

# THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

April 2021

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)

## Cushing Pride hosts Trashy "Treasure Hunt" Clean Up

On Sunday April 18, 2021, Cushing Pride held a "Trashy Treasure Hunt" clean-up. Cushing Pride Director, Richard Thackray reports that the event went off without a hitch. Cars started lining up about 1:30pm for the 2pm start. It was limited to the first 60 vehicles. Although slightly less than 60 cars showed up, approximately 100 people took part in the event with 16 volunteers helping out with set up, handouts, and break down.

Republic Services provided a \$2200 grant to Cushing Pride to hold the event. Participants were rewarded with gift certificates and 5 lucky winners won mega prizes for locating "Golden Stakes" hidden in the clean-up areas.



## Chickasaw Nation celebrates Earth Week in Ada!

### Earth Week

Make a Difference Monday

#### White Goods Collection

April 19 - 23  
ReUse Center  
2205 N. Broadway Ave. Ada



No Trash Tuesday

#### Eliminate Litter

If you see litter, pick it up.  
Post your photos online  
with #GreatGlobalCleanup.



Water Bottle  
Wednesday

#### Reusable Water Bottles

Refill your own bottle to  
avoid single use plastics.



Earth Day Thursday

#### Earth Day Recycling Event

Thursday, April 22 10am - 4pm  
Abbott-Miller Building  
1630 E. Beverly St. Ada



For the Trees Friday



#### Arbor Day

Plant a tree today to ensure a better tomorrow.

## Eliminate Litter

No Trash  
Tuesday

Lasting impacts are built upon small daily actions that add up over time. Have you looked outside your car window and noticed trash on the sides of roads? Actions as small as picking up trash (gloves recommended) while on a walk or run is a good place to start. Multiple small actions can build and create a larger change if we all work together.

Join the #GreatGlobalCleanup by collecting litter in your area.  
Visit [EarthDay.org](http://EarthDay.org) for more information.

Recently, the Environmental Health & Safety team took time to pick up trash along the side of a highway just outside of Ada.

In just two hours, the group was able to collect 26 bags of trash.



The Chickasaw National celebrated Earth Week in Ada, April 19th to 23rd, with a specific environmental focus (e.g. Eliminate Litter on No Trash Tuesday) each day. From recycling to picking up litter to planting trees, the goal of Earth Week was to show Ada residents the many ways that they can make a positive impact on the environment. Great idea Chickasaw Nation!

# So Many Things Gone Wrong on Earth in 2020

It was just a bit over a year ago that I, as the Director of Cushing Pride, had to inform our volunteers that our BIG Spring event, "The Great American Cleanup," wasn't going to be so GREAT that year.

In 2018 our Cushing Pride organization had just gone through a rebirth that found record turnouts of volunteers kicking it off with 96 volunteers and 134 bags of trash collected. Later that Fall, we had 138 volunteers participate and just as many trash bags collected. In 2019 we repeated our success and even added a few more events of beautification and removal of hazards earning us an award of "Clean Community" presented by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

Things were rolling along and "BAM", COVID-19! We all were frightened on how the world would handle this, and sorry to say, "Trash" was not on the top of the list. We tried to hold small open-air events, but volunteers were not buying it. Our organized "Adopt-A-Block" program was still holding its own with some encouragement, but the streets were showing signs of needing attention. We categorize our standard of cleanliness with "Condition GREEN, YELLOW, or RED" and we certainly were not GREEN anymore!

To coin a phrase, "What a difference a year makes". Here it is 2021 and though some had horrible experiences and loss, it was time to get on with life. Though some things have returned to some degree of normalcy, holding a large gathering at City Hall and riding busses to cleaning areas was not going to happen. It was time to

**DATE: SUNDAY April 18th @ 2pm**  
**Cushing Pride's**  
**"Trashy Treasure Hunt"**  
**\$1500+ in FREE Treasure**

Sponsored by  
**REPUBLIC SERVICES**

**CUSHING PRIDE**

Line up **BEHIND City Hall!**  
**Maps handed out at 2pm SHARP!**

**LIMITED TO FIRST 50 CARS**

- \*Receive a numbered instruction envelope.
- \*Drive to a specific cleaning spot
- \*Clean for 45-60 minutes
- \*Return to City Hall to receive "TREASURE"
- \*\*\*FIVE MEGA PRIZES RANDOMLY HIDDEN AT SITES\*\*\*

**FREE** **SWAG**

devise a plan! Cushing Pride wanted to bring big numbers out to clean but had to keep it "Socially Distant" and "COVID-19 Safe." Teaming up with a large sponsor we decided we to hold "Cushing Pride's Trashy Treasure Hunt."

