

*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

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# SURFACE

FALL 2019



## HIGHWAY, BRIDGE PROJECTS ACCELERATE ACROSS OKLAHOMA

### OKLAHOMA MOTORISTS DRIVING IN ANY DIRECTION ARE HARD PRESSED TO NOT ENCOUNTER HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

on both the state and county highway systems. Thanks to long-term renewed investment from the legislature, with support from the executive branch, Oklahoma's transportation infrastructure is rapidly improving. Earlier this year, ODOT officials turned over the long-awaited Oklahoma City Boulevard to the city of OKC. Meanwhile, the largest project ever bid by ODOT, the I-235/I-44 interchange in Oklahoma City, continues to make fluid progress with flyover ramps going up and widening of the roadway. Also, not to be outpaced, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority continues to make rapid progress on implementation of the Driving Forward Plan with the completion of the eastern Turner Turnpike widening, accelerated progress on the new Kickapoo Turnpike (I-40 to I-44) and Kilpatrick Turnpike extension, and most recently,



TRUST president Neal McCaleb and board member Gary Ridley were among those helping present the key to the newly opened Oklahoma City Boulevard to Mayor David Holt and Governor Kevin Stitt. Also pictured are former Secretary of Transportation and ODOT executive director Mike Patterson, current Secretary of Transportation and ODOT executive director Tim Gatz and OKC Chamber of Commerce president Roy Williams.

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# 2020 Legislative Preview

## REDISTRICTING, ELECTIONS ADD TO BUSY 2020

**COMING ON THE HEELS OF A VERY CROWDED 2018 ELECTION BALLOT, NEXT YEAR BRINGS A SCALED DOWN VERSION, AT LEAST IN TERMS OF STATEWIDE ELECTIONS.**

The leanness is due to 2020 being a midterm election for four-year statewide officials such as governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, etc. The only statewide secondary official up for reelection is Corporation Commissioner Todd Hiett. On the federal level, U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe is up for reelection. Both offices are six-year terms. All five U.S. Representatives (Kevin Hern – CD 1, Markwayne Mullin – CD 2, Frank Lucas – CD 3, Tom Cole – CD 4, Kendra Horn – CD 5) will also be on the ballot for two-year terms. At the state Capitol, all 101 House seats will be up for election to two-year terms, and half (odd numbered districts) of the state Senate seats to four-year terms. Additionally, President Donald Trump is seeking reelection to a second four-year term.

In addition to its annual duties, the Oklahoma Legislature will also begin the once-a-decade process of redrawing boundaries for all 149 state legislative districts and Oklahoma's five congressional districts. Following completion of the 2020 census, the legislature must approve, and the governor must sign, the final plan during the 2021 legislative session. The first election cycle impacted by the new boundaries will be 2022. In preparation for the lengthy process, Speaker of the House Charles McCall announced in September the formation of a bipartisan House Redistricting Committee that will begin its work early next year. Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat named Senator Lonnie Paxton (SD 23) and Senator Dave Rader (SD 39) as chairman and vice chairman of the Senate Redistricting Committee, and Governor Kevin Stitt recently formed a 20-person Census 2020 Complete Count Committee to provide recommendations on what the state can do to ensure an accurate Oklahoma population count.



TRUST board member Gary Ridley makes a point to the audience at the dedication of the Oklahoma City Boulevard.

The second session of the 57th Oklahoma Legislature will convene February 3 and will feature Governor Stitt's second State of the State address. Some of the topics expected to be on the front burner of discussion among the governor and legislators are criminal justice reform, education, health care and government accountability and efficiency. As always, TRUST will be at the Capitol every day during session to continue efforts to stabilize transportation funding as a core priority of state government. The advocacy efforts of TRUST members throughout session is impactful on the executive and legislative branches, and that advocacy will be needed again in 2020. The budget forecast for FY21 is expected to be a leaner surplus than FY20, however any surplus often makes the going tough due to multiple entities and causes seeking a larger piece of the pie. TRUST has been an extremely effective voice at 23rd and Lincoln for nearly 14 years, and thanks to each TRUST member for making our organization one of the most respected in the state of Oklahoma. ■

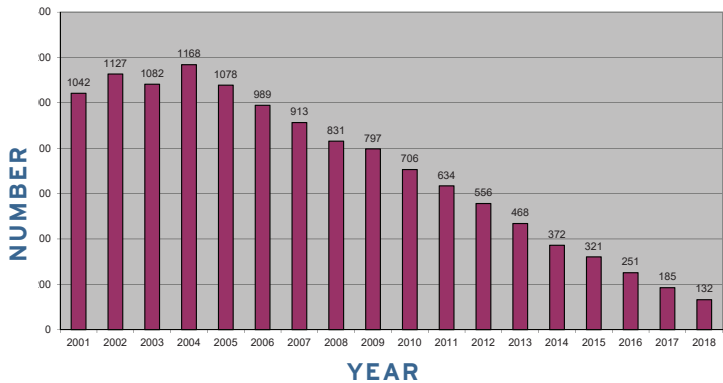
A capacity crowd awaits the beginning of the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.





# STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGE PROGRESS ACCELERATES

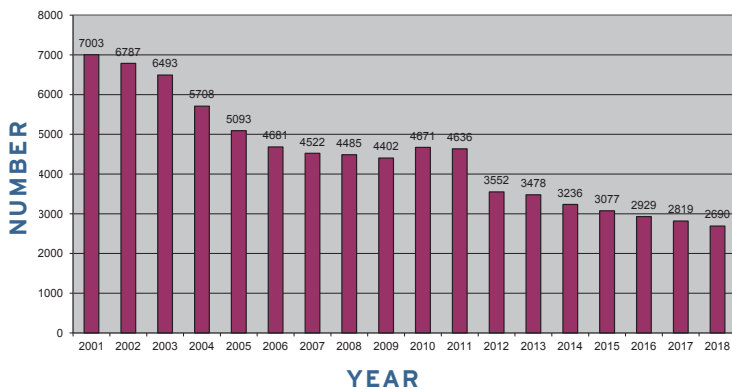
## STATE 'ON SYSTEM' STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES



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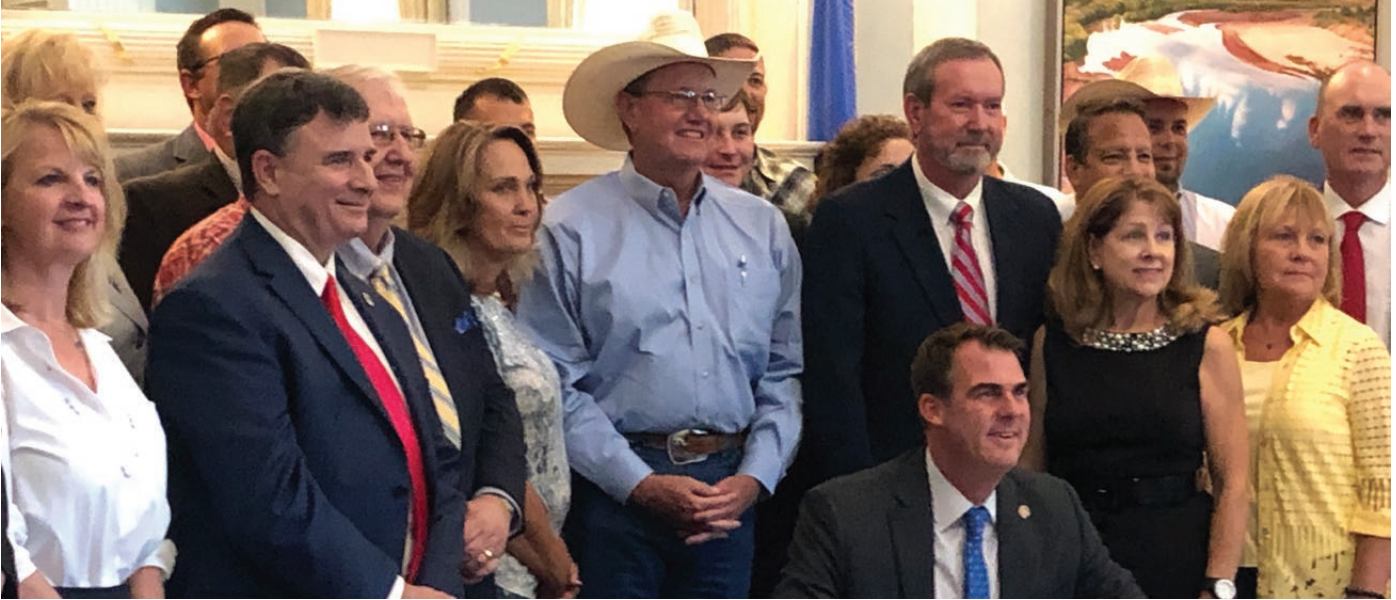
ground broken on the Gilcrease Expressway extension in Tulsa. Thanks to the legislature's approval of HB 2676 (see page 4) last session, progress will continue to rehabilitate county highways and bridges through the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) program. Despite occasional delays and lane closures, the end product will be well worth any temporary inconvenience motorists may encounter. ODOT, OTA and county officials continue to encourage motorists to slow down in construction zones and obey all signage while Oklahoma continues its advancement toward a first-rate and modern surface transportation system. ■

## COUNTY 'OFF SYSTEM' STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT BRIDGES



Speaker of the House Charles McCall was the featured speaker at the TRUST House Transportation Committee Dinner.

