

Local Group to Establish ULI District Council

A forum held last month to discuss the current renaissance of the urban region and the exciting possibilities of its future was a formal step to initiating a local district council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). The session brought together local leaders in urban development and former Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy to discuss how the region can benefit from a more concentrated and carefully constructed approach to land use development.

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the institute now has more than 34,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As a multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

The quest for a local ULI council has been in development for the past year. A host committee comprised of several

real estate and urban planning professionals, including ACOG Executive Director Zach Taylor, set the agenda for the kickoff meeting with hopes that a local ULI chapter can elevate the reputation of the region even further. Issues such as transportation, urban housing and retail development were among the topics discussed. Group members also toured the newly renovated Skirvin Hotel, which serves as a premier example of creative public private partnership building, inner city construction and creative financing strategies.

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI previously assisted the region with recovery efforts after the 1995 Murrah building bombing.

Members say that ULI is a trusted idea place where leaders come to grow professionally and personally through sharing, mentoring, and problem solving.



After being shuttered for two decades, the newly renovated Skirvin Hotel opened last month. The hotel is considered a great example of thoughtful planning espoused by the Urban Land Institute.

ULI members commit to the best in land use policy and practice.

For more, visit www.uliokc.com.

Association Releases Transportation Projects Funding Report for FFY06

A report reflecting federally funded transportation projects approved in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area during federal fiscal year 2006 was recently released by ACOG. Highway and transit projects were funded and implemented in the region through federal funds made available to the state and metropolitan area through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

A suballocation of funds, known as Surface Transportation Program Urban-

ized Area (STP-UZA) funds, helped provide for a number of street and intersection improvements, including adjacent sidewalks that have been or will soon be constructed in communities within the ACOG region.

Along with the STP-UZA funds, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation provided federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to the region to promote and enhance air quality in Central Oklahoma, helping the region ...See "Funding Report" on page three.

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Henry Proposes Bioenergy Center for State

As part of growing efforts nationwide to reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil, Gov. Brad Henry announced an ambitious proposal last month to create a world-class Oklahoma Bioenergy Center (OBC) to focus on research, development and education. If approved by the Legislature, the OBC would pool top researchers from throughout Oklahoma as well as across the nation.

"With 60 percent of the nation's oil supply coming from foreign countries, many of which are openly hostile to the U.S., the need for renewable energy is clearly a matter of national security," the Governor said. "Not only would the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center play a vital role in reducing America's dependence on foreign oil, but it would be a great boon

for Oklahoma in a number of ways. This institute would help diversify our state's economy, protect our environment, create high-paying jobs and contribute to a revitalization of rural Oklahoma."

Gov. Henry said Oklahoma is ideally suited to have a leading role in biofuels and bioenergy research. The state produces many of the most promising energy crops, such as switchgrass and other native grasses, and Oklahoma boasts a long and venerable tradition in energy and agriculture. The University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation would be founding consortium members of the OBC.

Biofuels research supported by the OBC would include development of feedstocks, collection and transportation, conversion technologies and distribution. Because the center would provide a particular boost for the state's rural and agricultural economy, it would also feature an education component to help

interested farmers and ranchers make the transition to energy crops and adopt best management practices.

Gov. Henry said the Bioenergy Center could be funded with \$40 million over a four-year period. Coupled with the state's oil and gas industry, Gov. Henry said, the OBC would make Oklahoma a leader in the energy arena.

"A thriving oil and gas industry certainly does not nullify our need to pursue other sources of energy," the Governor said. "In fact, more and more oil companies today are making the necessary investments in alternative energy. Aside from the concerns stemming from our dependence on foreign oil, the fact is that oil continues to get harder and harder to find and more expensive to produce."

"We will need every arrow in our quiver to face the challenges of energy production and usage in the 21st century. With the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center, Oklahoma can make a tremendous contribution to the challenges ahead."

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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9-1-1 ACOG to Recognize National Telecommunicator Week in April

They are the "heroes behind the scenes" when emergencies occur. Public safety dispatchers provide a critical service to the Central Oklahoma region and all emergency personnel while performing their duties with integrity, quality, accountability and respect. Call-takers are the first people "on the scene" of every crime, fire and medical emergency.

To honor the region's dispatchers, the 9-1-1 Association of Central Oklahoma Governments is recognizing their efforts during National Telecommunicator Week **April 8-14**.

Each year, the second full week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators. Telecommunicator Week was first conceived by Patricia Anderson of the Contra Costa County (Calif.) Sheriff's Office in 1981. Members of the Virginia

and North Carolina chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) became involved in the mid-1980s. By the early 1990s, the national APCO organization convinced Congress of the need to create "National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week."

9-1-1 ACOG will be encouraging all 22 area answering points to participate in activities during the week, which will include daily door prizes, a commemorative lapel pin, a dispatch center decorating contest and official proclamations recognized by member municipalities.

The winning center will be announced on April 12, and receive a pizza party for each shift, a traveling trophy and tickets to see the Oklahoma City Hornets.

For more information, contact Wendi Marcy, ACOG.



Wellness Week Puts Focus on Health

Central Oklahoma Turning Point (COTP) will be sponsoring the third annual Oklahoma Wellness Week, **March 31-April 6**. This year's event is being co-chaired by First Lady Kim Henry and Sue Hale, executive editor of *The Oklahoman*.

The week will kick off with the second community-wide health fair at the Bricktown Events Center on Saturday, March 31, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The name of the fair this year is "Strong & Healthy Oklahoma - a Health & Wellness Fair."

COTP will be launching the distribution of a free statewide health handbook that day called "Strong & Healthy Oklahoma Guide Book," which will contain 148 pages of health information, tips and resources. The morning will also begin with *Walk This Weigh* along the Bricktown canal. Regional employers are encouraged to send corporate teams as a part of their wellness activities.

