

March Commission Wrap-Up:
Funding needs, issues discussed;
\$87.7 million in projects awarded
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Information Release



Public Affairs Division, 200 N. E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105 (405) 521-2554

Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's March 5 meeting include a visit by Rep. Mary Fallin, R-Oklahoma, an update on funding issues, approval of a dozen rail safety projects across the state, the awarding of projects on the Broadway Extension (US-77) in Oklahoma County, US-271 in LeFlore County and US-54 in Texas County and approval of cable barrier projects on I-40 in Caddo, Custer and in Tulsa counties.

Fallin is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and highlighted transportation funding issues at the meeting. Noting that about 26 percent of Oklahoma's bridges are structurally deficient, she said she is sponsoring legislation to allow states to retain a larger share of federal tax revenue used on transportation issues. She reiterated transportation infrastructure is important to the nation not only because of safety issues but also for economic concerns.

In his monthly report to the commission, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley said because of its cumulative effects, the recent loss of \$32.5 million in projected state funding will result in \$127 million of construction and maintenance projects that cannot be completed in the agency's 2007-2014 Construction Work Plan. The amount represents 45 to 50 bridges. He noted several bills being considered by the State Legislature could restore the money to ODOT.

Commissioners approved 12 rail safety crossing projects, which will include a flashing light signal with a gate arm, designed to reduce the number of vehicle collisions with trains. The safety projects will be built in Creek, Grady, Kingfisher, Mayes, Noble, Nowata, Oklahoma, Pittsburg and Rogers counties.

Commissioners awarded a \$28 million contract to rebuild the interchange of US-77 (Broadway Extension) in Edmond at Memorial Road and Kelly Ave. The project is part of a long range plan to improve Broadway Extension between Edmond and downtown Oklahoma City.

Commissioners also approved two cable barrier projects, one in Tulsa and another near Weatherford. The Tulsa project would result in two miles of barrier on US-169 near I-44. The work near Weatherford includes six miles of pavements rehabilitation as well as installing cable barriers at locations along a 12-mile stretch east into Caddo County.

In all, commissioners awarded 35 contracts totaling \$87.7 million to improve highways, interstates and county roads in 29 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded in Alfalfa, Beckham, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Creek, Custer, Ellis, Garvin, Grady, Hughes, Jackson, Kingfisher, LeFlore, Marshall, Mayes, McClain, McCurtain, McIntosh, Muskogee, Nowata, Oklahoma, Payne, Seminole, Stephens, Texas and Tulsa counties.

The commission - an eight-member panel appointed by the governor to oversee the state's transportation development - awards project contracts for road and bridge construction every month. The panel's next meeting is Monday, April 7, 2008, at 11 a.m. in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Before a project is awarded, ODOT researches, plans and designs work to be done. Contracts are bid competitively, with the OTC selecting the winning firm. Contractors have a grace period to begin work, typically six weeks after a contract is awarded, unless a later start date is specified. However, weather or other factors can delay a project.

Contracts, bid information, the commission's monthly agenda and project details can be accessed at <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us>.

– www.okladot.state.ok.us –

(Editors and News Directors: For details about projects in your area and to download accompanying pictures, please visit the Web site www.okladot.state.ok.us/public-info. For more information, call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Office at 405-521-6000.)



U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin (center) attended the Oklahoma Transportation Commission during its March 3 meeting. She noted that about 26 percent of Oklahoma’s bridges are rated as structurally deficient and said she is sponsoring legislation to allow states to retain a larger share of federal tax revenue that is used on transportation issues. Also pictured, from left, are: OTC District 1 commissioner Carlisle Maybrey III, Okmulgee; and OTC District 4 commissioner Jackie Cooper, Oklahoma City; Transportation Secretary Phil Tomlinson; and OTC Vice Chair James Dunegan, Durant.



At their March 3 meeting, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved 12 rail crossing safety projects that will include flashing light signals and gate arms. The devices, like this crossing at Shields Blvd. and S.W. 25th St. in Oklahoma City, are aimed at reducing the number of collisions involving motor vehicles and trains. The new safety devices will be located in Creek, Grady, Kingfisher, Mayes, Noble, Nowata, Oklahoma, Pittsburg and Rogers counties.