

OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board

SEE IMPORTANT NOTICE INSIDE CONCERNING PUBLIC HEARINGS IN OCTOBER



*from
the desk
of the
Director...*

As I write this, I am preparing to attend the 35th annual meeting of the Interstate Council on Water Policy in Philadelphia September 6-9. I have been an active member of ICWP since I became OWRB executive director in 1991. It has been my pleasure to take a leadership role in this important policy-defining organization, and on September 8, it will be my privilege to be confirmed as its Chair.

The Interstate Council on Water Policy represents state, interstate, intrastate and regional water agencies, academic institutions, professional and business firms and individuals committed to the conservation, use, development and wise management of water. Since its founding in 1959, ICWP has been the national voice of water interests concerning quality and quantity issues.

It is a prominent forum in which I believe Oklahoma's concerns deserve to be heard. Throughout my membership, I have been excited and educated by the nationwide exchange of ideas and the networking with other water professionals.

In addition to promoting our states' interests, the ICWP membership is charged with recommending to the United States Congress sound national water policy. ICWP actively advanced the National Water Resources Plan-

Continued on page 3

Circle November 2 on the Calendar...

Come to the Governor's Water Conference

The Water Resources Board and 25 other sponsors announce the Fifteenth Annual Governor's Water Conference will be held on Wednesday, November 2, at the Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City.

The Conference theme, "Planning Today for a Secure Tomorrow," will emphasize the importance of water and environmental planning. Oklahoma Senator Gene Stipe will open the Conference with an address entitled, "Water Resources: Strategies to Carry us Forward."

Local, regional and national authorities will speak on floodplain management, the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, agribusiness and environmental concerns, Indian water rights, wetlands banking, multipurpose use and interstate concerns in the Neosho River Basin

and other timely water topics.

The Oklahoma Congressional delegation has been invited to update conferees on pending water and environmental legislation and impacts on water planning and management issues. Governor David Walters and gubernatorial candidates are invited.

According to a long tradition, the Conference will present Water Pioneer Awards to a few citizens who have made significant contributions to the development, conservation and preservation of Oklahoma's water resources.

Registration costs \$30 and includes lunch. For more information, please call (405) 231-2576. To register in advance, please complete the registration form below. Or you may FAX registrations to (405) 231-2600.

Governor's Water Conference
P. O. Box 150
Oklahoa City, OK 73101-0150

Please make \$30 check or purchase order payable to GOVERNOR'S WATER CONFERENCE. No refunds considered after October 26.
Registration includes luncheon.

Name _____

Representing _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

TENTATIVE MAXIMUM ANNUAL YIELD

Antlers Sandstone Groundwater Basin North Canadian River Alluvium and Terrace Groundwater Basins

Pursuant to Oklahoma Statutes, public hearings on the maximum annual yield of fresh groundwater from the Antlers Sandstone Groundwater Basin and two reaches of the North Canadian River Alluvium and Terrace Groundwater Basin will be held by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board at the dates, locations and times listed below.

At each public hearing, the Board will present evidence of geological finding and determinations upon which the tentative maximum annual yield on the basins have been based. Any interested party may appear and present evidence or comments in response to, in support of, or in opposition to the Board's tentative findings. Appearances at the hearings may be in person and/or by legal counsel. Evidence may be presented orally or in writing.

Copies of materials relating to each of the maximum annual yield determinations are available for examination or inspection at the locations listed below and at the OWRB's main office, 600 N. Harvey, Oklahoma City, 73101-0150. If there are any questions concerning this matter, please contact the OWRB Water Management Division by letter at the above address or by telephone at (405) 231-2531.

ANTLERS SANDSTONE GROUNDWATER BASIN

October 12, 1994, 9:00 a.m.

Public Service of Oklahoma
Conference Room
100 E. Main Street
Idabel, OK
(405) 286-3391

Copies of materials available for
examination at Idabel Public Li-
brary.

October 12, 1994, 2:00 p.m.

Choctaw County Library
Heritage Room
208 E. Jefferson
Hugo, OK
(405) 326-5591

Copies of materials available for
examination at Choctaw County
Library.

October 13, 1994, 10:00 a.m.

