



Oklahoma Turnpike Authority

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AUTHORITY ADOPTS OKLAHOMA'S FAVORITE SON'S NAME FOR PLAZA

OKLAHOMA CITY—The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority adopted a resolution at its monthly meeting today, naming the former Vinita Service Plaza, known to travelers as the “Glass House,” to the Will Rogers Archway.

The Authority teamed with the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation and allowed visitors to the Tourism’s website to take a survey on the naming of the plaza. The Will Rogers Archway was the overwhelming choice of those who took the survey.

The plaza, located just outside of Vinita, is currently undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation. When completed, the Will Rogers Archway will have enhanced services, including a McDonald’s and Subway Restaurant and enhanced fuel services operated by Kum & Go.

The history of Will Rogers and his influence in Oklahoma will be on display as well. Other enhanced services for the Will Rogers Archway will be the addition of a video wall highlighting Oklahoma’s tourism hotspots.

“The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department values its strong relationship with the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. To assist with the renaming of the service plaza, OTRD used social media and electronic communication to drive the public to a Survey Monkey questionnaire. Will Rogers Archway was the name chosen by participants, and is a fitting honor for Oklahoma’s favorite son, Will Rogers,” said Deby Snodgrass, Cabinet Secretary and Executive Director of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.

The Will Rogers Archway has been a fixture on the Will Rogers Turnpike since the 1950s. It gives travelers a unique view of traffic while they look out over the roadway from the structure that sits above the road.

“We are pleased with the name provided by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority’s approval of that name today. We believe the name “Will Rogers Archway” will for years identify this iconic location for millions of visitors traveling in NE Oklahoma,” said Tim Stewart, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Executive Director.

William Penn Adair “Will” Rogers was born in 1879 in Oologah, OK. He was an American cowboy, vaudeville performer, humorist, social commentator and motion picture actor. He was one of the world’s best-known celebrities in the 1920s and 1930s.

Known as “Oklahoma’s Favorite Son,” Rogers was born to a prominent Cherokee Nation family in Indian Territory (now part of Oklahoma). He traveled around the world three times, made 71 movies (50 silent films and 21 “talkies”), wrote more than 4,000 nationally syndicated newspaper columns, and became a world-famous figure. By the mid-1930s, the American people adored Rogers. He was the leading political wit of the Progressive Era, and was the top-paid Hollywood movie star at the time. Rogers died in 1935 with aviator Wiley Post when their small airplane crashed in Alaska.