

# THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

August 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)

## Successful Recycling Events Held in Durant and Stigler

Tire and electronic recycling events were held May 6th at Durant High School and May 22nd at Stigler High School. The events were the result of partnerships between the local communities and school districts and the Choctaw Nation Recycling Center.



*Electronics collection at the Stigler recycling event*

Jason Lilley, Choctaw Nation recycling manager, says these partnered events are important to the environment, and they are a great way to get involved with the local community.

**GREAT JOB!**

Both recycling events were very successful. The Durant event collected 4,200 lbs. of electronics for recycling and over 500 tires. The Stigler event collected 15,895 lbs. of electronics and approximately 100 tires.

These partnered recycling events are made available thanks to an Environmental Justice grant that the Choctaw Nation was awarded from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information, click [here](#), where you can find a list of recyclable materials and collection locations.



*Tire collection at the Stigler recycling event*



OKRA Online Conference  
*Keeping a Lid on Contamination*

September  
22-23

Details on the following page!

Every recycling program deals with contamination. Contamination can make or break a recycling program. That is why the theme of OKRA's Annual Recycling Conference, September 22-23<sup>rd</sup>, is "**Keeping a Lid on Contamination**." This conference is centered around anti-contamination initiatives and efforts to help Oklahoma communities improve their recycling programs. Like OKRA's 2020 conference, this year's conference will be online rather than in-person.

Wednesday afternoon, Sept, 22nd, Josef Bittner, Regional Manager with Call2Recycle, will talk about stewardship and battery recycling. In a following session, recycling professionals from around the state will discuss efforts to curtail contamination in their local programs. Later, Michael Patton will tour a grocery store and show us how to "pre-cycle" and shop sustainably. Wrapping up Wednesday will be a social hour at 6pm hosted by Fenton Rood. Fenton will lead a relaxed, interactive discussion on what we can learn from each other.

Thursday morning will start with an overview of OKRA's Materials Exchange program. Then, Vincent Leray from The Recycling Partnership will speak on ways to stop contamination in programs and talk about anti-

contamination media kits and how to use them. Next, conference attendees will have the opportunity to participate in two of four different roundtable discussions (breakout rooms) with subject experts. Topics for the breakouts are: Recycling 101, Challenges of Commercial Recycling, Marketing and Anti-Contamination Kits, and Glass.

Conference registration is \$45 for OKRA Members and \$60 for non-members. For Seniors or Teachers/classrooms the rate is \$20. If you have questions about the classroom option, please contact us at [info@recycleok.org](mailto:info@recycleok.org).

This event is sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and The Chickasaw Nation. Supporters include The Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Services, the Indian Nations Chapter of SWANA, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful and IPL, Inc. Additional support is welcomed! If you are interested in supporting this conference, please contact [info@recycleok.org](mailto:info@recycleok.org) for support benefits and costs.

We invite you to attend as we discuss contamination. See the [OKRA 2021 Conference page](#) for more info, or to register for the conference, click [here](#).

## #SecondhandSeptember

by Shavara Johnson

In 2018, an EPA study reported 17 million tons of textile waste were sent to landfills making up 5.8% of the total municipal waste generated. On a global scale just 12% of the material used for clothing ends up being recycled. These startling statistics make it easy to understand the importance of UK-based movement #SecondhandSeptember, a month dedicated to advocating for the cessation of purchasing new clothes for 30 days. The goal of this movement is to get people thinking of their own habits not only with purchasing, but the disposal as well.

As the summer nears to a close, and life seemingly heads back to "normal" many of us are finding the desire to revamp fall wardrobes. But what are the consequence of this constant urge to obtain new clothing? How many of us can say we consider the afterlife of our discarded clothes? It is estimated that 84% of clothing ends up in either the landfill or incinerators. When textiles are sent to the landfill you can expect for them to hang around for roughly 200 years before decomposing. Recycling old clothing & shoes to companies like the American Textile Recycling Service or donating to local thrift stores like Goodwill and Salvation Army, allow these materials to serve a secondary purpose, either to

be worn again or used to make new textile products. Unfortunately, even with resources available to divert textiles from landfills it is still reported that only 12% of clothing is recycled or donated to secondhand clothing stores.

Americans currently throw away double the amount of clothing that we did just 20 years ago. There has been a noticeable decrease in the quality/durability of clothes produced because of the shift clothing companies have taken to mass-manufacture low-cost clothing. The fast fashion trend has made it normal to toss clothes rather than attempt to repair, which is what we all must combat. Society's desire to simply replace clothing items should also come with the desire to responsibly reuse those clothes. The environmental impact of producing new clothing can be offset when we upcycle our old clothes into something new or donate them for extended use. Producing just one new shirt is equivalent to the emissions released by driving a car for 35 miles and takes 2,700 liters of water.

During Secondhand September say no to the low-cost fast fashion gimmicks and instead get creative in your own closet, host a clothing swap with friends or utilize the options in your community to recycle textiles!

