As I settle into my new role of Executive Director for your Kansas Association of Counties, I am reminded of a quote from a popular book entitled: *Who Moved My Cheese?* written by Dr. Spencer Johnson.

The book is a timeless business classic that uses a simple parable about four beings and some cheese living in a maze to reveal profound truths about dealing with change so that one can enjoy less stress and more success in work and in life. The quote: “If you do not change, you can become extinct!” is a simple line that speaks volumes to the fact that if you do not stay current in technology, work skills, and various other aspects of the modern culture, life will pass you by. I speak from experience as I try to keep pace with the technological skills of a 17-year-old son. Combine that quote with the age-old adage that we have all heard a million times: “The only thing constant in life is change!” It’s no wonder that life can be overwhelming at times when trying to cope with the many pressures placed upon us on a daily basis.

Trying something new. The most important part of taking on a new role or responsibility with an organization is being trained or feeling prepared to do what is being asked of you. As I was reviewing the agenda for the 44th Annual Conference & Exposition coming up in Wichita, November 12-14, it occurred to me that many of these topics and speakers may be old hat for some of our long time Association members. However, I am confident that there are still more colleagues, new hires, and up and coming leaders that have never experienced or been exposed to this information. Or maybe there are new hires that have not been offered a chance to attend the conference & exposition. In either case, I ask that you look around your circle of influence and identify those whom you feel have the most to gain and personally invite them to attend.

I, myself, will be a first timer and am excited about all that the conference has to offer. The educational classes, the meet and greets, and the time to socialize and build connections with fellow association members.

The one piece I am most looking forward to is something new that we are trying this year. On Tuesday, November 12, we
are offering an extra workshop that requires pre-registration and an additional $50 fee. The workshop is being conducted by Mike Taylor who is the Public Relations Director for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas. The title of the workshop is “Truth and Lies: How to Effectively and Ethically Get Your Message Out to Citizens and the Media.” It will be a multimedia presentation with interactive exercises for the participants; full of real-life stories of how to frame messaging. Topics included will be ethics, public relations, and lobbying the Legislature and elected officials. Participants will work on writing succinct talking points and presenting them effectively. In this fast paced, Tweet filled, soundbite society, it is more important now than ever to be able to craft a message that gets heard and is meaningful and impactful. I encourage you to join me.

So, my ask to you veteran readers of this monthly publication – share this issue with someone new to your organization, or someone who is new to a leadership role who you feel might benefit either personally or professionally from what the conference has to offer.

And as an added bonus – if you are a first timer to the conference like I will be – please stop me and introduce yourself. Shake my hand and give me your business card or something with your name and county on it. I will be collecting these all three days. Then at the end, we will enter your name in a drawing and the winner will receive one free complimentary conference registration for 2020. That’s almost a $400 value!

I look forward to meeting many of you there in November.
ONE YEAR
By Jay Hall, Legislative Policy Director & General Counsel

Has it really been a year? The calendar says yes, but somehow it does not feel like it could have possibly been a year. I started at KAC not fully knowing what to expect, but excited to face the challenges ahead. In the past year I have had the privilege of meeting many of you, and look forward to meeting many more of you as I continue in this role.

So what am I looking forward to in year number two? First, I am looking forward to being able to meet with and interact with many more of you as I travel throughout the state. I have met a lot of great people and been to a lot of wonderful places over the last year, yet I have not even covered one quarter of the counties in our great state. I am excited to have the opportunity to continue to travel around the state talking to everyone about legislative issues, county governance and many other topics.

Obviously, the legislative agenda is a big part of my job, and I look forward to continuing to advocate on behalf of counties, but even more, to advocate on behalf of better communities. It is my firm belief that strong, effective county government makes Kansas a better place to live and work. Advocating for the things that make county governments strong and effective gives me a way to directly make Kansas the best possible home, whether you live on the range or otherwise.

I also look forward to continuing to teach. I have had the privilege of talking about the legislature, open meetings, open records and ethics this year, and I look forward to the topics that I will be able to cover next year. If there are legal or policy topics that you are interested in hearing about please let me know. You can email me at hall@kansascounties.org or phone 785-272-2585 x 307. Providing educational opportunities to county officials is one of the great missions of our organization, and something that I take pride in being able to participate in.

As quickly as this past year has gone by, I know that the upcoming year will be even busier. Still, I am eager to see what this next year holds for the Association, and what new opportunities will be presented. I look forward to seeing you along the journey.

THE NUMBERS ADD UP TO VALUE.

ANYONE CAN SELL YOU A MACHINE.

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Is your facility struggling with energy and maintenance costs for outdated equipment? How much money could you save in energy and operational costs if your facility were upgraded?

In a partnership with the Kansas Corporation Commission, the Kansas Energy Program is offering a free workshop on Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) and the KCC’s Facility Conservation Program (FCIP). Attendees will hear from national experts on EPCs and learn about ways in which EPCs can help organizations save on energy and operational costs, and meet sustainability goals. The agenda includes speakers from three Kansas organizations that have been through the FCIP Process.

**Date and time:** November 21, 2019, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Location:** Washburn Tech Conference Center, 5724 SW Huntoon Street, Topeka, Kansas

**Who should attend?** This workshop is for anyone that has been through an EPC, has considered entering an EPC, has questions or concerns about EPCs, or is being introduced to EPCs for the first time. The workshop is intended for anyone with responsibility for government-owned buildings eligible for the FCIP. Examples include Facility and City Managers, Municipalities, Public Schools, Correctional Facilities, to name just a few.

The workshop will be held at the Washburn Tech Conference Center. Registration is from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. and the workshop will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with plenty of opportunity for attendees to meet the speakers, as well as representatives from energy service companies. Refreshments will be provided, but lunch will be on your own.

Registration and other details can be found on the Kansas Energy Program website at [https://kansasenergyprogram.org/2019EPCworkshop](https://kansasenergyprogram.org/2019EPCworkshop). We hope to see you there! Feel free to share with any colleagues you think would be interested or that this would also apply to.

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**KCAMP is a member-owned self-insured property and liability risk retention pool providing coverages to 72 of Kansas’ 105 counties. Formed in 1991 as a viable alternative to commercial insurance, KCAMP offers broad coverage at low stable rates. Membership in KCAMP includes risk management services such as human resources consulting, legal advice, model policies, risk management grants and tuition reimbursement. Approximately 85% of U.S. public entities belong to risk retention pools. Contact us to learn why.**

---

**David Luke, Administrator / CEO**

5425 SW 7th Street

Topeka, Kansas 66606

davidluke@kcamp.org

(800) 240-9828
We are excited to announce a move to a new location. We are still going to be within walking distance to the State Capitol. Our new location will have plenty of parking for staff and visitors as well as meeting room space for classes or other meetings.

Our office will close December 19 and reopen in our new location January 2 to accommodate the move and the holidays. We will have limited access to email during this time.

**Effective December 23, 2019 our address will change.**
Kansas Association of Counties  
715 SW 10th Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66612

Our phone number will remain the same at 785-272-2585.

