

# OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board



*from  
the desk  
of the  
Director...*

## Water Board Welcomes Friends To Open House in New Offices

Governor Frank Keating and legislative leaders joined more than 300 friends, colleagues and families of the Water Resources Board who vis-

ited new OWRB offices on March 18. The celebration marked the end of a tiresome 11-month journey that began April 19 when the workers



Governor Keating told OWRB employees and friends that "out of evil, good must come. The Water Board's recovery is certainly a sign of good."

March 18 was a joyful landmark occasion for the Water Resources Board. It was our pleasure to welcome to our new offices Governor Frank Keating, Senate President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor, Speaker Glen Johnson, other legislators and staffers, customers, friends, colleagues from other state agencies, and retired and former OWRB employees.

We were proud to show off our new offices and grateful for the opportunity to thank our Board, our friends in the Oklahoma Legislature, and all others who had supported us through the tragic aftermath of the bombing.

However, the most important signal we sent on March 18 was that we are back and better than ever -- healed, healthy and rededicated to the single purpose of serving our customers in the most efficient manner possible. □

evacuated their bombed-out building across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. Two employees were killed, six were hospitalized with serious injuries, and more than 30 were treated and released.

In their new quarters at 3800 N. Classen, Executive Director Gary Sherrer told them, "It's a new beginning for us. We've been through a difficult situation to get here, but now we're beaming with pride at our accomplishments."

Sherrer pointed out that although Gov. Keating, Speaker Johnson and President Pro Tempore Taylor had generously offered special legislative appropriations to assist after the bombing, the OWRB had declined and done it on its own. "We're proud of that fact," said Sherrer.

Gov. Keating recalled the bombing aftermath as "terrible days following that senseless act that so monstrously and savagely took the lives of so many." He emphasized the belief that out of evil, good must

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**OKLAHOMA WATER  
RESOURCES BOARD**

**Open House, continued from page 1**

come. The Water Board's recovery is certainly a sign of good.

OWRB Chairman Ross Kirtley said he was proud of the Water Resources Board. "I have never seen people snap back with such determination and tenacity. With stitches and bandages, they were back on the job in the next day or two," he said.

In the interim between the bombing and the move to the Classen address, the Water Board worked out of the State Insurance Building at 1901 N. Walnut. □



## Enviro Conference April 24-25

The Third Annual Governor's Conference on the Environment on April 24-25 at the Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City will have as its theme "Industry, Economy and the Environment: A New Horizon." The conference is sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Environment.

Registration costs \$75 and includes all conference materials, breaks, two luncheons and tickets to the Governor's Reception. For more information or to register, please call Kelley Smith at (405) 530-8895.

## ICWP Announces New Policy

A water policy roundtable sponsored by the Interstate Council on Water Policy and Western States Water Council in Washington, D.C., March 20-22 focused on appropriate federal and state roles in water management and development of water policy.

ICWP announced a new National Water Policy Charter, unveiled at the National Press Club on March 21 and attended by press and ICWP members. Present were OWRB Executive Director Gary Sherrer, Board Members Mike Henson and Ervin Mitchell, Assistant Director Duane Smith and OWRB Hydrologist Terri Sparks.

ICWP is an organization of state and regional government water managers. The Charter is a blueprint for managing the nation's water resources and responds to public concern for reduced government spending, a balanced budget and a clean environment.

The Charter sets forth these principles to guide the nation's decision makers:

- ◆ Manage water for long-term goals,

recognizing both human needs and the health of water-dependent ecosystems.

- ◆ Manage ground and surface water as an integrated system, by hydrologic units, including both quality and quantity.

- ◆ Realign government roles and responsibilities, shifting authority to state, regional and local entities.

- ◆ Improve government performance and consolidate government water programs for greater effectiveness and responsiveness to the public.

- ◆ Set water management priorities based on relative risk and costs and benefits.

- ◆ Recognize and include all affected interests in policy-making.

- ◆ Emphasize water management program results.

- ◆ Use economic and other incentives to achieve water management objectives.

- ◆ Increase awareness and improve the quality of public dialogue.

