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NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation news release

June 8, 2009

09-066

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebration marks beginning/end of transportation initiatives

HUTCHINSON – State and local officials, as well as many others, were on hand at a celebration at two locations today to mark both the beginning and an ending of two transportation initiatives.

Gov. Mark Parkinson got the state's first American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project of 2009 officially under way by unveiling a sign at the project on K-61 just north of the McPherson/Reno county line. The sign unveiling, which was shown on closed circuit TV to a crowd gathered at the Grand Prairie Hotel and Convention Center in Hutchinson, also marked the start of the last major project of the 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

The \$64.2 million project will expand K-61 to four lanes in McPherson County.

After unveiling the sign, the Governor then traveled back to the hotel for a program that included Kansas Department of Transportation Deb Miller; Mary Turkington, Chair of the Transportation 2000 Study Group; Dennis McKinney, State Treasurer and former Minority Leader in the Kansas House; Dave Kerr, former president of the Kansas Senate and

current President/Executive Director of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce; Rep. Paul Davis, Kansas House Minority Leader; and Sen. Steve Morris, Kansas Senate President.

Former Gov. Bill Graves, who signed the CTP legislation in May of 1999, couldn't attend the event but provided a video message during the ceremony.

"We faced many roadblocks during the CTP, but we showed amazing resolve and overcame them all to keep the program moving forward," said Secretary Miller. "Not only did we have to be competent and professional in delivering the program, we also had to be resourceful, flexible and creative."

Over 5,700 projects were completed during the 10-year, \$13.2 billion state transportation program. Reaching the end of the program wasn't easy for KDOT, which dealt with inflation, recessions, cost increases caused by natural disasters and agency budget challenges.

"It's been a struggle, but with the help of good policies and priorities we have managed to deliver what was promised," said Secretary Miller.

In April, Koss Construction Co., Topeka, was awarded the \$64.2 million contract for the McPherson County expansion work. The project is part of construction that will four-lane the entire section of K-61 between McPherson and Hutchinson by early 2012. Total construction cost of the 23.1-mile expansion is \$105.3 million.

"The expansion of K-61 from Hutchinson to McPherson was the last remaining CTP project we had not let to construction," said Secretary Miller. "The project was temporarily removed from our letting schedule and without ARRA funds, completing this commitment would not have been possible."

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