

FEBRUARY 2024

THE OKRA OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION NEWS

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 on our website www.recycleok.org/get-involved

2024 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE ENDS FEBRUARY 29TH



RENEW YOUR OKRA MEMBERSHIP OR, BECOME A MEMBER NOW!

The Oklahoma Recycling Association is holding its annual membership drive from now – February 29, 2024. The OKRA website will be updated to reflect 2024 membership in March. In April, 2024 OKRA will publish the names of members in good standing in that month's edition of the newsletter. Check out the new family tier membership level.

The publication of the OKRA Membership Directory (for members only) will be in May. Membership in OKRA is open throughout the year, but only those who renew during the membership drive will be featured in the publications. Renewing your membership is easy.

Fill out the **membership form** on the OKRA website. If you are interested in stepping up in your membership and need more information, please take a look at the **membership benefits** chart also on the OKRA website. For more information about membership, contact Ellen Bussert at **okra.secretary@gmail.com**



Membership Levels

There are several levels of OKRA membership, each with corresponding annual dues.

Student Member (\$5)

Senior 65+ Member (\$10)

Individual Member (\$25)

***NEW* Family Membership (\$50)**

Non-Profit (\$75)

Government (\$75)

Higher Education (\$75)

Corporate (\$100-1,000)

Basic - \$100: 1 membership
Additional Memberships - \$25 each

Bronze - \$250: 2 memberships
Additional Memberships - \$25 each

Silver - \$500: 3 memberships
Additional Memberships - \$15 each

Gold - \$750: 4 memberships
Additional Memberships - \$15 each

Platinum - \$1,000: 5 memberships
Additional Memberships - \$10 each

OKRA Member Spotlight on Why They Became an OKRA Member



Jerry Schuber, Director of Solid Waste and Recycling, City of Broken Arrow

“Being an OKRA member just makes sense”



Mariama Borsuah

“Because I love recycling!”



Bret Scovill, City of Norman

“To be educated on the do's and don't's of recycling”



Jeanette Nance, retired Executive Director of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful

“Because I am a recycler, and want to help disseminate proper recycling information”

OKRA's 2023 Annual Recycling Conference was held at the Chickasaw Conference and Retreat Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma on Friday, September 29th. The theme of the conference was "Offsetting the Recycling Objection."

Activities began the night before the conference with a cookout and corn hole tournament for conference attendees and vendors. In addition to enjoying the beautiful outdoors at the pavilion on the conference center grounds, people had the opportunity to get to know people attending the conference.

Vincent Leray, The Recycling Partnership, presented at the opening session. He spoke about making recycling happen through tools and grants The Recycling Partnership offers to communities. Chaz Miller, Recycling Waste Expert gave a presentation on recycling markets 2023 and beyond. Next Riley Coy - OK Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry, Susan Bergen - Eco Wood Solutions and Paul Streets- City of Midwest City participated in a panel discussion on urban wood utilization in Oklahoma. The last two presentations of the morning were made by Traci Walton, Plenty Mercantile, who spoke on the "refillery" business concept and Jessica Miller, U. S. EPA, who spoke about understanding e-waste.

The afternoon session was dedicated to roundtable discussions facilitated by subject experts. People selected a topic they were interested in and had the opportunity to ask question of the expert and exchange ideas and thoughts with others at the table. Discussion topics this year were: composting and all about OCASA, community education and engagement, glass recycling in Oklahoma, textile waste, understanding policy and making it work for your program, Styrofoam recycling, e-waste, Super Recycler Program, wood waste, reuse in business, and the Oklahoma Medical Sharps Disposal Committee. There were 3 thirty-minute sessions so people could participate in more than one roundtable.

To see a 2023 conference program with speaker information, go to:

<https://recycleok.org/oklahoma-events-activities/past-okra-conferences/2023-oklahoma-recycling-conference/>

The 2024 Oklahoma Recycling Conference will be held October 8 & 9, 2024 at Sequoyah State Lodge. Look for more information on the OKRA Website.



