Grant County Announces Approved Road & Bridge Projects

CIRB Fund Allows Counties to Address Infrastructure Needs

Medford, OK, May, 2015 - Grant County has scheduled and approved $18.1 million dollars for new transportation infrastructure projects to ensure the safety of our communities and precious cargo carried by our yellow school buses Grant County Commissioners recently announced.

“The partnership between Grant County, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the state legislature has resulted in a more modern, safe and efficient infrastructure system throughout the county, and on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and the residents of Grant County I say thank you,” commented Grant County Commissioner Max Hess.

The legislature created the statewide County Improvements for Roads & Bridges (CIRB) fund that enables counties across Oklahoma to replace dangerous county highways, roads and bridges. Grant County has already utilized $10.3 million dollars in CIRB funds to replace 10 bridges and surface 9 miles of roadway. Furthermore, plans are in

WHEREAS, Grant County Board of Commissioners, marks the STAND UP FOR TRANSPORTATION WEEK, in support of the national transportation infrastructure week that highlights the critical need to invest in not only maintaining but updating our nation’s transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, transportation is the economic backbone of our nation’s economy; and,

WHEREAS, county roads and bridges are an important part of our nation’s transportation system; and,

WHEREAS, Congress needs to pass a long-term, multi-modal transportation bill by May 31, 2015 to maintain federal funding for transportation infrastructure; and,

WHEREAS, the STAND UP FOR TRANSPORTATION WEEK will be celebrated in small, medium, and large communities across the United States as a week that highlights the critical need for funding transportation infrastructure.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Grant County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim May 10-16, 2015 as STAND UP FOR TRANSPORTATION WEEK and will join with public transportation agencies and businesses across the country to participate in national transportation infrastructure week to encourage greater federal investment in public transportation infrastructure.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 4th day of May, 2015.

ATTEST
Sherri Eulberg,
County Clerk (SEAL)

I-40 Cross

Town Beams Repurposed

11 New Bridges Completed in Grant County

Recognizing that the State and the Counties had the opportunity to exercise good governmental stewardship, a conversation was initiated related to the re-tasking of existing bridge beams from the major Interstate 40 crosstown realignment project.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation and County officials immediately completed work on a logistics plan to move and store the I-40 bridge beams. This plan started with mandating the careful removal of the bridge deck from the beams during the deconstruction project. The beams were then readied for removal and lowered from the piers where they were initially inspected, serialized and prepared for shipping. The beams were then immediately loaded onto trucks and shipped to one of twenty-one different County Government sponsored beam staging areas across the state. Upon arrival, the beams are unloaded by County forces and stored as they await incorporation into a subsequent bridge replacement project.

While the on-going logistics of securing the beams was difficult, identifying funding to assist in constructing the bridges in the counties with a tough state budgetary year and with a conservative eye to the future was far more challenging. However, with the collective support of the Governor and the Legislative leadership, it was determined that additional long term funding for County road improvements could be facilitated by enhancing the existing County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) fund. The funding necessary to construct the recycled beam bridges is generated by increasing the CIRB fund from the current fifteen percent share of the Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes,
Dear Grant County Taxpayers,

I would like to remind you of the importance of transportation for Oklahoma. It is important to our quality of life. It’s about how we get to work, get our children to school, get to the store to buy food and clothing, and how we visit with our families and friends. It’s also about doing business efficiently and providing an avenue for economic growth.

As a county commissioner, I experienced first-hand the successes but also the challenges and frustrations that go along with obtaining and coordinating state and federal funding of local transportation priorities. When it comes to our transportation crisis – and yes, it is a crisis – the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) revolving funds should not even be a consideration for balancing the state budget. Transportation is pro-education, pro-safety, pro-health care, pro-agriculture, pro-business, pro-urban, pro-rural, pro-economic development and pro-anything and everything because without the infrastructure to travel from point A to point B there is nothing!

Grant County has the most bridges and fifth highest number of road miles in the entire state of Oklahoma. Our roads and several of our bridges were built before the Model T, and most of them are still working, but a large portion of them are structurally deficient. “Structurally deficient” means one component of a bridge — the deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert — is rated in “poor” condition by the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) National Bridge Index rating scale. A bridge can also be classified as structurally deficient if its load carrying capacity is significantly below current design standards or if a waterway frequently floods over.

