

# OKLAHOMA

## water news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA  
WATER RESOURCES BOARD

Gerald E. Borelli, Chairman

Earl Walker • L.L. Males • John B. Jarboe • James H. Norick • R.G. Johnson • Ralph G. McPherson • Boyd Steveson • Ernest R. Tucker

## Budget Cuts to Water Programs Underline Need for State Funds

The budget cuts proposed by President Reagan will reduce funds for water resource projects nationwide by 15 percent. Many of them will impact Oklahoma as early as October 1, the beginning of federal FY 82.

These cuts indicate a trend toward more state assistance for water projects. During a recent press conference, James Watt, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, said "creative and innovative" financing mechanisms would have to be formulated, with the states assuming more of the costs of water development.

Watt said he would ask state legislatures and governors to "help establish new financing mechanisms and set priorities for new starts and accelerated construction."

While large water projects now under construction in Oklahoma have fared well under the budget axe, the small communities will feel the blows most sharply.

Dismantling the Economic Development Administration will automatically abolish the Ozarks Regional Commission. ORC, made up of Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, is one of eight such organizations established in 1967 to stimulate economic development by providing direct grants.

Oklahoma communities served by ORC would have received almost \$2 million in FY 82 to improve or expand their water supply systems. Federal budget experts contend the regional commissions duplicate the work done by states and municipalities.

The Farmers Home Administration water and waste disposal program for Oklahoma will be cut 26.5 percent, the state receiving only \$11.3 million of the proposed \$14.3 million. Currently FmHA has 10 times as many Oklahoma loan applications as it has money to fill, so FY 82 cuts can be expected to further strain Oklahoma communities dependent on FmHA for funding.

Other prospective victims of the budget slashes are the Water Resources Council and the Office of Water Research and Technology. Present duties of these federal agencies are proposed for transfer to a new Office of National Water Policy in the Department of the Interior, and to the Water and Power Resources Service.

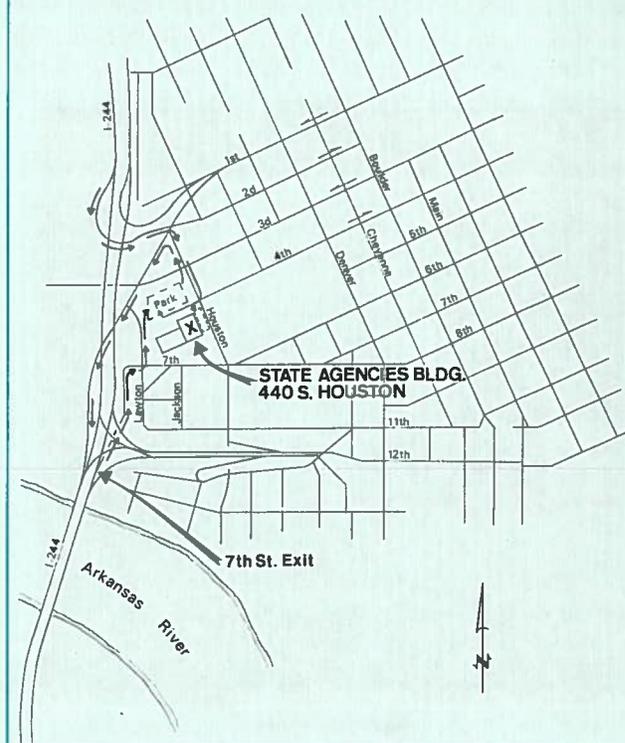
Oklahoma Water Resources Board will feel the effects of the Reagan cuts during the current fiscal year with a 50 percent reduction in money available for Title III programs. Original Carter appropriations of \$156,200 are targeted for reduction to \$78,100 jeopardizing the status of at least six programs and the shared funding of "Oklahoma Water News." In addition, the Board has assumed zero funding for Title III programs in FY 82.

*Continued on page 2*

### Here's Where to Find OWRB in Tulsa

Interest in OWRB's branch office opened in Tulsa March 1 prompts "Oklahoma Water News" to print this map. The office is on the street level of the State Agencies Building, and parking is available in the visitors' lot or in spaces designated "A" in large painted letters. (Others may be ticketed by police.)

