

*SURFACE* is a publication of TRUST dedicated to bringing news about the financing of Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure to community, business and policy leaders around the state. This biannual publication has a central focus of:

- Federal and state funding
- Regulatory news from state Capitol and Congress
- TRUST events and news
- Innovative topics on transportation funding

# SURFACE

FALL 2015



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## BUDGET DEFICIT DEFINES LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 55TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE BEGAN

February 2nd and adjourned May 22nd, a week earlier than mandated by law. The largest budget deficit in recent years—\$611 million—garnered most of the headlines during the four months lawmakers spent at the state Capitol. While the final FY-16 budget did reduce ODOT's budget along with a funding impact to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) Fund and the Weigh Station Revolving Fund, the ongoing ODOT eight-year highway and bridge construction plan is continuing uninterrupted. Due to the eight-year plan, steady progress continues in reducing the amount of structurally-deficient state bridges to less than 1% by the end of the decade. This progress has allowed ODOT officials to begin incorporating more highway pavement and widening projects into the eight-year plan which currently runs through 2023.

The 2015 legislative session was extremely challenging due to the budget deficit. Every area of government, whether core or non-core, was subject to intense scrutiny, and the preliminary outlook for the FY-17 budget is that another large deficit will greet legislators when they return to the Capitol February 1st. One of the prime selling points for funding transportation as a core priority is the tangible evi-

dence of progress whether on the state, county or municipal level. It is hard to ignore orange safety barrels, detours and road graders. In order for this collective progress to continue, TRUST members and all transportation advocates must be vigilant in advocating—as has been done since 2006—for sufficient funding in order to create a modern, safe and efficient transportation infrastructure system throughout Oklahoma. Legislative sessions are like human beings in that no two are alike. Over the past nine years, TRUST has aided in the creation of an environment that has returned transportation as a core priority of state government, and the results are evident across Oklahoma. 2016 will bring a new legislative session, a new budget, elections and its own unique set of challenges and opportunities to improve Oklahoma's infrastructure on many levels. TRUST must always stand ready to protect our mission.

In Washington, D.C., Congress is close to a resolution on a long-term surface transportation funding bill. This summer Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, and a bipartisan collection of senators, co-sponsored a six-year bill entitled the DRIVE Act. The DRIVE Act was passed by the Senate just prior to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) reaching insolvency July 31st. Since that time

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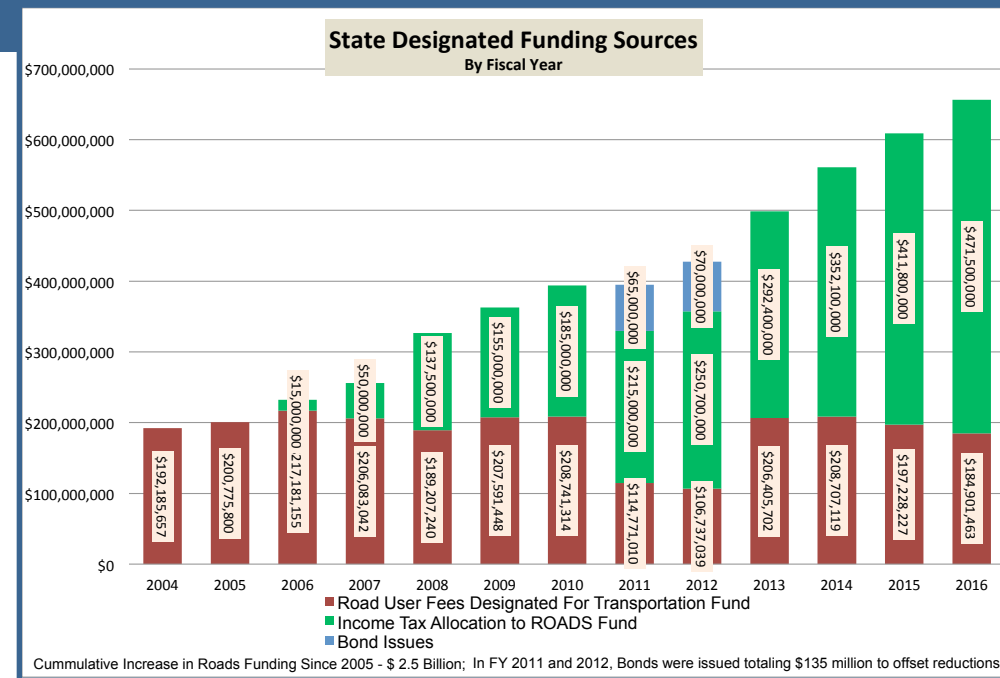
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two short-term HTF funding extensions were passed through late December. The House passed its own six-year bill entitled the Surface Transportation Reauthorization & Reform Act of 2015 in late October afterwards which Senate and House leaders proceeded to a joint conference committee where a final singular long-term bill was scheduled to be sent to President Obama prior to the December congressional recess. While no Oklahoma projects have been impacted due to the series of short-term funding extensions, circumstances could change if reimbursement funds are not available, resulting in halting current or delaying new projects on the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan.