Staff email will remain the same:
Bruce Chladny, Executive Director, chladny@kansascounties.org  
Jay Hall, Legislative Policy Director & General Counsel, hall@kansascounties.org  
Dorrie Sullivan, Education & Communications Director, sullivan@kansascounties.org  
Dornella Leal, Operations & Finance Director, leal@kansascounties.org  
Norm Bowers, Local Road Engineer, bowers@kansascounties.org  
Betty Oliva, Office Manager, oliva@kansascounties.org  
Dana Wethington, Marketing Coordinator, wethington@kansascounties.org

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**NATIONWIDE RETIREMENT SOLUTIONS (NRS)**

Contact: Burt Burrows, Program Director  
P.O. Box 24232  
Denver, CO 80224  
Phone: 303-452-6300, 816-221-5266 or 785-271-7010  
Fax: 785-271-7020

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) administers the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program for county employees across the U.S. NRS provides education, investments and recordkeeping functions for these plans. Along with the 457 Plan, NRS also administers a 401a Match Plan and the Post Employment Health Plan (PEHP), a plan that provides retiree health care reimbursements, tax free.
FREE for NACo Member Counties

Be a Live Healthy county with health discount programs for residents

Help your residents save on everyday prescription, dental and health costs.

**Prescription Discounts** at more than 68,000 pharmacies nationwide.

- Free to residents – they can save an average of 24%* off retail prices

**Dental and Health Discounts** at a national network of providers.

- Low-fee programs save residents 15% to 50% on dental and health costs

The Live Healthy program is offered at no-cost to our member counties – and we’ll provide everything you need to market these savings to your residents, including:

- Customizable posters
- Customizable free prescription discount cards
- Dimensional counter display
- Press releases and more

Become a Live Healthy county – it’s free! Visit www.naco.org/health or call toll-free 1-888-407-6226.

* Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy.

The Live Healthy discount program is NOT insurance.

The Prescription Discount Card is operated by CVS/caremark®. The Discount Medical Organization for NACo Health and Dental Discounts is Alliance HealthCard of Florida, Inc. All rights reserved. ©2015 CVS/caremark.
Weight Limit Signs for Fire Trucks

Author’s Note: I regret I have to write this article. We still have the federal government telling us what we have to do to solve a problem we don’t have. In this case the bridge inspection section of FHWA made another rule interpretation without input from affected people in the field with common sense. They have done it before, and will probably do it again, and it is costing us a lot of money to inspect bridges that would be better spent on building new bridges.

History: Over the years fire trucks have been getting bigger and bigger. This trend toward bigger trucks was probably in response to bigger and bigger buildings. Sometime in the past, fire trucks became so big they started exceeding the legal weight for trucks. Generally, road engineers were not aware of the overweight fire trucks, and fire truck manufacturers were not communicating the issue to road officials. In urban areas, and a few rural areas, there are some really big fire trucks. These trucks were so big, theoretically they could not legally be driven on any public road and meet state and federal axle weight limits. Of course, no law enforcement official is going to stop a fire truck and check the weight, and as far as anyone knows no firefighter has been issued an overweight ticket. In 2015 a federal transportation bill (FAST Act) authorized larger emergency vehicles on the Interstate System. In 2018 the Kansas legislature authorized larger fire trucks on public roads. As far as I know no one objected to the change in weight limits, after all, the fire trucks were already in operation and had not caused us any issues. The Kansas statute authorizing heavier emergency vehicles is printed below and matches the federal law for the interstates.

(a) Notwithstanding any other laws to the contrary, an emergency vehicle may operate at a gross weight not exceeding 86,000 pounds, subject to a maximum weight of:
(1) 24,000 pounds on a single steering axle;
(2) 33,500 pounds on a single drive axle;
(3) 62,000 pounds on a tandem axle;
(4) 52,000 pounds on a tandem rear drive steer axle.
(b) As used in this section, “emergency vehicle” means a vehicle designed to be used under emergency conditions to: (1) Transport personnel and equipment; and (2) support the suppression of fires and mitigation of other hazardous situations.

Most fire trucks are rigid frame with a steering axle and a drive axle either single or tandem as shown in Figures 1 & 2.

Fire trucks are basically the configuration of a dump truck or redi-mix truck. Bridge engineers call these Single Unit trucks, and on a multiple truck weight limit sign the maximum weight allowed is the top truck configuration. The table below compares the legal loads of a regular truck with a fire truck.

At first glance the single axle fire truck is not that much heavier than a tandem dump truck. Keep in mind that 57,500 lbs is on two axles, and a similar truck is limited to 40,000 lbs. The 33,500 lbs on a single axle scares pavement engineers, but for bridge engineers it is not such a big deal as the bridge spreads out the load and it almost calculates out like a legal
34,000 tandem axle. However, the tandem axle fire truck is the big issue for bridge engineers. From a percentage standpoint a tandem axle fire truck can legally exceed the weight of a dump truck by 60%, and the tandem axle can exceed a truck tandem axle by 82%. To a bridge engineer these are scary numbers.

I hope you are following me so far, because now we get to the issue. Since we now have heavier legal loads, federal regulations require that we load rate the bridge for fire trucks and, if necessary, post appropriate weight limit signs to warn the fire truck driver. Now this is an issue for every county in the state. Rural counties may not have any big fire trucks, but the regs apply uniformly. I guess a fire truck from a big city could get lost and drive into another county.

This posting of bridges for emergency vehicle affects our good bridges, not our poor bridges. If the bridge already has a posted weight limit for trucks, it also applies to fire trucks. The bridges affected by the new requirement are the bridges that can carry the legal truck load and up until now have not had posted weight limits. KDOT is currently load rating our bridges, and many of the bridges that can carry the weight of a legal truck cannot carry the weight of a legal fire truck and will need weight limit signs. The weight limits would typically be above the legal limit for trucks but below the legal limit for fire trucks.

So how do we notify the fire department of a weight limit without confusing other truck drivers? The FHWA has considered the question and issued recommended weight limit signs that apply to emergency vehicles as shown in Figures 3 & 4.

Figure 3 shows the R12-7aP sign which is to be used in addition to a normal weight limit sign. This sign could be used in the rare occasion when due to longer axle length the allowable weight of a fire truck is heavier than a regular truck. FHWA calls this a plaque as it is supplemental to the standard weight limit sign. This sign is 30” x 30” which is wider than the typical weight limit sign. To get both signs on one post would require a really big and long sign post. Most agencies would probably use a separate post.

Figure 4 is a stand-alone sign used at bridges that can carry the weight of regular trucks, but not the higher weights of the big fire trucks. This sign only applies to emergency vehicles; trucks would still be limited to the state legal weights.

Figure 5 is the standard multiple truck weight limit sign. The weight limits shown are the legal maximum for regular trucks. Typically, we do not post bridges at the legal limit, as that is the legal limit in the state. However, this sign is an option if the bridge needs to be posted for emergency vehicles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Truck</th>
<th>Front Axle</th>
<th>Rear Axle</th>
<th>Gross Wt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single axle Truck</td>
<td>20,000 lbs.</td>
<td>20,000 lbs.</td>
<td>40,000 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandem axle Truck</td>
<td>20,000 lbs.</td>
<td>34,000 lbs.</td>
<td>54,000 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single axle Fire</td>
<td>24,000 lbs.</td>
<td>33,500 lbs.</td>
<td>57,500 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandem axle Fire</td>
<td>24,000 lbs.</td>
<td>62,000 lbs.</td>
<td>86,000 lbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KS Statutory Legal Weights

COUNTY COMMENT • October 2019

continued next page
Which Sign?
As KDOT performs load ratings on our bridges they will deliver those load ratings with options for load postings. Federal regulations require that a bridge be weight posted if the bridge cannot safely carry the state legal load for both regular trucks and emergency vehicles. However, the counties have quite a bit of flexibility on the actual posted weight and sign.

