

# OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

*Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board*



*from  
the desk  
of the  
Director*

**Duane A. Smith**

In mid-November, the Water Resources Board held the most successful Governor's Water Conference in the 20-year history of the event. Attendance was approximately 425 and, for the first time, included officials and legislators representing 53 communities that will be awarded Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grants in FY 2000. The conference welcomed citizens from all parts of Oklahoma, representatives of state and federal agencies and many others to a program of exceptional speakers and topics. The Water Board is fortunate to have loyal and active sponsors, as well as a staff that takes pride in producing a memorable conference.

As I write this, we are completing a series of public meetings throughout the state to collect public opinion concerning proposed rules and regulations. It was a pleasure to visit with interested folks and friends in Altus, Guymon, Woodward, Tulsa and McAlester.

We have been working hard to prepare a legislative agenda setting out priorities and identifying issues the Water Board believes important to be addressed in the upcoming session of the Oklahoma Legislature.

It is, indeed, a busy time of year.

But year's end also presents us an opportunity to reflect on a blessed year. On behalf of the Board, OWRB staff and myself, I send warmest wishes for a happy holiday season.



## *Conference Projects Millennium Water Supplies, Quality Issues*

***Keynoter downplays agriculture's role in pollution; declares EPA standards arbitrary, unattainable***

The Environmental Protection Agency oversteps its authority in regulating agricultural runoff, Carolyn Richardson, California Farm Bureau Federation attorney, told 425 attendees of the Governor's Water Conference November 17. She said the EPA is engaging in a regulatory experiment that could destroy the agricultural economy. "The standard for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) – the amount of nonpoint source pollutants in water – makes

***Keynoter Carolyn Richardson, California Farm Bureau Federation, is interviewed by reporters following her address concerning regulation of nonpoint sources.***



compliance impossible.” Nonpoint source pollutants include sediment in rain runoff from fields. Richardson said the states normally set TMDL levels, but the EPA has forced states to allow the federal government to set the standards instead.

“The EPA claims 70 percent of surface pollution can be traced to agriculture, but the record needs to be set straight,” Richardson said. “A more accurate figure is, at most, 4.6 percent and the pollutant is soil from erosion. Agricultural officials have worked for 60 years to successfully reduce the problem.” She pointed out that the Journal of Science recently published a study that examined 140 years of data on California watersheds. The study found that soil erosion and related pollution peaked in the 1920s. By the 1970s, erosion was only at six percent of the 1920s peak and it has remained at that level ever since. Richardson sees voluntary efforts as the means to achieve the results, instead of switching to a costly, heavy-handed regulatory regime to fight pollution.

Federal law deals only with point source pollution, she noted. The government has spent \$100 billion over 27 years and has successfully controlled it. Now, EPA wants to combat non-point sources with arbitrary regulations instead of money, claiming authority through the federal Clean Water Act. Richardson pointed out.

Sharing the conference keynote slot was Gregg Cooke, EPA Region 6 administrator. He stated his agency is attempting to make application of water quality standards consistent from state to state. He said each state has interpreted federal mandates differently, leading to vast inconsistencies in the way water pollution problems are solved.

Mid-morning panels examined issues facing state and federal organizations in the 21st century. Then Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner Carroll Fisher sketched the Commission’s support for cloud seeding as means to replace damaging hail with beneficial rainfall. OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith briefed the conference on initiatives to promote economic development and enhance water supplies in southeastern Oklahoma’s Kiamichi River Basin.

The luncheon program included an address by Larry Watkins,

general manager of the Electric Cooperatives of Oklahoma, who compared boundary disputes between rural water districts and municipal suppliers with problems experienced in supplying power to outlying areas.

Water Pioneer Awards recognized three Oklahomans outstanding in their efforts in developing, protecting and conserving the state’s

waters. They were Sidney D. Williams, Stillwater attorney instrumental in the development of rural water legislation; the late Jimmie Pigg, Moore teacher and environmentalist; and the late James Eddie Phillips, Faxon soil conservationist and university professor.



*OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith, Water Pioneer Sid Williams, Anna Belle Williams, wife; Marilyn Wilson, daughter; Jennifer Edwards, granddaughter; Anna Maria Johnson, daughter*



*Col. Michael Phillips, son; Polly Belle Krasser, daughter, and Mrs. James Eddie Phillips accept award honoring the late James Eddie Phillips from OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith.*



*Robert Gibbs receives award on behalf of his friend, the late Jimmie Pigg.*

*Some of the speakers, guests and workers at the 20th Annual Governor's Water Conference.*



*Harvey Thomason, Altus-Lugert Irrigation District; Sen. Robert M. Kerr; Donna Kirby, Altus-Lugert Irrigation District; Rep. David Braddock*



