

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ben Vidricksen at 9:05 a.m. on January 28, 1998 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Mark Gilstrap

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes
Marian Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dean Carlson, Secretary, Department of Transportation
Emerson Lynn, Editor & Publisher, **Iola Register**
Dave Burnett, Exec. Dir. SE KS Planning Comm.
Joe Scammey, Montgomery Co. Commissioner
Bob Ortiz, Ft. Scott, Area CofC

Others attending: See attached list

Transportation issues.

Mid-America, Inc. Transportation Committee - Southeast Kansas Highway Supporters were welcomed as were all others who are interested in developing a comprehensive transportation plan for the state. Chairman Vidricksen explained that most House Transportation Committee members were unable to attend due to the death of Representative Long. A few House members did attend. The Chair cited the Kansas State University study, "Economic Impact of the Kansas Comprehensive Highway Program," demonstrating the economic benefits from the Program which has been in effect. To obtain a copy of this report, please contact the Kansas Department of Transportation, Office of Public Information, 7th floor, Docking State Office Building, Topeka, Kansas, 66612-1568 or phone (785) 296-3585 (Voice) (TDD). Senator Vidricksen volunteered to meet with groups who are interested in working to pass a new program, reminding them that a means for funding the program must be an integral part of any plan to be presented to the legislature.

Secretary Carlson extended his welcome and appreciation to the group and added his positive comments on the Kansas State study, especially regarding economic benefits. He explained the circumstances leading to KDOT having funds to continue some highway programs for the next four years. He feels Kansas should fare well in terms of federal funds in the foreseeable future. Discussed several aspects of federal funds. Secretary Carlson, stating KDOT wishes to be a part of the solution, extended an invitation to everyone to contact his office with their problems and concerns. They are always happy to attend local forums and help in problem solving. Highway 400 in Southeast Kansas is still being worked and should be finished in 1999. (No written testimony).

Members introduced themselves to attendees. All of the following conferees spoke of their appreciation for what has already been done regarding highways in their region.

Emerson Lynn, Editor, Iola Register, reminded attendees that it was in 1987-88 when the Highways for Progress Committee was organized in southeast Kansas under the leadership of Bob Whittaker. They started the ball rolling that eventually created the 1989 program. He emphasized that in southeast Kansas they are still as dedicated to a good highway system for the state as they were then. At this time their mission is very simple and that is to find out what this Committee and the Legislature have in mind. They pledge their support for a program and promise to organize a grass roots campaign again to support additional taxes necessary to have a new meaningful program. He introduced Dave Burnett, Exec. Director, Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission.

Dave Burnett asked for a change in thinking regarding southeast Kansas - "think four-lanes." A key ingredient necessary to the continued growth and economic development of southeast Kansas is a four lane interstate quality highway to link it to its metropolitan neighbors. He addressed the need to begin without further delay (Attachment 1).

Joe Scammey urged development of a new program, especially four lane highways. Referred to use of a fuel (user's) tax as part of funding mechanism (Attachment 2).

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM, Room 254-E,
Statehouse, at 9:05 a.m. on January 28, 1998.

Individuals and members of several other groups supporting highway improvements were also present. They did not present written testimony. Some of their comments are as follows: Bob Ortiz, Ft. Scott Area

Chamber of Commerce, suggested everyone should really examine the Kansas State University Report. It explains their experience. Pittsburg State is the only state university without access to a four lane highway. Highways 69 and 54 certainly have problems. Highway 400 is great but Highway 39 connecting to it needs to be looked at. Darrel Roe, Montgomery County Action Council, Montgomery, Kansas advised they have two corridors, US 75 and 169, with related problems. From Caney, Kansas they can see what Oklahoma is doing on US 75. Tourism needs good roads to enhance safety for tourists. A representative for Kansans for Good Roads Association, Dan Coulter reported similar problems and needs; Gene Chambers, City Commissioner, Parsons and Pittsburg State University retiree, spoke to the problems on 169 in their area. Mr. Chambers feels Parsons needs bypasses - otherwise Highway 400 will be a real bottleneck.

Interested parties were reminded that in light of the type of tax legislation being considered for tax cutting, they need to look at the structure of the tax system if they expect to have funding for a comprehensive transportation program.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 29, 1998 in the regular meeting room - 254-E.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: JANUARY 28, 1998

NAME	REPRESENTING
Don Cowby	Division of the Budget
Dick Heisler	Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers
MILTON L. LOWMASTER	MONTGOMERY COUNTY
JOE SCAMMEY	MONTGOMERY CO.
E. DALE McBRIDE	LABETTE CO.
Kent Thompson	Allen Co.
John McRae	Iola, Ks
Jean Barber	Allen County
Hon. Rubeen State Rep.	
Dick Works	Allen County
Sherrill L. Ruelof	Allen County
Richard G. DORAN	City of Garnett
Darrell M. Williams	City of Oswego
Bob Corkins	Ks. Chamber of Commerce & Ind.
ROBERT WEISS	CITY OF OSWEGO
Darrel Poe	Montgomery County
John Petersen	Montgomery County Action Council
Branch Key, Ch.	Montgomery Co. Commission
FRED OSBORN	INDEPENDENCE CHAMBER OF COMM.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: JANUARY 28, 1998