In the last two years Grant County has built more bridges than were built in the last two decades; today we’re building bridges 24 to 26-feet and some wider. The new combines are 19 feet wide, tire-to-tire. We’re seeing farm equipment get larger and heavier and the agricultural output is getting much higher.

The decisions that county commissioners make every day about transportation, land use and economic development influence local, state and national prosperity, shape how communities grow and contribute to every Oklahoman’s quality of life. Counties that tie infrastructure investments to complementary community goals are well positioned to grow businesses, create quality jobs, retain and attract skilled workers and support families to build lasting communities for generations!

Our greatest challenge is ensuring that we can build and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system that allows Oklahoma and Grant County to remain competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. In reality we need to be investing well above the current insufficient levels. A state just trying to stay afloat isn’t going to be in a position to compete in the global economy against other states or other countries that are rapidly increasing their infrastructure investment. I believe that we must think bigger to truly keep Oklahoma prosperous.

I would like to remind you of the importance of transportation funding.

Please contact Senator Patrick Anderson at patrick.anderson@oksenate.gov (405-521-5630) and Representative John Tefft at john.tefft@okhouse.gov (405-557-7332) with your thoughts about protecting current and future CIRB transportation funding.

Respectfully
Cindy Bobbitt, Commissioner
Grant County

Moved I-40 Beams into place with Jerry Thomas & Robert Moss

Continued from I-40 Cross Town page 1

License and Fees to twenty percent.

The deconstruction project is completed with 2,067 beams having been successfully removed, inspected, serialized and shipped to 21 County staging areas. To date 252 Beams have been installed on 39 bridges in 16 Counties. The additional deposits to the CIRB fund begin in January of 2013 and will fully mature in 2015. These deposits will generate an estimated $45 million for recycled beam bridge construction during that time period.

Continued from I-40 Cross Town page 1

Grant County received 140 of these I-40 Cross Town beams and so far has successfully built 11 new bridges with the use of 62 beams. More bridges are being planned while monthly revenue is added to the CIRB account to fund the construction.

The re-tasking of the Interstate 40 bridge beams as a primary component of County bridges may be the largest single direct recycling effort of its kind. The initiative is a shining example of State and Local elected officials and governmental entities working together with innovation and creativity to reduce the cost and increase the efficiency of transportation infrastructure investments.
Cross Town Bridge Beam Projects
11 Bridges Completed in Grant County
Districts 1 & 2

District 1 Bridge 51 Before

District 1 Bridge 51 After

This Bridge was built by “force account” with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $36,231 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 66’ long and is located west of CR 790 on LeFlore Road.

District 1 Bridge 64 Before

District 1 Bridge 64 After

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $38,340 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 45’ long and is located east of CR 990 on Latimer Road.

District 1 Bridge 273 Before

District 1 Bridge 273 After

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $55,573 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 87’ long and is located 1/2 mile south of Kay Road on CR 800.

District 2 Bridge 22 Before

District 2 Bridge 22 After

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $94,351 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 55’ long and is located east of CR 1080 on Osage Road.
Cross Town Bridge Beam Projects
11 Bridges Completed in Grant County

Districts 2 & 3

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $108,158 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 71' long and is located west of CR 1030 on Jackson Road.

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $111,840 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 80' long and is located on Grant Road between CR 920 & 930.

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $151,712 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 55’ long and is located south of Osage on CR 1080 on Jackson Road.

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $92,290 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 56’ long and is located on Comanche Road between CR 800 and CR 810.
Cross Town Bridge Beam Projects

District 3

District 3 Bridge 282 Before

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $187,990 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 144’ long and is located between Grant Road and Greer Road on CR810.

District 3 Bridge 282 After

District 3 Bridge 284 Before

This Bridge was built with Crosstown beams. Cost of bridge was $87,236 (without the cost of the beams.) This bridge is 59’ long and is located on CR 810 between Cotton Road and Craig Road.

