

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 list server on our website: www.recycleok.org

High Schoolers Use Youtube to Promote Recycling

Meet the Bethel Acres "Mean Green Team"

We are the "Mean Green Team," a group of 9 high school STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) students from the rural community of Bethel Acres, Oklahoma. Our desire is to spread the importance of recycling through simple do-it-yourself videos that our team has created.

Unfortunately, last year our school district lost our recycling program due to the budget cuts to Oklahoma schools. We no longer had accessible recycling stations for our community and school, causing unnecessary paper, plastic, and cardboard waste.

Last year's STEM students brainstormed and developed a brilliant solution to help with this problem. They created over 200 notepads from recycled paper and cardboard

that they collected from across the school district - materials that would have ended up in landfills.



This school year, our team sought ways to take this idea a step further, informing our community about ways to recycle. To do this, we are developing a series of do-it-yourself videos with recycling tips and tricks that you'll want to check out and try at your school, home, and/or workplace.

We hope our Youtube channel shows our generation and our community that recycling is not just good for the Earth but it can be fun too! To check out our videos and to learn more about our project, please visit our website at <http://meangreenteam1.wixsite.com/gogreen>. Additional videos will be added soon, so keep checking back for new recycling tips!

DEQ Recycles Obsolete Media Materials By Bryce C. Hulsey

The idea for obsolete media materials recycling came as I toured our building one day and noticed many VHS tapes sitting on the shelves taking up space and collecting dust without being used for years.

Soon after, I was asked by my supervisor to review some of the VHS tapes to see if they were still applicable. What I found was that all the materials were extremely outdated and new, updated resources were now available on the web! I decided to investigate the best way to get rid of them and see if there was a way

to recycle these materials. I called several companies and compared services and fees. I decided to go with GreenDisk because they offered the best price and had great reviews. After getting a quote, I brought the information to administration and received permission to follow through with this initiative.

After approval, DEQ ordered 3 Techno-cans from GreenDisk and advertised throughout the building about our collection. The materials we collected were: VHS, CD/DVD, floppy disk, cassettes, slides and film.

DEQ Recycles Obsolete Media Materials (continued from front page)

We collected these materials for several weeks and stored them in our Re-purpose and Recycling area. We offered this service to the entire building and asked upper management to talk about it in meetings with their division.

With the help of my son Graeme, who was on summer break, we sorted, counted and packed up all the materials and when we had collected enough to fill a couple of boxes we shipped it off to GreenDisk. A few things, like some old music cassettes that Graeme



Graeme Hulsey packages boxes of obsolete media for shipping

was interested in, were put back into use, keeping them out of the waste stream.

In the two boxes that we sent off, DEQ collected: 377 VHS tapes, hundreds of CD/DVDs and 27 cassette tapes of which 21 were re-purposed. For our efforts we collected 75.8 pounds of obsolete media.

We have one more box available for a future collection effort and we hope to do another drive in 2017.

(Editor's Note: While GreenDisk is a good choice for organizations, individuals may drop off media items for free at a nearby Best Buy store.)



by: Lauren Drummond

Science careers are more fun than ever before—according to the growing number of awesome STEM education for kids events that are sprouting up across the country. STEM, the acronym that stands for **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**, is a rapidly growing path for the next generation.

Tulsa Green STEM will be a hub for teachers looking for environmental-themed STEM programming in classrooms. The Metropolitan Environmental Trust of Tulsa (M.e.t.) will coordinate these efforts by managing a database of organizations and agencies who provide these services and targeted outreach from the groups to the students.

Recycling is one of the easiest and most traditional ways to have a positive impact on your environment and community. Waste reduction curriculum uses STEM focused lessons to introduce students to energy concepts and conservation strategies.

Teaching the importance of recycling at an early age is vital to lifelong stewardship. The M.e.t. operates 12 recycling centers in the Tulsa area, loans recycling bins to events and non-profit organizations, helps affiliated communities promote their own centers, administers a household pollutant disposal program, and provides a recycling directory for residents. Our main goal is to educate citizens on recycling and the environment.



