

## National Week of Hope 10th Anniversary Plans Unveiled

Nearly 10 years ago, the lives of Oklahomans were changed forever with the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Since the tragedy, officials with the Memorial have worked diligently to educate, inform, and inspire hope and healing.

The National Week of Hope, April 17– 24, will include a variety of events and ceremonies honoring “those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever” by the 1995 bombing.

One of the first events is Spreading Our Branches, where seedlings from the Survivor Tree will be planted in each of the communities that lost one of their citizens.

“We felt very strongly that planting a seedling from the Survivor Tree, which has become such a symbol of strength, would demonstrate the importance of the second decade,” said Kari Watkins, executive director, Oklahoma City National Memorial. The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments has helped coordinate this event with the 19 Central Oklahoma communities that lost citizens 10 years ago.

A public lecture will be given by Rabbi Harold Kushner, best selling author of

“When Bad Things Happen to Good People,” on April 13 at the Oklahoma City University Freede Activity Center.

On April 18, A Day of Understanding, a national media symposium will address the impact of terrorism over the past 10 years. Members of the national media who reported the story of the bombing will discuss how terrorism has impacted countless lives, beginning with the Oklahoma City experience.

“NBC Nightly News” Anchor Brian Williams will use the Memorial as the backdrop for NBC’s live newscast on April 18 and will meet with Oklahomans at an evening reception and keynote the symposium.

A Day of Remembrance will be held on April 19 where 168 seconds of silence will be observed along with the reading of the names of those who were killed. The ceremony will also recognize the survivors of the bombing and their journey over the past decade.

Opening on April 19 is the Memorial’s newest exhibit, which tells stories of life moving forward. The day will be capped off with the announcement of the inaugural Reflections of Hope Award, which honors a living person or group whose work has significantly impacted a community, state, or nation and exemplifies that hope not only survives but thrives in the wake of political violence.

Family members, survivors, and rescue workers will participate

in the First Person educational program in schools across the state on a Day of Sharing on April 20. “This will give Oklahoma students the chance to hear the incredible stories of hope and survival first-hand while learning about the impact of violence,” said Watkins.

In addition, A Day of Tolerance on April 21 will offer 15 Oklahoma schools the opportunity to participate in the Memorial’s first simulated Model United Nations. ...See “Memorial” on page four.



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## TIP Available for Comment

ACOG is inviting citizens throughout Central Oklahoma to review and comment this month on a preliminary version of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The TIP identifies all federally funded surface transportation projects (transit, bicycle, highway, airport, etc.) expected to be carried out by city, county, state and local transportation agencies during federal fiscal years 2006-2008 in the

Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Area. This region includes Oklahoma and Cleveland Counties and parts of Canadian, Grady, Logan and McClain counties.

Federal law recognizes ACOG as the metropolitan planning organization responsible for long and short-range transportation planning for Central Oklahoma. As such, ACOG maintains a three-year TIP. ...See “TIP Plan Review” on page two.

# Turning Point Implementing Health Action Plan

The action-steps phase of Central Oklahoma Turning Point (COTP) is now in full implementation mode, as the health initiative celebrates Oklahoma Wellness Week April 3-10.

Reversing the state's bad health trends, or "turning" them around, has been the goal of Central Oklahoma Turning Point, a local initiative designed to improve the health of the region's citizens. For the past year, Turning Point has involved a citizen-led community engagement process that includes stakeholders from across the region, such as partners in media, non-profit organizations, corporate entities, local governments and ACOG.

Last summer, the group announced its nine-action steps to improve the health

of Central Oklahomans, and has since taken great strides in meeting its objectives. Five primary committees have been created to implement the strategies, and Jackie Jones has been hired as Executive Director, with a full-time office at the United Way of Central Oklahoma.

While the state's health indicators have improved from 45<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation, they still indicate some negative trends. For example, Oklahomans tend to smoke more, exercise less and are more overweight than residents in most other states. As a result, the mortality rate is younger than in other states, and Oklahomans die

more often from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and respiratory disorders.

This has an enormous impact on healthcare and insurance costs, particularly for small businesses, strapped local governments and non-profit organizations. This is not simply a rural phenomenon. Citizens in Oklahoma County, for example, are less healthy than other state residents. Stroke, cancer, heart disease, suicide and homicide rates are higher in the county than the rest of the state.

For more information, please visit [www.healthyoklahomans.org](http://www.healthyoklahomans.org).



## Central Oklahoma Perspective

Offering Regional Leaders News and Information

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### Association of Central Oklahoma Governments

*"Providing Regional Leadership in Central Oklahoma Since 1966"*

Established in 1966, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) is a voluntary association of cities, towns and counties. ACOG helps member governments plan for common needs, cooperate for mutual benefit and coordinate for sound regional development.

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## ODEQ Provides Regional Fish Advisory

In 2004, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a national fish consumption advisory for mercury that recommends that women of child-bearing age and young children eat no more than one meal per week of locally caught fish.

As the state agency responsible for issuing fish consumption advisories, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is providing Oklahoma citizens with information on how to obtain EPA's fish advisory, "What You Need to Know about Mercury in Fish and Shellfish", as well as state-specific advisory. EPA's fish advisory for mercury can be found at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish).

DEQ is also issuing a local advisory for the state of Oklahoma that recommends that pregnant or nursing women and children under the age of 15 eat no more than one meal per week of predator fish such as bass.

EPA's fish consumption advisory and the state-specific advisory do not mean Oklahoma fish are unsafe to eat nor does it mean that unsafe levels of mercury in fish are found in all state waters.

Advisory levels for the eating of fish vary across state and federal jurisdictions. There is limited state and federal data concerning mercury in predator

fish in Oklahoma and elevated mercury levels in fish may not be present in all water bodies in the state.

