



November Commission Wrap-Up:

Earthquake inspections discussed; \$119 million in contracts approved

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Nov. 7, meeting include discussion of bridge inspections following the recent central Oklahoma earthquakes, agreements for engineering contracts to design 61 bridges and approval of construction projects totaling more than \$119 million.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley told commissioners that crews were mobilized to inspect highway bridges within a 50-mile radius of the epicenters of both major earthquakes that occurred on Saturday, Nov. 5.

"As you might expect, the team here at the department moved rather quickly," he said.

Crews had the first inspection on rural bridges complete by mid-afternoon Saturday but were back at work Sunday morning after the second event.

Neither inspection turned up earthquake-related structural damage. Ridley noted that bridges are designed to some extent to safely move with changes in temperature and traffic demands.

There was some damage to US-62 east of Meeker, following the second trembler, but it was repaired within an hour after it was discovered.

Ridley also noted that the year-long observance of ODOT's 100th Anniversary will be coming to a close soon. However, sales of coffee table books will continue. The books highlight the history of Oklahoma transportation since the founding of the State Highway Department in 1911. Books are available at ODOT's eight field division headquarters and its central office in Oklahoma City.

Commissioners approved engineering contracts with 15 firms to design 61 bridges as part of an ongoing, statewide effort to accelerate bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation. Accelerating work on these crossings paves the way for more structures to be added to eight-year construction work plan as part of Gov. Mary Fallin's effort to eliminate structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system by 2019.

In addition to engineering, commissioners okayed construction projects to build or rehabilitate nearly two dozen bridges statewide. Commissioners also approved a major project to rebuild a more than six mile stretch of I-40 near Henryetta.

In all, commissioners awarded 37 contracts totaling more than \$119 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 27 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction; resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Craig, Dewey, Grant, Jefferson, Kay, Kiowa, LeFlore, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Mayes, McClain, McIntosh, Murray, Noble, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Pushmataha, Roger Mills, 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 scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 5, in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Before a project is awarded, ODOT researches, plans and designs the 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.)



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Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director of Operations Casey Shell, left, discusses bridge inspections following earthquakes in the early morning hours and late evening of Saturday, Nov. 5. The discussion came after the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's regular meeting Monday, Nov. 7.



The Seward Road bridge over I-35 near Guthrie is among two dozen such structures that will be replaced or rehabilitated after the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved contracts for 37 projects at its Monday, Nov. 7, meeting. The structurally deficient bridge, which was built in 1959, is being replaced as part of reconstruction of the entire interchange.