

ODOT presents historic blueprint for next eight years

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After years of receiving too few transportation dollars to address mounting infrastructure needs, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation now sees light at the end of the tunnel!

Transportation officials are proud to present a blueprint of the next eight years that is unprecedented in available funds, new mix of projects and the high cost of construction globally. Months of deliberating, planning and engineering have gone into this balancing process.

“Last year was a banner year for transportation thanks to the Legislature and Governor Henry,” ODOT Director Gary Ridley explained, “Today we are excited to show the fruits of their efforts.”

ODOT committed, over the last couple of years, that given the opportunity for increased funding, focused efforts could be made on the states bridges, highways and safety enhancements. The new Eight-Year Construction Program presented to the Oklahoma Transportation Commission does just that with a total of almost \$4 billion dollars of projects, including \$1.5 billion in new funding to specifically address critical transportation needs across the state.

This marks the first time since the late 1990s the department has been able to use state funds in addition to federal funds in the Eight-Year Construction Program. The occasion is thanks to House Bill 1176 passed last session providing a long term solution for our transportation problems. This is the first time there are additional funds to balance much-needed repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the system.

Some of the highlights include:

- Bridge replacements for more than 480 deteriorating bridges which is three times what was in previous programs;
- Adding shoulders on approximately 400 miles of narrow, two-lane roads which is almost four times what was in previous programs;
- Redesign and rebuilding of high volume multi-lane facilities including I-44 from Riverside to Yale and US-412 in Tulsa, I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City and I-35 between Moore and Norman;
- Installation of approximately 240 miles of median barrier on high traffic corridors across the state;
- In addition to construction, there is a yearly dedication of \$50 million for rehabilitation and repair of roadways and bridges which previously did not exist.

Progress on the Load Posted Bridge Program is also going strong as a result of Senate Bill 1288. The six-year plan to reconstruct or rehabilitate load posted bridges is on target if not ahead of schedule.

“While this does not entirely solve our funding challenge for all our needs, it certainly gets us much closer to a solution,” Ridley said. “This Eight-Year Plan is a long term commitment to rebuild our system and improve the safety for those that use it.”

This plan is very deliberate in that it not only considers new state funds with Senate Bill 1176 and additional federal funds provided under the last federal funding bill, SAFETEA-LU, but also balances a recent rise in construction costs.

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(Editors and News Directors: For more information call ODOT Public Affairs at 405-521-6000.)