

*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

SPRING 2020



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## ELECTIONS HIGHLIGHT BUSY YEAR

**IN AN ALREADY BUSY YEAR FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE AND CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, THE 2020 ELECTION CYCLE WILL CERTAINLY BE ONE OF INTEREST, AND MOST LIKELY, SURPRISE.**

One month after the second session of the 57th Oklahoma Legislature convened February 3, Oklahoma was one of the 14 Super Tuesday presidential primary states that held its election March 3. Any excitement was all on the Democrat side as former Delaware Senator and Vice President Joe Biden captured Oklahoma with 38% of the vote, followed by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, former NYC Mayor Mike Bloomberg and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren respectively. The day after the vote, Bloomberg dropped out of the race and endorsed Biden just as two other Democrat rivals, former South Bend, IN Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, had done the day before. Warren also dropped out of the primary



Former Secretaries of Transportation Neal McCaleb, Gary Ridley and Mike Patterson with current Secretary Tim Gatz at TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.



ACCO members enjoy the legislative luncheon during TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

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# Oklahoma Legislative Agenda

“From addressing state and county surface infrastructure needs to advanced development of our turnpike system to continued highway safety improvements, Oklahoma is moving in the right direction. Economic development competition from our neighbors is ever present, and private businesses locate where transportation systems allow growth and profit. Oklahoma’s location allows easy access to either coast, however businesses will shy away if our transportation network does not keep pace with Texas and other progressive states. I urge the executive and legislative branches to continue their support of the current infrastructure plans which are allowing Oklahoma to invest in a true 21st century transportation network.”

*TRUST Co-Chairman Kell Kelly*



Oklahoma Aggregates Association Executive Director Devery Youngblood, OAA Board Member Joe Mathia and OnCue Government and Community Relations Director Scott Minton were among the TRUST members attending Transportation Day at the Capitol.

- Motor vehicle fees redirected to transportation.** A core TRUST principle is all transportation-derived revenues are used strictly for transportation. TRUST supports returning all motor fuel taxes and the remaining allocation of vehicle-related fees to transportation purposes, and encourages the appropriate allocation of motor vehicle fees to state highways, county roads and municipal streets taking into consideration previous vehicle-related fees and general fund allocations. TRUST will continue to support this concept as a matter of sound public policy.
- Protect ODOT eight-year highway and bridge construction work plan.** TRUST’s top priority is ensuring funding remains at a level where no current projects are interrupted, no planned projects cut and no motor fuel taxes and vehicle-related transportation fees diverted from ODOT’s investment strategy which includes the eight-year construction work plan, the Asset Preservation Plan and highway maintenance. TRUST opposes the diversion of funds from ODOT’s general budget and/or the eight-year plan to aid budget deficits..
- Support the full statutory allocation to the ROADS fund.** In an effort to continue the replacement and rehabilitation of state highways and bridges, TRUST supports this statutory allocation as a core business function of the state.
- Infrastructure bond financing.** During uncertain budget times TRUST supports infrastructure bond financing to maintain critical transportation funding and projects, and vehemently opposes the diversion of motor fuel taxes and vehicle-related transportation fees to non-transportation uses of state government.
- Restore funding to County Improvements for Roads & Bridges (CIRB) five-year construction work plan.** To rehabilitate county bridges and highways, TRUST supports the CIRB program and its revolving fund to be used strictly for CIRB transportation projects with no interruption of current projects and no elimination of planned projects. Furthermore, TRUST calls for the restoration of diverted funds from CIRB to the state budget over the past several years.
- Protect transportation-dedicated revolving funds.** TRUST supports the protection of transportation dedicated revolving funds. The funds are intended to fund transportation infrastructure projects and should not be diverted for other governmental purposes
- Renovation of Ports of Entries - Weigh Stations.** TRUST supports methods to complete the construction of Oklahoma’s new ports of entries in order to protect highways and bridges from overweight freight. Doing so will result in additional revenues from fines and fees due to increased monitoring of overweight commercial traffic. TRUST also supports returning the one-cent transportation user fee from the Petroleum Storage Tank Indemnity Fund to transportation needs to service the bond debt. This allows for no revenue impact or increased taxes while utilizing transportation fees to support transportation needs.
- Innovative funding for transportation.** TRUST supports innovative and alternative transportation funding that is revenue equitable but not punitive, and for the intended purpose of establishing equitable mobility through a comprehensive approach to increase overall transportation funding. ■

