

# THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

February 2017

Welcome to the OKRA online newsletter. Please feel free to share our newsletter with anyone who might enjoy reading it. To receive electronic notification of newsletter availability and general recycling announcements, sign-up for the OKRA list server on our website: [www.recycleok.org](http://www.recycleok.org)

## OKRA Welcomes New President and 2017 Board of Directors

The Oklahoma Recycling Association welcomes new President, Tracy Horst, who recently took over the reins from long-time president, Traci Phillips. Tracy served as the Choctaw Nation's Director of Environmental Sustainability for several years, but recently stepped up to their Program Director of Natural Resources. Tracy has been actively involved with OKRA for over seven years.

Tracy has spearheaded recycling efforts and environmental education within the Choctaw Nation. Her goal is to help change the way our communities think about their environment and make significant improvements for generations to come.

### OKRA board members joining Tracy for 2017 are:

Vice President: Chris Feeney, KEG Curbside Recycling  
Secretary: Sara Ivey, ODEQ  
Treasurer: Robert Pickens, American Waste Control  
Past President: Traci Phillips, Natural Evolution, Inc.

### Executive Committee Board Members:

Ilda Hershey, OSU Sustainability  
Michael Patton, Land Legacy  
Lynn Malley, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Anne Napier, Oklahoma County Coop. Extension Service

### At Large Board Members:

Kara Berst, Chickasaw Nation  
Trudi Logan, Tinker Air Force Base  
Kathy Moore, Oklahoma Composting Council  
Jeanette Nance, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful  
Garmon Smith, Ada Recycling Coalition  
Maureen Turner, City of Tulsa  
Larry Wright, Western Oklahoma

The OKRA board is excited about serving in 2017 and hopes to further our efforts to increase and improve recycling in Oklahoma.

<http://www.recycleok.org/okra/about-us/>

## OKRA Honors Traci Phillips and Michael Patton

The Oklahoma Recycling Association recognizes Traci Phillips and Michael Patton for their decades of service in leadership roles.

Traci Phillips, president of Natural Evolution, Inc., an electronics recycling company in Tulsa, served as president of OKRA for the past 10 years. Tracy is a successful business woman with a passion for protecting the environment. She joined OKRA because of her interest in recycling and stepped into the position of president during a time when the organization was trying to redefine and reorganize itself. She provided leadership that brought about structure and positive changes and is responsible for facilitating ideas into working groups. As OKRA's president, Traci provided steady guidance and vision to the leadership team.



Former OKRA President Traci Phillips addresses Oklahoma Recycling Conference participants

She dedicated herself to both the development and execution of goals for the organization while keeping fellow volunteers on task. During her tenure, Traci helped OKRA work with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and Oklahoma Legislature to pass a State Recycling Goal bill. Traci also had a profound effect on communities such as Ada, by providing support for electronics recycling.

Michael Patton, executive director of Land Legacy, has been organizing recyclers since the 1990s, when he was a founding member and treasurer of Focus on Recycling Oklahoma (FOR Oklahoma). FOR Oklahoma was a merging of the Central Oklahoma Recycling Coalition (CORC) and other recycling groups from around the state. The name FOR never caught on with the organiza-

## OKRA Honors Traci Phillips and Michael Patton (cont.)

tions' members or the general public. Michael, who is known for having a million ideas a minute and a great sense of humor, came up with the idea of calling the organization OKRA (Oklahoma Recycling Association.) He said this name would be easy to remember and people would identify with it as being an Oklahoma-based group. He was correct. Later reorganized in 2005, Michael again served as OKRA's treasurer, a position he held through 2016.



Former OKRA Treasurer Michael Patton with fellow board members Jeanette Nance and Sara Ivey

countless community recycling organizers across the state and was able to instill in many communities the need to start recycling programs. In one Oklahoma community, for example, he was responsible for the city council's initiation of a household hazardous waste day, which has become an annual event, and greatly anticipated by its residents.

We are grateful to Traci and Michael for contributing to OKRA's many ac-

complishments and activities over the last decade with K-12 schools, municipalities, citizens, the legislature, Oklahoma recycling professionals, and our many non-profit partners. Over these 10 years, OKRA grew its listserv to nearly 600 subscribers, published 30 newsletters, and continued to expand audiences with the addition of our OKRA Facebook page.

