



Kingman County Commission

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Kingman County staff accept a pair of “Turn Around Don’t Drown” signs June 28 from Janet Salazar of the National Weather Service. Pictured, left to right, are: Bob Panek, county sign foreman; Fred Simon, emergency manager; Salazar; Jamie Hower and Heather Kinsler, 911, and Charles Arensdorf, Public Works director. The road signs will be placed in a flood prone area near Norwich. Photo by Nancy D. Borst

Kingman County awarded TADD signs

Kingman County formally accepted two new “Turn Around Don’t Drown” road signs in a brief ceremony June 28 at the county’s Public Works headquarters in Kingman.

The county is one of only two locales in Kansas to be awarded the signs through a program funded by the National Weather Service. The event was attended by NWS representatives and county staff.

“We are excited to be here,” said Janet Salazar, service hydrologist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association/NWS Wichita office. “This is the first installation of these signs in Kansas through this program.”

Salazar thanked Kingman County for its application, which cited an area near the City of Norwich that is prone to road flooding, despite mitigation efforts. Flooding occurs on SE 150th Avenue, approximately one-half mile north of Norwich, and also in Allen and Bennett townships.

In its application, Kingman County cited seven flooding incidents in this area since 2009, including at least one that involved a water rescue.

Kingman County Commission Chairman Fred Foley, whose district includes the Norwich area, said receiving the signs was the culmination of a concerted effort by county staff. The ceremony included representatives from Public Works, Emergency Management, Sheriff’s Office/911 and Communications.

“It was a great team effort on behalf of the county,” Foley said.

Salazar said the new signs will help grab the public’s attention in this area and hopefully guide drivers to steer their vehicles clear when there is flooding. The new signs will replace older “Road May Flood” signs.

Only 28 sites nationwide were chosen to receive signs. Barton County was the other Kansas recipient. Salazar said the hope is to get more funds for additional signs.

She noted that flooding kills an average of 82 people nationwide each year, which is a higher toll than deaths caused by thunderstorms. More than half of those deaths occur in vehicles and most of the flooding deaths are preventable, according to the NWS.

It takes only 12 inches of flowing water to carry away a small car and only 18-24 inches to carry away larger vehicles. The “Turn Around Don’t Drown” program was launched in 2003. The phrase was coined by a weather service warning coordinating meteorologist in Brownsville, Texas.

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