



# Central Oklahoma *Perspective*

November 2004

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments

## Cool, Wet 2004 Summer Means Low Ozone

The cool, wet summer produced some of the lowest temperatures in the past decade, and also served as a significant contributor to low ozone levels. The resulting low air pollution readings helped the state and the Central Oklahoma region maintain its clean air status to stay in compliance with federal air quality standards.

The region did experience a few exceedances at several air quality monitoring sites throughout the summer, but the cumulative readings were not enough to violate the standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency.

There were only two Clean Air Alert Days for ozone called in 2004, down substantially from recent years. From 1998 to 2003, the region averaged almost 10 Alert Days a year (see chart).

The number of Alert Days issued is not an accurate depiction regarding the actual levels of air pollution in the region. Alert Days are simply days in which a meteorological model predicts there would be high levels present.

In addition to a comprehensive public education program that included a multi-medium campaign, and new partnerships with OG&E Electric Services, Chesapeake

Energy, and Devon Energy, the ACOG Clean Air Committee also recently completed a survey on air quality in Central Oklahoma.

The survey was collected by phone from a sample of 403 Central Oklahoma households in September, with questions focusing on the 2004 ozone season. Some of the findings include:

- 65 percent of respondents polled were concerned about the health, economic, and environmental consequences of poor air quality in the Oklahoma City area.
- 68 percent of respondents believe that it is important to know when it is an Ozone Alert Day in the Oklahoma City area.
- 54 percent of respondents were willing to forego lawn mowing on an Ozone Alert Day.
- 58 percent of respondents were willing to gas up their vehicles in the evening on an Alert day.
- The percentage of respondents who felt that air quality in Oklahoma City has become much worse nearly tripled, from four percent in 2003 to 12 percent in 2004.

- 62 percent of respondents remembered hearing about an Ozone Alert Day this past summer through the media and other sources.

| Total "OZONE ALERT" days called each summer |    |
|---|----|
| 1998  | 14 |
| 1999  | 11 |
| 2000  | 13 |
| 2001  | 8  |
| 2002  | 6  |
| 2003  | 7  |
| 2004  | 2  |

- Advertising recall about air quality in the Oklahoma City area increased by 5.2 percent in 2004. In addition, there were significant increases in the percentage of respondents who could recall air quality TV ads as well as articles in the newspaper.

Even with the good summer, the region still faces a substantial challenge to remain in compliance with the Clean Air Act in the future. Concerted efforts by citizens, businesses and governments will have to continue to keep Central ...See "Mild Summer" on page four.

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## Water Trust Develops Web Resource

Reaching out to water systems across the nation, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) has taken the initiative to launch the Safe Drinking Water Trust eBulletin, an innovative tool designed to serve as a primary resource in water system solutions.

This valuable tool is offered at no cost to the water systems. To register, users simply go online and fill out the subscription form at [www.watertrust.org](http://www.watertrust.org).

Today's water treatment decision makers face important decisions each and every day - decisions that require quick action and a clear understanding of the nation's regulatory issues.

Every three weeks eBulletin subscribers receive an interactive e-mail bulletin containing informational articles written in plain English that are designed to put a wealth of information at their fingertips. ...See "Web Resource" on page four.

# Regional Program Combats Juvenile Fire Setting

According to national statistics, children start more than half of the fires that are intentionally set. In addition, fires started by juveniles are the leading cause of home and school property loss, accounting for over half of all arson arrests. Child-set fires are also the primary cause nationwide for hospital burn admissions of children under the age of five.

To address this issue, parents, educators and childcare workers are encouraged to use an effective fire prevention tool available in Central Oklahoma. Operation FireSAFE is a metropolitan-wide program for children who have either been known to start a fire or who have shown an unusual interest and curiosity about fire. The program was showcased in *The Oklahoman*, KFOR-TV and KYIS-FM during

Fire Prevention Week in October.

Begun in 1992, the regional Operation FireSAFE program educates children and their parents about the life-threatening dangers of fire and provides mental health counseling in situations that warrant. It was begun following the deaths of three Oklahoma City firefighters in a fire started by a child in a closet in 1989.

Twenty-two community fire departments in Canadian, Cleveland, Logan, Oklahoma and Pottawatomie counties participate in the regional program. The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) provides administrative support and leadership, and the Oklahoma Department of Health and area guidance clinics provide mental health services to the program.

Firefighters and trained professionals conduct evaluation interviews with children and their families to assess the

level of risk. Then, a comprehensive fire safety and prevention education session is taught. By intervening with at-risk children before the problem escalates, the likelihood of their setting future fires is reduced dramatically.

There has been a steady trend downward of numbers of fires started by children in the region since the program's beginning. Statistics gathered in 1992 showed 365 child-set fires, while in 2003 there were only 133. While other variables may be at play, program organizers believe that the FireSAFE program is having a very positive impact on the families that participate.

Parents, educators, childcare workers may make referrals to the program or others interested in a child's welfare. For more information, contact your local fire department or the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG).

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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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## OTRD Announces Two Grant Programs

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD) recently declared its 2005 application cycle and criteria for **Recreational Trails Program** (RTP) grant funds. Last year, over \$600,000 in federal funds was allocated statewide.

The trails program provides an 80 percent federal share on a reimbursement basis for projects involving the construction, restoration or enhancement of trail-side and trailhead facility development and land acquisition for motorized and non-motorized recreational trails.

The maximum grant amount allowable for each *non-motorized* trail project is \$80,000 (80-percent of a \$100,000 project), and there is no maximum grant limit for each *motorized* trail project. Eligible applicants include local and county governments, state agencies, other state-sanctioned governmental bodies, such as planning districts, river authorities, federal land managers, and private non-profit organizations, such as trail user groups and conservation clubs.

