

THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

April 2020

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)

50th Celebration of Earth Day and Recycling

Recycling is not new. Documents show the Japanese made paper from used waste paper as early as the year 1031. Mills in Philadelphia in 1690 made paper from recycled cotton and linen scraps. My mother collected steel cans during World War II because she knew that it would build the battleship that would bring her father (and my grandfather) home from the War. But recycling was done mostly after the War by businesses. There really wasn't a post-consumer movement in recycling; households saved and reused well, but did not recycle anything. Then came the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970.

The messages of Earth Day were all over the spectrum, much like the environmental activists of today. It started with a river in Cleveland catching fire and an oil spill off the California coast to get people to begin to demand change. The organizers of the first Earth Day were smart and focused on children and what they could do to help. Cleaning up the water and the air were political motivations, but the answer was that children could do very little to help those areas. The land was different. Litter and recycling became the most effective way to build such a movement.

The timing was perfect. It was estimated that 3,000 recycling drop-off centers were started in America in just one year focusing on steel cans, glass wine and beer bottles, aluminum cans, and/or old newspapers. The aluminum can, introduced just five years before, helped beverage companies perfect recycling collection programs to complement. This helped lead Oregon to pass the first bottle bill in America giving all beverage containers value.



It is that sense that recycling and the environmental movement will always be tied together. Recycling becomes the first thing that we did to care about the Earth. There is much to teach and learn about recycling and it also serves as the catalyst that starts to make us all care. Ask children to say what they can do to help save the Earth and most likely the first answer will be recycle. Be honest to yourself and how many of us began to recycle that first time because we were

taught or our kids were taught and came home asked about it. Recycling is something we can all do every day to make a difference. I think that mentality shows, and it is my experience, that citizens that recycle are among the best citizens in the community.

Earth Day celebrates 50 years this year. A half century of focusing attention on something vital to our existence as humans. Our quality of life and the quality of life for generations to come deserve our focus to ensure that we support recycling and we teach that recycling matters. Share the message and make sure and recycle this Earth Day and every day of the year. If you don't recycle, you are throwing away what could be valuable and as precious as the golden anniversary of Earth Day!

By Michael Patton,
OKRA Board Member,
Land Legacy



A Message from the OKRA President.....

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we find ourselves living under very different circumstances than we ever expected. But we can still participate in the celebration in many different ways. We can refine our recycling regimen at home ensuring we know what is acceptable for our local program and not "wish-cycling" items that we want to be recycled but are not currently accepted. We can start a vegetable garden to keep our food footprint smaller, and compost our organic waste to recycle those nutrients and reduce what goes to the landfill. We can read up on

green living. We can do an at home energy audit, and water audit - especially checking those outdoor sprinklers for leaks or overspray. As we help each other by staying home, let's focus on what we can do right now, and be encouraged with in-home accomplishments.

Happy 50th Earth Day OKRA enthusiasts!

Sara Ivey
OKRA President



Impacts of COVID-19 on Recycling Business

Like many of you, we have been dealing with the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts it is having on consumers, our ability to provide services and our workers. As waste hauling is considered an essential service, many of us have continued to provide our service. We have been fortunate to date that many of the worst projections have not yet come to pass in Oklahoma but vigilance (and social distancing) remain the priority.

Many haulers have taken extra precautions relating to making protective equipment like gloves and masks available for drivers and other front-line workers. We've looked to the guidance from the National Waste and Recycling Association. Fortunately, many aspects of this service do not require violating social distancing rules and allow people to continue to work and provide service in relative safety.

Others in the industry and many of our customers have experienced significant disruption to business due to the distancing and preventative measures. Many businesses are looking into solutions offered through the CARES Act. The most sought after is the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which are forgivable loans to protect businesses and worker's wages during the crisis. While the

first round of funding has expired, more may be on the way. This could be a vital lifeline in a tough economy. In addition to more funding, there is concern about who has benefited to date, that perhaps larger businesses with better relationships with banks got their loans first and smaller businesses struggled to get theirs. Encouraging your federal representatives to make sure that smaller businesses get help too and that more funding is added will be a boon to many businesses.

