



**February Commission Wrap-Up:
Stimulus plans updated; \$79.7 million in projects awarded**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Feb. 2 meeting include discussion of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's preparation for a possible federal economic stimulus package that could result in improvements to the state's infrastructure, a presentation honoring a retiree, and approval of \$79.7 million in bridge and highway construction projects.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley said the department staff has identified \$1.1 billion of already-scheduled transportation projects that could be built as part of the federal stimulus plan now in Congress. Although under existing formulas, Oklahoma's portion would be \$465 million for highways and bridges, \$33 million for transit, with rail and waterways yet to be determined. Regardless of the amount ultimately approved by Congress, Oklahoma will be ready both in terms of dollar amounts and time constraints.

"Staff and consultants have been working diligently to finalize shovel-ready projects across the state that could be let for contract immediately," Ridley said. "That means construction could start within about 60 days after the bill is signed."

Ridley said the number of shovel-ready projects has grown significantly in the months since he first informed commissioners of the proposal's impact on Oklahoma's transportation system. In all, about 180 projects have been identified that could be funded through the stimulus package.

Additionally, Ridley honored David Smith who recently retired as the agency's senior division engineer. Smith worked for the agency more than 40 years and was responsible for all ODOT activities in nine counties in the far southeastern Oklahoma.

In action items, commissioners approved an \$8.2 million contract to resurface and add cable barriers to a six mile stretch of I-40 in Caddo County and a \$6 million contract to build a new bridge on US-60 in Craig County. They also approved a contract for about \$2.5 million to replace a load posted bridge on SH-7 in Johnston County and a \$2.1 million contract for a series of intersection improvements in Jenks.

In all, commissioners awarded 55 contracts totaling \$79.7 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 37 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Adair, Atoka, Caddo, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Coal, Cotton, Craig, Custer, Delaware, Grady, Greer, Harper, Hughes, Johnston, Kingfisher, Kiowa, McClain, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Noble, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Ottawa, Pittsburg, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Seminole, Sequoyah, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, Tulsa and Washita counties.

The commission – an 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 11 a.m. Monday, March 2, 2009, in the R.A. Ward Transportation Building in Oklahoma City.

Before a project is awarded, ODOT researches, plans and designs work to be done. Contracts are bid competitively, with the OTC selecting the winning firm. Contractors have a grace period to begin work, typically several weeks or months after a contract is awarded. Weather or other factors can delay a project.

Contracts, bid information, the commission's monthly agenda and project details can be accessed at www.okladot.state.ok.us.

– www.okladot.state.ok.us –

(Editors and News Directors: For details about projects in your area and to download accompanying pictures, please visit the Web site 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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These bridges are among 53 on the Inner Dispersal Loop in downtown Tulsa that could be rehabilitated using funding from the federal stimulus package. The Inner Dispersal Loop is a network of four highways surrounding downtown Tulsa. Statewide, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation has identified 180 “shovel-ready” projects that officials say might qualify for stimulus funding.



Tim Tegler, director of Roadway Design for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, explains preparations made by agency staff for possible federal stimulus funding. Tegler is standing in front of several tables of project plans for the Tulsa area. Statewide, 180 projects totaling \$1.1 billion have been identified for possible federal funding.



David Smith, who recently retired as the Oklahoma Department Transportation's senior division engineer, discusses his more than 40 years of service with members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission at its Monday, Feb. 2, meeting. Smith was in charge of agency activities in the southeast Oklahoma area.