

THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

February 2020

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 listserv: [www.recycleok.org/get involved](http://www.recycleok.org/get_involved)

Curbside Recycling Approved for BA

The Broken Arrow Municipal Authority (BAMA), which is comprised of five City Councilors and oversees the City's Sanitation service, unanimously approved adopting a curbside recycling program for Broken Arrow refuse customers at its Nov. 5 meeting.

The approved recommendation includes:

- ◆ Converting the entire city to once per week collection via rerouting
- ◆ Issuing all customers a 96-gallon blue recycling cart with the option to opt-out
- ◆ Issuing all customers a black refuse cart with multiple size options
- ◆ Implementing a walk-up service for disabled and elderly customers
- ◆ Discontinuation of the city-provided trash bag program
- ◆ Replenishing the city's sanitation fleet with automated trucks for collecting recyclables



"I appreciate all the heartfelt thought and consideration Council members have put into this decision. It's a sorely needed service if Broken Arrow is to continue on the trajectory of growth we have been," said City Manager Michael Spurgeon. "Now with the Authority's approval, the real work starts as the city's staff begins putting together a public education and operational plan in order to ensure we have a highly successful rollout in the next year."

Full implementation is expected to take until fall 2020, due to logistical reasons, such as purchasing and distributing carts, determining new routes, training personnel and purchasing or retrofitting trucks.

"We understand this is a major change in how we do business," Spurgeon said. "We will be working with residents before implementation to answer all their questions, and we'll continue to be there with answers for them long after it's rolled out."



Curbside Recycling Approved for BA (cont.)

Details regarding the size options for carts and the walk-up service will be determined during the implementation phase. The \$620,000 budgeted annually for the city-provided trash bag program will be reallocated to purchase carts and other equipment needed for program implementation.

Future considerations for the Authority include the study and implementation of a green waste collection program and separating the Sanitation Division from the General Services Department to create its own department.

“Broken Arrow residents have always been proud of the service our Sanitation Division provides. Let me assure you, that quality service is not going anywhere. It is just adapting to a modern world that has different demands,” Spurgeon said. “Broken Arrow is seen as a leader among communities in the state and around the region, and implementing this curbside recycling program catches us up on the one area where we’ve been behind the curve.”

Adapted from the Broken Arrow Focus Newsletter, January 2020

Thanks for your Service to OKRA

The Oklahoma Recycling Association would like to express its sincere thanks to Robert Pickens for serving as treasurer from 2017-2019. Robert is stepping down from his OKRA responsibilities to commit more time to his position as Vice President of Recycling for American Waste Control.

During his tenure as treasurer, Robert helped lead OKRA from being an organization to an official 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Robert used

his extensive operations and management experience to establish sound financial record keeping practices for OKRA. He spent countless hours managing the financial records and taking care of all the banking duties.

Robert also served on the OKRA Board and Executive Committee from 2006 until 2019 providing leadership and expertise on recycling and solid waste management. He served on several committees including Bylaws and Membership. Additionally, Robert is a frequent presenter of recycling market trends at OKRA’s annual recycling conference.

Thank you Robert for all of the time and energy you have spent helping OKRA grow and prosper. As you step down to the role of OKRA Technical Council member, we wish you the best.



OKRA at ARD Banquet

OKRA is a proud supporter of the MET’s America Recycles Day Banquet. The 2019 event was held at the Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks, OK. Representative Trish Ranson and Representative John Waldron and his wife Kristin Waldron attended to celebrate the accomplishments of the MET’s 2019 Award Winners.

Left to right: Ellen Bussert, Jeanette Nance, Michael Patton, Krista Waldron, Rep. John Waldron, Rep Trish Ranson and Lynn Starnes.



OKRA Welcomes New Board Members for 2020!



Amanda Scofield is an Environmental Programs Specialist at the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality in Land Protection, Solid Waste and Sustainability. She is from Oklahoma City and has a degree in Natural Resource Ecology and Management from Oklahoma State University. Amanda is an outdoor enthusiast who is passionate about protecting the environment and living sustainably. She looks forward to working with OKRA and encouraging all Oklahomans to recycle and compost regularly.



