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For immediate release

Tuesday, June 20 2006

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KANSAS' INTERSTATE SYSTEM TURNS 50 YEARS OLD, REMAINS CRITICAL LINK IN STATE'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, SAVING EACH KANSAS RESIDENT NEARLY \$1,900 ANNUALLY IN SAFETY BENEFITS, SAVED TIME, REDUCED FUEL AND LOWER CONSUMER COSTS

BENEFITS OF INTERSTATE SYSTEM MAY ERODE OVER TIME UNLESS STATE CAN FUND NEEDED INTERSTATE REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Topeka, June 20, 2006 – For the last 50 years, Kansas' Interstate Highway System has remained the most critical link in the state's transportation network, saving Kansas residents \$5.2 billion annually - \$1,885 per person- in safety benefits, saved time, reduced fuel and lower consumer costs. But some of the benefits of the Interstate Highway System may erode over time, unless the state can fund needed Interstate repairs and improvements, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

The TRIP report, entitled "Saving Lives, Time and Money: A report on the condition, impact, use and future needs of Kansas' Interstate Highway System," estimates that the additional safety features of the Interstate Highway System have saved approximately 2,600 lives in Kansas since 1956. In addition to saving lives, improved traffic safety provided by the Interstate system saves each Kansan \$120 annually (\$329 million statewide) in reduced healthcare costs and costs associated with lost productivity due to traffic crashes. Kansas' Interstate Highway System also saves the average resident \$468 annually (\$1.3 billion statewide) in the value of saved time and fuel, and saves \$1,297 per resident (\$3.5 billion statewide) in reduced consumer costs for apparel, food, housing and transportation.

"Kansas' Interstate's have provided tremendous safety, time and economic benefits over the last 50 years. But, without an additional investment in maintaining and expanding the system, the state may see some of those benefits slip away," said William M. Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

Kansas faces a significant challenge in rebuilding its aging Interstate system and providing additional lane capacity to meet growing travel demands. Traffic congestion is likely to get significantly worse in Kansas unless the state can fund needed congestion-relief projects. Travel on Kansas' Interstate highways is expected to increase by 55 percent by the year 2026. Currently, 25 percent of Kansas' urban Interstates are congested. If the state's urban Interstate highways are not widened, 59 percent of Kansas' urban Interstate highways will be congested during peak periods by the year 2016 and 72 percent will be congested by 2026. According to KDOT over the next 10 years, approximately 150 miles of Kansas' Interstate system will need to be significantly rehabilitated or reconstructed and approximately 220 Interstate bridges will need either significant repair or reconstruction.

Two percent of Kansas' Interstate bridges are structurally deficient and an additional 21 percent are rated functionally obsolete. Nine percent of Kansas' Interstate pavements are in mediocre condition.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Kansas' 874-mile Interstate system, which includes one percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 24 percent of all vehicle travel in the state.
- Kansas's Interstate highways have saved approximately 2,600 lives in Kansas since 1956. The number of lives saved by the Interstate was calculated by estimating the additional fatalities that would have occurred had Interstate traffic been carried by other major roadways in the state, which have higher traffic fatality rates. Kansas's Interstate system has saved an average of 80 lives per year over the last 10 years, based on the above criteria.
- Since Interstate construction began in 1956, total vehicle miles of travel in Kansas increased by 197 percent. Since that time, the number of vehicles in the state has increased by 118 percent and the state's population has increased by 32 percent.
- Because it reduces travel times and provides more direct routes, the Interstate system saves each Kansas resident 29 hours of travel time annually - 80 million hours statewide. Kansas' Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 38 million gallons.