

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 2020



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PRESIDENTIAL, CD5 DOMINATE STATE ELECTIONS

WITH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC AS A BACKDROP, THE 2020 ELECTION SEASON WAS A BUSY ONE ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, AND OKLAHOMA WAS NO EXCEPTION. The presidential race took center stage with Republican President Donald Trump capturing all 77 Oklahoma counties with 65% of the vote over Democrat nominee Joe Biden. As of this writing, Biden has been projected the winner of the Electoral College and popular vote, however President Trump has mounted legal challenges in Pennsylvania and other battleground states. The inauguration is scheduled for January 20. President Trump continued a 56-year streak of the GOP presidential nominee winning Oklahoma, and a 20-year streak of the nominee sweeping all 77 counties. The last Democrat to capture the state was President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and the last to win a county was Al Gore in 2000. On the national scene, the makeup of the U.S. Senate remains undecided due to runoff races in Georgia, however Democrats will continue to control the

U.S. House despite Republicans drastically reducing the margin. One contributing race was Oklahoma's Fifth Congressional District, which was perhaps the most hotly contested congressional election in the country. In the end, Republican state Senator Stephanie Bice narrowly defeated incumbent Democrat Rep. Kendra Horn with 52% of the vote. Each of Oklahoma's other four Republican incumbent U.S. Representatives (Kevin Hern – CD 1, Markwayne Mullin – CD 2, Frank Lucas – CD 3, Tom Cole – CD 4) handily won re-election. In the



Representative-elect
Stephanie Bice



U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe

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2021 Oklahoma Legislative Preview



Senate President Pro
Tempore Greg Treat



Speaker of the House
Charles McCall

WITH THE 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION INTERRUPTED NUMEROUS TIMES BY COVID-19, MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 58TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE

are hoping for a return to some sense of normalcy come February 1 when the session is scheduled to begin. Whether the session returns to its standard operating procedure, or if it is once again altered by the pandemic, remains to be seen as lawmakers begin the process of preparing for the session. With the general election in the rearview mirror and new members sworn in, attention now turns to bill filing, committee assignments and the setting of agendas by each Senate and House caucus. Governor Stitt is scheduled to give his third State of the State address before a joint legislative session February 1. The most likely issue at the center of the Governor's address, and the session, will be the FY-22 state budget. Due to the significant economic fallout stemming from COVID-19, a significant budget deficit is expected to be preliminarily certified by the Oklahoma State Equalization Board at its December meeting. The OSEB meets again in February to certify final revenue available to be appropriated during the session for the fiscal year running July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

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Senate, incumbent Republican U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe captured a fifth full term with 63% of the vote over Democrat Abby Broyles. Oklahoma's junior Republican U.S. Senator, James Lankford, was not up for re-election this year.

At the state Capitol, all statewide elected officials, except Corporation Commissioner Todd Hiatt, who won a second six-year term, were mid-term this year, leaving the focus on state legislative races. With all votes counted, Republicans maintain supermajority status in both chambers. In the Senate, the GOP majority will be 38-9 with newly elected GOP senators Blake Stephens (SD 3), George Burns (SD 5), Warren Hamilton (SD 7), Shane Jett (SD 17), Zack Taylor (SD 28), Cody Rogers (SD 37) and Jessica Garvin (SD 43) joining the caucus. The new Democrat senator is Jo Anna Dossett (SD 35) who won a hotly contested open seat. Dossett's brother is incumbent Democrat Senator J.J. Dossett (SD 34). With Bice winning the CD 5 race, Governor Kevin Stitt has called a special election February 9 (primary) and April 6 (general) to fill

TRUST will be at the state Capitol each day during session advocating for continued investment in Oklahoma's bridge and highway infrastructure, on both the state and county levels. Due to the commitment of previous legislatures and governors, dating back 15 years, Oklahoma has made marked progress in modernizing and improving the safety of its surface transportation infrastructure system. However, the job is far from complete, and all transportation advocates will be needed again this session to continue our joint advocacy efforts, particularly among first and second term lawmakers. Tremendous progress has been made across the state. Construction zones are common in all 77 counties, and the state even received a very prestigious #9 ranking (see Page 3 story) earlier this year from the Federal Highway Administration which would not have occurred without all TRUST members and transportation advocates pulling on the same rope. The upcoming session, no matter what form it takes, will require the same due diligence. We have simply come too far to turn back now. We must protect the statutory annual allocation provided by the ROADS fund. We must advocate for continued replenishment of the CIRB fund. We must support ODOT's long-range plans for shoulder and surface improvements. We must continue to support the advancement of the Driving Forward (turnpike) plan.

As the session draws near, please plan to attend and support the annual Transportation Day at the Capitol gathering along with our annual Senate and House Transportation Committee Dinners. We are hopeful each can take place under normal circumstances, but that remains to be determined. One thing is certain. The members of TRUST have proven to be one of the most effective coalitions at the state Capitol. We are respected by members of both parties in both chambers. Our collective message is simple; transportation revenues must be used strictly for transportation purposes. Please help in making sure our message is once again heard by our elected leaders. ■

the remaining two years of her current Senate (SD 22) term. If no primary is necessary, the special general election will be February 9. The Senate will have a 47-member body instead of the standard 48 to begin the 2021 legislative session. Senator Greg Treat (SD 47) easily won re-election and will continue to serve as Senate President Pro Tempore.

