



## Commission okays first phase of historic blitz for better bridges

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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This fall, football isn't the only thing Oklahomans have to cheer about after Gov. Mary Fallin announced Monday, Oct. 3 an aggressive plan to address all currently known structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system. Today, the highway system has 706 structurally deficient bridges.

The first play of Fallin's Bridge Improvement & Turnpike Modernization Plan was put into motion when the Oklahoma Transportation Commission approved the FFY 2012-2019 Eight-Year Construction Work Plan by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The phase includes replacement or rehabilitation of 539 structurally deficient bridges, including 126 that Fallin directed be added to the program's already-anticipated revenue.

"This unprecedented action will ensure the improved safety of Oklahoma's bridges for decades to come," Fallin said. "It is critical that Oklahoma has a reliable transportation system for travel and commerce. Our state should be known as a leader in having good bridges for our citizens."

Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley praised Fallin's proposal noting that in recent years, additional transportation investment by state leaders has led to a 50 percent reduction in deficient highway bridges, down from nearly 1,200 in 2005.

"This is a light at the end of a long, long tunnel," Oklahoma Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley said. "We've made progress in reducing the number of deficient highway bridges. With Fallin's vision, this journey will finally reach a major milestone."

The second phase of Fallin's plan, which requires legislative approval, would increase funding to replace or rehabilitate the roster of the 167 structurally deficient highway bridges that remain unfunded and are not included in the FFY 2012-2019 Eight-Year Construction Work Plan.

When both phases are combined, the Bridge Improvement & Turnpike Modernization Plan would address all of the state's current 706 structurally deficient highway bridges by the end of the decade. Construction on the final projects is expected to begin by late 2019.

The FFY 2012-2019 Eight-Year Construction Work Plan includes the largest number of bridges ever targeted for work by the department in its construction plan. It also includes final funding to complete work along several major corridors including:

- Replacing the eastbound I-244 Arkansas River bridge in Tulsa; currently the westbound bridge is under construction. Both were rated as structurally deficient in their most recent inspections.
- Fully funding a new I-235/I-44 interchange in Oklahoma City; the existing bridges are structurally deficient.
- Reconnecting downtown Oklahoma City to I-40, the final phase of replacement of the existing I-40 Crosstown, which is also a structurally deficient bridge. Final paving on the new mainline portion is underway.



INFORMATION RELEASE

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Under the Bridge Improvement & Turnpike Modernization Plan, additional revenue would be invested in Oklahoma highway bridges. Current law gradually increases transportation funding each year until a \$435 million cap is reached in 2017. The proposal would add \$15 million to the existing increase and raise the cap from \$435 million to \$550 million, which would be reached in 2018. While the proposal would require legislative action, it would not increase taxes.

The Fallin plan also targets county bridges through the recycling of beams from highway bridges when possible and by increasing funding for the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges from \$80 million to \$105 million annually. In addition, the plan calls for expediting widening and safety improvements to the heavily traveled Kilpatrick Turnpike in Oklahoma City and the Creek Turnpike in Tulsa.

With more than 700 million tons of freight shipped each year in Oklahoma to and from markets around the world, a safe and reliable transportation system is essential to the state's economic well-being and to investment, job retention and job attraction as well as to public safety. With the governor's goal in place, ODOT is ready to accelerate work and face the challenge of making Oklahoma a champion of better bridges.

—[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.***

For a map of bridge locations, examples of a structurally deficient bridge and a county bridge constructed with reused beams, and a map of turnpike improvements, click on [http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/newsmedia/press/2011/11-059\\_additional\\_bridge\\_plan\\_graphics.pdf](http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/newsmedia/press/2011/11-059_additional_bridge_plan_graphics.pdf)

For a copy of ODOT's FFY 2012-2019 Eight-Year Construction Work Plan, click on <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/cwp-8-year-plan/index.htm>