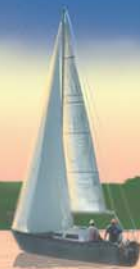


OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board



September-October 2006

Don't Miss the Kick Off!

This special edition of the Oklahoma Water News serves to get the word out about this year's Governor's Water Conference, which will officially "kick off" the Water Plan study recently funded by the State Legislature.

At the Conference, an impressive line-up of expert speakers will provide candid insight on many water planning issues. Most importantly, we've assembled a strong cast of key players to assist us in laying the foundation for much-needed system-level infrastructure improvements to ensure Oklahoma's future prosperity.

Please join us in downtown Oklahoma City on November 13-14 for a lively discussion of how Oklahoma plans to meet its future water needs.



Duane Smith
Executive Director
OWRB

Annual Water Conference To Focus on Water Plan

The 27th Annual Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference, "Oklahoma's Water Plan: Charting a Course for Sustainable Growth," will be held at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City on November 13-14, 2006. Registration will begin at 1:00 p.m. on November 13 (Monday) and 8:00 a.m. on November 14 (Tuesday).

Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director, and Oklahoma State Representative Guy Liebmann will welcome guests and speakers to a symposium on Water Planning on Monday afternoon, which will begin with a look at the successes of comprehensive water planning in Texas, featuring Bill Mullican, Deputy Executive Administrator of the Office of Planning at the Texas Water Development Board. Two panels will then offer insights: the first on Oklahoma's water planning process, including organization and management of the study, and the second on water user concerns, including municipal, agricultural, industrial, and soil conservation interests. Other state and national experts will also discuss Oklahoma's water planning process and success stories.

On November 14, with OWRB Chairman Rudy Herrmann as host, a full complement of state, federal, and local experts will address water planning as well as other current water issues of importance to the state and nation, such as drought, water quality, and water policy. The morning session will culminate with an update by Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmonson on Oklahoma's current legal issues concerning water.

The Conference luncheon will feature presentation of Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards for 2006. This year's recipients will include the late W. C. Austin and former Water Board Chairman Ervin Mitchell. A state and federal legislative update will follow, and the Conference will adjourn at 2:30.

To register for the Conference, call 405-530-8800 or fill out and mail the registration form on page two. Registration costs \$75 and includes the half-day Planning Symposium and evening reception on November 13, and the traditional Water Conference program and luncheon on November 14.

A New Water Plan for Oklahoma

Oklahoma's new water plan represents a crucial shift in the state's historical approach to water planning. For the first time, planners will focus on development of system-level projects to provide the most water to the most Oklahomans. Updated assessments of current water supply and long-term water needs will be used to identify those water management strategies--including development of additional water supplies, regionalization of facilities, infrastructure upgrades, and water management options--to meet the future needs of Oklahoma citizens, even during drought conditions. In addition, Oklahoma citizens will team with the state's foremost water experts to develop forward-thinking policy recommendations for consideration by the State Legislature.

Water Planning Symposium--November 13, 2006

- 1:00 Registration
- 1:30 Welcome and Overview
Duane A. Smith, Executive Director, OWRB
Rep. Guy Liebmann, Oklahoma State Legislature
- 1:50 Comprehensive Water Planning in Texas
Bill Mullican, Deputy Executive Administrator
Office of Planning, Texas Water Dev. Board
- 2:10 Panel--Oklahoma's Water Planning Process
OCWP Study Organization and Management
Duane Smith, OWRB
Stakeholder Involvement and Participation
Dr. Will Focht, Director
Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute
Planning for Environmental Protection
Steve Thompson, Executive Director
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Water Infrastructure Inventory
Trish Weedn, Executive Director
Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils
Federal Planning Assistance
Sue Haslett, Planning & Environmental Div. Chief
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District
- 3:25 Break
- 3:40 Partnerships in Regional Water Planning
Mike Irlbeck, Supervisory Program Coordinator
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, OK-TX Area Office
- 3:55 Future Water Policy Considerations
Rudy Herrmann, OWRB Chairman
- 4:10 Banking on Bristow's Water Future
Kell Kelly, President, SpiritBank
- 4:25 Panel--Incorporating Water User Concerns
Municipal Interests
Danny George, Executive Director
Oklahoma Municipal League
Agricultural Interests
Terry Peach, Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture
Industrial/Navigation Interests
Ronn Cupp, Senior Vice President
Government Affairs, The State Chamber
Soil & Watershed Conservation Interests
Clay Pope, Executive Director
Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts
- 5:25 Summary & Adjournment to Reception