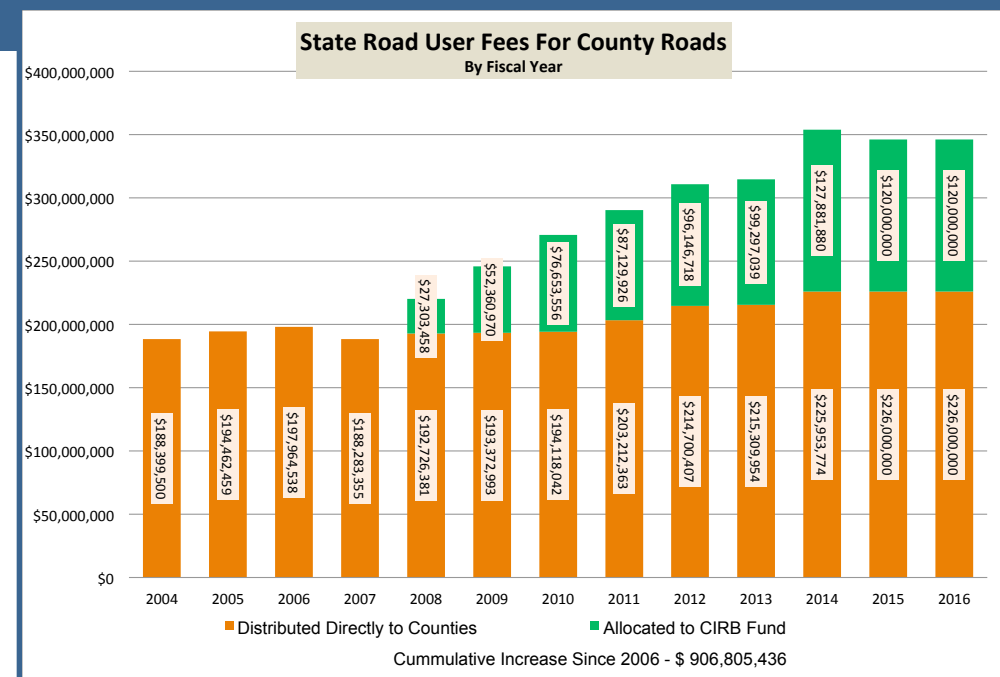
Oklahoma is very fortunate to have Senator Inhofe leading the charge for passage of a long-term bill. At the state Capitol, we are equally fortunate to have strong transportation advocates in Governor Mary Fallin, Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman, House Speaker Jeff Hickman and dozens of Senate and House members. Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure is positioned well for the future, however to continue to make necessary progress, TRUST and its partners must never stop looking for ways to create a modern, first-class and safe infrastructure system across each level of government. Our mission must always be advocating such a system through the state legislature, governor and congressional delegation in order for transportation investment to remain a top priority in Oklahoma City and Washington, D.C. ■

# State & County Infrastructure Investment Since 2004

THE FOLLOWING CHART REFLECTS THE AMOUNT OF DESIGNATED STATE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SINCE 2004.



