

## ACOG Leaders Meet with Congressional Staff

ACOG Chairman Ron Bledsoe, Mayor of Slaughterville; ACOG Vice-Chairman Willa Johnson, Councilmember of Oklahoma City; and 9-1-1 ACOG Chairman Dave Howe, Vice-Mayor of Choctaw recently went to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Oklahoma's Congressional delegation and personally deliver the *2004 Federal Legislative Issues* approved by the board in January.

Top issues discussed with members of the delegation were transportation reauthorization legislation, collection of sales taxes on retail transactions made via the Internet, water quality concerns, Tinker Air Force Base, and various regulatory and funding issues.

The board members and staff were able to meet personally with Senator James Inhofe, Congressmen Ernest Istook, Tom Cole and Frank Lucas, and staff legislative directors in the offices of Senator Don Nickles and Congressmen Brad Carson and John Sullivan.

"The group was disappointed to have to say goodbye to Sen. Nickles, but thanked him for his leadership. We remain in good hands with Sen. Inhofe, who has been a leader in transportation issues. Our delegation has accomplished much,



ACOG Executive Director Zach Taylor, is joined by Rep. Ernest Istook, Oklahoma City Councilmember Willa Johnson, Choctaw Councilmember Dave Howe and Slaughterville Mayor Ron Bledsoe at the unveiling of a bronze bust honoring the late Carl Albert. The group was in the nation's capitol to present ACOG's federal issues.

and we are grateful to Rep. Istook for helping to authorize sales tax collections on Internet sales and to fund the I-40 construction," said Bledsoe.

### Carl Albert Bronze Unveiling

The group's timing was good in that they also got to attend the ceremonial unveiling of the Bronze Bust of the late

Honorable Carl Albert, a well-known Oklahoman who served as the 46<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1971-1976.

Congressman Istook was master of ceremonies at the event, and comments were offered by Joel Jankowsky, former staff member of Speaker Albert, ...See "Washington" on page four.

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## MPO to Undergo Federal Review

The federal agencies involved in funding the region's transportation programs are asking citizens for their input on transportation planning in Central Oklahoma, and whether residents feel like they are being given a fair opportunity to be involved in the process.

The Federal Highway and Transit Administrations have scheduled a public listening session as part of an evaluation of ACOG's transportation planning

activities over the past three years. The session will take place on April 27, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., at Metro Technology Center, 1900 Springlake Drive in Oklahoma City.

ACOG, which serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), coordinates regional transportation planning efforts within the metropolitan region, which encompasses all of ...See "MPO Review" on page two.

# Transportation Improvement Program Comments Sought

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 2005-2007 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 trans-

portation planning for Central Oklahoma. As such, ACOG maintains a three-year TIP for the region, which will implement the long-range plan.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority and other local governments and agencies developed the preliminary TIP and will imple-

ment 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 copy may contact Holly Massie, ACOG, at 234-2264. Written comments on the TIP will be accepted through April 27.

## Edmond Introduces 'The Eddy'

The city of Edmond introduced a new trolley bus system last month that will serve the growing community. City leaders helped initiate the system to counter growing traffic concerns that have resulted from residential and business expansion in eastern and western portions of the city.

Nicknamed, "The Eddy," the distinctive hunter green and gold, wood-trimmed buses will run in three routes that serve a variety of education, entertainment and business stops, such as downtown Edmond and the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO). The Green line runs every 25 minutes, with service Monday through Saturday. The Maroon and Gold line runs every 50 minutes Monday through Friday and operates during daytime hours. The service also links to Express Route 37, which goes from

Edmond to downtown Oklahoma City.

Two buses make up The Eddy line, leased from Metro Transit and the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority. Leasing the buses helps the city because COTPA already has drivers, fueling and maintenance facilities in place. The city, COTPA and the University of Central Oklahoma formed the partnership last year to



develop the system. More buses may be added if the service becomes popular. Rides cost 50 cents, and UCO students with ID can ride for free.

Last fall, the partnership conducted a survey with Edmond residents and UCO students to determine travel routes and times, and the system's nickname. Hundreds of responses were submitted via e-mail, phone and in letters. The city council approved the name in January.

## "MPO Review"

...Continued from page one. Oklahoma and Cleveland counties and portions of Canadian, Grady, Logan and McClain counties. The Association is responsible for developing the long-range plan with input from area citizens, cities, towns, counties and local, state and federal transportation agencies, including the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA).

As the MPO for Central Oklahoma, ACOG is responsible for long and short-range transportation planning from a multi-modal approach, incorporating

street and highway improvements, transit options, goods movement, bicycle and pedestrian travel and intelligent transportation systems.

The review is part of a certification process that takes place every three years to ensure that MPOs comply with federal standards and policies.

In addition to the meeting, FHWA is accepting written comments. Comments may be sent to Isaac Akem, FHWA, 300 N. Meridian, Room 105S Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107-6560 by May 27, 2004. Interpreters will be available but must be requested by April 16, by calling 234-2264 by voice or 234-2217 (TDD).

### 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.

#### Chairman:

Mayor Ron Bledsoe, *Slaughterville*

#### Vice Chairman:

Councilmember Willa Johnson, *Oklahoma City*

#### Secretary-Treasurer:

Mayor Eddie Reed, *Midwest City*

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ACOG MEMBER IN PERSPECTIVE:

# Piedmont

By Jerry Church

There's a sign that welcomes visitors to Piedmont that reads "Winds of Progress." It's an apt slogan that is more accurate once one digs beneath the surface. With progress comes change. And with change come potential problems. The key word here is "potential." With key leadership and forward vision, the city of Piedmont is hoping to change any "potential" problems into assets.

