



Southern Great Plains Newsletter

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SGP SITE ACCESS ROADS IMPROVED

The “road” to improving the SGP site access roads was long and bumpy, but both visitors and employees are now enjoying trouble-free trips to the central facility.

The central facility is the hub of operations for the ARM Climate Research Facility SGP site. The central facility houses a large array of resident instruments, computer systems, and offices. It is also home to the guest instrument facility, which accommodates instruments and equipment of visiting researchers who temporarily collect data at the SGP site for their own projects.

The uniqueness of the collection of resident instruments at the SGP site motivates many researchers each year to bring visiting instruments to the site. These researchers leverage their own measurements by tapping into the extensive SGP data streams collected continuously at the same location. Easy and safe site access is an important concern for the visitors.

Hundreds of instruments are installed across the wider SGP site, an area of 55,000 square miles. The resident SGP instruments, within and outside the central facility, are maintained by skilled field technicians who use the central facility as their base. Most other SGP administrative functions, including operations and safety, are similarly housed at the central facility. More than 20 staff members make daily trips from their homes to the central facility, and safe site access is essential for their regular operations.

The condition of the access roads to the central facility, especially the east access road, has long been a concern. On rainy days, travelers risked getting stuck or sliding off the road, even in four-wheel-drive vehicles. The recently completed road upgrades are most welcome; they have lessened the challenges of driving to the site in bad weather.

Efforts toward road improvement began in 1999, when SGP site personnel started holding regular meetings with county officials. The SGP staff initially made presentations about the ARM Program and the need for reliable access to the site.

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Subsequently, SGP personnel maintained open dialogue with county officials on the best way to accomplish the goal of road improvement. The approach adopted as most promising was application for an Oklahoma Industrial Access Grant.

Acting as information collectors and facilitators, SGP site staff began working with Grant County District II Commissioner John Futhey and Grant County Administrator Rochelle Dowell to complete the daunting required forms. At the same time, SGP personnel contacted State Senator Paul Muegge and State Representative Jim Reese and gave them summaries of SGP activities and site access road problems.



Commissioner Bobbitt stands next to a road grader on the east access road to the SGP site (ARM photo).

Senator Muegge suggested informing Oklahoma Secretary of Technology Skip Porter of the situation. When Secretary Porter toured the SGP site, he saw the road concerns first hand. Senator Muegge remained vigilant in promoting the cause until the joyful day when he notified SGP site staff that monies had been allocated to fund the Industrial Access Grant to improve the site roads.

The recently completed road improvements begin at the east corner of the SGP site and run two miles north and one mile east. The effort to improve the roads was such a long journey

Did You Know?

Commissioner Bobbitt is the first woman county commissioner in northwestern Oklahoma and one of a handful in the state.

Among Oklahoma's 77 counties, Grant County has the most bridges to maintain.

that new Grant County District II Commissioner Cindy Bobbitt, who took office in 2005, completed the project that Commissioner Futhey began in 1999. Commissioner Bobbitt has provided outstanding support for the site, both by overseeing the completion of the east access road project and by proactively maintaining the other access roads leading to the site.

SGP employees and visitors are delighted with the road improvements and thank all involved for their support, especially Senator Paul Muegge for his work to obtain funding.