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Contact: Crystal Drwenski

405.410.7668

Cdrwenski@cox.net

News Release

TRANSPORTATION COALITION ANNOUNCES 2010 LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN

Preserving road funding and opposition to State Question 744 top concerns

OKLAHOMA CITY – (March 5) The Transportation Revenues Used Strictly For Transportation (TRUST) road and bridge coalition today announced their 2010 legislative agenda and campaign to preserve Oklahoma's road and bridge funding and to oppose State Question 744.

The group stated during the current state budget decline everything must be done to protect road and bridge funding by examining every financing option available to hold transportation funding harmless. TRUST warned if funding was reduced beyond the \$15 million cut already made in FY 2010, that critical road and bridge projects will suffer.

Former Oklahoma governor, Frank Keating, who serves as co-chairman of TRUST said, "As we saw with the partial collapse of two portions of the I-44 bridge in Tulsa last week, Oklahoma still has critical road and bridge needs. The legislature has provided significant investments over the last four years, but it is imperative to public safety these funds not be derailed."

Neal McCaleb, former state secretary of transportation and director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, who serves as president of TRUST added, "In this economy we must hold fast to the understanding that building and maintaining roads is a core function of state government. It is essential to spur economic development and grow jobs in rural and metropolitan areas of the state."

Kell Kelly, president of SpiritBank and TRUST co-chairman added, "In addition to protecting gains, TRUST believes we must be innovative and examine all possible funding methods to know what makes the most sense for our state. If we are going to move Oklahoma forward, we must dialogue about alternative financing options we can harness to build roads in the most efficient and equitable manner possible."

In addition to state transportation systems, TRUST also voiced concern that municipal and county road systems are in dire need of all planned funding and urged the legislature to treat them as a top priority.

TRUST further stated that defeat of State Question 744 would be vital to protecting transportation interests. The coalition cited a presentation given to the State House Appropriations & Budget Committee last fall that showed the anticipated effects of SQ 744 should it pass would be an immediate \$42 million cut to the department of transportation, which over the life of the current eight-year construction work plan would total \$395 million.

The coalition explained that SQ 744 would impose a constitutional mandate that would require spending levels to be raised to the "per pupil average" of surrounding states, regardless of Oklahoma's economic health. It is estimated this would cost Oklahoma taxpayers an additional \$850 million during the nation's worst economic recession in decades.

Since 2005, TRUST has grown into a diverse coalition of more than 120 organizations statewide that includes bankers, petroleum marketers, energy producers, agri-business, chambers of commerce, public safety groups, concerned citizens, elected officials and highway industries. The group is focused solely on issues of road and bridge funding to further Oklahoma's infrastructure.

TRUST engages in ongoing public relations efforts, grassroots campaigns, and paid media campaigns that advocate public policy goals, as well as educate elected officials and the public on the importance of transportation funding. To learn more visit www.RestoreTRUST.org.

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