Photo Recap of OKRA's 2023 Oklahoma Recycling Conference



Board Meeting Dates

March 8
May 17
July 19
September 20
December 6



Resolve to Reduce Your Waste

By Ofelia Ochoa

Every new year, we set ambitious goals that often fizzle out by mid-February. Life gets busy, priorities shift, and it's easy to make excuses for abandoning our resolutions. But what if I told you that embracing a sustainable lifestyle isn't just about personal gain? It's a positive change that ripples through your community, benefits the environment, and, most importantly, transforms you.

Let's break free from the cycle of discarded resolutions and embark on a journey towards reducing waste no matter what month it is! The mantra "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" isn't just a catchy slogan; it's a roadmap to a greener, more sustainable future.

Reduce: Mindful Consumption for a Better Tomorrow
Before we even consider recycling, let's start by mindfully choosing products with minimal packaging. This simple step significantly reduces the amount of plastic waste in your bin, setting the stage for a more sustainable lifestyle.

Reuse: Transforming Plastic Waste into Possibilities
In a world where plastic packaging seems unavoidable, let's shift our focus to creative solutions. Instead of discarding plastic containers, think about how you can repurpose them for storage, meal prepping, gardening, or even as art projects. Plastic containers are surprisingly sturdy and versatile, offering countless opportunities for reuse.



Recycle: Making Informed Choices

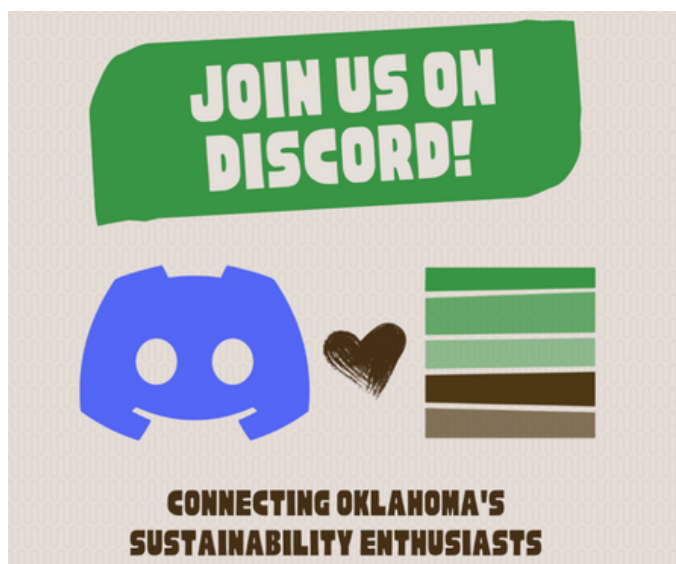
When you're out shopping, take a moment to inspect the packaging. Are the materials recyclable? Look for the numbers 1, 2, or 5 inside the recycling triangle – these are your green lights for recycling. Whether it's the Amazon boxes from the holidays or your everyday aluminum cans, recycling is a simple habit that diverts significant waste from landfills.

Swap by swap (the cheat code to become more eco-friendly)

When you use a product up you replace it with an eco friendlier version of it. Do not buy all new stuff all at once. Be mindful of what you use/need and find alternatives that are better for the environment little by little. It's easier on the wallet and less overwhelming.

Compost: Nourishing the Earth with Organic Recycling
Composting is like giving back to the Earth. Turn food scraps, leftovers, and forgotten cucumbers into nutrient-rich soil amendments. By incorporating compost into your garden, you're not only preventing a smelly trash can but also contributing to a healthier environment and soil.

If you're passionate about sustainability in Oklahoma, join the Fertile Ground Discord community. Let's inspire and support each other on the path to a more sustainable and eco-friendly lifestyle. Together, we can make a lasting impact!



Water Conservation in Oklahoma City & How the Beauty Industry Can Help

Written by Mazey Heydman
Stylist & Owner of Sustain Salon



Water conservation may not always be the first thing on everyone's mind, but it affects us all. Access to clean and safe water is essential for human life, necessary for everything from sustaining life and growing food to personal hygiene, public health, and healthcare.

