



State transportation officials grateful for improvements under stimulus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2010

PR# 10-004

Oklahoma Department of Transportation officials say they're grateful for progress they have been able to make improving Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure in the year since approval of the federal stimulus. The measure was signed Feb. 17, 2009.

ODOT officials said 76 bridges on the state highway system are being replaced or rehabilitated and that another 53 county bridges have been replaced or rehabilitated. In addition, nearly 337 center line miles of highway are being resurfaced or reconstructed.

Officials also said so far, 1.9 million labor hours have been worked to improve Oklahoma roads, highways and bridges as a result of the stimulus program.

States were required to put at least 50% of the stimulus funds to work within four months following the signing of the bill. ODOT was the first to accomplish this in a little over a month.

According to the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Oklahoma is among the top five states in the percentage of funds paid to construction contractors.

ODOT officials said that 97 percent of the \$465 million of stimulus funds have been obligated and 64 projects have been completed. The state is also on track to meet the next deadline: obligating all funds to specific projects.

"While jobs in the hard-hit construction sector are important to our economy, all Oklahomans will benefit for years to come from improved transportation infrastructure," Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley said. "Those improvements translate into smoother, safer and longer-lasting highways."

Nationwide, stimulus funding has been responsible for 12,250 projects. Three Oklahoma projects were highlighted in the AASHTO report:

- Reconstruction of I-244 on the north and west legs of the Inner Dispersal Loop around downtown Tulsa. Work includes rehabilitation of more than 40 bridges. The project is the largest award in state history. When all funding sources as well as engineering costs are taken into consideration, the total cost is \$75 million.
- Reconstruction of I-40 near El Reno. I-40 is one of the only all-weather routes to span the nation, traversing the country from North Carolina to California. I-40 in Oklahoma was previously mentioned in a *Parade Magazine* survey of commercial truckers as being one of the roughest roads on the interstate system.
- Widening of US-59 in LeFlore county. Work includes a new bridge over Cache Creek northwest of Spiro. The stretch of US-59 is primarily a north/south surface transportation linkage for eastern portions of Oklahoma and western Arkansas.

A list of all improvements being made by ODOT with stimulus funds along with other information related to the program is available from the front page of the ODOT Web site www.okladot.state.ok.us, click ARRA 2009 in the far right hand column. The ARRA program can be accessed at www.recovery.gov. Reports by the House transportation committee are available at www.transportation.house.gov. The AASHTO press release regarding ARRA successes is available at www.transportation.org.

--www.okladot.state.ok.us--

(Editors and News Directors: For more information call the ODOT Media & Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION
200 N.E. 21ST ST. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000