



December Commission Wrap-Up

New Port of Entry weigh and inspection station to be built near Arkansas border; \$84 million in contracts awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Monday, Dec. 9 meeting include commission approval of contracts for construction of a new Port of Entry weigh and inspection station on I-40 near the Arkansas border, a report on the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's plan to address the record low balance in the Highway Trust Fund and the agency's support of the state's commercial waterways system in eastern Oklahoma and approval of contracts for bridge work at the tri-level I-44 interchange in Lawton and a highway reconstruction project on US-60 in Osage County.

Construction of Oklahoma's next Port of Entry weigh and inspection station is planned to begin near the Arkansas border next year. Commissioners approved two contracts for construction of the new station on I-40 in Sequoyah County. A \$6.5 million contract was awarded for paving of the site's on and off-ramps and parking lot and a \$2.8 million contract was awarded for construction of the facility. The third of nine planned weigh and inspection stations, this state-of-the-art facility will include technology designed to thoroughly weigh commercial trucks while still on the roadway to verify trucks are following all size and weight regulations and safety requirements. This technology will also allow Oklahoma Corporation Commission and Department of Public Safety staff to review permits, registration, fuel tax payments, safety ratings and other documentation electronically with minimal delays to truck drivers.

Executive Director Mike Patterson updated the commission on the agency's plans for future construction projects, considering the record low balance in the federal government's Highway Trust Fund, which provides reimbursement to states for highway construction projects. With federal reimbursement in jeopardy, ODOT could be forced to delay engineering and construction projects in its 2014-2021 Eight-year Construction Work Plan.

"In the coming weeks, ODOT will be making a plan for how to handle our bid lettings in 2014. It would not be prudent to continue to put projects on the street if the Highway Trust Fund's cash balance doesn't improve," Patterson said. "We're hopeful that Congress will step in with a solution that will provide the necessary cash in the federal Highway Trust Fund to support the federal transportation authorization, MAP-21, and allow us to continue our Eight-year Construction Work Plan."

Patterson also briefed commissioners on ODOT's support of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System in eastern Oklahoma, a 445-mile freight corridor that includes the state's two public ports, the Port of Catoosa and Port of Muskogee. In 2012, nearly 6 million tons of cargo valued at more than \$2 billion was transported on the waterway in Oklahoma. With the state's network of highways and railroads, the ports are able to serve agricultural and industrial centers statewide. Since 2000, ODOT has invested \$417 million in highway and bridge improvements within 10 miles of the Port of Catoosa and nearly \$67 million within 10 miles of the Port of Muskogee.

The commission awarded a nearly \$5.5 million contract to replace one bridge and rehabilitate three other bridges at the tri-level I-44 interchange at Cache Rd. in Lawton. Through a partnership between ODOT and the City of Lawton, visual enhancements including a brown and tan paint scheme with buffalo and wheat designs will be added to the bridges.

Commissioners also voted to award a contract for a more than \$37 million project to reconstruct nearly six miles of US-60 near Pawhuska in Osage County. This project includes realignment of portions of the highway and replacement of three bridges as part of an ongoing effort to improve the US-60 corridor between Pawhuska and Vinita.

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In all, commissioners awarded 18 contracts totaling more than \$84 million to improve bridges, highways, interstates and roads in 16 counties.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Carter, Cleveland, Comanche, Garfield, Harmon, Hughes, Kay, McCurtain, Murray, Noble, Osage, Ottawa, Pittsburg, Sequoyah, Wagoner 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 regular meeting is scheduled for **Monday, Jan. 6 at 11 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 commission 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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(Editors and News Directors: For more information, call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)



At their Monday, Dec. 9 meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved contracts for construction of a new Port of Entry weigh and inspection station on I-40 near the Arkansas border in Sequoyah County. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is responsible for construction and maintenance of the station, which will be staffed by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission and Department of Public Safety who enforce commercial vehicle regulations and safety requirements.



At their Monday, Dec. 9 meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission voted to award a contract for a more than \$37 million project by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to reconstruct nearly six miles of US-60 near Pawhuska in Osage County. This project includes realignment of portions of the highway and replacement of three bridges, including the bridge over Rock Creek, pictured here. This is one of several projects to improve the US-60 corridor between Pawhuska and Vinita.



Structural improvements and aesthetic enhancements are scheduled for Lawton's tri-level I-44 interchange at Cache Rd, pictured here. At their Monday, Dec. 9 meeting, members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved a nearly \$5.5 million contract to replace one bridge and rehabilitate three other bridges at the interchange. Through a partnership between the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the City of Lawton, artistic treatments including paint and buffalo and wheat designs will be added to the bridges.