*Gregg Cooke, EPA Region 6 Administrator, Marla Peek and Sam Knipp, Oklahoma Farm Bureau*



*Insurance Commissioner Carroll Fisher*



*Gerald Borelli, Kingfisher; Nat Alea Hile, OWRB; Carolyn Schultz, OFMA*



*Ron Jarman, Environmental Federation of Oklahoma; Jon Craig, Department of Environmental Quality, Bill Howard, School Land Commission*



*Mary Nell Brueggen, Latricia Durham, Wilma Beagle, OWRB, assist registrant.*



*Dr. Joe Taron, Pottawatomie County Development Authority; Julie Cunningham, Oklahoma Clean Lakes Association*



*Derek Smithee, OWRB; Gil Luton, Environmental Federation of Oklahoma, Duane Smith, OWRB*



*Ronn Cupp, State Chamber of Commerce; Dean Couch, Mary Schooley, OWRB*

For the first time, the announcement of all Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grants for FY 2000 was included as part of the agenda. Changes to the REAP program in the last legislative session allowed for setting the closing date for grant applications to September 1, enabling the announcement of 53 REAP grants totaling \$4.4 million. (See page 6.)



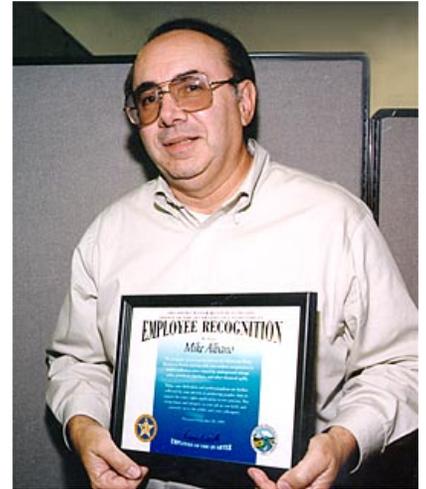
## *Albano Employee of the Quarter*

Mike Albano was named Employee of the Quarter by his co-workers and friends at the OWRB. He was presented with a plaque and other rewards at a staff meeting held September 29 and honored again at the October meeting of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

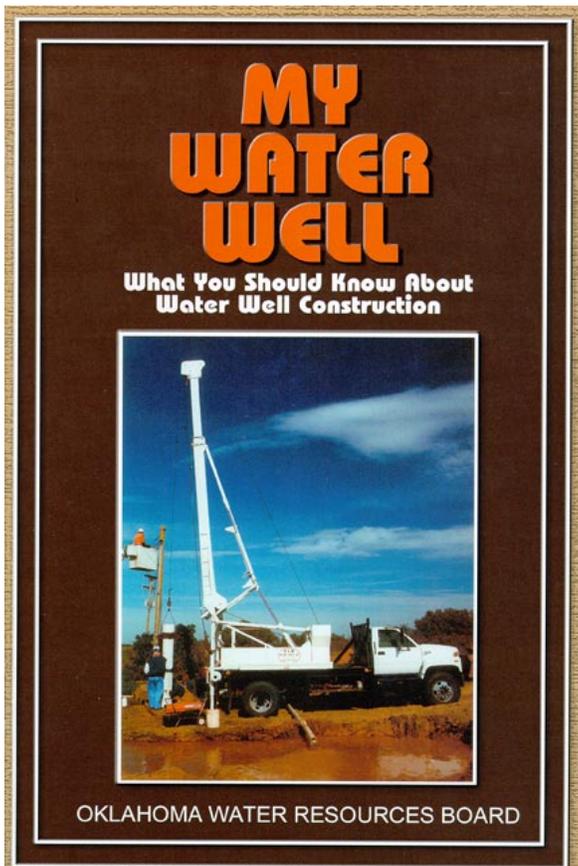
Executive Director Duane Smith praised Albano's skills in dealing with customers of the Board fairly and in a forthright manner. He noted that Albano has continually upgraded his computer skills in the area of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to utilize the technology in making himself more useful and efficient in his position in the Permitting Section of the Planning and Management Division.

Albano holds bachelor's and master's degrees in geology from Oklahoma University.

"His quiet and knowledgeable way of doing his job assures customers they are dealing with a professional who will interpret water law in a most equitable fashion," Smith said.



## *New Water Well Book Available*



Gary Glover, coordinator of the OWRB Driller/Pump Contractor Program, announces a new publication offered free to Oklahoma water users. The publication, *My Water Well: What You Should Know About Water Well Construction*, explains the state's program for water well drillers and pump contractors, what landowners should know before constructing a well, how to protect the well from contamination and offers many other helpful tips.

For a free copy, write the OWRB at 3800 N. Classen, OKC 73118, or call 405-530-8800.

