



## **January Commission Wrap-Up:**

### **U.S. transportation officials to visit state; \$33 million in projects awarded**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Jan. 11 meeting include discussion of an upcoming visit by federal officials, an update on federal funding issues, a report of recent snow and ice removal activities by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and approval of construction contracts totaling about \$33 million.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley said Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, will visit a series of federally funded highway construction projects in Oklahoma Monday, Jan. 18. Rep. Mary Fallin, R-Okla., a committee member, will accompany Oberstar.

"It's a big deal to have the chairman of the committee come to look at our projects first hand," Ridley said. "The last time that happened was in 1997 when Congressman Bud Shuster (R-Penn.) came."

Ridley also noted Congress is considering jobs legislation that includes significant funding for transportation infrastructure projects. He noted that ODOT staff has been reviewing projects on which construction could be quickly started.

Ridley also updated commissioners on the status of pending legislation to provide long-term funding for transportation projects. The current transportation program expired at the end of September. Ridley noted that Congress has approved temporary extensions, the most recent of which lasts until the end of February.

Commissioners were also updated about the status of projects funded through the economic stimulus package. To date, funds have been obligated for 192 transportation projects and officials expect 240 projects to receive funding.

Ridley told commissioners ODOT had more than 1,000 employees work through the Christmas holiday to clear snow and ice from state highways following a record-setting blizzard. He noted some employees worked 36 hours straight, giving up their holiday for the safety of the traveling public.

Commissioners approved contracts to construct a new bridge on SH-9W over I-35 near Newcastle, to build a new bridge on SH-33 over White Shields Creek near Hammon in Roger Mills County, to reconstruct a three-mile stretch of US-60 near Pawhuska and to build a frontage road and do earthwork on a section of the Gilcrease Expressway in Tulsa.

In all, commissioners awarded 16 contracts totaling just under \$33 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 14 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Beckham, Choctaw, Cotton, Delaware, Jefferson, McClain, McCurtain, McIntosh, Muskogee, Osage, Ottawa, Roger Mills, Texas and Wagoner 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 11 a.m. Monday, February 1, in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Before a project is awarded, ODOT researches, plans and designs 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](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us).

--[www.okladot.state.ok.us](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us)--

(Editors and News Directors: For details about projects in your area and to view accompanying pictures, please visit the Web site [www.okladot.state.ok.us](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us). For more information, call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

**INFORMATION RELEASE**

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**Oklahoma Department of Transportation workers logged more than 35,000 hours clearing ice and snow over Christmas weekend, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission were told at their Monday, Jan. 11 meeting. More than 1,000 employees plowed roadways and applied 50,000 tons of salt and sand at a cost of \$4 million – for state highways and interstates alone.**



**Members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission were apprised of an upcoming visit by U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, by Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley, at their meeting Monday, Jan. 11. Oberstar is expected to tour three federally funded highway projects Monday, Jan. 18, along with U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin, R-Okla., who is also a member of the committee.**