

NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation news release

July 9, 2008

08-239

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Contact: Kristen Brands (785) 877-3315 or Steve Swartz (785) 296-3585

Snow gates installed along I-70 in Western Kansas

It may be typical July weather in Western Kansas, but blizzards are on the minds of Kansas Department of Transportation officials this week.

Crews are installing a series of gates along Interstate 70 from Russell to the Colorado line that will enhance safety and efficiency when the inevitable winter storm requires that the road be closed. The gates, which resemble those at railroad crossings, are being installed along westbound lanes at Russell, Hays, WaKeeney, Oakley, Colby and Goodland. In past years, KDOT crews have manually placed barricades across the interstate. In some extreme conditions, the signs could be blown over.

In most situations, a law enforcement officer will continue to be stationed at the gates to allow local traffic to pass through the off-set gates, located on either side of the highway, if weather and road conditions allow safe passage.

“This will allow us to close the highway quicker when blizzards are moving in,” said District Maintenance Engineer Jerry Moritz of KDOT’s Norton office. “And, it will also be safer for travelers and our workers.”

The gates, which are equipped with warning lights, have been tested at the University of Nebraska and are similar to those used in Wyoming. Travelers will be alerted by signs two to three miles in advance that the gates are down and the highway is closed.

The estimated cost of the gates is \$126,500.