There will also be a series of presentations during the week at the OU College of Public Health. Noted health experts will discuss topics such as the first 25 years of HIV/AIDS, the new politics of health, and reducing health care costs. On April 5, there will also be a presentation on aging and a workshop on ADHD on April 6 given by Dr. Daniel Amen at the Center for Mind, Body and Spirit at Integris. Kim Henry will host companies who have been recognized as Certified Healthy Businesses at a luncheon at the Governor's Mansion on April 4.

For complete details and schedule, visit www.healthyoklahomans.org.

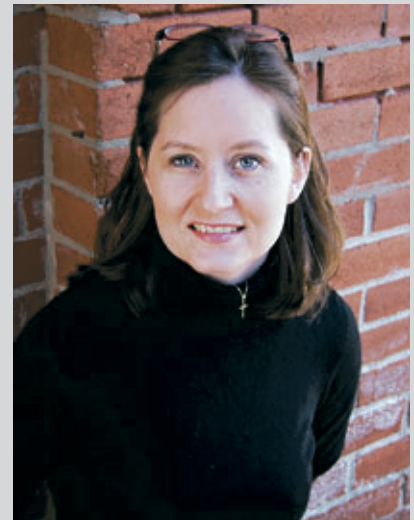
"Funding Report"

...Continued from page one. maintain its air quality attainment status with the Environmental Protection Agency. The Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA), which operates the METRO Transit bus system in the Oklahoma City metro area, used a portion of these funds for Clean Air Alert Day operations, guaranteed rides home for bus patrons in case of emergency and marketing transit as a clean air strategy. Cleveland Area Rapid ...See "Transportation" on page four.



Around the Region

- **Oklahoma City** was recently named one of the **100 Best Communities for Young People** by **America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth**. This marks the second year that the metro has garnered the honor. The recognition celebrates outstanding innovative efforts by cities across the country with improving the well-being of young people. A panel of experts chose the communities based upon each community's efforts to fulfill essential promises critical to the well-being of young people. Oklahoma City was noted for its efforts to improve schools through the MAPS for Kids initiative, as well as other public-private partnerships.
- The **Del City Fire Department** has named **Jim Hock** as its new Fire Chief. Hock is a native of Del City and has served the department for 24 years. A jack of all trades, he has been a firefighter, deputy chief, deputy emergency manager and fire marshal. He is very active with **Operation FireSAFE**, the region's juvenile firesetting prevention program.
- The **American Red Cross of Central Oklahoma** will be honoring regional heroes at a ceremony to be held on March 8 at the **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum**. The 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 group describes a hero as "someone who has gone beyond the scope of his or her job to help another in critical need, in a setting of unusual circumstances, or by displaying exceptional characteristics." For more information on the event, call the American Red Cross at 228-9500.
- The **National League of Cities** is accepting nominations for its **Awards for Municipal Excellence**. The initiative recognizes outstanding programs that improve the quality of life in America's communities. Up to eight winners will be nationally recognized at a ceremony at NLC's Congress of Cities Conference and Exposition in New Orleans in December. Nominated cities must be members of NLC. Nominations must be postmarked by May 3. Visit www.nlc.org.
- **Susan Yingling** has joined the **ACOG** staff as Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. Yingling holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Oklahoma and a master's in writing from Oklahoma City University. She will assist with preparation of the agenda for the ACOG Board of Directors and providing in-house communication and coordination. Yingling previously served at a similar position for the Sarkeys Foundation in Norman, and has written for several newspapers. She is an avid writer and busy mother away from ACOG.



Susan Yingling, ACOG's new Administrative Assistant.

“Transportation”

...Continued from page three.

Transit (CART), operator of the Norman METRO Transit bus system, used CMAQ funds to purchase electronic fareboxes to reduce bus idling times. The remaining funds were utilized by ACOG for a public education program that provided information on how citizens can help minimize summer ozone pollution.

The Oklahoma City urbanized area obligated its suballocated federal funds, which totaled over \$16.7 million. Major street improvements that will be implemented using federal funds include widening projects in Norman on Lindsey from Oakhurst to 24th Ave SE and on 24th Ave SE from Imhoff to Lindsey, improvement of the intersection of S. 4th and Classen in Moore, arterial pavement markings at various locations in Oklahoma City, and construction of sidewalks along SE 44th Street and portions of Bryant Avenue in Del City.

In addition to these developments, other transportation projects in the region were supported with other federal and state funds, and matched with either state or local dollars. An additional \$50 million in funding obligated in the past fiscal year allowed for numerous projects to be completed or initiated.

Some of these state-sponsored projects include improvement of I-40 from Morgan Road east to Rockwell, installation of cable barrier in the I-35 median between SH-9 in Norman and the SH-74

junction in Goldsby, construction of the relocated SH-152 between Council and MacArthur in Oklahoma City, widening of Meridian Avenue from the Oklahoma River to Reno, relocation of MacArthur Boulevard between SW 74th to SH-152 west of Will Rogers World Airport, intersection modification and signals at US-62 and 24th Street in Newcastle and numerous resurfacing and bridge repair projects throughout the region.

Finally, Federal Transit Administration funds assisted with the purchase of various transit capital items, property and bus maintenance, provision of METRO Link services and other programs to assist with federal Welfare-to-Work objectives, and provision of special transit services for elderly and disabled citizens.

The full report is available on the ACOG Web site at www.acogok.org.

ACOG Calendar

March

- 6th 9-1-1 Technical Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 8th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 9th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 15th Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA), 10:30 a.m.
- 20th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.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.

April

- 12th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 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.

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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