

OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board



*from
the desk
of the
Director...*

It is with regret I informed the Board of my resignation as executive director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board at the December 13 meeting. My resignation is effective January 9.

The OWRB is an outstanding organization which will continue its fine work. The agency is fortunate to have committed, talented people who will always put the interests of the citizens before their own.

As I look back over four years, I count as my successes the reorganization of the staff into a more efficient, customer-friendly corps.

Another strategy that has been successful for the Board and the State of Oklahoma was Governor Walters' creation of the Department of Environmental Quality. It allowed the OWRB to achieve its true identity and focus on our major tasks in water resources planning, water management and financial assistance.

I also assisted Governor Walters in establishing a subcabinet for the environmental agencies, which fostered coordination and cooperation.

I encouraged staff to take on more responsibility in "doing more with less." We have fewer people doing more work and providing an outstanding quality of service. We have exceptional leadership.

Another accomplishment I count is our total success in getting the OWRB legislative goals passed. We were

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Infrastructure Key to Growth, Stipe Tells Water Conference

Oklahomans interested in water resources planning heard a message about paying for infrastructure from Sen. Gene Stipe, keynoter at the November 2 Governor's Water Conference. He reminded the 325 attendees that the Five Civilized Tribes who settled eastern Oklahoma traveled the Trail of Tears on foot, arriving with only the possessions they could carry on their backs.

"Western Oklahoma was settled by land run by people who had very little, running for free land," Stipe said. "They didn't bring anything with them because they didn't have anything to bring. We started with very little, but we've come a long way."

Stipe reminded the conference that the progress in Oklahoma's water and turnpike programs has been through the use of revenue bonds. "We've got to pay attention to infrastructure," he said. We can't expect the country to grow, the economy to prosper, or the quality of life to improve if we don't provide the infrastructure.

***"If you want a boom,
put down a blacktop
road with a water line
beside it; in 5 years
there will be a house
every 100 yards."***

He credited the Water Development Fund created by the Legislature and administered by the OWRB for development in rural Oklahoma. "We issue bonds and go in debt and we

make money available to every town in Oklahoma that will take the time to qualify," he said. Stipe says the fairest way of building public projects is by letting the people who use the projects pay for them.

"We need to have a more daring philosophy. We need to venture out and invest. "If we're going to have infrastructure, we're going to have



Senator Gene Stipe

to pay for it. There is no free lunch.

"We have beautiful lakes that are tourist meccas," he pointed out. "Lake Texoma is so crowded on a holiday weekend that there's no place to camp or have a picnic. We've got Lake Eufaula that's much larger than Texoma, but the tourists who want to come can't get to it because we don't have the money to build access roads. Stipe pointed out that no one wants to raise

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Director, continued from page 1

successful in obtaining authorization and funding to update the Comprehensive Water Plan; in promoting Senate Bill 54 which clarified riparian water rights; and in securing state matching funds for our EPA cost-shared SRF program.

I am proud of the OWRB Financial Assistance Program that accomplished three successful bond issues during my tenure. We have doubled the scope and size of FAP with the addition of only a few staff in the SRF Program.

Finally, in our initiative of outreach and improved service to our customers, we have shared the Board's commitment to make the agency more visible throughout the state.

I shall look forward to my new position as executive director of Tulsa Opera, Inc. Earlier, I had the pleasure of serving on the Tulsa Opera Board for a number of years, and I welcome the chance to renew my friendships in that splendid organization.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the State of Oklahoma. Water will continue to be under political pressures and competing demands, but I know the Board will continue to meet these challenges with fairness and intelligence. □

Infrastructure, continued from page 1

taxes. We all want to pay for projects from growth revenues, but how can we grow without infrastructure? We're going to have to finance it through revenue bonds.

He asked conferees to go forth with the determination that we're going to invest in infrastructure and let Oklahoma grow.

Patty Eaton, OWRB executive director, followed Stipe to the podium to introduce the agency's 20-minute slideshow on the current update of the 1980 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan. The Water Plan is a flexible, long-term strategy for managing and developing the state's water resources to the year 2050.