NAME	REPRESENTING
Christy Caldwell	Topeka Chamber of Comm.
Bennie Koch	Wichita Area Chamber
Wanda By	Wessexha, ks
Tom Nichol	Neodesha, Ks
Kris Maple	Wilson County
Forrest Strickland	CHerryvale M.G.CO.
Ed Mulcahy	Transystems Corporation Independence, KS
Jacqueline Daker	Independence, Ks.
Darla Price	KDOC + H
Mark Barce / Tina	KDOC + H
Edward R. Moses	Ks. Agg. Prod. Assn
Shawn Coulter	Ks. Good Roads
B.B. Totten	Ks Contractors Assn
Tom Whitaker	Ks MOTOR CARRIERS Assn
Timothy Paris	Kansas, Inc.
Paul Sasse	City of Independence
Lynne Stewart	Parsons Chamber of Comm.
Toni Pollmiller	City of Parsons
A. Gene Chambers	City of Parsons

SEKRPC
MEMORANDUM

to: Members of the Kansas Senate and House Transportation Committees

from: David T. Burnett, Executive Director
Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission
Chanute, Kansas

subject: *After the Southeast Kansas Corridor (HWY 96/400) is complete...then what???*

date: January 28, 1998

Honorable Members of the Senate and House Highway Committees:

On behalf of the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission (SEKRPC), I want to thank Senator Vidrickson, Emerson Lynn, Jr. and others who have helped make this meeting possible. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present our point of view.

The completion of the Southeast Kansas (SEK) US 400/KS 96 Corridor is rapidly approaching. Based on my conversations with county, community, business and development leaders across the region, it is vital to the prosperity and growth of the region that no momentum is lost in the development and implementation of the next Comprehensive Highway Program. Although the "Super 2" highway from Wichita to I-44 is a tremendous improvement in transportation in the region, we must continue to address several major highway deficiencies that continue to plague the region and its 205,000 citizens.

1. The region is strategically located between Kansas City, Joplin, Topeka and Wichita. The heart of the region is almost equidistant from each of these metropolitan areas. Yet, there are no four lane highway links that pass through Southeast Kansas to any of these cities.
2. The most recent industrial recruitment prospect notice from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing requested that economic developers provide proposals to a plastic extrusion firm interested in finding a location for 125-150 jobs, possibly in Kansas. One of the criteria for site selection was proximity to an interstate highway. This is not an uncommon site selection requirement.

Southeast Kansas has done a phenomenal job of attracting high quality companies to the region. Cessna, Bag Craft, American Insulated Wire, Gates Rubber, Russell Stover and dozens of other firms are examples of those efforts. Yet, with all of the progress, Southeast Kansas continues to lag behind the rest of the state in several key economic growth areas. We have made substantial progress, but we began with a lot of ground to make up. One key ingredient necessary to the continued growth and economic development of Southeast Kansas is a four lane interstate quality highway link to its metropolitan neighbors.

Members of the Senate and House Transportation Committees

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3. Oklahoma realizes how important it is to have a four-lane link to Southeast Kansas. Oklahoma has committed to providing convenient four-lane routes from Tulsa to the Kansas state line. Do we want our Southeast Kansas jobs to be taken by "Okies" ???
4. Key state highway routes in the region are narrow, have no shoulder areas, or require passage over antiquated WPA bridges. These are dangerous for those who must commute to nearby towns to work. These are dangerous for the aging population that must travel these routes to purchase groceries and other goods, or to visit their doctor. These are a limiting force on the economic growth of the region.
5. I respectfully suggest that basing funding decisions in our region on existing traffic counts is inappropriate. There are people that drive US 71 to and from Joplin that would drive on a Kansas highway, buy Kansas gas, eat at Kansas restaurants and shop at Kansas stores if a four-lane Kansas route was available to them. There are people that travel I-35 and the Kansas Turnpike to Oklahoma City that would drive on a Southeast Kansas highway, buy Southeast Kansas gas, eat at Southeast Kansas restaurants and shop at Southeast Kansas stores if a four-lane route through Southeast Kansas was available to them.