THE FOLLOWING CHART REFLECTS THE AMOUNT OF STATE ROAD USER FEES DEDICATED TO COUNTY ROADS SINCE 2004.



# 2015 TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION ANALYSIS

**FACED WITH THE LARGEST BUDGET DEFICIT (\$611 MILLION) IN MANY YEARS**, the final FY-16 budget agreement between Governor Fallin and legislative leaders impacted virtually every entity of state government including transportation. The total FY-16 ODOT appropriation represents a 6.25% reduction or approximately \$12.3 million less than FY-15 with no reduction to the current eight-year highway and bridge construction plan. The budget, however, did cap the CIRB fund at \$120 million annually and removed \$17.5 million from the Weigh Station Revolving Fund in order to shore up the overall deficit, both of which TRUST adamantly opposed.

Protecting the eight-year highway and bridge construction plan equates to an annual increase of \$59.7 million to the ROADS Fund until the total increase in the program equals \$575 million in FY-18. Furthermore, since the inception of TRUST in 2006, the amount of motor vehicle fees redirected from the General Revenue Fund towards transportation programs has significantly increased to where the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) Fund now receives 20% of motor vehicle fees.

As of the end of 2014, 376 of the nearly 6,800 bridges on the state highway system were classified as structurally-deficient, down from a high of 1,168 in 2004. Nearly all of the 376 bridges are scheduled to be replaced or rehabilitated in the next five years providing ODOT with the opportunity to focus on asset preservation, resurfacing, shoulder and other critical projects moving forward. ■

“**PROTECTING THE EIGHT-YEAR HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PLAN EQUATES TO AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF \$59.7 MILLION TO THE ROADS FUND UNTIL THE TOTAL INCREASE IN THE PROGRAM EQUALS \$575 MILLION IN FY-18.**”



Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley listens to a question from the audience during TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.



House Speaker Jeff Hickman addresses attendees at the TRUST House Transportation Committee dinner.



Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman addresses attendees at the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee dinner.

# Transportation Innovation Banquet Draws Enthusiastic Crowd



Shant Boyajian, EP&W Committee senior counsel, and Brian Hackler, state director for Senator Jim Inhofe, with the TRUST Guardian of Transportation award.



ODOT Deputy Director Tim Gatz with Rep. Mike Sanders, Rep. Scott Martin and Rep. Josh Cockroft at the TRUST Transportation Innovation Banquet.

## THE ANNUAL TRUST TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION BANQUET

changed to a luncheon format this year, however that did not stop a capacity crowd of TRUST members, transportation advocates, elected officials and special guests from attending the annual event October 30th at the Jim Thorpe Sports Museum and Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Scheduled to keynote the occasion was Oklahoma U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee and co-sponsor of the DRIVE Act, the six-year surface transportation funding bill passed by the Senate last summer. Unfortunately, late night and early morning Senate business prevented Senator Inhofe from attending the event, however the Senator provided an outstanding message to the audience via video. In addition, Shant Boyajian, EP&W Committee senior counsel, was in attendance and provided an informative address regarding the DRIVE Act, the long-term status of the Highway Trust Fund and the deteriorating condition of the nation's transportation infrastructure system. A financially solvent HTF and long-term surface transportation program are wholeheartedly endorsed by TRUST, and will allow planning for ODOT's eight-year highway and bridge construction plan to continue while reducing burdensome federal regulations that often delay state construction projects. The luncheon also included presentation of the 2015 TRUST Guardian of Transportation award to Senator Inhofe who joins Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation and former ODOT and Oklahoma Turnpike Authority director Gary Ridley, former Governor George Nigh, former state representative Mark Liotta and TRUST co-founder Tom Love as recipients of the prestigious annual award.