Under Traci and Michael's leadership, OKRA board and council members worked to provide a forum of networking through eight annual conferences, a referral services system that fielded hundreds of recycling queries, and a unified voice to engage legislators in recognizing the business of recycling.

Thank you Traci and Michael for spending countless hours to guide OKRA in fulfilling its mission. Given your new roles as Past-President and Executive Committee Board Member, we trust you will keep us on track to continue growing OKRA.

### **A Note from our Past President....**

It has been an honor to serve as president for the Oklahoma Recycling Association for the last decade. We have increased the presence of recycling through collaboration and education so most Oklahomans have access to recycling within a reasonable driving distance. I am excited to see what the next chapter brings for OKRA under Tracy Horst's leadership and the new board. Thank you for allowing me to serve the recycling community.

Traci Phillips

Having led the Metropolitan Environmental Trust for 21 years, Michael became known as "Recycle" Michael. His expertise in virtually every aspect of recycling, whether running collection centers and effective outreach strategies or balancing budgets and organizing volunteers, has been invaluable to OKRA. "Recycle" Michael spoke to

## OKRA's 2017 Oklahoma Recycling Conference

Wednesday, October 11, 2017  
OSU Alumni Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Keynote Speaker: Chaz Miller  
Director of Policy & Advocacy  
National Waste & Recycling Association

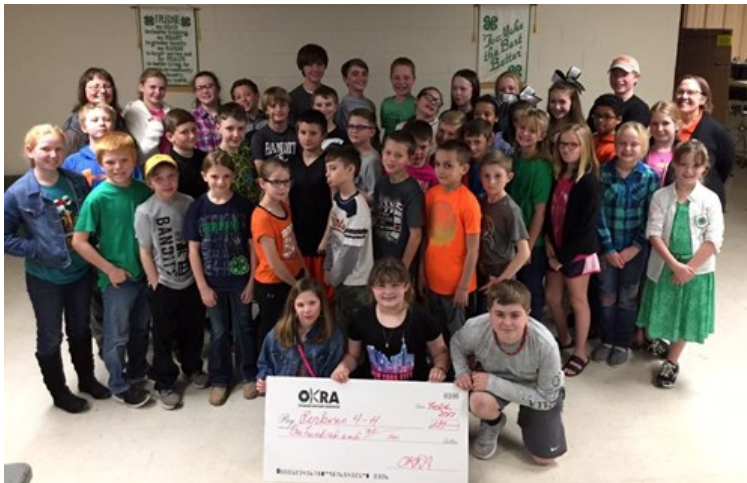
**Discounted conference fees for OKRA Members.  
Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend!  
Please email [info@recycleok.org](mailto:info@recycleok.org) for information about becoming a conference sponsor or exhibitor**



## Perkins 4-H Group Puts Power Toward Service

The Perkins, OK 4-H group has helped their schools accomplish something no other Oklahoma group has done. For two years in a row, the 4-H group collected the greatest amount of aluminum cans for their schools per capita in the state. As a result, they not only donated the money they raised from recycling aluminum cans to the schools but also the \$1000 that they won each year from the Can Manufacturers Institute. As a member of the Executive Board of the Oklahoma Recycling Association, Lynn Malley had the privilege of presenting a \$100 check from OKRA to Donna Dollins' 4-H group in Perkins two years in a row. Donna is the 4-H leader for the group, and she has been instrumental in encouraging the kids to collect cans and recycle.

**State  
Winner of  
the Great  
American  
Can Round-  
up for 2  
Consecutive  
years!**



If your school has done something outstanding in the area of recycling, let us know. OKRA is always looking for schools to support!



## OKRA Recruits members at Environmental Expo

OKRA Executive Board Member Lynn Malley exhibited and spoke at the 2017 annual Environmental Expo at OCU on February 3, 2017. She reserved a corner of her exhibit table for OKRA with the special offer of two years of membership for the price of one for the first four teachers who signed up. We are pleased to welcome 13 prospective new members as a result!

Please let all your teacher friends who promote recycling in their schools know that their cost to join OKRA is just \$5/year. Membership benefits can be found on the OKRA website at <http://www.recycleok.org/okra/>.



**OSU Senior Tyler Peters and OKRA Board Member Lynn Malley at the Environmental Expo**

If you are interested in Reducing, Reusing, Recycling, Repurposing, or Composting, please join us. There's always room for more at OKRA's table!