Across the rotunda, Republicans will hold an 82-19 advantage heading into the 2021 legislative session after picking up five previously held Democrat seats. Those five are Bob Ed Culver (HD 4), Steve Bashore (HD 7), Dick Lowe (HD 56), Eric Roberts (HD 83) and Max Wolfley (HD 95). Other new GOP representatives are Eddy Dempsey (HD 1), Rick West (HD 3), Wendi Stearman (HD 11), Danny Williams (HD 28), Preston Stinson (HD 35), Gerrid Kendrix (HD 52), Anthony Moore (HD 57) and Mike Dobrinski (HD 59). West and Williams are returning to the House after previously serving. Newly elected Democrats are Mauree Turner (HD 88) and Jose Cruz (HD 89). Charles McCall (HD 22) ran unopposed and will serve another term as Speaker of the House. ■

OKLAHOMA TRANSPORTATION HITS TOP TEN MILESTONE



Governor Kevin Stitt announces Oklahoma's Top Ten bridge ranking while Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz listens.

LAST AUGUST, GOVERNOR STITT AND SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION TIM GATZ ANNOUNCED THAT OKLAHOMA HAS BECOME A TOP TEN STATE NATIONALLY FOR HIGHWAY BRIDGE CONDITIONS AS NAMED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION. This includes bridges on non-tolled interstates, U.S. highways and state highways maintained by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

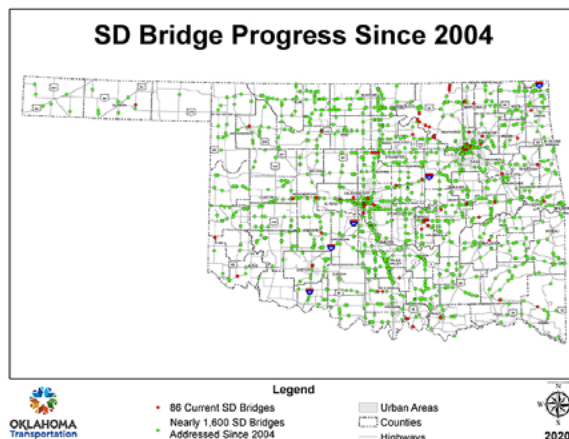
In 2004, Oklahoma was ranked 49th nationally for highway bridge conditions. In last year's bridge conditions report submitted to the Federal Highway Administration in April 2019, for the inspection year ending 2018, Oklahoma reported 132 structurally deficient or poor bridges out of the 6,749 on the highway system. This placed Oklahoma at 13th place, just outside of the Top Ten.

In this year's bridge conditions report submitted in April 2020, for the inspection year ending 2019, Oklahoma reported 86 structurally deficient or poor bridges on the highway system. **This moved Oklahoma to 9th place, a Top Ten State.** Following is a timeline leading to the FHA Top Ten designation:

- **1990s-Early 2000s:** Many national reports rank Oklahoma near the bottom in bridge conditions, including one in 2000 that ranked Oklahoma's interstates at 47 out of 50
- **May 2002:** I-40 Webbers Falls Disaster forces interstate traffic to detour on rural state highways, bringing heightened attention to Oklahoma's poor bridge conditions
- **October 2002:** Oklahoma Transportation Commission approves first ODOT Eight-year Construction Work Plan, an accountable plan that is updated annually to address the most pressing highway and bridge needs in a fiscally responsible manner
- **April 2004:** Bridge inspections show 1,168 out of 6,800 total highway bridges are rated structurally deficient, an all-time high for Oklahoma
- **June 2004:** When compared with other states' inspection reports, Oklahoma is ranked 49th nationally in highway bridge conditions
- **May 2005:** House Bill 1078 approved, creates Rebuilding Oklahoma Access and Driver Safety Fund and provides annual

allocation of income tax revenue to ROADS Fund

- **September 2005:** State Question 723 to increase state motor fuel taxes to fund highway improvements rejected by 87% of voters in the most lopsided defeat in state history because they wanted to tap existing transportation revenues
- **March 2006:** Senate Bill 1288 appropriates \$100 million for emergency bridge work; ODOT is able to address 137 load posted bridges, including many that were previously unable to carry loaded school buses
- **May 2006:** House Bill 1176 approved, provides annual increase in ROADS Fund allocation
- **August 2007:** I-35W Minnesota Bridge Disaster brings national attention to structurally deficient bridges
- **October 2011:** Governor Mary Fallin announces the Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan, which calls on the Legislature to increase ROADS Fund allocations to allow ODOT to address all remaining 706 structurally deficient bridges by end of the decade
- **January 2012:** ODOT opens new at-grade I-40 Crosstown in downtown Oklahoma City, replacing the state's longest structurally deficient bridge
- **May 2012:** House Bill 2248 approved, provides incremental annual increases to the ROADS Fund to implement Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan
- **August 2017:** American Road and Transportation Builders Association recognizes Oklahoma for replacing more structurally deficient bridges than any other state in past decade since I-35W Minnesota Bridge Disaster
- **April 2019:** Governor Stitt announces that Oklahoma is just outside of the Top Ten for good bridge conditions nationally and hopes to be there in the next year
- **May 2019:** ROADS Fund reaches the \$575 million annual cap set by HB 2248 for the first time
- **April 2020:** Bridge inspection reports show only 86 structurally deficient bridges remaining on highway system
- **August 2020:** Governor Stitt announces that FHWA data shows that Oklahoma is now ranked 9th for good highway bridge conditions nationally. ■



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 15 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, 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 15 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.

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% continues to be the goal. ODOT's most recent bridge inspection report finds less than 86 structurally-deficient bridges remain, down from a high of 1,168 in 2004. The impressive 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.

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PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL TRUST

- Transportation Day at the Capitol
- Senate & House Transportation Committee Dinners
- Transportation Innovation Forum

DETAILS COMING SOON!