Jim LaGrotte, who directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation effort in five states, told conferees that floodplain management relies on a new partnership with the states. "It is not solely a federal plan, but a new approach based on

shared responsibility and accountability," he said.

"Top-down, single-purpose floodplain control is no longer affordable or effective"

LaGrotte pointed out that the National Flood Insurance Program fell short by planning for the 100-year flood, when some midwestern states were experiencing 500 and 750-year floods.

A panel chaired by Kathy Peter, USGS district chief, considered future water planning issues. Professor Drew Kershen of the OU College of Law, who spoke on the environmental concerns associated with agriculture, said "Agriculture is a pollutant-developing industry. By its nature, it disturbs the soil, creates residues and uses resources, fertilizers and pesticides which can become water pollutants.

"In coming years, agriculture will be the most important issue as we discuss what kind of environmental quality we want, as opposed to the costs we'll impose on agriculture and impacts on our food supply and cost of food," Kershen said.

Next, tribal Judge and OU Professor of Communication Phillip Lujan spoke on successfully negotiating with Native Americans. He encouraged seeking commonalities, not differences. "There is no monolithic Indian-ness or whiteman-ness. It is an issue of trust."

Col. Otis Williams, commander of the Tulsa District Corps of Engineers, described the difficulties in balancing water uses in six Corps lakes in the 12,500 square mile Grand Neosho River Basin.

Mason Mungle, executive director of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, briefed conferees on Oklahoma's wetlands management strategies being developed by a committee of state and federal agencies. Mungle pointed out the committee is dedicated to conserving, enhancing and restoring the quality, quantity and biological diversity of the state's wetlands resources.

The balance of the morning agenda included remarks on federal environmental legislation by Sen. Don Nickles and Congressman Frank Lucas.

The luncheon program was highlighted by an update by Rep. Randy Beutler on activities of the Joint Committee on Financing Environmental Infrastructure. Sen. Jack Bell reported on the progress of the Kiamichi Basin Water Supply Study.

Governor-elect Frank Keating told the conference that as the son of a drilling contractor, member of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, and someone who has operated a family owned oil and gas business, there must be an agreement that we will not permanently soil our nests, first. Second, we must recognize that quality water is important to job development and the growth of Oklahoma. We must recognize that this process must be driven by science, not by politics.

Keating described his agenda as "Oklahoma One." He said "O" is for opportunity -- real economic development. "N" is for neighborhood -- legislative solutions to crime and corrections. "E" is for education -- tax credits for teachers pursuing masters and doctorates; tax credits for firms hiring Oklahoma college graduates; public school choice, and getting competition back in public school education.

Presentation of Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards closed the Fifteenth Annual Governor's Water Conference. Chairman Ross Kirtley and Executive Director Patty Eaton honored J.K. Lindsey, Tahlequah; Bonita Hoeme, Guymon; and Gerald Borelli, Kingfisher.

Lindsey is a water resources engineer instrumental in the development of more than a dozen eastern Oklahoma rural water districts and has served nine communities as city engineer.

Hoeme is a founding member, officer, longtime conservation activist and newsletter editor for the Texas County Irrigation and Water Resources Association.

Borelli served on the Water Resources Board 20 years and was elected its chairman by fellow members 15 consecutive terms. Under Borelli's leadership, the OWRB completed the 1980 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, established the successful Financial Assistance Program, completed the Six-State High Plains Ogallala Aquifer Study and established the Governor's Water Conference. □



Board member Ervin Mitchell visits with Dean Couch, OWRB general counsel.

Fifteenth Annual Governor's Water Conference



Beth McTiernan of OSU enjoys a coffee break with Terri Sparks and Jann Hook of the Water Board.



1994 Oklahoma Water Pioneers J.K. Lindsey, Tahlequah; Bonita Hoeme, Guymon; Gerald Borelli, Kingfisher, pose with their awards.

Bernice Crockett, seated, was among the first Water Pioneers honored at the 1985 conference. She and Bonita Hoeme, standing, are the only two women who have won the award.