Robert L. Williams Library
Utterback Room
323 W. Beech
Durant, OK
(405) 924-3486

Copies of materials available for
examination at Robert L. Williams
Library.

NORTH CANADIAN RIVER ALLUVIUM AND TERRACE GROUNDWATER BASINS

*Reach III-B (Portions of Seminole,
Okfuskee, Hughes, Okmulgee,
McIntosh Counties)*

October 4, 1994, 10 a.m.

Wetumka Public Library
202 N. Main
Wetumka, OK
(405) 452-5825

Copies of materials available for
examination at Wetumka Public
Library.

*Reach III-A (Portions of Pottawatomie
and Seminole Counties)*

October 4, 1994, 3:00 p.m.

Shawnee Public Library
Community Room B
101 N. Philadelphia
Shawnee, OK
(405) 275-6353

Copies of materials available for
examination at Shawnee Public
Library.



Water Law Conference Oct. 6-7

"Oklahoma Water Law," a comprehensive two-day conference on water rights and water quality issues will be held in Oklahoma City at the Century Center Hotel on October 6-7.

The meeting will feature addresses by Dean A. Couch, OWRB general counsel and Jerry Barnett, OWRB staff attorney. Couch will speak on interstate sale of water in "Sardis, a Case Study," and Barnett will address "Ethics in Oklahoma Water Law Practice."

The seminar is sponsored by Continuing Law Education International and is approved by the Oklahoma Bar Association for 15 hours CLE credit. Tuition costs \$395 per person. For further information, call CLE International at (303) 377-6600.

Meetings Set on Board Rules

Dean Couch, OWRB general counsel, announced meetings will be held in six cities around the state to solicit input from the public concerning the agency's Rules and Regulations. Citizens will have an opportunity to discuss their ideas with OWRB staff and ask questions concerning rules, water rights and other Board programs.

Couch pointed out that the Board's Rules and Regulations are reviewed and updated annually.

Meetings are scheduled in Lawton on September 22, Woodward on October 17, Guymon on October 18, Tulsa on October 27, Oklahoma City on November 7, and McAlester on November 15. All of the public meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m., but meeting sites have not yet been confirmed.

For further information on the public meetings or to offer comments, you are invited to call the Water Resources Board at (405) 231-2500.

Board Geologist Presents Paper

Noel Osborn, geologist in the OWRB Water Management Division, recently presented a paper at the Second Annual

International Symposium on Artificial Recharge of Groundwater in Orlando, Florida.

Osborn's paper, based on results of the Woodward Recharge Demonstration Project, was entitled "Artificial Recharge with a Subsurface Barrier Dam: Computer Simulations and Feasibility Study." The paper was presented as an exhibit at the meeting attended by 200 geologists, engineers, hydrologists and geochemists representing 23 countries.

Leak Detection Expanded

The Statewide Rural Energy and Water Conservation Program recently has been expanded to include the cost of repairs to leaking rural water systems in need of renovation. Previously, loans were available only for water audits and leak detection activities. Funds are made available by Gov. Walters from "oil overcharge" monies.

The cooperative effort of the Water Resources Board and the Oklahoma Rural Water Association makes no-interest loans up to \$30,000 available to entities who want to reduce leakage and power costs related to water delivery. It is estimated rural Oklahoma water systems lose millions of gallons of treated drinking water each year through line leaks and malfunctioning water meters.

Rural water districts, corporations, municipalities and public trusts who provide service to 10,000 or fewer water users are eligible to apply for loans under the new program. For more information, call the OWRB at (405) 231-2576 or the ORWA at (405) 672-8925

Staff Revises CPP Document

Shon Simpson, Water Quality Division chief, announced that staff recently made pivotal recommendations concerning implementation of Oklahoma Water Quality Standards in the state's Continuing Planning Process (CPP) document. The CPP is a document required by EPA which describes how water quality programs will be implemented in Oklahoma.