We certainly do not want to unnecessarily limit emergency vehicles. Fire trucks detouring around a posted bridge increases response time, which is a public safety issue. The county should check with the local fire departments to determine the heaviest fire truck operating in the area. Most counties outside of urban areas will not have a fire truck in the area that exceeds the legal weight of a regular truck. However, weight limit posting is still required, but we might handle it differently. When considering fire truck issue there are four situations:
1. Bridge is posted below the legal limit for trucks.
2. Bridge can carry legal limit for trucks, and actual weight of local fire trucks.
3. Bridge can carry legal limit for trucks, but not actual weight of local fire trucks.
4. Bridge can carry legal weight for trucks and for fire trucks. No load limit signs are required.

The options are described in more detail below.

1. **Bridge is posted below the legal limit for trucks.** Due to longer axle spacing a fire truck might calculate out to a higher weight limit. However, it is unlikely to calculate enough higher to allow a fire truck. In this case just use the standard weight limit sign. If close to a fire station and depending on the weight of the fire truck and load calculations, consider issuing an overweight permit to the fire department.

2. **Bridge can carry legal limit for trucks, and actual weight of local fire trucks.** Compare the suggested posting for emergency vehicles in the load rating with actual weight of local fire truck. If the suggested posting for the fire truck is below the weight of the local fire trucks there is no point in installing the emergency vehicle weight limit sign. In this case you still have to post the bridge, but the multiple truck weight limit sign as shown in Figure 5 would be appropriate.

I personally do not like the emergency vehicle weight limit signs. It is a big sign that will confuse almost everyone. Seems like the brains in Washington could have figured out a better sign. If you have to post many bridges for fire trucks, it may be a good idea to develop a weight limit map for fire trucks. Then the fire department can determine the best routes to different locations. Remember we also have an option to issue an overweight permit.

One issue that bothers me is the new legal axle weights on culverts (less than bridge size structures). Bridges have been studied and inspected in detail, but we have many more culverts that could be subject to loads much heavier than in the past. There are not many timber structures that can handle a 62,000 lb. axle. Timber structures are fragile, and I have been advocating for years posting all our timber structures at a 10 Ton axle limit. It is time to think about it again.

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If you like roads, and who doesn’t, you may be interested in my twice monthly email on current road issues and road items of statewide interest. If you would like to receive these emails just send me an email request with position, and county or company at bowers@kansascounties.org.
Preliminary Agenda
Following is a list of topics and times for the 2019 KAC Annual Conference and Exposition. We are still working on fine-tuning but we know some want more information about our topics before registering. To register for the conference, click here or copy and paste the following link into your browser.


Exhibition & Dinner Sponsor: Foley Industries

Host Sponsor: Sedgwick County

Tuesday, November 12, 2019
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Registration Opens

8:30 – 9:45 a.m. Women of KAC Continental Breakfast Riverview Ballroom
9 a.m. KAC Governing Board Meeting
10 – 11 a.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block A)
• Making Performance Pay More Successful in the Public Sector
• Garnering USDA, CDBG and other Grant Funding for your Community
• The New Kansas Weed Law and Regulations

10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m, Extra Workshop – Must Pre-register. Cost $50

Truth and Lies: How to Effectively and Ethically Get Your Message Out to Citizens and the Media
Join us for this extra workshop being held during the first half of the day at the KAC Annual Conference. This workshop is a multimedia presentation with interactive exercises for the participants and lots of real life stories about how to frame messaging. Topics included will be ethics, public relations, and lobbying the Legislature and elected officials. You will work on writing succinct talking points and presenting them effectively.

Presenter: Mike Taylor, Public Relations Director, Unified Government Wyandotte County/KCK

This workshop can be applied toward requirements for the Foundations in County Government leadership certificate program. The registration fee includes lunch, breaks and materials. You must pre-register for this workshop to assure catering is accurate. Space is limited. Cost is $50. You do not have to register for the conference to register for this workshop.

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch on Your Own – serving in the restaurant & Riverside Ballroom

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block B)
• Employment Law Updates
• Opening and Vacating of County Roads
• Working as a Community to Create an Integrated System of Behavioral Health Care that Moves from Crisis and Illness as a Norm to Recovery and Prevention as a Practice
1:45 – 2:45 p.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block C)
• *Conversation with Kansas Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz*
• *Records Management 101: From Creation to Preservation*
• *Meaningful Property Tax Relief – What’s the Right Path?*

2:45 – 3:15 p.m. Coffee and Snack Break
*Location: Eagle Ballroom Foyer*

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block D)
• *2020 Census: What’s at Risk if Kansas Under-reports*
• *Expanding Access to Affordable Housing for Kansans: KHRC Programs and Resources in a Nutshell*
• *How to Avoid Swimming with the Phishes*

4:30 – 5:30 p.m. 2020 Legislative Policy Statement Review
This time is set aside to review the draft 2020 KAC Legislative Policy Statement, as recommended by the KAC’s Legislative Policy Committee. KAC Legislative Policy Director & General Counsel will brief attendees on major changes to the draft policy statement, and there will be opportunity for questions and answers and discussion. All voting delegates are strongly urged to attend this session.

5:30 – 7 p.m. KCAMP/KWORCC Business Meeting

**Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Registration Open

6:30 – 8 a.m. Final Voting Delegates Credentials Pick-up

7 – 8 a.m. Breakfast Buffet

8 – 9 a.m. Annual Business Meeting
• Call to Order: KAC President Craig Cox, presiding
  • Welcome, Chairman David Dennis, Sedgwick County Board of Commissioners
  • Membership will adopt the 2020 Legislative Policy Statement
  • Membership will vote on changes to the KAC Bylaws
  • Executive Director “State of the Association” and announcements about upcoming 2020 KAC programs and services.

9:10 – 10:35 a.m. General Session

*Keynote Speaker Tim Gard*

*Laughter Becomes You*

Tim Gard is a tears-in your-eyes funny keynote speaker who teaches people to be more resilient and resourceful and coaches organizations on how to enhance productivity and employee enthusiasm. Tim’s down-to-earth style and real-life humor leaves a lasting impression that you will benefit from for years to come!

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. County Counselors Association Continuing Legal Education (CLE)
(Separate CCAK Registration required.)

10:35 – 11 a.m. Refreshment Break

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block E)
• *Can I Say that at Work? Tim Gard, motivational speaker and this year’s keynote speaker*
• *Public Health Emergency Preparedness and County Government*
• *Foley Industries Sponsored Speaker TBA*
• *The Legitimacy and Future of Industrial Hemp Production in Kansas*

12 – 1:15 p.m. Luncheon
• 12:15 Presentation of 58th Annual County Public Improvement Awards sponsored by the American Council of Engineering Companies in cooperation with the KAC, recognizes engineering projects benefiting citizens of Kansas communities.
• 12:30 NACo Works for You
• 12:45 Constitutional Home Rule
Dessert is Served! Join us in the Exhibition Hall for your afternoon dessert at 1:30 p.m.

At the 2019 KAC Annual Conference and Exhibition, you’ll learn a lot from our exceptional workshops, but don’t let the information stop there. On Wednesday afternoon explore the nearly 100 companies showcasing their services and products that will help you serve the residents of your county. Many of them also are sponsors of the conference so look for them at workshops, breaks and presentations. Get all your questions answered by these exhibitors who are eager to help you.

Drawings for Prizes: Must be present to win! Beginning at 3 p.m. and then every half hour until 6:30 p.m., we will have drawings for great prizes.

If you attend a Vendor Red Carpet presentation, you can enter a drawing for each presentation you attend.