## Sherrer Addresses Irrigators

Executive Director Gary Sherrer was the featured dinner speaker at the Third Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Panhandle Agriculture and Irrigation Association in Goodwell February 24.

At the same meeting, OWRB member Ervin Mitchell of Balko was reelected to represent Beaver County on the OPAIA Board.

Sherrer introduced Scott Christenson



of the U.S. Geological Survey, who outlined a proposal pending before the Oklahoma Legislature to evaluate the impact of large, long-term withdrawals of groundwater on the Ogallala (High Plains) Aquifer in the Panhandle. The bill seeks state funds to match federal money appropriated for USGS groundwater flow modeling and water quality and quantity monitoring of the Ogallala.



Executive Director Gary Sherrer meets Rep. Glen Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives, at the front door.



Reese Daugherty of the Financial Assistance Division visits with Cecil Wildman, of Spear and McCaleb Co., Inc.



Danny Spiser, retired from the OWRB, recalls old times with Norma Aldridge, formerly of the OWRB, now employed by the DEQ.



# Open House at 3800 N. Classen



Friends and family of OWRB employees toured the new offices, including Stella Strauss, OWRB senior personnel officer; Carla Espinoza of OPM; Claire Belden, daughter of OWRB geologist Mark Belden (in the background); and Ernie Birchfield, husband of Librarian Susan Birchfield. Also in the background, right: Brent Riley of the FA Division.



James Simpson came with his dad, Larry Simpson of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, who visits with Bob Fabian, OWRB hydrogeologist.



Mary Whitlow greets Gov. Keating, Todd Lamb of the Governor's staff, and Sen. Stratton Taylor, Senate President Pro Tempore.



Board Members Bill Secrest and Richard McDonald visit as Connie Ziegelgruber of Planning and Management looks on.



Mike Melton, assistant to the director, takes retired OWRB Division Chief J.A. Wood on a tour of the new facility.



Executive Director Gary Sherrer welcomes Board Member Jack Givens and wife, Helen Jane of Mangum; and Board Member Ervin Mitchell of Balko.



Brenda Maxey of the Board's Financial Assistance Division invited husband Steve to the Open House.

# FAP NEWS

AN UPDATE OF THE OWRB  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM



A grant from the Board's Financial Assistance Program contributed to the funding of the sanitary sewer lift station at Burbank's new total retention lagoon wastewater treatment system.

## \$50 Million FAP Bond Issue Keeps Exceptional AA Rating

*Board develops innovative strategy to provide reserve fund without assistance of appropriation*

In another of its successful, first-in-the-nation feats, the OWRB Financial Assistance Division designed a sound plan to provide the necessary reserves for its October bond issue, independent of a legislative appropriation. Instead, the Board purchased a surety bond as additional collateral, and Standard & Poor's awarded the issue a AA rating. It was the masterstroke to a program that already had earned a solid reputation.

Joe Freeman, Financial Assistance Division chief, emphasizes that this is the first time Standard & Poor's has allowed a AA rating on an issue with surety bond collateral.

"Institutional investors have strong confidence in the Board's programs," said Freeman. "This confidence was reflected in full subscription of the bond issue by investors within an hour after trading began," he said.

This bond issue is the Board's seventh, and all have received the exceptional S&P rating. Proceeds from the bond sale support the Board's vital loan and emergency grant programs.

The Financial Assistance Program was established in 1982 by a series of laws and a \$25 million appropriation from the Oklahoma Legislature to the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund. The immensely successful program provides low-interest loans to qualified entities for the construction, renovation and repair of water and wastewater facilities.

Interest accumulated on the Revolving Fund enables the Water Board's grant program. Grants up to \$100,000 provide emergency assistance to cities, towns, rural water and sewer districts for the solution of critical water and sewer problems.

By mid-March, the Board had approved 163 loans totaling nearly \$200 million and 382 emergency grants totaling \$21 million.

