



Strategic Communications
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Officials kickoff first ACCESS Oklahoma project with groundbreaking along I-44/Turner Turnpike in Bristow

The first ACCESS Oklahoma long-range project leaped into action Feb. 29 after an afternoon groundbreaking event along the I-44/Turner Turnpike just east of Bristow.

The I-44/Turner Turnpike will be widened to six lanes between SH-66 at Heyburn (mm 203) to just east of Bristow at mm 197. This just more than 6-mile project connects with the previous six-lane widening completed during Driving Forward from Sapulpa to Kellyville. This project will include a new interchange at SH-66 to improve community access and emergency response times. Work is expected to take about two years to complete by spring 2026, weather permitting.

The \$98 million contract was awarded by the Authority's Board in December 2023 to Duit Construction Co. of Edmond. This is the second, single largest dollar construction project to be awarded in OTA's history at more than \$98 million, behind the Gilcrease Expressway.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt told the crowd of about 100 that one of his favorite archival displays in the Governor's Mansion is the framed, \$31 million bond check made out to then-Gov. Roy Turner on Nov. 8, 1950, to build the Turner Turnpike, which became the first four-lane divided roadway in Oklahoma. "When the Oklahoma Legislature created the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority in 1947 it may have been one of the greatest investments at the time in state history," he said.

"The people of Oklahoma really appreciate safe and reliable roads. I set a vision for Oklahoma to be Top Ten in everything we do," Stitt said. "Since I took office, Oklahoma has made tremendous strides in infrastructure. ... In 2021, we were 24th place ... and this year we jumped to 12th place in overall infrastructure. We've got a clear path to become Top Ten overall."

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Executive Director Tim Gatz emceed the event and called the attendees' attention to the importance of the state's transportation system in our daily lives.

"Three highways converge here in the community of Bristow. Until we make some improvements to this I-44/Turner corridor, those highways don't function at their highest level and don't support the community as they will in the future. I'm really excited about this turnpike project and I'm really, really excited about the next one that begins to reconfigure the interchange that serves the Bristow area and that will make all of those highways on the tax-supported highway system work far better

than they do today. And what that translates to is additional opportunities to grow and enjoy economic development," Gatz said.

Bristow Mayor Kris Wyatt echoed Gatz's enthusiasm for what is in store for the area with these improvements.

"Expansion of the Turner Turnpike is a strategic response to the increasing demands of a thriving state. Safe, efficient and reliable transportation infrastructure is critical to the ongoing growth and development of the Tulsa to Oklahoma City corridor. The Turner Turnpike expansion is not just about laying asphalt and concrete. It's about laying the foundation for a brighter future. This expansion will open new opportunities for businesses, attract public and private investments and make our city even more attractive as a place to live and work," Wyatt said. "Because of this important infrastructure investment Bristow is on course to experience remarkable growth in the next few years."

Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Deputy Director Joe Echelle said this first ACCESS Oklahoma long-range project heralds the start of major investment in the state's turnpike network, which will improve transportation options for all who travel across Oklahoma. "The Turner Turnpike is the backbone for interstates in Oklahoma and connects two-thirds of the population," he noted.

[ACCESS Oklahoma](#), which stands for Advancing and Connecting Communities and Economies Safely Statewide, is a 15-year long-range plan to provide upgrades to turnpike infrastructure including widening projects on the I-44/Turner Turnpike, I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike and the John Kilpatrick Turnpike while also adding new interchanges along existing turnpikes, upgrading bridges and modernizing existing interchanges. The plan also includes three new turnpike routes in south Oklahoma City and the Norman area to complete the Oklahoma City Outer Loop while also relieving growing traffic congestion along the Southern I-35 corridor. OTA sold the first \$500 million in bonds in late October that will fund engineering design work and the initial projects in the long-range plan.

View the event for full remarks [here](#).



Dignitaries, including Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, break ground Feb. 29 just east of Bristow on the next phase of widening the I-44/Turner Turnpike to six lanes.



Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt speaks at the Feb. 29 groundbreaking event for the start of the first ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan project on the I-44/Turner Turnpike between Bristow and Heyburn in Creek County.

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