



Left to Right: Terry Yearby-Bridge Foreman, Matt Baker, Glen Newell, Todd Churchman-Commissioner, Brad Hedrick

## Stephens County: First Bridge Built With Cross-Town Beams

Stephens County has bad bridges. That is not news if you are a County Commissioner, but Todd Churchman, District #2 County Commissioner, is trying to tackle this problem. Overall the county has 295 bridges consisting of 78 structurally deficient and 13 functionally obsolete with a total possible replacement cost of 30 million dollars. As of last year, District 2 had a total of 138 bridges-46 structurally deficient and 13 functionally obsolete for a replacement cost of 18 million dollars. Todd says that there was a long period before he took office where bridge replacements were not a high priority. Now all the serious problems are showing up at once.

Wrapping up his first term in office, Todd and his crew have replaced 22 bridges in 3.5 years. His goal is 6 bridges a year. He says weather and chip sealing will dictate

how many bridges he can get to. Todd has to keep a close eye on his funding, but he tries to run his district like he runs his construction company: do the job right the first time, do maintenance projects, invest in equipment and people; these all, in the end, will be the best "bang for the buck" for taxpayers.

So, Todd was excited to hear about Governor Fallin's County Transportation Plan to repurpose the cross-town bridge beams. Stephens County District 2 is one of 21 beam staging areas around the state that the contractor in Oklahoma City delivers crosstown beams to. Currently, 57 beams, 65 to 85 foot lengths, have been delivered with another 16 beams arriving the week of July 2nd. Over 100 beams should be delivered with a portion being shared with surrounding counties. Over 20 bridges may be replaced dependent on

the final number of beams showing up at District 2.

Stephens County District #2 was the first in the state to use these beams. The existing site was a single lane, 3-span, 52' long timber bridge with poor timber pilings. The deficient bridge required additional timber piling to support one of the piers and had a load rating of 16 tons. This route just south of Duncan was a major collector and a school bus route. The new bridge is a 60' single span bridge that has a new load rating of 50 tons and used six of the cross-town beams. The county drove steel piling and sheeting and had a total materials cost of \$29,813.83 invested. They worked on the bridge about a month but earlier rains prevented them from finishing sooner. Todd also plans to chip and seal 50 miles of roads this year, including this road.

—Randy Robinson

### Before



### After