November 14, 2006

- 8:00 Registration
- 8:30 Welcome and Introductions
Rudy Herrmann, OWRB Chairman
- 8:45 Water Needs & Strategies for a Sustainable Future
Shaun McGrath, Water Policy Program Manager
Western Governors' Association
- 9:15 The Oklahoma Drought
Ken Crawford, Director
Oklahoma Climatological Survey
- 9:35 Coffee Break/Exhibits
- 10:00 Update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan
Duane Smith, OWRB
- 10:20 State of the State's Environment
Miles Tolbert, Oklahoma Secretary of Environment
- 10:40 Legal Considerations in Oklahoma Water Planning
Gary D. Allison, Professor of Law
University of Tulsa
- 11:00 Oklahoma's Future: Strategies for Our 2nd Century
Larry Rice, Executive Assistant to the President
University of Tulsa
- 11:20 Oklahoma Legal Briefs
Attorney General Drew Edmondson
- Noon Luncheon Program
Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards
Water Outlook from Washington D.C.
Michele Nellenbach
Senior Professional Staff Member, U.S. Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
State Legislative Water Perspective
Rep. Lance Cargill, House Speaker Designate
Rep. Don Armes
Sen. Charlie Laster
- 2:30 Adjournment

27th Annual Governor's Water Conference

REGISTRATION FORM

Please mail form to

Governor's Water Conference
3800 N. Classen Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Please enclose \$75 check, money order, or purchase order payable to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. No refunds after November 1.

For more information, contact the OWRB at (405) 530-8800 or go to www.owrb.state.ok.us.

Check all that apply*:

- I will attend the symposium on Nov. 13, 2006.
- I will attend the reception on Nov. 13, 2006
- I will attend the conference & luncheon on Nov. 14, 2006.

*One price (\$75) includes any or all of the above.

Name: _____

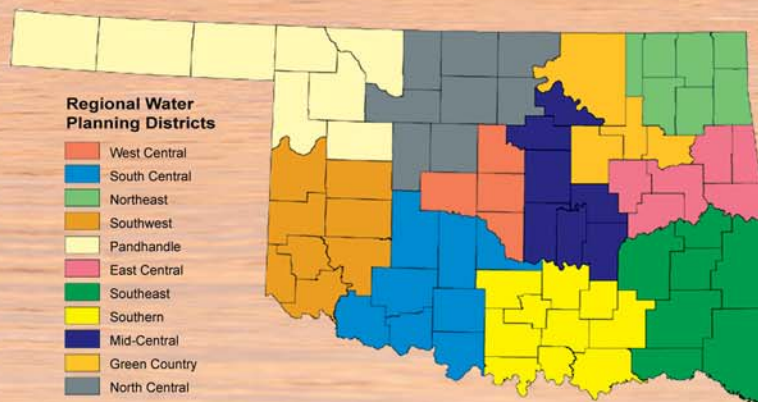
Occupation: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone (____) _____

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT Oklahoma's WATER PLAN



Q: How will the new water plan differ from previous plans?

A: *The new Oklahoma water plan represents a crucial shift in the state's traditional approach to water planning and policy development. This more ambitious water planning initiative will also center on grass-roots implementation of water projects, including a detailed appraisal of virtually every public water supply system in the state. With this information, planners can develop regional and system-level plans that provide economical, long-term water service to the largest customer base possible. The initial phase of the water plan is anticipated for completion in 2011.*

Q: Will the plan advocate construction of large reservoir projects?

A: *While the overriding goal of the water plan will be to assess Oklahoma's overall water and related infrastructure needs, the primary focus will be on gauging the ability of existing water supply systems to serve their current and future customers. In this regard, development of potential water supply projects, including reservoir construction, will be weighed first against local needs, water management options (including regionalization of facilities and infrastructure upgrades), economic feasibility, local support and financing ability, and impacts to the environment and recreation interests.*

Q: Will the public have an opportunity to provide input into the planning process?

A: *Input from the public and various stakeholders who comprise Oklahoma's water user community will be crucial to successful implementation of the state's new water plan and the shaping of feasible water policy for consideration by the State Legislature and Governor. Throughout the five-year planning period, an extensive public participation program will be implemented to make the planning process as transparent and open as possible, thus leading to a final product that truly reflects the views and opinions of Oklahoma citizens.*

Q: How do planners project future water use?

