



August Commission Wrap-Up:

Crosstown moving along; \$66 million in contracts approved

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2011

PR# 11-042

Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Aug. 1, meeting include a discussion of I-40 Crosstown construction in Oklahoma City, an update on federal Highway Trust Fund issues, an agreement for a low cost fix to traffic congestion in Sulphur, authorization of numerous safety projects and approval of contracts totaling nearly \$66 million.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley said Congress has made progress toward a long-term solution for Highway Trust Fund spending in recent weeks. Since 2009, the trust fund has been operating under a number of temporary measures. He said committees in the House and Senate are working on two proposals but those efforts were put on hold while Congress focused on deficit reduction.

The agency reached a major milestone on the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City with the award of a contract for paving the final section highway. Ridley told commissioners that once traffic is moved to the new roadway, the next phase of the project will be to remove the existing Crosstown bridge and to build a thoroughfare and fully connect the interstate with downtown.

Commissioners approved a plan to address congestion problems in Sulphur without constructing a new highway in the area. Under the plan, ODOT will add a four-mile section of the Chickasaw Turnpike to the state highway system, creating the SH-7 Spur northwest of Sulphur. Ridley said the change would take place after construction of a full interchange between the spur and US-177 that is expected to begin this winter.

"In the past, the department has looked at a reliever route – a way to allow the truck traffic to get around the Sulphur area," Ridley said. "This is an opportunity for us to do so very inexpensively. It really is a win for everybody, especially in the Sulphur area."

Commission members also approved a project to construct a nearly five-mile section of the Durant Bypass between US-70 and SH-78 south and west of the town.

Members also approved a number of projects to construct safety features to highways across the state. Projects include:

- More than a dozen new changeable message signs in Oklahoma City and Tulsa;
- Cable barriers along a nearly three-mile stretch of I-35 in Oklahoma City;
- New pavement markings on I-35 in Moore;
- Guardrail on I-40 east of Shawnee; and
- Traffic signals at the I-35/US-77 interchange in Thackerville.

In all, commissioners awarded 27 contracts totaling nearly \$66 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 21 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Bryan, Caddo, Cimarron, Cleveland, Garvin, Grady, Hughes, Kingfisher, Latimer, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Major, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Pawnee, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Tulsa and Woods 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 meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 6, 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 OTC 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.

—www.okladot.state.ok.us—

(Editors and News Directors: For details about projects in your area and to view accompanying pictures, please visit the website www.okladot.state.ok.us. For more information, call the ODOT Media and 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



Paul Green, Oklahoma Department of Transportation division engineer, and ODOT Director Gary Ridley discuss progress on the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City and federal funding issues at a news conference following the Monday, Aug. 1, meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. The commission approved the final paving contract for the 10-lane interstate, which is paid for largely with federal funding. Ridley said Congress has made progress in updating long-term transportation funding and that with debt ceiling issues out of the way, he hopes debate on transportation issues will resume.



A low cost alternative: At their Aug. 1 meeting, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved adding a four-mile stretch of the Chickasaw Turnpike to the state highway system, which is expected to reduce heavy truck traffic in Sulphur without having to build a new highway.