Here are the event basics. It was limited to the first 50 cars to line up behind City Hall. As the cars drove through the parking lot they were handed necessary cleaning tools and a **NUMBERED** instruction envelope telling them specifically where to clean, where to park safely, as well as instructions to

clean for 60 minutes and return to City hall with their trash bag to be tossed on "Mount Trashmore." The original letter they received had a number that corresponded to their "Treasure Envelope" that contained a gift certificate worth \$10, \$25, or \$50 to a local business in our city. The donated funds received from our sponsor were entirely used to purchase treasures in our City



**A Golden Stake Mega Prize Winner!**

among numerous area businesses. To top it off there were five "Golden Stakes" randomly planted in five of the cleaning areas. Participants that located and returned a "Golden Stake" won one of five "Mega Prizes" valued at approximately \$300.00 each.

**FUN, SAFE, & A CLEAN CITY-** It was a Win,Win,Win situation! When the world dealt Cushing "lemons", we certainly made lemonade, and then cleaned up after ourselves.

**By Richard Thackray**  
**Director of Cushing Pride**



## What A Wonderful World: Thoughts for Earth Day 2021

What does Earth Day mean to you? I've asked myself this question, I've asked social media and now I'm here asking you all. Earth Day does of course have an official meaning, which is a day dedicated to the global observance of the need to protect the earth. Each year for Earth Day there is a new "theme" chosen or an environmental focus; however, beyond even the concrete official meaning of Earth Day it remains an individualized experience on how you participate.

When I think about what Earth Day means to me, I think of honoring the day by reflecting on the personal responsibility I have taken to protect earth. I ask myself if I am doing enough? Is there more that I am capable of, and how do my choices impact the environment? No matter how the day is observed the most important thing is that we all do something. April 22<sup>nd</sup> is a reminder year after year that we can do more and that we can treat the earth better than the year before.

The official theme for Earth Day, 2021 is so fitting for the notion of the collective effort for environmental betterment, "Restore our Earth." The definition of restore is to return something or someone to an earlier good condition or position. For over a year many of our lives have looked very different while navigating the changes caused by COVID-19, so how fitting that the definition of restore is what we can all individually strive to achieve for ourselves, and the planet. The official organization for Earth Day, [earthday.org](http://earthday.org) had this to say about the theme, "It is up to each and every one of us to "Restore Our Earth," not just because we care about the natural world, but because we live on it. We all need a healthy earth to support our jobs, livelihoods, health & survival, and happiness. A healthy

planet is not an option — it is a necessity." With more than 1 billion people in 192 countries participating in the day, the progress towards the restoration of a healthier earth is limitless.



Action comes in so many forms, from collecting litter from around your neighborhood, planting a tree or starting a garden. You can use the day to self-reflect on improvements you and your family can make on a more regular basis, like requesting no plastic-ware when you grab takeout or remembering to always carry your reusable bag. The day can also be about just having fun in nature, creating some "earth art" out of materials

found in nature, sketching a picture inspired by mother nature, or writing the first page of your plan to be more environmentally involved. If you're spending the day in the office or even working from home, take your lunch break outdoors. You can totally zone out and be in the moment of the beauty around you, or if that's not your fancy, opt to tune into [EARTHDAY.ORG](http://EARTHDAY.ORG), who has organized the second-annual Earth Day Live livestream event (April 22, 2021) featuring global activists, international leaders, and influencers from around the world.

Earth Day is a day that our actions in some way or another go on to inspire and influence others to join the fight to save our planet. Share with others what you plan to do, participate in a meaningful way, and remember that what the day is truly about goes far beyond April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

***Let's make Earth Day everyday.***

KOB's very own Content Writer,  
Shavara Johnson



Conference Online

*Keeping a Lid  
on Contamination*  
September 22-23

## EARTH DAY at TINKER AIR FORCE BASE



Members of the Civil Engineering Environmental Division had an outreach booth at the Base Exchange April 22nd. Ray Moody, Natural Resource Biologist (left) had a juvenile Texas horned lizard (Thl) on display and educated visitors about Tinker's research on the Thl. Lots of items, such as reusable shopping bags and collapsible water bottles, were given away to promote recycling and other environmental focus areas.