TRUST extends its deepest appreciation to Senator Inhofe for his continued leadership and commitment to transportation improvement. ■



Senator Jim Inhofe

## Why Join TRUST?

Be part of the voice for transportation advocacy that works with members of the state legislature to implement solutions. Without your membership to TRUST, we risk losing the valuable momentum we have gained over the past nine years. At the state Capitol we must have a constant and growing voice for transportation and urge you to join us in this vital cause.

## MISSION STATEMENT

TRUST, Transportation Revenues Used Strictly for Transportation, is an advocacy group dedicated to restoring Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure. We are committed to creating a culture within Oklahoma government that values and adequately funds transportation as a core priority.

## Principles of TRUST

- Use all state transportation-related taxes and fees strictly for transportation
- Protect and grow dedicated funds for Oklahoma's transportation system
- Educate policy makers and the public on the importance of investing in highways and bridges
- Support leaders who are committed to transportation as a core priority of state government
- Use high-quality, lasting materials in building and maintaining highways and bridges
- Advocate efficiency and accountability within the state legislature and Oklahoma Department of Transportation

## TRUST ON THE WEB

restoreTRUST.org

### OKLAHOMA TRANSPORTATION NEWS



Our online news page is updated daily with local and national legislative and transportation articles. To receive articles as they are posted, select the orange RSS feed button located on the news page of the website.

### FOLLOW TRUST ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK



You can follow TRUST on Twitter and Facebook under the username "restoreTRUST". If you are not Facebook "Friends" with TRUST, please do so today.

### EVENTS ONLINE

TRUST provides the opportunity to register for upcoming events online. In addition to TRUST events, meetings for other transportation and member organizations are posted. To review the latest transportation happenings in Oklahoma, visit the events page at [www.restoreTRUST.org](http://www.restoreTRUST.org). To have your organizations' activities posted contact TRUST membership director Helra Han at [helrahan@gmail.com](mailto:helrahan@gmail.com).

### UPDATE YOUR MEMBER PROFILE ONLINE

In an ongoing effort to conserve operating funds, TRUST continually updates its mailing lists and contact database. If you wish to continue to receive TRUST mailings, emails and newsletters, or wish to add additional contacts within your organization, please visit [www.restoreTRUST.org](http://www.restoreTRUST.org), click on the contribute page and select "update membership profile."



TRUST co-chairman Kell Kelly speaks at the DRIVE act announcement at the Bird Creek/169 interchange. Listening are (left-to-right) David Burrage, chairman of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, Harold Hamm, founder and CEO of Continental Resources and Chuck Mai, vice president of public affairs for AAA Oklahoma.

A capacity crowd filled the state Capitol Blue Room during TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.



Brian Hackler, state director for Senator Jim Inhofe, accepts Senator Inhofe's TRUST Guardian of Transportation award from Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation Gary Ridley and TRUST president Neal McCaleb.

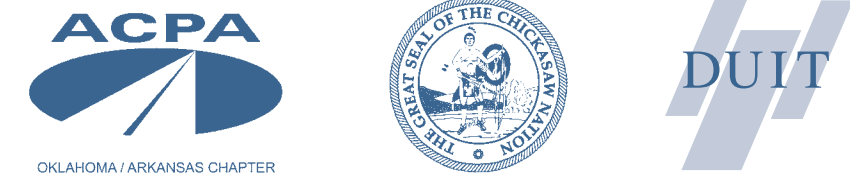


Senator Don Barrington (center) and TRUST board members LaVern Phillips and Jim Rodriguez visit prior to the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee dinner.



Senator Jim Inhofe (center) is surrounded by members of TRUST, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission and a variety of business and transportation leaders following his DRIVE Act announcement at the Bird Creek/169 project in the Tulsa/Owasso area.

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Dues paid to TRUST, a project of Oklahomans for Safe Bridges and Roads, Inc., are not deductible as charitable contributions. However, 40% of dues paid may be claimed as business expense for federal income tax purposes for fiscal year 2015. Any dues paid used for lobbying efforts are not tax deductible.



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## Please Plan to Attend our Upcoming TRUST

- Transportation Day at the Capitol - March 8, 2016
- Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners - April/May 2016

*Details Coming Soon!*