District 3 Bridge 284 After

Highway Trust Fund & Federal Highway Bill

Funding Runs Out on May 31, 2015

By Jessica Monahan, Associate Legislative Director for Transportation National Association of Counties (NACo)

Transportation funding from the federal government that flows to the states and down to counties comes from the Highway Trust Fund, which collects revenues from the federal user fee (also known as the gas tax). Due to several factors, including a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, increased fuel efficiency and decreased purchasing power, the trust fund has faced growing shortfalls since 2008.

The user fee (gas tax) has been set at 18.4 cents per gallon for gasoline and 24.4 cents for diesel since 1993. Had it been indexed for inflation it would amount to roughly 30 cents per gallon today.

The surface transportation reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) has had a short-term extension to keep funds flowing to states and local government as well. Congress has had a hard time passing long term traditional highway bills. State, county and local officials along with business groups are asking lawmakers to enact a full six-year bill this year.

The federal government is an important partner in delivering locally-developed transportation projects. At the local level, counties see the direct impact of federal dollars spent on transportation.

In addition to moving goods and people, federal transportation investments are major economic drivers for local communities. However, in order to plan and execute large and small-scale transportation projects that are critical to commerce and the American quality of life, counties need long-term funding certainty and a reliable federal partner.

If Congress continues to kick the can down the road, counties and the transportation infrastructure they own will pay the price. When funding needs go unmet, county budgets are strained, projects are delayed, services are cut and local economies suffer the consequences. With the cost of project construction outpacing the rate of inflation, Grant County people need Congress to fix the trust funds now.

Oklahoma Congressional Delegation can be contacted as follows:

Senator Jim Inhofe
202-224-4721
www.inhofe.senate.gov

Senator James Lankford
202-224-5754
www.lankford.senate.gov

Representative Frank Lucas
202-225-5665
www.house.gov/lucas/

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Oklahoma’s bridge problem is well recognized
By: Randy Robinson, P.E. Executive Director
Oklahoma Cooperative Circuit Engineering Districts Board

Of the 13,659 bridges on the county highway system, 3,767 are either too narrow to support today’s traffic, have structural deficiencies, or both. See definitions shown at the bottom of this page. Over the last several decades, Oklahoma consistently ranked at or near the top of the list of states with the nation’s worst bridge conditions. Crumbling transportation infrastructure and deficient bridges have a detrimental impact on Oklahoma commerce, job creation and economic growth and can even endanger our citizens.

The Boards of County Commissioners have accelerated bridge replacement efforts through a focused and concerted effort made possible by additional state funding provided by the Oklahoma Legislature. Grant County is no exception. The CIRB fund was phased in over a three-year period starting in 2007, at 5% each year from the Motor Vehicle Collection tax. This was further augmented by Governor Fallin’s Transportation plan in the fall of 2011, which transferred 2,067 used beams from the deconstruction of the Cross Town I-40 bridge in Oklahoma City for repurposing on county bridges. Grant County received over 100 of these Cross Town beams and has successfully used 65 beams to build 11 bridges so far.

The counties can see a savings of $15,000 to $40,000 per project with these beams. Also, with the Governor’s and Legislature’s support, an additional 5% from the Motor Vehicle Collection tax was infused into the CIRB fund to help counties’ efforts in replacing deficient bridges with these repurposed beams. As of this date, 39 counties have requested 744 beams and have built 69 bridges. These actions have allowed counties to replace or rehabilitate 1,359 bridges since January 2007. Even with this progress and our best efforts to gain control of the bridge infrastructure deterioration curve, the conditional problems caused by inadequate transportation funding continue. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation’s yearly, “Bridge Summary Report”, which shows conditions and ownership of all of Oklahoma’s bridges, reveals in the most recent report, May 2014, that an estimated 3,271 structurally deficient bridges remain on the county system. Grant County had 201 structurally deficient bridges at the end of 2012. (See Structurally Deficient Bridges Graph)

The counties have also needed an aggressive bridge rehabilitation program to make improvements on marginal bridges, but never possessed enough resources to address all of the issues. The CIRB funding has allowed counties to rehabilitate...
One of the most formidable tasks of any board of county commissioners, as the formal leader of county organization, is to build and sustain a team of officers and employees who can (and will) work together around common tasks and goals. When commissioners work well together in advancing a common vision for the county and its constituents, their behavior of civility and constructive dialogue becomes a model for both elected and appointed officers, deputies, supervisors and front-line employees.

