

“ Oklahoma Celebrates America Recycles Day Officially Kicks Off 2008 Pledge Drive”

Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oklahoma Recycling Association (OKRA), Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) and The Metropolitan Environmental Trust (M.e.t.) request your help in promoting increased recycling in Oklahoma. If protecting the environment and conserving natural resources are important to you, you'll be glad to hear that recycling is making great progress. With more than 20-thousand programs available throughout the country, over 90% of Americans have access to recycling. In Oklahoma, over 50% of our citizens have recycling programs available.

Every year, communities, organizations, schools and businesses hold America Recycles Day (ARD) events to celebrate recycling and to keep it in the public eye. ARD celebrates clean air and water, a reliable supply of energy, and a healthy future for our children. However, a lot of valuable materials are still being wasted. So America Recycles Day also means rededicating ourselves to recycling. The annual ARD date is November 15th, but a lot of events are starting much earlier!

DEQ, OKRA, KOB and the M.e.t. are encouraging citizens to make a pledge to do their part in keeping recycling working. By filling out a pledge card and returning it to the DEQ by November 25, participants are automatically entered into drawings for three categories of state prizes. Be sure to check which drawing—youth (under 18), workplace, or general public—you would like to enter on the pledge form. Only one entry per person is allowed and only Oklahoma residents may win. If a prize winner's name is found more than once, he/she will be disqualified.

This year's prizes include two high-tech bicycles for the youth drawing, a Xerox Phaser Solid Ink Printer for the workplace drawing, and two Black & Decker cordless rechargeable electric lawnmowers for the general public drawing. All pledges must be received, both online and by snail mail, by November 25, 2008. Please mail to the address on back of the pledge card. Drawings for prize winners will be held on December 5, with prize winners notified by December 9.

For those planning an event or celebration, an event planning guide is available on the OKRA website. You may make your own copies of the pledge cards (4 to a sheet) by downloading the PDF from the OKRA website: www.recycleok.org. Educational materials, posters, sample proclamations, sample press releases and other materials are also downloadable from the website. You may also sign-up online for OKRA's distribution list for Oklahoma recycling information, including ARD updates.

Sponsors for the 2008 celebration have are OG+E Energy Services, Oklahoma Environmental Management Authority (OEMA), Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)—Oklahoma Chapter, Xerox Corporation, Waste Management-Recycle America, Sierra Club-Oklahoma Chapter and DEQ Pollution Prevention Program.

A recycling seminar for city officials and interested citizens is also offered for 2008 Oklahoma Celebrates America Recycles Day. The seminar will be held Thursday, Oct. 30 in Oklahoma City. Community Recycling Toolkits will be provided for all attendees. The agenda and registration details are available now on the OKRA website. For more information, contact Susie Shields at 405.702.5166 or susie.shields@deq.ok.gov.