Megan Waters is the Executive Director of Pride In McAlester/Keep McAlester Beautiful. She has held this job since January 10, 2019. After one year, she states she might have half an idea what is going on! Before Keep McAlester Beautiful, she was a local radio DJ for 30 plus years. She likes to tell people she was born in the same hospital as Reba McEntire... not that they ever met!

McAlester has volunteer recycling. Citizens take their recyclables to the Recycling Center, or various Choctaw Nation recycling drop bins located around the city. It has always been the goal of Keep McAlester Beautiful to have curbside recycling. They continue to promote it, and have had some very promising meetings very recently, but curbside recycling for McAlester is still a ways away, according to Megan. Having been a recycler for years, Megan finds this job gives her the freedom to do more. "There is fun in the challenge of recycling more than you trash!"



Bob Masterson is the Fleet/ Solid Waste Superintendent for the City of Edmond. He started for the city in 2011 as Fleet Superintendent and assumed the Solid Waste and Recycling role in 2013. Previous to working for the City of Edmond he spent over a decade in both corporate and vocational education. Bob is an avid outdoorsman and has a passion for preserving the outdoors and managing resources for future generations. He looks forward to helping OKRA educate people about recycling and seeking long term solutions to the issues.

Get Involved with OKRA in 2020 - Join a Work Group or Committee

There are *many* opportunities to join in the work of OKRA to promote the business of recycling in Oklahoma. We are looking for members to serve on our work groups, committees and champion causes in 2020. Your term of commitment is one year, with the option to continue. Please look at the options below and select an area to serve. You can go to the Join a Work Group or Committee on the Get Involved page on the OKRA website to contact the chair. For general information please contact Ellen Bussert at okra.secretary@gmail.com. Details about work groups, committees, and champion causes are provided on the following page.

Get Involved with OKRA in 2020 - Join a Work Group or Committee (cont)

Work Groups

Advocacy Work Group (Chair: Michael Barton): The Advocacy Work Group aims to make OKRA better known among Oklahoma legislators. We would like OKRA to be the “go to” organization for recycling and resource recovery issues in our state. This group participates in the Oklahoma Center for Non Profits Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Another potential project for 2020 is to bring attention to secondary markets for glass in Oklahoma.

Education Work Group (Chair: Sara Ivy): The Education Work Group is headed in a new direction this year - from school projects to community education events. Lunch and learn workshops are currently projects being explored for this year.

Committees

Conference Planning Committee (Ellen Bussert, Staff Chair): This committee handles the program, logistics and fundraising for the annual Oklahoma Recycling Association Conference.

Communications Committee (Chair position is open): This committee updates OKRA website content, manages and posts updates to the listserv, maintains engagement via social media (Facebook), arranges OKRA exhibit opportunities, and publishes the OKRA Newsletter.

Membership Committee (Ellen Bussert, Staff Chair): This committee facilitates membership renewals, solicits new members, updates the membership structure and brochure, and recognizes OKRA members.

Champion Causes

Composting (Natalie Mallory, Champion): Natalie promotes composting as a resource recovery strategy and relays updates from the OK Compost Council U.S. Composting Council, Biocycle and other compost organizations.

Materials Exchange (Ilda Hershey, Champion): Ilda promotes the online RENEW Materials Exchange, a free matching service for businesses and industries that want to find takers for the by-products they generate or acquire the by-products of other businesses.

Product Stewardship (Garmon Smith, Champion): Garmon collaborates with the national Product Stewardship Institute to solve waste management problems by encouraging product design changes that lead to sustainable end-of-life management.

The Choctaw Nation Recognized As an Oklahoma Clean Community

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in partnership with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB), recognized the Choctaw Nation as an Oklahoma Clean Community during a special ceremony on February 20, 2020. The ceremony was held at the Choctaw Recycling Center in Durant. The Choctaw Nation was recognized as a Level I, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Oklahoma Clean Community. This is the highest recognition a community can receive under the Oklahoma Clean Community Program.

The Choctaw Nation promotes community environmental stewardship by involving volunteers, businesses, civic organizations, and civic leadership in various environmental projects, cleanups, and recycling events.

