



March Commission Wrap-Up:

Centennial activities highlighted; more than \$152 million in contracts approved

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, March 7, meeting include a highlight of centennial activities at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, reports on federal funding issues, recognition of two employees by a national organization, the remembrance of a former transportation commissioner, approval of a contract to build a first-of-its-kind bridge in Oklahoma and approval of contracts totaling more than \$152 million.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley discussed two projects celebrating the agency's centennial.

This year's state map incorporates historic themes, along with a timeline of significant transportation trends throughout state history. Maps are free of charge at any of the 12 welcome centers statewide, all ODOT division offices and the Tourism and Recreation Department offices. The map also is available to view on the ODOT website, www.okladot.state.ok.us.

Additionally, Ridley unveiled a transportation educational program designed by the Oklahoma History Center and aimed at school children.

"We will be going out this year and working with young people in our school system," Ridley said. "We want to explain what we do and how we do it and make it interesting for them. Hopefully, they will become transportation leaders of the future."

Existing federal transportation policy has been extended through September; however, current funding will run out in mid-March. Ridley said he remains hopeful Congress will work out a long-term solution.

Commissioners also were informed about the status of projects funded through the federal stimulus. Of the 274 projects approved, 221 are complete. Contractors have been paid just over \$452 million through the program.

Commissioners also took a moment to remember former commissioner Larry Wade, Elk City newspaper publisher, who died March 6. Although he left the commission when Gov. Brad Henry appointed him to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, he remained a supporter of improved transportation.

Two ODOT employees were honored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for their help in developing software to track testing of construction materials and work done by disadvantaged businesses. Both projects will improve efficiency, not only for the agency but also for contractors. John Thomas, Materials Division, and Andy Penney, Regulatory Services, were honored.

Commissioners approved a contract for construction of a bridge to carry I-244 over the Arkansas River near downtown Tulsa. The double-deck structure would also carry rail and pedestrian traffic. This is the first time such a structure will have been built in Oklahoma.

In all, commissioners awarded 57 contracts totaling more than \$152 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 38 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Coal, Comanche, Creek, Delaware, Garfield, Garvin, Grady, Grant, Haskell, Hughes, Kingfisher, Kiowa, McClain, McIntosh, Muskogee, Nowata, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Pawnee, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Seminole,

INFORMATION RELEASE

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Sequoyah, Stephens, Texas, Tulsa, Washington, Washita, 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, April 4, 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.)



Two Oklahoma Department of Transportation employees, John Thomas, Materials Division, left, and Andy Penney, Regulatory Services Division, center, were honored at the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, March 7, meeting by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials for their help in developing software to track testing of construction materials and work done by disadvantaged businesses. At right is Gary Evans, ODOT's deputy director/chief engineer.