

Central Oklahomans Vote “Yes” On Upgrading 9-1-1

Voters in Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian, Logan, McClain and Grady counties and 18 other counties across the state voted Dec. 13 on the approval of a 50 cent monthly service charge on cellular phone bills. The funding in Central Oklahoma will be used to improve enhanced 9-1-1 systems to be more compatible with cellular phones, specifically providing the location of the caller, which is vital in emergency situations.

“We are pleased that citizens recognized the need for a 9-1-1 system that is inclusive of new technology, and can keep up with the trends in today’s ever-changing telecommunications marketplace,” said Zach Taylor, Executive Director of the 9-1-1 Association of Central Oklahoma Governments [9-1-1 ACOG], on behalf of the 9-1-1 Saves Lives Committee. “The funding will be used to upgrade our system to make it work for all phone users in our region.”

The final tally included:

- **Canadian County:** Yes, 3,129 [77.6%]; No, 900 [22.3%]
- **Cleveland County:** Yes, 9,651 [81.9%]; no, 2,121 [18.02%]
- **Grady County:** Yes, 1,832 [79.1%]; no, 485 [20.9%]



Oklahoma County Commission Jim Roth, left, and Oklahoma City councilmember Willa Johnson color in Oklahoma County, the final county in the region to be declared with a resounding “yes” vote, at the 9-1-1 Saves Lives Committee election night watch party. The vote reached a nearly 80 percent “yes” plurality in the region that will bring enhanced wireless 9-1-1 service to the metro in the coming year.

- **McClain County:** Yes, 1,569 [82.5%]; no, 332 [17.5%]
- **Oklahoma County:** Yes, 20,673 [79.2%]; no, 5,419 [20.7%]

In Logan County, there were two propositions, one to provide 9-1-1 landline service to parts of the county not presently served. That proposition passed with

1,409 “Yes” votes [75.9%] to 446 “No” votes [24%]. Proposition 2, which was the cell phone bill passed with 621 “Yes” votes [73.3%] to 226 “No” votes [26.6%].

Cellular customers can expect the 50 cents to be added in spring 2006. The build-out of the system is expected to ...See “9-1-1 Election” on page three.

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Midwest City Earns Best ISO Rank

The city of Midwest City recently announced its attainment of a “Class 1” ISO rating, the lowest (and best) Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating offered to communities and their emergency response capabilities.

Midwest City is the first and only Class 1 ISO rated fire department in Oklahoma, and one of only 46 in the United States. ISO rates over 45,000 departments across the country, and ratings rank from

“1” for best, and “10” for minimal coverage. Many communities in the Central Oklahoma region work hard to drive their ISO ratings down for the benefit of their citizens and business infrastructure. The ratings help determine insurance costs.

ISO’s Public Protection Classification Program rating criteria takes into account a community’s water distribution, communications and dispatch system, fire ...See “ISO Rating” on page three.

New Heartline 2-1-1 Phone Line Kicks Off

A new service that connects callers in need with necessary community services launched in November. The Heartline 2-1-1 phone line allows citizens to simply dial "2-1-1" to access a database of hundreds of agencies and organizations that provide vital social services.

Sixty-percent of the state of Oklahoma now has access to the service. In Central Oklahoma, Heartline, formerly known as Contact Crisis Helpline, will provide the service to people calling in the 405 area code, which encompasses a nine county-region. The area includes all of Oklahoma and Cleveland counties, and most of Canadian, Grady, Kingfisher and Logan counties, and parts of McClain and Pottawatomie counties. Mobile phone users can call (405) 286-4057.

Burns Hargis, Chairman of the Board for the United Way of Central Oklahoma, placed the first ceremonial 2-1-1 call from the Senior Summit, and Howard Hendrick, director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, received the call from Heartline.

With 2-1-1, callers get an easy to remember three-digit phone number that connects them with specially trained staff and volunteers to analyze what services are available to help. During the recent spate of hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, 2-1-1 performed a vital function by allowing communities to coordinate responses to thousands of people in need. States that have 2-1-1 have seen its effectiveness in times of disaster.

"Our operators go through a regimented 16 week course before they start fielding calls," said Tom Martin, director of

Heartline. "We have 15 operators now covering shifts 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems are expected to certify Heartline operators in 2006. There are currently 171 different 2-1-1 systems



operating in 33 states, serving a national population of 139 million Americans. The average call takes from three to six minutes, and ranges

from utility assistance, to suicide counseling to help with social services, such as homelessness, disaster relief and more.

The service is free and available 24-hours a day, every day of the year. Soon, TDD services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing will be in place, as well as multilingual services.

For more information, visit www.heartlineoklahoma.org.

Central Oklahoma
Perspective
Offering Regional Leaders News and Information

21 East Main, Suite 100
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73104-2405
(405) 234-2264 / FAX: (405) 234-2200
TDD: (405) 234-2217 / www.acogok.org
E-mail address: acog@acogok.org

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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Zach Taylor

Editor: Jerry Church

Layout: Ken Brown

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Fixed Guideway Study Nears End

A regional fixed guideway study, conducted by the city of Oklahoma City, Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) and Carter & Burgess consulting group was recently completed. Developed to address future transportation needs in the region, the study recently held its final Steering Committee Meeting and its recommendations and implementation plan were to be unveiled to the public this month.

The fixed guideway study was not solely relegated to light rail, although 27 major American metro areas now utilize light rail. Aside from Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes, Modern Streetcar Transit, and streetcar trolleys, other fixed guideway technologies include monorail and heavy rail. The study team reported that there are currently 140 light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit projects being planned and constructed in the United States.