# TRANSPORTATION DAY

## ENTHUSIASM RUNS HIGH



Governor Kevin Stitt speaks during TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

### TRUST TRANSPORTATION DAY AT THE CAPITOL WAS HELD MARCH 11 WITH A CAPACITY CROWD OF TRUST MEMBERS, LEGISLATORS, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ODOT AND OTA OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE.

The annual legislative luncheon was a bustling affair due to ongoing Capitol renovations, however noise and close quarters did not dampen attendees' enthusiasm who enjoyed a great lunch catered by the OU Faculty House. Guests then made their way to the Blue Room to hear from Governor Kevin Stitt, Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Rob Standridge, Senate A/B Subcommittee Chairman Gary Stanislawski, House Majority Leader Mike Sanders, House Transportation Committee Chairman Avery Frix and House A/B Transportation Committee Chairman Todd Russ. The audience also heard from Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz, who also serves as executive director of ODOT and OTA, and McCurtain County District 3 Commissioner Jimmy Westbrook, board chairman of the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma. Special thanks go to TRUST President Neal McCaleb and TRUST Board Member Gary Ridley for serving as program host and emcee respectively. The commitment from the governor and speakers was that Oklahoma has made tremendous progress in every corner of Oklahoma over the past many years, but that diligence must remain the order of the day to allow Oklahoma to continue to build the type of safe, modern surface transportation system that will solidify our state as a first-world economic engine. TRUST appreciates the governor and legislative leaders for taking time to participate in Transportation Day at the Capitol. Following the Blue Room event, attendees made office visits to their hometown legislators and members of the Senate and House Transportation Committees. ■



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

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

after Super Tuesday but declined to offer an endorsement. On the Republican side, the outcome was much less dramatic as incumbent President Donald Trump easily carried the state with a record 93% of the vote against a nominal field of candidates. Biden is now the assumed Democrat nominee due to several primary victories after Super Tuesday, Sanders withdrawing from the race April 8 and endorsing Biden. If nominated at the Democrat National Convention this summer, Biden will face President Trump in the general election November 6.

On the congressional front, all five Oklahoma U.S. Representatives (Kevin Hern – CD 1, Markwayne Mullin – CD 2, Frank Lucas – CD 3, Tom Cole – CD 4, Kendra Horn – CD 5) are seeking reelection to two-year terms with the Republican CD 5 primary expected to garner the most attention. Oklahoma senior U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, the ranking member of the Senate Environment & Public

Works Committee, has announced he will seek a fifth six-year term this year.

The statewide ballot will be much less crowded as compared to 2018 with only one statewide official, Corporation Commissioner Todd Hiett, up for reelection. On the state legislative front, all 101 House seats and half (odd numbered districts) of the Senate seats will be up for election. The freshman legislative class of 2020 is not expected to be as large as the classes of 2016 and 2018 due to less term-limited members, and more first and second term incumbents seeking reelection. Whatever the elections bring, TRUST will be ready to work with our congressional delegation and legislature to ensure surface transportation investment remains a top priority. TRUST encourages everyone to exercise their right to vote in the June 30 primary election, August 25 primary runoff election and November 3 general election. ■

