

SURFACE

A PROGRESS REPORT ON OKLAHOMA TRANSPORTATION • www.restoreTRUST.org

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 54TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE

Legislature Supports Transportation Program To Completion

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 54TH Oklahoma legislature began February 3rd and adjourned May 23rd, a week earlier than required. Governor Mary Fallin gave the final State of the State address of her first term by advocating passage of several initiatives including reducing the state income tax, state employee pension reform, salary increases for state troopers and other state employees and repairing the state Capitol building. Despite a late session legislative threat to redirect funding from the ROADS Fund to a non-transportation area of government, and a modest reduction in the overall Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) FY-15 budget, the final executive budget fully funds the continuation of ODOT's ongoing eight-year highway and bridge construction plan. The budget also protects funding for HB 2249, passed during the 2012 legislative session, to repair or replace the remaining structurally-deficient bridges on the state system by the end of the decade, and provide additional funds and recycled beams from the former I-40 Crosstown Expressway, to address deficient bridges on the county system.

The 2014 legislative session was challenging in that the tremendous progress collectively made with regards to trans-

portation funding was legitimately threatened for the first time since 2006. Each legislative session is complex and has its own personality with progress gauged in a variety of ways. Since 2006, TRUST members have been dedicated to creating a modern, safe and efficient infrastructure system that touches every corner of the state. Fortunately, we have seen marked and steady success. 2015 will bring a new legislative session, new legislators and new challenges and opportunities to improve Oklahoma's infrastructure on many levels. TRUST must continue to stand ready.

While the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan was protected by the legislature, the state of transportation funding in Washington, D.C. continues to be a concern. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which reimburses states for certain highway projects, was near insolvency in August before Congress appropriated enough funds to continue the program through May 2015. While no Oklahoma projects were impacted, the ongoing instability of the HTF is an issue that ODOT officials are monitoring with a close eye. If reimbursement dollars are not available, current projects on the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan could be halted and new projects delayed. In addition to the HTF, Congress must also address the future of the current two-year surface transportation authorization program known as MAP-21. MAP-21 expired September 30th, however Congress extended its funding through next May as well. Despite these federal funding challenges, Oklahoma's steady economic growth and commitment from



SURFACE is a publication of TRUST dedicated to bringing news about the financing of Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure to community, business and policy leaders around the state. This biannual publication has a central focus of:

- Federal and state funding
- Regulatory news from state Capitol and Congress
- TRUST events and news
- Innovative topics on transportation funding

CONTENTS

- 02 Tulsa Interstate Projects Open
- 03 2014 Transportation Legislation Analysis
- 04 Shuster Keynotes Innovation Banquet
- 05 Why Join TRUST?
- 06 2014 TRUST Event Photos
- 07 Thank You SURFACE Sponsors

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the legislature and Governor Fallin has positioned transportation well for the future, however modernizing Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure on all levels is a moving target. The legislature has returned transportation as a core state government priority over the past eight years. The challenge moving forward for TRUST and everyone dedicated to building a first-class transportation infrastructure system in Oklahoma is to remain committed to communicating with the legislature, governor and Oklahoma's congressional delegation to ensure transportation investment continues to remain a top priority on the state level, and that Oklahoma receives its fair share of federal dollars. ■

High Profile Tulsa Projects Open to Motorists

TWO MAJOR INTERSTATE PROJECTS IN TULSA, ONE COMPLETED AND ONE NEAR COMPLETION, have motorists in the Tulsa metropolitan area elated.

The reconstruction of the I-44/Lewis Avenue bridge corridor, a component of the \$348 million Riverside Drive to Yale Avenue widening project, has been open to traffic in all directions for several weeks while the eastbound portion of the I-244 bridge over the Arkansas River opened September 15th following a ribbon cutting ceremony sponsored by the ODOT and the Tulsa Regional Chamber. Among the officials speaking at the event were Governor Mary Fallin, Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation Victor Mendez, Oklahoma Transportation Commissioner Pete Regan, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley and ODOT director Mike Patterson. The remainder of the \$41 million project, including opening of the westbound lanes, is expected to be completed in the spring. ■



Listening to Senator Jim Inhofe on the I-44/Lewis Avenue bridge are Oklahoma Transportation Commissioners Todd Huckaby and Pete Regan, Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett, Governor Mary Fallin, ODOT director Mike Patterson and Tulsa Regional Chamber president and chief executive officer Mike Neal.



Joining Governor Mary Fallin at the I-244 ribbon cutting in Tulsa are TRUST board member Jim Rodriguez, former TRUST board member and current Oklahoma Secretary of State Chris Bengtson, TRUST president Neal McCaleb, TRUST co-chairman Kell Kelly and Tulsa County Commission chief deputy Mark Liotta.



Admiring the new I-244 eastbound lanes are ODOT director Mike Patterson, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley, TRUST president Neal McCaleb and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation Victor Mendez.

2014 State Legislation Analysis

THE FY-15 BUDGET AGREEMENT

between Governor Fallin and legislative leaders continues to limit the size and growth of government. The total FY-15 ODOT appropriation represents a 55% reduction or approximately \$11,478,892 less than FY-14. The reduction does not impact the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan. In addition, the budget allows counties to reach their full 20% allocation of motor vehicle fees in FY-15 and directs those funds to county bridge projects.

