

OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board



Duane A. Smith

*from
the desk
of the
Director*

I enjoyed the Governor's Water Conference on September 29 in Muskogee and the barge tour September 30 provided by the Tulsa District Corps of Engineers. The generous hospitality of the city and the assistance of the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce helped make the conference a huge success.

Now we launch a busy season that will include meetings to solicit suggestions for 1998 revisions to the Oklahoma Water Quality Standards. The first informal meeting was held at Water Board headquarters on October 5. Critical issues for consideration include tribal water quality standards, nutrient management, groundwater vulnerability and beneficial use assessment protocols. The second meeting will be held at Water Board offices on November 9.

Another important activity will be underway soon -- revision of the Board Rules and Regulations. We intend to bring these draft documents to public meetings throughout the state to seek input and comment from the water users we serve. See page 2 of this issue for news concerning meetings in your area.

At the October 13 meeting of the Board, members considered adoption of three emergency rules. One exempts small poultry producers typically operations using five acre-feet of water annually).

Another establishes a minimum setback of three miles for swine feeding operations from a permanent camp

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"Road Trip" to Muskogee Proves Successful for Water Conference

400 enjoy conference agenda of notable speakers, firsthand tour of the navigation system by barge

The downtown Muskogee Civic Center was the site of the successful Nineteenth Annual Governor's Water Conference on September 29.

The meeting opened mid-morning with a keynote by Dr. Joe Westphal, former OSU professor who is Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Col. Leonardo Flor, commander of the Tulsa District Corps of Engineers, updated conferees on projects underway in Oklahoma and this district.

Westphal pointed out that water touches the lives of all Oklahomans. "When a water user in Taft turns on the tap, he draws a glass of water that comes from Lake Fort Gibson, a Corps of Engineers lake. When a rural electric co-op member turns on the lights, she uses hydroelectric power generated at a Corps facility," he said. "A bass fisherman speeds his boat across a Corps lake."

Congress passed a budget that contains funding for civil works, including construction at Montgomery

Point Lock and Dam, safety improvements at Tenkiller Ferry Dam and flood protection improvements along Mingo Creek, near Tulsa, Westphal emphasized.

Tulsa District Corps Commander Leonardo Flor stated 23 million people visit Corps lakes in Oklahoma every year. He said the lakes provide 378 million gallons of water supply, generate \$50 million in hydropower and prevent an estimated \$122 million in flood damages.

State agency heads Duane Smith of the OWRB, Dennis Howard of the Department of Agriculture, Jon Craig of the Department of Environmental Quality and Mike Thralls of the Conservation Commission described environmental challenges in a discussion that rounded out the morning agenda.

In a luncheon address, Governor Frank Keating praised the courage of the Oklahoma Legislature in passing

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Conference, continued from page 1

strict measures to regulate the poultry and swine industries. He pointed out that Oklahomans must anticipate water quality problems before the environment is threatened.

The afternoon agenda included remarks by Attorney General Drew Edmondson; water quality initiatives outlined by EPA Regional Administrator Gregg Cooke, and a segment on Native American Issues led by Chris Kenney, Bureau of Reclamation Native American Coordinator, Cherokee Chief Joe Byrd and Chickasaw Governor Bill Anoatubby.

Drought was the topic discussed by Albert Ashwood, director of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, and Dr. Ken Crawford, director of the Climatological Survey. Crawford told conferees National Weather Service outlooks predict the

state will receive less than normal rainfall the balance of the year. He said the drought in southwest Oklahoma is as bad as during the Dust Bowl years in the 1930s. The state experienced its most severe droughts in 1896, 1910, 1936, the early 1950s and 1963.

Brian Griffin, Secretary of Environment, reported on programs in place, and Patsy Bragg, vice-chair of the Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority, described studies underway in Tulsa aimed at safeguarding the watersheds that produce the city's water supply.

