

LEGISLATIVE LEADERS AGREE ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

From Oklahoma Legislature

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Legislative leaders have reached a budget agreement Wednesday that will pump an additional \$28.3 million into Oklahoma roads and highways in the coming fiscal year.

"This represents one of the largest funding increases for Oklahoma roads and highways in state history," said Sen. Stratton Taylor, President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma Senate. "Coupled with our investment in education, the transportation increase will

be a great boost to Oklahoma's job creation efforts."

The agreement was announced Wednesday after several weeks of budget negotiations between House and Senate leaders.

"Every member of the Legislature, regardless of political party, has a strong commitment to improving Oklahoma's transportation system," said House Speaker Glen D. Johnson. "Any suggestion to the contrary simply is not true.

"Transportation is absolutely essential as

we work to further improve this state's growing economy."

The additional transportation funding is divided into several different pieces of legislation. For example, an additional \$6.6 million was sent to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation in the general appropriations bill earlier this session. Another \$7.5 million was earmarked for rural road projects in the REAP program approved earlier this month.

The latest agreement will send another \$14.2 million to ODOT—\$11.2 for general highway maintenance and construction, an additional \$2.5 million for rural roads, \$500,000 for rural mass transit—for a total increase of \$28.3 million.

"We identified roads and highways as a top priority before the session began, and we're keeping our commitment to an improved infrastructure. The investment will make our roads and highways safer, and send the signal to economic development prospects that we're serious about building the most business friendly state in the country," said Sen. Taylor.

Speaker Johnson said the economic growth the state has enjoyed in recent years can only be continued if Oklahoma's commitment to transportation is renewed.

"This agreement signals just such a commitment," he said. "We have made a huge step into the 21st century. The transportation improvements this money will help fund will ensure quality roads and increased economic growth."

ONENET FUNDING AND EXPANSION APPROVED

By Marta McCloskey
Staff Writer

■(GIT) In a decision to expand OneNet service and access statewide, the Contingency Review Board (CRB), with members consisting of Governor Frank Keating, Senate President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor and House Speaker Glen D. Johnson, met Wednesday and approved allocating approximately \$5.8 million to further upgrade the system out of 1992 remaining capital bond monies.

Last October, the CRB voted and approved an expenditure totaling approximately \$8 million from the \$14 million Oklahoma Building Bonds Fund to upgrade OneNet (the telecommunications information network for local government and education). As a result of that approval, 33 hub sites for the network were installed across the state. With today's approval, an additional 26 to 28 hub sites will be installed. "OneNet services will now be virtually available to all school districts statewide," said Tom Daxon, secretary of Finance and Revenue for the Office of State Finance. "This represents good investment for the state of Oklahoma because there is no additional tax money being spent."

The approval came after a recommendation by the State Data Processing and Telecommunications Advisory Committee. Rep. Calvin Anthony, D-Stillwater and co-chairman of the committee endorsed the move. "This is a wonderful partnership for the state of Oklahoma between public and private interests," he said.

"I am excited to be adding additional hub

sites for OneNet. It is particularly important to rural Oklahoma and will allow rural areas to greatly improve in the areas of education and economic development," Keating said.

To be exact, allocations of \$2,708,112 will go to enhance hub sites, \$387,859 for

security, \$2,346,920 for switching and conversion and \$332,458 for other enhancements, totaling \$5,775,349.

OneNet uses and services include:

- ✓ Sharing library resources statewide, nationwide and worldwide
- ✓ Access to government services
- ✓ Access to public documents
- ✓ Distance learning applications
- ✓ Electronic correspondence between courts
- ✓ Video services (full motion, compressed, video teleconferencing and conversion of video formats)
- ✓ Data services (access to the Internet, high-speed dedicated connections, electronic mail distribution, LISTSERV, USENET news feed, dial-up access, domain name services, access to the World Wide Web, Gopher and Lotus notes)
- ✓ Network Security (Firewall and Encryption)

Original hub sites are located at colleges, universities, vocational-technical schools and county seats. The additional hub site locations are Anadarko, Antlers, Atoka, Burns Flat, Drumright, Eufaula, Fairview, Frederick, Hobart, Holdenville, Hugo, Jay, Medford, Nowata, Okemah, Pawnee, Pawhuska, Perry, Ponca City, Purcell, Pryor, Sapulpa, Stigler, Stilwell, Vinita and Wetumka.

