

9-1-1 System Celebrates Two Decades of Dedication

Enhanced 9-1-1 service in the Central Oklahoma region celebrated its 20th year of operation on May 1. The anniversary was celebrated by members of the 9-1-1 Saves Lives committee, regional 9-1-1 dispatchers, city and county officials, and representatives from towns and cities throughout Central Oklahoma at a Wild West themed event held at the Historic Farmers Market.

KWTV-9 Anchor Alex Cameron served as the master of ceremonies for the event, which included a look at the history of 9-1-1 in Central Oklahoma, a motivational speech by keynote speaker Stewart Lee, award presentations, door prize drawings and costume contests. Following the meal and presentations, some attendees tried their luck at the sport of rodeo with a ride on the mechanical bull, while others settled scores the old fashion way in a “quick draw” competition. Others took a spin around the dance floor to the music of Oklahoma City’s own Gregg Luther and the White Trash Rodeo band.

Organizers honored 28 dispatchers and/or supervisors who have worked in 9-1-1 for 20 or more years for their “two decades of dedication”. Receiving special recognition for their role in Central



Oklahoma City dispatcher Steve Williamson with his wife Maria, enjoy the 9-1-1 20th Anniversary Celebration.

Oklahoma’s 9-1-1 system since the beginning were ACOG’s Jane Sutter and Carolyn White and Oklahoma City’s Lucien Jones.

The Telecommunicator of the Year award was presented to Benjamin Curry, of Edmond Central Communications. Curry was nominated for the award by his peers. Also honored was the 9-1-1 Child Hero, three-year-old Madelyn Eaves

of Guthrie. The girl is credited for calling 9-1-1 from her mother’s cell phone when an underlying medical condition rendered her then pregnant mother unconscious. The girl’s call generated national media exposure.

The evening left everyone with a renewed spirit for the job that they do, how far the system has come, and wondering what the next 20 years will bring.

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Long-Range Plan to Encompass the Public

Over the past few months, ACOG staff has been working on new visualization tools to enhance the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and the 2035 Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Plan.

The emphasis of the PPP is to inform the public about regional transportation issues, to establish the process in which the public can be engaged, and to ensure that the Metropolitan Planning Organi-

zation’s programming genuinely reflects the region’s values as determined through public input.

A new marketing concept for the 2035 OCARTS Plan was unveiled in April that provides the OCARTS Plan with a friendlier brand name of Encompass 2035. The new strategy was designed to serve as a conduit for more robust public engagement, and includes a distinct logo and ...See “2035 Plan” on page four.

Regional Rideshare Program Ready to Launch

ACOG is launching a regional rideshare program this month that is designed to alleviate traffic congestion, reduce car emissions and help motorists and commuters save time and money. The rideshare program, named GetAroundOK, is a free, web-based, user-driven system that can be accessed at www.GetAroundOK.com.

The website is secure and easy to use. Participants can go online and open an account in minutes. The personal information is safe. The site will produce potential matches for carpooling based on gender, smoking, driving and other preferences. GetAroundOK.com will then search the regional database to see if there is anyone who has a similar commute schedule and route.

Commuters can also monitor their trips and measure the impact on environmental benefits and cost savings based on gasoline and vehicle wear and tear.

The program also comes with a Guaranteed Ride Home component. Those registered in the program will receive a limited number of free taxi rides home in case of an emergency.

Ridesharing is more than carpool matching. GetAroundOK is a multi-modal program that also incorporates other mobility options such as transit routes, bike and pedestrian routes, park and ride lots, and other commuting resources.

There are also individual modules that employer groups can personalize for their own employees. The modules can be set up so an employee can search within the module for co-workers, or those who work in the vicinity.

Work places with large workforces benefit from ridesharing. As a result of ridesharing, employers may see increased employee productivity and attendance, reduced employee turnover, stronger work relationships, an attractive recruiting tool, reduced demand for parking and an enhanced corporate image.

GetAroundOK is funded by Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality improvement funds from the Federal Highway Administration and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. It is administered in the Central Oklahoma region by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG).

ACOG staff are currently marketing the program through business-to-business networking.

For more information, contact Meredith Williams, ACOG.



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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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Regional Transit Dialogue Ongoing

Since the completion of the Regional Fixed Guideway Study (FGS) in 2005, there has been growing interest by Central Oklahoma's community leaders, business leaders and citizens in expanding the region's public transportation opportunities. While it seems like common sense that the social, environmental and economic benefits of improving mobility and increasing transportation choices within our region would be great, there is currently no consensus on how to reach such a goal.

Faced with this situation, ACOG has initiated a Regional Transit Dialogue to bring together public and private interests to collaborate on the future of public transportation within Central Oklahoma. Led by Tom Love and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, the Dialogue is designed to gauge public appetite for a regional transportation system that places more emphasis on bus and rail travel.

In addition, the Dialogue may result in answers to the following basic questions: What would be the best governing struc-

ture for a regional transit system in Central Oklahoma? How would it be funded? What are the region's implementation priorities? How do we engage local citizens and garner public support?

In order to develop collaborative answers to these questions and a strategy, the Regional Transit Dialogue (RTD) will be led by a Steering Committee and supported by four working subcommittees; focusing on finance, governance, technical and land use and public outreach.

It is anticipated that the RTD process will last approximately a year and that the Steering Committee will meet every other month. In addition, Steering Committee members will be asked to provide input to the membership of each of the subcommittees.

Although the RTD is a new initiative, it is expected that the Fixed Guideway Study (FGS) will serve as a starting point for the discussions. More information about ACOG and the contents of the FGS are available on ACOG's website at www.acogok.org.