"We're right where we want to be as a community on the move," said Mayor Greg Banta. "Great schools, inexpensive and available land, and well-educated and affluent citizens. But where do we go from here? That's going to be key to the future of our community."

## Business Shift

Banta has just finished his first year as Mayor of Piedmont, one of the fastest growing cities in the Central Oklahoma region. By day, Banta operates a realty and brokerage firm that keeps him plenty busy. With three teenage sons, school activities and a thriving business that has recently experienced a radical business shift, why did he decide to add "mayor" to his nametag?

While reading a book about Rudy Giuliani, he thumbed across a notice in a local newspaper announcing the deadline for mayoral candidacy. The two thoughts clashed, and out came the notion that he should run for mayor. After discussing it with family and friends, the campaign was put together quickly. Banta went door-to-door, received enormous support and won the election without ever before dabbling in local politics.

"I've always been interested in politics, but never considered holding office. But when I was running, I really became invested in setting our agenda," said Banta. "I'm a business man, and I really wanted to run our city like a business."

A new team of administrators has helped shape a sound financial founda-

tion for the community. Michael Drea was named City Manager last month. He joins Police Chief David Hardin, City Treasurer Michael Vaughn and Community Development Director Justin DiGiacinto as Piedmont's new city leaders tasked with taking the community to the next level in growth management. So far, the team has already strengthened its financial platform. Strategic planning and financial reassessment helped provide the inherent resources to purchase four new police vehicles and a new fire truck.

"Getting our finances in better shape was the first order of business," said Banta. "Now I think we're ready to tackle our growth and infrastructure issues."

## Water, Water, Everywhere?

Water has been described as the "new gold," by T. Boone Pickens, and for city administrators everywhere in the ACOG region, water is one of the most pressing and important issues facing small and growing communities.

For Piedmont Councilmember John Brown, water has become his specialty on the five-person city council. Brown, who serves Ward 4, is in his third term on the council. A long-time agent for Shelter Insurance, he has been honored for his work and tenure over the past two decades. As a public servant, he has been counted on to provide insight and guidance on the city's water woes.

"Water encompasses the bulk of our issues as a community because of our huge population growth spurt. Back in 1974, we barely had enough taps to fulfill the minimum needed, and now, with our population growing 10 percent every year, we don't have enough water to satisfy our current needs," said Brown.

With his background in geology, Brown

became the council's "go-to guy" when it came to water and sewer issues. Since serving on the council, he helped spearhead the Central Oklahoma Water Resource Authority's long-term study into acquiring water from the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer to serve Piedmont, Mustang and Yukon. Litigation has since stalled the deal, and it appears now that the communities will have to look elsewhere.

Meanwhile, a booster pump and a pending potable water arrangement with the city of Oklahoma City will help satisfy water needs for the short term, but Brown

said that the city of Piedmont has the capacity to take a leadership position on water in eastern Canadian County, and may need to consider the possibility of building a water treatment plant if a stable water source can be identified.

## Winds of Progress

Both Brown and Banta agree that the city of Piedmont is at a crossroads ...See "Piedmont" on page four.



John Brown



Greg Banta

## Coming

## Regional

## Events

### FHWA Public Listening Session

•April 27, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Metro Technology Center,  
Carousel Room

The public is invited to listening session to evaluate ACOG's transportation planning activities over the past three years. Call 234-2264 for more information.

# “Washington”

...Continued from page one.

Congressmen Cole, Sullivan, Carson and Lucas, and Senators Inhofe and Nickles. Dr. David Albert and Mary Frances Albert, son and daughter of the honoree, also participated in the event.

The bust was sculpted by Paul Moore, a native Oklahoman and member of the Creek nation. Moore is the Artist in Residence at the University of Oklahoma and is currently working on the Oklahoma Centennial Land Run Monument on the south tip of the Bricktown Canal. A depiction of the Land Run of 1889, the sculpture is expected to be 365 feet long, 36 feet wide and over 15 feet high. It will be one of the world’s 10 largest bronze sculptures when completely installed.

Copies of the ACOG federal and state legislative issues documents can be found on ACOG’s Web site, [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org).

# “Piedmont”

...Continued from page three.

of sorts. Both are equally excited, too, that the city is in the right position to handle the challenges that lie ahead.

“Trying to keep up could be a daunting task,” said Brown. “But we have the leadership and the systems in place to take care of any problems. We have the ordinances, we have the system of con-

trol and all of our bills are paid.”

Brown said that the city is currently upgrading its comprehensive plan, and that he hopes that the city can develop a definitive “look and feel” that would be apparent to visitors. “It’s going to take a major commitment from all of us to retain what we started here.”

Banta agrees. “We’ve already built a great community that is friendly and accessible to families,” Banta said. “People move here because of the school system, but they quickly realize that this is a great place to live. If we can take care of our infrastructure needs, and manage our growth, we can be even better.”

## ACOG Calendar

### April

- 8th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 29th 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

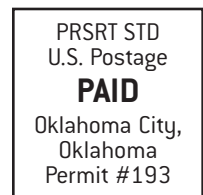
- 13th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee  
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 14th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 18th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.  
Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1 p.m.
- 27th 9-1-1 Board of Directors, 1 p.m.  
Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee, 1:20 p.m.  
ACOG Board of Directors, 1:45 p.m.  
Garber-Wellington Policy Committee, 2:30 p.m.
- 31st ACOG Offices Closed for Memorial Day Holiday

# Central Oklahoma *Perspective*

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