A: *Estimating future water requirements, while necessary in planning for future water needs, is an inexact and difficult procedure. To minimize uncertainty and maximize accuracy, planners and their forecasting models typically utilize a 50-year planning horizon—the maximum reliable timeframe—that takes into account current trends of population growth and water use as well as factors such as income, housing and employment.*

To assess the ultimate water requirements of each county and region, estimates of available water supply will be compared to projections of future use. Planners will use methodologies that assume somewhat liberal, yet realistic, scenarios of projected water use to identify areas of the state that will likely have either a surplus or deficit of supply.

Q: Why does Oklahoma need an updated water plan?

A: *The existing Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, while a valuable planning and policy tool, does not address the many new water challenges facing the state. Increases in population and water usage, more competition for finite water supplies, changing values related to recreational and environmental water needs, aging water and sewer system infrastructure, and continued threats from drought and flood events require Oklahoma to revisit its long-range water strategy. While the OWRB prepares to fulfill its statutory mandate to update the 1997 OCWP, the agency is also embarking upon a more challenging strategy to ensure that all Oklahomans have access to a safe and secure source of water.*

Pandhandle Regional Water Planning District: Beaver, Cimarron, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Texas, Woods, and Woodward counties.

Southwest Regional Water Planning District: Beckham, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, and Washita counties.

North Central Regional Water Planning District: Alfalfa, Blaine, Garfield, Grant, Kay, Kingfisher, Major, and Noble counties.

West Central Regional Water Planning District: Canadian, Cleveland, Logan, and Oklahoma counties.

South Central Regional Water Planning District: Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Jefferson, McClain, Stephens, and Tillman counties.

Green Country Regional Water Planning District: Creek, Osage, Tulsa, and Wagoner counties.

Mid-Central Regional Water Planning District: Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Pawnee, Payne, Pottawatomie, and Seminole counties.

Southern Regional Water Planning District: Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Johnston, Love, Marshall, Murray, and Pontotoc counties.

Northeast Regional Water Planning District: Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Nowata, Ottawa, Rogers, and Washington counties.

East Central Regional Water Planning District: Adair, Cherokee, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, and Sequoyah counties.

Southeast Regional Water Planning District: Choctaw, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha counties.

Financial Assistance Program Update

Loans/Grants Approved as of October 10, 2006

FAP Loans—318 totaling \$619,350,000

The OWRB's Financial Assistance Program (FAP), created by the State Legislature in 1979, provides loans for water and wastewater system improvements in Oklahoma. The tremendous popularity of the bond loan program is due, in part, to extended payoff periods of up to 30 years at extremely competitive interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

CWSRF Loans—177 totaling \$624,916,622

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program was created in 1988 to provide a renewable financing source for communities to draw upon for their wastewater infrastructure needs. The CWSRF program is Oklahoma's largest self-supporting wastewater financing effort, providing low-interest loans to communities in need.

DWSRF Loans—65 totaling \$299,406,372

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan program is an initiative of the OWRB and Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality to assist municipalities and rural water districts in the construction and improvement of drinking water systems. These projects are often mandated for communities to obtain compliance with increasingly stringent federal standards related to the treatment of drinking water.

REAP Grants—455 totaling \$39,823,839

The Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) Program was created by the State Legislature in 1996. REAP grants, used for water/wastewater system improvements, target primarily rural communities with populations of 7,000 or less, but priority is afforded to those with fewer than 1,750 inhabitants.

Emergency Grants—528 totaling \$30,964,692

Emergency grants, limited to \$100,000, are awarded to correct situations constituting a threat to life, health, or property and are an indispensable component of the agency's financial assistance strategy.

Total Loans/Grants—1,543 totaling \$1,614,461,525

Estimated Savings—\$503,993,753

Applicants eligible for water/wastewater project financial assistance vary according to the specific program's purpose and requirements, but include towns and other municipalities with proper legal authority, various districts established under Title 82 of Oklahoma Statutes (rural water, master/water conservancy, rural sewage, and irrigation districts), counties, public works authorities, and/or school districts. Applications for agency financial assistance programs are evaluated individually by agency staff. Those meeting specific program requirements are recommended by staff for approval at monthly meetings of the nine-member Water Board.

More information about the OWRB's Financial Assistance Program can be obtained by calling the OWRB at (405)530-8800.

Rudy Herrmann, *Chairman*; Mark Nichols, *Vice Chairman*; Bill Secret, *Secretary*

F. Ford Drummond, Lonnie L. Farmer, Ed Fite, Jack Keeley, Kenneth K. Knowles, Richard C. Sevenoaks

Brian Vance, *Writer/Editor* • Darla Whitley, *Writer/Layout* • Barry Fogerty, *Photography*

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