



February Commission Wrap-Up:

Storm recovery activities reviewed; nearly \$92 million in contracts approved

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Feb. 7, meeting include a review of work by Oklahoma Department of Transportation crews to clear highways following a major snow storm that began Jan. 31 and approval of contracts totaling nearly \$92 million.

ODOT Director of Engineering Gary Evans told commissioners the agency spent between \$4 million and \$6 million to clear highways because of the storm. He noted the National Weather Service estimated the storm to be one of the three worst winter storms in state history. He explained the amount and type of precipitation and the temperature and wind speed are all critical to how crews fight a storm.

In addition to ODOT crews, 27 private contractors assisted in the snow removal. Evans said after highways were cleared in the western part of the state, crews there volunteered to work in harder hit areas.

"The people who work for ODOT are always ready. We are willing and ready to step forward and do what is needed," Evans said. "The sunshine allowed us to catch our breath, get a little bit of sleep and make sure our equipment is maintained and ready to go for the next storm. We've also been able to shift salt supplies around the state."

Evans also presented an award from the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors to Purcell construction inspectors for the role they played in construction of the US-77 bridge over I-35 in Norman. The structure is deemed by ODOT's Bridge Division to have been the highest quality bridge constructed in Oklahoma in 2010.

The 2010 Pharaoh Award was also presented earlier by AGC to contractors Manhattan Road and Bridge Co. of Tulsa and Haskell Lemon Construction of Oklahoma City for their roles in the project.

Further, commissioners approved contracts for the first phase of a new interchange at I-235 and I-44 in Oklahoma City and a new bridge carrying US-59 over the BNSF railroad near Afton.

At the same meeting where commissioners were briefed on blizzard recovery, they approved dozens of summertime work projects. More than half of the projects they approved were for pavement resurfacing, which is typically done during summer months.

In all, commissioners awarded 54 contracts totaling nearly \$92 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 Adair, Atoka, Beaver, Blaine, Bryan, Canadian, Choctaw, Cleveland, Comanche, Craig, Creek, Custer, Delaware, Dewey, Grady, Harmon, Kay, Kiowa, LeFlore, Logan, McCurtain, Murray, Noble, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Roger Mills, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner, Woods 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 tentatively scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday, Mar. 7, 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



A quick breather: Oklahoma Department of Transportation maintenance engineers were honored on behalf of maintenance employees statewide for their snow removal work following the Jan. 31 winter storm. The honors came at the Monday, Feb. 7, meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. Two days later, the crews were clearing highways after a second major winter storm. From left are: Director of Operations Casey Shell, along with division maintenance engineers Mike Smith, Tulsa; Taylor Henderson, Clinton; Roy Counts, Perry; Kevin Kehoe (interim), Clinton; Brian Taylor (interim), Antlers; Brad Mirth, Duncan; Troy Travis, Muskogee; Bill Wilkinson, Ada; James Robinson, Buffalo; and Chief Engineer Gary Evans.



The US-77 bridge over I-35 in Norman is adorned by the scissortail flycatcher, Oklahoma's state bird. Oklahoma Department of Transportation inspectors were honored for their role in construction of the structure that is deemed by the agency's Bridge Division to be the highest quality bridge constructed in Oklahoma in 2010. The award given by the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors was presented at the Monday, Feb. 7, meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission.