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April OTA Board Meeting Wrap-Up

Board approves contract for tolling equipment for Turner Turnpike PlatePay conversion; authorizes speed limit increase on multiple turnpikes

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board approved a more than \$500,000 construction contract to purchase tolling equipment for the Turner Turnpike's future conversion to PlatePay. PlatePay helps create a free flow of traffic and eliminates sudden speed changes needed to pay cash tolls. PlatePay cameras photograph a vehicle's license plate, enabling the Authority to send the vehicle's registered owner an invoice in the mail.

"We've got four turnpikes waiting to convert to PlatePay and while the conversion dates have not been set, purchasing the equipment needed provides efficiencies in both time and cost to our crews," said Secretary of Transportation and OTA Executive Director Tim Gatz. The OTA plans to have all Oklahoma toll roads converted to PlatePay by the end of 2024.

Board members also approved raising the speed limit from 75 miles-per-hour to 80 miles-per-hour on select portions of the H.E. Bailey, Cimarron and Muskogee turnpikes. The vote follows several corridor and speed studies in the area. The change will provide a more consistent driving experience across the turnpike network. The speed limit changes will go into effect once several factors are completed, including installing cable barriers, conversion to PlatePay and posting new speed limit signs.

Board members were briefed on this year's work zone safety campaign: *Make It Home Safe; Make Oklahoma Safe*. Gov. Kevin Stitt has proclaimed April 17-21 as Oklahoma Work Zone Awareness Week.

"Our hope and expectation of the traveling public is that they pay attention to everything they do out on the highways and turnpikes but especially when they are in work zones," Gatz said. "The danger that is presented by work zones to our employees and the traveling public is real and we really want to emphasize it this month."

Drivers can expect more than 160 active work zones across Oklahoma this summer. OTA field crew workers were in attendance at Tuesday's board meeting and were recognized for their efforts in work zones.

The board recognized OTA staff who have received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2021 annual comprehensive financial report. The certificate is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. This marks 32 consecutive years the [Government Finance Officers Association](#) has awarded OTA this prestigious honor.

“This level of achievement doesn’t happen by accident. It takes everybody working together to make sure we are doing things the right way and we have a great appreciation for what they’ve accomplished,” Gatz said.

The board, a six-member panel appointed by the governor to an eight-year term to oversee turnpike development, awards project contracts for road and bridge construction on a monthly basis.

The next Oklahoma Turnpike Authority board meeting is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 2, at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Commission Room, 200 N.E. 21st St., Oklahoma City. The May meeting will feature the same format as the April meeting and will be available to view live online.



The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board, Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz and Deputy Director Joe Echelle were joined by OTA maintenance crew members at Tuesday’s board meeting to help kick off work zone awareness month activities. This year’s campaign focuses on slowing down, not following too closely, putting away distractions and always buckling up to help keep everyone safe in work zones. *Click on the photo to download a higher resolution version*



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