Gene Whatley of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association registers with Kim Brown and Denise Hill of the OWRB.



Board Chairman Ross Kirtley presented Sen. Don Nickles a certificate expressing appreciation for Nickles' long support of the conference.



Governor-elect Frank Keating was one of the featured luncheon speakers.



Rep. Randy Beutler updated conferees on the work of the Joint Committee on Financing Environmental Infrastructure for Economic Development.

THE FLOOD CURRENT

JANUARY- FEBRUARY 1995

OWRB Lends Staff to Assist In Texas Flood Response

Only as south Texas floodwaters receded could local citizens and officials begin to painstakingly evaluate the widespread damage left in the wake of catastrophic flooding that claimed more than 20 lives. While the National Guard, state and federal agencies and volunteers worked to restore order, find shelter for displaced families and respond to a contingent of other problems caused by the September disaster, Texas looked to neighboring states for help.

Prompted by a formal request to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board from Wayne Fairley, with Region VI of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Donnie Blanlot traveled south to lend her hand in a cooperative effort to help communities rebuild and improve floodplain management procedures. Blanlot, who routinely coordinates National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) activities in southeast Oklahoma as a staff member of the Water Board's McAlester Office, flew to Houston on October 30.

"Upon my arrival, Wayne assigned me to a four-person disaster response team that would evaluate floodplain management practices in affected counties and recommend measures that have promise to reduce future damages," she said.

Blanlot's team also included representatives of the Texas Department of Emergency Management, NFIP and FEMA. "The majority of my work involved explaining to local officials about the availability of funds through

the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and helping them obtain those funds," she explained.

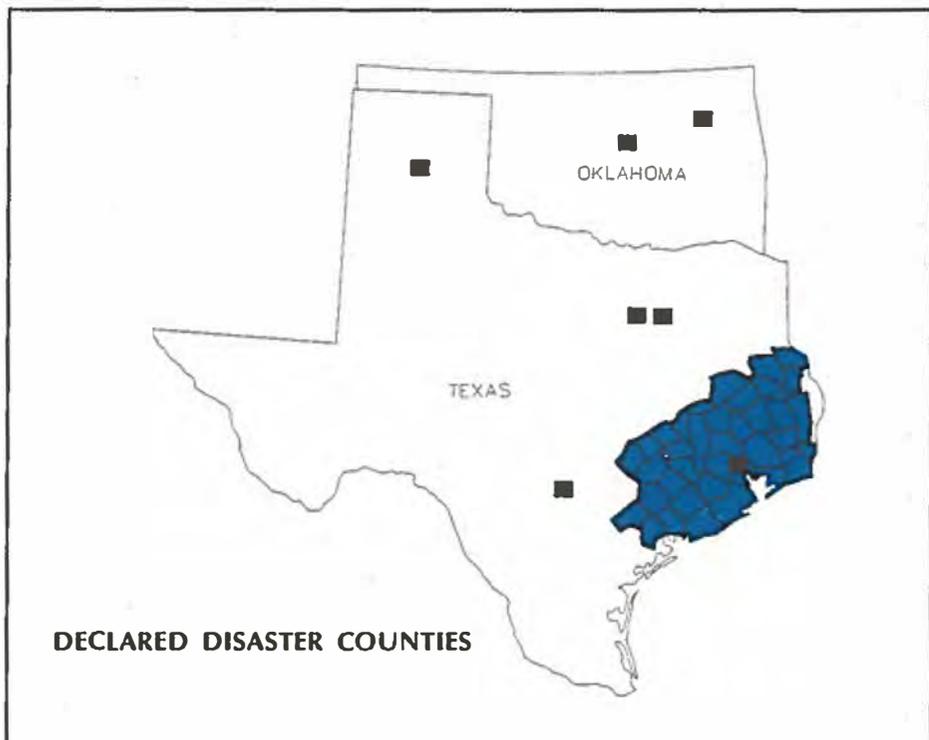
The HMGP was created in 1988 to reduce the vulnerability of communities to flooding and related natural disasters. The program facilitates a 75/25 federal/state cost-match to fund projects which reduce local flooding risks and prevent repetitive damage. A separate funding mechanism, the federal Public Assistance Program, finances actual repairs to roads, bridges and other publicly-owned flood-damaged structures.