# THE FLOOD CURRENT

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1999

## *OFMA Celebrates Legislation, Certification in 1999*

*Notes from the desk of Ken Morris, CFM, Oklahoma NFIP Coordinator*

What an eventful year for floodplain management in Oklahoma! The Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association (OFMA) extends special thanks to Charles Don Ellison, Harold L. Springer and Carol Williams for realizing early on the importance of such an organization.

Although Oklahoma did not experience any devastating flood disasters in 1999, floods at Blackwell and Miami inflicted significant damage in November, 1998. In Blackwell, 365 homes were damaged by floodwaters and Miami suffered many losses. OFMA worked hard to set in place a mechanism to buy out homes with histories of repetitive flood damage. House Bill 1841, authored by Sen. Kevin Easley, Sen. Sam Helton and Rep. Larry Rice, created a landmark flood mitigation program.

OFMA will be challenged in 2000 to obtain legislative approval for long-term funding to support this important initiative.

The Ninth Annual OFMA Training Conference at Lake Murray Lodge attracted 85 people, including Region VI Director Buddy Young, who made opening remarks, and Larry Larson, executive director of ASFPM, Inc. At the conclusion of the conference, OWRB hosted an 8-hour floodplain management workshop, replacing the workshop canceled by the May 3 tornados.

Of the 32 who attended the workshop, seven had been pre-approved to take the OFMA Certified Floodplain Manager exam. Congratulations are in order for Nancy Wade, Bartlesville; Robert Tortorelli, Oklahoma City; Floyd Hansen, Woodward, Stephen Seikel, McLoud; Terry Thurman, Del City; Jim Leach, Tulsa; and James Roberts, Stilwell, who passed the exam.

OFMA is grateful to the Board of Directors who appointed a Professional Development Certification



*Midwest City Engineer Stuart Chai was recognized as Oklahoma Floodplain Manager of the Year and received the award from Ken Morris.*



*Paul Zachary, former OFMA chair, presents speaker gift golf shirt to FEMA Representative Lonnie Ward at the Lake Murray conference.*

Committee to pursue attaining certification for Oklahoma's program. Members of the committee are Eric Wiles, Joe Remondini, Ron Flanagan, Cliff Pitner, Carolyn Schultz, Nancy Kennedy and Ken Morris. For many months, the PDCC worked closely with the ASFPM in revising and strengthening the program and won certification by the national organization.

As a result, Oklahoma floodplain managers will have an opportunity to be Certified Floodplain Managers and write the CFM designation after their names.

All materials for the program are available on the OFMA website: [www.sirinet.net/ofma](http://www.sirinet.net/ofma) and may be downloaded with Adobe Acrobat.

Applicants must submit a completed application and \$25 fee to OFMA, P.O. Box 8108, Tulsa, OK 74101-8101. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, two years experience in floodplain management and membership in OFMA.

The PDCC will review all applications and notify applicants concerning testing. The next opportunity to take the exam will be January 14 at the University of Oklahoma Adult Education Center at the conclusion of the 5-day NFIP workshop. For more information, call the OWRB at 405-530-8800 soon.



***Past PDCC members Cliff Pitner, Vice-Chair Joe Remondini, Ron Flanagan, Nancy Kennedy, Chairman Ken Morris, Carolyn Schultz, and Secretary Eric Wiles.***

## ***OFMA Program Nationally Accredited***

*(Article reprinted from the ASFPM, Inc., News and Views, October 1999.)*

The Oklahoma Certified Floodplain Managers Program has become the first state program in the nation to obtain accreditation from the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc. In early September, the ASFPM Certification Board of Regents (CBOR) approved the Oklahoma program, under provisions of the Charter of the Certified Floodplain Manager Program of ASFPM.

The Charter provides that the certification programs of states may, upon meeting certain criteria and receiving the Certification Board's approval, add the designation ASFPM-accredited to their certification.

Oklahoma's program was developed by the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association, which is a chapter of the ASFPM.

In its letter granting accreditation, the CBOR noted that the Oklahoma program will be an effective tool for ensuring that floodplain managers in the state obtain and maintain the skills and training to properly administer programs aimed at reducing flood losses. And because it is the first state to receive accreditation, the materials and procedures that Oklahoma has developed can become a model for other chapters to use in developing their programs.

Oklahoma's certification requires application and fees, continuing education, and adherence to a professional code of conduct. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of floodplain management by passing a written exam. Oklahoma's exam covers elevation certificates, mapping, insurance, wetlands, natural and beneficial values and state-specific components.

As the Oklahoma group moves to implement its program, it will continue to coordinate with the ASFPM executive office.

The ASFPM congratulates the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association and applauds the opportunity this presents for floodplain managers in Oklahoma to receive the recognition they deserve.

