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CHOCTAW NATION HOSTS ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR AT WILL ROGERS ELEMENTARY IN MCALESTER

On Wednesday, May 10th, departments of the Choctaw Nation presented an Environmental Fair for 419 first through fourth grade students at Will Rogers Elementary School in McAlester. The students were able to learn more about what they can recycle in the school's already established recycling program.



Increasing Environmental Stewardship through education and outreach



Students learn the impacts that their actions can have on the environment

The Environmental staff talked about the impact of litter, motor oil and other items that are often dumped into our area waterways. The Forestry staff presented the story of Smokey the Bear and talked about forest fires. The Ag Outreach staff talked about pollinators, types of soil, facts about fish and seed germination.

Three Norman schools discuss at summit how they are going green

by Sidney Lee / Norman Transcript Staff Writer

NORMAN — Three Norman schools are part of the growing movement to make Oklahoma schools green.

Norman High School, Lincoln Elementary and Terra Verde Discovery School all took part in the Oklahoma Green Schools Summit May 15th.

Nine schools - ranging from elementary schools to high schools - shared their green efforts with 14 schools in total attending the summit.

"I think we had the most schools present at the summit since it has started, so that was pretty cool," Norman High biology teacher Adam Lifsics said.

Norman High School hosted the summit last year and presented on the school's aquaponics system.

Lifsics said this year, his students discussed how they expanded the system, along with their expanded outdoor garden and recycling project.

He also said there was a broad range of not just ages represented, but also the projects themselves were diverse.

One of his favorite presentations was by a school in Tulsa that had its own small barn where they raised chickens and mini-goats.

"They had a really cool monarch butterfly area where they are really building up that population," Lifsics said.

He didn't get to see all of Lincoln Elementary's presentation, given by some of the school's second-graders, but he said they worked on a pollinating garden.

"We learned an entrepreneurial marketing skill from them," Lifsics said. "They made really cool pamphlets showing the different processes with their garden."

Learning and getting ideas from other schools, specifically other students, is one of the important parts of the summit. At the end of each presentation came a Q&A session. While some questions came from adults in the room, Lifsics said most came from students.

He said students tend to get a little envious of other projects they see, which

prompts them to look at how they can either tweak their own projects to work better or start a new project from scratch.

"They think this stuff is cool," Lifsics said. "It's invaluable collaboration. It's real-world learning here. It's OK if every single project isn't from square one; you don't have to reinvent the wheel with every project."

Terra Verde Headmaster Eric Snyder said his students had a chance to reflect on their own projects, as well as connect with other students around the state looking at similar problems in their own schools and communities.

Terra Verde's presentation centered around how the school monitored and improved its green initiatives.

"The project they presented today was our trash-less lunch program," Snyder said.

He said their school found out about the Oklahoma Green Schools Initiative last year and started a committee of middle schoolers who developed different projects and was charged in up keeping the different projects, including taking care of the school orchard, checking the recycling bins and hosting clean-up days at a local creek.

During lunch, students from the committee look at how many trash items students have, then give or take away points accordingly. At the end of each month, the class with the least trash in their lunches is awarded a special Green Owl Award.

"I thought our kids did really well with their presentation," Snyder said.

He and his students were interested in a project from another middle schooler about a website he made and then promoted to let people know about his school's various green initiatives.

Oklahoma Green Schools presentations don't just focus on the end result; students also talk about different grants used for the project, where they went to get materials and how they actually implemented the projects in their school along with any



Norman High School students discussed the school's expanded garden, pictured, along with the recycling project and aquaponics program.

Three Norman Schools... (continued)

setbacks they may have faced along the way.

Lifsics said this helps him as a teacher get ideas for what he can do to lower the cost of projects, which is often the biggest barrier to starting a green initiative.

Snyder agreed.

"Every school can do something small," Snyder said. "And it doesn't have to be something expensive; trash-less lunch is a prime example."

**Story and photo reprinted with permission:
Norman Transcript; May 15, 2017**



About our Members.....Keepin' Enid Green

Each edition of the OKRA News is going to highlight one of our members by asking them to answer a few basic questions. The spotlight this month is on Keepin' Enid Green (KEG). Answers are courtesy of Chris Feeney, Owner/Operator KEG.