## Bill Addressing "Advanced Plastics Recycling" passes OK Legislature

A bill was introduced by Senator Taylor and Representative Boles to change the definition of advanced plastic recycling in the State Statutes. This bill originated from the American Chemistry Council. They are pushing legislation around the country about advanced plastics recycling. They want to address the #3-7 Plastics roadblock domestically by allowing more options for "junk plastics" to be used for new and evolving technology that mainly uses these resins for petroleum products.

SB448 makes updates to the Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act. It provides that, if done properly, advanced recycling shall not be considered disposal, incineration, or a solid waste management system. The measure also provides that advanced plastic re-



cycling facilities shall not be considered disposal sites, solid waste management systems, or transfer systems. They are subject to inspections by the Department of Environmental Quality. If these facilities do not comply with the requirements in law, they shall not be considered advanced recycling facilities and will be subject to all applicable solid waste laws and regulations as determined by the DEQ. As long post-use polymers and recovered feedstock are properly managed and disposed of, they shall not be considered solid waste.

The bill passed the House and Senate and was signed into law by Governor Stitt on April 19, 2021. Here is a link to read [SB 448](#).

## THE HIGH COST OF CONTAMINATION

Like a bad April Fools Day joke, it all happened on the night of Thursday, April 1st. The employees of the recycling facility finished their shift, without imagining the tragedy that would occur in their workplace. In the end... who could have imagined that a small battery could cause so much damage to a facility over a thousand times its size?

The problem happened so quickly, the first to realize that something was wrong was a traveler on Highway 75 who called 911. I was notified when a friend called me, asking if I was still working in recycling, because the firefighters were putting out the fire at the Tulsa Recycle and Transfer facility.

It was after watching the news when I realized the seriousness of the problem: a contaminating item, specifically a lithium-ion battery, reached the recycling stream, causing the fire in this facility, and seriously damaging the equipment and structure. Until now, it remains uncertain when the facility will once again be able to accept recyclable items due to the serious damage caused by the fire. It should be noted that the Tulsa Recycle and Trans-

fer facility received not only recycling from the City of Tulsa, but also from several cities in the metropolitan area and northeastern Oklahoma.

Lithium ion batteries have become very popular today due to their high capacity to produce energy, being commonly used in most electronic devices such as toys, tools, cell phones and laptops. However, if not properly disposed of, they are also the leading cause of fires in waste disposal and recycling facilities.

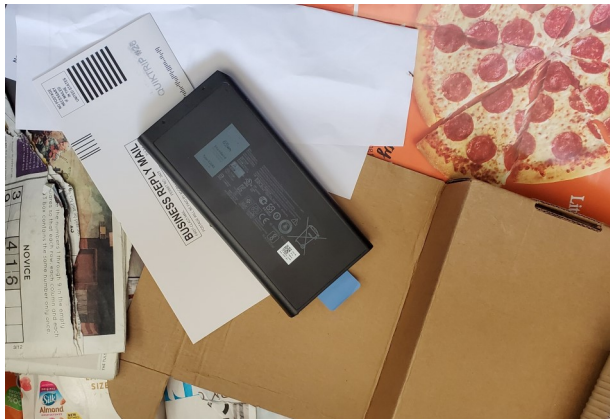
Due to the increase in fires in recycling and solid waste facilities across the country caused by improper disposal of batteries, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicates on its website that it

has been created the campaign "Avoid the spark. Be Battery Safety Smart" to promote education on how to properly dispose of used batteries.



To find a place where you can properly dispose of old batteries, visit [www.call2recycle.org/locator](http://www.call2recycle.org/locator) or the M.e.t. website at [www.metrecycle.com](http://www.metrecycle.com)

By: Lehabim Escoto-Flores, Community Involvement Coordinator of the City of Tulsa



### Earth Day Recycling Ada, OK

Special thanks to all who made the Earth Day Recycling Event a success!!



ON



### ENVIRO EXPO 2021

WEDNESDAY  
05.12.2021  
11:00 am - 1:30 pm

on the Guthrie Green  
111 E. Brady Street, Tulsa, OK

- Give-Aways • Live Music by And Then There Were Two •
- Food Truck Wednesday on the Green •
- Enter to Win One Night Stay at Cedar Rock Inn, Tulsa •
- Test Drive a New Model Electric Vehicle •

Supported by



For more information, visit [MetRecycle.com](http://MetRecycle.com) or call 918.584.0584

## Lunch & Learn - Glass Recycling

On April 23, 2021, OKRA was joined by Josh Boyer, the Regional Program Manager for Ripple Glass for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of OKRA's Lunch & Learn series sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. Glass recycling has been a hot topic for many people across the nation, as curbside collection haulers have continued to cut their acceptance of glass.

