



THE FIRST WORD

December, 2015

Congress Set to Pass Long-Term Highway Funding Bill

All indications are that Congress will vote in the next day or two on a new long-term funding bill. Congress has extended the existing programs through this coming Friday, December 4 to give negotiators more time to finalize the measure. House-Senate conference negotiators said last week they are confident they will have a final deal shortly after the Thanksgiving break.

In a letter to conference members, ACEC urged that they retain several key measures in the final bill, including a provision encouraging departments of transportation to partner with private sector engineering and design firms; aggressive environmental streamlining reforms; research and development grants to study mileage-based user fees and other alternative revenue mechanisms; and increased funding for TIFIA loans and loan guarantees to leverage additional private sector investment.

Other ACEC-backed provisions in the bill include water infrastructure financing assistance for local communities, energy grid resiliency and security measures, and reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

Welcome New Members!

ACECOKLAHOMA would like to welcome two new members:

PATH Engineering, Oklahoma City, is a civil engineering firm offering site civil services, water/sewer/stormwater design, and street/highway design/reconstruction. Jonathan Heusel is the principal of the firm.

W2M Consulting of Edmond, headed by Mike Morrison, is a bridge/structural engineering firm.

Welcome PATH Engineering & W2M Consulting!!!!!!

"Driving Forward" \$900 Million Turnpike Expansion Announced

The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority (OTA) announced an ambitious \$900 million expansion of the system which will include two new toll roads in the Oklahoma City area, one in Tulsa, and improvements to several existing turnpikes, including widening 22 miles of the Turner Turnpike to six-lanes from Bristow to Tulsa.

In making the announcement, Governor Mary Fallin praised the plan as a, "comprehensive blueprint for the state to modernize our turnpike system."

Dubbed the "**Driving Forward**" plan, Fallin said it is, "about ensuring safe travel, relieving congestion to shorten commutes and sustaining economic development for years to come."

OTA Chairman Kell Kelly said he expects new turnpike construction to spur economic development along the turnpike corridors. "Infrastructure drives economic development," Kelly said. Fallin agreed, stating, "As we open up these different routes to ease congestion, ... we'll also see the businesses, the neighborhoods, economic development and the investment in our economy that will come with this."

OTA Executive Director Tim Stewart, addressing ACEC OKLAHOMA members at the November meeting, said that OTA would rely on Oklahoma's private sector engineering firm to handle the large project, estimating that engineering fees could amount to \$90+ million.

Referring to the consulting profession as "our partners," Stewart said, "We want the engineers to be profitable in what they do, because we cannot be successful if they are not successful."

Construction on some of the projects could start as early as the spring of 2016.



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Recent & Upcoming Retirements at ODOT & FHwA

We would like to take a moment to recognize two individuals at ODOT who are retiring, as well as one at the Federal Highway Administration.

Ray Sanders and Greg Allen of ODOT have announced their retirement.....Greg effective December 1st, and Ray at the end of the year.

Ray has headed the Project Management division, and had been our lead liaison for the annual ODOT/ACEC OKLAHOMA Partnering Conference. His dedication and efforts have been an important and valued part of the success of the Partnering Conference. We will miss his leadership!

Greg has been in the ODOT Bridge Division for what seems like forever, and has also been an important part of the Partnering Conference, serving on the Steering Committee for many years. His input and expertise will be greatly missed, although we know will be still be seeing him around regularly.

Lastly, as noted to the right, Gary Cornio is retiring from FHwA. Gary has been a great leader for the Oklahoma Division, and has been an important part of our Partnering efforts. Below is the invitation to his retirement gathering, and all ACEC OKLAHOMA members are invited.

Thanks to Ray, Greg, and Gary for all you have done for Oklahoma! ACEC OKLAHOMA wishes you all of the best in your future endeavors!!!!

Retirement Announcement

After 42 years of service
Mr. Gary Corino, FHWA-OK
Division Administrator,
has decided to retire

Please join us to celebrate
his retirement on
December 17, 2015
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
at AOGC Conference Room

Address: 636 NE 41st,
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Please RSVP by December 14 to Ms. Trina Kinsfather
at 405-254-3300 or trina.kinsfather@dot.gov



Merry Christmas *Happy Holidays*

*ACEC OKLAHOMA Wishes Everyone
A Joyous Holiday Season
and the Happiest of New Years!*



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President's Report

December, 2015

David Raymond, ACEC President

As we eagerly await the House-Senate Conference Committee's release of a five-year transportation bill – with final passage expected later this week – I want to give you an update on all else the Council has accomplished this past month. In November, we held our annual leadership orientation sessions in Washington, in which 65 MO officers from 34 states participated. The positive ratings by attendees reflected the value of the program and the strength of ACEC moving forward. Congratulations to Nevada, Utah and Arkansas for reaching their ACEC/PAC fundraising goals last month. I know that all of you are driving hard to complete another record year and arm the Council for political and legislative battles crucial to our industry.

Hope you have an enjoyable holiday season.

General

- * The Minuteman Fund helped secure major transportation funding victories in Texas and Michigan: in Texas, voters approved a highway funding general sales tax of \$2.5 billion beginning 2018 that will amount to over \$40 billion by 2030; in Michigan, an additional \$1.2 billion per year will be generated through a gas and diesel tax increase and other revenues.
- * ACEC/PAC has already surpassed last year's record fundraising total and now stands at over \$846,000 toward its \$1 million goal.
- Nevada, Utah and Arkansas met their annual ACEC/PAC fundraising targets, joining Indiana, Hawaii, South Carolina, Delaware, Wisconsin, Alaska, Tennessee, Kansas, Illinois, Alabama, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Maryland, Georgia, Arizona, New Jersey and Massachusetts.
- * ACEC's Job Board postings have surged in the Fall months, hitting a record in October, which reflects continuing strength in the A/E sector of the economy.
- * Defeated ten amendments to weaken or strip provisions in the transportation bill to extend the Export-Import Bank for four years.
- * The House-passed transportation bill includes ACEC-backed energy provisions to bolster the reliability of the nation's electric grid in the face of natural and manmade threats.
- Joined with industry allies to support legislation that will expand the tax benefits of Master Limited Partnerships to encourage investment in energy efficiency and renewable projects.
- * Joined with AGC and other industry groups in urging Congress to direct the Corps of Engineers to move forward with WRRDA-authorized P3 projects in 2016 related to navigation and flood control.
- * Briefed members of ACEC/Louisiana on federal legislative issues and initiatives at annual Project Outlook conference.
- * ACEC and a coalition of employers sent a letter to Members of Congress expressing concerns about the Department of Labor's proposed overtime pay rule.

Government Advocacy

- * Helped to secure House passage of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization & Reform Act, a six-year, \$340 billion highway and transit bill that includes several ACEC-backed project delivery reforms, including an amendment encouraging states to contract out engineering services.
- * Lobbied House-Senate Conference Committee negotiators on the transportation bill, pushing for increased funding levels, TIFIA investments, environmental review reforms, pilot projects to study mileage-based user fees, a fix for municipal water infrastructure financing, energy grid modernization, and Ex-Im Bank reauthorization.
- * Joined business allies in asking Congress to extend expired business tax provisions, particularly higher Section 179 expensing levels, bonus depreciation, and the Section 179D energy efficient commercial buildings tax deduction.
- * Members of the International and Federal Agencies and Procurement Advocacy Committees met with the State Department's Overseas Building Operations Bureau to press for greater engineering firm participation.



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