



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OTA highlights statewide infrastructure investments, winter readiness and community connections

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board approved three construction contracts totaling about \$41.6 million during its February meeting, advancing infrastructure improvements across the state.

The approved projects include reconstruction of an I-44/Turner Turnpike bridge and roadway approaches over the Deep Fork near Arcadia Lake in Oklahoma County, a joint project with the City of Oklahoma City along the John Kilpatrick Turnpike, and pavement rehabilitation work on the Turner Turnpike in Creek County.

The Turner Turnpike bridge project is designed to support future widening while improving safety and reliability for motorists. Along the John Kilpatrick Turnpike, a partnership with the City of Oklahoma City will bring roadway widening, adding a protected turnaround and a new eastbound entrance ramp to improve access and traffic flow.

In Creek County, pavement rehabilitation will address aging asphalt and improve ride quality. Two of the three projects attracted eight bidders, reflecting strong competition as the OTA prepares for an active year of construction.

OTA reviews statewide response to winter storm

The Board reviewed OTA's statewide response to Winter Storm Fern, a rare winter event that brought historic forecasts and heavy snow and ice.

OTA began tracking the storm roughly 10 days before it reached Oklahoma, watching long-range forecasts and adjusting plans as conditions became clearer. As the storm drew closer, OTA moved from monitoring forecasts to preparing crews and equipment on the ground, working closely with the National Weather Service and state partners.

OTA deployed 144 snowplow operators and logged more than 9,700 labor hours. Crews treated about 113,000 miles of roadway using about 6,500 tons of salt and other materials, along with nearly 37,000 gallons of magnesium chloride. The estimated cost of the response is about \$1.4 million.

Board approves additional interstate designations

Board members also approved resolutions supporting new interstate designations for two Oklahoma turnpikes. The Creek Turnpike would carry the designation I-644, while the Muskogee Turnpike would be designated I-343. The designations were developed in coordination with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and will proceed through federal review before signage is installed.

“Interstate designation is the highest designation you can give a roadway,” OTA Executive Director Joe Echelle said. “When drivers see that interstate shield, they know it’s a controlled-access, high-speed facility and one of the safest routes they can take.”

ACCESS projects move forward across the state

The Board received a quarterly update from ACCESS Oklahoma Program Manager Ladan Nelson, highlighting progress across both urban and rural areas of the state.

A \$98 million widening project on the Turner Turnpike east of Bristow is expected to open in late February, adding 6 miles of six-lane roadway. Updates were also provided on the Haikey Creek bridge project and upcoming rural interchange improvements.

“The connectivity of rural communities is one of the main objectives of ACCESS Oklahoma,” Nelson said. “We’re excited to connect those communities to the system so they can travel across the state more efficiently.”

Planned improvements near Adair, Indianola and Blanco aim to improve access for rural residents, businesses and emergency responders. Public input remains open for the East–West Connector at I-35 through Feb. 20. Design work continues for the South Extension Turnpike, with outreach to potentially affected property owners expected to begin later this month.

Board recognizes behind-the-scenes OTA teams

Chairman John Jones also recognized internal operational achievements, highlighting teams whose behind-the-scenes work has a direct impact on the public.

“All of our departments do a great job, but I want to recognize a couple of areas that really stood out this year,” Jones said. “The work being done in Business Operations and Customer Service reflects the accountability and service we expect from this organization.”

Business Operations Director Patrice Collins and her team were recognized for collecting more than \$30 million in past-due balances during 2025, while Customer Service Director Nandi Taggart and her team were acknowledged for maintaining consistently high customer satisfaction scores throughout the year.

Trooper recognized for life-saving response

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Vince Curtis was recognized as Trooper of the Month for his actions at the scene of a motorcycle collision on Dec. 22, 2025, in Tulsa County.

According to OHP, Trooper Curtis arrived shortly after the crash and quickly assessed the situation. Determining the motorcyclist had suffered a severe leg injury, Curtis applied a tourniquet from his medical equipment — an action later credited with saving both the rider’s leg and his life.

The award was presented by OHP Major Allread, who cited Curtis’ preparedness and decisive response during a critical moment.

TO WATCH the full February Board meeting, click here [Feb. 3, 2026, OTA Board Meeting - YouTube](#)



The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Board recognized Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Vince Curtis as Trooper of the Month for his recent life-saving efforts at a crash site in Tulsa County. Pictured are the OTA Board members in the background and front row, OTA Executive Director Joe Echelle, Capt. Jeff James, Trooper Curtis and Maj. Jeremy Allread.