OKRA recognized after the very first Lunch & Learn Virtual Event that covered the topic of glass recycling that there was a great interest from many Oklahomans for the continued conversation about how to expand glass recycling in Oklahoma. Josh Boyer presented the attendees with a detailed explanation of the benefits of glass recycling and talked about the final destination for glass collected in Oklahoma. Josh kept his presentation brief, so that much of the time could be open to discussion with some guided questions such as, "What are some issues you face specific to your community?" Or, "What are some drawbacks you have with glass recycling?"

Through the Q&A discussion there were so many great ideas thrown around, like smaller communities having a better chance of bringing glass recycling to their residents by working together with the communities around them. When communities come together to purchase one centralized bunker for drop off, and smaller trailers for collection the

cost goes down drastically for hauling. The thought behind smaller communities working with one another was that there would be enough glass collected to make the collection of value to haulers to collect, which would make it not only affordable for the small communities but would also reduce the cost of waste collections by diverting the glass normally collected to go to landfills. On average a small town may collect 80 tons per year, with larger cities collecting closer to 125 tons per year. When that tonnage is recycled or at the very least reused in some other way it reduces the

landfill tipping fees, creates jobs and prevents the emissions released in order to create new glass from raw materials. Besides for aluminum, glass is the only resources that can be endlessly recycled without any loss to the products quality.

There is an undeniable need for glass recycling and what seems like a genuine interest from so many people in Oklahoma, so OKRA's hope is to keep the conversations going about how to bring about our own glass recycling success story across the entire state. Thank you to Ripple Glass, and Josh Boyer for providing us with such important insights to strength the efforts happening across our state!

Join the official OKRA Glass Recycling workgroup by emailing your name and contact information to: [info@recycleok.org](mailto:info@recycleok.org)!



## 2021-2022 OKRA Board and Technical Council

### Executive Committee

Keima Borsuah – President  
Megan Waters– Vice President  
Crystal Bennett – Secretary  
Sara Ivey – Treasurer  
Tracy Horst – Past President  
Michael Patton – At Large

### Board Members

Michael Barton \*  
Kara Berst  
Natalie Evans \*  
Trudi Logan  
Bob Masterson  
Jeanette Nance  
Eric Pollard \*  
Amanda Scofield  
Bret Scovill \*

*\*Denotes new members*

### OKRA Technical Council 2021

Diana Askins, Tulsa Master Recyclers (volunteer training & mgmt)  
Scott Smith, Republic Services (hauling services)  
Chris Feeney, Keepin' Enid Green (Rural Recycling)  
Bryce Hulsey, ODEQ (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, Acquisitions, Marketing, Sales, Education, Transportation, Website Design).  
Fenton Rood, Retired ODEQ (solid waste/recycling)  
Garmon Smith, Ada Recycling Coalition (product stewardship)  
Larry Wright, Western Oklahoma (rural issues)

### OKRA Staff

Ellen Bussert, Programs Director  
Shavara Johnson, Communications Manager

## DEQ Offers Funding Opportunities in Solid Waste Management

Local governments and nonprofit organizations can apply to the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for funds aimed at solid waste improvements. The Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act (Act) affords DEQ resources that can help local governments with things such as cleaning up illegal dumps, hiring environmental enforcement officers, equipment purchases, food waste management, and hosting collection events for difficult to manage waste such as old electronics, household chemicals, unwanted meds, and medical sharps. The Act created a system of state solid waste fees that help fund DEQ's environmental protection programs.

Partnerships with local governments allow DEQ to make the best use of available resources. "Local governments understand local environmental needs. From assistance in hosting household hazardous collection events, or aid in investigating illegal dumping, DEQ solid waste funding agreements are a tool

we offer to help drive locally initiated environmental improvement projects" says Patrick Riley, DEQ manager of Solid Waste and Sustainability. "If funding is available, we will work to develop agreements and implement local projects this fiscal year."

The first application period is open now through May 30 for the FY22 project year starting July 1, 2020. Find out more and apply for any of the grant applications here: <https://www.deq.ok.gov/land-protection-division/waste-management/solid-waste/funding-opportunities-for-community-based-environmental-protection-projects/>

Assistance will be provided until funds are exhausted. Subsequent application periods will be opened if additional funds remain after the first round of applications.



