



SURFACE

SPRING 2023

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

Busy Spring

03

TRUST Legislative Agenda 2023

04

Welcome New Board Members

05

Why Join TRUST?

06

TRUST Events

07

Thank you SURFACE sponsors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Frank Keating, Co-Chairman
 Kell Kelly, Co-Chairman
 Neal McCaleb, President
 Terri Angier
 David Burrage
 Jim Duit
 Tom Kirby
 LaVern Phillips
 Jim Rodriguez
 Mike Webb
 Ken Wert



EDUCATION FUNDING DEBATE DOMINATES LEGISLATURE

WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE 59TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE DEFINED BY INTENSE COMMON EDUCATION FUNDING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SENATE AND HOUSE, lawmakers found

themselves in a concurrent special session that began 10 days prior to the mandatory May 26 Sine Die adjournment of regular session. The special session will Sine Die June 30, if not before. The intent of the special session is to allow legislators more time to complete appropriations for the FY-23 and FY-24 budgets, administration of other budget-related funds and appropriation of federal funds pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The special session could also allow legislators to attempt overrides of legislation vetoed by Governor Kevin Stitt. With over 30 new members, the regular session convened February 6, and like last session, the 149-member Legislature enjoyed a record budget of nearly \$13 billion. This allowed for state agencies to be funded with standstill budgets at the minimum while utilizing the surplus to make the largest investment in public education in state history and major new investments in health care, higher education and drought relief while eliminating the franchise tax and



OK Transit Association lobbyist Curt Roggow, Secretary Tim Gatz, Senator John Haste, TRUST Executive Director Jami Longacre and TRUST board members Jim Rodriguez and Jim Duit at the Senate dinner.

providing tax relief to married couples. The FY-24 budget runs July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 with the surplus primarily due to a growing and more diversified state economy along with the aforementioned American Rescue Plan Act funds. On the transportation front, most public attention centered on the 15-year, \$5 billion ACCESS Oklahoma turnpike plan and related push back from Norman area residents and corresponding legal maneuvering. On the transportation funding front, \$200 million in new monies were allocated to transportation causes while the ROADS fund was funded at its annual cap of \$590 million and the

CONTINUES ON PAGE 2

TRUST MEMBER EVENTS DRAW CROWDS



A large crowd of TRUST members and legislators attended the House Transportation Committee Dinner.

THE BUSIEST EVENT CALENDAR IN OVER FOUR YEARS DOMINATED SPRING ACTIVITIES FOR TRUST MEMBERS.

Our annual Transportation Day at the Capitol was March 8 and once again an overflow crowd was on hand to hear from Governor Stitt, President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, Speaker Charles McCall, Secretary of Transportation Tim Gatz, Senate Aerospace and Transportation Committee and A&B Subcommittee Chairman John Haste, House Transportation Committee

Chairman Ronny Johns, House A&B Subcommittee Chairwoman Nicole Miller and Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma Executive Director Chris Schroder. TRUST President Neal McCaleb led a heartfelt moment of silence for TRUST co-founder Tom Love and former Secretary of Transportation, ODOT/OTA Executive Director and TRUST board member Gary Ridley who passed away in recent months.

Just over a month later on April 12, TRUST held a Transportation Innovation Forum with Fourth District U.S. Representative and Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing & Urban Development Chairman Tom Cole as guest speaker. In addition, former Governor Mary Fallin was presented with the TRUST *Guardian of Transportation* award for her steadfast dedication to improving Oklahoma's surface transportation infrastructure during her two terms in Congress and two terms as governor. The forum was held at the new First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City with over 150 TRUST members and guests in attendance.

To conclude the spring event schedule, TRUST hosted its annual House and Senate Transportation Committee dinners, May 8

and 10 respectively, at the headquarters of TRUST member, the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors. Guest speakers included Speaker McCall, Pro Tempore Treat, Haste, Johns, Miller and Gatz.

TRUST is recognized broadly as the preeminent transportation funding advocacy organization in the state 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. ■



Speaker of the House Charles McCall addresses attendees at the House Transportation Committee Dinner. In the background is TRUST Co-Chairman Kell Kelly.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) fund was funded at its annual cap of \$150 million.