In Oklahoma, there is a growing need for water conservation, primarily due to its vulnerability to drought, which can lead to water scarcity, especially affecting agriculture, industry, and municipal water supply. This, in turn, contributes to rapidly decreasing groundwater levels.

The increasing population is also placing higher demands on surface water, leading to competition for limited water resources and the potential for conflicts over water allocation. Adding to the challenge, Oklahoma is a high-risk area for wildfires, which can damage ecosystems and further threaten water quality and supply.

So, what can be done, and why can beauty industry professionals play a significant role in addressing this issue?



First, let's consider some numbers: In the Oklahoma City Metro area alone, there are approximately 264 salons. Generally, each salon has at least one shampoo bowl. For the sake of this discussion, let's assume each salon has one shampoo bowl. When we shampoo a client, each shampoo service typically takes between 7-10 minutes.

An average shampoo basin shower head flows at a rate of 2.5 gallons per minute, resulting in an average water usage of 17.5-25 gallons per shampoo service. If each salon had one shampoo basin and served just one client a day, the collective water usage in salons would amount to 4,620 - 6,600 gallons every 7-10 minutes.

Why do these numbers matter? Because there is a solution, and salons can significantly contribute to water conservation with one small change: low-flow, high-pressure showerheads, such as Eco Heads.

Eco Heads have a flow rate of 1.45 gallons per minute, and they provide higher water pressure. This not only reduces water usage but also shortens the time water is running. Furthermore, it saves on the electricity and gas required to heat the water, ensuring clients don't experience a chilly shampoo.

This relatively simple \$135 investment for salons could potentially save a minimum of 1,980 - 2,672 gallons every 7-10 minutes a single shampoo bowl is in use. Considering the numerous shampoo basins in the Oklahoma City metro area (which doesn't even include barbershops or educational facilities), the potential water savings are substantial.

Even if we assume every salon only has two shampoo bowls, implementing water conservation measures would result in saving a minimum of 4,000 - 6,000 gallons of water every 7-10 minutes in the OKC metro area. While this might not seem like a significant amount, it's worth noting that in one month, salons collectively use the same amount of water that the entire population of Oklahoma City uses daily in their homes for personal use. If all salons adopted water conservation practices, in just one five-day work week, Oklahoma City would save 2.4 million gallons of water.

Now, imagine the water usage of a large salon with multiple shampoo bowls, numerous stylists, and many clients throughout the day. The potential for water conservation impact is substantial. And let's not even get started on the environmental implications of reducing the chemicals from salon treatments going down the drain.

By making simple changes in the beauty industry, we can be instrumental in conserving water, reducing water waste, and contributing to a more sustainable future for Oklahoma and beyond.



BROKEN ARROW'S TRASH BASH & RECYCLING RALLY



Co-hosted by The City of Broken Arrow, The M.e.t., and Keep Broken Arrow Beautiful, the Trash Bash & Recycling Rally unites over 10 organizations, local businesses, and nonprofit groups to offer this award-winning collection event to the public.

Since October 2021, we have helped Broken Arrow and surrounding cities recycle more than 31 tons of waste that would have otherwise been thrown in the trash, often unsafely. This event not only provides a solution for disposal of special items like tires, medical sharps, and medications, but also assists the community with paper shredding and litter cleanup. Over 7 tons of litter has been collected during these events!

Join us for the Trash Bash & Recycling Rally every April and October to make a real difference in our community!
Details at www.RecycleBA.com



October 2021 - October 2023



OCASA

Oklahoma Compost and Sustainability Association

If you are new to OCASA, let us introduce ourselves. Established in 2015 as the annual Oklahoma Compost Conference, we officially became a 501c3 non-profit in 2021. While we continue to host the Compost Conference, we also host the annual Compost Festival during International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW). Throughout the year, we host various workshops, such as Backyard Composting 101 and How to Build a Worm Bin. You can catch us tabling at various events, like Earth Day and Fix it and Flowers Festival.