Simpson said restructuring of the state's environmental agencies necessitated

the revision. The primary focus of the CPP document is the process by which Standards will be implemented as limitations in wastewater discharge permits. Changes, additions and clarifications developed by OWRB staff include a requirement to measure background concentrations in determining if a permit is needed; a process for estimating mean annual flows on ungaged streams in calculating permit limits for human health criteria; a process for implementing acute and chronic toxicity testing; and specifics for implementing human health and aquatic life numerical criteria.

Fourth in a Series...

Meet the Water Resources Board

Working with Wagoner RWD #5 and today managing Wagoner RWD #4 (with 3800 meters, the state's second largest district) has given Bill Secrest exceptional insight into producing drinking water for the public. Add to that, a boyhood in the country five miles east of Coweta and 12 years



Bill Secrest

experience as city manager of Broken Arrow, and the sum in Secrest is a genuine expert on rural water.

Secrest has been a member of the OWRB since 1982, Board vice-chairman since 1988, member of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association Board since 1976 and represents Oklahoma on the Board of the National Rural Water Association. After observing the trends in rural water for 20 years, Secrest pinpoints costs as the major problem facing rural water managers. In his water district, sup-

Director, continued from page 1

plied by the Verdigris River, chemicals, labor and electricity contribute to an average cost of 54 cents per thousand gallons, but add the cost of debt service, and the final cost is over a dollar.

"Treatment costs are escalating like crazy, with all the new EPA regulations," he said. "Right now, we're required to test for 62 contaminants, and EPA is adding about 20 more to the list each year. We used to test for seven."

Secrest pointed out that lab charges and chemical costs drive up their costs. He agrees that systems need to test for 20 to 25 contaminants, but there are 20 or more contaminants on the EPA list that have never been found in Oklahoma. He holds hope for the Slattery-Bliley Bill now before the Congress that proposes more lenient testing for rare contaminants.

"If it costs us \$22,000 a year now to test for 60 contaminants, imagine the costs when the list grows to 90, as it will soon," he added.

"We're lucky to have such good water in Oklahoma." Secrest confirms that we've seen the last of cheap water. "In the past, most cities had their rates structured so the more water you used, the less you paid. No more. It's appropriate that the Board's Financial Assistance Program awards points to grant applicants who promote conservation by an increasing block rate structure."

He points out that the Financial Assistance Program has been one of the most successful initiatives. "I'm proud to be a part of it," he said. □

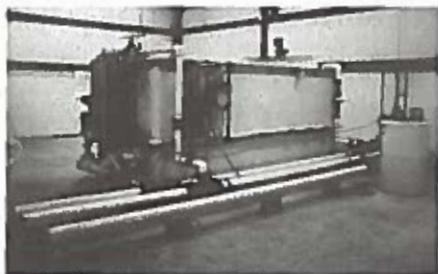
I am excited by the opportunity and humbled by the challenge of serving this prestigious organization as its chair. In every meeting, in every conversation, I promise to promote Oklahoma's mission and water interests. □

ning Act in the 1960's; the Water Resources Development Act of 1986; and in 1994 has proposed to the Clinton Administration an exciting new National Water Policy Project to reform the process and to develop a true state-federal policy model.

FAP is Unique in the Nation, A Made-in-Oklahoma Success

FAP NEWS

AN UPDATE ON THE OWRB FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Combined FAP loan and grant funds assisted in Red Oak's water treatment plant which is expected to meet the community's water demands for 25 years. Red Oak's project was enabled by a \$220,000 loan and a \$70,000 grant.

One of the most successful programs of the Water Resources Board is the loan and grant program administered by the Financial Assistance Division. The three-tiered program enables qualified entities to develop and improve water and wastewater facilities through low-interest loans, grants and State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans.

The program was established in 1982 by a series of laws and a \$25 million appropriation from the Oklahoma Legislature to the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund. Money for the loan facet of the program is generated by bond sale proceeds. So successful is the loan program that Standard and Poor's has consistently awarded OWRB bonds the exceptional AA credit rating.

Joe Freeman, FA division chief, points out that the program is unique in the nation and never has experienced a default by a borrower. Freeman said by mid-August, the Board had approved 147 loans totaling more than \$167.8 million.