Construction zones define Oklahoma roadways as the ODOT eight-year highway and bridge construction plan continues to rebuild the state's surface transportation infrastructure in all directions. It bears repeating that the plan remains the single most influential policy and funding development for transportation in Oklahoma history. Oklahoma now ranks 5th in the nation for the lowest number of structurally-deficient bridges on the state highway system, a major accomplishment when one considers Oklahoma was in the bottom five less than 20 years ago. Major projects continue across Oklahoma in large and small population centers that with continued state and federal funding allows ODOT to complete projects more quickly and to focus additional monies on new statewide initiatives like two-lane highway development, pavement and widening projects. The CIRB fund continues to make steady progress on the county highway system by providing millions of dollars for priority bridge and highway projects.

In Washington, D.C., Oklahoma lost longtime transportation advocate, former Senator Jim Inhofe, to retirement last January. He will be sorely missed; however TRUST is excited to work with his successor, Senator Markwayne

Mullin, a former member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and a transportation funding advocate in his own right. America is currently in year two of the five-year federal funding bill approved by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden that includes transportation infrastructure appropriations for highways, bridges, rail, waterways and airports.

Oklahoma's most valued physical commodity is its highway and bridge infrastructure. We must continue to treat it as such and that is only possible with the continued advocacy of TRUST and its members. The funding pie in Oklahoma City and Washington gets more crowded each year. The professionals at ODOT have proven themselves to be fantastic stewards of the monies presented to them. Real progress is occurring statewide; progress not seen 20, or even 15 years ago. Therefore, the mission of TRUST has never been more visible. We must stay the course and provide an environment with our state legislators and congressional delegation that continues to place transportation funding as a core priority. TRUST members are paramount in making this happen. Thank you for your past and future support! ■

TRUST LEGISLATIVE AGENDA - 2023

“Our legislative agenda provides the bedrock for TRUST advocacy at the state Capitol, an agenda that is unilaterally focused for all transportation-generated revenues to be used strictly for transportation purposes”

TRUST President Neal McCaleb



Former Secretary of Transportation and ODOT Executive Director Mike Patterson (now with HNTB), Wade Christensen, former Governor Mary Fallin and Secretary of Transportation and ODOT/OTA Executive Director Tim Gatz at the Transportation Innovation Forum.

- **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 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, 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.
- **Support full 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.
- **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. ■

TRUST WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

THE BUSY SPRING CALENDAR FOR TRUST ALSO SAW THE ADDITION OF THREE LONGTIME TRANSPORTATION ADVOCATES TO THE TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Each of these transportation and business professionals have distinguished themselves within the public and private sectors and will provide a wealth of experience and counsel to the TRUST board and overall membership.



TERRI ANGIER

Former Media/Communications Director & Senior Administrator - Oklahoma Department of Transportation



DAVID BURRAGE

Owner/Board Member - FirstBank, Former Oklahoma Transportation Commission member & chairman



TOM KIRBY

Manager, Government Affairs - Love's Family of Companies

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

Jami Longacre – Executive Director

John Cox – Communications Director

Helra Han – Membership Director

TRUST EVENTS 2023



Fourth District U.S. Rep. Tom Cole (R-Moore) addresses the audience at the TRUST Transportation Innovation Forum.



Nearly 175 TRUST members and transportation advocates were in attendance at the First Americans Museum.



Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma Executive Director Chris Schroder provided a Transportation Day update on the status of surface infrastructure within Oklahoma's 77 counties.



The Love's corporate logo shines bright as TRUST President Neal McCaleb leads a moment of silence in memory of TRUST founding member Tom Love.



House Transportation Committee Chairman Ronny Johns addresses TRUST members at Transportation Day.

Sponsors of SURFACE



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 2023. Any dues paid used for lobbying efforts are not tax deductible.



The TRUST Coalition
Post Office Box 16112
Oklahoma City, OK 73113



Senate Aerospace and Transportation Committee and Subcommittee on Appropriations Chairman John Haste at the Senate Transportation Committee Dinner.



Former Gov. Mary Fallin and state Rep. Nicole Miller, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, at the TRUST Transportation Innovation Forum.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A TRUST MEMBER!