# OKRA Welcomes New Board Members

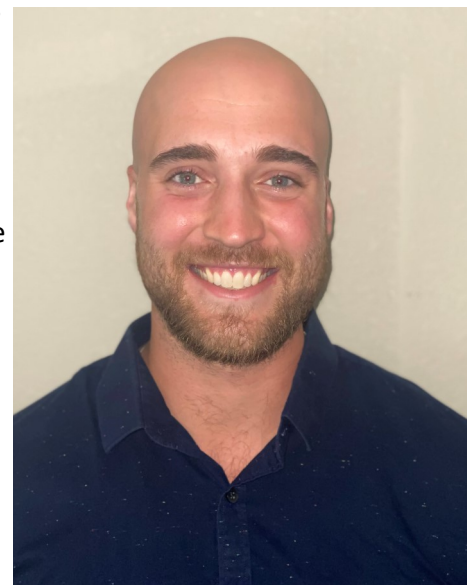
**Robert Paul Streets**, known to most as Paul Streets, is the Public Works Director for Midwest City. Streets oversees numerous departments, including recycling, solid waste, and household hazardous waste. Serving the residents of Midwest City in this current capacity is something that Paul considers a dream



come true, because of his lifelong passion for the environment. At an early age Streets remembers collecting recyclables from his home and transporting them across town with his father and brother to responsibly recycle them. Later, when attending college, Streets had a professor who was also an avid

recycler, who motivated him to take this passion into adulthood. Streets got his first opportunity to work around like-minded environmentalists in 1994 when he began working as a Water Plant Operator, which opened the door to build relationships that galvanized his interest in protecting the environment. His biggest hope as a new OKRA board member is to bring passion and practical insights from his experience in Public Works to those who are attempting to make sustainable decisions for their community or stakeholders. One fun fact about Paul is that at age eight he won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in his school's science fair with a project titled, "Where does your water go when you flush the toilet?" Paul has truly dedicated his entire life to educating others about responsible environmental practices. Streets wears many hats in the environmental community, doing so much that some have said he must wear a super-hero cape as well, and who knows he may just be Oklahoma's next Captain Planet.

**Josh Boyer** is the Regional Manager for Ripple Glass, where his role is to assist municipalities and private businesses with recycling their glass. Boyer, who has always had an interest in nature, refers to himself as an outdoorsman with a passion for doing his part to preserve it for generations to come. This passion for nature is what led him to major in Agriculture in college. He joined Ripple Glass. Ripple Glass is a company driven to help communities divert glass from the landfill by providing a program that allows it to be recycled properly. Boyer hopes with his new role as OKRA board member to bring more insight into the glass industry. He works every day to come up with solutions for communities that have a desire to recycle glass, but have been unable to find a sustainable way to go about it. You may be surprised to learn that along with Boyer's passion for the environment he also has a talent for basketball and is a former teammate of three different NBA players. Boyer may no longer be scoring on the court, but we have high hopes in seeing him score an increase in glass recycling for our great state!



**Welcome to the OKRA Board!**  
**We are so happy to have you!**



## 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 *	Jeanette Nance
Kara Berst	Eric Pollard *
Josh Boyer *	Amanda Scofield
Trudi Logan	Bret Scovill *
Bob Masterson	Robert Streets *

*\*Denotes new members*

## OKRA Staff

Ellen Bussert,  
Programs Director  
  
Shavara Johnson,  
Communications  
Manager



## WIN, WIN, WIN COMES TO CUSHING

On February 16, 2018, Cushing's city manager asked me if I would consider directing a 100% volunteer organization known as Cushing Pride. Its basic job is to organize cleanup and beautification teams every few months to enhance the beauty of our city. I accepted the position and we held our first large event on April 22, 2018.

It wasn't long before Cushing Pride caught on and people began noticing a marked improvement on our streets. Soon the call for recycling hit my desk when a local businessman asked if we could form a recycling team. I told him that we had just gotten people to stop littering and to pick up trash and now you are asking me to have them separate it? It was not going to happen. Many organizations in town asked if the city planned to set up a formal recycling program and the answer was that it was not in the budget. The acquiring of real estate as well as the cost of collection equipment, manpower, and ways of disposal would be too costly.

Jump ahead three years - Cushing Pride is now a successful, award winning organization and is part of *Keep Oklahoma Beautiful*, which led us to a newly formed company known as Replenish. Cushing Pride's V.P.



Laura Green reached out to this company during the Covid19 period and set up a ZOOM meeting with herself, the CEO of Replenish, Mark Armen, Cushing City Manager, Terry Brannon, and myself.

What was discussed seemed too good to be true. Replenish said they would supply the equipment necessary for

events, along with a truck that would load the recyclables, as well as provide web support. In addition, they would have the recyclables on their way out of town by the end of the event and on their way to the buyers. Better yet, Mark Armen assured us that this would all be provided with no expense incurred by Cushing tax payers.

