

Letters of Support Index
Competitive Highway Bridge Grant
Oklahoma Department of Transportation & Grant County Oklahoma

Project Parties

- **Mike** Patterson, Director Oklahoma Department of Transportation



OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

J. Michael Patterson, Executive Director

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November 21, 2018

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

This letter is in support of the Grant County, Oklahoma application for Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP) funds. Thank you to you and the Administration for promoting this important infrastructure assistance project!

Oklahoma is a diverse state - urban and rural, wealthy and impoverished, old, young and multi-cultured. One of the things that unites the state is its stubborn spirit to improve life for all. An essential piece of improving life is a safe and efficient transportation system.

Grant County in northern Oklahoma is bisected by the north-south US Highway 81, the old Chisholm Trail, which runs parallel to the current Union Pacific (UP) Railroad line. From west to east, highway arterial routes on SH 11 and US 64/60 provide additional support. The bulk of the remaining roads, over 90% of the county road and highway network, are local county roads. Notably, the county transportation network includes over 13,565 bridges and of those, over 452 are in Grant County alone! The utility of the bridge and highway network is expanded when grain and other products come from farms, elevators and other industries to the 120-unit car train loading facility which UP opened in central Grant County, near Medford in 2016. Similarly products come into the rail terminal and are distributed to farm, energy, and other users. I call this to your attention because it is a situation where the fusion of highway, bridge, and rail service provides an opportunity for excellent trade and transport – when the system is in good condition. At present, the county bridges in Grant County are NOT all in good condition.

It is the Department's opinion that this is a golden opportunity to forge a partnership between local, state, and federal partners to maximize the use of the existing infrastructure by reconstructing 34 inadequate, small, and old (average age-65 years old), but significant timber and concrete bridges in rural Grant County. In a county populated by farmers, oil and gas industry owners, livestock producers, families and retirees, mobility is important. Unlike much of America, broadband internet service is not ubiquitous, so personal visits, commercial commutes, and postal service are essential to safe and healthy daily living. When a bridge is load posted, or closed, individuals have to add miles and time to their essential daily commutes.

"The mission of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is to provide a safe, economical, and effective transportation network for the people, commerce and communities of Oklahoma."

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

We are pleased to present a series of innovative concepts for replacing deficient bridges in the county. We are confident this can be a prototype to follow, not only in the State of Oklahoma, but nationwide.

The contribution of local county funds is a substantial effort, in an area where, by law, property taxes are not available to fund road and bridge projects. This is a special opportunity to promote economic growth in our area and to bring hope for the future of our County by means of improved infrastructure.

I respectfully ask for your wholehearted support of this worthy project that we feel confident will help Grant County and the surrounding area to thrive and grow by retaining current jobs and providing new opportunities for rural America in addition to making the county roads and bridges significantly safer for our citizens.

Sincerely,



J. Michael Patterson
Executive Director

xc: Grant County Commissioners Office