Choctaw Nation Recycling began with a Going Green Team and small scale recycling in 2009 and gradually

expanded into two facilities with 15 employees. Choctaw Recycling has processed over 24 million pounds of recycling material and 267 thousand tires with collections across 10 counties in Oklahoma.



Choctaw Nation Recycling is an affiliate of KOB and has participated in the Great American Cleanup, America Recycles Day, and Fresh Paint Days. In 2019 they collected 71,200 pounds of trash and 175 pounds of electronics. With 1000 volunteers they cleaned up 32 miles of road, six acres of public parks, and one illegal dump site. For their efforts they were a finalist for the Environmental Excellence Awards. Choctaw Nation

has held multiple collection events over the past several years for tires and electronics. These events have helped reduce hazardous materials from ending up in landfills and have prevented dumping. As a result of their efforts, the Choctaw Nation has reduced many risks to human health and the environment. The Choctaw Nation is now an Oklahoma Clean Community.

Glass Recycling in the OKC Metro

At the end of 2019, several municipalities announced they were going to stop accepting glass in their single-stream recycling systems. This has caught many citizens off guard as people have been taught for decades that glass is infinitely recyclable and does not belong in a landfill. Many waste haulers have known these issues were coming due to changes in commodity prices as well as contamination issues in the single-stream process.

Waste hauling is a messy business. With few scale-level providers, only a handful of companies compete for large municipal contracts. They are able to lock municipalities into terms favorable to the companies, for many years. Like many things, price is a determining factor— not necessarily what is best for our communities or planet. With low margins and collapsing commodity markets, waste haulers have started executing clauses in their contracts that allow them to change what items they recycle.

But this should not be the whole story, especially for glass. Recycled glass is a critical component to making new glass. It takes 1/3 less energy to use recycled glass vs. producing it new from raw natural materials. While single-stream recycling requires a great deal of shipping, sorting and processing as well as contamination loss, multi-stream recycling (or at minimum, pulling the glass out separately) opens up new market possibilities and greatly improves how much glass is actually recycled.

One example is that Fertile Ground recently announced a glass recycling program in the OKC metro. The response has been very positive! For a modest monthly fee, we can pick up glass in 18-gallon bins, dump it in a container at our facility and have a glass processor in Oklahoma pick it up and recycle it. Kansas City has had similar programs for years with considerable success.

Beyond the business opportunity, there is the practical concern that glass is recyclable and we do have local options. Norman has had a drop off solution with a glass company in Kansas City but out-of- state shipping costs are making it potentially unsustainable and drop off, due to lack of convenience, leaves a lot of glass in the waste stream. Longer term, it would be nice for municipalities to explore more sustainable approaches to recycling.

While it is fine to try to minimize the price of single-stream, we are getting what we pay for. The real value in recycling is reducing the volume of waste going to the landfill and reducing the harm of our consumption of single-use goods. Consumers are interested in this proposition and having options for recycling. We should continue to challenge local leaders to look past the bottom dollar and see the broader value of, and popular demand for, recycling.

by Nick Singer

Nick is a zero waste specialist at Fertile Ground. He has a degrees in Economics and Mathematics from Penn State and has worked for and consulted with many political organizations and campaigns around Oklahoma. Opinions are his own.

Federal Legislation Introduced to Tackle the Plastic Waste Crisis

U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) introduced a comprehensive waste management and recycling support bill this session in Congress. The goal of “Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act of 2020” ([click here for bill text](#)) is to put a stop to the plastic pollution that has become a global crisis.

A key component of this bill is the nationwide Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for all



packaging materials. It also contains provisions for a nationwide container deposit, carryout bag fee, plastic ban of certain products, ban of certain uses of Styrofoam, labelling requirements, and awareness-raising measures.

For more information about the bill, see article in Resource Recycling ([click here](#)). If you are interested in commenting, you can submit your thoughts to plastic@tomudall.senate.gov and plastic@mail.house.gov.

