



Groundbreaking ceremony launches I-244/Arkansas River bridge replacement project in Tulsa

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As the Oklahoma Department of Transportation marks its centennial year, it launches a first-of-its-kind construction project. On Friday, state and local leaders took part in a ceremonial groundbreaking for Oklahoma's first double-decker bridge, which will be on westbound I-244 over the Arkansas River in Tulsa.

The current bridge, built in 1967, is functionally obsolete and in critical need of replacement. The new bridge is "multi-modal," incorporating highway lanes on the top, with two dedicated future rail lines and an area for bicycle and pedestrian traffic underneath.

"We are excited to make this project a reality," Oklahoma Department of Transportation Chief Engineer Gary Evans said. "Starting the construction of this type of bridge during our agency's centennial year certainly speaks to our evolving transportation needs, and the bridge will be a tremendous benefit to this corridor for decades to come."

At the end of April, crews from Manhattan Road and Bridge Co. will start work on repairs to the eastbound I-244 bridge surface, and complete construction of crossover detours on either side of the current Arkansas River bridges. In summer 2011, the westbound I-244 bridge will close and traffic will shift onto the eastbound I-244 bridge, which will accommodate two-way traffic. Construction is expected to take two years to complete.

"The design of this new bridge keeps current and future transportation needs in mind," Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley said. "The opportunity to construct a bridge of this magnitude is not without challenges, particularly to the drivers who use this corridor each day. We will make every effort to keep traffic flowing on I-244 during construction."

The cost of construction is \$64 million and the cost of construction time is \$14 million bringing the total bid to \$78 million. The project cost is a combination of federal funds and a nearly \$50 million federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Grant received in February 2010. This grant cycle was extremely competitive, with more than 1,400 applications submitted nationwide. The I-244 multi-modal bridge is considered one of the top projects in the country to receive this funding.

Representatives from ODOT, City of Tulsa, Tulsa Metro Chamber, and Federal Highway Administration along with state and local leaders took part in Friday's groundbreaking.

"It is exciting for Tulsa to be the site where the state's first double-decker, multi-modal bridge is built," said Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett. "This bridge takes our transportation system to a new level and sets the course for more innovative transportation solutions. This visionary bridge prepares Tulsa for future growth."

The existing eastbound bridge is scheduled for replacement in 2013, although the \$30 million estimated project cost is not fully funded at this time.

Information on the project, including a detour map and daily closure information will be posted in the Traffic Advisories section of www.okladot.state.ok.us.

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(Editors and News Directors: For more information call the ODOT Media & Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION
200 N.E. 21ST ST. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000

I-244 Multi-Modal bridge groundbreaking

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Tulsa, OK



State and local officials break ground Friday on the upcoming I-244 Multi-Modal bridge project in Tulsa. The new bridge is a double-decker style, incorporating highway lanes on top, with two dedicated future rail lines and an area for bicycle and pedestrian traffic underneath. Taking part in the ceremonial groundbreaking are {from left to right}: former Oklahoma Transportation Commissioner Guy Berry; Oklahoma Department of Transportation Division Engineer Randle White; Manhattan Road and Bridge President Kendall Adams; Rep. Jadine Nollan; City of Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett; Federal Highway Administration Assistant Division Administrator Ivan Marrero; Tulsa Metro Chamber President Michael Neal and ODOT Chief Engineer Gary Evans.