PUBLIC NOTICE

US-259 Improvements through Hochatown

Section 4(f) de minimis impacts to Ouachita National Forest owned by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS)

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is proposing to widen and improve the road and bridges on US-259 from 8.25 miles north of JCT SH-3, extending north for four miles in Hochatown, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. Easement within the Ouachita National Forest, managed by the USFS, will be required to extend the bridge over Yashau Creek and widen and resurface US-259 between Carson Creek Road and Sailfish Road. Due to the proposed transportation use of the property located within USFS property, Section 4(f) regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 apply to the project. Section 4(f) affords protection to publicly-owned recreation areas (resources) including city, state, and national parks, wildlife refuges and management areas, and significant historic sites.

ODOT has coordinated with the USFS regarding avoidance and minimization of impacts of this project on USFS lands, and the USFS is supportive of these measures. This will be accomplished by avoiding existing USFS facilities (like trails, campgrounds, and visitor center), fencing or clearly marking construction limits, re-seeding disturbed soils, utilizing vegetated slopes in the design instead of retaining walls, and minimizing tree clearing. ODOT is proposing the use of approximately 14 acres of easement within the Ouachita National Forest, representing approximately 0.00004% of the national forest within Oklahoma. The use of appropriate best management practices (including stormwater, erosion, dust control, and chemical/fuel handling) will be conscientiously implemented.

Based on the avoidance and minimization of impacts to the USFS land as described above, ODOT, in coordination with FHWA, is proposing a *de minimis* impact finding regarding Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (1966). ODOT welcomes your comments on the effects of this project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of the Ouachita National Forest (the Section 4(f) resource). Please mail or email any comments you have by **December 22, 2026** to:

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