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Important Transportation Projects in Eastern Jackson County

As citizens of the Show-Me State, we interact on a daily basis and in a variety of ways with our state government. Since our daily lives are impacted so directly by these dealings, I think it is important to spend some time discussing some of the state's departments and the services they provide.

Perhaps the department that we interact with the most in a typical week is the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) as we travel up and down state built and maintained highways and bridges. MoDOT is charged with making sure this state's roads and bridges are in good condition to help you get to where you need to be. That's no easy task when you consider the folks there are charged with maintaining 32,464 miles of highways, the seventh largest system in the nation. They also have to take care of 10,224 bridges and 55 major river bridges — the most in the nation. Despite the size of the task, new leadership at MoDOT is making a positive difference and I am encouraged about the future of this department.

MoDOT is working hard on a number of local projects here in Eastern Jackson County. As you travel around this summer you might want to be aware of these. For example, work along Route 291 includes some lane and ramp closures at the I-70 intersection through early August along with closures on a section between Route 40 and the Little Blue River through late August. In addition, some southbound construction and related traffic issues will be seen on Route 291 between Bayberry Lane and Oldham Parkway, as well as northbound Route 291 traffic issues between Oldham Parkway and the exit ramp to westbound Route 50. There's a bridge rehabilitation project that will close some lanes of Route 50 in either direction between Todd George Road and the west junction of Route 50/291 that is scheduled to be completed in September. Also, a bridge replacement will reduce Route 150 to one-lane traffic over Big Creek and the Union Pacific Railroad in Greenwood through November.

Some other major projects in the works include work on the I-470/Pryor Road half-diamond interchange and the I-470/Blue Parkway project. Another project just in the early planning stages now is the I-470/Strother Road interchange. As you can see, there are plenty of orange cones going up in our area so please be careful driving in these construction zones.

If you have any questions about road construction in the Kansas City area, contact the Lee's Summit office at (816) 622-6500, or call MoDOT's statewide toll-free number: 1-888- ASK MODOT (275-6636).

Next week we'll turn our focus from strictly local projects and talk more about MoDOT's statewide mission. Until then, if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.