What are your biggest recycling challenges? The biggest recycling challenges in northwestern Oklahoma are location and education. I operate recycling locations in Enid, Ponca City, and Perkins, OK. We rely on brokers and larger MRFs to move our materials. The distance from my locations to major markets in OKC and Tulsa costs me dearly. I must sit on materials much longer to meet volume expectations. This reduces revenues and the types of materials we can recycle in rural Oklahoma. Recycling education is not adequate. Many consumers believe if it has a recycling symbol, it can be recycled. Contamination negatively affects recycling programs everywhere.

Which material would you like to add to the recycling program? Without a doubt, the answer is



glass. I truly believe glass should be at the forefront of our program, yet we recycle very little. Sorting, packaging, and transportation costs are high. There are not enough vendors. We are truly in need of a large outlet in Oklahoma.

There are many challenges with recycling. Why do you do it? Besides the obvious environmental reasons, my focus is on the workers and the local economy. Recycling in my area directly or indirectly employs about 150 people with developmental disabilities and provides them with approximately \$1 million in annual income. This money is then spent locally. This fragile population often has challenges to gaining and maintaining employment. Recycling provides a number of different job opportunities in integrated locations to meet most people's interim occupational needs. It is a win-win situation for everyone.



Oklahoma Recycling Conference Returns to Stillwater

The 2017 Oklahoma Recycling Conference will be held Wednesday, Oct. 11, at the ConocoPhillips Alumni Center, Oklahoma State University.

Hosted by OKRA, the full-day conference returns to Stillwater after being held in recent years in Tulsa and Edmond.

Internationally known speaker, Chaz Miller, Director of Policy & Advocacy for the National Waste & Recycling Association, will deliver the keynote address "Communicating with Customers about Contamination."



Other conference topics include "How to Talk with your Legislator," "Curbside Subscription Services," "Close the Loop," "Textile Recy-

cling" and "Product Stewardship." An optional tour and workshop may be offered at the end of the day.

The Conference Planning Committee is still working on the program and registration details, which will be made available soon at www.recycleok.org/events-activities.php. Continental breakfast, buffet lunch, refreshment breaks and parking will all be covered with registration fees that range from \$50 to \$95 (discounted rates for OKRA members!).

The event is sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Environment Quality, Oklahoma State University, Choctaw Nation, Indian Nations Chapter of SWANA, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful, City of Stillwater, Batliner Recycling, and American Waste Control.

Additional sponsors are welcomed! For sponsor information, please contact info@recycleok.org.



AROUND THE STATE



OKRA & OCES's "Close the Loop" display was featured at OSU's Earth Fest in April. The display and OKRA brochures are available for your next event. Email info@recycleok.org to learn more.



On Tuesday, April 25th, the Science students of Tushka High School partnered with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to offer an electronics and tire recycling collection event. The event was from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. and the students helped unload cars and sort materials. The day of the event brought in 168 tires with numerous requests to bring in additional tires, which resulted in a weekly collection of 1,894 tires. Eight full Gaylord boxes, 24 CRT monitors, and 30 TV's resulted in 12,100 pounds of electronics being collected as well.

TUSHKA HIGH SCHOOL & CHOCTAW NATION ELECTRONICS AND TIRE RECYCLING EVENT

Event was sponsored in part by an EPA Environmental Justice Small Grant.



Fresh Paint Days Revitalizes Oklahoma Communities, Prevents Waste

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful's Fresh Paint Days program is often associated with community beautification and eradication of blight in municipal areas. While Fresh Paint Days does fulfil these community needs, the program serves another purpose as well.

Founded in 2005, Fresh Paint Days was created with the collaboration of KOB and H-I-S Coatings of Oklahoma City. The program was intended to help groups restore the face of their communities, with H-I-S Coatings providing paint for communities in need. H-I-S Coatings collects the leftover paint throughout the course of the year, and in giving this excess paint to communities, this paint is deterred from waste collection. This creative solution not only provides H-I-S Coatings an opportunity to repurpose surplus paint, but benefits communities in need of a facelift.