Other components that were initially identified in the study were potential transportation corridors, estimated ridership, costs of system programming,

and a determination of potential funding strategies. Added emphasis was placed on station development and intermodal transportation tie-ins. Shortly after starting research, the team noted 10 regional concept corridors.

The system plan presents multi-modal visions for a fixed guideway transit system that will provide fast, reliable and safe transportation service to the metro area. The plan includes 789 miles of recommended enhanced bus service, 40 miles of bus rapid transit, 42 miles of commuter rail transit and five miles of light rail streetcar. A new downtown Intermodal Transportation Center is also recommended that will allow transfers between the modes.

Throughout the year, numerous public involvement meetings were held in the metro to showcase the purpose and intent of the transportation study. The objectives and goals of the forums were to gain community feedback and invite comments on the future of transportation in the area. Comments were recorded and incorporated into the study.

...See "Fixed Guideway" on page three.

“9-1-1 Election”

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take 12 to 18 months.

The campaign in the metro was led by a coalition of stakeholders, headed by former mayors Ron Norick, Ann Taylor and Dick Reynolds.

The committee will keep the public apprised of system improvements as milestones are reached in the future.

For more information, contact 9-1-1 ACOG at 234-2264.

“Fixed Guideway”

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Joining the Carter & Burgess team was a steering committee made up of more than 30 community leaders who volunteered to help lead the effort. The entire study process was conducted in accordance with Federal Transit Administration guidelines and was completed in the 12 months that was anticipated. A federal grant paid 80 percent of the cost of the study, with the remaining 20 percent funded by the city of Oklahoma City.

The study also addressed cost projections and ridership characteristics for each mode. Funding for implementation and build out of the system is not available yet. For details on public meetings this month, visit www.okfgs.org.

“ISO Rating”

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station location, personnel levels, response capabilities, training certificates, inspection procedures, fire prevention and public education and other factors. Dispatch accounts for 10 percent of the grade, and the recent remodeling and upgrade of the emergency operations center, along with plans to improve wireless 9-1-1 with scheduled elections helped achieve a full score of “10” for that component. Fire alarm systems also account for 10 percent, and the review focuses on a community’s facilities and support for handling and dispatching fire alarms from residential homes and businesses. Water supply accounts for 40 percent and hydrant size, availability and condition are all grading components of this category.

...See “Class 1” on page four.



Around the Region

- **Charles Johnson**, City Manager of **Midwest City**, died December 16 of a heart attack, after a prolonged illness. Johnson was renowned throughout the region as a visionary, and led the city to economic prominence with a massive redevelopment effort on the I-40 corridor following devastating tornado damage in 1999. He served as city manager for 21 years in Midwest City, with prior stints as personnel director and assistant city manager. He had undergone surgery in Los Angeles for removal of an aneurysm and was making significant progress before he died. He will be missed, and his master plan for the city will be used as a model for many communities for decades to come.

- **Randy Richardson**, **Logan County Sheriff**, was recently elected as regional president of the **Oklahoma Sheriff’s Association**. Richardson will chair the Central Region group of the Association, which represents elected sheriffs in all 77 counties and provide technical support, public safety promotion and policy.

- Newly elected municipal officials are now required by law (as of November 2005) to undergo training to familiarize themselves with the complexities and workings of municipal government and public service. The new law was established by SB 587, and requires elected municipal officers elected since Jan. 2005 to complete eight hours of certified instruction through the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. Classes will be offered throughout the state this spring. For more information, contact the Oklahoma Municipal League at (405) 528-7515.

- **Sam Webster**, a patrol officer for the city of **El Reno** was recently named

“Officer of the Year” by the **Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police**.

Webster was honored as a result of heroic and meritorious action when he thwarted a kidnapping and extortion attempt in late 2004. The episode saved the life of a noted El Reno citizen and sent one man to jail, while three others await trial. The Association has given the award for the past 11 years.

- The **Oklahoma River Water Transport Mobility Plan** was unveiled last month and stakeholders and the public can review the plan in January. The plan helps provide input and direction to transit projects on the **Oklahoma River**, which is administered by the city of Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority. After undergoing massive redevelopment as part of the MAPS projects, the river has played host to the Oklahoma Regatta, a national speedboat competition and the city’s annual Holiday Parade. The parade has been held at the river for the past two years, and draws a festive crowd of tens of thousands on the river-banks. This year, Red E. Fox, a ...See “Red E. Fox” on page four.



Red E. Fox greets kids at the Oklahoma River

“Class 1”

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Previously a “Class 2” community, attained in 1996, the city had worked feverishly to attain Class 1 status, with careful strategic planning and commitment.

“After we achieved Class 2 in ’96, we started looking at what it would take to get to a Class 1 rating – so this has been in the making for a long time,” said Mike Bower, director of the city’s emergency operations center and former Fire Chief.

“It was a city-wide effort, from our water department, to fire suppression to dispatch and our administration. For our citizens, it doesn’t affect their home insurance rating, but for our commercial and economic development prospects, the Class 1 rate is significant,” Bower said.

“Red E. Fox”

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mascot purchased by the AT&T Pioneers, made an appearance to promote proper 9-1-1 usage to regional children. Red E. Fox appeared on behalf of 9-1-1 ACOG. For more information on Red E. Fox, and the River Mobility Plan, contact ACOG.

ACOG Calendar

January

- 2nd ACOG Offices Closed for New Year’s Day
- 12th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
Special Meeting of ITTC, 1 p.m.
- 13th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 16th ACOG Offices Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 17th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
Central Oklahoma Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.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.

February

- 19th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 20th ACOG Offices Closed for President’s Day
- 23rd 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.

Central Oklahoma

Perspective

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments

21 East Main • Suite 100
Oklahoma City, OK 73104-2405
(405) 234-2264 • FAX 234-2200
TDD 234-2217 • www.acogok.org

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