



## March Commission Wrap-Up

### **Commissioners hear report on Purcell/Lexington bridge repairs; \$82 million in contracts awarded**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, March 10 meeting include a report on ongoing emergency repair work at the Purcell/Lexington bridge, introduction of the leader of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's newly-organized Facilities Management Division and approval of contracts for a major I-40 interchange project in Weatherford, highway widening in Norman and replacement of structurally deficient bridges in Grant and McIntosh counties.

Commissioners received a detailed report on the ongoing emergency repair work at the Purcell/Lexington bridge on US-77/SH-39 that was closed in late January. As additional cracks continue to be discovered in bridge beams, ODOT engineers, upon recommendations from expert consultants, have determined the bridge will remain closed to all traffic until all cracked areas have been reinforced at 264 locations by specially-manufactured brackets, which is estimated to be in June.

"We know we must reopen this bridge as quickly as possible, but public safety is always ODOT's number one priority," Executive Director Mike Patterson said. "It would not be safe to reopen the bridge to any traffic until all of the affected areas have been addressed."

The agency's new Facilities Management Division Manager, Rick Johnson, was introduced to the commission. As leader of the newly-organized division, Johnson will oversee the design, construction and maintenance of the agency's buildings statewide, including maintenance facilities, construction residencies, field division offices and port of entry weigh and inspection stations.

The commission approved a contract with a \$16.7 million base bid and potential early completion incentives for construction of a new eastbound I-40 off-ramp to Washington St. in Weatherford. Additionally, the Washington St. bridge over I-40 will be reconstructed and seven miles of interstate will be resurfaced.

Commissioners approved a contract with a \$9.6 million base bid with potential early completion incentives for reconstruction and widening of more than one mile of SH-9 beginning near 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E. in Norman. This is one of several projects in ODOT's Eight-year Construction Work Plan to eventually widen SH-9 to four lanes between Norman and Tecumseh.

They also awarded a \$6.6 million contract for replacement of structurally deficient bridges on US-81 north of Medford in Grant County and a nearly \$5.9 million contract to replace the structurally deficient SH-9 bridge over the Union Pacific railroad near Eufaula in McIntosh County.

In all, commissioners awarded 29 contracts totaling more than \$82 million to improve bridges, highways, interstates and roads in 23 counties.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Atoka, Bryan, Cimarron, Cleveland, Custer, Delaware, Dewey, Garfield, Grady, Grant, Kingfisher, Kiowa, McIntosh, Marshall, Mayes, Murray, Nowata, Oklahoma, Pawnee, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Rogers and Texas counties.

The 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 regular meeting is scheduled for **Monday, April 7 at 11 a.m.** in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Before a project is awarded, ODOT researches, plans and designs the work to be done. Contracts are bid competitively, with the commission selecting the winning firm. Typically, work begins several weeks or months after contracts are awarded.

Contracts, bid information, the commission's monthly agenda and project details can be viewed at [www.okladot.state.ok.us](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us).

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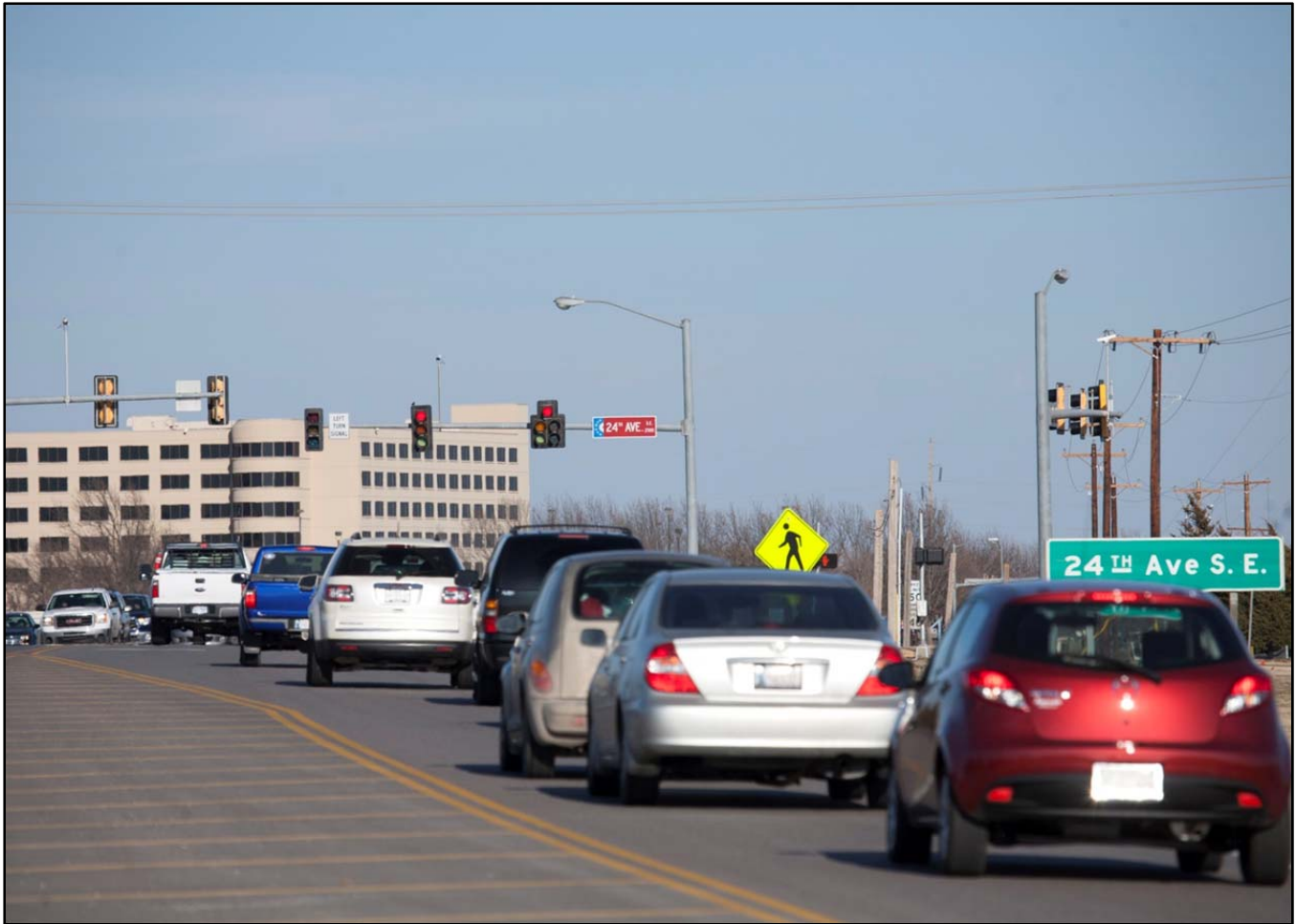
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At the Monday, March 10 meeting, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission received a detailed report about the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's ongoing emergency repair project to reopen the Purcell/Lexington Bridge on US-77/SH-39. To ensure the safety of the public, ODOT has determined that the bridge will remain closed to all traffic until all cracked areas on the bridge have been reinforced by the installation of specially-manufactured brackets, pictured above.



At the Monday, March 10 meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved a contract with a \$9.6 million base bid with potential early completion incentives for reconstruction and widening of more than one mile of SH-9 beginning near 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E. in Norman, pictured above. This project is part of a long-term effort to eventually widen SH-9 to four lanes between Norman and Tecumseh.