

**Cable Barrier Project Progresses,  
ODOT Officials Note  
Reduction in Fatalities**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 12, 2008  
PR #08-044

Oklahoma Department of Transportation

## Information Release



*Public Affairs Division, 200 N. E. 21st Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105 (405) 521-2554*

Since early 2007, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation has been diligently installing cable median barriers as part of heightened safety improvement efforts on Oklahoma's interstates and highways. Today, considerable results are materializing statewide.

Credited with preventing hundreds of cross-median crashes, cable barrier systems have been shown to significantly reduce fatalities associated with crossover accidents. Oklahoma Dept. of Public Safety data cites six crossover fatalities on interstates and highways through the first six-months of 2008, compared with six month totals as high as 31 in recent years.

"The department is beginning to see significant reductions in the number of fatalities associated with cross-median collisions," ODOT Director Gary Ridley said. "Cable barriers can and have provided life-saving protection and peace of mind to motorists across Oklahoma."

These safety systems were first introduced on the Lake Hefner Parkway in Oklahoma City in 2001. When installed, the system was the first of its kind in the United States. Since 2001, the Lake Hefner Parkway cable has sustained more than 500 known hits. Yet, the barrier has reduced the number of crossover fatalities during that time from six in the three years prior to installation, to one in subsequent years.

"With the trends we are seeing and the reduction of fatalities, it appears that the installation of cable barriers has been one of the most effective, if not the most effective, safety improvements the department has made," said John Fuller, ODOT Chief Engineer.

After the installation on the Lake Hefner Parkway, ODOT continued its research of the different cable systems available and did more testing on the interstate system, including the segment on I-35 near Norman. With the test strip doing well, ODOT proceeded to program more projects statewide.

Overall, much research has gone into this process prior to embarking on using the cable barrier systems across the state.

These vital safety improvements are possible through the hard work of Oklahoma's Legislature. Passage of House Bill 1078 in 2005 allocated funds for ODOT to address critical highway safety needs. After evaluations of the Lake Hefner Parkway cable showed promising results, ODOT moved quickly, using the available funds to install systems across the state.

Since installation began statewide in 2007, more than 230 miles of cable have been installed or are under construction. As already approved in our 2007-2014 Construction Work Plan, an additional 41 miles will be let, totaling 272 miles of cable in the state.

In coming months, Oklahoma's Transportation Commission will be presented with the department's new 8-year construction program. Thanks to funds provided by the Oklahoma Legislature in 2008 under HB 2272, ODOT hopes to continue the cable barrier program in the 2009-2016 Construction Work Plan. Planning new projects is complicated by the potential for a federal funding shortfall. However, even with the limited funds since the cable barriers come at a lower cost, continuing the program will provide motorists with increased safety.

On average, the cable can be installed at 10 percent of the cost of concrete median barriers, and repairs can be made quickly following accidents.

Cable barriers do not replace concrete barriers and are not suitable for all median designs. Motorists are reminded, however, that increased safety features are not a substitute for driving responsibly and remaining alert.

-[www.okladot.state.ok.us](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us)-

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