The last thing to consider is how this changes things moving forward. We have seen massive shifts in consumer behavior. Commercial recycling has seen significant declines with many non-essential businesses being closed. Residential recycling is likely up considerably, with the increased time that people are spending at home. It is anybody's guess where things will be when we come out of this. The only thing we can say is "the only constant in life is change."

By Nick Singer

Nick Singer is a zero waste specialist at Fertile Ground. He has a degrees in Economics and Mathematics from Penn State and has worked for and consulted with many political organizations and campaigns around Oklahoma. Opinions are his own.

OK Earth Coalition, OK Sierra Club, Carrie Dickerson Foundation & OK Roots Music present

WE CAN'T BE WITH YOU ON GUTHRIE GREEN FOR THE 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, so we're improvising—like jazz. Here's an Earth Day message and a beautiful tune from the first-ever Native U.S. Poet Laureate, **JOY HARJO. We're rescheduling Joy and her band for an evening of music and poetry sometime in 2021, so stay tuned.**

We've teamed with our friends at OK Earth Coalition to share special Earth Day messages for Oklahomans from 350.org founder **BILL McKIBBEN**, sustainable fashion tips from supermodel & actress **AMBER VALLETTA**, and others. All leading to 3 days of virtual activities April 22-24.

Get involved at **OKEarthCoalition.org**

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Celebrate the 50th Earth Day on April, 22nd, 2020!

Earth Day 2020 is going to look a lot different from any of the previous 49 Earth Days. COVID-19 has forced cancellation of thousands of face-to-face events, such as community clean-ups, rallies, expos, and fun-runs. This year Earth Day will be largely digital. But whether online or in person, the goal of Earth Day remains the same: to unite people around the world to encourage world leaders to act on environmental degradation and climate change.



tions that are hosting digital events and providing education on actions that you can take, wherever you are, to improve the environment and help save the Earth.

This year you can make a difference, even while staying at home. There are numerous organiza-

Over the 24 hours of Earth Day, April 22nd, Earthday.org will be hosting global conversations, calls to action, messages from celebrities, performances, video teach-ins and more. Other digital events will include virtual protests, social media campaigns and more. A full scope of digital events will be available at earthday.org

Celebrate Wherever You are!

OKC ZOO

Virtual Party for the Planet Earth Day Celebration with the OKC Zoo

On Wednesday, April 22, the Zoo is joining the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Party for the Planet® celebrating 50 years of Earth Day. The Zoo will be sharing a series of conservation videos from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. focusing on what the Zoo is doing to protect our planet, its wildlife, and wild places – and how you can help. Fans will also have an opportunity to receive a free Party for the Planet® pollinator garden kit when they answer questions on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/okc_zoo) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/okc_zoo) following each live video.



HAPPY 50th EARTH DAY!



**PICNIC
IN PLACE**
EARTH DAY 2020

Picnic In Place — Earth Day 2020. Join The Nature Conservancy & Myriad Botanical Gardens online this April 22, 2020 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of **Earth Day** with a virtual picnic live on their [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/okc_zoo) page.

KOB Announces End Litter Video Contest Winners

In January 2020, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) together with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) announced the 2019-2020 End Litter video winners.

The End Litter Video Contest is an annual competition in two divisions – high school and college. Each group has the opportunity to submit a 30-45 second video that covers the issues of litter and illegal dumping in Oklahoma. The winners in each category received a \$750 cash prize made possible by ODOT and ODEQ. The winners will also be recognized at the 30th Environmental Excellence Celebration on November 20, 2020 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.



The winning high school video was *End Litter Keep Oklahoma Beautiful* from Mooreland High School. The team members were Emily Lintner, Shelby Schmidt, Bracen Lewis, Jayna Gullic, Sydnie Butts, and Julie Focht supervised the project.

Our Home Oklahoma is the winning college video from Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center (EOCTECH). The video was produced by Preston Master, Hunter Reed, Braydon Beam, Lyric Morris, Joey Mitchell and supervised by Ben Hlavaty.

KOB Executive Director Jeanette Nance and a Representative from ODOT awarded the cash prizes at each of the winning institutions during an informal ceremony on January 31st.