H-I-S Coatings has donated thousands of gallons of paint in the 12 years the program has existed. Joe Cox, founder and owner of H-I-S Coatings, said, "We use all of those recycled (paints) and make different colors out of them. We donate a lot."

Beginning in June, community groups can apply for a Fresh Paint Days grant. The selected groups are provided paint and a stipend for supplies, sponsored by the Public Service Company of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. In 2016, 49 community structures were restored in 38 communities, with participation in 29 counties.

"With the collaboration of efforts by H-I-S Coatings and KOB to utilize and reuse surplus paint, therefore 'recycle' it, we can change the face of Oklahoma's communities one building at a time," said Jeanette Nance, Executive Director of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. "We love that we are able to provide this program that does so much good to keep Oklahoma beautiful!"

Following the projects' completion, an online contest determines finalists in the Communities Primed for

Change contest, which is a comparison of the projects' before and after shots. In 2016, Cheyenne High School BPA won this contest, earning a \$1,000 cash prize.

Fresh Paint Days exemplifies what can be achieved with the collaboration of state agency, nonprofit, and corporate entities when pursuing a unified goal of benefiting communities. Applications for the 2017 Fresh Paint Days program will be accepted starting June 1.



Visit keepoklahomabeautiful.com for more information regarding this program and Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. Keep Oklahoma Beautiful is a statewide nonprofit with a mission to empower Oklahoma citizens to preserve and enhance the state's natural beauty and ensure a healthy, sustainable environment.

For more information, contact Natalie Evans
natalie@keepoklahomabeautiful.com, 405-286-9141

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Requests Nominations for Environmental Awards

Nomination forms available for annual Environmental Excellence Competition & Celebration

Oklahoma City (May 22, 2017) – Individuals, businesses, organizations, and communities are continuously finding ways to better Oklahoma and preserve its natural beauty. Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) supports these efforts and desires to provide recognition to Oklahomans through the Environmental Excellence Competition and Celebration (EEC).

This annual celebration recognizes businesses, individuals, organizations, and communities in nine categories: KOB Youth Awards, Business, Collegiate Effort, K-12 Educators & Educational Institutions, Government Programs, Law Enforcement, Nonprofit Organization, Volunteer Community Group, and the Team Builder Award.

There are numerous deserving people and organizations across Oklahoma, but to be in the running for an EEC award, they must first be nominated by someone from the public. To nominate an individual or organization, visit www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com. There is no fee for nominations. The deadline for nominations is August 5, 2017.

Finalists will be recognized at the 27th annual Environmental Excellence Competition and Celebration, which is November 18, 2017. The event will be held at the Embassy Suites in Norman.

“Our annual EEC banquet is a time for KOB to recognize those community groups, corporations and individuals who go above and beyond to make a better, more



Pictured are organizers of Celebrate COMMUNITY, and annual earth day festival in Tulsa, which received Best of the Environmental Best in 2016.

healthy, more beautiful Oklahoma,” said Jeanette Nance, KOB Executive Director. “We love to let those folks know they’ve done well and we recognize that. Nominate someone, some company, some deserving group in your community today!

This is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the work of individuals and organizations working to keep Oklahoma beautiful and preserve this great state.

Press Release from Keep Oklahoma Beautiful

A word from OKRA Advocacy Committee Chair, Daniel McCune

Hello fellow OKRA members and Oklahoma recycling enthusiasts, this is Daniel McCune, chair of the Advocacy committee. I just wanted to take a moment to let you know about the efforts of the committee and its plans. Currently, the committee is working on a “one-pager” that could be used to highlight the mission of OKRA and any current events, bills, or projects OKRA supports. The one-pager will be presented to the board at the next OKRA meeting, and if approved would then be available to members. Look for that in August. The committee is also looking for a person to serve as a bill reader who can sift

through the new legislation that is proposed each session. The structure of our legislature makes this task difficult currently, as there is not an easy search tool available. If you ever see a recycling related piece of legislation or a bureaucratic action that will impact you, don’t hesitate to reach out to me. In addition, if you have reached out to OKRA in the past looking to serve on the advocacy committee, check your spam folder, I have sent out emails, but have not gotten strong responses. My email is mccune@danny@gmail.com. Feel free to contact me at any time.



