



OKLAHOMA

Water Resources Board

Immediate release

OWRB approves first round of ARPA grants

OKLAHOMA CITY -- During its February meeting, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board approved 11 grants totaling more than \$25 million, the first of more than 160 total grants from appropriated funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Last year, \$436,607,275 in ARPA funds was entrusted to the OWRB for eligible water and sewer projects throughout the state. The projects are estimated to benefit more than two and a half million Oklahomans and provide numerous jobs and water security for communities and rural districts across the state.

“We are humbled by the Oklahoma Legislature’s faith in our financial programs and thankful for all the hard work that has gone into making such historically significant investments in our state’s most critical infrastructure,” OWRB Executive Director Julie Cunningham said.

The projects approved in February include Competitive grants for the Alva Utility Authority, El Reno Municipal Authority and the Town of Waynoka; Statewide Targeted Investment Fund grants for the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, City of Bethany and Edmond Public Works Authority; Tribal Matching grants for the Chelsea Economic Development Authority, Lone Grove Water and Sewer Trust Authority and the South Delaware Regional Water Authority; and High Hazard Dams grants for the cities of Stigler and Hobart.

“It’s been great to be able to contemplate how we would apply these ARPA dollars and the best method to roll these out in a manner that benefits people throughout the state,” said House Speaker Charles McCall, who was onsite during the Board meeting to show support.

“Being a former mayor ...and knowing the cost of water systems, be that treatment or wastewater systems or just upgrading water infrastructure, [it is] a significant cost and a burden on people in those communities and counties. So we are happy to play a part in building the future of Oklahoma,” McCall added.

Senator Roger Thompson, co-chairman of Joint Committee on Pandemic Relief Funding, was also in attendance, and praised Speaker McCall, co-chair Rep. Kevin Wallace, Speaker Pro Tem Kyle Hilbert and Sen. Chuck Hall before describing the significance of the State’s new partnership.

“Part of our ARPA funds were tribal matching. The partnership this built-in rural Oklahoma and in my district is life changing,” Thompson said.



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Through collaborative efforts between the OWRB and the Office of the Secretary of Energy & Environment— approximately \$57 million was made available through the tribal matching program for the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Iowa, and Muscogee Creek Nations for which 32 projects have been identified.

Ken McQueen, Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment, commented that the ARPA grants provide funding that likely would not otherwise have been available, specifically the \$57 million that has been allocated and matched by tribal communities.

“In addition to those matches,” said McQueen, “we have been able to secure additional matches through Indian Health Services and other sources. So, we really appreciate the legislative leadership in putting forth this initial seed money that has been matched and multiplied many times over.”

The OWRB has created an interactive online ARPA grants dashboard that shows all recommended and Board-approved projects by legislative district and population served. Visit www.owrb.ok.gov to access the dashboard or find more information on ARPA Grants and the agency’s other financial assistance programs. Since 1983 the OWRB has approved over \$6.2 billion in loans and grants for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements throughout Oklahoma.