

United Way Campaign is Off the (Pie) Charts

ACOG staff participated in the association's annual United Way Pacesetter fundraising campaign in August and the results were worthy of 100 years of celebration. The theme this year revolved around the state's Centennial, which helped set the tone for an exciting week of fun, entertainment and regional educational opportunities.

This year's ACOG United Way drive organizers were Randy Entz, Associate Planner, and Wendi Marcy, 9-1-1 Special Programs Officer.

ACOG celebrates the United Way for an entire week. This year, the week started off with a presentation by Bill Weaver, President of the Daily Living Centers. Visits to the Metropolitan Better Living Center and the John W. Keys Speech & Hearing Center followed.

State history became the focus of a lunch time team trivia contest, in which ACOG staff were partitioned into groups and each team had to answer questions about the state's past, as well as identify people and places during a slide show.

Aside from the regular poker tournament, the highlight of the week was a new activity in which an unfortunate and unwilling staff member received a pie

in the face. Three staff members, nominated by their peers, became candidates for the ignoble achievement. The person with the most money in the jar "won" the honor. To the relief of Zach Taylor and Doug Rex, Jerry Church was forced to take a pie in the face for the campaign. But it was all for a good cause! The contest itself generated over \$500. Overall, ACOG staff increased contributions by 33.4 percent over the prior year (which was also a ground-breaking fundraising year), with a per capita average of \$511.52.

The week then capped off with the increasingly popular annual chili cook-off and auction that incorporated donations from many regional organizations, individuals and businesses. Teams also convened again to present "team auctions" that added to the fun.

The United Way of Central Oklahoma last year ranked ACOG as a Top Ten contributor per capita for organizations with 20 or more employees in annual workplace campaign giving. Several ACOG staff are also members of the Horizon Circle (those that contribute more than \$500). The Pacesetter program is designed to set the "pace" for the public fundraising campaign.



Due to suspicious accounting and overwhelming popularity, the editor of Central Oklahoma Perspective became an unwilling victim of a pie in the face. The "contest" was one of the features of ACOG's annual United Way of Central Oklahoma pacesetter campaign.

The United Way of Central Oklahoma serves the region as a "community safety net" by improving the health, safety, education and economic well being of families and individuals in need. The United Way helps support numerous partner organizations and agencies that reach one out of three Central Oklahomans
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REAP Application Process Underway

The 2008 Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) grant process is currently underway, with communities in the Central Oklahoma region with a population of under 7,000 eligible to apply. The maximum dollar amount for grants is \$50,000, which can be used for a variety of projects in the areas of community development and transportation.

REAP funding is important to the region because it allows small communities

to develop necessary infrastructure and transportation projects that they otherwise may not have full resources to implement. The program consistently receives more requests for project funding than there is funding available.

Projects can include, but are not limited to the following: Water quality projects, including acquisition, treatment, distribution and recovery; solid waste disposal;
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ODOT Launches Safe Routes to School Program

Last month, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced that funding will be available for the federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program in Oklahoma.

Studies have shown that less than 15 percent of today's elementary and middle school children currently walk or bike to school and as much as 25 percent of morning rush hour traffic comes from parents driving their children to school. Recent reports have also stated that childhood obesity has tripled since 1980.

The SRTS Program is designed to encourage the nation's children to be more active and healthy. The \$612 million federal program was approved by Congress in 2005. It provides funding to support education and enforcement programs

and help communities improve infrastructure such as crosswalks, sidewalks and bike paths. Each state administers its own program and solicits and selects its own projects for funding. Oklahoma's SRTS funding is \$7 million through 2009, apportioned annually.

The Oklahoma SRTS Program grant application period will officially begin October 1, 2007.

Ernestine Mbroh, ODOT's SRTS Program Director, is charged with the task of working with local governments and organizations to gather public input, identify needs, analyze projects, and guide proposals through the process.

Eligible applicants are schools, school districts, private schools, state and local

governments, as well as tribal and regional agencies. Nonprofit organizations may apply if sponsored by one of the above named entities. Projects can be for single or multiple schools, as well as entire school districts. The program is

100 percent federally funded and matching funds are encouraged, but not required.

ODOT is also a proud sponsor of International Walk to School Day on October 3, 2007.

For more information on the Safe Routes to School program, contact Ernestine Mbroh at embroh@odot.org or 522-3570. Visit www.saferoutesinfo.org and www.walktoschool.org online.



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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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Editor: Jerry Church

Layout: Ken Brown

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Conference will Highlight Developments in Alternative Fuels

The emerging Oklahoma biofuel industry is the subject of Grow: The Second Annual Oklahoma Conference on Biofuels October 16-17 at the Sheraton Conference Center in Oklahoma City. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, will deliver the keynote address.

Abundant native grasses and substantial research efforts in alternative fuels position Oklahoma to emerge as a leader in biorefining. Last year, Governor Brad Henry established the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center, a \$40 million research and development initiative.

"Switchgrass and other native Oklahoma prairie grasses show great potential for alternative fuels and can offset some of the downside of corn," said Henry. "Studies show the U.S. will need many renewable products besides corn to create transportation fuels to replace a portion of imported petroleum."

Farmers and ranchers will be the cornerstone of the emerging biofuel industry and are wondering how soon they will be able to sell a dedicated energy crop. With a net energy output more than four times that of corn ethanol, investors and

policy makers are turning more attention to Oklahoma Switchgrass and other agricultural products as attractive sources of biofuel.

ACOG's Yvonne Anderson will be moderating a session on transportation fuels and markets. Other speakers include leading researchers in agricultural feedstock development and refining technologies, federal and local officials and representatives from the biotechnology, auto and petroleum industries.

