

County Highway System

Myths versus Facts

Myth: My property tax goes to pay for my road maintenance.

Fact: Taxes on gasoline, diesel, Motor vehicles, and gross production are apportioned to counties for the maintenance of roads and bridges.

Myth: The higher fuel prices get, the more taxes collected.

Fact: Fuel taxes are based off of volume sold. Less fuel sold, then lower taxes collected.

Myth: When I buy fuel, the taxes collected, stays in my county.

Fact: Fuel taxes are collected statewide, pre-collected when removed from the terminal, then apportioned to counties by formulas.

Myth: The new fuel tax increases, 3 cents on gas & 6 cents on diesel, will go towards county roads and bridges.

Fact: The new fuel tax increases will, as of 7/1/2018, first go to the State's General Revenue Fund, then 7/1/2019 all will go toward ODOT's ROADS fund. This increase will replace dollar for dollar the current state income tax going to the ROADS fund.

Myth: Counties can operate off of current taxes because the tax collections have increased.

Fact: Over the last 20 years tax revenue toward county roads has increased overall 3% but has been out paced by construction costs increases of 13%.

Myth: Counties can do more with less.

Fact: Not including the 3 wealthiest counties (Oklahoma, Tulsa, Cleveland), on average, one county road employee maintains 27 miles of road. (bridges, grading, mowing, etc)

Myth: Every opened road not on the State Highway System or within a large city limit is a county maintained road.

Fact: Constitutionally every opened section line road is a county road. All other county maintained roads have been adopted by commissioner board action or has been county maintained continuously for at least 15 years.

Myth: Road mileage is divided evenly between commissioner districts.

Fact: County Commissioner districts are divided by population as equally as possible, and in some cases causes a significant road mileage difference between districts within a county.

Myth: Counties can work on private property.

Fact: There are limited instances where county equipment and employees can work on private property. Some are emergency conditions such wildfire fighting, school bus turnaround, agreements to clear a fence row, with a road assessment district within a private subdivision, and in a situation, where creek flow is posing a danger to a bridge or roadway.

Myth: Oklahoma's deficient bridge numbers will drop to near zero by 2020.

Fact: This statement ONLY pertains to the state highway system. As of 2018, the County Highway System has 2,624 deficient bridges with an estimated replacement cost of 900 million dollars.

Myth: Projects are oversized to meet ODOT standards.

Fact: The projects are designed to meet the County Roads Design Guidelines Manual that was adopted by the Association of County Commissioners and ODOT. This manual follows engineering industry standards that have been developed by leading experts with AASHTO, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. The latest design methods have been developed and tested to provide the most economical and safe project as possible.

Myth: ODOT charges their administration costs to the CIRB fund.

Fact: ODOT does not charge the CIRB fund/program for any pre-construction activities handled by their employees, including but not limited to right-of-way, environmental, project management, or contract bidding. If ODOT staff performs the construction inspection, then their costs are charged and recovered from the fund.