



August Commission Wrap-Up:

Commission updated on funding issues; awards more than \$100 million in projects

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Aug. 3 meeting include updates on federal highway funding issues, stimulus expenditures, high-speed rail funding and two regional awards received by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. Commissioners also approved an agreement for transportation bonds and awarded contracts for \$104 million in bridge and highway projects.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley said Congress approved a measure to add \$7 billion to the federal Highway Trust Fund, which should keep the fund solvent through the end of the current federal fiscal year. He said lawmakers will need to change federal transportation funding to keep the fund solvent over the long term.

Updating commissioners on the status of economic stimulus spending, Ridley said 85 percent of the state's portion of transportation funding is under contract, or about \$400 million of the \$465 million. That total includes \$17 million for local projects commissioners approved at the meeting.

Ridley also noted ODOT filed a pre-application to apply for stimulus funds set aside for high-speed rail. Oklahoma's proposal will include upgrades for the *Heartland Flyer* route and a high-speed rail line between Oklahoma City and Tulsa as part of a nationally designed high-speed rail corridor.

Commissioners were apprised about honors ODOT received in the America's Transportation Awards program, which is sponsored by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, along with the American Automobile Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

One award was for an emergency project on SH-20 in Rogers County that was named best "On Time, Small Project." The contractor, Muskogee Bridge Co., Inc., finished about two months ahead of schedule. The widening of I-235 at N. 36th St. in Oklahoma City was the top "On Budget, Medium Project." The project was completed by Duit Construction Co., Inc., of Edmond.

Commissioners authorized an agreement with the Oklahoma Capital Improvement Authority to issue \$300 million in bonds to finance ODOT's eight-year Construction Work Plan. The bonds are part of a funding agreement made by state lawmakers a year ago.

In other items, commissioners approved a project to upgrade the US-69 interchange with US-266 just west of Checotah in McIntosh County, as well as the next phase of the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City and two cable barrier projects on stretches of I-40 in Custer and Sequoyah counties.

In all, commissioners awarded 42 contracts totaling \$104 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 24 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Beaver, Bryan, Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Comanche, Custer, Garvin, Kiowa, LeFlore, Logan, Major, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Sequoyah, Stephens, Tulsa and Woodward 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. **Tuesday**, Sept. 8, 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 view 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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Bragging rights: Gary Evans, Director of Operations for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, announces two awards ODOT recently won for projects in Rogers and Oklahoma counties to members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission at the Monday, Aug. 3, meeting. ODOT received the honors in the America's Transportation Awards program, which is sponsored by the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials, along with American Automobile Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

An emergency project on SH-20 in Rogers County was named the best "On Time, Small Project." The widening of I-235 at N.W. 36th in Oklahoma City was named the best "On Budget, Medium Project." The projects won regional awards given at the Western AASHTO meeting in July and now will be part of the national competition.

From left are commissioners Bruce Benbrook, northwest Oklahoma; Bradley Burgess, southwest Oklahoma; Peter Regan, northeast Oklahoma, and Evans.



Crews construct a bridge that will carry Western Avenue traffic over the I-40 Crosstown in Oklahoma City. Monday, Aug. 3, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission awarded a contract for construction along the central portion of the more than 20-phase project, to the east of the above project. Not only is I-40 a major east-west corridor through Oklahoma, it is one of few coast-to-coast highways in the United States. The new I-40 Crosstown is expected to open to traffic in 2012.