



December Commission Wrap-Up:

National awards celebrated; \$58 million in contracts approved

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Dec. 5, meeting include celebrating three national awards won by the department, wrapping up centennial activities, a discussion on the status of federal transportation legislation, an update of progress on the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City and approval of construction projects totaling nearly \$58 million. Commissioners also paid respect an ODOT employee killed in a recent work zone accident.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Deputy Director/Chief Engineer Gary Evans asked for a moment of silence to remember ODOT employee Ira Lee Henderson who was recently killed in a work zone while making safety repairs on US-75 near Ramona.

Evans later highlighted a trio of national gold awards given to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for excellence in concrete pavement by the American Concrete Pavement Association. Winning three of the prestigious gold awards is very unusual and is a great way to cap off ODOT's centennial year.

Construction of the three projects was done by Edmond-based Duit Construction Co. Inc. Engineering work on the projects was by Oklahoma City-based Poe & Associates, Triad Design and ODOT roadway engineers.

Wrapping up observances of ODOT's 100th anniversary, noted that many of the activities were funded by private industry.

"I don't know that there's any other state where when you come to celebrate your transportation department 100-year anniversary and it's really a celebration of the entire industry," Evans said. "We have that kind of partnership in Oklahoma and I think that's what makes us successful as you would see with the awards where we are recognized on a national level."

Tim Gatz, ODOT's Director of Capital Programs told commissioners that two bills advancing through Congress incorporate a series of suggestions from the department championed by U.S. Sen. James Inhofe that would reduce or streamline regulations and consolidate programs in order to focus core highway programs.

Commissioners awarded contracts for two projects related to the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City, one for work near May Ave. and the other to dismantle the existing bridge. Evans said the agency's goal has been to remove traffic off the existing structure, which is outdated and structurally deficient. Some of the beams will be reused as part of county bridges throughout the state.

Evans said he expects the dismantling to begin in February or March and take about eight months. After the bridge is removed, construction can begin on a connector route to downtown. The route will follow the path of the existing structure.

Commissioners also approved a project for a bridge over the North Canadian River west of Watonga as part of a corridor widening and another to rebuild a two-mile stretch of I-40 near Hinton.

In all, commissioners awarded 23 contracts totaling nearly \$58 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 19 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction; resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Adair, Atoka, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Delaware, Garfield, Harmon, LeFlore, Major, McClain, Oklahoma, Payne, Pontotoc, Stephens and Tulsa 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. It's next meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 9, 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.)



INFORMATION RELEASE

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With narrowed lanes and only a traffic cone to protect crews working close by, drivers must pay extra attention and use caution on work zones. At its Monday, Dec. 5, meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission observed a moment of silence in memory of Oklahoma Department of Transportation maintenance worker Ira Lee Henderson who was killed the previous week in a work zone accident. Henderson, who was doing safety-related maintenance on US-75 near Ramona, is the 56th ODOT employee killed at work during the agency's 100 year history. Pictured above is work in 2010 in a construction zone in east Tulsa.



Crews work to build part of a bridge near the west end of the new I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City. At its Monday, Dec. 5, meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved two contracts for construction expected to begin in the spring. One of the contracts would be for dismantling the existing Crosstown bridge, which is expected to begin in February or March of 2012.