We spread compost awareness through education, outreach, and advocacy. We connect Oklahoma's composting community and promote the production and use of compost throughout the state. Stay connected with us on our website OKcomposts.org and on social media @OKcomposts.

Consider becoming a member:

Membership Levels and Benefits | Oklahoma Compost and Sustainability Association (okcompostconference.org)

ADVOCACY UPDATE

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) presented the Solid Waste Management Advisory Council (SWMAC) with changes to Oklahoma's composting rules on January 11th. The changes are intended to simplify the permitting process for small scale composters (accepting up to 100 tons of feedstock per year). After discussion and hearing overwhelming support from the community (including OCASA, OKC Parks, Scissortail Park, Fertile Ground, Commonwealth Urban Farms, the OKC Zoo, and more!) the council voted to approve the changes. Approval from SWMAC is the first step in rule making. Next, the proposed changes will be presented to the Environmental Quality Board, where community support will also be important. If passed, they will move on to the legislature and then to the Governor for approval.

Find proposed changes under the Rulemaking tab:
Council Meeting Single - Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality

Sign up for Environmental Quality Board updates:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/OKDEQ/subscriber/new>



Get Involved with OKRA In 2024 - Join A Work Group Or Committee

Would you like improved accessibility to recycling in Oklahoma? Would you like to help strengthen Oklahoma’s recycling network? If so, please consider joining one of OKRA’s work groups or committees in 2024. Your term of commitment is one year, with the option to continue. Select the work group you wish to join when you renew your membership in 2024 or contact Ellen Bussert at okra.secretary@gmail.com.

Committees

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

Communications Committee (Chair: Shavara Johnson) This committee updates OKRA website content, manages and posts updates to the listserv, maintains engagement via social media.

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

Work Groups

Advocacy Work Group (Chair: Eric Pollard) The Advocacy Work Group works to make OKRA better known among Oklahoma legislators and decision makers. The ultimate goal is to make OKRA the “go to” organization for recycling, waste reduction and resource recovery issues in our state.

Education and Outreach Work Group (Chair: Sara Ivy) The Education Work Group organizes Lunch and Learn workshops to provide information on recycling topics and issues.

Glass Work Group (Chair: Fenton Rood) The Glass Work Group is working on developing initiatives to develop programs for the communities in Oklahoma to reduce the amount of glass entering the landfills in Oklahoma.

Composting (Chair: Amanda Scofield): OKRA promotes composting as a resource recovery strategy and relays updates from the Oklahoma Compost and Sustainability Association, U.S. Composting Council, Biocycle and other compost organizations.

Product Stewardship (Chair: Cat Ecker): OKRA 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.

For more information on opportunities to get involved go to www.recycleok.org -Get Involved



Upcoming Events



OK RECYCLING FESTIVAL

March 23, 2024
9am – 2pm
Southern Woods Park
Stillwater OK.

Mark your calendars now for the biggest recycling festival in town! We'll have music, food trucks, educational exhibits, collection of hard to recycle waste and lots of opportunities to learn about recycling and sustainable living. Don't miss it!

Stillwater OKLAHOMA
GOING GREEN
OKRA OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION



OKRA
OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

**EARTH DAY
PHOTO
CONTEST**

Stay tuned for more details!

March **26th Golf Tournament** **27th & 28th Conference** **2024**

SAVE THE DATE

Emerging Waste Streams
Do you or anyone in your organization need **Continuing Education Unit/Professional Development Hours** credit or required **Waste Exclusion Plan training**? This conference is for **YOU!** Please share with your peers who may also need these credits!

OKLAHOMA SWANA Hosted by SWANA



Save The Date

2024

October

8th-9th

OKRA RECYCLING CONFERENCE



**VIRTUAL
NATIONAL
RECYCLING
CONGRESS**

March 5&6, 2024

REGISTER NOW!

**Two full days of
information
sharing, learning,
and networking**