Phone number is (918) 581-2924. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Fourth in a Series of Nine

## East-West Water Rivalry Could Brake State's Progress

James H. Norick is the newest member of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, appointed to the position by Gov. George Nigh in July 1980. With a background in city government, Norick brings to the municipal seat on the Board a solid appreciation of water.

A strong advocate of implementing a statewide water plan, Norick says, "water conveyance is an extensive project and an expensive one, but it has to be done." While it's possible the rivalry will continue between water-rich eastern Oklahoma and the thirsty west, he hopes that competition for water will cease.

"A lot of people feel the water is theirs since it comes from Mother Nature, but it's not — it belongs to all of us. Oklahomans must keep that in mind. My biggest hope concerning the state's water issues is that the water tug-of-war will be put on the back burner while all our citizens work together," he said.

He concedes that the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan's cost — over \$7.8 billion in 1978 dollars — is very expensive. "But the water situation is like your home," he theorizes. "If you let it go without improvement, someday it will be gone. The same is true of our farms out west. If they don't get water, they will disappear."

Oklahomans and all Americans must "bite the bullet" says Norick of the budget cuts proposed by President Reagan. "The cuts will affect everyone, but if they eventually help straighten out the economy, a delay in water projects won't be so severe."

As a member of the City Council of Oklahoma City from 1952-1955, Norick encouraged construction of the Lake Atoka project to transport water to Oklahoma City. After being elected mayor in 1959, Norick took part in

the dedication of Atoka Dam. He served another 4-year term as mayor beginning in 1967.

He believes Oklahoma City has been farsighted in developing water to supply its needs. "Oklahoma City has been fortunate. However, population and industry are increasing, and the City will need to continue its progressive water development."

Currently chairman of the board of Norick Brothers, Inc., Norick has been involved in the printing industry since he joined the family firm in 1935. When not at his desk at the firm or golfing, fishing or hunting, he serves on the board and the Industrial Development Committee of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, and on the boards of Central National Bank and the Better Business Bureau.

*Budget Cuts, continued from page 1*

A study has already been scratched from federal spending which would have provided Arkansas and Oklahoma \$1 million to identify pollution in the Arkansas River and prescribe corrective measures.

With shrinking federal resources, the state's financial assistance program under the auspices of OWRB takes on even greater significance. It allows the Board to issue investment certificates in the form of revenue bonds and to establish a water resources fund from the bond proceeds. Up to \$1.5 million can be loaned to a city, town, county, rural water district or other qualified entity to develop and expand local water supplies and facilities.

Senate Bill 220 currently under consideration would expand the program by creating a reserve fund, the interest upon which would provide grant money to be administered by OWRB for assisting communities obtain adequate water supplies.

Concerning federal projects, Secretary Watt has declared a moratorium on new Water and Power Resources Service construction. This will not affect the \$29.1 million FY 82 appropriation for the McGee Creek water supply project presently under construction and scheduled for completion in 1985. Reagan budget paring does, however, defer \$35 million from WPRS construction projects for FY 82.

The Tulsa District Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports the \$21.3 million Arcadia Lake budget for FY 82 has been left intact, but proposed cuts in FY 84 and FY 85 will be substantial — almost \$4.7 million. Completion of Arcadia construction originally set for 1986, is reset for 1987.

Skiatook Dam budget would be reduced \$1.2 million in FY 82, delaying fencing and development of recreation areas. The FY 83 budget for Skiatook is considered secure, but cuts of \$3.5 million are expected in FY 84 and FY 85, with a \$1.8 million increase projected for FY 86.

Nationwide, budget cuts will reduce the Corps water project funds by \$176.8 million.

Relatively unscathed by the budget axe are Soil Conservation Service planning projects in the state, sliced just \$2 million off the \$10 million allowed by the Carter budget. Nationwide, SCS construction projects under PL

STAFF PHOTO BY GARY GLOVER



James H. Norick

566 received only a \$9 million reduction from Carter's \$142 million.

SCS officials confirm that Oklahoma is in better shape than most states, with funding sustained for all three projects begun in FY 81. Of five new starts nationwide last year, Oklahoma has three of them, Arkansas one, and Kansas one. Although studies and clearing activities will continue on more than 30 SCS sites in the state, the decreased funding will severely limit any new starts.

