INFORMATION RELEASE
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First Port of Entry Station gets green light to change travel into Oklahoma
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The first of nine new stations designed to help protect travellers and Oklahoma highways has the green light to begin construction. The Oklahoma Transportation Commission has awarded a $7.5 million contract to Duit Construction Co. and TTK Construction Co. to build the state-of-the-art facility on I-35 in Kay County, two miles south of the Oklahoma/Kansas state line.

Formerly referred to as weigh stations, the construction of these new stations is a partnership between the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. They will be installed at key entry locations along Oklahoma's borders over the next several years to help minimize delays for truck traffic and stop violators with illegal or unsafe loads. Permits, registration, and other safety requirements will be enforced. Each facility will include truck scales, parking lanes and enclosed inspection bays.

"These critical checks are extremely important for the safety of Oklahomans and to the preservation of our transportation assets," ODOT Director Gary Ridley said. "This is a tremendous step in ensuring that commercial vehicles entering Oklahoma meet our current laws and regulations."

The Corporation Commission, ODOT and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol realized concerns for many years that the state was not adequately ensuring that commercial vehicle traffic was properly documented and legal. The trucking industry is supportive of the new stations because they will be more efficient and help move trucks back onto the road safely.

Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Jeff Cloud calls the new stations "a classic win-win" for both agencies and Oklahoma motorists.

"Studies show an overweight truck can do as much damage to the pavement as 10,000 cars," Cloud noted. "This will help us protect the massive investment ODOT is making in our transportation infrastructure, as well as protect the driving public, all at no additional expense to the taxpayer."

The Corporation Commission is providing $54 million of the overall $61 million project cost, and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority will provide the funding for a facility in Ottawa County. ODOT is responsible for providing the facilities, while the Corporation Commission will provide the staffing. The installations will also have facilities for OHP.

The Port of Entry stations will replace the six current weigh stations across the state, many of which are 40 years or older and do not feature modern inspection technology. The Corporation Commission indicates that due to the limitations of the existing stations, less than 10 percent of commercial vehicles operating on Oklahoma's roads are inspected or weighed. Research shows that illegal, overweight trucks cause the infrastructure to prematurely fail and can contribute to accidents.

Construction of the Kay County facility is expected to start after the first of the year, and take about ten months to complete. The combination of land, building and state-of-the-art technology elements are a first for ODOT to incorporate into a single project. Stations in Beckham and Sequoyah Counties are expected to go to bid by Spring 2011.

Locations for nine new Port of Entry Stations:
I-40 in Beckham County
I-40 in Sequoyah County
I-44 in Cotton County
I-44 in Ottawa County
I-35 in Love County
I-35 in Kay County
US-69/US-75 in Bryan County
US-271 in Choctaw County
US-412 in Delaware County

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(Editors and News Directors: For more information call ODOT Media & Public Relations Division, 405-521-6000 or Matt Skinner, Oklahoma Corporation Commission, 405-521-4180.)