



June Commission Wrap-Up

ODOT responds to May's destructive tornadoes and floods; \$36 million in contracts awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, June 3 meeting include reports on the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's efforts to clear debris following May's tornadoes and flooding, announcement of a new deputy director and chief engineer and approval of a \$7.5 million contract for the final phase of new interchange construction on I-35 near the Oklahoma/Texas border.

In a report to the commission, Director Mike Patterson provided details on the tornadoes and heavy rains that closed several interstates and highways for short periods of time. The May 20 tornado caused heavy damage to the old truss bridge on US-62 near Newcastle. The bridge carries utility lines but hasn't been in use for traffic since 1963. Flooding on May 31 caused damage to US-62 (N.E. 23rd St.) near Midwest City, which has been narrowed from five lanes to two lanes while repairs are made. In a special meeting, commissioners approved an emergency contract to repair the highway, which is estimated to cost \$575,000. With planning and contracting procedures being expedited, ODOT plans to have the highway repaired in less than two months, depending on weather.

Patterson was pleased with the agency's quick response to the destructive storms.

"I have never been more proud of the ODOT family and how the agency responded to these events," Patterson said. "We made the call to mobilize ODOT workers and equipment at midnight and trucks were rolling in at 2 a.m."

Director of Operations Casey Shell praised the efforts of ODOT maintenance crews who came from all eight field divisions to clear storm debris from highways and local roads following the tornadoes that struck the Carney, Moore and Shawnee areas on May 19 and 20.

"Many of these workers missed out on Memorial Day weekend activities like graduation ceremonies, memorial services and family reunions to assist in Moore and south Oklahoma City," Shell said. "The work was performed without any complaints, serious injuries or incidents."

Patterson also announced the promotion of two longtime employees to fill ODOT's top leadership positions. Tim Gatz, of El Reno, was named Deputy Director and will oversee all of the department's project management, administrative, financial, legislative and public information activities. Casey Shell, of Stillwater, was named Chief Engineer and will lead ODOT's preconstruction, construction and maintenance efforts statewide.

The commission awarded a nearly \$7.5 million contract to construct the north half of the new interchange at I-35 and Winstar Blvd. near Thackerville in Love County. This second and final phase of construction is expected to be completed in Spring 2014. Construction of this new interchange is being funded by the Chickasaw Nation.

In all, commissioners awarded 20 contracts totaling more than \$36 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 18 counties.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Alfalfa, Beckham, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Creek, Kingfisher, Grant, Lincoln, Logan, Love, Major, Oklahoma, Osage, Roger Mills, Washita and Woods 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 **Monday, July 1 at 11 a.m.** in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Continued...

INFORMATION RELEASE

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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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More than 800 Oklahoma Department of Transportation workers from all eight field divisions statewide assisted with debris removal and cleanup following the destructive tornado that struck in Moore on May 20. The department estimates that ODOT maintenance crews hauled 4,000 tons of storm debris away from the area.



Heavy flooding on May 31 closed three lanes of US-62 (N.E. 23rd St.) between Sooner Rd. and Air Depot Blvd. near Midwest City. During a Monday, June 3 meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission voted to approve an emergency contract for highway repairs, which are estimated at \$575,000. To ensure safe travel while repairs are made, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation placed concrete barriers along the two open lanes of the highway. Depending on the weather, ODOT plans to have the highway repaired in less than two months.