Attendees will be updated on the latest news and developments in the biofuel industry:

- The Oklahoma Bioenergy Center
- Washington Update: The new farm and energy bills
- Biofuel feedstock developments
- Advances in feedstock conversion technology
- The controversy over fuel vs. feed supply
- Biofuels and water supply management
- Impacts and opportunities for fleet managers, end users and marketers

...See "Bioenergy" on page four.

Trick or Treat Night to be October 31

Regional leaders in Central Oklahoma have recommended Wednesday, Oct. 31 as the night for Trick or Treat activities in the metropolitan area this year.

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments Board of Directors, comprised of local elected officials, recommends Trick or Treat night in the region to keep a uniform date for children, families and public safety officials.

The ACOG Board has helped schedule trick or treat night since the 1980s. A uniform date helps plan for the safety and welfare of children in the region and allows everyone to have fun around the area on the same night. Many years ago, communities set their own schedules, and it caused great confusion and inconsistency in the region, as trick or treaters and their families could visit several communities over a two or three-night span to take in Halloween festivities.

The Association also recommends several tips for a safe Trick or Treat night:

- Drivers should be aware of children running or crossing the street.
- Homeowners who distribute candy should keep their porch lights on and keep their yards free of items that could cause Trick or Treaters to fall.
- Children should go out with their parents or older siblings.
- Make sure eye and mouth holes in masks are large enough to see and breathe through easily.
- Parents should check all candy to make sure it is safe.

Communities still determine their own hours of activity on Wednesday, Oct. 31. For further details, call your local city hall.

“UW Campaign”

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For more information, visit the United Way of Central Oklahoma at www.unitedwayokc.org.



Around the Region

- **Larry Stevens**, City Manager of **Edmond**, was presented the **Gerald Wilkins Award** at the **Oklahoma Municipal League's** annual conference last month. The award recognizes a city administrator that best exemplifies the principles established by the City Management Association of Oklahoma. **Yukon's Jim Crosby** was also nominated. The **Don Rider Award**, which honors outstanding municipal employees, was presented to **Stephen Murdock**, who serves as Edmond's Legal Counsel.
- **Willa Johnson** was elected to serve as County Commissioner for **Oklahoma County District One**. Voters named Johnson in a race over former state Representative **Forrest Claunch**. The seat was open because former Commissioner **Jim Roth** was named state Corporation Commissioner by the Governor this summer. Johnson, a long time councilmember of “Seventh Heaven” (Ward Seven) for the city of **Oklahoma City**, also served the **ACOG Board of Directors** as Vice-Chair. She took oath at her new office on September 17 and began serving immediately.
- **Trish Weedn**, former State Senator, and current Executive Director of the **Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC)**, was honored by the **Girl Scouts of America Sooner Council** as one of 2007's “Women of Distinction.”
- **ACOG** hosted a visiting Panamanian official enrolled in the U.S. Department of State's **International Visitor Leadership Program**. Staff assisted **Maria Donoso de Vasquez**, Vice Director for Panama's Conservation of Nature, with information on regional environmental programming and social justice.
- The **Governor's Water Conference**, held annually in the fall, attracts hundreds of people from across the country to discuss water issues. The event is hosted by the **Oklahoma Water Resources Board** and other water-related sponsoring organizations. The 28th Annual Governor's Water Conference will be held in Oklahoma City at the Cox Convention Center on October 23-25, 2007. This year's conference will be held in conjunction with the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute's Annual Water Research Symposium. Visit www.owrb.ok.gov to register.
- **State Farm Insurance** recently donated \$5,000 in grant funding to two regional programs that help youth at risk. The grants will be equally allocated to **Operation FireSAFE**, the region's juvenile firesetting prevention program, and **Risk Watch**, which is an accident-prevention program that utilizes a school-based curriculum. **John Wiscaver** and **Kevin Garrett** from State Farm Insurance, hand delivered the check, which will be used to continue public education and marketing efforts for Operation FireSAFE and curriculum and classroom materials for Risk Watch.



John Wiscaver (left) and Kevin Garrett (right), from State Farm Insurance, present a check to Jane Sutter (center) for use in two programs that ACOG assists in administering.

“Bioenergy”

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Registration is \$45. For more information or registration, visit www.GrowOK.com or call 1-800-203-5494. The Oklahoma Biofuels Conference is presented by the Office of the Secretary of Energy, State of Oklahoma, in collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture and the Office of the Secretary of Environment, State of Oklahoma.

“REAP Grants”

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sanitary sewer construction or improvement; provision of health care services, including emergency medical care for rural areas; construction or improvement of telecommunication facilities; improvements of municipal utility distribution systems; expenditures designed to increase employment; implementation of emergency communications systems; non-administrative costs for engineering studies and preliminary architectural designs; construction of public facilities; and others.

Last year, REAP funds helped several regional economic and community development projects in Oklahoma County, Arcadia, Slaughterville, Marshall, Cedar Valley, Jones City and Lake Aluma.

REAP grants last year also funded transportation projects in Okarche, Union City, Cedar Valley, Jones City, Luther, Logan County, Lexington, Oklahoma County, Piedmont and Logan County.

October

- 5th JLUS Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 11th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 18th JLUS Public Hearing, 7 p.m.
- 19th JLUS Policy Committee, 10 a.m.
- 25th 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.
- 29th REAP Workshop, 10 a.m.

November

- 2nd JLUS Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 6th Regional GIS Technical Committee
- 8th Areawide Planning Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 9th Garber-Wellington Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 12th ACOG Offices Closed for Veterans Day
- 13th Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.m.
- 20th Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
- 22nd ACOG Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Day
- 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.

Application packets will be mailed to eligible entities in the Central Oklahoma region this month, and a workshop is planned on October 29.

The REAP program is subject to annual budget decisions and action by the state legislature. For more information, contact Diane McCullough, ACOG.

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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