KOB's Uncapped and Upcycled Contest Winners

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) celebrates the winners of their elementary and middle school Litter Education programs, the UnCapped and UpCycled contests! These KOB programs, whose mantra is "Every Litter Bit Hurts" provide opportunities to create young environmental ambassadors by offering creative projects that teach students about the harmful effects of littering.

UnCapped engages 4th & 5th grade students to take action in understanding the importance of recycling in Oklahoma by creating a work of art from plastic bottle caps. The UnCapped winners were Mrs. Jennifer Lewis's 4th Grade class from Will Rogers Elementary School in McAlester, OK who created a mural



titled, *For the Love of Buffalo Pride*.

UpCycled challenges 7th and 8th grade students to understand the consequences of litter and how it affects our environment. The UpCycled winners were Mrs. Trinda Crow's



7th grade class from Wyandotte Middle School in Wyandotte, OK. Mrs. Trinda Crow's students led the project titled, *Page Turner*.

As a prize for their hard work, KOB Executive Director Jeanette Nance and representatives from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation had the opportunity to treat our contest winners with a pizza party at their schools in late January with guest appearances from their local heroes such as the Mayor of McAlester, the Wyandotte Nation Environmental Department, and more. The contest winners were also selected and recognized at the 29th Annual Environmental Excellence Celebration in November 2019.

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful is a nonprofit working to empower Oklahoma citizens to preserve and enhance the state's natural beauty and ensure a healthy, sustainable environment.

For more information about KOB, visit: keepoklahomabeautiful.com

Graham Braninn Retires from M.e.t.

I have had the honor of being the Executive Director at The Metropolitan Environmental Trust, The M.e.t., for almost 5 years. With the support of my staff, my board of trustees, the public, and the 11 local governments in the trust, many accomplishments have occurred. The 11 local governments I have directly served are: Bixby, Broken Arrow, Claremore, Collinsville, Coweta, Owasso, Sand Springs, Tulsa, and Tulsa County. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve. I now plan to retire at the end of May.

As all of you know, many things have changed over the years related to solid waste management and recycling. The M.e.t. has evolved in conjunction with these changes. We have responsibly expanded our collected items to specifically compliment the growing curbside recycling option. This includes emphasizing the collection of electronic waste, all types of batteries, used oil, fryer oil, and plastic grocery bags. The M.e.t. also does periodic special collection events including smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, tires, e-waste, and more. We also partnered with the City of Tulsa to allow outside citizens free limited access, by appointment, to Tulsa's Household Pollutant Collection Facility. Finally, we have a commercial business fee-based system for proper processing of fluorescent bulbs and ballasts.

Another area of growing effort has been in educational outreach covering a more holistic environmental exposure, a large part of which involves partnering with outside educators. Our Green STEM children's education program is flourishing with "STEM education with a Green Tint".

My parting and humbly given unsolicited advice is this, the only constant in business and public service is **change**. Try to embrace it while maintaining your core principles and keeping your eye on a worthwhile mission.

Again, many thanks go out to all who have supported and tolerated me over the years. I plan to dabble a bit in environmental protection but now as a citizen.

Graham Braninn
Executive Director, The M.e.t.



The above picture was submitted by Queen Bee Nicole Glenn, from Jones, Oklahoma. Nicole reports that there are now three organizations that have adopted streets in Jones - Cub Scout Pack #347, Jones High School Key Club and the Queen Bees. Great Job!

Are you an OKRA Member?

The Oklahoma Recycling Association would like to invite you to become a member in 2020. If your membership has expired, we invite you to renew. There are many benefits to membership of which you can take advantage. Members receive a discount to the annual conference, recognition on the OKRA webpage (for corporate, government and non profit members) and newsletter, and an annual membership directory.



One of the biggest advantages to membership is becoming a part of the network of Oklahomans who are working in the business of recycling. Being an OKRA member you have contact with Oklahoma businesses and governments that are recycling right here in Oklahoma. Sharing information and resources helps grow Oklahoma's recycling programs and industry.

