

# UPDATE

### Meetings & Events

*ORWA 37<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Meeting and  
Technical Conference  
April 23-25, 2007  
Marriott Southern Hills  
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

*Rural Water Rally  
April 29-May 2, 2007  
Hyatt Regency  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, DC*

*Capital Water Day  
May 8, 2007  
State Capitol Building  
Oklahoma City, OK*

*ORWA Fall Management  
Conference  
August 13-15, 2007  
Western Hills Lodge  
Wagoner, OK*

*NRWA Annual  
Conference  
September 23-26, 2007  
J W Marriott  
Philadelphia, PA*

*Governors Water  
Conference  
(OWRB 50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary)  
October 23-25, 2007  
Cox Convention Center  
Oklahoma City, OK*

### SB 841 PROVIDES MORE FUNDING FOR WATER DEVELOPMENT

Legislation passed last year dedicated a portion of the gross production tax on oil to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to pay for the update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan and provide much needed funding for re-capitalization of the state financial assistance program. The amount of funds allocable to the water program was capped at a percentage of the first \$150 million of monies generated by the gross production tax. If oil prices stay at the current level the tax will generate over \$2 million a year, over the next five years, for water programs.

Senate Bill 841 by Senator Charlie Laster, Senator Mary Easley and Representative Guy Liebmann takes the water fund out from under the \$150 million cap and removes the five year limitation on funding. SB 841 almost doubles the amount of gross production tax revenue that would be available and provides a continuing source of funding for planning, water supply and infrastructure development. The bill passed the Senate and is now awaiting action in the House. Talk to your legislators about making funding for water a high priority. Last

years drought and proposed out-of-state water sales highlighted the importance of assessing and evaluating our current and long range water supply needs and developing our water resources to assure safe, dependable water supplies for all Oklahoman's for now and in the future.

Some of our legislative leaders have concerns with removing the cap and five year limit on gross production tax funding for water programs. The important thing right now is that the legislature provide adequate funding for completing the update of the water plan and re-capitalizing the financial assistance program. If your legislator can't support SB 841, ask them to support an appropriation of additional monies to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for planning and water and wastewater loans and grants. You can contact your State Representative at (405) 521-2711 and your State Senator at (405) 524-0126.

For an update on other legislative issues of interest to rural water please refer to the Legislative Review enclosed with this newsletter.

### ORWA WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER

We are pleased to announce the addition of Kelley Brown to the ORWA Staff. Kelley started work on February 1. She fills the ORWA Source Water Protection Specialist position formerly held by Scott Roberson. Scott has moved back to the Wellhead Protection Program where he worked three years ago.

Kelley previously worked as general manager for Okmulgee County RWD No. 6. The district is a purchase water system that serves almost 3100 members. She will be working with surface water systems to assess potential contaminate sources within their watershed areas. Additionally, she will assist systems in developing their Source Water Protection Plans and Contingency (Emergency Response) Plans. Please contact Kelley at (405) 672-8925 if you are interested in developing a source water protection plan for your watershed.

### ORWA STAFF CHANGES

A recent restructuring at ORWA has several of our staff working in new positions.

Kelly Matheson is now working with the ORWA Assurance Group. In his new capacity, Kelly is performing property assessments and assisting ORWAAG members in evaluating their coverage's. This very beneficial service helps Group members ensure that all of their property and other assets are covered, and that they are properly covered.

Other staff changes effective March 1, 2007 are as follows. Tim Wincapaw has moved to the Wastewater/Native American Technical Assistance and Training Program formerly administered by Kelly Matheson. Tim's previous Wastewater Technician position has been filled by Marc Davis, and Marc's former Wellhead Protection slot has been filled by Scott Roberson.





For emergency calls after office hours, nights, weekends and holidays, contact Gene Whatley at 405/794-0841



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### UPDATE OF THE STATE COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN

Last year, the Oklahoma Legislature appropriated funds and directed the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) to update the State Comprehensive Water Plan. The Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan was first published in 1980 and updated in 1997. Updating of the plan will take place over the next five years and will involve assessing current and projected water supply demands, water supply availability, mapping and inventory of system infrastructure, identifying adequacy of existing system infrastructure to meet projected needs and developing master plans to meet future needs. The Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute (OWRRI) at Oklahoma State University has been selected to assist the OWRB in developing a strategic guide for managing the State's water resources over the next 50 years. In cooperation with several partners, the OWRRI has been asked by the OWRB to sponsor a series of meetings across the State to provide Oklahomans an opportunity to shape the next water plan.

OWRRI will conduct approximately 40 "Local Input Meetings" around the state to give state residents an opportunity to share their opinions about what should be included in Oklahoma's upcoming 50-year water plan. We strongly encourage all water systems to have representatives attend one or more of these meetings and address water supply, infrastructure and planning problems and the needs of your area. This is your opportunity to help set the agenda for the state water plan. To learn more about the update of the state comprehensive water plan visit: <http://okwaterplan.info>, or for your convenience, a link to this website has been placed on the ORWA home page [www.okruralwater.org](http://www.okruralwater.org).

Local Input Meetings that have been scheduled for April and May are listed below. New meeting sites will be added each month, so be sure to check the OWRRI website <http://okwaterplan.info> for additional dates and locations. We look forward to seeing you at a meeting in your area. **All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.**

- April 12 Beaver County Fairgrounds Pavilion, Beaver, OK
- April 19 Oklahoma Panhandle Research & Extension Center, Goodwell, OK
- April 26 City of Woodward Pioneer room, Woodward, OK
- May 3 Woods County Fairgrounds, Woman's Building, Alva, OK
- May 8 Western Technology Center, Conference Center, Sayre, OK
- May 15 Great Plains Technology Center, Worley Center, Lawton, OK
- May 17 Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Conference Center, Weatherford, OK
- May 29 Western Tech Center, Convention Center, Hobart, OK
- May 31 Western Oklahoma State College, Altus, OK

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### PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN

The Rural Water Public Relations Campaign has developed a series of new ads and a new web site to promote the benefits of rural water. One of the ads will run each month for the next eight months in Oklahoma Living magazine. The magazine is published by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives and is mailed monthly to over 250,000 rural electric customers around the state. Unpaid Heroes ads will continue to run in Oklahoma Living on a periodic basis.

Be sure and check out our new web site at [www.gettoknowyourh20.com](http://www.gettoknowyourh20.com) and let us know what you think. We would like to thank the ORWA Public Relations Committee and Traction Marketing for their good work. Members of the ORWA Public Relations Committee are; Charles Lewis, Chairman, Richard Alig, Jerry Gammill, Bill Giles, Phillip Klutts Gary McGuire, Dennis Meyers, Arvil Morgan, Jimmy Seago, Bill Secrest, Bill Sims and Clifford Tatum. Attend the ORWA annual conference April 24-25, at the Marriott Southern Hills in Tulsa to learn more about the public relations campaign.