Protecting the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan equates to an annual increase of \$59.7 million to the ROADS Fund until the total increase in the program equals \$575 million. Furthermore, current law has reduced, over a three-year period, the amount of motor vehicle fees currently going to the General Revenue Fund from 29.84 percent to 24.84 percent, directing the five percent balance to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) Fund. The CIRB will now be allocated 20% of motor vehicle fees, increasing its annual funding to more than \$111 million.

As of the end of 2013, 468 of the nearly 6,800 bridges on the state highway system were classified as structurally-deficient, down from a high of 1,168 in 2004. Approximately 400 of these bridges are scheduled to be replaced or rehabilitated in the next six years providing ODOT with the opportunity to focus on asset preservation, resurfacing, shoulder and other critical projects moving forward. ■



Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman addresses the audience at the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee dinner.

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House Speaker Jeff Hickman was the featured guest at the TRUST House Transportation Committee dinner.

Shuster, Mullin Featured Guests at Transportation Innovation Banquet

IN WHAT HAS BECOME A TRADITION, a capacity crowd of over 225 TRUST members, transportation advocates, elected officials and special guests attended the annual TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet October 7th at the Jim Thorpe Sports Museum and Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Keynoting the exciting evening was Ninth District Pennsylvania U.S. Representative Bill Shuster, chairman of the U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. Introducing Congressman Shuster and also addressing the audience was Oklahoma's representative on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Second District U.S. Representative Markwayne Mullin. Included in Congressman Shuster's enlightening address was a detailed update on the long-term status of the Highway Trust Fund and reauthorization of the MAP-21 surface transportation program.

A FINANCIALLY SOLVENT HTF AND LONG-TERM SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ARE WHOLEHEARTEDLY ENDORSED BY TRUST AND WILL ALLOW PLANNING FOR ODOT'S EIGHT-YEAR HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PLAN TO CONTINUE WHILE REDUCING BURDENSOME FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT OFTEN DELAY STATE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

The evening also included presentation of the 2014 TRUST Guardian of Transportation Award to Tom Love, TRUST founding member and founder and executive chairman of Oklahoma City-based Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores. Love joins current Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation and former ODOT and Oklahoma Turnpike Authority director Gary Ridley, former Governor George Nigh and former state representative Mark Liotta, as recipients of the prestigious annual award.

TRUST extends its deepest appreciation to Congressman Shuster and Congressman Mullin for being our special guests and engaging in a frank discussion regarding the future of America's and Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure system. ■



Pennsylvania Ninth District U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, chairman of the U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, delivers the keynote address at the TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet.



TRUST co-chairman Kell Kelly, Second District U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin and Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley enjoy the TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet.

Why Join TRUST?

Be part of the voice for transportation advocacy that works with legislators to implement solutions. Without your membership to TRUST, we risk losing the valuable momentum we have gained over the past eight years. At the state Capitol, we must have a constant and growing voice for transportation and hope you will join us in this vital cause.

MISSION STATEMENT

TRUST, *Transportation Revenues Used Strictly for Transportation*, is an advocacy group dedicated to restoring Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure. We are committed to creating a culture within Oklahoma government that values and adequately funds transportation as a core priority.

Principles of TRUST

- Use all state transportation-related taxes and fees strictly for transportation
- Protect and grow dedicated funds for Oklahoma's transportation system
- Educate policy makers and the public on the importance of investing in highways and bridges
- Support leaders who are committed to transportation as a core priority of state government
- Use high-quality, lasting materials in building and maintaining highways and bridges
- Advocate efficiency and accountability within the Oklahoma legislature and Oklahoma Department of Transportation

TRUST ON THE WEB restoreTRUST.org



Oklahoma Transportation News

Our online news page is updated daily with local and national legislative and transportation articles. To receive articles as they are posted, select the orange RSS feed button located on the news page of the website.



Follow TRUST on Twitter and Facebook

You can follow TRUST on Twitter and Facebook under the username "restoreTRUST." If you are not "Friends" with TRUST on Facebook, please do so today.



Events Online

TRUST provides the opportunity to register for upcoming events online. In addition to TRUST events, meetings for other transportation and member organizations are posted. To review the latest transportation happenings in Oklahoma, visit the events page at www.restoreTRUST.org. To have your organizations' activities posted contact TRUST membership director Helra Han at helrahan@gmail.com.

Update Your Member Profile Online

In an ongoing effort to conserve operating funds, TRUST continually updates its mailing lists and contact database. If you wish to continue to receive TRUST mailings, emails and newsletters, or wish to add additional contacts within your organization, please visit www.restoreTRUST.org, click on the contribute page and select "update membership profile."



Rep. Mike Sanders, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Transportation, speaks to attendees at the TRUST House Transportation Committee dinner.



TRUST co-founder Tom Love receives the 2014 TRUST Guardian of Transportation Award from TRUST president Neal McCaleb.



Representing TRUST member Dolese Brothers, Kermit Frank visits with TRUST board members Jim Rodriguez and Mike Webb prior to the Senate Transportation Committee dinner.



Pennsylvania U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster (left) joins Tim Duit, TRUST board member Jim Duit and Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe at a reception prior to the TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet.



Rep. Tom Newell, former First District U.S. Rep. John Sullivan and Rep. Jason Smalley attended the TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet.



U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, flanked by Senator Jim Inhofe and other Oklahoma transportation leaders, speaks during a roundtable discussion October 16th in Tulsa.

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.....→ **Please Plan to Attend
our Upcoming TRUST**

- Transportation Day at the Capitol - March 11, 2015
- Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners

Details Coming Soon!