The simple act of tossing a can into a recycling bin rather than a garbage can diverts needless trash from entering landfills. Recycling saves natural resources and energy, thus helping the economy by reducing production and energy expenses.



Ultimately, the Tulsa Green STEM group has plans to use Tulsa Public Schools curriculum to coordinate a comprehensive Green STEM experience for students that will start in Pre-K. It will build toward a capstone experience in high school resulting in graduates who are both STEM and eco-literate citizens.

For more information about STEM in the Tulsa area, contact:

The M.e.t., Graham Brannin - greengraham@metrecycle.com or 918-584-0584

Tulsa Public Schools, Julie Hasfjord - hasfju@tulsaschools.org or 918-746-6986

OKC to overhaul recycling and trash services

On August 2nd, the OKC City Council voted to approve a resolution for phased improvements to its trash and recycling services. The council's decision paves the way for biweekly collection of 96-gallon recycling bins that will replace the 18-gallon Little Blue recycling containers currently used by city residents. The changes are in response to customer's desires for additional recycling options and larger recycling carts.

Changes to the trash and recycling services will be phased in over the next four years. The Little Blue recycling program will end December 2017 and the new biweekly recycling program will start in February 2018. The new program will add the curbside collection of cardboard, which is not currently collected in the Little Blue program. At the same time, four pilot recycling stations will open for rural customers to use. These drop off stations will collect the same recyclables that are collected curbside in urban areas.

In addition to the changes to the recycling program, OKC will begin a "pay as you throw" program in 2019. Under this program, charges will be based on waste collections. This program will be incrementally phased in over 3 to 5 years. It is anticipated the new recycling program will encourage waste reductions through recycling, mulching, and composting.

OKC residents can expect to pay annual rate increases of 3.5% through 2019 to fund the new program, which is equal to the annual increases levied since 2012

For more information on the new program, see the presentation from the August 2nd OKC City Council meeting at <https://www.okc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/1828/5206>

Cigarette recycling stations in downtown OKC

Oklahoma City has recently installed 23 cigarette waste recycling stations downtown through a partnership among the city's Office of Sustainability, OKC Beautiful and Downtown OKC Inc.

The cigarette recycling stations were installed on Project 180 light poles in Bicentennial Park, at city hall, the Oklahoma County Courthouse and Leadership Square. Downtown OKC will service and maintain the stations, and all cigarette waste collected will be shipped at no cost to a private company. The excess tobacco and paper will be composted and the filters will be recycled into a reusable high-grade plastic.

"Downtown belongs to everyone," says Lisa Synar, OKC Beautiful executive director. "It is so important we provide the tools for everyone to do their part to safeguard downtown's appeal. Through this program, reducing the cigarette waste that collects in our tree wells, streets and sidewalks doesn't just beautify downtown, it also diverts waste from our landfills."



OKC Beautiful is one of 42 organizations to receive 2016 grant funding totaling \$240,000 through Keep America Beautiful's Cigarette Litter Prevention Program.

"Storm drains too often end up as litter receptacles," says T. O. Bowman, the city's sustainability manager. "The toxic chemicals in cigarette waste can then leach into our waterways. This program partnership with OKC Beautiful and Downtown OKC Inc. will help us ensure Oklahoma City remains beautiful, healthy and sustainable."

From: OKC News Release 7/27/2016

HELP US GROW...



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Not a current member of OKRA? Consider joining today!

To learn about membership levels and member benefits, such as discounts to OKRA events, download our membership brochure from www.recycleok.org.

To join or renew your membership :

- ♦ ***Send completed membership brochure and check by mail to OKRA, PO Box 521154, Tulsa, OK 74152-1154.***
- ♦ ***Go to www.recycleok.org/join-us.php and access the online membership form toward the bottom of the page. You can pay online via PayPal, by mail (send your check to the PO Box above), or by credit card (follow the PayPal link and select "Pay by Credit Card" instead of PayPal).***

Celebration Announced to Honor Statewide Environmental Excellence

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Announces Finalists for Annual Awards

All year, Oklahomans have been doing their part to keep Oklahoma beautiful, and now it's time to recognize them for their efforts. Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) is hosting their 26th annual Environmental Excellence Celebration on Thursday, November 17, at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

A statewide nonprofit, KOB recognizes Oklahomans doing their part to help preserve the beauty and sustainability of this state. This year, over 60 individuals, groups, businesses, municipalities, etc. from across the state will be recognized for their work for the past year.