Grant County has eight elected officials – three commissioners, a sheriff, court clerk, county clerk, treasurer and assessor. The county election board secretary and the county emergency management director are appointed officials. As important as it is for county officers to recognize the importance of collaborative leadership within county government, it is also crucial for officers to know how to bring people together around common issues and tasks.

Grant County is very fortunate to have elected and appointed officials who are all committed to their jobs and that work together for the common good of the county. To maintain a positive image that promotes public confidence in county government, an officers meeting held quarterly. Most meetings are just informational reporting on what has been going on in each office. Some meetings are more problematic with solutions being sought. The most important aspect is to insure that the lines of communication are kept open between all the offices.

Grant County Commissioners also wants to ensure that the lines of communication are kept open between constituents and all district employees. If there is an issue that you feel has not been addressed – whether it is a county issue or a local road issue – please call us:

- District 1 Commissioner Max Hess 580.541.4740
- District 2 Commissioner Cindy Bobbitt 580.541.8950
- District 3 First Deputy Jerry Thomas 580.532.5542

Other county officers contact information may be found at the Grant County Website at www.grantcountyok.com.

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**CIRB District 1 - Phase I & II**

(County Improvements for Roads and Bridges)

The CIRB Project for Grant County District 1, Phase I & II, is on Kiowa Road, beginning at Highway 132 going east to Wakita. Bridge 64 has just been completed and the road stabilization for the 6 mile asphalt is just beginning.
Grant County Roads & Bridges Review

Highways & Safety

Oklahoma's Transportation Infrastructure Condition and Needs

By: Randy Robinson, P.E. Executive Director
Oklahoma Cooperative Circuit Engineering Districts Board

When Oklahoma became a state, our constitution adopted all of the existing rights-of-way widths for roads. These widths varied from 33' to 66', depending on whether you reside within the five larger tribes’ territories. This makes it incredibly challenging in eastern Oklahoma to provide for a two-lane road with drainage ditches in a rolling terrain landscape all constructed within the statutory 33' of right-of-way. The constitution granted rights-of-way width in Grant County at 66'; however, some major collector roads are 80' while rights-of-way around bridges can vary from channel to channel.

Oklahoma’s rural nature and historically agricultural and energy based economy required the constructing of many farm-to-market roads and bridges. The Boards of County Commissioners were responsible for all roads before the development of a State Highway Department in 1911. While these roads were ideal for transporting livestock and crops to market 70 years ago, they are less than adequate to support today’s heavier trucks, increased traffic demands and higher operating speeds.

Counties’ major and minor collectors roads, over 18,000 miles of the county system, link communities, rural industry and state highways. These roads provide traffic corridors inside and out of the county. The size and type of traffic on county highways has increased dramatically over the years as farm equipment continues to get larger and the oil and gas industry expands. Rollover accidents are prevalent on our rural roads as conditions promote these types of accidents.

Much like our bridges, pavement surfaces require systematic rehabilitation in order to maximize the life cycle of county highways. Roadways require periodic drainage ditch cleaning, crack sealing, and pothole patching to extend the pavement life. It is cheaper to maintain than replace and will get its best value by having maintenance activities performed to prolong the pavement life. The CIRB (County Improvements for Roads and Bridges) funds are only for new construction, but this frees up other local funds, used in the past for matching construction funds, that now can be used for maintenance.

Completed county road projects using CIRB funds currently stand around 400 miles statewide with Grant County having 9 miles. Even with the improvements scheduled in the current 5-Year CIRB Construction Work Plan, many inadequate roads will remain unaddressed. The safety of our transportation system for the traveling public is not only what County Commissioners strive to do, but it is their friends and families lives they are protecting. The challenge still remains for counties to address every safety improvement that could prevent property damage, personal injuries and the tragic loss of life.

Other parts of the process in building bridges and roads is pouring and finishing concrete. Sometimes that includes pumping it out long distances. The finishing process is a critical part of making sure the bridge has a smooth surface.

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National Transportation Infrastructure Week

May 10-16, 2015