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Southwest Kansas Coalition Looks To Improve Highways

Leaders from Liberal, Garden City, and Dodge City met Monday night with a common goal of improving the region's roads.

When KDOT asks people how they feel about Highway 50 going west of Garden City, he got a common response.

“The answer we got was, ‘you know that road scares me,’” said Larry Thompson with KDOT.

He hears the same reaction about Highway 83 where drivers feel they're taking chances with their safety when they have to pass on the two-lane road. And that's the reason why Liberal, Garden City and Dodge City leaders met Monday night to discuss the transportation in the region and what can be done to improve it.

"Long term this group is advocating for four-lane highways throughout southwest Kansas on 54, 83, and 50," said Matt Allen, city manager for Garden City.

City leaders say it's not just about safety – it's about the future success of the region as the highways provide a route for reliable transportation of goods.

“Transportation of those resources relies on roads and right now, the rural congestion that southwest Kansas experiences prohibits us from improving,” Allen said.

Turning some of the two-lane roads into four lanes is a big project that's going to have to be done in increments. They say creating adequate shoulders and passing lanes would be an acceptable first step before four lanes become reality. The big question remaining is where the funding for the improvements will come from.

Liberal, Garden City and Dodge City officials will meet again in August to discuss the priorities of transportation projects.

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