

The logo for the Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA) features the letters "SODA" in a large, white, stylized font on a dark blue background.

Southern Oklahoma Development Association

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September 10, 2009

US Department of Transportation

Re: City of Durant - Partnerships Supporting Economic Recovery

To the TIGER Grant Review Team:

As the Economic Development District and Council of Government for 10 counties in southeastern Oklahoma since 1965, Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA) has been an active partner with the City of Durant. The area-wide **TEAM** Durant concept promoting economic development and a better quality of life for the City of Durant and Bryan County area has proven to be effective for soliciting business and job creation. In the past ten years, SODA has partnered with Durant to obtain millions of economic development dollars from the US Economic Development Agency and the OK Department of Commerce creating thousands of jobs to bring industry and families to Durant.

With the economic crisis, our organization is aware of the critical need for communities to avoid stagnation and continue economic growth. Southern Oklahoma Development Association is committed to fully support the projects identified for the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program, as these surface infrastructure improvements are critically needed to sustain the current jobs and opportunities for new job creation.

The TIGER grant funds for the proposed surface transportation improvements are essential to continue the City of Durant's intense efforts towards economic development, quality of life, safety and partnerships. The improvements will directly affect the industrial parks, opportunities for new jobs, and enhance efforts to solicit new business for a solid financial future in Durant and for the surrounding areas, located in southeastern Oklahoma.

In support of "**Partnerships Supporting Economic Recovery**", the Southern Oklahoma Development Association is dedicated to continue collaboration for all efforts to preserve jobs and increase economic activity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wes Bowman".

Wes Bowman
Executive Director