

**Brilliant people talk about ideas.  
Average people talk about things.  
Small people talk about other people.  
~ Author Unknown**

### Railroad crossing projects near completion

What began as an idea between the Union Pacific Railroad, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Grant County District 2 is nearing completion. In May of 2007 seven individuals met to form a diagnostic team to determine the scope for a Federal-aid Railroad Safety Project for improvements of the Union Pacific Railroad crossings north of Medford.

The first on-site meeting was to examine existing crossing conditions, establish a recommended level of protection, formulate a preliminary estimate of improvements costs and negotiate the funding of the proposed improvements.

The existing crossing, located 2-miles north of Medford, had been defined by Union Pacific Railroad as being an un-safe crossing due to past accidents and near accidents. ODOT said the site qualified for a safety improvement project, which meant that the county was legally obligated to make a decision on this crossing.

Options were (1) to do nothing which would place a liability issue on the county when the next accident happened, or (2) upgrade the crossing with the installation of pedestal signals with gates and a full depth concrete crossing surface. The estimated cost was \$228,000.

The railroad would expend 10 percent of the cost while Grant County would have to pony-up the remaining 90 percent of the cost or \$205,200. Needless to say Grant County did not have that kind of money to put into this project.

Many ideas were exchanged with much discussion over the next few weeks. The end result was for District 2 to close one road with a railroad crossing in exchange for upgrading 3 railroad crossings. These projects would be paid by using joint resources from the railroad, state and federal funds with no costs to Grant County. The estimated project cost was \$800,000.

In October 2007 a resolution was passed by the Grant County Board of Commissioners to participate in this District 2 project. A Notice of Hearing and Application for the railroad crossings were filed with the Corporation Commission of the State of Oklahoma.

Twelve months later in September 2008 the Grant County Board of Commissioners signed the agreement with ODOT to begin the project which now was estimated to cost \$937,249.

Finally, in August 2009 the work began. Twenty-eight months have passed to come full circle on these railroad crossings. The great news is that Grant County District 2 has three safer railroad crossings without any financial burden. The new crossings are located at Renfrow, 1-mile south of Renfrow and 2-miles north of Medford.

Please think "safety-safety-safety" and remember to STOP at all railroad crossings and take a good long look before crossing because you are important to your family and to Grant County!

As always, I am here to serve you. If you have any questions or comments about Grant County please stop by the shop office located at 524 N. Front Street in Medford or call me at 580-395-2859. I may also be reached on my cell phone at 580-541-8950 or you may call Robert Moss, District 2 Foreman, at 580-541-8953.

Respectfully submitted.