



Stimulus program huge success for Oklahoma drivers

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Santa will give a big HoHoHo! when he sees how many improvements are underway on Oklahoma's roads and bridges, thanks to additional funds through the federal economic stimulus.

Since Oklahoma Department of Transportation officials announced one year ago this week they were planning possible stimulus projects, contractors have finished more than 40 highway and bridge projects throughout the state with more than 100 currently under construction.

With so many projects under construction, drivers are asked to be patient and to drive carefully in construction work zones. Attentive driving in work zones helps promote safety for both drivers and construction workers.

Early preparation was a key to Oklahoma's success compared with other states. Oklahoma was one of the leaders in obligating stimulus funding for all of its major highway-related projects.

Nearly 90 percent of the \$465 million for transportation projects in Oklahoma has been obligated or spent. More than 180 projects on state highways, city streets and county roads are planned, underway or complete. Projects include improvements to bridges and roadways and installation of safety devices such as cable barriers and improving sidewalks along highways in small towns to conform to the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

"Hard work and preparation through last year's holiday season paid off when bidding on construction contracts began only days after Congress approved the stimulus package in February," ODOT Director Gary Ridley said. "Oklahoma led the nation in terms of putting the funding to work. The positive results are becoming more and more apparent both in terms of jobs and transportation improvements."

More than \$200 million already has been pumped into the state's economy through payments to contractors. Workers have logged nearly one million hours in Oklahoma because of the stimulus.

Thanks to the stimulus, projects that have been substantially completed include:

- I-44 resurfacing more than seven miles between the H.E. Bailey Turnpike in McClain County and I-240 in Oklahoma City;
- I-235 pavement preservation in Oklahoma City;
- US-64 pavement rehabilitation in Texas County;
- US-183 resurfacing in Tillman County, and
- US-69 pavement rehabilitation in Pittsburg and Atoka counties.

Some projects under way include rebuilding two legs of the I-244 Inner Dispersal Loop in downtown Tulsa, a new interchange on US-81 at Bois D'Arc in Duncan and new lanes and bridges on US-271 in LeFlore County.

Less than \$50 million remains to be obligated, the bulk of which is slated to be used for local projects.

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

INFORMATION RELEASE

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