

## = Chickasaw Turnpike =

The Chickasaw Turnpike is a short two @-@ lane toll road in the rural south central region of the U.S. state of Oklahoma . It stretches for 13 @.@ 3 miles ( 21 @.@ 4 km ) from north of Sulphur to just south of Ada . The Oklahoma Turnpike Authority ( OTA ) owns , maintains , and collects tolls on the turnpike . The first section of the Chickasaw Turnpike opened on September 1 , 1991 .

The Chickasaw resulted from a compromise between urban and rural legislators . Originally , it was part of a now @-@ canceled plan to connect southern and eastern Oklahoma with a longer turnpike . It was also intended to link Ada to the Interstate system . A four @-@ mile ( 6 @.@ 4 km ) segment of the turnpike was transferred to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation ( ODOT ) , making it a toll @-@ free road , in 2011 .

## = = Route description = =

The Chickasaw Turnpike takes a southwest @-@ to @-@ northeast route , passing through only two counties , Murray and Pontotoc . The turnpike begins in Murray County at U.S. Highway 177 ( US @-@ 177 ) north of Sulphur ; west of this interchange , the road becomes State Highway 7 Spur ( SH @-@ 7 Spur ) . The turnpike continues northeast into Pontotoc County . Just north of the county line is a barrier toll plaza , the only plaza along the route . Beyond the tollbooth lies an interchange serving the town of Roff . This is a partial interchange , providing access to Roff for eastbound travelers and access to the westbound lanes from Roff . The Chickasaw Turnpike then ends at SH @-@ 1 .

The Chickasaw Turnpike has only two lanes for the majority of its length ; however , there is a short eastbound passing lane . The Chickasaw is the only two @-@ lane turnpike in Oklahoma . Lightly traveled , the road is used by about 2 @, @ 000 vehicles per day .

## = = History = =

The Chickasaw Turnpike was originally envisioned as a corridor running from Interstate 35 ( I @-@ 35 ) near Davis to I @-@ 40 near Henryetta . Proposed by southern Oklahoma politicians , the turnpike was intended to promote economic development by connecting Ada to the Interstate Highway System . It was proposed at the same time as three other turnpikes , which would become the Kilpatrick Turnpike in Oklahoma City , the Creek Turnpike in Tulsa , and the Cherokee Turnpike , which bypassed a mountainous section of US @-@ 412 in eastern Oklahoma . Rural legislators objected to the Kilpatrick and Creek Turnpikes , and moved to block them unless the Chickasaw Turnpike was built . Urban legislators relented and allowed the Chickasaw to be built as part of a compromise , with legislation requiring that the Chickasaw be built before work on the other two turnpikes could begin . The turnpike was authorized in 1987 .

Governor Henry Bellmon opposed the Chickasaw Turnpike , arguing it would be a money loser . Bellmon had the turnpike built with only two lanes and shortened it to its current termini . Dewey F. Bartlett , Jr . , an OTA board member ( and future mayor of Tulsa ) , was later quoted as saying " I think it stinks . We never wanted to build it . It was not anything we thought was appropriate . But in order to build the three turnpikes that were necessary , that is the only way they would build it . "

Bonds for the first section were approved in 1989 . The bonds specifically permitted the turnpike to be transferred to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and become a free road , the only turnpike in Oklahoma eligible for this type of transfer . At the time , however , ODOT director Bobby Green said that his agency could not buy the turnpike due to a lack of funds . The Chickasaw cost nearly \$ 44 million to build ( equivalent to \$ 64 @.@ 4 million in 2015 ) . Its first section opened on September 1 , 1991 . Originally , the turnpike began at SH @-@ 7 west of Sulphur , proceeding northeast to the US @-@ 177 junction , then continuing northeast on its present @-@ day alignment .

As part of his 1994 turnpike package , Governor David Walters proposed expanding the Chickasaw Turnpike to four lanes and extending it to Henryetta . The Chickasaw improvements were eventually

cut from the package , which ultimately died when a commission overseeing the sale of bonds by state agencies voted against it .

The OTA voted on November 11 , 2002 , to open discussions about transferring the Chickasaw to ODOT . The transfer would also include a one @-@ time payment of \$ 14 million ( equivalent to \$ 20 @.@ 5 million in 2015 ) for maintenance . The turnpike had deteriorated since its original construction ; ODOT director Gary Ridley said that recurrent pavement problems necessitated constant repairs . He also mentioned that there were other issues , such as right @-@ of @-@ way problems , that could endanger ODOT 's ability to draw from the federal highway trust fund . House Speaker Pro Tempore @-@ designate Danny Hilliard opposed the transfer on the grounds of the road 's poor condition , as well as objecting to the partial interchanges . The lawmaker called the Chickasaw Turnpike " an albatross " and said " I told them that unless the Turnpike Authority brought that turnpike up to ODOT specifications , and completed the interchanges at Roff and US @-@ 177 north at Sulphur [ sic ] , we 're not interested in having that thing dumped on the taxpayers . "

To address these concerns , OTA began a \$ 12 @.@ 8 @-@ million ( equivalent to \$ 15 @.@ 4 million in 2015 ) pavement rehabilitation project on February 9 , 2006 . Construction constraints required the entire turnpike to be closed in March , causing traffic problems in Sulphur . The turnpike reopened on September 29 , 2006 . The Oklahoma Transportation Commission , which oversees ODOT , voted on August 6 , 2007 , to begin feasibility and cost ? benefit analysis studies towards accepting the four miles ( 6 @.@ 4 km ) of the turnpike between SH @-@ 7 and US @-@ 177 . On August 1 , 2011 , the Transportation Commission voted to transfer the section of the turnpike west of US @-@ 177 to ODOT , designating it SH @-@ 7 Spur . The commission noted that OTA had raised the new SH @-@ 7 Spur to meet ODOT standards , and that expansion of the US @-@ 177 interchange to full access was the responsibility of ODOT . This was the first time that a turnpike had been transferred from OTA to ODOT . Transferring the turnpike was considered an inexpensive way to solve the problem of excessive truck traffic in Sulphur .

= = Tolls = =

As of 2009 , passengers of two @-@ axle vehicles ( such as cars and motorcycles ) pay tolls of 65 ¢ in cash or 55 ¢ if Pikepass is used . Drivers in vehicles with more than two axles , such as truckers , pay higher tolls . Tolls are collected at the single barrier toll plaza between the US @-@ 177 and Roff interchanges . Due to the partial interchanges , it is not possible to legally use the turnpike without passing through this toll plaza . The toll is the same regardless of the point of entry or exit .

The Chickasaw Turnpike has been fully automated since shortly after it opened . As Governor Bellmon predicted , it has been a consistent money loser since opening . Improvements are funded largely through proceeds from the more profitable Turner and Will Rogers Turnpikes .

= = Exit list = =

All exits are unnumbered .