A separate and equally successful initiative is the Wastewater Facility Construction Loan Fund, (SRF) created by the legislature in 1988 to replace diminished EPA funding. The fund is made up of state seed money enhanced by EPA capitalization grants to assist in the financing of sewage collection and treatment facilities. Since its creation, \$18.4 million in state matching funds and eight EPA capitalization grants for \$92.8 have enabled 38 SRF loans totaling \$147 million. □

The staff of the Financial Assistance Division take pride in customer service. They are, standing: Tiger Feng, engineer; Stan Halley, environmental specialist; Joe Freeman, chief; Reese Daugherty, engineering supervisor; Brent Riley, financial analyst; Marc Hullinger, engineer; Paul Hodge, assistant chief. Seated: Karen Yuan, engineer; Brenda Maxey, financial analyst supervisor; Laura Oak, financial analyst; Angela Roberson, financial analyst; Kelley Bailes, secretary. (not pictured, Shelley Bacon, administrative assistant.)





## Small Community Program "Second Chance"

The Water Resources Board has good news for Oklahomans who prefer small town living to a big city lifestyle. The good news is a loan program tailor-made for small communities, who previously may have had few financing options for constructing or upgrading wastewater collection and treatment systems.

The Board's Small Community SRF Program targets communities with populations less than 10,000 -- small systems for whom compliance with the Clean Water Act and state and federal mandates may be most difficult. It makes low-interest loans available from loan repayments and interest and investment earnings accumulated in the SRF account.

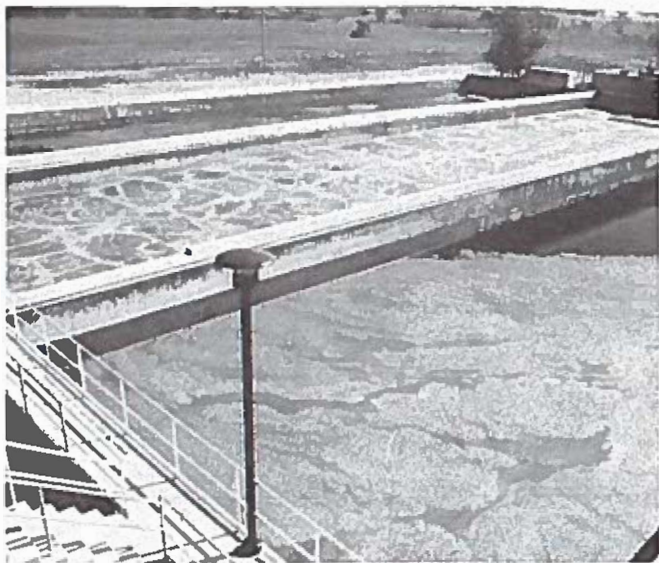
According to Paul Hodge who oversees the SRF Program of the Financial Assistance Division, small community loans enjoy fewer program requirements than larger cities whose loans are drawn from EPA capitalization grants and state matching funds. The interest rate for Small Community is sixty percent of the current fixed or variable market rate. On loans closed to date, that translates to interest rates of 2.934 percent to 3.263 percent.

Hodge noted that interest in the Small Community Loan Program has grown steadily, with nine such loans total-

ing \$9.1 million approved since 1995. Eight more Small Community loans are in the application process. □



The Town of Marshall received a \$25,000 grant from the Board's Financial Assistance Program in a ceremony at the Capitol on February 29. Present for the award were Satish Dasharathy, engineer; Rep. Sean Voskuhl, Marshall Mayor Dwayne Beeby holding the check, Sen. Ed Long and Brent Riley of the OWRB. The emergency grant assisted the town repair a collapsed interceptor and construct a new lift station at the sewage treatment plant. To date, the grant program has assisted 382 Oklahoma communities in repairing or replacing sewer and water facilities.