Also felled by the Administration's budget axe were the Council on Environmental Quality, reduced in size by two-thirds, and assorted EPA water quality programs.

The Council on Environmental Quality was originally established as an independent advisory body to the president on environmental issues. The Administration recently released all 45 members of the CEQ professional staff and replaced them with three appointees who will select their own staff to fill the 13 positions left intact.

Proposed revisions in EPA programs would rescind \$600 million in FY 80 and \$1 billion in FY 81 funds for the construction of sewage treatment facilities. The nature of the construction grants program causes projects to span several years, so states seldom expend within any fiscal year all the funds allocated. Recalling and redistributing among the states those unobligated funds would underwrite FY 82 programs at much lower levels. Enactment of certain proposed reforms would appear to increase the states' responsibility for funding and to focus construction grants toward larger cities.

Other Reagan recommendations would reduce Section 106 water pollution control funds and abolish FY 82 funds for Section 208 water quality planning and Section 314 Clean Lakes programs. Funding at much lower levels for 208 and 314 programs is proposed to be provided from reduced 106 monies, thus severely limiting the water quality activities of all three programs.

Along with these cuts, the Administration proposes a 50 percent reduction (to approximately \$600,000) in Section 404 funds for dredge and fill activities.



### Tulsa Considers Land-for-Dam Swap

The Tulsa Urban Renewal Authority is considering the sale of 37 to 45 acres of land along the Arkansas River to Lincoln Property Company, an apartment development firm. Approximately 27 to 35 acres on the west bank north of 11th street and 10.5 acres on the east bank at 61st street were originally set aside for Tulsa River Parks area.

If the transaction is completed, city officials would use the \$3 million to \$4 million proceeds of the sale to pay half the costs of a low-water dam to impound a recreational lake. Water quality of the proposed 254-acre lake would probably limit its recreational use to

#### ACTIVE CONSERVATION STORAGE IN SELECTED OKLAHOMA LAKES AND RESERVOIRS AS OF MARCH 17, 1981

| PLANNING REGION<br>LAKE/RESERVOIR | CONSERVATION<br>STORAGE (AF) | PERCENT OF<br>CAPACITY  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>SOUTHEAST</b>                  |                              |                         |
| Atoka                             | 71,100                       | 57.6                    |
| Broken Bow                        | 891,938                      | 97.2                    |
| Pine Creek                        | 77,700                       | 100.0                   |
| Hugo                              | 156,605                      | 99.4                    |
| <b>CENTRAL</b>                    |                              |                         |
| Thunderbird                       | 84,251                       | 79.5                    |
| Hefner                            | 57,900                       | 76.8                    |
| Overholser                        | 15,169                       | 100.0                   |
| Draper                            | 73,000                       | 73.0                    |
| <b>SOUTH CENTRAL</b>              |                              |                         |
| Arbuckle                          | 55,423                       | 88.6                    |
| Texoma                            | 2,546,664                    | 96.5                    |
| Waurika                           | 115,721                      | 57.0 <sup>1</sup>       |
| <b>SOUTHWEST</b>                  |                              |                         |
| Altus                             | 28,382                       | 21.4                    |
| Fort Cobb                         | 63,388                       | 80.8                    |
| Foss                              | 140,510                      | 57.6 <sup>2</sup>       |
| Tom Steed                         | 65,631                       | 73.8                    |
| <b>EAST CENTRAL</b>               |                              |                         |
| Eufaula                           | 1,857,900                    | 79.7                    |
| Tenkiller                         | 550,850                      | 86.4                    |
| Wister                            | 27,100                       | 100.0                   |
| <b>NORTHEAST</b>                  |                              |                         |
| Eucha                             | 23,870                       | 30.0                    |
| Grand                             | 1,163,500                    | 78.0                    |
| Oologah                           | 452,440                      | 83.1                    |
| Hulah                             | 17,180                       | 56.2                    |
| Fort Gibson                       | 347,200                      | 95.1                    |
| Heyburn                           | 4,400                        | 66.6                    |
| Birch                             | 15,875                       | 82.7                    |
| Hudson                            | 200,300                      | 100.0                   |
| Spavinaw                          | 25,500                       | 85.0                    |
| <b>NORTH CENTRAL</b>              |                              |                         |
| Kaw                               | 398,000                      | 92.9                    |
| Keystone                          | 567,580                      | 92.1                    |
| <b>NORTHWEST</b>                  |                              |                         |
| Canton                            | 66,300                       | 57.2                    |
| Optima                            | 4,215                        | — <sup>1</sup>          |
| Fort Supply                       | 13,900                       | 100.0                   |
| Great Salt Plains                 | 31,400                       | 100.0                   |
| <b>STATE TOTALS</b>               | <b>10,206,677</b>            | <b>85.1<sup>1</sup></b> |

