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Around the District

Construction projects abound through District 4. It is the busiest construction season District 4 has ever had! Every county has projects in process. Review some of the most [current projects for your county](#) that are under construction.

40 Highway Bridge is New Again

Seems like only a few weeks ago we were standing in the dark waiting for that first rumble as the Route 40 bridge fell.

On July 11, a contractor brought the bridge down into the roadway below with a carefully planned charge. Since then, crews have cleaned up, [recycled](#) and replaced the structure. Crews have been working at a speedy pace the past few weeks, with most of the work focused on the bridge over I-435 and new pavement on either side of the bridge. Traffic will again be driving over the Route 40 bridge by October 6. The entire interchange should be open in November.



This bridge project is part of the larger [ARRA-funded I-435 expansion](#). Motorists will be able to reach the stadiums from the north, south and west. New access at I-435 and Route 40 will better use that highway. Long ramps will handle event-day traffic and this new intersection will offer new access to the stadiums.

Once the bridge is open, crews will shift focus to completing the additional auxiliary lanes on the outside of I-435 in both directions. Drivers will also see some minor work on the south side of I-70 in preparation to rebuild the Blue Ridge Cutoff, or George Brett Bridge over I-70, which is scheduled to begin this winter. The bridge will be removed and replaced by the Kansas City Royals home opening game on March 31.

For complete details, including updated photos and a video of the Route 40 bridge explosion, log onto www.modot.org/kc and click "Major Projects."

Motorists Choice: Bike, Walk or Drive

Last spring, the Heart of America Bridge began the transition from a motorist-only bridge to a multi-use Missouri river crossing with paths for bikes and pedestrians.

When completed in October, there will be a barrier-separated bike and pedestrian path on Route 9 extending from 10th Avenue in North Kansas City to 3rd Street in Kansas City. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for Oct. 1.

MoDOT will use two existing bridges that can be reconfigured to provide enough room for cars, trucks, avid cyclists and more casual bicyclists and pedestrians. In tandem with this project, [the Chouteau Bridge](#) is also under rehabilitation.

MoDOT plans to retrofit the 8-year old bridge as part of already-scheduled bridge work. The department will use existing pedestrian access to provide



more opportunities for both foot and pedal traffic.

When complete by 2010, the Chouteau and Heart of America bridges will help Kansas City achieve its goal of a phased network of 600 miles of on-street bicycle routes within the city.

For more information, check out the [project page](#) on www.modot.org/kc under "Major Projects."

Speedy No. 50

U.S. Route 50 stretches through more than 3,000 miles from coast to coast. In Missouri, it is a critical artery from Kansas City to St. Louis. Several projects to widen, improve and smooth this roadway have been undertaken through the years.

Right now, outside of Lone Jack, MoDOT crews are working on a new full-diamond interchange to accommodate westbound Route 50 and a new bridge to carry Bynum Road/Route 150 traffic over the highway. Adding a bridge and ramps on westbound Route 50 at Bynum brings the crossroads to modern interchange standards and provides safer local access in all directions.



Last month, the contractor completed the bridge, the barrier wall on the bridge, more than half of the new pavement on Bynum north and south of the bridge, half of the new on-and off- ramp from Bynum down to the new lanes of 50, and half of the tie-in to existing 50 on the west end. Crews expect to open the new bridge and remove the crossovers by Sept. 17. The project is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and is on schedule to open Dec. 1.

This is one of several projects to improve this corridor just in the past few years. MoDOT improved Route 50 from St. Martins in Cole County to west of California in Moniteau County with 11 miles of new four lane highway.

MoDOT also recently hosted a public hearing on plans to construct a new four-lane divided highway from the Route 50/63 junction to County Road 604 west of Linn – a project which could start as early as 2012.

For more information on the Route 50 and Bynum project, visit www.modot.org/kc

Curbing Some Questions on Route 150

Route 150 will open up two westbound lanes at White Avenue in the next few weeks and residents and commuters are looking forward to a smooth transition from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane parkway.

As construction continues, we've heard a lot of questions about "why this design?" A big motivator for the redesign, style and configuration of this new roadway can be summed up in one word: Safety.



Did you know, when compared to similar routes in the state, the existing Route 150 project corridor has an accident rate that is almost double the statewide average? In fact, from 2003 to 2007, there were more than 520 reported vehicle crashes along the project corridor, including five fatalities and 21 disabling injuries. The original design is more than 80 years old and doesn't consider the growth in traffic. The new design however will enhance roadway safety for decades.

A large factor in the accident rates are street and driveway intersections where left turns are allowed. As traffic volumes continue to increase in the future, left turns in and out of driveways will become more time consuming, and increasingly hazardous. Allowing a combination of safer right turns and nearby U-turns will actually *reduce* travel times. Raised medians routinely reduce accidents by 37 percent and injury rates by 48 percent.

