

## NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 17, 2007

07-301

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Contact: Steve Swartz, (785) 296-3585

## **KDOT reviewing crossover crashes**

Traffic engineers at the Kansas Department of Transportation are reviewing crash reports and agency policy related to median barriers following several crossover crashes in the past week.

Five people have died in three crashes (two in Johnson County and one in McPherson County) since Saturday when vehicles traveled across medians and struck oncoming traffic.

KDOT's policy has been to design highways, where possible, with wide, open medians to give drivers who have gone off the road enough area in which to regain control. Concrete barriers generally are used when the medians are less than 50-feet wide. The medians that were crossed in the three crashes of the past week ranged in width from 60 to more than 80 feet.

"The wide medians have been effective at minimizing crossover crashes," said KDOT Assistant Secretary and State Transportation Engineer Jerry Younger.

"But in light of the tragic crashes of the past week, we are reviewing records to determine if crossover incidents are increasing in the Kansas City metro area and elsewhere on roads that have open medians."

Younger noted that traffic volumes and speeds have increased in the metro area.

"We will try to determine if the safety benefit of a wide median has diminished and, if so, has it diminished to the point that additional safety features should be considered," he said.

###