Summer is upon us again, but the outlook is quite different from last year! Instead of drought conditions, we are currently experiencing flooding problems. Several areas of the state, including Ottawa, Washington, Comanche, and Bryan Counties, have experienced severe flooding. A positive aspect of the rainfall is that many of the state’s groundwater basins are receiving some much needed recharge.

The Oklahoma Ground Water Association (OGWA) provided continuing education classes this summer for all well drillers and pump installers. I would like to thank the OGWA for their efforts to present both educational and informative sessions that were well received by the licensed operators.

Renewal period ended June 30, 2007, for the odd numbered licensed firms. A grace period is extended until July 31, 2007, but after that, firms will not be renewed. Any firm attempting to renew after the grace period will have to reapply and retest, so please renew on time to prevent the assessment of a late fee or requirement of retesting.

The well drillers and pump installers advisory council will begin proposing rules in August, so if you have any comments or suggestions, please let me know. And as always, if you have any questions regarding new rules or current rules, please give me a call at (405) 530-8800 or visit our website at www.owrb.ok.gov.

OGWA Presents Continuing Education Classes

The Oklahoma Ground Water Association presented five continuing education courses for licensed operators during the month of June. Classes were held in Woodward, Lawton, Tulsa, McAlester, and Oklahoma City. Attendees were able to obtain either four or five hours of classroom credit depending on the specific class attended.

Instructors included Francis Weedon from Frontier Logging Services, Keith Hall from Franklin Motors, Brad Amen from Pumps of Oklahoma, Lyndon Pence from Baroid Industrial Services, John L’Espoir from Enid Drill Systems, Cheryl Cohenour from Cherokee America Drilling, and Kent Wilkins from the OWRB. Presentations included information regarding electric well log interpretation, constant pressure pumping systems, drill rig safety, construction standards, and drilling fluids.

If an attendee would like a certificate or if you have any questions or comments, please contact Beth Vannoy, OGWA Executive Secretary at 888-884-6492 or www.ogwa.biz. Also, if you have any suggestions on future educational topics, the OGWA will work hard to present the information beneficial to the drillers and installers in the state of Oklahoma.
OCWP Local Meetings Give Voice to Public

In April, the first of 42 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP) local input meetings took place in Beaver, facilitated by the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute (OWRRI), with 14 additional meetings held throughout April, May, and June in Goodwell, Woodward, Alva, Sayre, Lawton, Hobart, Weatherford, Altus, Tonkawa, Chickasha, Duncan, Enid, El Reno, and Kingfisher. The meetings, which have been well-attended in every city, will continue through the end of the year, providing citizens across the state with the opportunity to identify issues they believe should be considered in the OCWP update. As was envisioned, citizens are utilizing this forum to voice concerns about existing and potential water problems and contribute possible solutions. Already, the comments of these citizens have helped state water planners better understand what issues are important to the public.

Citizens have raised a variety of issues, some general and others specific to their respective regions. Some of the more common topics for western Oklahomans have included water conservation and education, support for building more reservoirs and flood control structures, and sediment removal from existing structures to increase storage. Current water law and the protection of water rights have frequently been the focus of discussion as citizens consider whether or not Oklahoma's groundwater and surface water laws require review.

Comments can be made in person at the meetings or online at www.okwaterplan.info, where the OWRRI has provided reports from each meeting and a searchable database of all the issues that have been raised. The Web site also includes information on meeting dates and locations.

After the local meetings are completed, there will be a series of regional meetings to provide area citizens the opportunity to consolidate and prioritize the comments in each region. For more information, contact the OWRRI at (405) 744-9994 or by e-mail at waterplan@okstate.edu. Information packets, comment cards, and nomination forms are also available at Oklahoma County Extension Offices.