Springs, Roadside and General Services helped us, giving us plenty of trailers to move all the blocks. Once again we would like to thank everyone for their quick response.

Sandy Naylor
Senior Office Assistant

I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for all of the calls, cards, visits, food, donations and love shown to me and my family during this time of loss of our daughter Ruthie. We truly appreciate each of you and all that you did for us.

Thanks,
Ron Eads

Recently, I completed about my 100th round trip between Kansas City and Saint Louis. I have averaged at least five round trips a year for the past 20 years, always on I-70. I have never seen the highway in such good shape. I was impressed with the smoothness of the road and the appearance of the roadsides. I commend you for your excellent work.

Sincerely,
Robert H Van Horn, LTC (Ret) USA



More MoDOT News

Reason Foundation Report Briefing

Points: Missouri jumped from 39th to 17th in overall performance of the state highway system over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. From 2004 to 2005, Missouri jumped 11 places in overall performance from 28 to 17 - second only to Nevada, which moved 12 spots.

The latest ranking was from 2005 when SRI was only partially complete, so Missouri's ranking would likely be higher if 2006 data were used. Per mile, MoDOT had the third lowest administrative costs. The report also showed Missouri had the sixth lowest total project expenses and the seventh lowest capital/bridge disbursements. The report measured state highway systems based on cost effectiveness and cited Missouri's major improvements in road conditions statewide.

If your vehicle is E-85 compatible and you fuel at the District Garage, please use E-85. We are mandated to use alternative fuels and also have a Tracker measure showing how much we are using. If you have any questions whether your vehicle can use E-85, contact the Service Station and they can let you know. Typically the vehicle will have a sticker inside the fuel door that states E-85 compatible.

Realignments of Area Engineers. Some changes have been made in the Maintenance Superintendent assignments. Along with these changes are some re-alignments of the Area Engineer areas and

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Driver'sEd

Continued from first page

The presentations also exposed the District's newest engineers to a facet of transportation that puts them in contact with the users, she pointed out.

"It was a field check of a different kind," Puhr said. "Less dust, more smiles."

Betz was in familiar territory when speaking to the students. Years earlier, he had been a mathematics and driver's education teacher in the Fort Osage School District.

"I've spent enough time with students at this age to know what can get through to them, how to make an impression that, we hope, will make them more cautious drivers," Betz said.

Johnson and Hogan added the traffic safety component this year that presentations in previous years touched only generally. Their emphasis was on buckling up, paying attention, eliminating distractions and obeying traffic signs and signals.

"When they hear that 43,000 people die from traffic crashes in the U.S. each year – the equivalent of two jetliners crashing each week – most of these students begin to understand the importance of safe driving," Johnson said. "And when we tell them that more than three-quarters of young crash fatalities involve unbuckled occupants, we think it begins to sink in. Maybe our efforts will save lives."

Hogan placed "Fatal Vision" goggles on students, which simulates the blurred, uneven vision of an impaired driver. Wavering, staggering participants elicited laughs from fellow students, but in the end, the message was far more sobering.



Some bystanders enjoyed one Kearney student's failing effort to overcome the "impaired" sensation created by Fatal Vision goggles.



Transportation Project Manager Randy Johnson (left) stands ready to redirect a Kearney student as he veers from a tape line while wearing Fatal Vision goggles.

District 4 Blood Drive Scheduled

Every two seconds, someone in the United States is faced with the need for some type of blood transfusion. That equals an estimated five million people per year. According to the American Red Cross, only five percent of eligible donors take the opportunity to give blood. There are currently no substitutes for blood and the only possible way to keep the supply at an adequate amount is for healthy persons older than 17, weighing at least 110 pounds and in good health to take an hour out of their day and give the gift of life.

MoDOT D4 is sponsoring a blood drive Thursday, July 19 from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. in room 136. All employees interested in donating please stop by. No appointment necessary and all are welcome. To make an appointment, please contact Karin Cummins at 816-622-6307.

Here are some tips to prepare for the opportunity to donate blood.