- 2:00 p.m. KCAMP: How to protect your county from Cyber Attacks
- 2:30 p.m. Census 2020
- 3:00 p.m. KWORCC: Training and Why it Matters
- 3:30 p.m. Mid-Continental Restoration: Renovation = Longer Building Life
- 4:00 p.m. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas: Collaborating for a Healthier Kansas

Thursday, November 14, 2019

6:30 – 9 a.m. Registration Open
6:30 – 8 a.m. Buffet Breakfast
7 – 8 a.m. Keynote Speaker Andrew Hait, Economist

Andrew Hait (Andy) is an economist in the International Trade Management Division at the U.S. Census Bureau. With more than 30 years of service at the Census Bureau, Andy advises on Economic data products and conducts data user training for the Economic Census and the Census Bureau's other monthly, quarterly and annual economic survey programs. He will bring us his insights on the 2020 Census.

8:15 – 9:15 a.m. Concurrent Education Workshops (Block F)
- When Rural America Thrives, All of America Thrives with Lynne Hinrichsen, Rural Development Director, State of Kansas
- Building Trust in Our Communities
- Kansas Counties and Kansas Wind: Reflecting on Twenty Years Together and Exploring the Future

8:30 – Noon Highway Officials Meeting Birch

9:30 - Noon Affiliate/Associate/Group Meetings
Administrators Chisholm/Stimson
Appraisers Cypress B
Clerks & Election Officials Cypress A
Commissioners Redbud A-B
Highway Officials Birch (starts at 8:30 a.m.)
Human Resource Directors Osage
Local Health Departments Cedar
Mental Health Maple
Noxious Weed Directors Oak
Planning and Zoning Directors Willow
Registrars of Deeds Redbud C

Noon ADJOURN
Conference Registration Fees
Register online today by clicking here

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Member Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Conference includes all meals, workshops, sessions &amp; events</td>
<td>$370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Day Only includes attendance for the day’s events and meals only</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliate/Associate Meeting includes breakfast with speaker, workshop and Thursday’s meeting</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Exhibition, Reception &amp; Dinner</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop: Truth and Lies: How to Effectively and Ethically Get Your Message Out to Citizens and the Media. Workshop includes lunch.</td>
<td>$50</td>
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Event Ticket required for everyone not registered for full conference or one-day-only events.

**HOTEL CANCELLATION POLICY FOR THE KAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE:** The room block will be opened when the KAC annual conference registration opens. A deposit equal to one night’s stay is required to hold each guest’s reservation and it will be charged at the time of the reservation. These deposits paid by individuals are refundable if notice is received at least four weeks prior to arrival (which is October 15, 2019) and a cancellation number is obtained. Each reservation must be accompanied with the name for each room (no hotel room block will be allowed; for example, booking five rooms under one name is not allowed). Name changes on guest room reservations will be accepted.

CONFERENCE CANCELLATION POLICY: Partial refunds are given for full conference registration only, and NOT Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday ONLY Registration, Affiliate/Associate Meeting Registration, or Exhibition dinner ticket. To be eligible for a partial refund, all cancellations must be made in writing to the KAC office on or before 5 p.m. October 11, 2019. Upon receipt of written notice, a refund will be processed and mailed to registrants less a $25 registration processing fee. After October 11, 2019 NO refund requests will be honored.
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

North Central Regional Planning Commission Executive Director

Based in Beloit, Kansas, the North Central Regional Planning Commission is a public development organization, serving 12 counties and 83 cities in an economic development capacity and many other Kansas counties in other program capacities. The NCRPC Executive Director is responsible for overall management and supervising all aspects of the primary and affiliate organizational operations. This includes revenue maintenance & development, organization planning & development, community relations, personnel management for a staff of 20 as well as fiscal management. The Executive Director is responsible for the oversight of the NCRPC’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as well as various other reports to federal, state and local agencies and authorities.

Visit www.ncrpc.org to learn more about the organization, position and application submittal. The North Central Regional Planning Commission is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by October 24, 2019.

Emergency Management Director – Decatur County

Decatur County is taking applications for an Emergency Management Director. For applications, contact Nora Urban, Decatur County Clerk, 785-475-8102, nurban@dccoks.org or may be picked up at the Decatur County Clerk’s Office on the second floor of the Courthouse. Decatur County is an equal opportunity employer.

County Administrator – Reno County, Kansas (62,000)

Situated in the fertile agricultural lands of Central Kansas, Reno County offers its 62,000 residents the best of both worlds – stunning prairie vistas and a small-town sensibility, alongside a flourishing regional economy, and cultural and entertainment amenities of a 21st century metropolitan area. Prospective candidates will find more than a decade of stable and progressive leadership has positioned Reno County to contribute to economic growth and quality of life. Prospective candidates will find the County with a strong financial condition and a professional and competent workforce. Reno County provides a full range of county government services with a budget of $17,164,636 and a 400-person workforce. Compensation negotiable and competitive. Minimum starting salary $125,000.

See full Recruitment Profile brochure at www.renogov.org. Qualified persons should submit a cover letter highlighting preferred qualifications and resume in one integrated Word or PDF file to Beth Tatarko, Reno County Recruitment Advisor, etatarko@austinpeters.com by November 1. For more information, call (970) 266-8724.

Post Your Position and Find The Right Candidates.

We can help you connect to the talent you need for your county. We’ll place your employment posting online and in the County Comment, reaching all 105 Kansas counties. The online posting goes up within 48 hours of submission and your County Comment listing will be included in the next month’s issue.

Rates: Up to 75 words $65; 76-150 words $95; more than 150 words $120. The website posting is from submission date for at least a month and County Comment is for one month.

Deadline: First of each month for County Comment

Contact: Dana Wethington at wethington@kansascounties.org
County Appraiser - Sedgwick County (Wichita), Kansas

Sedgwick County, Kansas is seated in Wichita and covers 1,008 square miles. It is one of the most populous of Kansas’ 105 counties with an estimated population of 508,000. It is the sixteenth largest in area and reportedly has the second highest per capita wealth among Kansas’ counties.

Sedgwick County residents enjoy a central location, a diverse population, a strong local economy and four distinct seasons. Quality of life amenities, including education, are excellent and the cost of living is well below the national average.

Sedgwick County utilizes a Commission/Manager form of government under which the County Manager’s Office implements the priorities and goals of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The BOCC is the County’s governing body. It is comprised of five members and meets in regular weekly sessions. Commissioners are elected according to geographical area (districts) and serve four-year overlapping terms. The Chairman of the Board is elected by the Commissioners and serves a one-year term. In addition to the BOCC, citizens of Sedgwick County elect the County Clerk, the Register of Deeds, the County Treasurer, the Sheriff, the District Attorney and the 18th Judicial District Judges.

Sedgwick County is recognized by the International City-County Management Association as a Council-Manager form of government. Accordingly, the Board appoints a professional County Manager to administer most County functions and to implement policy decisions. The BOCC also appoints the County Counselor, County Appraiser and the Assistant County Manager for the Department of Public Works, Facilities Maintenance & Project Services.

Sedgwick County employs nearly 2,800 persons and functions on a current budget of $439,530,627. The County provides a full range of services including public safety, public works, criminal justice, recreation, entertainment, cultural, human/social, and education.