OKRA is actively recruiting new members. Our definition of recycling is broad and includes the whole gamut of the three Rs, as shown in this illustration of the integrated waste management hierarchy.





# The M.e.t.'s 15<sup>th</sup> Annual America Recycles Day Banquet

by Lauran Drummond



This year's America Recycles Day, ARD, was nationally recognized on November 15th. In order to celebrate, the M.e.t. hosted its annual America Recycles Day Banquet at the Gilcrease Museum to recognize organizations and individuals who have shown significant dedication to recycling. There were four main awards: Green Government, Green School, Green Recycling Business, and Green Non-Profit.

The Green Government Award was given to the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. Led by Environmental Director Kandice Taylor, the town's Environmental Dept. established a recycle drop off location for the rural area it serves. The drop off location consists of a trailer with labeled bins where citizens can recycle paper, plastic, and aluminum. The Environmental Dept. also hosts an E-Waste Collection event twice a year to assist citizens in recycling their unused electronics.



*Thlopthlocco's Kandice Taylor*

The Green School Award was given to Inola Middle School. The Inola Middle School's Green Team was organized by Carol Holland to audit the energy usage, indoor air quality, lighting, restroom faucets and drinking fountain use for the ENTIRE Inola school system. This included all classrooms, offices, cafeterias, gymnasiums, etc. for grades K-12! The Green Team summarized their findings and presented their results,



*Inola's Carol Holland*

then recommended changes to benefit all Inola schools. They have also promoted recycling in the schools and beyond. For all of their hard work, they were also awarded the Oklahoma Green Schools Flag!

The Green Recycling Business Award was given to NORDAM. In the last 12 months, NORDAM has recycled approximately 60.5% of their waste - a whopping 432 tons of material! In early 2015, the firm implemented a company-wide single stream recycling program, encompassing all nine of their Tulsa locations. Manager of the Project, Mandy Leemhuis, and employees worked tirelessly to make company-wide recycling successful. NORDAM is an inspiration to businesses everywhere!



*NORDAM's Mandy Leemhuis*

Last but not least, the Green Non-Profit Award was given to Sustainable Tulsa. Under their Executive Director, Corey Williams, Sustainable Tulsa brought sustainability to the forefront of discussion within the business sector. Sustainable Tulsa created a Scor3card to help show businesses the benefits of and path towards sustainability.



*Sustainable Tulsa's Corey Williams & Alison Stone*

Scor3card is a web based app. that educates, reports, archives, and provides a platform for celebrating and clarifying sustainability. In the last year, two dozen area companies participated in a beta test of the Scor3card which officially launched on November 17<sup>th</sup>.

All of the award winners went above and beyond to promote and maintain a green environment through recycling. The M.e.t. hopes to see you next year for their 16th America Recycles Day Banquet!



# OKRA Board Hires Ellen Bussert as Office Manager

Oklahoma's statewide recycling association, which formed around 1997, began the second chapter of its history when it was reorganized in 2005 as the Oklahoma Recycling Association. Since then, all of OKRA's organizational functions and activities have been performed by volunteers. Although the volunteer model has been working for the most part, the Board has had ongoing discussions about the advantages of adding a part-time staff person to provide continuity and support to the organization. In October of 2016, the OKRA board offered Ellen Bussert, one of OKRA's hardest-working and dedicated volunteers, the part-time position of Office Manager.

The office manager will support the OKRA Board by performing routine clerical duties such as correspondence and data entry. This will include information dissemination through e-mail, list serve, Facebook and the telephone. One of the most important functions of this position will be to track and process memberships and sponsorships, and maintain the membership database. The office manager will specifically provide support to the President, Secretary and Treasurer of OKRA and assist work groups. Additionally, the office manager will assist



Ellen (right) speaks with Trudy Nevland at the Oklahoma Recycling Conference

with conference planning/activities as requested by the conference Committee Chair. As time permits, the office manager will also assist with OKRA Educational Programs and other special events.

Ellen Bussert is a lifelong recycler and has been a recycling advocate for many years. As a founding member and Past Chairman of Central Oklahoma Recycling Coalition (CORC) she was a part of the effort to get curbside recycling for the residents of Oklahoma City. CORC later merged with OKRA. Ellen was a member of the first OKRA Executive Board. She became Secretary of the Board in 2006, and maintained that position until moving to an At Large Executive Board position in 2012. Ellen is a past board member of the Ada Recycling Coalition and Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. Currently, Ellen represents the City of Bixby, Oklahoma on the Metropolitan Environmental Trust board of trustees.

