



Bureau of Transportation Information
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NEWS RELEASE

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Policy for use of cable median barrier implemented by KDOT

Cable barriers designed to reduce the chances of vehicles crossing narrow medians into the path of oncoming traffic will be installed on stretches of highway in Shawnee and Sedgwick counties.

Two locations – just north of Topeka on U.S. 75 and on K-96 near Wichita – were selected using guidelines developed through extensive research by the University of Nebraska’s Dr. Dean Sicking, one of the nation’s foremost experts on roadside safety, and input from the Kansas Department of Transportation.

“Cable median barriers have been used successfully in other states as a way to reduce crashes resulting from vehicles crossing medians on divided highways and striking oncoming traffic,” said KDOT Deputy Secretary for Engineering Jerry Younger.

From 2002 through 2006, the time period examined in developing the guidelines, there were 115 cross-median crashes in Kansas and 19 of those involved fatalities. Such crashes

represent only three-tenths of one percent of all crashes in Kansas during the study period.

“We have a small percentage of cross-median crashes because most freeways in Kansas have broad, flat medians. Kansas medians are designed to allow a driver to regain control of a vehicle before it crosses into opposing lanes,” Younger said. “As a result, there are very few sections of four-lane, divided freeway in Kansas we will consider for this treatment.

“The new guidelines allow KDOT to use cable median barriers in a way that is cost-effective and makes sense in Kansas.”

Every three years, KDOT engineers will develop a new list of potential locations for cable median barriers based on calculations and the most current data.

Based on a survey of other states, the average cost of installing their cable barrier is \$125,000 a mile. The cost of maintenance in those states ranges from \$312 to \$1,000 per impact.

The mile-long Shawnee County project, which is located on US-75 from approximately 25th to 35th streets, will be installed in the spring of 2010. The four-mile Sedgwick County project on K-96 from Interstate 135 to Rock Road is expected to be installed in late 2010.

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