The County Appraiser’s Office is required by law to annually appraise all tangible, taxable property by January 1. In Sedgwick County there are 221,814 residential, agricultural, multi-family, commercial and industrial parcels as well as 33,791 personal property accounts. In addition, the Office applies classification rates and determines tax exemption eligibility of religious, charitable, educational and municipal properties. The County Appraiser leads, manages, plans, organizes, administers and directs the activities and operations of the Sedgwick County Appraiser’s Office in compliance with County policies and applicable Kansas law. In conformance with the Kansas State Property Valuation Division, the County Appraiser Office serves and assists the property assessment needs of the citizens and the community. The County Appraiser is responsible to deliver quality public service through use of effective leadership, strategic planning, performance measurement, teamwork, maximizing resources, innovative approaches and high professional standards. The County Appraiser’s Office currently employs sixty-five (65) FTE’s and has an FY 2019 budget of $4,843,692.

The County Appraiser advises the County Commissioners and County Manager on matters pertaining to property appraisals and attends meetings of the BOCC, responds to inquiries made by the Commissioners and other County officials and makes presentations on a regular basis. He or she also presents testimony to state legislators and assists the County’s Division of Finance with long-term valuation forecasting. For more information about Sedgwick County and the County Appraisers Office visit www.sedgwickcounty.org

Minimum qualifications are an Associate’s Degree in Finance, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, Regional/Urban Planning or a related field from an accredited college or university; certification as a general real property appraiser pursuant to Article 41 of Chapter 58 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated and amendments; possession of one of the required appraisal designations. OR be a registered mass appraiser pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of Revenue. Must have a minimum of five (5) years CAMA experience; five (5) years commercial property appraisal experience and three (3) years of direct supervision experience. Must have superior written and verbal communication skills.

Preferred qualifications are a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree in Finance, Accounting, Economics, Business Administration, Regional/Urban Planning or a related field from an accredited college or university combined with additional CAMA assessment administration or other local government education and training plus ten (10) years of experience in assessing properties which includes five (5) years in a managerial/supervisory capacity. IAAO designation, CAE preferred.

Compensation

The compensation package includes a competitive base salary and benefits that will ultimately depend upon the qualifications of the selected candidate. The beginning salary will be commensurate with experience. The County offers excellent benefits which include: State retirement, a generous paid time-off program, medical/prescription insurance (95% County paid), dental vision, Life & AD&D insurance, a Flexible Healthcare Spending Account, a Dependent Daycare Flexible Spending Account, AFLAC and other benefits.

To Apply

The County is anxious to fill this position. It will remain open until filled. The first review of resumes is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 14, 2019. For consideration, please email your cover letter, resume and current salary to:

Robert E. Slavin, President
SLAVIN MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS
3040 Holcomb Bridge Road #A1
Norcross, Georgia 30071
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Each year the Kansas Association of Counties sends out a call for service award information so we can help our member counties recognize their employees and elected officials for their years of service.

A pre-formatted data file, service award form for internal collection, and a link for online submission have been sent to clerks, HR directors, and support staff.

You must submit the formatted data file to Betty Oliva in order for us to complete the service awards at oliva@kansascounties.org.

Please submit the data file by December 2, 2019. This will help us assure correct spellings, titles and years of service.

Awards will be given for the completion of 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 44 and 48 years of service. The required period of service must be completed by January 1, 2020, to receive credit for the 2019 county service award.

Completed lists MUST be received via online submission by close of business on December 2, 2019 to be considered for a county service award.

We will print and mail the certificates by January 10, 2020 along with the appropriate pins (pins are supplied for 16, 24, 32, 40 and 44 years of service; there is no pin for 8 years).

If you have questions, contact Betty Oliva at oliva@kansascounties.org.

Click here to obtain the pre-formatted spreadsheet.

Women of KAC Breakfast Scheduled for First Morning of Conference

The Women of KAC Breakfast will kick off the Annual Conference at 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, November 12.

Greet your friends and meet new ones as you gather for a continental breakfast in the Riverview Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency. The breakfast is included in the conference fee.

“The Women of KAC traditionally have met for an evening reception,” said Dorrie Sullivan, Education & Communications Director. “Competing conference meetings have impacted the attendance, so this year, we are scheduling a breakfast where the Women of KAC can share ideas and discuss opportunities they can take back to their counties,” she said.

Registration will open at 8 a.m. that morning, preceding the breakfast. The breakfast is scheduled until 9:45 a.m. to accommodate later arrivals, ending prior to the first Concurrent Education Workshops (Block A) at 10 a.m. that are included in the conference fee.

“A special extra workshop that requires pre-registration is titled Truth and Lies: How to Effectively and Ethically Get your Message Out to Citizens and the Media,” Sullivan said. It starts at 10:30, includes lunch and ends at 2:30.

Workshop blocks continue through the first day, concluding at 4:15 p.m.
Key themes:

These themes remained the consistent focus throughout all eight meetings.

1. **Improve health.** Transportation investments can contribute to better health outcomes for people, our economy and our highway system.

2. **Invest strategically.** Given that funding will always be limited, we must make sure our investments are strategic. Through the T-WORKS process, we learned the value of regional collaboration and that must continue in the future.

3. **Act now.** There is a strong sense of urgency among local consult participants that we must move forward with a new program soon to capture new opportunities and confront challenges.

Progress to Date:

- Approximately **1,100 Kansans** have participated in the Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures discussions.

- Meetings completed:
  - Aug. 19 in Salina - [North Central Region Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 20 in Hutchinson - [South Central Region Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 21 in Independence - [Southeast Region Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 22 in Overland Park - [Kansas City Metro Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 26 in Topeka - [Northeast Region Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 27 in Wichita - [Wichita Metro Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 28 in Dodge City - [Southwest Region Meeting Summary](#)
  - Aug. 29 in Hays - [Northwest Region Meeting Summary](#)
Don’t wait to shape the future of our state.

That was the message delivered by the more than 80 stakeholders who participated in the North Central region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Monday.

Transportation plays a critical role in many aspects of our lives including one of the most vital – access to health care. Stakeholders noted that health care access can be improved both through providing more mobility options for Kansans to travel to medical facilities and through expanding broadband across the state to allow more opportunities for telemedicine.

Overheard at the meeting: “We always talk about preparing for the bad things that may happen, but how do we maximize the joyful opportunities we have in our communities to build the future my children and grandchildren deserve?”
As participants made their way through the scenario planning exercise, they emphasized the importance of ensuring transportation policies and programs are flexible and adaptable enough to capture future economic opportunities and confront unknown challenges.

*Overheard at the meeting: “We need to find ways to keep doing the things we do well such as intermodal facilities, but also give ourselves the flexibility we need to be prepared for the things we don’t know about yet.”*

Participants discussed the need to build our system at the right strength in the face of more floods and bad winters. Because Kansas needs to export crops, priority/freight corridors must be built to stand the test of weather challenges.

During the breakout group discussions, stakeholders noted that highway improvements are not the only way to generate economic growth. The State should consider investing in broadband to generate more economic opportunities across Kansas. And multimodal investments (transit, aviation, rail and bike/ped) are necessary to provide the quality of life needed for communities to thrive.

Participants also noted the concerns about transportation funding both at the state and local levels. It’s not just about how much revenue will be available but being mindful that tough decisions may be necessary to ensure critical needs are being met. For example, they noted that Saline County has considered using 2-mile grid to help prioritize roads and bridges it needs to maintain while also ensuring citizens will have the necessary connectivity to be successful.

Stakeholders emphasized that creating partnerships between all levels of government was critical not only for making good policy decisions but also for ensuring we make strategic investments.

The emphasis on partnerships was not limited to government agencies as participants stressed the importance of engaging the private sector. For example, there may be opportunities to work with Uber and Lyft to expand mobility options across the state.

North Central Kansans had strong concerns about the availability of water in the future. They noted if Kansans are unable to live in certain areas due to water shortages, it directly impacts both infrastructure needs and the population necessary to support it.