DEQ reminds citizens that fish are an important part of a healthy diet.

For more information contact the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality at 405-702-1000.

## "TIP Plan Review"

*...Continued from page one.*

TIP for the region, which will implement the long-range plan.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (operator of MetroTransit Oklahoma City), Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (operator of Metro Transit Norman) and other local governments and transportation agencies developed the preliminary TIP and will implement activities outlined in the program.

Copies of the preliminary TIP are available for citizens' review at metropolitan area libraries and on the ACOG Web site at [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org). Those interested in requesting a paper copy may contact Holly Massie, ACOG, at 234-2264. Written comments on the TIP will be accepted through April 26.

# Red Cross Names Regional Heroes

The **American Red Cross of Central Oklahoma** recognized several regional heroes at its annual heroes breakfast last month. The Heroes Awards were developed to honor individuals and groups in the region who have displayed hard work, dedication, and meritorious courage in an act of heroism.

The public was able to nominate heroes. Nominees must have participated in the heroic event in the past two years and must have come from the Chapter's five-county region, which includes Oklahoma, Lincoln, Grady, Kingfisher and eastern Caddo Counties. The honorees included:

- The **Law Enforcement Award** went to Sgt. Larry Boggess and officer Shayne Clark of the Warr Acres Police Department and Sgt. Lance Marston, Sgt. Tod Yates and police dog Kazan with the Oklahoma City Police Department. All helped to rescue two young girls who wandered near a swimming pool on a frigid day.
- The **Community Educator Award** went to Rhonda Malahy, a counselor at Putnam City North High School.
- The **Military Award** went to Maj. Edward Pulido of the U.S. Army Reserve. Pulido works for the United Way of Central Oklahoma and was called to active duty to serve in Iraq. Last year, he lost his leg when an explosive hit his vehicle.
- **Good Samaritan Awards** went to Chaplain Lt. Col. Boyd Falwell and Randy Gilreath. Falwell was recognized for his work rendering military honors at over 1,000 military burial ceremonies in the past decade. Gilreath, from Norman, rescued a man after an accident in which the man's car caught on fire.
- The **Firefighter Award** went to Webb Tilton of the Oklahoma City Fire Department. Tilton helped prevent a co-worker from being injured after a fall during a fire.

"We wanted to recognize people in the community that do amazing things," said Marisa Valdez, Community Relations Coordinator for the local chapter.



## Around the Region

- **ACOG** and its advertising partner, **Third Degree Advertising**, won four ADDY awards last month, presented annually by the **Oklahoma City Advertising Club**. The ADDY awards are the regional advertising field's highest honor and are voted on by people within the regional advertising industry. ADDY Awards were presented for stormwater phase II public education television and radio, and merit awards were presented for stormwater and regional clean air public education campaigns. The stormwater campaign will be implemented this spring.

- With the EPA Phase II Stormwater Notice of Intent deadline looming (May 8), local stormwater technicians are busy planning a regional training session for states that make up Region 6 of the Environmental Protection Agency. The **7th Annual Region 6 MS4 Operator's Conference** will be held in **Oklahoma City** June 13-16. Session subjects and time, date and place are still being determined. More information will be forthcoming in *Central Oklahoma Perspective*.

- The **Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security** and Governor **Brad Henry** announced the allocation of federal funds that will be used to prevent terrorist attacks. The state was awarded approximately \$29.9 million for six programs designed to train and equip cities, counties and tribes to help reduce the state's vulnerability to an attack. For complete details on the state's priorities, visit [www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ok.gov).

- The city of **Harrah** received a \$250,000 **Economic Development Infrastructure Grant** from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The majority of the

funding will be used to complete water and sewer lines to the community's industrial park. The third time was the charm, as city leaders have applied for the grant each year for the past three years.

- **ScienceFest Oklahoma 2005**, a free event designed for young students, will be held on **April 21, at the Oklahoma City Zoo**. Scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., **ScienceFest** is intended to foster scientific literacy while educating children about alternative fuels and technologies and their role in a cleaner environment. Event planners have programmed a day packed with kid-friendly workshops all developed to show the importance and scientific applications of alternative fuels. For information, [www.sciencefestok.org](http://www.sciencefestok.org).

- In February, **Logan County** voters approved a three-quarter cent county sales tax to fund a new county jail that will replace the current 98-year-old jail that has been under threat of closure. The tax will begin collection on July 1 and will run for 10 years. It is projected to bring in over \$1.5 million a year. The proposed \$7.1 million, 166-bed facility has been one of the counties most pressing needs in recent years. Sixty percent of the County's voters approved the measure.



Men's area in existing Logan County Jail.

# “Memorial”

...Continued from page one.  
Nations Security Council.

On April 22, A Day of Caring will showcase new and familiar Oklahoma recording artists for a special thank you concert for the people of Oklahoma. The concert will be held at the Ford Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

The week will conclude with A Day of Inspiration on April 23 where families, survivors, and rescue workers can greet 7,000 runners from across the country who will participate in the fifth annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon. The marathon will begin on Sunday, April 24.

“It is our hope that people who have never visited the Memorial will take this opportunity to experience Oklahoma at its best. Likewise, we invite those who were a part of the recovery and rebuilding efforts to return in April to experience just how far we have come,” added Watkins.

A detailed schedule of events is available at [www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org](http://www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org).

## ACOG Calendar

### April

- 14th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 18th Citizen's Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 28th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.  
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.  
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.  
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.

### May

- 12th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.  
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 13th Garber Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 16th Citizen's Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 17th Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.m.
- 24th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
- 26th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.  
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.  
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.  
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.
- 30th ACOG Offices Closed for Memorial Day

## Central Oklahoma *Perspective*

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