- Get a good night's sleep
- Have a good breakfast or lunch
- Enjoy foods high in iron such as red meat or fish
- Avoid fatty foods
- Wear clothing with loose sleeves easy to roll up

During the donation, don't forget to relax and take the time to enjoy some refreshments immediately following the donation. After the donation, drink plenty of fluids and avoid strenuous activities. If you become light headed, simply lie down with feet elevated.

Remember, every pint of blood donated can save up to three lives.





Corporate Ladder

Welcome to District 4

Highway Designer, Taylor Hill
Transportation Planner, Michael Landvik
Traffic Technician, Brian Lavender
Community Relations Specialist, Gina Myles
Assistant Materials Technician, Zachary Smith
Highway Designer, Jacob Wilson

Promoted

Materials Inspector, Stephen Boone
Intermediate Construction Inspector, Brian Burger
Senior Materials Inspector, Michelle Clevenger
Senior Maintenance Worker, David Hemme
Maintenance Supervisor, Linda Hibdon
Senior Construction Inspector, Erik Mewes
Maintenance Worker, K Carl Pointer
Intermediate Maintenance Worker, Danny Snider
Senior Materials Technician, Maria Stuck

Retirement

Senior Construction Inspector, Frederick Caldwell
Senior Construction Inspector, Michael Dawson

econnections sources

Construction Bev Chrisco, 6341

Design Flo Noear, 0455

Regional Counsel LeAnn Francis, 6382

Administration Judy Magruder, 6309

General Services Toni Terry, 0056

Human Resources Belinda Fite, 6321

Right of Way Melbra Taylor, 6351

Traffic Dawn Phillips, 0401

Editor Kerri Lewis, 6328

Trees for Tomorrow

A new program provided by MoDOT and the Missouri Department of Conservation will provide about 2.5 million trees to youth groups in Missouri over the next five years.

“We’re very excited about this partnership,” said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. “Our job of building roads and bridges requires us to remove trees sometimes, and it’s our goal to replace those trees with new ones each year. Trees For Tomorrow is the perfect way to increase the tree population in our state, and by providing them to youth groups, I know we’re putting trees in good hands that will help them thrive.”

More than 60 varieties of tree seedlings will go to youth groups throughout the state, including Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, FFA and 4-H groups. MoDOT will also fund MDC’s long-standing annual program that provides a tree seedling to every fourth grader in the state. Trees will also be provided in conservation areas to improve wildlife habitats, and will be available at Arbor Day and Earth Day events.

“Trees For Tomorrow is a great way to get kids involved in protecting our natural resources,” said MDC Director John Hoskins. “We’re proud to work with MoDOT and kids all over Missouri to get trees planted, improve our environment and enhance the natural beauty of our state.”



A group of fourth graders plants a tree to kick-off Trees for Tomorrow. John Hoskins, Director of Missouri Department of Conservation (left) and Pete Rahn, Director MoDOT (right) look on.

Fred Caldwell, Senior Construction Inspector from the Stadium Project Office, celebrated his retirement. Fred has worked for MoDOT more than 41 years. Many stopped by to wish him well at his party and joined in the celebration with cake and punch.



More MoDOT News

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responsibilities. The following changes will take effect on July 16th:

1. Kirsten Munck - Kirsten's area will continue to be Platte and Clay County. The coverage in North Kansas City will extend to the river. In addition, the Excelsior facility will report to Pat Moseley who is the MS for Clay County. The re-assignment of the Excelsior facility includes all personnel, equipment and coverage area, including the area in Ray County.

2. Darryl Lamson - Darryl's area now consists of Henry, Johnson, Lafayette and Ray counties, except as noted above.

3. Mark Stock - Mark's area will stay the same except for the changes in N. Kansas City as noted above. That area is Western Jackson County and Cass County.

4. Jesse Skinner - Jesse's area will be Eastern Jackson County, however, his responsibilities will also include Pavement Management, in conjunction with Erik Maninga, Assistant Construction & Materials Engineer.

Recent Personnel Policy Changes:

A few changes have been made to the Personnel Policy Manual and were effective July 1. These changes include:

- Temporary Modified Duty Assignments:

- Extended length of time for temporary modified duty (TMD) assignments from four months to six months.
- Added reference to the Fit for Duty Review Program policy.
- Deleted unnecessary language from procedure.
- Created a handbook to assist supervisors and risk management and human resources representatives in identifying possible TMD assignments.