Applications for the RTP program must be submitted to OTRD by January 31,

2005. RTP grant guidelines and applications are available on the OTRD Web site, [www.otrd.state.ok.us](http://www.otrd.state.ok.us), or by calling 521-2904.

The OTRD is also accepting applications for FY 2005 **Land and Water Conservation Fund** (LWCF) grants. The LWCF program provides matching federal grants (50/50) on a reimbursement basis to state and local government organizations, Indian tribes, public school districts, and universities to help acquire open spaces and develop outdoor recreational areas for public use.

Examples of eligible projects include parkland acquisition, playground equipment installation, athletic field construction, and the development of picnic areas, boating facilities, nature centers, recreational trails, or support facilities, such as restrooms, signs and parking for outdoor recreation activities.

Applications for the LWCF program must be submitted to OTRD by January 31, 2005. LWCF guidelines and applications can be obtained by calling 521-2980 or through the OTRD Web site.



# FEMA Launches Online Disaster Aid Registration

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is using technology to make it easier to apply for disaster assistance. In addition to registering by phone, residents of federal disaster areas may now apply online for assistance as well as find valuable recovery information at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

"The ability to apply online furthers our capacity to get disaster assistance to those who need help," said Michael Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response and Director of FEMA.

"Individuals and families affected by disasters can apply online, visiting local library that provides Internet access, or reaching out to family members with access to help them complete the application."

Individuals should be prepared to give their contact information and social security number, as well as provide insurance and financial information when they log on or call for assistance. Those who encounter difficulties while registering online can call the FEMA Technical Helpdesk toll-free 1-800-745-0243, 24 hours a day. This number is for technical questions only; applicants with questions about FEMA assistance, or with changes to the information submitted, can call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) to reach the agency's disaster assistance helpline.

Online registration is the latest step FEMA has taken in response to the devastating 2004 Hurricane season. FEMA took more calls for disaster assistance in September than any previous month in history. In less than two months, more than one million assistance applications have been taken, and FEMA has provided more than \$1 billion in assistance.

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.



## Around the Region

- The **International City/County Management Association** honored three Central Oklahoma city managers at its annual conference last month. **Doug Henley**, with **El Reno**, **Jim Crosby**, of **Yukon** and **Choctaw's Robert Floyd** were all recognized for longevity service and outstanding contributions to their communities and for the profession of city administration. The three have a combined service record of 100 years in municipal management.
- Two city leaders from the region completed training to attain **Certified Municipal Official** designation through a program established by the **Oklahoma Municipal League**. **Jerry Taylor**, **Harrah** City Manager, and **Bud Green**, **Nicoma Park** Mayor, were among the 12 professionals that completed the training last year. The program encourages municipal staff to enhance their skills and develop their expertise in local government administration.
- The **Oklahoma Highway Safety Office (OHSO)** reports that car seat and seat belt use in the state is at record highs. According to an annual survey that OHSO conducts, car seat use compliance was up to 80.6 percent, an increase from 62.5 percent five years ago. Seat belt use was up to 80.3 percent, an increase from 67.5 percent in 2000. There are other statistical variations on seat and seat belt use, based on demographic factors. For more details, call 523-1570 for a complete report.
- The city of **Jones** joins **Midwest City**, **Moore** and **Norman** as communities in **Central Oklahoma** that are nationally recognized for storm preparedness. The National Weather Service recently named Jones a

StormReady community. The **Storm-Ready** program helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property— before and during the event. StormReady helps community leaders and emergency managers strengthen local safety programs to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through better planning, education, and awareness.

- The **Oklahoma Turning Point Health Initiative** is sponsoring its seventh annual Forum and Council meeting on December 3 at the Reed Conference Center in Midwest City. Sessions will focus on partnership building, grant writing and communications strategies. The conference will bring together 48 partnerships from the state that are developing strategies to create a healthier Oklahoma. To register for the conference, visit [www.okturningpoint.org](http://www.okturningpoint.org).
- The town of **Slaughterville** hosted a ribbon cutting in September to unveil its new Town Hall. Mayor **Ron Bledsoe** led the dedication ceremony that welcomed members of the Slaughter family, city and county officials and distinguished guests from the town and region. Slaughterville was established in 1970 with 158 residents and has since become one of the fastest growing communities in Central Oklahoma.



*Slaughterville Mayor Ron Bledsoe leads the ribbon cutting at the community's new Town Hall.*

## “Mild Summer”

...Continued from page one.  
Oklahoma’s air clean.

Full details of the survey are available on ACOG’s Web site at [www.acogok.org](http://www.acogok.org).

## “Web Resource”

...Continued from page one.  
Recognizing that water systems need more than just additional reading material, the *SDWT eBulletin* offers both up-to-date financial resources and an interactive “ask-the-expert” section providing direct access to water industry experts from across the nation.

This free resource is one of the industry’s leading centralized water utility tools created specifically to help small public water systems keep up with the flurry of regulations that impact this industry. The project is supported through a federal Homeland Security Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For more than 30 years, the RCAP partnership has served as a leader in rural community development through its field-based staff and delegate agencies working at the community level in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. In Oklahoma, RCAP partnership offices are located locally in Tulsa, Bennington, Warner and Pryor. For more information, visit [www.crg.org](http://www.crg.org).

## ACOG Calendar

### November

- 10th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.  
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 11th ACOG Offices Closed for Veteran’s Day
- 12th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 15th Citizens Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 16th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.  
Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1 p.m.
- 18th 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.
- 25th ACOG Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

### December

- 9th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 13th Citizens Advisory Committee, 3 p.m.
- 14th 9-1-1 Technical Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 16th 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.
- 24th ACOG Offices Closed for Christmas
- 31st ACOG Offices Closed for New Years Day

Central Oklahoma

# Perspective

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