In all, 38 counties received presidential disaster declarations. According

to Blanlot, most of the damage occurred north of Houston in Montgomery County, a result of flooding caused by overflow of the San Jacinto River. "My team was assigned a seven-county area on the western edge of the flood-damaged region. Our headquarters, which housed some 400 people, was set up in an office building assumed by FEMA. This Disaster Field Office was essentially a large, makeshift governmental agency, complete with entire sections dedicated to personnel activities, dispersal of supplies and counseling for staff and the public," she pointed out.

"We met early each morning to review files for the county scheduled for visit that day. Then we would contact the local communities to set up the meeting times and places and collect all relevant information on flood insurance poli-

Continued on page 5



Food Response, continued from page 5
es and claims, repetitive loss, and community status in the National Flood Insurance Program.

"At the meetings, we discussed local food damages, potential projects that could prevent damages and various other floodplain management issues. When we presented an overview of available funding programs to help mitigate future flood problems," she said.

Because many of the damaged communities did not have mitigation strategies in place (including plans and specifications for projects that would likely reduce subsequent flood damages) and federal monies are available for only a brief time following the disaster declaration, Blanlot's team worked 12-hour-plus days.

"Much of our time was spent helping folks complete permit applications quickly and as accurately as possible to expedite the rebuilding process. On one particular day, we prepared more than 300 permit applications for citizens who sustained damages to properly rebuild in flood-prone areas. Our team members also provided much information to community and county officials to increase their chances of receiving funds, most of which would go to more heavily damaged areas," Blanlot added.

Of her week-long stay in Texas, Blanlot said that the one resounding issue or problem she encountered was the lack of disaster preparedness -- or, in many cases, lack of it. "The south Texas flooding situation reflects something we stress in Oklahoma-- cities and towns with frequent flooding problems should participate in hazard mitigation planning efforts prior to disasters rather than during post-disaster recovery periods. Regardless, the experience I gained there was invaluable and will assist us in preventing and responding to potential flooding disasters in Oklahoma." □

OFMA Elects Officers

At its fourth annual conference in September, the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association elected nine new officers. They are chairman, Pat Loggard, City of Tulsa; vice-chairman, Albert

Ashwood, State Department of Civil Emergency Management; secretary, Donnie Blanlot, State Water Resources Board; and treasurer, Carolyn Schultz, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The five OFMA region representatives are Region 1, Robbie Williams, City of Edmond; Region 2, T.J. Davis, City of Sand Springs; Region 3, Johnny Shepherd, Durant/Bryan County Civil Defense; Region 4, Joe Elles, Ardmore Emergency Management; and Region 5, Rod Shaw, Soil Conservation Service.

The conference, held at Lake Murray State Lodge, focused on hazard mitigation. Specific topics of discussion included the Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; floodplain mapping; ongoing study of flooding problems in the Cache Creek Basin; the Clean Water Act Section 404 dredge and fill program; Tulsa's stormwater utility fee; and the Community Rating System.

The Floodplain Man-

ager of the Year award was presented to Ken Morris, State Coordinator of the National Flood Insurance Program. Edmond Mayor Randal Shadid was named Elected Official of the Year. Special awards for promoting floodplain awareness and the OFMA went to Mike Morgan, meteorologist for Oklahoma City's KFOR-TV, and Donnie Blanlot. □



Oklahoma City Meteorologist Mike Morgan of KFOR-TV, receives an award for promotion of floodplain awareness from Robert Bigham, former OFMA chairman.

OWRB, FEMA Set Floodplain Workshops

The OWRB and Federal Emergency Management Agency will host five workshops in March to provide continuing education for local officials on various aspects of floodplain management.

While the workshops are specifically designed for Oklahoma members of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), all interested persons are encouraged to attend. The one-day workshops, held each year throughout the state, serve to inform community officials and leaders of NFIP regulatory and administrative requirements, flood loss reduction techniques and related aspects of wise floodplain management.