# COVID-19 DISRUPTS 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## ALTHOUGH THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 57TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE BEGAN SMOOTHLY FEBRUARY 3 AS GOVERNOR KEVIN STITT DELIVERED HIS SECOND STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS,

the session hit an historic roadblock in mid-March as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the state Capitol and all of Oklahoma's federal, state, county and municipal government entities. The Senate, under the leadership of President Pro Tempore Greg Treat (SD 47) and the House of Representatives, led by Speaker Charles McCall (HD 22), suspended legislative activity for two weeks beginning March 23 due to COVID-19 precautions. They reconvened April 6 in a one-day regular session to shore up an FY20 revenue failure by appropriating over \$415 million from the Rainy Day and Revenue Stabilization funds. The failure was due primarily to the rapid decline in energy prices and economic fall-

out from COVID-19. They also convened April 6 in special session called by Governor Stitt to approve a more extensive health emergency declaration due to COVID-19. Following three more weeks recessed to a 'call of the chair', lawmakers reconvened May 4 to pass the general appropriation bill for FY21 (the legislature's only constitutional requirement), and several policy bills. The aforementioned downfall in oil prices, and COVID-19 uncertainties, led to a combination of Rainy Day and Revenue Stabilization funds being tapped, along with other entities, to balance an FY21 deficit of \$297 million. The ROADS fund will be reduced by \$180 million in FY21 and FY22 and those funds redirected to the Education Reform Revolving Fund. A transportation bond of \$200 million was authorized, however to assist ODOT with ongoing highway and bridge projects. Most agencies will realize FY21 budget cuts ranging from 2.5% to 7.5% with the average being less than 4%. Governor Stitt vetoed three individual budget bills, including the bill that sweeps \$180 million from the ROADS fund. He also vetoed the FY21 general appropriation bill. The Senate and House quickly overturned each veto by the required two-thirds majority. Upon passage of additional policy bills, lawmakers adjourned Sine Die to the 'call of the chair' on May 15.

Shortly after the legislature convened February 3, and prior to COVID-19, the state Board of Equalization certified \$85.5 million less for FY21 than FY20, however that deficit grew to \$297 million due to the extreme downturn in energy prices and financial impact from COVID-19. Regarding transportation, the governor utilized his State of the State address to call for transportation-related initiatives including consolidation of certain functions of ODOT and OTA and additional investment in Oklahoma's two-lane highways. He also called on the legislature to once again set aside additional funds (\$100 million) to the Constitutional Reserve (Rainy Day) Fund, as was done in 2019, in order to build the fund to upwards



Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Rob Standridge was among the speakers at TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

of \$2 billion, or the equivalent of three months' operation budget for the state. TRUST and other transportation funding advocates had hoped additional reinvestment could be made back to the CIRB fund to assist in replenishing the fund after millions of dollars were withdrawn to aid in balancing the state budget during the revenue deficit sessions of 2015-2018. The goal was thwarted due to the unique nature of the session and the negative impact to the FY21 budget. Last year, the legislature passed HB 2676 which returned \$30 million to the fund, which is capped at \$120 million annually.

The ODOT eight-year highway and bridge construction plan continues to progress, and remains perhaps the single-most important transportation funding policy development in Oklahoma history. The plan to reduce the amount of structurally-deficient bridges on the state highway system to less than 1% by the end of this year continues to be the goal. ODOT's most recent bridge inspection report finds just 86 structurally-deficient bridges remain, down from a high of 1,168 in 2004. The marked progress has allowed ODOT officials to begin incorporating more two-lane highway development, pavement and widening projects into the eight-year plan which currently runs through 2028. Steady progress has also been made on the county system with under 2,700 structurally-deficient bridges remaining, down from over 7,000 in 2001.

As is the case each year, it is vital the transportation industry continue to advocate for consistent investment in Oklahoma's most valued asset, its surface transportation infrastructure system. Within the current downturn in the energy sector, transportation investment must remain a core priority at the state, county and municipal levels, and the mantra of TRUST has never been more important. Transportation-generated revenues must be used strictly for transportation purposes and not diverted to other areas of government. It is a simple but powerful statement that has served the transportation community well. We will continue to foster an environment within state government that recognizes the value of transportation, and that it must always be treated as a core priority. Thank you to the executive and legislative branches and all who continue to support the TRUST mission.

