

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **U.S. 69 four-lane expansion celebrated;**

### **Preliminary engineering work announced for highway**

Kansas Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller and area officials dedicated the expanded 55-mile stretch of U.S. 69 between Louisburg and Fort Scott on Wednesday at a new safety rest area in Linn County.

Secretary Miller also announced that the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will begin the initial development phase of extending the U.S. 69 four-lane expansion from Fort Scott south to Arma.

“I know none of us want to see the major improvements to this highway end here,” Miller told those gathered at the ceremony. “Although no construction funds are available for this project at this time, we are putting the additional stretch of U.S. 69 into the pipeline for preliminary engineering work.”

The dedication of the four-lane freeway, which is in the final phases of construction, took place at the new safety rest area near the community of Trading Post. The soon-to-be opened rest area houses interpretive displays about the history and natural attractions of the region. US-69 is designated as the Frontier Military Scenic Byway and is being promoted by the Kansas Lottery and artist Stan Herd.

Construction began in 2002 on the first of the eight U.S. 69 expansion projects. All eight projects were included the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) passed by the Kansas

Legislature in 1999. The 10-year CTP ended in June with the letting of the K-61 expansion project in McPherson County.

KDOT officials expect the U.S. 69 expansion to be completely open to four-lane traffic by late August 2009. The controlled-access freeway includes nine new interchanges. More than a quarter of a billion dollars was invested in the improved highway.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., Second Floor West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice) (TTY).