On Wednesday, conferees rose before daylight to board the Corps of Engineers barge that transported them from the Port of Muskogee to Webbers Falls Lock & Dam 17, 30.5 miles down the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. □

Board Closes First Drinking Water Loan

On August 28, the Water Resources Board closed the first loan for improvements to a drinking water system. The program that enabled the Board's Financial Assistance Division to underwrite the \$5 million loan to the Cushing Municipal Authority is the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Program, a cooperative initiative with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

Joe Freeman, chief of the Board's Financial Assistance Division, explains that the first DWSRF loan approved by the Board was the \$4.17 million loan to Holdenville in June, but paperwork is pending, so Cushing's loan is the first to be completed.

Freeman said the Cushing DWSRF loan will refinance at a lower interest rate an earlier FAP loan and finance new construction to update the city's water supply. The city contributed \$2.3 million in local bond issue proceeds to get the renovation underway.

Eight new wells replace the water supply previously available from Cushing Lake, which will be drained and dredged. Water from the new wells will be transported to the treatment plant through a network of pipes ranging in diameter from six to 16 inches. A new water treatment plant designed to process 1.5 million to three million gallons a day, will replace the city's 75-year old facility. A new elevated water storage tank will improve the city's

fire protection capabilities and augment storage in other tanks.

Freeman pointed out that the DWSRF Program is partially enabled by \$3.5 million appropriated by the Oklahoma Legislature to match U.S. EPA grants for upgrading public water systems. The OWRB is "banker" for low-interest loans to communities targeted by DEQ as candidates for improved water treatment and distribution systems. Freeman said that the EPA grant and state matching funds may be used for a reserve, should the demand for loan funds make it necessary to issue revenue bonds to support the program.

The DEQ prioritizes projects and ensures that environmental and engineering standards are satisfied, then Board FAP staff review applications and disburse funds during construction.

Freeman said the 20-year loan to Cushing Municipal Authority carries a fixed interest rate of 3.313%, with repayment to begin at completion of construction.

In addition to this newest initiative, the OWRB Financial Assistance Division manages successful loan and grant programs for the construction and improvement of water and wastewater facilities and oversees the water/wastewater portion of the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grant program directed to small communities. □

Director, continued from page 1

or recreational camp operated by a non-profit organization.

The third establishes an emergency drought relief grant account.

Now that the emergency measures have been approved by the Board, they will be forwarded to Governor Keating for review and approval. With his approval they become effective. □

Public Meeting Dates Announced

Executive Director Duane A. Smith announced a series of public meetings on proposed Board rules will be held throughout the state, beginning in western areas in mid-November and culminating in Oklahoma City in January. Smith said the meetings provide citizens opportunity to comment on new rules proposed, as well as discuss changes to existing rules.

Meetings are scheduled at 7 p.m. at the following locations:

Guymon - November 17
Texas County Activity Center

Woodward - November 18
High Plains Vo-Tech

Idabel - December 3
Kiamichi Area Technology Center

Altus - December 10
Southwest Vo-Tech

Tulsa - December 17
State Offices Building

Oklahoma City - January 5
Board Room, Oklahoma Water Resources Board

The first draft will be distributed to Board members on January 12.

A public hearing will be held in Oklahoma City in the Board Room of OWRB offices, 3800 N. Classen on January 21 at 2 p.m.

Final approval of rules is expected at the February 9 Board meeting.

Smith also announced a schedule of meetings to gather input for Oklahoma Water Quality Standards.

Informal meetings are scheduled at OWRB Oklahoma City offices at 1:30 p.m. on November 9 and December 14. For more information, call Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief at 405-530-8800. □

A. Jan New of Oklahoma City picks up packet from Mary Brueggen.

B. Angela Thompson and Kent Wilkins assist with registration.

C. Keynoter Dr. Joe Westphal is interviewed by Marla Peek of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

D. A sandwich luncheon was served to conferees by Jasper's Restaurant of Muskogee.

E. Steve Taylor, Johnston's Port 33, visits with Col. Leonardo Flor and Glen Cheatham of the ABDA.

F. Jack Anderson of the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District and Derek Smithee, OWRB Water Quality Programs Chief talk about water issues.

