

Aug. 25, 2008 – Southeast Kansas Collaborative Meeting

I was thrilled with the collaborative spirit I saw and heard Monday at a regional transportation workshop in Chanute.

More than 70 people participated in the workshop, which was held by Southeast Kansas, Inc. The organization is gathering input to help the Southeast Kansas Inc. Transportation Council develop a position statement about the transportation needs of southeast Kansas.

The workshop occurred at a crucial time for those concerned about our state's transportation network. Kansas is launching a task force to craft a new strategic transportation approach. The task force, Transportation-Leveraging Investments in Kansas (T-LINK), is scheduled to hold a local consult meeting Sept. 26 in Pittsburg.

Workshop facilitator Terry Woodbury, with Kansas Communities LLC, said collaboration can seem like an unnatural act for humans. But he said government, business and other pillars of civilization can't function in isolation. "In collaboration we figure out how to do things together that we can't do separately," he said.

Dean Mann, a T-LINK member and chair of the Southeast Kansas Inc. Transportation Council, said he was pleased that 75 people came to talk about their transportation priorities. "With everyone hearing everyone else you are able to develop a better list of priorities," he said.

Also attending were Senator Dwayne Umbarger and Representatives Richard Proehl, Shirley Palmer, and Julie Menghini.

-from Julie Lorenz, Director of Public Affairs, KDOT