- Salary Increases, Temporary Assignments or Promotions, Demotion, and Relocation Assistance.

- Removal of "half" from half-steps, when describing pay on the above named policies. The new reference to step increases will be consistent with the new salary grid.

- A new outline how disciplinary actions can impact employees who apply for jobs that will be filled through a competitive selection process.

- A correction on the person that approves relocation expenses and temporary salary increases when employees receive later transfers.

- Working Hours and Overtime

- Holiday pay will increase from \$8.50 to \$8.75 per hour to reflect the July 1 pay raise.

- Changes to the various employee award programs that include Performance Plus, Solutions at Work, and the new High Achiever awards.

- High Achiever: A new way for supervisors to recognize employees for special achievements above and beyond what is normally expected.

- The policy communicates a calendar year limit on the amount of cash and paid time off employees can be awarded from all department recognition programs.

To review the new policies and changes, go to the MoDOT Intranet site, access the Human Resource Division Web site, click on the Administration section under the quick links, and then access the Recent Personnel Policy Changes.

The 2007 No MOre Trash! Bash was a success. Nearly 72,000 bags of litter were collected from Missouri's roadsides during April. Across the districts, MoDOT had a total of 9,947 volunteers, and cleared 15,864 bags of trash from Missouri's highways.

EAC: To make it easier for employees to submit department-wide concerns for consideration by the Employee Advisory Council, each MoDOT computer desktop now has an icon that links directly to the EAC Employee Concern Form. The idea of installing this EAC icon is the result of information provided by Community Relations and Information Systems stemming from employee feedback. The EAC worked closely with both divisions to get the icon installed. We hope the new desktop icon will provide employees with better access to the committee.

There are a few things to remember when submitting a concern. The EAC takes confidentiality seriously, and we encourage employees to provide a name with each concern submitted. The EAC may be limited in its ability to address and respond to concerns when no contact information is provided. The EAC is not an alternative to the department's grievance process. Grievance issues will be sent back to District Human Resources. The EAC does not handle allegations of sexual harassment or discrimination. The EAC forwards all such allegations directly to Audits and Investigations.

You may contact the EAC at any time at EAC@modot.mo.gov.

Summer Transportation Institute

by Kerri Lewis

The Kansas City Summer Transportation Institute (STI) provides local high school students an opportunity to learn about careers available in transportation during a four-week summer program.

The annual program is hosted by the University of Missouri Kansas City and funded by the Federal Highway Administration. MoDOT District 4 is a proud participant in the Kansas City sessions, which include skill-building workshops, leadership training and personal development. In addition, students interact with transportation professionals who



David Bower, Information Specialist, teaches the students how to create a web page.



Students were given hands-on opportunities during the STI program.

can help them to explore specific areas in the transportation industry.

On June 26, 28 STI students spent the day at District 4 exploring occupational fields that included KC Scout, Traffic, Materials/Construction, Design/Project Managers, Right of Way, and the Sign Shop. Volunteers showed the students around, answered their questions, and offered them a hands-on learning approach during their time at MoDOT.

Many of the students expressed their gratitude for allowing them to visit and learn about the industry.

Take a Break From the Exhaust

A New Ride Share Incentive

The Mid America Regional Council (MARC) is sponsoring a new program called Take a Break From the Exhaust through Ride Share. This program aims to reduce congestion and improve the air quality in the MARC region. It is a Web-based log that allows users to record work-related alternative transportation activities and earn points. The program will track activities by teams and individuals that help in this endeavor. If you

carpool, bike to work, walk to work, or flex your schedule (4-10 hr days, etc), you are eligible for weekly and monthly prizes through this program. If you are in a work unit that is outside the MARC area, then activities, such as sharing rides to the district office for meetings or training is an eligible activity. MoDOT is currently participating in this program and have a team set up and ready to go. The MoDOT team code is 31MOD7. Each participant

will need it to make sure to sign up under the MoDOT team.

Please call Eric Foster, Transportation Planner at (816) 622-6330, or Marge Gasnick at MARC (816) 701-8201 with questions, or visit the website at www.marc.org/takeabreak.