A loan from the Board's SRF Program enabled Bethany-Warr Acres to construct a new 3.75-mgd Bluff Creek regional wastewater treatment plant.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Approved at February and March 1996 Board Meetings

#### FAP Loans

February: 4.472% 28.5 year maximum term  
March: 3.772% 1995 Bonds; 29.5 year maximum term  
3.922% 1994; 28.5 year maximum term

None

#### FAP Grants

Town of Laverne	\$	30,000.00
Wellston PWA	\$	100,000.00
Town of Marshall	\$	25,000.00

#### SRF Loans

Fairfax PWA	\$	882,000.00
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#### TOTALS AS OF 3/26/96

	FAP Loans	FAP Grants	SRF Loans
<b>APPROVED</b>	163	382	38
<b>Amount</b>	\$204,445,000.00	\$21,336,077.00	\$147,433,834.23
<b>FUNDED</b>	157	352	35
<b>Amount</b>	\$195,355,000.00	\$19,200,839.41	\$141,204,834.23

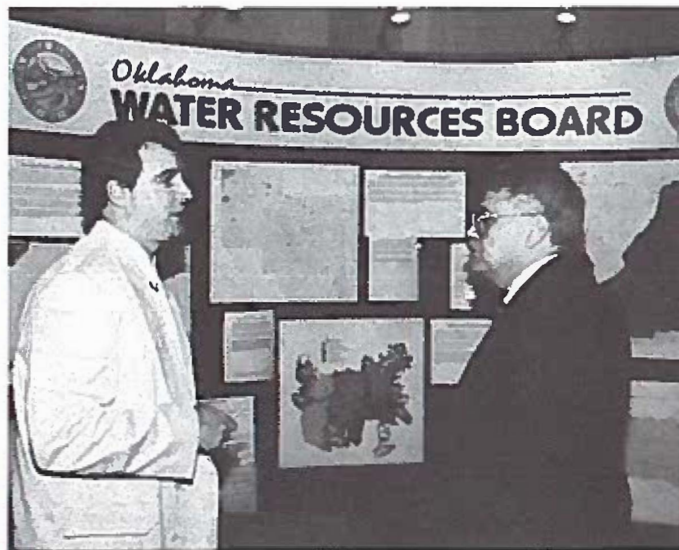
## At the March 19 Board Meeting:

Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division chief, was first to the podium to ask the Board's approval of Water Quality Standards Implementation Documents, required by EPA and Oklahoma Statutes. Smithee said the document will help all state permit writers by providing a sound, fair and consistent foundation upon which to build point source discharge permits. Smithee noted that Oklahoma industries had been very supportive.

Joe Freeman, Financial Assistance Division chief, asked and received approval for an emergency water improvement grant of \$100,000 to Wellston PWA. The Board approved an \$882,000 SRF loan to Fairfax PWA; and an additional project for loaned funds for Wayne PWA. Bill Secrest, Board member and Finance Committee member recommended and received approval for Boatmen's Bank to serve as trustee bank for the Board's bond issue to fund the state match for the State Revolving Fund Loan Program.

The Board approved 10 temporary permits for the use of groundwater and three regular permits and amendments to two regular permits for the use of groundwater. The Board approved three regular permits for the use of stream water. Planning and Management Division chief Mike Mathis asked and received Board approval for a \$30,000 loan under the Statewide Rural Energy and Water Conservation Program for Woods County Rural Water District #3. The loan will fund a water audit and leak detection survey and repairs. New D/PC operators licenses were approved for Roddy Qualls, Mark Lassiter, Randy K. Phillips, John W. McClure and Shawn D. Wood. Four licensed firms added operators/activities: Howard

Drilling Company, Kenny D. Skelton, operator; Venture Drilling, Inc., Jack Green and Larry G. Turner, operators; NESCO, Ike Ray, operator; and Thurman French, pump installer. □



Brad Nesom, OWRB senior drafting technician, explains map to Steve Woodall, director of research and analysis for the Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah. Nesom demonstrated the Board's Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities at the Annual GIS Day at the State Capitol on March 18. The OWRB was one of 23 exhibitors representing state, federal and private groups, as well as equipment vendors. The Water Board is employing GIS technology to map municipal and rural water systems in the state. Nesom said GIS, a combination of computer equipment, software and data that allows the analysis and display of land-based information, will save months, perhaps years, of data collection necessary in updating the Board's popular 1980 publication "Rural Water Systems in Oklahoma." The project will map facilities of more than 800 water systems serving cities, towns and rural areas.

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Oklahoma Water Resources Board  
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