G. The award-winning jazz band from the Parkview School entertained at lunch.

H. Remarks by Governor Frank Keating highlighted the luncheon program.

I. Gene Whatley and Terry Walker of the ORWA attended the conference.

J. Gary Sherrer, former Water Board director, visits with Mason Mungle of the Oklahoma Farmers Union.

K. Board Chairman Ross Kirtley welcomed conferees and thanked the City of Muskogee for hosting the conference.

L. Ken Morris of the OWRB visits with Andy Comer of the Corps of Engineers.

M. Board Executive Secretary Mary Schooley and Col. Leonardo Flor chat in the Registration Area.

N. Mike Melton talks to Sen. J. Berry Harrison and his wife, Jackie, as the barge travels down the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.

O. More than 400 people enjoyed the tour from the Port of Muskogee to Webbers Falls.

P. Julie Cunningham of the Water Quality Division explains programs of the Water Resources Board to a conference attendee.

Q. Duane Smith, OWRB executive director, outlines the issues facing the Water Resources Board.

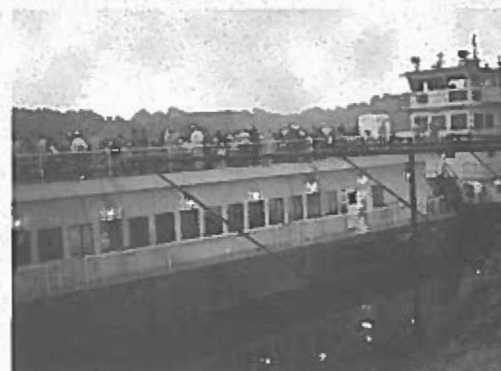
R. Janet and Grady Grandstaff and an unidentified passenger enjoy the early morning view from the barge.

S. The annual Corps of Engineers Navigation Tour began with boarding at 6:30 a.m. for departure at 7 a.m.

T. Mike Sughru of the OWRB Information Services Section demonstrates GIS application to Liz Hollingworth of Hilldale Public School.

U. Sen. J. Berry Harrison and Grady Grandstaff, OWRB member, chat before the meeting.

V. Board Members Ervin Mitchell and Lonnie Farmer visit with Keith McDonald.





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Secret, Portiss Honored as Water Pioneers

At the September 29 Governor's Water Conference in Muskogee, Robert W. "Bob" Portiss, Port Director of the Tulsa Port of Catoosa and rural water activist Bill Secret of Broken Arrow were honored as Oklahoma Water Pioneers. The awards were presented by Governor Frank Keating, Water Resources Board Chairman Ross Kirtley and OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith. The two recipients of the 1998 award were recognized for their exemplary efforts on behalf of the state's water resources.

Portiss has served the port as manager of traffic and sales, director of marketing and transportation and deputy

Portiss' leadership, the port has grown to include 53 businesses shipping products throughout the world.

Secret serves on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board and is a founding member and board member of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association. He also serves on the National Rural Water Association Board. Secret served as Broken Arrow city manager, founded Wagoner County Rural Water District #5 and managed Wagoner RWD #4 for 20 years, until his retirement last year. He was honored as ORWA Manager of the Year in 1996 and ORWA Man of the Year in 1994.

Water Pioneer Awards were presented at the luncheon attended by more than 400 people at the Nineteenth Annual Governor's Water Conference in Muskogee's Civic Center. According to Duane Smith, executive Director of the Water Resources Board, this is only the second time in the 19-year history of the conference that it has been held outside Oklahoma City.

Honorees receive a framed award and their names are added to a bronze plaque displayed at the conference. The Water Pioneer Award was added to conference activities in 1985 to honor Oklahomans who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation, protection and development of the state's water resources. □



Governor Keating presents Water Pioneer Awards to Bill Secret, top photo, and Bob Portiss, lower photo.

port director before assuming the title of Port Director in 1984. He has served as first vice president of the Arkansas Basin Development Association, a 5-state water resources organization and just completed two terms as chairman of the National Waterways Conference. Under



Laura Oak of the Board's Financial Assistance Division rakes the soft bed of sand placed to cushion falls in the playground area.