There were also concerns about the need for affordable housing. Participants suggested there might be a role for KDOT and the State of Kansas to foster public private partnerships to spur more housing development.

Transportation investments are about the future. North Central Kansans want a future that has more mobility options, expands access to healthcare and generates economic growth across the state – and they’re ready to get to work building it—today.
Overheard at the meeting:
“Technology + training + infrastructure + marketing = a state where people want to
live and thrive.”

Posted on Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2019
Let’s make the future work for all of us.

In an uncertain future, the path forward will require us to think regionally, invest multimodally and preserve our infrastructure.

Those were the key themes that emerged from the South Central region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Tuesday. About 85 Kansans participated in a scenario
planning exercise, and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities in the future.

Participants demonstrated the value of regionalism often by voicing support for projects in communities outside of their own. And they spoke about the need for future transportation investments to be fair to both urban and rural areas. They also referenced the T-WORKS projects that were delayed due to revenue losses and their desire to see these projects completed as promised.

“You can’t bring new businesses to the State, if you don’t have a transportation system in good shape,” – Suzanne Loomis, City Engineer & Director of Public Works for the City of Newton

There was strong recognition that because transportation funding will always be limited, state and local leaders must work together to prioritize needs. For example, Winfield City Manager Taggart Wall spoke about the need for the West Winfield Bypass. He indicated originally the project was estimated to cost about $79 million according to KDOT. However, upon further discussion and evaluation, the community has proposed a smaller improvement, which could still meet their most pressing needs. The new, proposed project is slated to cost less than half the original estimate, about $30 million, and will still support the growth in the city.

“Our funding sources rely on traditional models, which are rapidly changing.” – Joseph Turner, City Administrator for the City of Sedgwick

As they worked through three distinct scenarios about possible futures for Kansas, participants noted that expanding broadband access would be critical in any scenario. And while there may be uncertainty around how technology will impact our lives going forward—ensuring that all Kansans are better connected to the digital economy should be a top priority of the State, the participants said.

“What’s going to happen as drones become more and more user-friendly?” – Glenna Borho, Pratt County Commissioner

Expanding mobility is about more than improving highways in south central Kansas. Many stakeholders referenced the need for investments in transit, rail, aviation and bike/pedestrian improvements. They mentioned the importance of transit services that allow people to access medical facilities and how offering more bike and pedestrian routes will provide public health benefits.

The Kansans who attended Tuesday’s event also voiced strong support for prioritizing highway preservation in the future. The challenge for maintaining infrastructure will not only be in our limited resources, but also because we may experience greater demands on our system due to extreme
weather. For example, participants noted that K-14 south of Sterling was closed for multiple weeks this summer due to flooding. The potential impacts of extreme heat or flooding on our roads and bridges should be considered when making future improvements, they said.

Like their neighbors to the north at the previous day’s meeting, South Central Kansans were concerned about water availability in the future and how that could have enormous implications for where people could live and work.

Despite the uncertainty about the future, it was clear from the discussion that south central Kansans want the State to be proactive in delivering transportation projects and programs.

Or as one person said better, “why should we wait for things to happen to us? It’s time to make things happen for us.”

Posted on Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2019
No matter what happens in the future, we need to make sure Kansans can travel safely.

While there were many issues discussed at the Southeast region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Wednesday, participants made it clear that finding ways to improve safety should be a top priority and they were open to multiple approaches for how to do so.

“The City of Caney believes that passing lanes are alternatives that need to be considered.” - Fred Gress, City Administrator for the City of Caney

About 155 Southeast Kansans, the largest crowd this week, participated in a scenario planning exercise and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities in the future. There was a noticeable pragmatism and collaborative spirit among participants. For example, they
noted that while 4-lane highways are ideal, it’s not always fiscally feasible to expand highways and pointed out that constructing passing lanes or adding/expanding shoulders can improve highway safety at a much lower cost. These approaches will allow for more needs to be met across the region, they noted.

Similar to previous local consult meetings this week, Southeast Kansans stressed the importance of expanding broadband access across the state. However, they added that cell phone reception in the region needs to be improved too.

To address growing concerns with resiliency of our transportation system, attendees noted that recent weather events have opened consideration for a new approach for rebuilding infrastructure. Participants noted the challenge of resources if we keep rebuilding in the same places that are continually flooded, for example.

“If we keep having flooding on the same roads, why do we keep rebuilding them in the same place?” - Chanute Resident

As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, participants noted that collaboration between urban and rural areas would be important in any scenario. While rural and urban areas may have different challenges or expectations— they need to work together for our state to move forward successfully, participants stressed.

They also noted that while technology will bring new opportunities such as to telework – that will not feasible for every profession. In particular, hands-on jobs that provide essential services, like road construction and electricians, will still exist and need to be factored into decision-making too, they said. And many important components of the region’s economy are location specific, such as construction aggregates or oil and gas, which should be accounted for when making future investments.

One future scenario places an emphasis on regional hubs (smaller cities) in rural areas and participants saw a lot of value in making investments in hubs. They noted, though, that hubs should not strictly be defined by retail as there are other smaller hubs that provide a lot of value to the region’s economy. For example, Sedan, while not a major retail center, serves a lot of traffic related to the oil and gas industry in the area. They noted that areas that serve natural resources will always be important and the State should prioritize the routes needed to transport those materials to markets.

The conversation was not limited to highways as several people voiced support for short-line rail networks and mentioned that they can play a valuable role in reducing the toll heavy trucks can place on our highways. Participants also voiced support for the new transload facilities in the state and that they’d love to see more of these facilities across the state.

When making modal investments, they stressed the importance of prioritizing services that allow people to access jobs. This is critical for growing the economy and allowing more young, talented Kansans to be able to stay in or return to their hometowns.
Many participants remarked that they’ve missed regular local consult meetings with KDOT, they appreciate the opportunity to provide input and look forward to the next round of local consult later this year.

*Posted on Thursday, Aug. 22, 2019*
To navigate an unpredictable future – we need to consider where we can be certain and provide flexibility for where we can’t.

A modern transportation system must be nimble to navigate changes in our economy, population shifts or new weather patterns. That was the key message that emerged from the Kansas City Metro’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Thursday. Participants also called for collaboration and inclusivity by voicing support for making investments that benefit the entire region, establishing more public-private partnerships, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Approximately 204 Kansans participated in a scenario planning exercise in Overland Park and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities in the future. It was also a chance to highlight recent successes as examples for what can work going forward. For example, Beth Linn, city administrator of Edgerton, noted the connection between public and private investment. About $150 million in public funding for roads and bridges in the Logistics Park Kansas City area has
spurred $1.1 billion in private investment, she said. And the 4,500 jobs expected in the area by the end of this year will contribute $6.6 million in new annual income taxes for Kansas, Linn added.

“We passionately believe in the connection between investment in public infrastructure and what happens on the private side as a result of that.” - Beth Linn, City Administrator for the City of Edgerton

And there are more opportunities to be gained with additional investments. Participants spoke of emerging needs such as improvements at K-47 & 43rd Street or better connections from Leavenworth to Kansas City International airport. Participants demonstrated an openness to alternative sources of funding to meet needs. For example, Rep. Jeff Pittman, while advocating for the replacement of Centennial Bridge in Leavenworth, mentioned that the community is willing to consider tolling to help fund a new bridge. He also said regional connectivity would be important to support ongoing economic development.

