



September Commission Wrap-Up:

Construction work plan approved; nearly \$40 million in projects awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 10, 2009

PR# 09-059

Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Sept. 8 meeting include recognition for conservation of endangered species, approval of an eight-year construction plan, updates on stimulus-related projects, federal funding issues and approval of nearly \$40 million in contracts on projects.

Gary Corino, Oklahoma Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration, recognized the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for winning an FHWA national 2009 Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative Award for streamlining efforts to conserve the American burying beetle, which is an endangered species found mainly in eastern and southern parts of the state.

Commissioners approved ODOT's Federal Fiscal Years 2010 -2017 Construction Work Plan. The Plan enumerates priorities for highway and bridge construction during the next eight years and includes more than \$4 billion in improvements to the state's bridges and highways.

ODOT Director Gary Ridley said the plan continues the agency's focus on bridges with an increase of more than 100 bridges over last year's Plan. The plan represents the largest increase in bridge work ever incorporated into the agency's eight-year Construction Work Plan.

Relating the plan to federal funding issues, Ridley noted funding in the federal economic stimulus program allowed engineers to include additional critical projects in the Construction Work Plan.

Ridley said eight-year plan predicts state and federal revenues as well as construction costs over an eight-year period. He said agency officials conservatively estimated revenue because Congress is currently considering changes to short term and long term funding.

He noted within the last year Congress twice added money to the Highway Trust Fund. In addition, \$135 million in Oklahoma projects may be rescinded over the next several months. Ridley said the state's Congressional delegation is working to solve the problem.

Updating commissioners on progress with the stimulus program, ODOT Operations Director Gary Evans said 150 stimulus projects are currently under contract and eight projects completed. In total about 87 percent of stimulus funds have been committed for projects throughout the state.

Commissioners approved a contract to develop bridge rating software for an automated routing system for overweight trucks. The software will also be used in the state's bridge inspection database.

Ridley also updated commissioners about an initiative to improve the aesthetic appearance on highly visible projects. He said the effort is bringing positive feedback.

In other items, commissioners approved a pair of contracts to construct a bypass on US-287 around Boise City. They also approved a contract for construction of a sound wall on the north side of I-44 between Harvard and Yale avenues in Tulsa, following a recent federal study. Commissioners approved a contract to restructure a causeway over Lake Eufaula in Pittsburg County.

In all, commissioners awarded 30 contracts totaling nearly \$40 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 22 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Beckham, Canadian, Cimarron, Cleveland, Coal, Custer, Comanche, Creek, Delaware, Dewey, Garvin, Kiowa, Logan, Murray, Oklahoma, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Roger Mills, Rogers, Tillman, Tulsa and Woodward 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 meeting is 11 a.m. Monday, Oct. 5, 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, which can be affected by weather.

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

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



Following the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's Tuesday, Sept. 8, meeting, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley explains to members of the media how changes in federal funding will affect highway and bridge construction projects in Oklahoma. The commission approved an eight-year Construction Work Plan for ODOT at the meeting.



The Oklahoma Department of Transportation recently won a Federal Highway Administration national Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative Award for streamlining efforts to conserve the American burying beetle, which is an endangered species found in eastern and southern areas of the state. Gary Corino, Oklahoma Division Administrator for the FHWA, recognized the agency's efforts at the Tuesday, Sept. 8, meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. Under the program, ODOT will use savings to fund habitat preservation projects. Pictured from left are: ODOT Director Gary Ridley, Corino, ODOT Natural Resources Biologist Julianne Hoagland, ODOT Environmental Programs Coordinator Dawn Sullivan, Oklahoma Transportation Commissioner James Dunnegan and ODOT Director of Engineering David Streb.