

Regional Air Quality Important this Summer

The American Lung Association (ALA) released its annual 2006 State of the Air Report last month, and the Central Oklahoma region fared well. Oklahoma County received a “B” grade for ozone, and a “B” for particle pollution. Particle pollution is an emerging pollution threat that regional officials will be monitoring in coming years.

Although there were 12 Clean Air Alert Days for ozone issued in 2005, the ALA report only measured two “orange alert” days in Oklahoma County. The methodology used by the ALA borrows heavily from a scale that the Environmental Protection Agency utilizes. Clean air alert days issued in Central Oklahoma are based on a predictive model. High ozone readings don’t always correspond with the alerts, as public interaction and weather changes affect ozone build-up.

In other parts of the country, the ALA report finds that more than 150 million Americans still live in counties where they are exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollution. The report ranks the cities and counties with the dirtiest air, and provides county-by-county report cards on the two most pervasive air pollutants: particle pollution (more commonly called

“soot”) and ozone (more commonly called “smog”).

While air pollution is unhealthy for everyone, some people are at increased risk because of their age or health situation. Those groups include people with asthma, adults over 65, children under 18, people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD – chronic bronchitis and emphysema), people with cardiovascular disease, and those with diabetes.

The ALA also includes population data on those most affected by air pollution in Oklahoma County. The numbers include:

- 14,498 with Pediatric Asthma
- 41,837 with Adult Asthma
- 21,301 with Chronic Bronchitis
- 8,377 with Emphysema
- 167,493 with Cardiovascular Disease
- 35,319 with Diabetes.

The statistics are one of the driving forces behind ACOG’s annual clean air public education program. Aside from health impacts, air pollution has an adverse impact on the region’s economy, environment and quality-of-life. Since

1992, with the emergence of the Clean Air Alert Day program, the Central Oklahoma region has implemented a voluntary air pollution prevention program that has helped the metro remain in full compliance of all federal air quality policies.

Due mostly to the dry, hot weather in April, ozone levels were higher than normal this spring in Central Oklahoma. Based on forecasts for a warm summer, it is important to take air pollution concerns under consideration, even while the region maintains its “clean air” EPA designation.

A public education committee has been busy implementing a social marketing program for the region. The committee is comprised of a variety of partners including ACOG, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Chesapeake Energy, Devon Energy, OGE Energy Corp., the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, MetroTransit and ACOG member entities.

Currently, the public education program is involved with an ongoing electric lawnmower promotion with OGE. The promotion is being held in conjunction
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9-1-1 Begins Wireless Implementation

The crisis of wireless phones and how they interact with 9-1-1 became a topic that many Oklahomans took to heart last year. Thanks to a positive vote of the people, the crisis will be averted. Central Oklahomans went to the polls on December 13, 2005 and overwhelmingly reaffirmed their desire for an enhanced 9-1-1 system that works with all phones. Voters said, “Yes” to a 50 cent fee on their wireless phone bills.

Voters in Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian, Logan, McClain and Grady counties and 18 other counties across the state voted on the approval of the service charge. 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.
...See “Wireless 9-1-1” on page three.

Highway Tree Program, Urban Forestry Grants Available

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) has announced the application cycle and requirements for the **2006 Highway Tree Grant Program**. This competitive program awards communities with funding to plant trees and shrubs for the beautification of interstate highways or primary state highways leading into or through the cities. Since the program's inception in 1997, over 152 communities across the state have received grants for highway landscaping projects.

Eligible entities include local and state governments, public schools and universities, and Indian Nations and tribal governments. Funding should be spent on buying and/or planting trees, and/or the installation of drip irrigation systems.

Approximately \$325,000 in federal enhancement funds is expected to be available for selected projects this year. The maximum award available per project is \$25,000. Proposals require a 25 percent local match, while the grant will fund 75 percent of the remaining.

The deadline to submit an application is **July 7**. Application packets are available from the ODOT Beautification Office at (405) 521-4037 or beauty@odot.org.

Urban Forestry

In related grant news, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is still taking applications for the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program. The program is a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Council.

The urban forest grants are a 50/50 match grant. Eligible applicants include state entities, local governments, approved non-profit organizations, neigh-

borhood associations, civic groups, educational institutions and other tree-related groups.

The intent of the **Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program** is to enable local communities to effectively manage and improve their community forests. Components of a successful community forestry program involve much more than tree planting, but include planning, maintenance, protection, education and training, and utilization of the community forest resource. One of the most important aspects of urban and community forestry is maintaining a broad base of citizen support. Promotion of volunteerism and involvement of non-profit organizations will aid in securing citizen support.

Applications can be downloaded from the ODA Web site at www.oda.state.ok.us. The application deadline is **June 21**. Contact Mark Bays at the Oklahoma Forestry Services, 522-6158 for more information.

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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Biking Survey Reveals Insight

To coincide with Bike to Work Day last month, ACOG launched a new software program that allows for interactive Web surveys. The inaugural survey focused on the event and asked Central Oklahomans a variety of questions regarding biking and bicycle commuting.

Almost 300 respondents filled out the online survey, which ran from April to May 19. Over 30 percent of respondents were between the ages of 45-55. Those surveyed also lived in over 20 different communities, including some from outside of the ACOG region.

When asked if they owned a bicycle, fewer than five percent said that they did not own a bike. However, more than 50 percent said that they owned more than one bicycle.

Other findings:

- Over 78 percent of those polled said that they "drove alone" as their primary mode of travel. Eight percent said that they "always" rode a bicycle.
- When asked how often they ride a bike, 44 percent said that they rode

three or more times a week, and 56 percent said that they rode year round.