1. In initial filling stage.
2. Temporarily lowered for maintenance.
3. Lake Optima storage excluded from state total.

Data courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Water and Power Resources Service, Oklahoma City Water Resources Dept., City of Tulsa Water Superintendent's Office.

boating. River Parks Authority plans had earlier included location of a museum, amphitheater, planetarium, shops and an American Indian Heritage Center on the site where 850 to 950 apartments would be clustered.

Total cost of the dam is estimated at \$8.2 million, the balance of which city officials expect to solicit from private sources.

### Corps and Osages Continue Negotiations

A mid-March pow-wow in Washington between representatives of the Corps of Engineers, the Osage Tribal Council and Oklahoma's congressional delegation

*Continued on page 4*

Mainstream, continued from page 3

failed to resolve the issue of mineral rights at northeastern Oklahoma's Skiatook Lake site.

Col. James J. Harmon, Tulsa District Engineer, had earlier announced that work on the half-finished dam would be suspended in June if agreement on mineral values is not reached by then. Sylvester Tinker, chief of the Osages, had asked \$100,000 for mineral rights the Indians had previously claimed are worth \$1 billion.

Corps consultants estimated the value of oil and gas under the site at \$9.4 million. The Osages declare that the 20,000 acres acquired by the Corps have produced 33 million barrels of oil by primary production methods and should produce much more under secondary and tertiary recovery methods.

Both sides agreed to negotiate further. The Corps has promised another evaluation of mineral rights, along with an explanation of their methodology. If the Osages are satisfied that the revised Corps figure is in the ballpark, earnest bargaining toward a fair settlement could begin.

### Coal Ash May Threaten Ground Waters

A study recently completed at the University of Kansas suggests that the burning of more coal could increase pollution in the nation's ground water supplies. KU geology professor Ernest Angino, who researched the effects of coal ash on runoff, points out that "coal is nature's junk basket, possessing virtually every toxic element which threatens our environment. Burning 4,000 tons of coal can yield up to 1,000 tons of ash which could present a potential health hazard when water runs

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through the ash, leaching off the toxic elements and subsequently contaminating the ground water."

Acceptable disposal methods appear so costly that finding a practical use for the ashes may provide the only reasonable alternative, the report concludes.

### Acid Rain Costs U.S. \$5 Billion a Year

Scientists and economists reporting to two Senate committees estimated annual losses to acid rain at \$5 billion, noting that losses include damage to forests, crops, aquatic ecosystems and water supplies. Oxidants produced by the combustion of fossil fuels are blamed for the "death" of thousands of lakes in Wisconsin, Minnesota and the northeast.

The hearing was held to gather information for use in formulating possible amendments to the Clean Air Act and for coal conversion legislation.

### MARCH CROP AND WEATHER SUMMARY

Wheat and other small grains are making excellent progress and are rated in good condition in all areas except the Panhandle, where condition is fair. Twenty percent of the wheat is reported in the jointing stage compared to 15 percent last year. Some wind damage was reported in the Panhandle.

Topsoil moisture conditions are adequate except in central areas, and improving surface moisture supplies have encouraged tillage and seedbed preparation. Planting intentions for peanuts in Hughes and adjoining counties are decreasing due to low irrigation pond levels.

Hay and alfalfa are making excellent progress. Pastures and ranges continue to improve and cattle are in good condition.

Precipitation during the week ending March 23 averaged four-tenths inch in the east and less than one-tenth inch in central and western sections. Temperatures were near normal statewide.

Oklahoma Crop and Livestock Reporting Service

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