This year's board commendation winners are Latta High School FFA for the Towering Spirit Award, Global Gardens for the Visionary Leadership Award, OGE Energy Corp. for the Vanguard Award, Dixie Harper for the Champion Volunteer Award, and Tom Terry for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Our Environmental Excellence Celebration and Award banquet is our moment in time to appreciate the work, acknowledge the passion, commitment and sacrifice of remarkable Oklahomans who go above and beyond to enhance the beauty and health of our environment and our state," said Jeanette Nance, Executive Director of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. "This is more than just a public pat on the back. Our event is the largest in Oklahoma gathering 550+ citizens at the Cowboy & Western Heritage museum in Oklahoma City. Join us to celebrate these selfless volunteers, groups and corporations that work tirelessly to keep Oklahoma's beauty running deep."

Finalists for the Environmental Excellence Competition showed exceptional work in the following areas and more: education, conservation, beautification, sustainability practices, nonprofit efforts, youth leadership, litter prevention, and much more. These finalists include Andrew Sartain with Earth Rebirth, Ardmore Beautification Council, Armstrong Flooring, Inc., Bethel High School STEM Club, Charlie Dougherty with Lincoln County, Chris Coager with the Owasso Strong Neighborhood Initiative, City of Comanche, City of Cushing – Cushing Pride, City of McAlester, City of Midwest City, City of Muskogee, City of Newkirk, City of Oklahoma City, City of Okmulgee,

City of Owasso, City of Wilburton, City of Yukon, Collinsville Trails Initiative, Donna Mackiewicz with Beyond the Classroom, Durant Chamber of Commerce, Earth Day: Celebrate CommUNITY, Environmental Management Inc., Grand River Dam Authority & Oklahoma Blue Thumb, Jacob Coffman with Team Up to Clean Up, JCPenney in Enid, Kathy Harding with Peters Elementary, Lake McMurry & Friends, McAlester Main Street, Melissa Walker with Ardmore Beautification Council, Neighborhood Solutions, OKC Beautiful, Okeene FFA, Okeene Historic Preservation Group, Operation Clean House, Owasso Strong Neighborhood Initiative-Owasso Cares, Pittsburg County Drug Court, Pride in McAlester, Pryor Main Street, Inc., Rhodes Molenda with Beyond the Classroom, Rick Miller with the City of Okmulgee, Russel Gaskamp with Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Sharon Atcheson with Keep Broken Arrow Beautiful, The Grove Neighborhood, The Nature Conservancy, Town of Fargo, Tree Bank Foundation, Twin Cities Revitalization Project, University of Central Oklahoma, Up With Trees, Urban Soul – Xtreme Youth Ministries, Vision Farms, and Wildhorse Gardens and Market.

Kathy Gain, KOB Board President, believes these finalists exemplify Margaret Meade's famous words of, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Winners in the various award categories will be announced the night of banquet. Tickets for the event can be purchased online at www.KeepOklahomaBeautiful.com. The event will begin with a reception and fundraiser at 5:00 p.m. Dinner and awards will follow.

Join KOB in recognizing these outstanding Oklahomans!

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The Great American Can Roundup (GACR) School Challenge is a fun and easy way to raise money and help the environment. A \$1000 prize is awarded to the school in each state which recycles the most pounds of cans/student. This allows small schools to compete equally with large schools. The national champion recycling school earns an additional \$5000. The Can Manufacturers Institute is sponsoring the program beginning on America Recycles Day (Nov. 15, 2016) to Earth Day (April 22,

2017). It is a wonderful way for schools to show their true green environmental spirit, encourage recycling and join the GACR leader board. Last year's GACR State Champion for Oklahoma was Perkins-Tryon Intermediate School, who recycled 18.22 pounds of cans/student. For more information on the GACR, visit www.canroundup.com.