



December Commission Wrap-Up:

Ongoing federal funding issues discussed; \$22 million in projects awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Highlights of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission's December 7 meeting include an update on federal funding issues, recognition of a recent statewide honor for an employee of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and approval of construction contracts totaling about \$22 million.

Since the federal transportation program expired at the end of September, Congress has approved two temporary extensions. In addition to hampering work plans, the measures reduced funding nationwide and for ODOT.

ODOT Director Ridley said the current interim measure will lapse a week before Christmas. He said he doubts a final program can be adopted before the current stop-gap law ends and predicted that a third temporary measure will be necessary.

Ridley said ODOT officials preferred a single 18-month extension to allow full congressional consideration for "a good highway bill, rather than one that's done quickly." He said the reduced funding has caused the delay of projects across the state.

Ridley also noted department officials are monitoring issues brought about by the state's revenue shortfall, which also could impact highway and bridge construction.

Commissioners recognized Dru Bradford, of ODOT's Technology Services Division. She was named "Oklahoma Certified Public Manager of the Year for 2008," which led to her nomination for an award by the American Academy of Certified Public Managers.

In action items, the commission approved a Smart Work Zone in Tulsa that will remain in place throughout four phases of widening of I-44 from Riverside Dr. to Yale Ave. Construction on the corridor is expected to begin in January and be complete by early 2013. Changeable message boards across Tulsa will provide real-time information from traffic sensors about driving conditions within the corridor. Similar systems are currently in place on projects in highly traveled locations.

Commissioners also approved a contract to replace three bridges and adjoining approaches on SH-48 near the Creek and Okfuskee county line south of Bristow.

In all, commissioners awarded 18 contracts totaling just over \$22 million to improve highways, interstates and roads in 14 counties. Projects include bridge and highway construction and reconstruction, resurfacing and safety improvements.

Contracts were awarded for projects in Canadian, Carter, Cleveland, Greer, Haskell, Kiowa, Latimer, McClain, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Osage, Rogers, Tulsa and Wagoner 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 **10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 11**, 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. Typically, work begins several weeks or months after contracts are awarded.

Contracts, bid information, the commission's monthly agenda and project details can be viewed 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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Winter “wonder” land: Congress has provided stop-gap funding since the federal transportation program expired at the end of September. Following the Oklahoma Transportation Commission’s Monday, Dec. 7, meeting, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Gary Ridley explains the current interim measure expires Dec. 18. Ridley said he doubts Congress can get permanent legislation approved one week before Christmas, which leaves engineers wondering how to schedule future construction.



Traffic solutions: A multi-year widening project on I-44 between Riverside Dr. and Yale Ave. in Tulsa will be getting under way on the main line in early 2010. At its Monday, Dec. 7, meeting, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved funds for a Smart Work Zone system, which will provide real-time traffic information from traffic sensors to drivers heading into this corridor. This series of more than 30 message boards will be in place throughout the entire project, which is currently scheduled to end in early 2013.