



**OTA Communications and Marketing  
Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Press Release #017-24

**Board approves ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan design contract increases for 2025 engineering design, studies, project oversight**

The ACCESS Oklahoma long-range plan work will increase in 2025 as up to 127 construction projects will get closer to engineering design completion throughout the next year, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board members learned Tuesday during their regular monthly meeting.

ACCESS Oklahoma is a 15-year long-range plan that will provide needed upgrades to the existing turnpike system statewide and includes new routes that complete the Oklahoma City Outer Loop. Thanks to the agency's ongoing cashless conversion for non-stop all-electronic tolling, it is now possible to add several interchanges to the turnpike system that will create new access to communities and improve emergency response times.

ACCESS Oklahoma Project Coordinator Ladan Nelson said motorists will start to see more construction progress in seven corridors, including the I-44/Turner Turnpike, I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike, the John Kilpatrick Turnpike and the SH-364/Creek Turnpike.

The Board on Tuesday unanimously approved three construction management services contract updates to existing contracts for ongoing engineering design services, environmental studies and permitting, route alignment studies, corridor management, GIS and mapping services, public involvement and program oversight for the long-range plan. These contract updates will go toward work expected to occur in 2025 and may be renewed annually. The contract additions include:

- \$1.3 million to Freese & Nichols;
- \$1.9 million to CEC; and
- \$13.8 million to Poe & Associates.

Additionally, the Board unanimously approved an \$8.3 million total increase in on-demand right-of-way services contracts with five companies that will assist the Authority in right-of-way acquisition for an estimated 285 parcels for upcoming construction projects in 2025.

OTA Executive Director Joe Echelle during his director's report to the Board confirmed that 14 parcels have been acquired so far on projects throughout the program. "We're actively working to make offers and negotiate on several other parcels. As we move forward with plan completion, after we accept 60 percent plan submittals that allows us to draw a right-of-way line that we're able to then establish a legal description on, do an appraisal and make an offer on some of these properties. There will be more updates on this in the coming months," Echelle said.

He encouraged property owners with questions to call 1-844-56-ACCESS or email [info@accessoklahoma.com](mailto:info@accessoklahoma.com). "We want to answer any questions that we can," he said.

In other Board action, a SH-375/Indian Nation Turnpike bridge over US-271 at mm 13 near Antlers in Pushmataha County will be rehabilitated in 2025. The Board unanimously approved a \$3.74 million contract with L&N Bridge LLC for the work to the deck, pier columns, pier caps, abutments and concrete repairs. This project is part of OTA's capital plan and work is expected to begin in early 2025 and complete by fall 2025, weather permitting. Motorists can expect the Indian Nation turnpike to be narrowed to one lane in each direction in the work zone and up to two weekend closures of US-271 underneath the bridge.

### **OTA Board approves preliminary 2025 budget**

The Board unanimously approved Tuesday the preliminary 2025 agency budget, which includes a \$156 million operations and maintenance budget and a \$166 million capital budget. This is the first step in a two-step process to approve the agency's budget for the next fiscal year. The Board will consider the budget for final approval at the Nov. 7 Board meeting.

"This budget is really impressive in its thoroughness and the attention to detail is very admirable," said OTA Board member Todd Cone, who represents the Board's District 2 in Northeastern Oklahoma.

The Board also unanimously approved the preliminary 2025 budget at \$1.3 million for operations and maintenance of the Gilcrease Expressway. This west Tulsa turnpike is a non-system project and tolls from the Gilcrease are not part of the overall system's toll revenue cross-pledging. Toll revenue from the Gilcrease will reimburse the system on actual expenses in the budget. This is a \$168,000 increase above the 2024 budget due to an increase in toll transaction collection costs due to increased traffic on the expressway. The Gilcrease has seen a 41 percent transactions increase since August 2023 with 31,000 vehicles on average traveling the new turnpike daily on weekdays.

## **OTA Board awards Trooper of the Month honor**

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Seth Hudson was honored by the Board on Tuesday for his stellar work in protecting the public while patrolling the I-44/Will Rogers Turnpike in Northeastern Oklahoma. This year alone, Trooper Hudson is credited with confiscating the following during traffic stops:

- \$263,000 in cash
- 317 pounds of marijuana
- 17.8 pounds of methamphetamine
- 10 pounds of mushrooms
- 5 pounds of cocaine
- 5,160 articles of stolen property and
- 5 firearms

On Sept. 19, in conjunction with the Newton County (Mo.) Sheriff's Office, Trooper Hudson stopped near Afton a suspect in a kidnapping case. The victim allegedly had been stabbed by the suspect. Hudson arrested the suspect and ensured transport to the hospital for the victim.

"Trooper Hudson makes sure turnpikes are kept safe and he's a credit to Oklahoma and is to be commended for his actions," said OHP Maj. Garrett Vowell.

Click [here](#) to watch the full meeting.



Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Seth Hudson, center, received the October OTA Trooper of the Month Award. Also pictured are OHP Maj. Garrett Vowell, left, and OHP Capt. Mike Yelton, right.



Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board members Todd Cone, left, Gene Love and John Titsworth congratulate Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Seth Hudson for being named OTA Trooper of the Month for October 2024.

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