International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is May 2-8th. Be sure to check out OKRA's FAQ page for information and resources on composting [here](#), and give the Oklahoma Compost Conference, a program of the Oklahoma Compost & Sustainability Association, a follow to catch local ICAW events.

<https://www.facebook.com/okcompostconference> | <http://instagram.com/okcompost> | <https://twitter.com/OklahomaCompost> | <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1hvDIJJvl5mUrRRjdiJ2LQ>

## National Solid Waste and Recycling Survey

by Lisa Skumatz

A National Trash and Recycling Survey update is being conducted by Skumatz Economic Research Associates (SERA) for 2021. The data are used to track trends and latest methods in Solid Waste Management, conduct quantitative analyses to guide program refinements, and other studies, many of which are published in aggregate form (no name / individual data) in *Resource Recycling*. This year's special topic includes a *drill-down on contamination strategies*.

As advocates in the industry, we are hoping you can help us with a survey and be entered for a drawing if you wish. Previous results were presented in a free webinar last fall and the results of this national study will also be presented at various state conferences.

Please click [HERE](#), or use the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NationalSW2021>

In the past, the survey has typically taken 15-20 minutes. If you need to do part, and then hold it open – or come back in, the survey allows that. Feel free to call if you have questions or would rather complete it by phone (303/494-1178; [dsouza@serainc.com](mailto:dsouza@serainc.com)). We're hoping for responses by early May. Thank you very much!

Lisa A. Skumatz, Ph.D. – *Proud Chair National Recycling Coalition (NRC); Member, Recycle Colorado Board; National SWANA Policy Advisory Committee*

# OKRA's Corporate Members 2021

## Corporate Platinum Members



## Corporate Silver Members



## Corporate Bronze Members



## Corporate Basic Members

American Sanitation  
Big 4 Filtration  
Cox Communications  
Eco Wood Solutions  
Keepin' Enid Green Curbside Recycling LLC

Linn Paper Stock Company  
Northeast Waste Solutions LLC  
Ripple Glass, LLC  
SCL Recycling

# OKRA Members 2021

## Higher Education

OSU Cooperative Extension Services  
OSU Facility Management

## Government

Cherokee Nation  
Chickasaw Nation Department of Commerce  
City of Midwest City  
City of Norman  
City of Tulsa  
City of Stillwater  
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality  
Otoe-Missouria Tribe  
Thlopthiocco Tribal Town

## Non-Profit

Ada Recycling Coalition  
Arkansas Recycling Coalition  
Electronic Synergy Foundation  
Keep McAlester Beautiful  
Keep Oklahoma Beautiful  
Oklahoma Green Schools Program  
Show Inc.  
Solid Waste Institute of NE Oklahoma  
The Met  
Tulsa Master Recyclers  
Tulsa Zoo

## Corporate Umbrella Members

Jon Barton – CDR Global  
Tanner Atkinson – CDR Global  
Scott Smith – Republic Services

## Individual Members

Galea Albano  
Jessika Bergeron  
Kara Berst  
Valerie Blomgren  
Keima Borsuah

Kelly Yockey-Bronnenberg  
Ellen Bussert  
Tom Elkins  
Natalie Evans  
Laura Green  
Krystal Grizzle  
April Hathcoat  
Ilda Hershey  
Kris Higginbotham  
Tracy Horst  
Wayne Issacs  
Pat Ivey  
Sara Ivey  
Trudi Logan  
Natalie Mallory  
Amanda Marcott-Thottunkal  
Jeanette Nance  
Michael Patton  
Crystal Romero  
Garmon Smith  
Larry Wright

## Seniors

Matt Albright  
Stuart Burchett  
Bret Scovill  
Bob Stewart

## Students

Mariama Borsuah  
Kian Ivey  
Rori Ivey  
Sydney Mantzke  
Cherie O'Mary  
Jacob Sherman  
Brittany Smith

## Lifetime Member

Susie Derichsweiler

## Honorary Member

Fenton Rood



### Passionate about Oklahoma Recycling, but not yet an OKRA Member?

Join our network of Oklahomans working to improve recycling across the state! As an OKRA member, you have contact with Oklahoma businesses and governments that are recycling in Oklahoma. Sharing information and resources helps grow Oklahoma's recycling programs and industries.

OKRA members receive a discount to the annual conference, recognition on the OKRA webpage (for corporate, government and nonprofit members) and newsletter, and an annual membership directory.

To join, or for more info, go to: [www.recycleok.org](http://www.recycleok.org), or contact Ellen Bussert at [okra.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:okra.secretary@gmail.com)