A separate, yet similar, tier of the

Financial Assistance Program is the Statewide Revolving Fund (SRF) Program, which, with funds appropriate by the Legislature or provided through Board issued financing, and enhanced by federal money, replaced EPA's construction grants program. Its intent is to assist cities, towns, rural sewer districts and other qualified entities in replacing or renovating wastewater facilities. Often, the SRF Program is the only avenue open to smaller communities and rural sewer districts in achieving compliance with EPA wastewater treatment regulations.

Freeman said the SRF loan program has enabled 22 projects for more than \$117.9 million.

The third tier of the thriving program is the emergency grant initiative. Money for the grant program originates from interest earned on the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund and interest on OWRB bond issue reserves. The grant program has provided nearly \$20 million in critical assistance to 338 Oklahoma communities. (See related article on the Board's point system.) □

SRF Program Plans Public Meeting

Paul Hodge, who oversees the Board's SRF Loan Program, announces a Public Meeting on September 20 to receive comments on the Preliminary FY 95 Intended Use Plan and Priority List. The meeting will be held in Room 112 of the Water Resources Board, 600 North Harvey in Oklahoma City at 1:30 p.m.

The 1987 amendments to the federal Clean Water Act provided for the states to establish a State Revolving Fund (SRF) to make loans to eligible entities for the construction of sewage treatment facilities. The OWRB administers the SRF program and conducts project reviews for selecting entities to be considered for loans. The program replaced the EPA Construction Grants Program with federal funding authorized by the Clean Water Act. Federal funds provide 83.33%, and state matching funds appropriated by the Oklahoma Legislature provide 16.67% of the total available for wastewater projects.

Hodge said uncommitted prior year federal and state funds, FY 95 federal and state funds, investment income and repayments of principal and interest totaling approximately \$43.27 million are expected to be available for wastewater loans. Cities, towns, entities authorized by the State of Oklahoma, rural sewer districts and political subdivisions may submit applications. Priority points are awarded for readiness of the project to proceed, water quality and public health considerations.

For more information on the Intended Use Plan, Priority List or the September 20 Public Meeting, call Paul Hodge at the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, (405) 231-2621.



A \$605,000 FAP loan assisted Choctaw Utility Authority in raising the existing standpipe 28 feet to provide additional water for firefighting and increase water pressure in part of the distribution system.

Here's How We Award Priority Points

If you wonder why one community awarded a grant from the Water Resources Board and another applicant isn't, it's probably a question of priority points. According to Joe Freeman, Chief, the Financial Assistance Division receives many more requests for grants than the program has money to fund. Freeman says there are now 150 applications on file requesting \$5.2 million. And although the emergency grant fund is bolstered regularly with interest earnings on the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund and interest on bond issue reserves, available funds fall far short of meeting the needs. In order to fairly evaluate the merit of each applicant, staff developed a system for awarding priority points. Once the eligibility of the applicant is established and the likelihood of other financing alternatives weighed, AP staff assess each application for "emergency" -- defined as a life, health or property-threatening.

Freeman says the FAP staff consider...

FAP grant funds for other communities. High indebtedness receives high points.



Joe Freeman

- ❖ **Nature of the emergency** (up to 50 points). Total loss of water supply or sewage system or loss of a major component of a system by a natural or unforeseen disaster (tornado, fire, flood etc.) earns maximum points. A 10-point emergency (contaminated water supply, raw sewage spill, etc.) presents an imminent health hazard.

- ❖ **Current sewer and water rates** (13 points). High bills get higher points. Rate structure should be sufficient to provide routine operation and maintenance costs and reserve funds for emergencies. Rate structures are important. A flat rate or decreasing rate that discourages conservation receives few points; an increasing block rate, more points. An applicant earns points if it has dedicated a sales tax to water/sewer improvements.

- ❖ **Monthly debt payment** (10 points); Indebtedness per customer is determined by taking the applicant's monthly requirements for debt service and dividing it by the number of customers served by the system. Low indebtedness indicates the community could afford loan assistance instead of a grant, freeing up more

- ❖ **Local contribution** (10 points). Local participation with cash, easements, or in-kind contributions earns points. In order to assist more communities from available funds, the Board encourages applicants to provide maximum possible support.

- ❖ **Median household income** (10 points). In areas with low median household incomes, there is little opportunity to raise water/sewer rates. High points are awarded to communities with low median household incomes; a single point for incomes up to \$27,999.

- ❖ **Ability to finance the project** (12 points). An important factor is the ability of the applicant to finance the project without grant assistance. A formula estimates the amount water/sewer rates would have to be raised to finance the project through a loan. High points are allowed applicants that would have to increase rates significantly.

- ❖ **Amount of grant requested** (10 points) - To ensure fair and equitable distribution of limited grant funds, the Board encourages applicants to request the smallest grant possible. Applicants for \$25,000 or less are awarded high points; requests for \$95,000 to \$100,000 forfeit five points.

Freeman emphasized that a score of 60 of the possible 120 makes an applicant eligible for the Priority List, but those which gain funding traditionally score higher than 70.

For more information on the Board's Financial Assistance Program, call the Water Resources Board at 231-2621.



Enid City Manager Jim Ferree, Rep. Sean Voskuhl, Enid resident David Buller, Sen. Ed Long and Mrs. David Buller attended the August 9 Board meeting in Oklahoma City to encourage approval of Enid's grant request. Grant will replace contaminated wells and leaking septic systems and connect the area to the Enid water/sewer system

At the August 9 Board Meeting in Oklahoma City:

Executive Director Patty Eaton said the OWRB has received notification of approval from the Environmental Protection Agency for the \$9.6 million grant for the SRF Program.

She announced also that Board members Bill Secrest and Lonnie Farmer have been approved by the House of Representatives to serve on the Joint Committee on Financing Environmental Infrastructure for Economic Development.

Eaton said the agency had been commended by the Office of Personnel Management for being one of the few state agencies in full compliance with OPM rules concerning mandatory supervisor training. She also noted staff had been recognized by the United Way for 100 percent participation and for being among the top givers.

The OWRB is seeking ways to get more input from the public into the rule-making process, so informal public meetings have been scheduled in cities around the state.

The Board approved grants to the Barnsdall PWA, Town of Brooksville, Stevens County RWD #1, and Enid Municipal Authority.

The Board approved loans to the Weleetka PWA and Longtown RWSD #1.

The Board approved seven applications from the Department of Wildlife Conservation for the construction of wildlife pit ponds in the floodplain for wildlife watering during dry seasons.

The Board approved the protested application of the City of Tulsa Rogers County Port Authority for the use of four acre-feet of groundwater to be used in the Lower Bird Creek Wastewater Treat-

ment Plant. The Board also approved 11 other new water rights. Groundwater permits were approved for the City of Clinton for municipal use; Dorchester Hugoton Ltd. (Texas Co.) for commercial use; Prairie Village Baptist Church (Beckham Co.) for commercial use; George Dennie (Texas Co.) for irrigation and swine operations; Mobil (Carter Co.) for fire protection; 3M Company (Custer Co.) for industrial use; Shell Western, Inc. (Harper Co.) for remediation; Western Fibers, Inc. (Harmon Co.) for irrigation; Paul H. and Sammy Horton (Harmon Co.) for irrigation; Enogex, Inc. (LeFlore Co.) for industrial use; and Audrey Treece (Cimarron Co.) for irrigation.

The Board approved licenses for five new well drilling firms and approved licenses for six new operators. Four new operators were licensed for previously licensed firms.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Approved at August Board Meetings

FAP Loans (3.522%; 30 year maximum term)		Grants	
Weleetka PWA	\$ 300,000	Barnsdall PWA	\$ 50,000
Longtown RW&SD #1	\$ 1,370,000	Stephens RWD #1	\$ 25,000
		Town of Brooksville	\$ 25,000
		City of Enid	\$ 50,000
Totals as of 8/9/94			

	FAP LOANS	FAP GRANTS	SRF LOANS
APPROVED	147	338	22
Amount	\$166,885,000.00	\$18,925,175.00	\$117,919,726.48
FUNDED	135	304	17
Amount	\$151,675,000.00	\$17,047,878.11	\$82,386,924.55

Mary E. Whitlow, Editor

Barry Fogerty, Photographer

James Leewright, Typography and Layout

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