



June Commission Wrap-Up:

Transportation budget discussed; \$83 million in projects awarded

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's June 7 meeting include an overview of the department's budget for the upcoming fiscal year, a call for enhancement project applications and approval of construction contracts totaling about \$83 million.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley told commissioners the agency likely will be able to stay on track with construction projects in state fiscal year 2011, despite a reduction in state funds.

Ridley said a number of factors will help keep construction projects on track:

- Over the past year, the agency has reduced staff and made other cost-saving measures.
- The legislature approved the sale of bonds for construction projects.
- In recent months, bids on construction projects have averaged less than expected.

He noted the department's staff is in the process of updating ODOT's eight-year Construction Work Plan, balancing construction needs with expected revenue.

"We take a conservative approach each year in anticipating what our revenues will be, both state and federal, and try to come up with an estimate that is realistic but conservative," Ridley said. "It's worked well for us over the years."

Also at the meeting, Special Projects Manager Rick Johnson announced the department is accepting applications for the federal Transportation Enhancements Program. Communities may submit proposals for projects with a direct relationship to the state's transportation system.

Commissioners approved cable barrier projects for I-35 in Noble and Payne counties, US-75 in Okmulgee County and as part of a resurfacing project on I-40 in Sequoyah County.

They also gave the nod to four interstate resurfacing projects: I-35 in Kay and McClain counties and I-40 in Beckham County, along with the Sequoyah County project.

Additionally, they approved bridge replacements on state highways in Custer, Grady, Sequoyah and Washita counties and rehabilitation projects on bridges in Alfalfa, Jefferson, Marshall, Mayes, McClain and Muskogee counties.

In all, commissioners awarded 44 contracts totaling \$82.97 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 36 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Alfalfa, Atoka, Beaver, Beckham, Carter, Choctaw, Cimarron, Cleveland, Craig, Custer, Delaware, Garvin, Grady, Hughes, Jefferson, Kay, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mayes, McIntosh, McClain, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Pontotoc, Sequoyah, Stephens, Washita and Woodward 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, July 6, 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.



Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley provides an overview of the agency's budget for the next fiscal year to members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission at their June 7 meeting. With reduced construction costs, staff reductions, other cost savings and bond funding, he expects construction plans to remain on track.