As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, participants said that Kansas’ position of being situated within a two-day drive to 85 percent of the nation’s population would continue to be an asset that the state should continue to leverage when making investments. The metro region has some considerable advantages over coastal cities, including shorter commutes and more affordable housing. And the region is making strides towards becoming more walkable, which is helpful for gaining new residents, they said.

The scenario planning exercise allowed participants to consider how technology could impact transportation needs and services going forward. Beth Wright, Public Works Deputy Director and City Engineer for the City of Olathe, pointed out there may be a time in the future when traffic patterns and the need for more highway lanes change because self-driving vehicles can move people and goods when people aren’t awake.

“I see a lot of car sharing and electric bikes in the future,” - Mark Bechtel, Deputy Regional Administrator for Federal Transit Administration

Technological implications were not limited to highway improvements. Participants spoke about the increased traffic on Metcalf Ave. in Overland Park and how technology is already allowing better transit service, including increasing access to medical facilities. There may also be opportunities to partner with ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft to increase mobility options throughout the metro, participants said.

In one future scenario, the Kansas City region would gain population rapidly due to extreme weather on the east and west coasts, which would have numerous implications on the transportation system. Participants stressed the importance of having flexibility to allow for future growth and capture new opportunities. For example, an increased population in the metro area could generate density necessary to support light rail.
“When planning for future road improvements, we should consider transitional strategies, such as making one lane of a highway suitable for mass transit – like light rail.” - Stephanie Malmborg, Deputy Community Development Director for the City of Shawnee

Similar to previous local consult meetings, participants were concerned about safety. However, the conversation expanded from identifying specific roadway improvements that can be made to improve safety to discussing the cultural tolerance of traffic fatalities. Olivia Desmarais, a trauma injury prevention specialist for the University of Kansas Health System, noted that hundreds of Kansans die in traffic fatalities each year and the public must stop thinking that’s okay or unchangeable.

“We need to put safety at the forefront of all innovation.” - Olivia Desmarais, Trauma Injury Prevention Specialist, University of Kansas Health System

Participants voiced strong support for making sure Kansans, regardless of where they live or their economic status, benefit from transportation investments. This inclusivity extended to both rural and urban areas. Participants noted that these areas are interdependent and regardless of what the future brings – rural and urban collaboration will be essential for the state to succeed. Or as one group agreed, “More than anything as we move forward, we need to have faith in our communities and work together.”

Posted on Thursday, Aug. 22, 2019
There’s a need for planning, collaboration and policy changes to build the future we want.

A future transportation system should provide greater flexibility in decision-making, encourage partnerships and deliver more mobility options for everyone. Those were the key themes that emerged the Northeast region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Monday in Topeka.

Community leaders from cities large and small stressed the importance of increasing connectivity by investing in pedestrian and bike paths. The need for greater walkability in communities is critical both for allowing current citizens to access more services and for attracting new residents to Kansas, participants said.

“We want to be part of the solution, when it comes to alternatives for transportation. If someone doesn’t want to drive somewhere in our town, we don’t want them to have to.” - Leslie Herring, Assistant to the City Manager for the City of Eudora
Julie Steward, a Lawrence resident, spoke about how often transit services are often focused on the elderly, but increasing mobility is critical for all Kansans, especially for those in wheelchairs.

(Accessibility) “is something that is important today. This is an issue in everyone’s life if you want a community that is integrated.”
- Julie Steward, Lawrence resident

About 210 Kansans participated in discussions about the transportation needs of their communities both today and in the future. Recognizing that funding is limited, participants were practical and offered suggestions for how to make more incremental improvements at less cost. Curt Niehaus, director of public works for Shawnee County, while advocating for the expansion of K-4 in Shawnee County, referenced the importance of phasing for projects. For example, he said that constructing a 2-lane highway on a 4-lane right-of-way would serve as an immediate improvement at less cost than a 4-lane freeway while also allowing for future growth in the next phase.

Participants also noted that state and local partnerships were important for stretching transportation dollars. For example, the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce indicated its support for local contribution to help complete the South Lawrence Trafficway.

Like the previous local consult meetings, participants were concerned about traffic safety. They noted that many communities in the northeast region are growing quickly and that increased traffic creates more safety concerns. For highways, they mentioned adding shoulders or passing lanes can be effective for improving safety at less cost. Safety concerns also extended to areas with highway pedestrian traffic near major roadways.

As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, participants emphasized the importance of regional collaboration. That included being proactive in making investments in regional hubs and by being able to deliver seamless trips regardless of the mode of transportation.

“We think it’s important to talk about aligning priorities. We want to talk about aligning KDOT’s regional transportation system and our local economic development priorities such as access to downtown from I-70.” - Jason Peek, Public Works Director for the City of Topeka

No matter the future scenario, participants stressed the importance of workforce development. That included ensuring we are generating enough job opportunities for our citizens and that we’re providing the right education and training to serve those jobs. They also noted that if changing weather patterns encourage more migration to Kansas from coastal cities in the future - those people could bring new talents and ideas that the State should take advantage of for economic development.

And these potential new residents may also have increased mobility expectations, which will be important for the State to meet in order to attract those people.
Finally, participants stressed the importance of having proper planning to ensure smart growth or smart shrinkage depending on what the future holds.

Or as one group said, *as communities shrink or grow, we need to make smart investments.*

*Posted on Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2019*
In the future, we can be healthier, if we are flexible, adaptable and multimodal.

That was the message that emerged from the Wichita Metro’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Tuesday. About 135 Kansans participated in a scenario planning exercise and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities in the future.

Throughout the discussion, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration and compromise. They noted that the importance of the State and local governments working together to fund projects.

For example, Gary Plummer, President and CEO of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, noted that Wichita and Sedgwick County have contributed about $140 million in local match for the last two state transportation programs. Participants also noted that making infrastructure more resilient to extreme weather will increase costs and we must prepare for that.
The emphasis on health and wellness related to not only making existing modes of travel safer but also in encouraging walking or biking to improve public health. However, as Jane Byrnes, a Wichita resident, stated more work is needed to make pedestrians—especially children—safer. She noted that the existing Safe Routes to School program is helpful, but more projects and initiatives need to be implemented. Crosswalks near elementary schools should be a priority, she said.

“Active Transportation isn’t healthy, if it’s not safe, especially for children. We could enable active transportation for every Kansan in the future.”

- Jane Byrnes, Wichita resident

Participants stressed the importance of utilizing multimodal approaches when addressing challenges, including congestion. Tom Brown, the mayor of McPherson, noted that creating a regional transit network would help more people gain access to jobs. McPherson has many jobs available, but Kansans from nearby communities are unable to fill them because they have no transportation to our city, he said.

“They (Wichita) have the people we need to supply our jobs and we need ways to get them to our town.”

-Tom Brown, Mayor of McPherson

Participants also noted that they must be open to new technologies and approaches to delivering services. For example, Michael Tann, Wichita Transit Director, said that Wichita has recently begun the process of electrifying its bus fleet. The city has ordered 11 electric buses and plans to purchase more as funding becomes available.

The emphasis on multimodal also extended to the importance of short-line railroads. Pat Cedeno, Watco Transportation Services, said “short-line railroads are the regional airlines of the rail industry.”

“Multimodal solutions are about giving people access they didn’t have previously and access to markets that businesses wouldn’t otherwise see.”