Ellen graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Relations. She is married to Ron Bussert and lives in Bixby, Oklahoma. They have two grown sons. Ellen enjoys playing the piano, singing, knitting, cooking and taking her dog, Ginger, for walks when she is not busy volunteering for her church or the community.

## HELP US GROW...



### ***OKRA Memberships expire at the end of February!***

***If you haven't already paid your 2017 dues, be sure to join/renew before March 1st .***

***To learn about membership levels and member benefits, such as discounts to OKRA events, download our membership brochure from [www.recycleok.org](http://www.recycleok.org).***

#### ***To join or renew your membership:***

- ♦ ***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](http://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).***

## REGISTER NOW!

**2017 Arkansas Recycling Coalition/Virco  
Spring Recycling/Sustainability Summit**

**March 30, 2017**

**Virco Manufacturing  
Conway, Arkansas  
9:00 AM – Noon**

**To register visit the ARC website  
([www.recycleark.org](http://www.recycleark.org)) or call the  
ARC office (866) 290-1429.**

**To view other recycling-related  
events in our regions, visit  
[www.recycleok.org/okra/  
oklahoma-events-activities](http://www.recycleok.org/okra/oklahoma-events-activities) and  
scroll down to "Other Related  
Conferences"**

## Pilot Program Eases Disposal of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

A new pilot program in four Oklahoma communities is helping residents properly dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications – a move that not only enhances safety in the home, but also is good for the environment.

The OK Pharmacy Drug Takeback Pilot Program is sponsored by the OK Department of Environmental Quality and the Product Stewardship Institute and will run through June. It is possible that one or two additional pharmacies may be added in March, the halfway point of the pilot program.

Lynn Malley, OKRA Board member and OSU Cooperative Extension assistant state specialist for solid waste management, serves on the Advisory Committee for the pilot program. She is excited about this program because it will help keep medications out of the landfills and the water system and can even help prevent accidental poisonings in the home.

“All too often, people simply dispose of over-the-counter and prescription medications by throwing them in the trash or flushing them down the toilet,” Malley said. “Both methods allow medications to be released into the environment and contaminate our drinking wa-



Collection Box at Razook's Drug

ter supply and harm aquatic life. This program allows people to get rid of medications that are no longer needed in a safe, legal manner. This service is free and no questions are asked.”

Collection receptacles are available at Razook's Drug, 1518 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave., Stillwater, Oklahoma; Moore RX, 2018 S. I-35 Service Road, Moore, Oklahoma; Family Health Pharmacy, 10021 S. Western Ave., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Pawnee Indian Health Center, 1201 Heritage Circle Exit, Pawnee, Oklahoma. There is no fee to dispose of medication through this program. Another bonus is it will help cut down on the nonmedical use of prescription drugs.



Razook's co-owners and pharmacists, Lisa Hladick and Courtney Redding speak with OKRA Board member, Lynn Malley, about the take back program

Courtney Redding, co-owner of Razook's Drug, said it is common for people to have leftover medications in the home. She also pointed out it is a good idea to clean out the medicine

cabinet at least once a year. There is a higher chance of accidentally taking the wrong medication if your medicine cabinet is cluttered with old prescriptions and outdated over-the-counter products. Redding said she has been getting positive feedback from customers who have come in to dispose of old medications.

Article by:  
Trisha Gedon  
Communications Specialist  
Agricultural Communications Services  
Oklahoma State University

**RETURN YOUR LEFTOVER MEDS**  
to a nearby drug take-back location!

Collections will run through the week of June 5, 2017.

<b>Moore Rx</b> 2018 S. I-35 Service Rd Moore, OK (405) 735-5101	<b>Razooks Drug</b> 1518 West 9th Ave Stillwater, OK (405) 377-4445
<b>Pawnee Indian Health Center</b> 1201 Heritage Circle Exit Pawnee, OK (918) 762-2517	<b>Family Health Pharmacy</b> 10021 S. Western Ave Oklahoma City, OK (405) 692-3370

Have a positive impact on public health & the environment.  
Safe - free of charge - no questions asked.

Questions? Contact the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) at  
(617) 236-4771.





**Keep watch 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](mailto:trudi.logan@us.af.mil).