Workshop dates and locations are listed to the right. To register, call the OWRB at 405/231-2576.

March 1 -- Okmulgee
Okmulgee Noble Center
1801 East 4th

March 2 -- McAlester
Days Inn
1217 George Nigh Expressway

March 7 -- Omega
Chisholm Trail Vo-Tech
Highway 33
(between Watonga & Kingfisher)

March 8 -- Oklahoma City
Metro Tech
1900 Springlake Drive

March 9 -- Lawton
Cameron University
Shepler Center

□

At the December Board Meeting:

Joe Freeman, Financial Assistance Division chief recommended and received Board approval for a \$200,000 loan to Rogers County RWD #9; a \$4.7 million loan to Guymon Utilities Authority; and a \$1.9 million loan to the Chandler Municipal Authority.

Mike Mathis, Planning Division chief, asked the Board to approve an amendment to the OWRB contract with the ORWA to expand the scope of the cooperative leak detection program to include the remedy of water losses. The Board approved the amendment. The Board also approved a \$30,000 loan to Cyril Municipal Authority for water audit, leak detection and corrective activities. The loan will be made from oil overcharge funds through the Statewide Energy and Water Conservation Program.

J.A. Wood, Water Management Division chief, asked and obtained Board approval of four regular permits and eight temporary permits to use groundwater; and seven regular permits for the use of stream water.

In protested applications, the Board approved regular permits for the use of groundwater for Cochino Ranch L.L.C., Major County, and for Barry Smith, Major County. The Board Order required applicants to plug existing well bores and to meter water use on new wells. The Board approved a temporary permit for Alta Mae Wood and Clifford Neil McGarraugh, Texas County, for the use of groundwater and required metering of water use.

A regular permit was approved for Richard K. Young, Comanche County, for the use of 76 acre-feet of stream water for irrigation.

The Board approved water well driller/pump contractor licenses for John Lawson, Okland Development Co., Nicoma Park; and Neil R. Arnold, Shady Nook Pump & Supply, Inc., Tulsa.

Mary E. Whitlow, Editor

Barry Fogerty, Photographer

James Leewright, Typography and Layout

This bimonthly newsletter, printed by the Department of Central Services, Central Printing Division, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is published by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as authorized by Patricia Eaton, executive director. Ten thousand copies are printed and mailed bimonthly at an approximate cost of 28 cents each. Copies have been deposited at the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

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Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
600 N. Harvey Avenue, P.O. Box 150
Oklahoma City, OK 73101-0150

J. Ross Kirtley, Chairman
Bill Secrest
Ervin Mitchell
Robert S. Kerr, Jr.
Mike Henson
Richard McDonald
Dick Seybolt
Lonnie L. Farmer
Paul H. Horton

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Approved at October, November and
December 1994 Board Meetings

FAP Loans (4.522%; 30 year maximum term)

Locust Grove PWA	\$ 2,555,000.00
Porum PWA	\$ 350,000.00
Ponca City PWA	\$ 1,800,000.00
Nowata RWD #7	\$ 22,000.00
Rogers County RWD #9	\$ 200,000.00
Guymon UA	\$ 4,775,000.00

FAP Grants

Ketchum PWA	\$ 75,000.00
Locust Grove PWA	\$ 75,000.00
Davenport	\$ 22,000.00
Grove School	\$ 50,000.00
Jenks	\$ 23,931.00
Covington UA	\$ 37,000.00
Tishomingo	\$ 30,000.00
Carnegie	\$ 50,000.00
Washington MA	\$ 25,000.00
Mountain Park	\$ 40,000.00

SRF Loans

Chandler MA	\$ 1,974,000.00
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TOTALS AS OF 12/13/94

	FAP Loans	FAP Grants	SRF Loans
APPROVED	154	347	24
Amount	\$181,060,000.00	\$19,333,106.00	\$120,303,726.48
FUNDED	139	314	22
Amount	\$157,425,000.00	\$17,426,878.55	\$117,919,726.48

BULK RATE
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Permit No. 310