-Pat Cedeno, Watco Transportation Services

Like previous local consult meetings, participants also emphasized the importance of expanding broadband access and making our infrastructure compatible with the latest technologies. They noted that while how people choose to travel may change in the future, freight corridors will still be needed and should be prioritized. They noted the importance of planning for the needs of rural and urban communities in future and were particularly interested in how agriculture may shift with new technological advances.
As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, participants questioned how to create a system where active transportation, technology and freight distribution all work could together in small space. They noted that as more goods and services continue to be delivered on-demand, people may come to expect transportation to be delivered the same manner. Regardless of what the future brings, participants stressed the importance of future transportation programs and policies being flexible and adaptable to seize opportunities and confront challenges.

Finally, participants insisted that future requires us break out of our silos and work together regionally. Or as one group noted, “We need to work together to build a multimodal system that allows people and freight to travel seamlessly.”

*Posted on Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2019*
A brighter future requires safer and better connections for people and freight.

That was the key takeaway from the Southwest region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Wednesday in Dodge City.

About 155 Southwest Kansans participated in a scenario planning exercise and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities now and in the future. Participants strongly advocated for highway safety improvements and were open to a variety of practical strategies for doing so such as adding shoulders, passing lanes or freeways. The most important thing was to make some improvements in the short-term while allowing greater improvements in the future, they said. Due to the rural nature of southwest Kansas, residents generally must make longer trips, which can lead to more distracted driving, they said.
Southwest Kansans were concerned about creating better connections to regional and area hubs – as well as other regions across the state. This is important for economic development, they noted. However, the need for better connections went beyond roads. As they discussed new technologies, participants noted that currently some areas of Southwest Kansas are unable to receive same-day deliveries. Utilizing drone deliveries for small freight could potentially fill this service gap in the future, they said. The technology discussion extended to broadband where participants noted that some families subscribe to multiple internet providers because they can’t access reliable service.

As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, participants stressed the importance of making investments that could create a ripple effect throughout the region. For example, Katie Eisenhour, executive director of the Scott County Development Committee Inc., spoke about how her community would look to build upon the growth in the Garden City and Dodge City areas. She noted there are vibrant areas in southwest Kansas and communities should find ways to collaborate to create more opportunities across the region.

Wednesday’s discussions served as the penultimate for this round of KDOT local consult meetings. To date, more than 1,000 Kansans have participated in these input sessions. And, the Southwest meeting held the distinction of having the youngest participant yet – a three-year-old attendee, who was much welcomed and was a helpful reminder that transportation investments should serve us today and well into the future.

In their discussions about how future changes could impact southwest Kansas, participants were particularly focused on how the agriculture industry may shift. As one group noted, the future may be as much about finished products as it is raw commodities, and we need to think about the transportation implications of that change. Regardless, participants noted that agriculture would continue to be a staple of the region’s economy and we must continue to find ways to serve it.

“Kansans will still need to eat no matter where they live.
My vision is for southwest Kansas to continue to be an agricultural hub and we need safe, good highways to do that.”
- Ada Linenbroker, Seward County Commissioner
Ada Linenbroker, Seward County Commissioner, stated that to be successful, Kansas would need to find the balance between serving immediate needs while also adopting long-term strategies. Participants referenced safety improvements and highway maintenance and preservation as examples of immediate needs that must be met. They pointed out that infrastructure is deteriorating faster than it used to, which is causing preservation needs to increase.

In any future scenario, participants noted that having enough revenue and ensuring it is distributed strategically across the state would be a challenge. They noted that technological advancements may be a way to combat this.

Finally, participants discussed the difficulties of finding a balance in how transportation services are delivered. For example, a highway needs to serve people and the flow of commerce. At times, these can be competing interests operating in the same small space, but for a transportation system to work well, it needs to find a way to serve both interests. Or as one group noted, “We need a transportation system that works well and most importantly is safe for people and freight.”

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We want to be in charge of our future.

The pace of change is accelerating, especially in the agriculture industry, and we must be mindful of these shifts in order to make transportation investments that will serve us well now and in the future. That was the key message delivered at the Northwest region’s Local Consult Round 1: Visioning Transportation Futures meeting on Thursday in Hays.

This session held the distinction of being the last of eight local consult meetings across the state. With the 75 attendees at Thursday’s meeting, it brings the combined total to approximately 1,100 Kansans who provided input to KDOT this August. It was quite fitting that the closing message of the session included a call for Kansans to keep their eyes open for the changes ahead and work together to move our state forward.
Attendees participated in a scenario planning exercise and provided input on how transportation investments could best serve their communities in the future. Like the previous meetings, participants noted the role that transportation improvements can play in increasing safety and generating more economic opportunities. And they also demonstrated a similar practical approach offered in previous regions for how to stretch limited transportation dollars further. Phil Smith-Hanes, the Ellis County administrator, talked about the need to find ways to accommodate oversized and superload trucks as they approach the busy retail and service district of Vine Street in Hays. Residents would prefer a complete bypass, he said, but even a downscaled intersection improvement on the city’s northwest side would be helpful.

As they worked through three distinct future scenarios, some participants imagined a future where rail travel could help move people - including seniors - and agricultural products - such as cattle - around the region. If one Kansas producer could move 1,000 cattle at a time from northwest Kansas feed yards to southwest Kansas processing plants by rail instead of truck, “that would be amazing,” a participant said.

In the more immediate future, however, participants said the current infrastructure needs require the region to rely heavily on good, safe roads. Technology could change that, they agreed, but the roads will likely need to remain a critical piece of the system.

In addition to thinking about how to move agriculture products around and out of the region, it will continue to be important to think about moving workers from home to jobs — especially in rural areas and during times of low unemployment, one group said.

Participants also stressed the value of both regional hubs and the “spokes” that support those regions. Having good connections to the amenities throughout the region is important for attracting and retaining people, participants said. For example, one participant mentioned a Phillipsburg resident who works out at a gym in Hays. The man doesn’t mind traveling 120 miles round trip because it’s a shorter and much easier commute than he had when he worked in a city. Participants also mentioned that these connections should be multimodal and noted the importance of regional transit.
There was significant discussion about stabilizing revenue sources for both current and future needs. Participants noted that there were increasing extreme weather events like flooding that warrant keeping our infrastructure well maintain especially as it relates to drainage. They noted that it’s more costly to recover than properly prepare. They also acknowledged that it may be important to consider alternative sources of revenues as technology changes. For example, motor fuel taxes are declining as more vehicles become electric, and that decline in revenue will worsen. One group discussed the need to consider user fees that are tailored to the type of facility travelers are using.

Similar to the previous meeting, participants discussed the importance of making infrastructure improvements to improve safety. For example, Ross Carter, a county road supervisor for Sheridan County who has a 31-year career as a fire chief in and near Hoxie, said he was particularly concerned about US-23 that connects Selden, Hoxie and I-70. In his career, he said, he has attended to 22 fatality accidents on that road. The numbers and severities of crashes continue to increase as passenger vehicles share the road with an increasing number of trucks serving the area’s agriculture industry.

In a discussion that called for attendees to envision what Kansas will be like in 2045, it was very fitting that a college student took the opportunity to share his concerns. Thomas Nelson, a senior at Fort Hays State University from Hutchinson who is studying international business and economics, spoke in favor of the project known as the Northwest Passage that would connect Wichita and Hutchinson to Sterling, Great Bend and Hays and other communities in central and western Kansas.

Regardless of the scenario, participants discussed the value of rural and urban communities working together. They noted that the state’s overall success is tied to large and small communities supporting each other.

The wrap up discussion included a call for holistic connections – meaning a multimodal system that works seamless and allows regional hubs and spokes to thrive. KDOT Secretary Julie Lorenz concluded the discussion by thanking everyone across the state for participating in these discussions. It was clear from all these discussions, that Kansas are truly looking forward to building a future that works for all of us.

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