OSU Celebrates America Recycles Day (ARD)

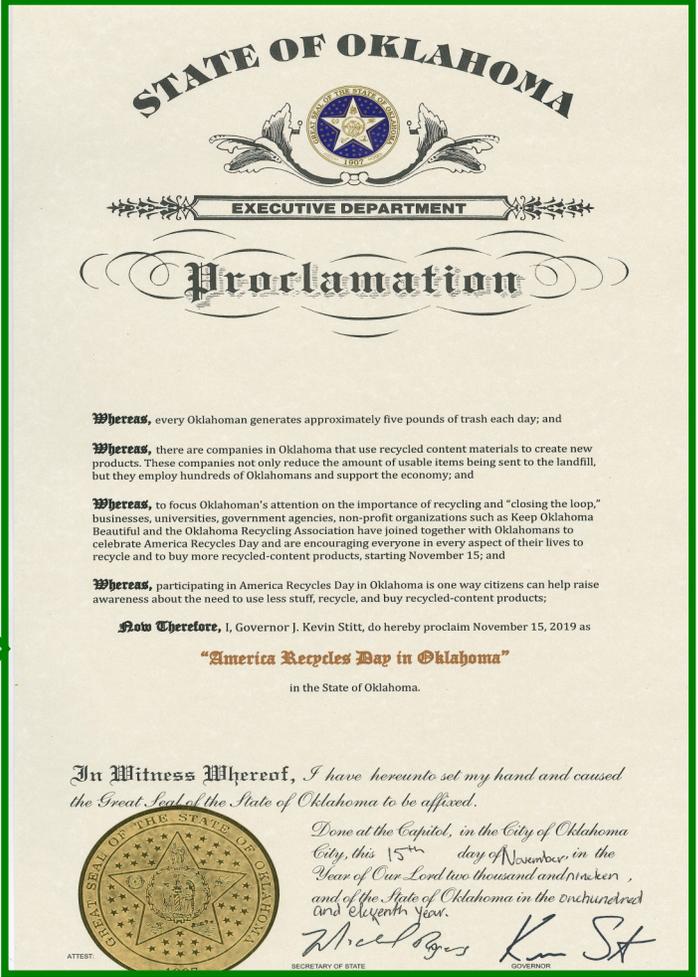


Students from several campus organizations joined Pistol Pete on November 15 to collect recycling pledges at Oklahoma State University outside the Student Union.

OSU's ARD theme for 2019 was "Recycle Right!" This lightweight board made from corrugated plastic features actual products (attached with Velcro) that can and cannot be accepted in the OSU Recycles program. Because OSU students come from all over the state and the world, it's important that we stress what is accepted in their hometowns may not be accepted in our campus program.



For America Recycles Day in 2019, OSU Sustainability interns rolled out their new Waste Reduction Twister game. It was a big hit! We can't wait to use it again this semester. Want to make one? Contact sustainability@okstate.edu



Governor Kevin Stitt signed proclamation naming November 15, 2019 "America Recycles Day in Oklahoma"
[Click here for proclamation](#)

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

Hello green friends, are you someone who loves recycling? Do you get a thrill out of protecting the environment? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then boy do I have an exciting event for you! Each year on November 15th people all across the U.S participate in America Recycles Day, which is the only nationally recognized day dedicated to promoting, celebrating and educating others about recycling. Now you might be thinking to yourself "I recycle every day," and we are happy you do, but this day is far bigger than just the act of recycling, it's about bringing awareness to the importance of recycling, preserving natural resources, and purchasing products made out of recycled material.

America Recycles Day (ARD) was created by the National Recycling Coalition in 1997. Since its inception, the national initiative has become an integral part of Keep America Beautiful and is one of their most widely participated in programs. Millions of people participate in ARD each year and there has been a steady increase in the number of groups, individuals and organizations promoting not only the day, but necessary long-lasting behavior change. Recycling makes up the third R' in the REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE mantra, and while all three R's are important, recycling can often be seen as the last barrier between sustainable action and waste. It is estimated that 60% of the "trash" we send to the landfill could be recycled such as aluminum cans, glass, and paper. When we divert materials from the landfill that can be recycled, we conserve natural resources, save energy and also help create jobs in the recycling industry.