Economic Stimulus a Good Thing for Region

by John G. Johnson

Contrary to popular belief, government is not always slow on the draw. On February 17, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), better known as the economic stimulus package. In a month since, the governments in the greater metropolitan area have developed a plan to receive \$33.67 million dollars of the stimulus funding.

This portion of the package will be devoted to improving transportation infrastructure that will benefit over 30 municipalities in Central Oklahoma.

The pie has been baked, so put aside the arguments behind the strategy and motivation for the bill, and consider the real beneficiaries. Local governments need the funding and will spend it wisely.

For the past few months, elected officials and staff representing nearly every municipality in the region have met to conceive a unified process to efficiently implement the funding. Criteria established at the federal level made meeting the deadline a challenge. Priority was placed on projects that were "shovel ready," meaning that they could be ready to go by summer.

Another consideration was equity and balance. Most of the stimulus funding will be assigned in proportion to a city's population. But all incorporated communities in the central Oklahoma transportation planning area, regardless of size and population, receive at least a minimum allocation.

Accountability and transparency were key to the discussions. There will be a structured process in place to ensure all parties are allocating your tax dollars in a proper and responsible manner. Monthly reports will be available online.

I'm proud to say that our region came together, compromised and reached an agreement that fits the needs of all of the communities involved. We feel like we have a plan that will allow our cities to start rebuilding our roads as soon as possible.



Around the Region

- The **Oklahoma Department of Commerce** is hosting a conference focusing on the state emerging wind industry. **Wind Commerce 2009: The Future is Now** is scheduled for June 23-24 at the Embassy Suites in **Norman**. The conference is intended to help state employers, small businesses and communities explore the economic development opportunities involved with wind power. To register for the conference, visit www.OKcommerce.gov/energy.

- **Gov. Brad Henry** announced the promotion of **Oklahoma Department of Transportation** Director **Gary Ridley** to the cabinet post of Transportation Secretary. Ridley has served as the head of ODOT since 2001. Ridley, a registered professional engineer, has worked at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for some 40 years, earning promotion to agency director in 2001. "During his lengthy career in public service, Gary Ridley has done great things for the state of Oklahoma, and I'm thrilled that he has agreed to serve in my cabinet," said Gov. Henry. Ridley will remain ODOT director.

- The **National Association of Regional Councils** (NARC) will award its Lifetime Achievement Award to former **ACOG** Executive Director **Zach D. Taylor, Jr.**, posthumously. In recognition of his 30 years as ACOG Director and community leader, the national recognition will be made at NARC's annual conference June 3 in Denver.

- Regional elections in April helped usher in many new and familiar public servants. In **Mustang**, **Jay Adams** was reelected to the council. In **Piedmont**, **Vernon Woods** and **Horace Cooley** won council seats. **Jason Blair** was

named to Ward 3 in **Moore**. In **Noble**, **Gary Hayes** was reelected Mayor, and **Tim Del Dotterer** won a Ward seat. **Bobby Williams** was elected Mayor of **Tuttle**. Voters in **Guthrie** named **John Wood** and **Patty Hazlewood** to their respective Wards, while **Lewis Pringle** and **Elton Matthews** returned to serve **Forest Park** as Trustees. In **Harrah**, **Larry Fryar** was elected Mayor, and **Gordon Jeney** returned to serve as Ward 3 councilmember. Citizens of **Jones City** named **Randall McMillin** and **Teresa Shuffield** to the Board of Trustees. New Trustees in **Luther** include **Sue Woods**, **James Jackson** and **Gerald Martin**, while **Marsha Jefferson** returns for the city of **Spencer**. Finally, **Warr Acres** elected a new Mayor in **Patrick Woolley**.

- **Dorothy Danen** has joined the **ACOG** staff as an accountant for the Finance Division. Danen comes to ACOG with over 30 years of accounting experience. She is a native of **Wisconsin**, has an accounting degree from the **University of Central Oklahoma**, and became a CPA in 1995. At ACOG, her primary focus will be monitoring financial duties for 9-1-1.



Dorothy Danen, ACOG Accountant

“2035 Plan”

...Continued from page one.

a dedicated website, at www.acogok.org/2035. Other public engagement techniques, such as a speaker’s bureau, a role-playing consensus building exercise called Red Dirt Monopoly, a printed brochure, and social-networking and new media applications will also be part of the new process.

Another component is a public survey that was launched in mid-May. Input from the survey will identify strategies to improve auto, bus, pedestrian, truck, rail and bicycle travel for the 2035 Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Plan.

Results from the survey will identify or recommend the most acceptable means of financing transportation improvements, as well as gauge the level of interest in improving alternative transportation modes.

The survey will also provide planners with insight into public wants and needs, and gauge responses to important plan issues such as travel habits, employment travel, intermodal elements and

June

- 2nd 9-1-1 Technical Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 5th ACOG Orientation. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 9th COUASI Budget Committee, 1:30 p.m.
- 11th Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 16th Clean Cities Stakeholders, 1:30 p.m.
- 17th Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory 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.

July

- 14th COUASI Budget Committee, 1:30 a.m.
- 16th Areawide Planning and Technical Advisory Committee, 9 a.m.
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee, 10 a.m.
- 21st Operation FireSAFE, 10 a.m.
- 28th COUASI Working Groups, 12:30 p.m.

other facets in transportation planning. Preliminary survey results will be

unveiled in the next issue of *Central Oklahoma Perspective*.

Central Oklahoma *Perspective*

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