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KDOT crews preparing for winter

When winter weather knocks on Kansas' door, crews for the Kansas Department of Transportation will be ready.

This year KDOT is adding two new snow fighting machines to its arsenal: the tow plow. These tow plows, which are 26-foot-long and attached to a dump truck, will be housed in Colby and Olathe.

"KDOT will assess the performance of the tow plow in these two different environments and that will help determine where future units will provide the best results," said Clay Adams, KDOT Bureau Chief of Maintenance. "Olathe was chosen because of the high traffic volumes and urban area. Colby was chosen to see how well the tow plow would do on open stretches of highway that are often subjected to high winds and drifting."

When the tow plow is in use it will swing out the right side taking up a full lane, allowing a single operator to plow two lanes of highway in one pass. Drivers need to be patient when following a tow plow; they are doing twice as much work as a single plow truck. They also should be aware when passing a snow plow because other trucks have wing plows that extend. Check out the video showing how the tow plow works at <http://bit.ly/1MGWbVn>.

"Other states have been operating tow plows for several years and it has been proven to be an effective tool in snow fighting," Adams said. "KDOT provides snow fighter training every year across the state on the best practices when plowing and

spreading material. This year is no different; our staff is trained and ready to respond to what winter will bring us.”

To know the conditions before venturing out, Kansas travelers can obtain route-specific road conditions and weather by calling 5-1-1 within the state or (866) 511- 5368 from out of state. The same information and more can be obtained by visiting the KanDrive website, <http://www.kandrive.org>, which has maps and camera views of the state.

Those planning to travel during or after a storm should follow these safety tips:

- Completely clean frost and snow off all windows, mirrors, and lights, and use headlights to provide optimum visibility.
- Slow down, accelerate and brake gently, and increase following distance between other vehicles.
- Don't use cruise control.
- Allow for more travel time.
- Always wear a seat belt, and secure children in the proper child safety seats.
- Slow down and move over for stopped emergency vehicles and maintenance crews.
- If possible, remain in your vehicle, and remain buckled up, that way if a crash would occur involving your car or another vehicle nearby, you are more protected than if you are out in the roadway or even on the shoulder.
- If involved in a traffic crash, or need assistance, call 911, or contact the Kansas Highway Patrol at *47 (*HP) from a cell phone. Call *582 (*KTA) on the Kansas Turnpike.

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