

## **First Construction Phase of I-44 widening project in Tulsa awarded**

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The first construction phase of the I-44 widening project between Riverside Dr. and Yale Ave. in Tulsa was approved today by the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. The \$46 million bid for construction of an underground drainage structure and frontage road was awarded to Sherwood Construction Co., Inc., and incentives are in place to expedite the work of the 22 month-long project.

“This is the biggest and single most expensive project ever put up for bid by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation,” ODOT Director Gary Ridley said. “It’s the first of many projects for this corridor, and we do ask for citizens to be patient with us during construction. The finished corridor will far exceed what they are driving on now.”

This construction phase, expected to begin in early 2009, will build a 1.25 mile long concrete drainage structure 30 feet underground in the Perryman Ditch area, which extends on the north side of I-44 from Riverside Dr. to just west of Yorktown Ave. This will serve as a major drainage structure for this entire Riverside Dr. to Yale Ave. corridor, and this phase must be started before any widening work on I-44 can begin.

“We are very excited to enter the construction phase of this long-awaited project,” Oklahoma Transportation Commissioner Guy Berry said. “This is perhaps the most important highway expansion in the history of Tulsa. We have another four years or so to go before all of the construction is over, but I believe that the citizens of Tulsa will be very pleased with the safety, convenience and beauty of this new highway.”

The overall \$330 million I-44 widening project includes expanding traffic lanes between Riverside Dr. and Yale Ave. from four to six and improving on and off ramps at the Harvard Ave., Lewis Ave., Peoria Ave. and Riverside Dr. intersections. Currently, right-of-way acquisitions and utility relocations are continuing throughout this corridor. The next construction phase of the overall project will be in the area of Harvard Ave., which is tentatively scheduled to bid in mid-2009. This will be followed by the Riverside/Peoria corridor bid, tentatively scheduled for early 2010, and the Lewis Ave. corridor, tentatively scheduled for bid in mid-2011. The overall project is expected to be complete by late 2012.