

SESSION OF 2009

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 274**

As Recommended by Senate Committee on  
Transportation

**Brief\***

SB 274, the Kansas Scenic and Heritage Backroads Act, would establish the Kansas Scenic and Heritage Backroads Program. The Program's purpose would be to promote and enhance tourism while increasing the understanding and appreciation of the state's heritage, using local designated routes that are not part of the state highway system. The Program also would show the importance of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the state's scenic, historic, and cultural resources.

A route to be designated as a Kansas scenic and heritage backroad would be required to meet these qualifications:

- It must use public county roads with an asphalt, rock, or dirt surface that can be traveled in a passenger car;
- It must be clearly defined, with a starting and ending point; and
- It must have at least one exceptional or distinctive scenic, natural, historical, cultural, archaeological, or recreational quality.

The Act would require documentation of local support and involvement. Applicants would be required to create an appropriate brochure, with a map, of the designated route. Applications for the designation of a local route as a Kansas scenic and heritage backroad would be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation on a form approved by the Secretary.

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\*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The bill would give the Secretary of Transportation the following additional responsibilities:

- Providing signage at an intersection of a state or U.S. highway and a scenic and heritage backroad;
- Indicating the scenic and heritage backroads on the official state transportation map; and
- Providing a link on the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT's) official website to the website of the county in which the scenic and heritage backroad is located.

The Secretary would be authorized to accept and administer donations to aid in obtaining and installing signs for the Program, and to adopt rules and regulations necessary for the program.

The Department of Commerce also would be required to provide a link from its official travel and tourism website to the website of the county in which the scenic and heritage backroad is located.

## **Background**

Senator Janis Lee presented testimony in support of the bill, as did representatives of Osborne County Tourism. Those representatives said Osborne County has established two heritage backroad routes based on the books *Sod & Stubble* and *Sod-House Days*, and local volunteers have raised money for and erected interpretive markers along those routes. They said state assistance is needed to make potential tourists aware of the routes.

Written testimony in support of the bill was received from representatives of the Lucas Area Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Kansas Travel Council, and the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Planning Committee. The Senate Transportation Committee also received written testimony

supporting the bill from a member of The Kansas Sampler Foundation Board of Directors.

KDOT's State Scenic Byway Coordinator presented neutral testimony on the bill. He stated the agency has concerns about the mapping requirement and possible inclusion of unmaintained roads.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget, KDOT expected additional costs for signs and anticipated a possible need for additional staff or consultants. Costs for the signs would range from \$680 to \$3,100, depending on the location of the intersection of the designated route with the state highway system. The agency could not determine exact increases in costs because the potential usage of the Program was unknown when the fiscal note was prepared.