

August Commission Wrap-Up:
Cable barriers, safety touted;
\$57 million in projects awarded
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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's August 12 meeting include discussion of the benefits of cable barriers as well as approval of construction projects throughout the state.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley told commissioners agency personnel are creating a work plan for construction projects between 2009 and 2017. Among the factors that will be addressed when designing the work plan are: changes in construction costs, increases in state funds and lower potential federal revenue.

John Fuller, deputy director of the agency, told commissioners that 89 miles of cable barrier have been installed and early indications are the number of crossover accidents have been dramatically reduced in those areas.

"It appears the installation of cable barriers has been one of the most effective, if not the most effective, safety improvements the department has made," Fuller said, noting cable barriers cost as little as one tenth of that of concrete barriers.

Fuller pointed out the state currently has 142 miles of cable barrier under construction and another 41 miles that are expected to be let to bid by the end of the federal fiscal year in October.

In addition, commissioners approved a \$21 million contract to widen US-59 in Grove and an \$8 million contract to widen US-70 through Oakland in Marshall County. They also approved a \$395,200 contract to add a lane to the southbound I-35 on-ramp at I-240 in the crossroads area of Oklahoma City. All three projects are aimed at improving traffic flow.

Commission members also approved an emergency repair contract of the US-60 bridge over US-75 in Washington County. Traffic has been restricted since July when the bridge was struck by an over-height vehicle. Additionally, they also approved a \$4.5 million contract for joint and seal repair to the US-62 bridge over the Arkansas River near Muskogee.

In all, commissioners awarded 27 contracts totaling \$57 million to improve highways, interstates and county roads in 21 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Alfalfa, Beckham, Cherokee, Coal, Custer, Delaware, Garfield, Jefferson, Johnston, LeFlore, Marshall, Mayes, McCurtain, Murray, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Osage, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Sequoyah and Woods 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 11 a.m. Monday, September 8, 2008, 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 several weeks or months after a contract is awarded. 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.)



John Fuller, deputy director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, congratulates Faria Emamian, ODOT traffic engineer, at the Tuesday, Aug. 12, meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission after a review of data indicated crossover fatality accidents have declined following the installation of cable barriers. Emamian designed projects to install cable barriers across the state.



Mike Brutsche with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's Traffic Division inspects a cable barrier at the SH-51 ramp to US-169 in Tulsa. A recent review of crash data by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation indicated a significant decrease in fatalities related to crossover accidents in areas where cable barriers have been installed.