



**Media Contact:**  
**Strategic Communications**  
Phone: 405-521-6000  
[www.pikepass.com](http://www.pikepass.com)

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## **February OTA Board Special Meeting Wrap-Up**

### **Board approves toll rates for Cherokee Turnpike PlatePay conversion; authorizes contract for emergency bridge repairs on I-44/Turner Turnpike**

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board approved the new toll rates for PlatePay (cashless tolling) users on the Cherokee Turnpike. 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. The OTA plans to have all Oklahoma toll roads converted to PlatePay by the end of 2024.

Board members also approved a contract for emergency repairs to a bridge near Chandler (mm 166). January 23, a vehicle carrying an oversized load hit the 14-foot bridge in the eastbound lanes causing significant damage. Less than two weeks later, the same bridge was hit in the westbound lanes by another oversized load.

"This puts a big exclamation point on why we need to continue to reinvest into our transportation networks," said Secretary of Transportation and Executive Director of OTA Tim Gatz. "When the Turner was constructed back in 1953 nobody expected loads in excess of 14 feet tall. We've got to continue our investments to support commerce."

The long-range ACCESS Oklahoma plan is designed to address a number of key points on the Turner Turnpike including bridge height.

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, March 7, at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Commission Room, 200 N.E. 21<sup>st</sup> St., Oklahoma City. The meeting also will be available to view live online.