

May 31, 2002

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Joe Freeman, Chief
Financial Assistance Division
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
(405) 530-8800

REAP Eligibility Expanded

With the passage of Senate Bill 1247 during the recently concluded legislative session, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) will now be able to provide funding to additional small Oklahoma communities for water and wastewater system improvements.

Beginning July 1, the legislation increases the population limit for eligible entities under the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grant program from 1,500 to 1,750. Similarly, the tap limit for rural water and sewer districts has been increased to 525 household taps, an increase from 450.

According to OWRB's Executive Director Duane A. Smith, "This change in eligibility provides us with the means to help even more rural communities in need through our already successful REAP grant program." The REAP program, created by the State Legislature in 1996, targets primarily small towns. As a result, it is a key component of the state's overall economic development program for rural Oklahoma. To date, the Board has approved 325 REAP grants for almost \$27.5 million. When combined with other funding sources, REAP grants have contributed to the construction of water/wastewater projects totaling more than \$58 million throughout the state.

For fiscal year 2003, the State Legislature appropriated \$4,230,000 specifically for the Board's REAP grant program, a slight reduction from last year. Fully completed applications for potential REAP funds are due to the Board by September 1, 2002. For additional information please call Shelly Bacon or Joe Freeman at 405-530-8800.

###