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## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **KDOT closes eastbound I-70 Lewis and Clark Viaduct in Kansas City**

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has closed the eastbound I-70 Lewis and Clark Viaduct over the Kansas River in Kansas City, Kan. for repairs.

As part of a recent bridge inspection, KDOT inspectors identified concerns with gusset plates on the eastbound I-70 bridge. Gusset plates are used to connect truss members of a bridge together. Gusset plates can be fastened to a permanent truss member by bolts, rivets, or welding or combination of the three. Based on the inspection findings, KDOT engineers determined that repairs are needed and, out of an abundance of caution, have closed the bridge to both vehicle traffic and pedestrians until the repairs are completed.

At this time, KDOT estimates the bridge will be closed through the end of this year. KDOT has started developing engineering plans needed for the repair work and expects crews to begin that work on the bridge in about a month.

A signed detour is in place and a detour map will be posted on the KDOT website today.

“The safety of the traveling public is the reason the decision was made to close this bridge,” said KDOT Secretary Calvin Reed. “We know that a sudden bridge closure of this magnitude will be a challenge for those who live, work and travel in this area, especially with the closure of other Kansas River crossings in the region. We will work diligently to make these repairs as quickly as possible so that we can get the bridge back open to traffic.”

The eastbound I-70 bridge over the Kansas River is inspected at least once a year, which is more often than required by federal law. The last major rehabilitation work on the bridge was in 2021.

The Lewis and Clark Viaduct is considered a series of bridges making up an interchange with I-70, Minnesota Avenue, Washington Boulevard, and Fairfax Trafficway in Kansas City, Kansas.

The eastbound I-70 bridge, that was closed to traffic today, was constructed in 1907. It was modified in 1963 to meet interstate standards at that time.

The westbound I-70 bridge, which will remain open, was reconstructed and reopened to traffic in 2021.

An engineering study of the Lewis and Clark Viaduct completed in 2012 identified the westbound I-70 bridge to be reconstructed first and the eastbound bridge to follow as a second phase. At this time the eastbound bridge has not been scheduled for reconstruction.

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