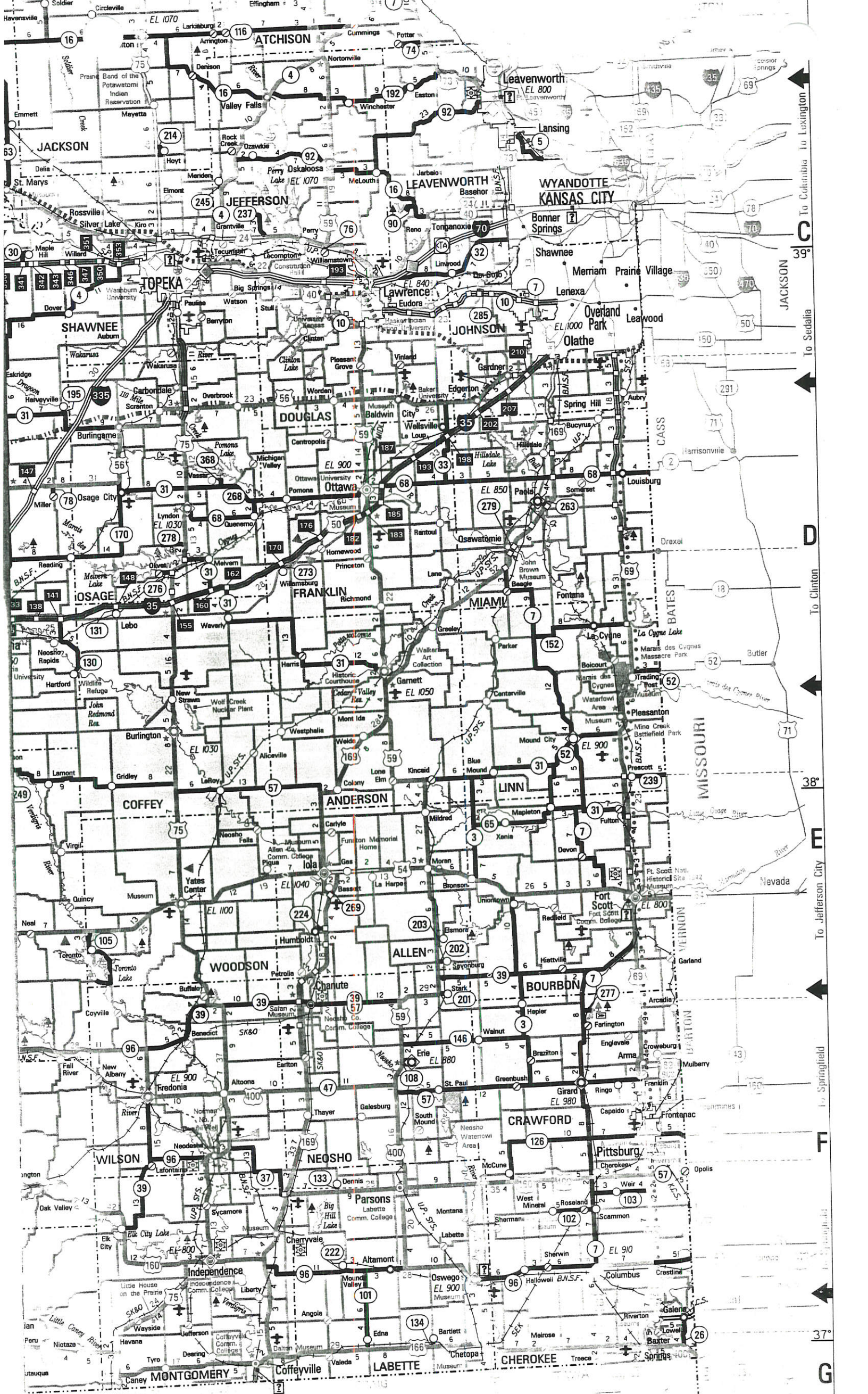
The shortest route from Topeka to Tulsa, from Kansas City to Oklahoma City, and from Omaha to Dallas is directly through the heart of Southeast Kansas. I believe that the reason that we do not have sufficient traffic counts to meet the present four-lane criteria is that many folks would prefer to take the extra time and drive the extra miles on a four-lane highway. Many people, like myself, just don't want to have to dodge the farm equipment, school zones, and 30-miles-per-hour small town traffic.

In the absence of a feasible mass transportation strategy, the highway system is required to serve the needs of the business community, the elderly, the commuter, the trucker, the farmer, the retailer, the tourist, and the inn-keeper. Even with the improvements of the recent Comprehensive Highway Program, these needs are not being adequately served in Southeast Kansas. On behalf of SEKRPC and its twelve member counties, I urge you to act now to begin the next Comprehensive Highway Program. The longer you wait, the further behind we get. The high cost of lagging futher behind is more than the taxpayers of Kansas can afford to pay.

Respectfully Submitted,



David T. Burnett
Executive Director



To: Joint Senate and House Transportation committees meeting on
January 28, 1998

In November, at the Kansas Counties meeting in Wichita, Governor Bill Graves offered ways the State and Counties could "partner" for the future.

We want to thank the Governor and Secretary of Transportation E. Dean Carlson as they work toward the completion of the largest public works program in Kansas history. The 3.12 billion dollar, eight year comprehensive Highway Program has already accomplished:

- Growth in Economic Development
- Reduced Travel Time
- Increased Safety of Travel
- Reduced Highway Maintenance

The program reflects how far we were behind in maintaining the Highway system.

Southeast Kansas is here today to begin the "Partnership" for the future Comprehensive Highway Program. One, that would provide a super four-lane north/south highway through Southeast Kansas, generally between I-35 and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Thank you for this joint meeting.



Joe Scammey
Montgomery County Commissioner