



December Commission Wrap-Up:

School route grants OK'd; more than \$100 million in contracts approved

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 8, 2010

PR# 10-048

Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Dec. 6, meeting include an update on federal transportation funding, along with approval of Safe Routes to School grants, an emergency project to move traffic off a dilapidated bridge, the state's long-range transportation plan and contracts totaling more than \$100 million.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley said Congress is working on a short-term funding extension, but he doubts a permanent solution can be approved by year's end.

"The longer the extension, the easier it is for us to plan and do our work," he said. "Not only is it important for us, but it's important for regional planners and county governments – for all of us – to continue to plan and move forward with our operations."

Commissioners approved grants to 16 communities as part of the federal Safe Routes to School program. The program encourages children to walk or bicycle to school safely. Communities apply for funding for educational programs or construction projects such as sidewalks, pedestrian signals or lighting.

Communities awarded grants were: Blanchard, Broken Arrow, Canton, Chickasha, Coweta, Elgin, Enid, Guthrie, Hobart, Inola, Norman, Piedmont, Stillwater, Tishomingo, Tulsa and Tuttle.

Commissioners approved a nearly \$750,000 contract for a detour around a Rogers County bridge that has needed more than 40 emergency repairs in the last three years. Replacement of the SH-66 bridge over Bird Creek is being expedited so it can be finished next fall.

Ridley noted the historic nature of the 1936 bridge adds complexity to the planning process, which has been under way for several years. He said the bridge's driving surface, called the deck, has been patched so many times that repairs are no longer possible, but the cost of redecking cannot be justified in light of the planned replacement.

After 18 months of public input, commissioners approved the state's long-range transportation plan. Over the next 25 years, vehicular traffic alone is expected to grow by 65 percent. The plan recommends improvements for various modes of transportation, including highways, rail, waterways, public transportation and aviation.

Commissioners approved contracts for widening I-44 between Riverside Drive and Peoria Avenue in Tulsa and SH-10 east of Miami between the Will Rogers Turnpike and SH-137. They also approved contracts for reconstruction of a three-mile section of US-287 north of Boise City and widening SH-39W from Purcell west five miles, including left turn lanes and additional shoulders.

In all, commissioners awarded 36 contracts totaling more than \$102 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 29 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Adair, Alfalfa, Beckham, Bryan, Cimarron, Cleveland, Custer, Dewey, Garvin, Grady, Greer, Jackson, Johnston, Logan, McClain, Nowata, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tillman, Tulsa, Wagoner, Washington, 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. Monday, Jan. 3, 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.

—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



One of 40: ODOT crews make an emergency repair to the SH-66 bridge over Bird Creek in Rogers County. The repair was one of more than 40 emergency repairs made in the last three years. On Monday, Dec. 6, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved a contract to build detours around the bridge until it can be replaced next fall.



Walking a safe route: The Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved Safe Routes to School grants Monday, Dec. 6. Grants were awarded to 16 communities for educational and construction projects encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school safely. The federally funded program is in its sixth year. For more information on the program, go to www.okladot.state.ok.us and click on "School Safety Information."



Making spirits bright: Oklahoma Department of Transportation employees conduct an annual Christmas toy drive for underprivileged children using friendly competition between University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University fans. While OU won the game this year, OSU fans won the competition when they donated the most toys by weight. In all, 20 bicycles and two 50-gallon drums of toys were collected. Oklahoma Transportation Commission members Bradley Burgess of Lawton, left, and Jackie Cooper of Oklahoma City, right, who are OU fans, present mementos in honor of the recent bedlam football game to Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley, center, who roots for OSU, at the end of the commission's Monday, Dec. 6, meeting.