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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Road crews recognized for life-saving efforts during blizzard

During the snow storm of Dec. 19-20, 2011, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) crews from northwest and southwest Kansas were instrumental in helping transport a heart attack patient from Scott City to the Hays Medical Center.

For their efforts, the KDOT Life-Saving Relay Team was recognized as an Example of Excellence for the first quarter of 2012. Transportation Secretary Mike King attended the ceremony honoring the team this afternoon in Oakley.

When Chad Griffith, 44, a farmer/rancher and father of four, had a heart attack at 9:45 p.m. Dec. 19, he needed to get to the closest hospital that could perform life-saving surgery as quickly as possible. But that was Hays Medical Center, 120 miles away, and air ambulances were grounded. As the blizzard worsened and 12 to 15 inches of snow piled up, a number of state roads were being closed, limiting travel options. That's when workers at Scott County Ambulance called KDOT for help.

"KDOT's role in helping orchestrate this event was truly a team effort. It required crews to shift to different Subareas and coordinate across District lines," said District Three Engineer Jeff Stewart.

While some crews were shifted to help clear roads in the affected area, other crews were busy coordinating the life-saving trip on alternate routes due to the closing of Interstate 70.

Doctors at the Hays hospital performed a heart catheterization on Griffith and inserted a stent. He was home before Christmas and is now back tending to his cattle.

“Without the dedication and cooperation of all the KDOT employees, this story could have had a much different ending,” he said.

Members of the team include:

- Mark Davis, **Dodge City**, Superintendent
- Max Dirks, **Hays**, Superintendent
- Jason Gerstner, **Hays**, Equipment Operator
- Jerry Glassman, **Oakley**, Superintendent
- Larry Kjellberg, **Ness City**, Equipment Operator Specialist
- Burke Koehn, **Scott City**, Equipment Operator Specialist
- Jason Lawrence, **Dighton**, Equipment Operator Senior
- Brent Little, **Hays**, Equipment Operator
- Dave Marsh, **Syracuse**, Supervisor
- Ron Munyan, **Syracuse**, Superintendent
- Tom Plummer, **Oakley**, Engineering Technician
- Tim Weigel, **Hays**, Supervisor

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