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## **September OTA Board Meeting Wrap-Up**

# **Board approves I-44/Turner Turnpike project over SH-66 near Wellston; OTA receives national pavement project awards**

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board approved Tuesday a nearly \$48 million bridge construction project on the I-44/Turner Turnpike over SH-66 near Wellston.

The project was awarded to Sherwood Construction and work is expected to begin in late fall 2023 and will take about 1.5 years to complete. The project will complete ahead of the 2026 Rt. 66 centennial celebrations, serving as another point of interest for those traveling Oklahoma's 400 miles of the historic highway. Additional work as part of the project will be to construct the bridge for future widening of I-44/Turner Turnpike, relocate the westbound I-44/Turner Turnpike exit ramp and reconstruct the park and ride parking lot. Additionally, four nearby county roads will be resurfaced to serve as detours during construction.

"This will be, once again, one of the partnerships that we have with the Department of Transportation. We're going to improve an interchange; we're going to get a bad bridge that's served us very well over time off the system and we're going to replace it with an iconic Route 66 structure. I'm excited about the opportunity here and excited about getting this work done in advance of the centennial celebration," said Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz. ODOT will fund \$8.3 million of the project as part of its partnership with OTA.

Another unique project that is designed for Oklahoma tourists also was awarded Tuesday. Cantera Concrete Co. was awarded a nearly \$369,000 project to construct eight Oklahoma welcome monuments at seven turnpike service plazas. These monuments will be perfect for vacation selfie stops, providing a safe location for those family photos and will be located on the I-44/Turner, I-44/Will Rogers, I-44/H.E. Bailey, Cimarron, Muskogee and Indian Nation turnpikes. Gatz cited partnerships with Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department and the Route 66 Centennial Commission as part of bringing this project forward.

Secretary Gatz also provided the board an update on ACCESS Oklahoma after Monday's conditional approval by the Council of Bond Oversight for the sale of \$500 million in bonds. The conditions require the petition for rehearing in the bond validation court case to be resolved in the Oklahoma Supreme Court and the remaining conditions are related to standard financing documentation.

"As those conditions are met, there are some variables left to resolve, we'll move quickly into the bond market. Once our bonds are sold, only then will we restart our engineering and design work on ACCESS Oklahoma projects," Gatz said.

ACCESS Oklahoma is a 15-year long-range plan of turnpike improvements that includes the widening to six lanes of the I-44/Turner Turnpike and a portion of the John Kilpatrick Turnpike as well as new interchanges on existing turnpikes and three new turnpike routes to complete the Oklahoma City Outer Loop and provide a reliever route for the I-35 Southern Corridor. Learn more at [www.accessoklahoma.com](http://www.accessoklahoma.com).

## OTA earns national pavement recognition

The Oklahoma Asphalt Pavement Association presented two national Asphalt Pavement Alliance awards to the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority at its board meeting Tuesday. The award was accepted by OTA staff and the presentation also highlighted members of the contracting and engineering consulting community for their work on the Kickapoo Turnpike and for a project on the Turner Turnpike at Stroud.

The 2022 Perpetual Pavement Award: By Design was awarded by the national organization for the 21-mile, four-lane Kickapoo Turnpike in Eastern Oklahoma County. This is OTA's first time to win this award, which is given for pavement projects that demonstrate the characteristics expected of long-life asphalt pavement. This category is evaluated by engineers at the National Center for Asphalt Technology. The Kickapoo Turnpike connects I-40 and I-44 and was designed to mitigate traffic congestion in Oklahoma City as part of the state's Driving Forward initiative. The project was constructed by Haskell Lemon Construction Co. and T.J. Campbell Construction Co. Designers included Poe & Associates Inc., CEC, EST, MKEC, MacArthur Associated Consultants and Olsson.

Additionally, the National Asphalt Pavement Association awarded OTA its 2022 Quality in Construction award for a mill and overlay project on I-44/Turner Turnpike near Stroud by Haskell Lemon Construction Co. This award recognizes high-quality highway asphalt paving projects and is rated by independent engineers.



The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority received the Asphalt Pavement Alliance 2022 Perpetual Pavement Award for the construction of the Kickapoo Turnpike in Eastern Oklahoma County. Pictured, front row, from left are OTA Chief Engineer T.J. Dill, Kenneth Gillespie, John Bowman, Adam Hodges, Oklahoma Asphalt Pavement Association Executive Director Larry Patrick, Jimmy Sparks, Taylor Barnes and Greg Sparks. Back row, from left, are OTA Deputy Director Joe Echelle, Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz, Board members Dana Weber, Will Berry, Todd Cone, John Titsworth and OTA General Counsel Eric Lair.