Replenish did not disappoint! In about three days after each event Cushing Pride receives the exact number of pounds of trash diverted from landfills, as well as a small

payment to our organization from the sale of goods. We use the Cushing High School agricultural parking lot as the collection site for events, which are held on Sundays (when the lot is empty). So, those residents who wanted recycling are participating and spreading the word, our city has a recycling program that costs the tax payers ZERO, and Cushing Pride receives a small rebate that we put back into our general fund to give right back to the community in the form of beautification projects. This has definitely been a WIN, WIN, WIN, opportunity!



by Richard Thackray  
Cushing Pride Director

### Diversion & Disposal

*Mark Your Calendar*  
**March 29, 30, 31, 2022**

**SWANA  
Oklahoma Indian Nations Chapter  
2022 Annual Conference  
and  
Golf Tournament**

*The Sheraton at the Reed Conf. Center*  
**5800 Will Rogers Rd.  
Midwest City, OK 73110**



## Recycling options for Enid residents

In addition to the Recycle Center, at 215 E. Chestnut, Enid has other options for people who want to recycle their items.

[Southside Recycling](#), 516 E. Hackberry, accepts metal items such as washers, dryers, iron, cars, aluminum cans and aluminum sheets.



Shane Hughes sorts through a bin of aluminum cans that were dropped off at the Enid Recycle Center  
(Kelci McKendrick / Enid News & Eagle)

When things like appliances, tires, oil, antifreeze and metal goods are brought to the landfill, city Solid Waste Supervisor Tim Stephens said they get recycled.

Interstate All Battery Center, 5601 W. Garriott, recycles batteries.

In 2011, Chris Feeney, the director of vocational services for Supported Community Lifestyles, founded [Keepin' Enid Green](#), a private collection service that "encourages recycling by making it easy and convenient."

The service is \$12 a month or \$120 for an entire year, with two months for free. It also provides an 18-gallon recycling bin to residents who sign up.

Feeney said Keepin' Enid Green serves about 500 homes in Enid.

The container is picked up once a week and brought to the Recycle Center to be sorted, and Feeney said all the materials collected with Keepin' Enid Green are donated back to the city. The money is then split between the city and the SCL clients who work at the Recycle Center.

The convenience of Keepin' Enid Green and helping save the environment are why Feeney continues to operate it.

"We have encouraged a lot of people to recycle that wouldn't have done that otherwise," he said. "There's a finite landfill space, and if we don't do our part now, everything's just going to go to the trash. ... It's a throwaway society, and we got to do our part. We've got to keep that stuff out of the dump and reuse as much as possible."

The biggest tip for recycling, Feeney said, is to pay attention and recycle only the acceptable items because things like glass, which are not accepted items, can contaminate an entire trailer load.

[4RKids also provides recycling services](#) and accepts recyclable materials like aluminum cans, cardboard and paper and has contracts with companies to pick up paper to shred - which is 25 cents per pound - and cardboard, 4RKids Executive Director Tricia Mitchell said.

Mitchell said 4RKids' recycling program gives businesses an easy, cheap way to get rid of documents and support the foundation.

by Kelci McKendrick | Enid News & Eagle  
Jul 11, 2021

*Article reprinted with permission from the Enid News and Eagle*

## 5 FUN FACTS ABOUT RECYCLING

1. Glass can be recycled and re-manufactured an infinite amount of times, and never wear out
1. Recycling a stack of newspaper 3-feet high saves one tree
2. Recycling 5 plastic (PET) bottles provides enough fiber to create one square feet of carpet
3. Recycling 1 ton of cardboard saves 46 gallons of oil
4. Recycling 1 aluminum can saves enough energy to power a TV for three hours

## Materials Exchange for Oklahoma Businesses

It's been a while since we've talked about materials exchanges. What are they? Where do I go? How do I do it? These are all great questions for a great opportunity!

Let's start with the basics. Materials exchange programs exist all over the country to connect companies that have unwanted materials or byproducts to companies that happen to be looking for those materials. The primary purpose is to reduce unnecessary consumption of our natural resources and thereby protect the environment. However, it goes a step further by helping companies financially as well. Using materials exchanges can lower (if not avoid) disposal costs, increase revenue from the sale of unwanted materials, and help lower expenses by purchasing materials at a reduced cost much of the time.

So now that you know what it is, let's talk about where to go and how to do it. OKRA is a proud partner of a regional materials exchange known as the

Resource Exchange Network for Eliminating Waste (RENEW). It started in Texas in the 80's but has since grown to encompass the south-central states within EPA's Region 6. It is a website-based materials exchange that allows you to post materials available and materials wanted. A quick look at their webpage will show you that such items include acids, solvents, oil, plastic, paper, textiles, wood, metal, rubber, glass, paints, etc. To get to RENEW, simply go to [renewtx.net](http://renewtx.net) and from there you can explore the website and create a profile. Check out some of the success stories too! Hopefully you include your own soon.

by Zach Benedict



SAVE THE DATE

SE Landfill Open House  
September 17, 2021  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

7001 S. Bryant Avenue • Oklahoma City, OK 73149



- ✓ Tours for the Gas to Energy Plant and Landfill
- ✓ Food and Giveaways



We'll handle it from here.®