In Washington, Oklahoma continues to be in a strong position due to a congressional delegation solidly committed to supporting and rebuilding America's transportation network. Senator Jim Inhofe, ranking member of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, is always a transportation investment stalwart, and Senator James Lankford can be counted on as well to support our unified mission. Oklahoma's House delegation also provides steady support for investing in America's and Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure. Thank you to each member of our congressional delegation. ■



House Transportation Committee Chairman Avery Frix was a featured guest during the Blue Room program.

# 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 14 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 ONLINE

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 have not "liked" TRUST on Facebook, 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 restoreTRUST.org. To have your organizations' activities posted contact TRUST membership director Helra Han at 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."

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 14 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.

# 2020 EVENTS & MEMBER PROGRAMS

## THANK YOU TO ALL TRUST MEMBERS WHO HAVE RENEWED THEIR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020.

For members who have not renewed or prospective new members, our tiered membership levels offer multiple packages, branding opportunities and reduced admission to TRUST events. Members also have the flexibility to opt out of a membership package and sponsor or purchase admittance to individual events. New or renewed memberships can be registered online at [restoreTRUST.org](http://restoreTRUST.org) by clicking the contribute page or by contacting TRUST membership director Helra Han at [helrahan@gmail.com](mailto:helrahan@gmail.com).



Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat speaks during TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.



Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz and House Majority Leader Mike Sanders at TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

### MARCH 11, 2020: TRANSPORTATION DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Our annual Transportation Day at the Capitol was held March 11 beginning with lunch in the second-floor rotunda for TRUST members, legislators and transportation officials. The luncheon was followed by remarks in the Blue Room from Governor Kevin Stitt and legislative leaders. Secretary of Transportation and ODOT/OTA Executive Director Tim Gatz was also in attendance, and attendees also heard a county roads update from ACCO Board Chairman and McCurtain County District 3 Commissioner Jimmy Westbrook. TRUST President Neal McCaleb and TRUST Board Member Gary Ridley served as program host and emcee respectively. TRUST members and guests also made office visits to their hometown legislators and transportation committee members. Transportation Day is an important annual event where transportation advocates join together to create a committed show of support for transportation funding and to emphasize our legislative agenda. Thank you to all TRUST members, sponsors and transportation advocates who attended this year's event.

### Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners

TRUST hosts annual Senate & House Transportation Committee dinners each spring. The events are designed for TRUST members and transportation industry advocates to interact with transportation committee members, hear remarks from state transportation officials and updates from legislative leaders on budget negotiations and transportation-related legislation.

### Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners Sponsorship - \$1,250

Includes logo placement at dinners and admission for two (2) to dinners. For TRUST members at the TRUSTee or Road Champion level, sponsorship and admission to dinners are included. For TRUST members at the Advocate or Friend level, admission for one (1) to dinners are included. Additional admissions are \$100.

### Transportation Innovation Forum

TRUST hosts the Transportation Innovation Forum attended by TRUST members, legislators, federal, state and county elected officials, state and county transportation officials and transportation advocates who gather to discuss the current state of Oklahoma's and the nation's infrastructure. A keynote transportation address or transportation discussion is provided by a prominent transportation official (s) and the annual TRUST Guardian of Transportation award is presented to a deserving Oklahoman. You do not want to miss this outstanding opportunity to hear from and visit with Oklahoma's political and transportation leaders.

### Transportation Innovation Forum Table Host - \$1,250

Includes logo placement at forum and admission for eight (8). For TRUST members at TRUSTee and Road Champion levels, table host package is included. For TRUST members at the Advocate, Friend or Basic level, admission for one (1) is included. Additional admissions are \$175.

### Transportation Forums

TRUST hosts periodic transportation forums which allow TRUST members to interact with congressional, state, county and municipal elected officials regarding transportation issues at their respective level.

### Transportation Forum Sponsorship - \$1,000

Includes logo placement at forum and admission for two (2). For TRUST members at the TRUSTee, Road Champion, Advocate or Friend level, sponsorship and admission is included. Additional admissions are \$50. ■

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JOSEPH "LEW" LEWIS MEIBERGEN**

September 5, 1931 - April 16, 2020

TRUST Board Member 2006-2020