## ***11 Communities Honored for Flood Safety Efforts***

In mid-September, 11 Oklahoma communities were honored by state officials for their flood control efforts resulting in lower flood insurance premiums for local residents. State Insurance Commissioner Carroll Fisher and officials of the OWRB and the Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management presented the awards at the State Capitol.

The communities honored are Bartlesville, Blackwell, Broken Arrow, Chickasha, Dewey, Edmond, Enid, Lawton, Sand Springs, Stillwater and Tulsa. The communities have exceeded minimum guidelines of the National Flood Insurance Program, (NFIP) through participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) and, as a result, residents are able to purchase flood insurance at reduced premiums.

Discounts are five percent for residents of Bartlesville, Broken Arrow, Chickasha, Dewey, Edmond, Enid and Stillwater; 10 percent for Blackwell, Lawton and Sand Springs; 25 percent for Tulsa.

Fisher pointed out that Tulsa stands as a strong leader for flood control in the United States.



***Representatives of the state's 11 model cities for flood control efforts received awards from Insurance Commissioner Carroll Fisher in ceremonies in the Blue Room at the Capitol on September 17.***



## ***Board Announces Award of 53 REAP Grants at Conference***

For the first time in the 20-year history of the Governor's Water Conference, announcement of \$4.4 million in Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grants for FY 2000 was a feature of the luncheon agenda. Changes to the REAP program in the last legislative session allowed for setting the closing date for grant applications to September 1, enabling the single announcement ceremony. Under previous rules, the Board's Financial Assistance Division continually accepted, prioritized and funded applications as money became available. Communities that had ranked high and waited a year or more could be bumped by a new application that ranked as little as one point higher in the priority system.

*For a list of communities approved for grants - see next page*

***The 53 communities approved for REAP grants were:***

Garvin Public Works Authority .....	\$ 99,999	Gould Public Works Authority .....	\$ 79,700
Bokoshe Public Works Authority .....	\$124,332	Canadian Co. Rural Water, S&SWMD #1 .....	\$ 99,945
Pushmataha Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$ 99,900	City of Coyle .....	\$ 98,448
Red Rock Public Works Authority .....	\$116,651	City of Marshall .....	\$ 92,965
Town of Nash .....	\$139,990	Grady Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$ 58,100
Garfield Co. Rural Water District #7 .....	\$ 38,000	Ringling Municipal Authority .....	\$ 79,000
Town of Covington .....	\$ 39,903	Geronimo Rural Water Assoc .....	\$ 86,352
Garber Public Works Authority .....	\$ 79,550	Wayne Public Works Authority .....	\$ 87,120
Jet Utilities Authority .....	\$ 99,900	Tillman Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$105,375
Woodward Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$119,825	Ryan Utilities Authority .....	\$100,000
Woods County Rural Water District #3 .....	\$ 99,330	City of Yale .....	\$ 50,000
Texas Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$ 99,999	Hughes Co. Rural Water District #3 .....	\$ 99,300
Goodwell Public Works Authority .....	\$ 73,300	Seminole Co. Rural Water District #2 .....	\$ 99,900
Shattuck Municipal Authority .....	\$ 99,969	Wanette Public Works Authority .....	\$ 51,500
Dewey Co. Rural Water District #2 .....	\$119,500	Davenport Utilities Authority .....	\$ 99,900
Bryan Co. Rural Water, S&SWMD #6 .....	\$119,000	Vian Public Works Authority .....	\$ 59,500
Town of Lehigh .....	\$ 85,920	Watts Public Works Authority .....	\$ 99,800
Town of Ravia .....	\$ 99,000	Sequoyah Co. RW,S,GSWMD #8 .....	\$138,500
Paoli Municipal Authority .....	\$ 78,000	Hulbert Public Works Authority .....	\$ 79,350
Love Co. Rural Water District #1 .....	\$ 80,850	Cherokee Rural Water District #13 .....	\$ 80,000
Town of Kingston .....	\$ 59,400	Kansas Public Works Authority .....	\$109,500
Bokchito Public Utilities Authority .....	\$ 27,500	Rogers Co. RWD #9 .....	\$ 98,000
Dill City Public Works Authority .....	\$149,215	Inola Public Works Authority .....	\$ 67,874
Beckham Co. Rural Water District #3 .....	\$ 44,970	Depew Public Works Authority .....	\$ 79,000
Beckham Co. Rural Water District #2 .....	\$115,000	Wynona Public Works Authority .....	\$ 99,900
Frontier Development Authority .....	\$ 20,218	Depew Public Works Authority .....	\$ 38,000
Lone Wolf Public Works Authority .....	\$ 14,550	Osage Co. RW,S&SWMD #3 .....	\$ 27,640

