



ODOT announces plan for stimulus funding

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Oklahomans will begin seeing crews on the ground using federal stimulus funding for highway construction by this Spring Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley said Wednesday, Feb. 18.

“We are certainly glad to get this money,” Ridley said. “Over the decades, funding has been the major issue keeping Oklahomans from driving on the kind of highways they deserve and this will help move our construction program one step further.”

Even prior to approval of the stimulus package by President Obama in Denver Tuesday, Feb. 17, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission had moved its April meeting to late March in order to accelerate highway work under the stimulus package.

ODOT has scheduled three bid openings instead of one in March with projects from the regular program and the stimulus program totaling \$440 million. About \$340 million is being funded through the stimulus package. Bids opened in mid-March would normally be awarded in April, but because of the move, they will also be awarded in late March.

In addition to expediting awards, the department plans to have projects on an accelerated construction schedule to take advantage of the spring and summer months.

Of the \$465 million Oklahoma is expected to receive under the plan, \$340 million is designated for highway projects in March. Highway improvements will include interstate rehabilitation, major bridge projects and safety projects such as cable barriers.

Projects scheduled for letting as part of the stimulus package had already been deemed necessary and had been previously scheduled in ODOT’s eight-year Construction Work Plan or pavement preservation program. Completing the projects early will allow for accelerating other necessary projects when the work plan is rebalanced, which is expected this fall. ODOT’s regularly planned annual construction work plan is about \$400 million, therefore allowing about one year’s worth of projects to be built with stimulus funding. Another \$39 million will be spent on urban and rural transit programs.

The Federal Highway Administration will have up to 21 days from Obama’s signing to provide specific guidelines, allowing the funds to begin to be used.

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INFORMATION RELEASE

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