The M.e.t.'s Tire & E-waste Collection Event

By Emily Dittus

Tires and E-Waste are bulky and abundant, taking up enormous amounts of space in our landfills. Proper disposal of these items can

help significantly in reducing the never-ending stream of solid waste and keeping our land clean. Another reason The M.e.t. encourages tire recycling is explained by Executive Director Graham Brannin: "Unattended tires are consistently a problem in Oklahoma for many reasons. They are a breeding ground for mosquitoes and with the threat of the Zika virus and reoccurring issues with West Nile, it is critical that we are proactive and remove the opportunity for these diseases to spread in and around Tulsa."



In May, The Metropolitan Environmental Trust (The M.e.t.) held a special collection event for tires and E-waste open to the residents of Bixby, Broken Arrow, Claremore, Collinsville, Coweta, Glenpool, Jenks, Owasso, Sand Springs, Tulsa and Tulsa County. The M.e.t. holds approximately 4 of these events each year. For these events, The M.e.t. defines E-Waste as anything that uses batteries or has a power cord and weighs less than 50 pounds. Otherwise it is considered solid or bulky waste and must be disposed of in a different way. In addition, The M.e.t. accepts CRT monitors and televisions under 50 pounds for the small fees of \$10 and \$21 respectively.

These fees are in place in order to cover the high costs of processing these items. When it comes to tires, up to 15 will be accepted per person and none are accepted from commercial or industrial sources.



At the event in May, The M.e.t. collected 1,826 pounds of E-Waste and about 350 tires. The M.e.t. also teamed up with the City of Tulsa at their permanent Household Pollutant facility for an expanded collection where The M.e.t. organized the tire and E-Waste collection on two Saturdays yielding hundreds of more tires and about 5,000 pounds of E-Waste. Tulsa also collected medications and ammunition, which usually aren't accepted taken at that facility; truly two impactful events.



Keep an eye out for Oklahomans recycling!

Catch them in the act and send us a photo and/or article describing their recycling or composting efforts. We would love to highlight them in an upcoming issue of the OKRA News.

Send photos, articles and other information to OKRA News Editor, Trudi Logan, at trudi.logan@us.af.mil.

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2017 OKRA MEMBERS!

Corporate Gold Member

Republic Services

Corporate Silver Member

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Corporate Bronze Members

American Sanitation

American Waste Control

Covanta Energy

Corporate Members

Closed Loop Recycling

DocuGUARD

Dryvit Systems

NeWSolutions

Ripple Glass

Service Recycling

Sue's Recycling and Sanitation, LLC

United Electronic Recycling, LLC

Non-Profit/Government Partners

Ada Recycling Coalition

Ardmore Beautification Council, Inc.

Arkansas Recycling Coalition

City of Ada

City of Moore

City of Norman

City of Tulsa

City of Yukon

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful

Metropolitan Environmental Trust (the M.e.t.)

Otoe-Missouria Environmental Dept.

Pride in McAlester

Show, Inc.

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Ellen Bussert

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Michael Patton

Robert Pickens

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Carol Preston

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Jade Urash

Larry Wright

Educators

Kristy K. Ehler

Luann Waters

Student Members

Madison Feeney

Makayla Feeney

Maria Feeney

Jayme Tuck

Not a current member of OKRA? Consider joining to-day! To learn about membership levels and member benefits, such as discounts to OKRA events, download our membership brochure from www.recycleok.org.

To join or renew your membership in 2017:

- ♦ *Send completed membership brochure and check by mail to OKRA, PO Box 521154, Tulsa, OK 74152-1154.*
- ♦ *Go to www.recycleok.org/join-us.php and access the online membership form toward the bottom of the page. You can pay online via PayPal, by mail (send your check to the PO Box above), or by credit card (follow the PayPal link and select "Pay by Credit Card" instead of PayPal).*

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OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION