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***Water Board Hosts Billion Dollar Celebration of  
Water/Sewer System Financing Program***

To celebrate the billion dollar mark in the agency's water and wastewater system financing program, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) hosted a special celebration in the Blue Room of the Oklahoma State Capitol on Tuesday, November 12.

Board Chairman Grady Grandstaff and Executive Director Duane A. Smith hosted the event marking 20 years and one billion dollars in financing through the state's Financial Assistance Program (FAP), administered by the OWRB. The Billion Dollar Celebration was highlighted by comments on the historical significance of the FAP from former Governor George Nigh, Lt. Gov. Mary Fallin, Sen. Cal Hobson, and Secretary of Environment Brian C. Griffin. Nigh successfully lobbied for creation of the financing program during his tenure while Hobson is the author of legislation paving the way for the program.

Extolling the virtues of the FAP, as well as providing a retrospective of the program, were former OWRB directors Jim Barnett, Patty Eaton, and Gary Sherrer, and ex Board member/chairman Gerald Borelli. The ceremony was also attended by numerous individuals who perhaps had less noteworthy, though no less important, contributions to the creation and success of the Board's Financial Assistance Program.

"As we look back on the history of this great program and its tremendous economic impact upon Oklahoma, it is so difficult to single out just one, two, or even a dozen individuals who provided the most significant contributions," said Duane Smith. "Certainly, Gov. Nigh was a tremendous supporter of the FAP and he realized that our communities require a dependable source of water and wastewater system financing to insulate our citizens from all-too-frequent drought episodes. But there are countless men and women to thank for the program's success and it was great to see most of them here today."

As of October, the OWRB approved \$1,003,505,989 in 1,255 grants and low interest loans to Oklahoma communities and rural water systems through its three loan programs (the FAP Bond, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water SRF Programs) and two grant offerings (Rural Economic Action Plan and FAP Emergency Grant Programs). At Tuesday's activities, a ceremonial check presentation was made to the Lexington Public Works Authority, whose FAP loan marked the billion-dollar milestone.

From an initial \$25 million dollar appropriation in 1983, plus about \$14 million in additional funding through the years, the FAP has resulted in an eight-fold return on initial investment and has become Oklahoma's most popular financing option for public water and sewer infrastructure needs.

For more information about the OWRB's Financial Assistance Program, please visit the OWRB Web site at [www.owrb.state.ok.us](http://www.owrb.state.ok.us).

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