



June Commission Wrap-Up:

ODOT centennial events highlighted; \$2.7 million in contracts approved

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Wednesday, June 1, meeting include election of new Transportation Commission Officers, presentation of two industry awards, an update on activities commemorating the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's centennial, authorization of an initial budget for fiscal year 2012 and approval of contracts totaling \$2.7 million.

Commissioners elected officers for the upcoming four years. Greg Love of Edmond replaces Dan Overland of Earlsboro as the board's chairman. Other new officers include David Burrage of Atoka, vice chairman, and Todd Huckabay of Snyder, secretary-treasurer.

ODOT and Oklahoma City-based contractor Haskell Lemon Construction Co. were presented two Excellence in Asphalt Pavement Awards from the National Asphalt Pavement Association. One award was for a project widening I-35 in Norman and the other for resurfacing SH-51 between I-35 and Stillwater. The national awards recognize high-quality asphalt pavement work and paving techniques.

Noting that ODOT will celebrate its 100th anniversary on June 15, ODOT Director Gary Ridley gave an update on the agency's centennial projects. He said 3,000 people attended a recent student event at Science Museum Oklahoma.

Ridley said much of the focus is about explaining the importance of transportation to children.

"We are going out to schools and libraries across the state to help educate the kids, getting them interested in transportation," Ridley said. "We think that is the legacy we need to pass on to our children and grandchildren, to let them know what we do and why it is important."

Ridley introduced Mark Kelly, director of the Oklahoma Employees Credit Union, which is a sponsor for some of the commemorative activities. Kelly said the credit union began in 1954 when eight highway workers formed the Highway Credit Union.

Also, Ridley said a coffee table book of state transportation history is available for purchase through ODOT, the Oklahoma History Center and the Oklahoma Heritage Association. For more information, call 405-521-2586.

"This book is the whole history of our agency from 1911 to now," he said. "When you read the book and look through it, it is really quite remarkable."

Commissioners approved an initial budget for state fiscal year 2012 totaling just over \$1.3 billion, down from the \$1.57 billion budget for the previous year. Mike Patterson, ODOT's deputy director/chief financial officer, told commissioners that a large part of the reduction is related to one-time spending on stimulus projects in previous years.

Additionally, a \$30 million reduction in state funding approval will result in short-term adjustments to the department's eight-year Construction Work Plan. However, because of adjustments in anticipated long-term funding, projects currently in the plan are expected to be built.

A last-minute change in wage rates by the U.S. Department of Labor required for accurate bidding forced the commission to postpone all but four projects totaling \$2.7 million. This compares with an average of \$83 million in projects awarded each month during the last 12 months.

Commissioners were able to award contracts for rehabilitation of the US-75 bridge over Nickel Creek in Tulsa County and for a new bridge over Sans Bois Creek at the Kerr Reservoir in Haskell County. They also approved two county bridge projects in Canadian and Muskogee 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. Tuesday, July 5, 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 ODOT's 100th anniversary, with photos and upcoming events in your area, visit the website www.okladot.state.ok.us or call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)



INFORMATION RELEASE

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Gary Ridley, Oklahoma Department of Transportation director; Dan Overland, outgoing chairman of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission; Greg Love, new OTC chairman; Mike Patterson, ODOT's deputy director/chief financial officer; and Mark Kelly, director of the Oklahoma Employees Credit Union, pause for refreshments after the commission's Wednesday, June 1, meeting. OECU provided cake and bottled water in honor of ODOT's 100th anniversary.



Changing of the guard: With new board members recently appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission elected new Transportation Commission officers at its Wednesday, June 1, meeting. From left are Todd Huckabay, Snyder, secretary-treasurer; Greg Love, Edmond, president; David Burrage, Atoka, vice chairman; and Gary Ridley, state Secretary of Transportation.



Spans of time: This 1966 photo shows a section of Tulsa's I-244 Inner Dispersal Loop under construction. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation celebrates its 100th anniversary June 15. By the time the department was finished with major interstate construction in 1975, Oklahoma had about 670 centerline miles of nontoll interstate.