# 2019 TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION ANALYSIS



Governor Kevin Stitt is surrounded by transportation advocates including county, legislative and ODOT officials as he ceremoniously signs HB 2676 which returns \$30 million to the CIRB fund.

## **WHILE THE 2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION (S) SAW SOME REPRIEVE FROM THE BUDGET DEFICITS THAT DOMINATED THE THREE PRECEDING SESSIONS, TRANSPORTATION FUNDING WAS VERY MUCH A CENTRAL FOCUS OF LAWMAKERS AS THEY CRAFTED THE FINAL FY19 BUDGET.**

With the general appropriation bill (HB 1010xx), passed and signed into law, the first motor fuel excise tax increase (three cents/gasoline, six cents/diesel) in years took effect with a portion of the revenue increase allocated to the ROADS fund beginning in FY20 (July 1, 2019). In addition, all future motor vehicle fees that were previously diverted to General Revenue are now also allocated to the ROADS fund. The ROADS fund annual cap of \$575 million has been reached, and is the major funding component of the ongoing ODOT Eight-Year Highway and Bridge Construction Plan. Following the 2018 election cycle that saw over 50 new legislators elected along with a new governor and other statewide elected officials, the halls of the state Capitol were much more tranquil during the 2019 session. New Republican Governor Kevin Stitt named Oklahoma Turnpike Authority executive director and longtime transportation professional Tim Gatz as Secretary of Transportation and ODOT executive director, and through legislation passed early in session, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission was revamped with seven new members who began their terms last spring.

Despite many new faces brought on by the 2018 elections, transportation continued to be at the forefront of the 2019 legislative session through the legislature's passage, and the governor's signing of HB 2676 which allocated \$30 million to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) fund. During the budget deficit sessions of 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, millions of dollars were removed from the CIRB fund

to assist in balancing the final state budgets. The loss of these monies caused numerous county bridge and highway projects to be cancelled or delayed throughout the state. The members of TRUST were in favor of the measure and will continue to support the return of additional monies to the CIRB fund (capped at \$120 million annually) next session and beyond. In addition, ODOT was fully funded for FY20 allowing the agency to continue its work to renovate and rebuild bridges and highways on the state system.

While the political climate moved along fairly smooth inside the Capitol, ODOT and counties across Oklahoma continued to make progress in reducing the number of structurally deficient bridges (see page 3) in all 77 counties. As of the end of 2018, 132 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. All of the remaining bridges are scheduled to be replaced or rehabilitated within the next year providing ODOT with the opportunity to focus on asset preservation, resurfacing, shoulder additions and widening, safety barriers and other critical projects moving forward. On the county system, 2,690 structurally-deficient bridges remained at the end of 2018, down from a high of 7,003 in 2001.

As the second session of the 57th Oklahoma Legislature convenes February 3, TRUST and transportation advocates must remain vigilant in advocating the continued needs of Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure. The dozens of second year Senate and House members will play a pivotal role in determining the future of transportation funding in Oklahoma, and it is vital that the transportation industry as a whole make a concerted effort to continue productive dialogue with this important group of lawmakers. ■





TRUST president Neal McCaleb speaks at the grand opening of the Oklahoma City Boulevard as Secretary of Transportation, ODOT and OTA executive director Tim Gatz listens.



TRUST co-chairman and former Governor Frank Keating served as emcee for the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.



Senator Marty Quinn, Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat and Senator Rob Standridge were among the senators present at the TRUST Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.



Rep. Mike Sanders speaks at the TRUST House Transportation Committee Dinner.



TRUST members, legislators and guests visit at a reception prior to the Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.

# 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 are not 'friends' with TRUST on Facebook or have not 'liked' our page, 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 restoreTRUST.org, click on the contribute page and select "update membership profile."

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## Please Plan to Attend our Upcoming TRUST

- Transportation Day at the Capitol - March 2020
- Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners - Spring 2020

Details Coming Soon!