



County bridges funded, safety honors made; \$193 million awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's April 27 meeting include discussing stimulus projects, awarding contracts to build more than 30 county bridges across the state, honoring former Transportation Secretary Phil Tomlinson and presenting worker safety awards.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley noted the agency is working to apply about \$26 million of the state's stimulus funds to projects on the county road system. He said the funding is ultimately expected to result in the replacement of nearly 50 county bridges. At the meeting, commissioners approved construction contracts worth about \$19 million for about 30 county bridges.

Oklahoma received \$39 million in stimulus funding for transit projects. Of that amount, \$22 million goes directly to urban providers in metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Norman and Lawton. The remaining nearly \$17 million is set aside to replace vehicles for rural transit providers. ODOT has requested proposals, including a compressed natural gas option, for vans and buses to be used in rural areas that would meet guidelines of the Americans with Disability Act.

Tomlinson was given a commemorative brick from Rt. 66 in honor of his six years serving as Oklahoma State Secretary of Transportation. He is expected to be replaced by Gary Ridley, who also will continue to serve as ODOT director.

Lt. Gov. Jari Askins presented awards to ODOT divisions for workplace safety. She said the ODOT awards program not only provides a safer environment for employees, but also saves tax dollars.

"The money that is saved when you have good safety records is certainly very important, not just the money that is saved on workers' compensation claims, but workers on duty get jobs done faster – and that saves money," Askins said.

Commissioners approved requests for construction of 19 bridges through the County Bridge and Road Improvement Fund. The CBRI-funded bridges would be built with county work forces.

Commissioners approved a \$75 million resurfacing project in Tulsa – the largest-ever single contract awarded in ODOT history. The project is less than six miles long but includes the rehabilitation of more than 40 bridges on the Inner Dispersal Loop (I-244) in downtown Tulsa. The project will also be the largest project funded through Oklahoma's portion of the economic stimulus program.

Commissioners also approved a contract for rebuilding the I-44 interchange at 193rd E. Ave. in Tulsa. Though not a stimulus project, the \$44 million contract is partially funded by the Cherokee Nation. The commission also approved contracts to widen US-54 near Hooker and to widen US-183 south of Cordell.

In all, commissioners awarded 53 contracts totaling nearly \$193 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 41 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

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(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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Safety pays: Oklahoma Department of Transportation personnel mark the agency's annual Safety Awards in Oklahoma City Monday, April 27. Pictured are: Gary Ridley, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director; Sam Roberts, Antlers-area Sign Crew; Ted Hollandsworth, Tillman County Maintenance Crew; Calvin Carney, Antlers-area acting Division Engineer; Dennis Walker, Pawnee County Maintenance Crew; Lt. Gov. Jari Askins; Rob Bowers, Woodward County Maintenance Crew; Brooks Billing, Adair County Maintenance Crew; Joe Carey, Guthrie Interstate Crew; Charles Davis, Central Sign Shop in Edmond; Charles Smith, Okfuskee County Maintenance Crew; Jerry Flury, Guthrie Interstate Crew; Darren Saliba, Muskogee-area Division Engineer; Sam Reynolds, Duncan-area Equipment Shop; Mike Bracken, ODOT Safety Branch; Rick Walls, Antlers-area Sign Crew.



Dan Overland, Oklahoma Transportation Commission chairman; Phil Tomlinson former Oklahoma Transportation Secretary and his wife Carol; and Gary Ridley, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director, reflect on Tomlinson's six years as secretary, during the commission's Monday, April 27, meeting in Oklahoma City. Tomlinson was presented with a commemorative brick from Rt. 66 in honor of his service to the state.



Pete Regan, District 8 member of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, discusses Tulsa area highway improvements following April's commission meeting. Commissioners approved a \$68 million contract to resurface the north and west legs of Inner Dispersal Loop (I-244) around downtown Tulsa and a \$44 million contract to rebuild the I-44 interchange at 193rd E. Ave.