Materials like glass can be recycled fully and reused without any compromise to the quality of product manufactured thereafter. Aluminum cans are one of the most commonly used everyday materials, which can be recycled and back on shelves for consumers to purchase just 60 days after the aluminum is recovered through recycling. There are so many statistics showing the benefits of recycling, so I picked out a few more of my all-time favorites to share: recycling just one aluminum can is equivalent to saving enough energy to power a television for close to two hours; when you recycle one glass bottle, it saves enough energy to power a computer for roughly 25 minutes; every three months, Americans throw enough aluminum in landfills to build our nations entire commercial airline fleet; a single recycled plastic bottle saves enough energy to run a

100- watt bulb for four hours; and recycling plastic save twice as much energy as it takes to burn it. If those statistics don't give you a clear understanding on why initiatives like ARD are so important, I truly don't know what will!



AMERICA RECYCLES DAY®

A KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL® PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 15

Recycling right often lowers the amount of waste we generate, lowers the amount of energy we use and overall gives you the feel goods when you do it... we promise! There is still plenty of time to form your recycle team, sign the #berecycled pledge, and document what you are doing to promote the practice and need for recycling. Let's make this year's America Recycles Day the biggest one yet.

Mark your calendars for November 15th and get out and do great things.

Reduce, Reuse, RECYCLE

Adapted from
Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
Blog Contributor, **Shavara J.**

www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com

References:
www.Epa.gov
www.earthfriend.com
www.americarecyclesday.org
www.recycleacrossamerica.org
www.dosomething.org

Save the Date



50th Anniversary of Earth Day

at Guthrie Green

- Food Truck Wednesday
- Walk-thru Butterfly Tent
- Live Music
- Giveaways
- 25 Green & Sustainably Minded Businesses/Non-Profits



Friends of The M.e.t., Inc. c/o The M.e.t. One West 3rd Street, Suite 110 Tulsa, OK 74103
918.584.0584 www.metrecycle.com

2020 OKRA Executive Council

Sara Ivey, President

Okla. Dept. of Environmental Quality

Maureen Turner, Vice President

City of Tulsa

Chrystal Bennett, Secretary

Republic Services

Sara Ivey, Acting Treasurer

Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality

Tracy Horst, Past President

Choctaw Nation

**Ilda Hershey, Executive
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**Keima Kamara/Oklahoma
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Trudi Logan/Tinker AFB

Bob Masterson/City of Edmond

**Jeanette Nance/Keep Oklahoma
Beautiful**

Michael Patton/Land Legacy

**Amanda Scofield/ Oklahoma Dept. of
Environmental Quality**

**Garmon Smith/Ada Recycling
Coalition**

**Megan Waters/Pride in McAlester/Keep
McAlester Beautiful**

**Ellen Bussert, Administrative
Assistant to the Board**

2020 OKRA Technical Council

Diana Askins, Tulsa Master Recyclers (volunteer training & management)

Scott Smith, Republic Services (hauling services)

Chris Feeney, Keepin' Enid Green (rural recycling)

Eric Hemphill, University of Central Oklahoma Sustainability (university programs)

Bryce Hulsey, OK Dept. of Env. Quality (OK recycling vendors / markets)

Chris Knight, City of Stillwater (convenience collection centers)

Jason Lilley, Choctaw Nation (rural recycling)

Trudy Nevland, City of Ada Recycling (drop-off center/promotion & educ.)

Julie Maher, Ardmore Beautification Council (beautification)

Natalie Mallory, Full Sun Composting (composting)

Traci Phillips, Natural Evolution (electronics recycling)

Robert Pickens, American Waste Control (operations, marketing, sales, education)

Fenton Rood, OK Dept. of Environmental Quality (solid waste/recycling)

Amanda Marcott Thottunkal, OK Dept of Commerce (business recycling)

Dianne Wilkins, OK Dept. of Env. Quality, Pollution Prev. (business/industry)

Larry Wright, Western Oklahoma (rural issues)

[Click Here for OKRA Board/Council Webpage](#)



www.facebook.com/RecycleOK.org/

Highlight your 2020 recycling events
in the OKRA News!

Send photos and articles to trudi.logan@us.af.mil to submit
for an upcoming edition!