

SURFACE

SPRING 2026

TRUST

TRANSPORTATION REVENUES USED STRICTLY FOR TRANSPORTATION

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

CONTENTS

02

TRUST Spring Events

03

Safe Actions Saves Lives Campaign

04

Why Join TRUST?

05

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EARLY BUDGET AGREEMENT ADJOURNS LEGISLATURE EARLY

AN UNUSUALLY EARLY BUDGET AGREEMENT SENT MEMBERS OF THE OKLAHOMA SENATE AND HOUSE HOME TO THEIR DISTRICTS MAY 14, TWO WEEKS AND ONE DAY PRIOR TO THE MANDATORY MAY 29 (5PM) ADJOURNMENT, THE EARLIEST SINE DIE IN MANY YEARS. The \$12.8 billion FY-27 budget was agreed upon by legislative leaders and signed by Governor Kevin Stitt in early April which accelerated the second regular session of the 60th Oklahoma Legislature from that point, as historically budget negotiations occupy a great deal of time in May. Senate President Pro Tempore Lonnie Paxton (SD 23) and Speaker of the House Kyle Hilbert (HD 29) completed their second sessions, and both were chosen by their respective caucuses to again serve

in their positions when the 61st Oklahoma Legislature convenes February 1, 2027.

The session was largely focused on public education matters, including a teacher pay raise and sweeping legislation to improve reading and literacy outcomes among public elementary school students. Much debate occurred on capping and/or reducing property taxes and tightening the way Medicaid operates. Most, but not all, agencies were funded with standstill budgets due to flat revenues and the desire on behalf of Governor Stitt to continue to increase state savings accounts, which are nearing the \$5 billion mark.

As for surface transportation funding, the budget agreement included a \$5 million operational increase for ODOT.



The annual capacity crowd at TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

State Rep. Nicole Miller (HD 82), chair of the House Transportation Subcommittee on Appropriations, did lead an effort to raise the annual cap on the ROADS

CONTINUES ON PAGE 2 --- ▶

fund which would have increased it to \$670 million, however the Senate did not advance the legislation, and it was not included in the final FY-27 budget.

Last session, however, through HB 2772, the ROADS fund cap was increased by \$20 million annually (\$590 to \$610 million) beginning July 1, 2025, and for the first seven fiscal years (through FY-33) the \$20 million will be allocated to fully staffing, maintaining, building out and operating Oklahoma's ports of entries (weigh stations). Beginning in FY-34, the \$20 million will be applied to projects within the ongoing ODOT Eight-Year Highway and Bridge Construction Plan.

Increasing the ROADS fund cap will continue to be a TRUST legislative priority, and we applaud the Legislature and Governor Stitt for their continued support in advancing Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure.

In addition to state and county projects, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority continues to advance its 15-year, \$5 billion ACCESS Oklahoma plan with major progress occurring including the completion of the widening of the six-mile stretch of the Turner Turnpike (four to six lanes) between Heyburn and Bristow and the first phase underway of the south extension and east-west connector turnpikes in and around the Norman area. After being completed in 2025, OTA's *Plate Pay* cashless tolling program has had a positive impact on eliminating accidents in and around for-

mer toll booth locations while providing non-*PIKEPASS* customers with a safe and convenient manner to pay tolls. *PIKEPASS* is by far the most economical manner to pay tolls, and OTA leadership encourages motorists to choose this option.

The ongoing ODOT Eight-Year Construction Plan remains the single most influential transportation policy and funding development in Oklahoma history. Highway and bridge modernization is occurring statewide with additional projects bid monthly by the Oklahoma Transportation Commission. Coupled with federal funding, ODOT can now complete projects more quickly and focus additional money on new statewide initiatives like two-lane highway development, pavement and widening projects. The CIRB fund continues to make notable progress on the county highway system by providing millions of dollars for priority bridge and highway projects.

Oklahoma's representation in Washington, D.C. has changed now that former Senator Markwayne Mullin is heading the Department of Homeland Security after being nominated by President Donald Trump. Mullin has been succeeded temporarily by Senator Alan Armstrong (R-Tulsa), appointed by Governor Stitt, who is serving as the 'placeholder' until the elected senator is chosen in November. Mullin was a former member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation which was

significant for Oklahoma. The United States is now in its last year of the five-year federal funding bill that includes transportation infrastructure appropriations for highways, bridges, rail, waterways and airports. It is hoped that Congress will pass a new multi-year funding bill rather than a temporary continuing resolution, however that remains to be seen. Sean Duffy continues as President Trump's cabinet Secretary of Transportation.

Oklahoma's most valued physical commodity is its highway and bridge infrastructure. The mission of TRUST never ceases as pressure mounts on available funds. The Eight-Year Plan continues to work as intended by prioritizing projects by need, not politics. Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure is in the best condition in state history, however there is still so much left to do as new challenges abound. Heavier vehicles on highways and bridges are a concern as is the fact that the state gasoline tax has not increased in many years and is no longer able to keep pace with maintenance needs. Electric vehicles are now a regular part of the motoring public. TRUST and its partners will continue to advocate with the executive and legislative branches at the state Capitol and with Oklahoma's congressional delegation to place surface transportation funding as a core priority. TRUST members are the best voices to ensure Oklahoma continues to build a first-class, safe and modern surface transportation network. Thank you for your past, current and future support! ■

TRUST ANNUAL EVENTS CONTINUE POPULARITY



Secretary of Transportation & ODOT Executive Director Tim Gatz, TRUST board member Terri Angier and OTA Executive Director Joe Echelle at TRUST Transportation Day at the Capitol.

