



January Commission Wrap-Up

ODOT reports on snow and ice clearing efforts; changes to the downtown Oklahoma City boulevard addressed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Jan. 7 meeting include a report on the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's response to the holiday winter storms that affected travel in many parts of the state, an update on changes to plans to construct the downtown Oklahoma City boulevard, approval of a partnership with the City of Enid to improve access to a regional airport and recognition of ODOT and industry partners for their work on five award-winning Oklahoma transportation projects.

Director of Operations Casey Shell praised the more than 800 maintenance workers who spent most or all of the Christmas and New Year's holidays away from their families while working to clear state highways and bridges of snow and ice following a winter storm that affected many areas of the state.

"Any time there is inclement weather combined with holiday traffic, it creates a difficult situation for our crews," Shell said. "I want to commend them for their hard work and thank them for the sacrifices they made to ensure that holiday travelers in Oklahoma got to their destinations safely."

Deputy Director/Chief Engineer Gary Evans updated commissioners on changes to the City of Oklahoma City's plan to use federal funds administered by ODOT to construct a boulevard to reconnect the downtown area to the new I-40 Crosstown. He explained that changes to the area in the last decade caused the city to revisit construction plans approved by the Federal Highway Administration, which originally called for a six-lane boulevard built in the existing right-of-way. Because of the city's changes and required federal evaluation, construction of the boulevard will be delayed until 2014 and likely not completed until 2016.

Commissioners approved a partnership to contribute up to \$500,000 to share the cost of a City of Enid project to improve Enid Woodring Regional Airport by extending the runway and relocating a county road. These improvements will greatly benefit nearby Vance Air Force Base by allowing military planes to use the airport for training and possibly take on additional missions in the future.

"Vance Air Force Base is extremely important to national security and the state's economy," Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley said. "This project is a cooperative effort that will really benefit Enid and northwest Oklahoma."

Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission Chairman Mike Cooper said the project would protect mission capabilities and reduce costs for Vance Air Force Base.

"Oklahoma's communities and government agencies have a great track record of working together to improve our military bases," Cooper said.

In a special ceremony, American Concrete Pavement Association Executive Director Brent Burwell and Evans recognized ODOT engineers along with construction contractors and engineering companies for their work on four award-winning Oklahoma highway projects in 2012. The four concrete pavement projects were the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City, I-35 north of Marietta in Love County, US-64 and I-40 near Webbers Falls in Muskogee County and the Port of Entry weigh and inspection station on I-35 in Kay County.

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200 N.E. 21ST ST. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000

Evans also joined Association of Oklahoma General Contractors Executive Director Bobby Stem to recognize the state's best and most innovative bridge project with the presentation of the 2012 Pharaoh Award to ODOT's El Reno Residency for reconstruction of the bridge and interchange at I-40 and Morgan Road in Canadian County. This \$34 million project included construction of the state's first Single Point Urban Interchange.

Since construction projects are typically not let in December, no construction contracts were awarded at the January meeting.

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 **Monday, Feb. 4 at 10 a.m.** 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.

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Oklahoma Department of Transportation crews worked around the clock during the Christmas and New Year's holidays to treat and clear highways affected by winter weather in parts of the state. At the Monday meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, ODOT officials praised the maintenance workers who sacrificed time with their families to respond to the storms.



At Monday's meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors presented the 2012 Pharaoh Award for the state's best bridge project to ODOT's El Reno Residency for the construction of the state's first Single Point Urban Interchange at I-40 and Morgan Rd. in Canadian County. A similar interchange is currently under construction at I-35 and Main St. in Norman.