

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 49th Legislature (2003)

SENATE
RESOLUTION 1

By: Leftwich and Shurden

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution praising all those who worked to repair the Interstate 40 bridge; commending the Oklahoma Department of Transportation; thanking the Gilbert Central Corporation; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, early in the morning of May 26, 2002, a boat pushing two barges on the Arkansas River rammed into a bridge on Interstate 40 in eastern Oklahoma, near Webbers Falls. The barge knocked out more than 500 feet of roadway or four spans of the bridge. Fourteen people died when ten vehicles plunged into the river below; only five survived; and

WHEREAS, the original estimate for the period of time to repair the bridge was as long as six months. However, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation issued an unusual contract that specified that the contractor would be paid an extra \$6,000 for every hour the bridge was opened before the deadline of 57 days or 1,368 hours for completion before August 8, 2002, but fined \$6,000 an hour for every hour after the deadline. This amounted to a \$144,000-a-day bonus for finishing early or a fine of the same amount for every day behind schedule. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation estimated the project would take a minimum of 72 days. Gilbert Central Corporation was awarded the contract. It was believed that its innovative practices and techniques would result in the bridge being rebuilt in three months, half the original estimate. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation estimated that the total additional costs to motorists who were forced to use

detours amounted to \$212,000 per day in fuel costs, time, pay, and other expenses; and

WHEREAS, work continued 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with workers divided into shifts. A team of 13 safety inspectors, rather than the normal two for such a project, oversaw the rebuilding of the bridge, making sure it was built as designed and met all standards. The contractors utilized current technology in an innovative manner. The project required continuous cooperation and coordination among federal, state, local and tribal governments. The Cherokee Nation, which controlled the land around the site, made work areas easily accessible to contractors. The Federal Highway Administration also worked closely with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation providing expertise and assistance as did the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard; and

WHEREAS, on July 29, 2002, more than a week ahead of schedule and 65 days after the bridge's collapse, a ceremony was held which included a moment of silence for the victims of the tragedy, remarks from transportation and governmental personnel, and the official opening of the bridge for normal traffic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 49TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate praises the communication, cooperation, and coordination among federal, state, local, and tribal governments as well as the private sector which resulted in the safe and rapid repair and rebuilding of the Interstate 40 bridge over the Arkansas River near Webbers Falls, Oklahoma.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate commends the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for issuing its innovative contract encouraging the rapid rebuilding of the bridge and other actions resulting in the bridge being speedily and safely rebuilt.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate thanks Gilbert Central Corporation for its utilization of inventive techniques to quickly

but securely repair this vital bridge and all the workers who labored non-stop throughout the period.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Cherokee Nation, and the Gilbert Central Corporation.

49-1-92

THC

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