- Over 53 percent said that they utilized regional trails.

When asked why they didn't ride a bike, or ride more often, 45 percent said that they didn't feel safe riding a bike on the road.

ACOG staff is still compiling survey results and will share non-personal data with ACOG member entities. For more information, contact Lisa Kehoe, ACOG.



Metro Transit's new bike rack roll-out helped promote a recent ACOG survey.

“Air Quality”

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with Black and Decker and all six stations in the Central Oklahoma Citadel Radio group. Traditional, gasoline-powered lawnmowers and lawn equipment (referred by the Environmental Protection Agency as non-road mobile sources) contribute up to 30 percent of total air pollution. Details on this promotion can be found at www.letcleartheair.org.

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. To read more about the report, visit www.lungusa.org.

There will be more air quality programming throughout the summer. Communities and organizations needing information should contact Jerry Church, ACOG.

“Wireless 9-1-1”

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Since those elections, regional technical and administrative staff have been busy mapping out a strategic plan that is moving the system from election commitments to seamless reality.

The plan actually began in earnest in spring 2005, when call centers in Central Oklahoma began implementing the first phase of Federal Communication Commission (FCC) wireless orders.

Phase I provided area call takers with the call-back number of the wireless 9-1-1 caller and the tower location from which the 9-1-1 call was received. **Phase II** of the FCC orders provides the *location* of the caller which is graphically displayed on a map to the 9-1-1 call-taker.

Phase II implementation is being broken into three major steps. First, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data set and map are developed. Then, additional software on the 9-1-1 workstations around the region is installed to display and interact with the map. Finally, the system must work together in symbiosis, from the caller, to the community-based dispatcher, the wireless carriers, regional administration and the equipment and network systems.

In order for wireless calls to be plotted to a map, a highly accurate and dynamic map must be created to ensure updated ...See “Regional Map” on page four.



Around the Region

- **Oklahoma SAFE KIDS** is taking registrations for its annual “Tee Up for SAFE KIDS” fundraising golf tournament, scheduled for July 10 at Oak Tree Golf and Country Club. For nine years, the tournament has become a prominent fundraiser for the group, which works to prevent child injuries and fatal accidents. This year’s event also includes the popular Golf Ball Drop, where participants can buy a golf ball that will be dropped from a helicopter over the first hole. The ball that enters the hole wins \$2,500! To register for the tournament, call 271-5695.
- **Travis Mason**, a freshman at **Rice University** in Houston was awarded a national heroism award from the Boy Scouts of America. Travis, an Eagle Scout, is the eldest son of **Steve and Kym Mason** of **Oklahoma City**. He was recognized for heroism for his efforts in saving his mother’s life after a serious car accident two years ago. Travis and Kym’s story was a key turning point in gaining public support for our successful region-wide wireless 9-1-1 elections last fall.
- New housing is getting a boost from a non-profit Oklahoma group and a federal government agency. The **Community Action Agency** and the **U.S. Department of Agriculture’s** program is designed for low income to moderate-income individuals. The program’s purpose is to provide a window of opportunity for individuals or families to fulfill the American dream and boost privately owned housing in rural areas. The **Self-Help Housing Program** offers USDA loans that are subsidized. A large portion of Oklahoma and Canadian counties are eligible for the program. For more information, contact Klare Ly at the Community Action Agency, (405) 232-0199.
- Several Central Oklahoma 9-1-1 answering sites that provide **Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)** will be upgrading to a computer assisted software program this summer that will help expedite response to medically oriented 9-1-1 calls. The communities will transition from card-based instruction protocols to a computerized processing system designed to lead the 9-1-1 call-taker through each question and answer step of the dispatching sequence. Complete data records of EMD cases, including details such as time stamps, are stored in the system, providing public safety answering points with excellent management and quality improvement methods. The program is funded by a grant from the Oklahoma Department of Health.
- **Zach D. Taylor**, Executive Director of the **Association of Central Oklahoma Governments**, received the **2006 Administrator of the Year** award last month. The annual tribute, presented by the Oklahoma Chapter of the **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)**, recognizes a public administrator whose career exhibits the highest standards of excellence, dedication and accomplishment.



Zach D. Taylor (left) accepts the ASPA Administrator of the Year Award from Steven Housel, ASPA.

“Regional Map”

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information is being provided to the region’s call-takers. The 9-1-1 Association has contracted with GeoComm to develop a regional map that contains geographical information for the six counties served by the regional 9-1-1 system. Information that will be incorporated into this map includes streets, community boundaries, emergency response boundaries, wireless tower locations, railroads, water features (such as lakes, rivers and streams), landmarks and parks.

The GIS map that will be developed will be added to the upgraded 9-1-1 equipment. It is being designed to not only plot wireless 9-1-1 calls on the map, but also landline emergency calls, as well. The regional map will provide call-takers a valuable tool for plotting and dispatching 9-1-1 calls. It can also be used in mutual aid responses.

Together with local government GIS personnel throughout Central Oklahoma, 9-1-1 ACOG staff is working on contrac-

ACOG Calendar	
June	
8th	Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
13th	FireSAFE Foundation, 11:30 a.m.
20th	9-1-1 Technical Committee, 9:30 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.
July	
4th	ACOG Offices Closed for Independence Day
13th	Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m. Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
14th	Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 2:30 p.m.
18th	Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.

tual relationships and network design for routing and delivery of data from wireless callers from all six wireless carriers operating in the region. This assures

that accurate information is delivered to each individual 9-1-1 call-center.

For additional information or questions, contact Steve Willoughby, 9-1-1 ACOG.

Central Oklahoma

Perspective

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