Public involvement in 2006 and 2007 also impacted the new design. MoDOT held several public meetings and asked for comments on this stretch of roadway. Meeting participants commented that Route 150 should be more than just a highway. In fact, they requested a consistent, parkway-like appearance that includes elements similar to other area parkways including walkability, bike and pedestrian accommodations, lighting and medians. You can review the meeting handouts [on the project page](#).

This project will be completed in stages, with the entire corridor finished in 2012. The first phase, from Route 71 to Lumpkins Fork is on schedule to be complete in December 2010.

For complete details, click the Route 150 link under "Major Projects" on www.modot.org/kc

Making Way on Route 13

What started as a blank canvas is now home to a sweeping stretch of highway that will greatly improve traffic flow from Lexington to Warrensburg. Two projects on Route 13 will be wrapping up in the next few weeks.



The Route 13 "Gap" project will send traffic to the east of the City of Lexington, separating through and local traffic. In fact, the Lexington Gap is on schedule to open in the first weeks of October.

The first leg of a new Route 13 east of Warrensburg, known as the East Loop, will move through-traffic away from stop-and-go congestion in downtown Warrensburg. A completed [roundabout at Route DD](#) on the East Loop is already open to traffic.

These projects were designed to reduce congestion on the existing Route 13, and assist economic development. Both projects have hit some major milestones this summer, and paving is in full swing on both roadways.

Both projects are funded through voter-approved Amendment 3 funds, a proposal to put more state funds on the roads for smoother, safer and sooner projects.

For complete details on both Route 13 projects, including updated photos and live web-cam views, visit www.modot.org/kc

Good-Bye Shoo-Flies, Hello Paseo Boulevard

Motorists traveling Interstate 29/35 to and from the northeast corner of Kansas City's Downtown Loop to Armour Road in North Kansas City are experiencing fewer twists and turns, improved access and a smoother ride.

In August, northbound travelers were shifted to new pavement from 16th Avenue to just north of Armour Road, and from the Downtown Loop to north of the Paseo Boulevard. Southbound travelers were shifted to the new interstate bridge over Front Street, eliminating the curvy shoo-fly ramp.



"Although not something motorists typically experience on an interstate, the shoo-fly ramps did enable us to keep the Front Street interchange open while we constructed the new bridge," said kcICON Project Director Brian Kidwell. Completion of the new single-point urban interchange at Front Street is an important part of the City of Kansas City and the Port Authority's long-range plan to further develop the riverfront area.

Before September's end, northbound travelers will cross the new interstate bridge over Front Street, eliminating the shoo-fly ramp. Additionally, the northbound and southbound I-29/35 ramps to and from Paseo Boulevard will be complete, restoring interstate access to Route 24, commonly known as Independence Avenue. Asphalt overlay work will provide a smoother driving surface from Independence Avenue to Oak Street, and will be complete by the end of September.

"The question I get most often is, 'When will I get to cross the river on the new bridge?'" said Kidwell. Kansas City's newest landmark, the Christopher S. Bond Bridge, will carry some northbound traffic over the Missouri River before the end of October. "We know the excitement is building, and we appreciate everyone's patience as Paseo Corridor Constructors' crews continue to work hard to meet or beat our project completion date of July 2011," said Kidwell.

For complete details on this project, visit www.kcicon.com.

Survey Says More Teens Buckling Up, but the Battle of the Belt Continues

The good news: More Missouri teens are buckling up. According to the results of the [latest statewide seat belt survey](#), teen seat belt use is up to 66 percent from 61 percent.

Unfortunately, that means 34 percent still aren't wearing their seat belts and are at a greater risk to get injured or killed in traffic crashes. That's why Missouri high schools are invited to compete in the 2010 Battle of the Belt Challenge for an opportunity to win cash and prizes while increasing their school seat belt use.

**ARRIVE
ALIVE**

Young drivers are overrepresented in crashes both nationwide and in Missouri. Of all 2009 Missouri traffic crashes, 24 percent involved a young driver (under age 21). Of all fatal traffic crashes, 17 percent involved a young driver. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15-20 years old.

The statewide competition will run Oct. 4 to Nov. 19 to educate young drivers about safety belt use, reduce traffic crash injuries and save teen lives. The program consists of two surprise seat belt checks at each high school to measure student seat belt usage before and after an educational campaign on the importance of safety belt use. In addition, schools have the opportunity to submit a 30-second video spot aimed at encouraging their peers to buckle up. Statewide and regional cash prizes are awarded to schools reaching high safety belt usage rates.

If you have a teen driver in your house, encourage them to sign up their local high school to take on the Battle of the Belt Challenge by completing a participation agreement form online at saveMOLives.com by Oct. 1. For more information on Battle of the Belt, visit saveMOLives.com.