For more information on becoming a member or renewing your membership go to: www.recycleok.org, or contact Ellen Bussert at okra.secretary@gmail.com.

OKRA Welcomes our New and Renewing Members for 2020!

Corporate Platinum Member



Corporate Gold Member



Corporate Silver Members



Corporate Bronze Members



Natural Evolution, Inc.



An Electronics Recycling Company



Corporate Members

DocuGuard Confidential Document Destruction
Fertile Ground Cooperative
Green Vision Recycling LLC
Keepin' Enid Green
Linn Paper Stock Company
NeWSolutions
Ripple Glass

Government

Cherokee Nation
Chickasaw Nation Division of Commerce
City of Ada
City of Broken Arrow
City of Edmond
City of Midwest City
City of Norman
City of Stillwater
City of Tulsa
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town

Higher Education

OSU Cooperative Extension
OSU Facilities Management
UCO Sustainability Program

Non Profit

Ada Recycling Coalition
Arkansas Recycling Coalition, Inc
Keep Oklahoma Beautiful
Oklahoma Green Schools Program
Pride in McAlester
Show, Inc.
Solid Waste Research Institute of NE Okla.
The M.e.t.
Tulsa Master Recyclers
Tulsa Zoo

Individuals

Kara Berst
Kelly Bronnenburg
Stuart Burchett
Ellen Bussert
Bill Cade
Julie Crawford
Tom Elkins
Peter Grant
April Hathcoat
Ilda Hershey
Tracy Horst
Patrick Ivey

Sara Ivey
Jason Kannady
Trudi Logan
Susan Looper
Natalie Mallory
Amanda Marcott-Thotunkal
Jeanette Nance
Michael Patton
Linda Pelton
Robert Pickens
Dennis Preston
Amanda Scofield
Jacob Sherman
Nick Singer
Garmon Smith
Jan Smith
Robert Stewart
Maureen Turner
Jade Urash
Isaac Wayne
Larry Wright
Tomoko Yoshida



Senior

Matt Albright
Linda Pelton
Mark Swanson
Luann Waters

Student

Kian Ivey
Rori Ivey
Sydney Mantzke

Lifetime Member

Susie Derichsweiler

Honorary Member

Fenton Rood



As of April 20, 2020

2020 OKRA Executive Council

Sara Ivey, President
Okla. Dept. of Environmental Quality

Maureen Turner, Vice President
City of Tulsa

Crystal Bennett, Secretary
Republic Services

Sara Ivey, Acting Treasurer
Okla. Dept. of Environmental Quality

Tracy Horst, Past President
Choctaw Nation

**Ilda Hershey, Executive
Council Member at Large**
Oklahoma State University

Board Members

Kara Berst/Chickasaw Nation

**Keima Kamara/Oklahoma
Cooperative Extension Service**

Trudi Logan/Tinker AFB

Bob Masterson/City of Edmond

**Jeanette Nance/Keep Oklahoma
Beautiful**

Michael Patton/Land Legacy

**Amanda Scofield/ Okla. Dept. of
Environmental Quality**

**Garmon Smith/Ada Recycling
Coalition**

**Megan Waters/Pride in McAlester/Keep
McAlester Beautiful**

**Ellen Bussert, Administrative
Assistant to the Board**

2020 OKRA Technical Council

Diana Askins, Tulsa Master Recyclers (volunteer training & management)

Chris Feeney, Keepin' Enid Green (rural recycling)

Eric Hemphill, University of Central Oklahoma Sustainability (university programs)

Bryce Hulse, OK Dept. of Env. Quality (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)

Fenton Rood, OK Dept. of Environmental Quality (solid waste/recycling)

Scott Smith, Republic Services (hauling services)

Amanda Marcott Thottunkal, OK Dept of Commerce (business recycling)

Dianne Wilkins, OK Dept. of Env. Quality, Pollution Prev. (business/industry)

Larry Wright, Western Oklahoma (rural issues)

[Click Here for OKRA Board/Council Webpage](#)



Highlight your 2020 recycling events
in the OKRA News!

Send photos and articles to trudi.logan@us.af.mil
to submit for an upcoming edition!