

Retirement Celebration for ODOT's Gary Ridley Planned March 4 at SWOSU

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Gary Ridley

A retirement celebration will be held for long-time transportation executive Gary M. Ridley on Monday, March 4, at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

Ridley is retiring in March as the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. He will remain Gov. Mary Fallin's Secretary of Transportation.

The banquet will be held at 6 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center Ballroom and will recognize Ridley for his long service to Oklahoma transportation. RSVP's for the event are being taken through SWOSU President Randy Beutler's office at 580.774.3766 or at randy.beutler@swosu.edu. Tickets are \$17 per person to cover the cost of the meal.

Ridley has held the positions of Director of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) since August 2001 and Director of the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority since October 2009. He was appointed Secretary of Transportation by Governor Brad Henry in May 2009, and in November 2010, Fallin announced she would retain Ridley as Secretary of Transportation in her administration.

Ridley's journey up through the ranks provided him with first-hand insights into the whole spectrum of department operations. His ODOT service dates back to 1965, when he joined the department as an equipment operator. He moved up to maintenance superintendent at Kingfisher in 1970 and traffic superintendent at Perry in 1979.

In 1983, he became field maintenance engineer at Perry and then advanced to ODOT Division Five maintenance engineer at Clinton in 1986. He became division engineer at Clinton in 1995. He was named assistant director for operations in January 2001 before becoming ODOT director in August.

At the national level, he chaired the committee that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the interstate highway system, and he has been asked to testify to Congress on several occasions about the challenges faced by state transportation officials.