Cecil Bearden steers a front loader in moving sand to the sand box. The Bobcat skid-steer loader was loaned without charge by A&B Rent-All and the sand was contributed by Dolese.

OWRB-ers Volunteer in 1998 Day of Caring

On September 11, 18 volunteers from the Water Resources Board returned to the Celebrations Preschool at 431 S.W. 11th to work in the United Way "Day of Caring." The volunteers arrived early, armed with buckets, brushes, paint, rakes, shovels, sand and a Bobcat skid-steer loader to spend half-day to touch up improvements they made on their first visit in 1995. Celebrations is a bilingual preschool assisted by United Way Funding. The effort was coordinated by Shelly Bacon and Laura Oak of the OWRB. □

Suzanne Dudding of the Board's Water Quality Programs Division and Jennifer Halstead of Financial Assistance freshen a bookcase with a new coat of paint.



At the October Board Meeting:

Two groups representing Sardis Lake water users attended the October 13 Board meeting to ask for resolution of some issues delaying their use of water from the lake. Ownership issues, the state's debt to the Corps of Engineers, proposed sale of the lake's water and a pair of lawsuits have stalled actual use of the water. Executive Director Duane Smith told the water users he believes an agreement reserving some of the Sardis water for use by area residents can be reached soon.

On unrelated issues, Board members approved three emergency rules that need only Governor Keating's signature within 45 days to become effective. One expands the definition of "domestic use" in Board rules, broadening to include use of up to five acre-feet of water by a landowner for agriculture purposes and fire protection.

Smith asked the Board to consider the passage of a rule requiring a 3-mile setback of swine operations from recreational camps operated by a nonprofit organizations and occupied at least six months of the year as a requirement for granting a groundwater permit. In response to discussion by the Board, staff will request an Attorney General's opinion on the definition of "nonprofit organization."

The third emergency rule approved by the Board establishes a drought relief account to assist counties, municipalities, rural water districts and other entities in supplying drinking water in periods of drought. Among eligible projects would be extension of water supply intake structures, acquiring tanks, tankers, temporary lines, pumps and other equipment necessary to acquire or transport water. It also allows grants for agricultural supply and fire protection.

Smith pointed out that citizens will have an opportunity to comment on these emergency rules as well as other rules proposed by the OWRB in a series of six meetings and hearings throughout the state in the coming months. He encouraged Oklahomans with an interest in water issues to watch their local newspapers for notices of meetings. □

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Approved at Aug., Sept., Oct. 1998 Board Meetings

FAP Loans

1997 Bonds; 29-year maximum term - Variable Rate

Enid Municipal Authority	\$ 5,720,000.00
Wagoner Co. RWD #8	\$ 280,000.00
Tulsa MUA	\$ 10,115,000.00

CWSRF Loans

Enid Municipal Authority	\$ 3,280,000.00
Warner UA	\$ 177,016.00
Tulsa MUA	\$ 17,035,000.70

DWSRF Loans

Cushing MA	\$ 6,500,000.00
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Emergency Grants

McCurtain Co. RWD #1	\$ 50,000.00
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REAP Grants

Green Valley RWD #4	\$ 127,394.97
Seiling PWA	\$ 58,458.00
Eldorado PWA	\$ 80,913.16
Southgate RSD #1	\$ 90,000.00
City of Carter	\$ 77,850.00
Devol PWA	\$ 83,310.55
Dewey Co. RWD #1	\$ 95,760.00
Kingfisher Co. RWD #4	\$ 134,500.00
Lenapah PWA	\$ 32,052.00
Grove School District #D-27	\$ 50,000.00
Devol PWA	\$ 99,900.00
Marland PWA	\$ 106,322.00
Delaware Co. RW,S,G&SWMD #6	\$ 21,200.00

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