ONCE AGAIN TRUST MEMBERS DEMONSTRATED THEIR LOYAL SUPPORT BY ATTENDING OUR ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE AND MEMBER EVENTS, AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVOCATE, LEARN AND ENGAGE WITH OKLAHOMA ELECTED OFFICIALS, STATE AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS AND FELLOW INDUSTRY COLLEAGUES.

The annual Transportation Day at the Capitol event was March 4 and as has become tradition, a capacity crowd gathered for the legislative luncheon and program. TRUST board member

Terri Angier served as host with Secretary of Transportation/ODOT Executive Director Tim Gatz providing an update on state projects and handling speaker introductions. Speakers included Speaker of the House Kyle Hilbert (HD 29), Senate President Pro Tempore Lonnie Paxton (SD 23), Senate Aeronautics and Transportation Committee Chairman Darcy Jech (SD 26), Senate A&B Subcommittee Chairman Tom Woods (SD 4), House Transportation Committee Chairman Ronny Johns (HD 25), House A&B Subcommittee Chairwoman Nicole Miller (HD 82), OTA Executive Director Joe Echelle and ACCO Circuit Engineering Districts Executive Director Randy Robinson.



Speaker of the House Kyle Hilbert addresses attendees at the TRUST House Transportation Committee Dinner.

The annual House and Senate Transportation Committee Dinners were held May 4 and May 6 respectively at the headquarters of TRUST member, the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors. Guest speakers included Gatz, Echelle, Hilbert, Johns, Miller, Jech and Woods. Transportation committee members from both chambers were well represented as were TRUST members and ODOT and OTA executive staff.

TRUST continues to build on its longstanding reputation as Oklahoma's leading transportation funding advocacy organization, and it is because of our growing membership. Thank you to all TRUST members for supporting these important events and continuing to recruit new members to TRUST. ■

ODOT/OTA LAUNCH

SAFE ACTIONS SAVE LIVES CAMPAIGN

Warmer weather and longer days bring an increase in highway construction and maintenance projects across Oklahoma. This spring, ODOT and OTA launched a statewide campaign focused on a simple but critical message: Safe Actions Save Lives.

The initiative encourages drivers to take simple safety steps during the state's busiest construction season and shares simple solutions to make Oklahoma safe: slow down, stay alert, avoid distractions and buckle up when traveling through work zones. The campaign mirrors a nationwide initiative and began April 20 and concluded April 30 with events designed to raise awareness and encourage safer driving habits. Governor Stitt declared April 20-24 Oklahoma Work Zone Awareness Week.

As part of the campaign, ODOT and OTA unveiled a short series of new public service announcements highlighting "A Day in the Life" of workers behind the orange cones and the importance of protecting workers and drivers in work zones. With more than 130 active work zones expected across the state this summer, transportation officials are urging motorists to share responsibility for keeping roads safe.

"Work zones are essential to maintaining and improving Oklahoma's transportation system, but they also require extra caution from drivers," said ODOT Chief Engineer TJ Dill. "By putting away distractions, slowing down and staying focused behind the wheel, every driver can help protect the men and women working on our roads and ensure everyone makes it home safely."

Seventy-four ODOT and OTA employees have lost their lives in the line of duty, and hundreds of crashes occur in work zones each year, many caused by inattentive driving, speeding through construction areas and following too closely.

"As the ACCESS Oklahoma program continues to expand, drivers will see more work zones along state turnpikes this summer," said OTA Chief Engineer Trent January. "Work zone safety depends on everyone. Choosing to slow down, put the phone away and follow posted signs can prevent serious crashes and save lives."

Throughout the campaign ODOT and OTA hosted and supported several events to raise awareness about work zone safety including landmarks across the state glowing orange in

support of work zone safety, Devon Tower and Skydance Bridge in Oklahoma City, ONEOK Boathouse and Williams Crossing Pedestrian Bridge in Tulsa, First Oklahoma Bank in Jenks and the City of Moore 34th Street Bridge. A moment of silence was also observed to honor fallen ODOT and OTA workers who lost their lives in the line of duty. ■



One decision can save a life.

Plan ahead. Buckle up. Slow down. Stay focused.

ODOT and OTA encourage all Oklahomans to support work zone safety by making responsible choices behind the wheel.

Why Join TRUST?

Be part of the voice for transportation advocacy that works with members of the Oklahoma Legislature to implement solutions. Without your membership, we risk losing the valuable momentum we have gained since 2006. 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 adequately funds and values 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 Oklahoma Legislature and Oklahoma Department of Transportation

TRUST ONLINE restoreTRUST.org

OKLAHOMA TRANSPORTATION NEWS



Our online news page is updated with local and national legislative and transportation articles. To receive our weekly Oklahoma Transportation News email newsletter, please contact TRUST Membership Director Helra Han at helrahan@gmail.com.

EVENTS ONLINE

restoreTRUST.org allows members to register for annual events and renew their membership with just a few clicks. Please take advantage of this convenient method to stay engaged with TRUST. For questions on events or membership, please contact TRUST Membership Director Helra Han at helrahan@gmail.com.

UPDATE YOUR MEMBER PROFILE ONLINE

TRUST continually updates its mailing lists and contact database. If you wish to continue receiving our mailings, emails and newsletters, or wish to add additional contacts within your organization, please contact TRUST Membership Director Helra Han at helrahan@gmail.com.

TRUST STAFF

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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 FY-2026. Any dues paid used for lobbying efforts are not tax deductible.



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A full house was on hand for the House Transportation Committee Dinner.



TRUST board member Pete Regan at the Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.



Senator Darcy Jech, OnCue's Scott Minton and OTA's Trent January at the Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING TRUST!