



**OTA Communications and Marketing**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Press Release #016-24

**OTA announces three new leadership positions**

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority recently announced three internal promotions. Jeff Garder recently was promoted as the Director of Construction. Ladan Nelson recently was named as the OTA's Project Coordinator for the ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan while Nandi Taggart was named the Director of Customer Service.

"We are pleased to see these new leaders rise through the ranks at OTA and take on new challenges for the organization," said OTA Deputy Director T.J. Dill. "All three have excelled in their previous roles and proven they are extremely capable in their respective areas. We're excited to see what's next as they progress in their careers."

Garder will manage and coordinate the construction of projects in the Authority's Capital Plan and in the ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan. His role includes oversight of construction contracts, plan reviews and coordinating with public officials and stakeholders during construction.

Garder began working at OTA in 2022 as a construction engineer managing the Authority's annual capital improvement construction projects and closed out the final projects of the \$1.2 billion Driving Forward Turnpike Improvement Program. This included day-to-day management oversight of the construction of the \$265 million Gilcrease Expressway West Turnpike in Tulsa, which to date is the largest single dollar amount highway construction contract awarded in Oklahoma history. He also has been instrumental in administering construction projects for the new ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan and the final phases of the Authority's cashless conversion projects that will have all 12 turnpikes converted to open road electronic tolling by the end of 2024.

Garder, a registered professional engineer, is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 2017. Garder and his wife Raquel live in Edmond with their daughter.

Nelson will oversee planning and coordination of all ACCESS Oklahoma projects, which includes stakeholder engagement, plan reviews, cost estimation for design and construction, constructability and bidding.

Nelson began working at OTA in 2022 as a construction engineer managing the Authority's annual capital improvement construction projects and worked to close out the final projects of the \$1.2 billion Driving Forward Turnpike Improvement Program. She also has been instrumental in administering construction projects for the new ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan and the final phases of the Authority's cashless conversion projects that will have all 12 turnpikes converted to open road electronic tolling by the end of 2024.

Nelson, a registered professional engineer, is a member of the Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Board and an officer for WTS Oklahoma, a transportation organization. She earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 2017 and a master's degree in civil engineering from OU in 2020. Nelson and her husband Greg live in Moore.

She will oversee daily operations to ensure efficient and effective service delivery while coordinating with other divisions within the agency to resolve complex customer concerns and systematic issues. Taggart oversees OTA's Customer Service call center, which handles about 90,000 calls a month, on average.

Taggart began working at OTA in 2021 as an Assistant Director of Customer Service where she developed and implemented customer service policies, procedures, and standards to enhance customer satisfaction. She has been instrumental in collaborating with senior leadership to align customer service strategies with the overall business goals and objectives.

Nandi and her husband Rodney live in Yukon with their son.



Jeff Garder recently was promoted to OTA Director of Construction.

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Ladan Nelson recently was named OTA's Project Coordinator for the ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan.

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Nandi Taggert recently was promoted as OTA's Director of Customer Service.

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