

UPDATE

October 2008



Meetings & Events

*Governor's Water
Conference
October 28-30, 2008
Reed Center
Midwest City, Oklahoma*

*OWPCA Short School
October 27-31, 2008
Meridian Convention Center
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

*ORWA Annual Meeting and
Management Conference
April 14-16, 2009
Marriott Southern Hills
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

*Rural Water Rally
April 19-21, 2009
Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill
Washington, DC*

*ORWA Operator EXPO
June 15-16, 2009
Payne County EXPO Center
Stillwater, OK*

LEGISLATION

The ORWA Legislative Committee will meet on October 27, 2008 to consider possible issues for next year's legislative session. If you have any issues affecting rural and small community water systems that you feel need to be addressed, please let us know so that the Legislative Committee can consider the request for possible inclusion on our 2009 legislative agenda.

GOVERNOR'S WATER CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 28-30, 2008

The 29th Annual Governor's Water Conference will be held October 28-30, 2008 at the Sheraton-Reed Conference Center in Midwest City, Oklahoma. This year's conference theme is the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan and Water Solutions for Oklahoma. The Conference begins with registration at 7:45 a.m. and runs all day on October 28th. First day conference activities include presentations by industry and political leaders, a luncheon and the Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards. At 5:00 p.m. plan to meet and visit with friends and acquaintances at a reception in the Joyner Room. The conference resumes Wednesday morning at 8:15 a.m. and concludes with a noon luncheon.

The Governor's Water Conference will be followed by the 6th Annual OWRRI Water Research Symposium, which will begin at 1:30 p.m. on the 29th and end at 5:00 p.m. on October 30.

A conference agenda and registration form is enclosed. Registration to the Governor's Water Conference is free for Rural Input Meeting (RIM) Discussants and Alternates. There is a \$50.00 charge for everyone attending the OWRRI Symposium.

DEER CREEK WATER CORPORATION DONATES GENERATOR

We would like to express our appreciation to the board and staff of Deer Creek Water Corporation for their generous donation of a generator to ORWA. The trailer mounted generator, as well as a generator owned by the ORWA Assurance Group, will be available as needed to loan to systems during emergencies. One of the major problems associated with tornadoes, ice storms and other natural disasters is loss of power. Power outages may last days or weeks. Backup generators are vital for keeping the water flowing until permanent repairs can be made.

Please let us know if your system has a generator or other equipment that you would be willing to donate to the Association. We are also interested in identifying resources that may be available during disasters. Please let us know if your system would be willing to loan equipment and/or provide assistance to other systems during disasters. Working together, systems helping systems, we can be better prepared and respond more quickly during emergency situations.





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



RED FLAG COMPLIANCE TOOL AVAILABLE FROM ORWA

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) and the Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA) are pleased to offer a free, simple compliance tool to comply with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) new federal mandate (the so-called Red Flag Rule). The Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act "red flag rule" requires any entity where there is a risk of identity theft, to develop and implement an identity theft prevention program. The program must include reasonable policies and procedures for detecting, preventing and mitigating identity theft. All financial institutions and creditors with "covered accounts", including water and wastewater systems, must comply with the regulation by November 1 of this year.

The NRWA/ORWA Identity Theft Prevention Program Compliance Model and a copy of the red flag rule (federal register) is available on the ORWA web site at www.okruralwater.org. If you do not have internet access, a hard copy of the compliance tool is available on request from the ORWA office.

SEMS Technologies has announced that an interactive program for the red flag rule will be included in their SEMS Software Suite. If you are an existing subscriber your service will be upgraded to include the red flag rule at no additional charge. SEMS is also offering a special short term subscription to help systems comply with the red flag rule. To find out more about the SEMS Software Suite call 1-866-758-6582.

ORWA TO SERVE ON MARGINAL-QUALITY WATER TECHNICAL WORK GROUP

Senate Bill 1627 enacted during the last session of the Oklahoma Legislature directs the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to establish a marginal-quality water technical work group. Marginal-quality waters include brackish or saline contaminated water which result from natural or man made contamination, which may be used or reused for the benefit of Oklahoma citizens and the environment. Possible uses may include treatment of salt water for public drinking water supply, or various industrial or commercial uses that do not require high quality water supplies.

The work group consists of various organizations and agencies that brings together a significant amount of expertise and knowledge to help identify needs that might be met by marginal-quality water supplies. ORWA appreciates the opportunity to participate in this important work. As more and more demand is placed on many of our limited ground water supplies, it is important that we identify technologies and alternatives for protecting, conserving and maximizing the utilization of the states water resources.

MEMBERSHIP

You will be receiving your ORWA membership renewal application in the mail this month. We sincerely appreciate your past support and look forward to serving you in the coming year. Your membership helps support important Association training and technical assistance programs and other ORWA services. For more information about ORWA visit our web site at www.okruralwater.org or call (405) 672-8925. Membership renewals are due January 1, 2009.

J.D. STRONG NAMED SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENT

J.D. Strong was named Oklahoma's fifth Secretary of Environment by Governor Henry on August 20, 2008. In addition to serving as Governor Henry's lead advisor on environmental matters, Secretary Strong will coordinate the activities of the Environmental Cabinet, including the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Water Resources Board and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Secretary Strong succeeds Miles Tolbert who resigned to accept a position in the private sector.

In his twelve years at the Office of the Secretary of Environment, Secretary Strong served as lead advisor to three different Cabinet Secretaries under two Governors. He coordinated the Tar Creek Superfund Task Force and the Governor's Animal Waste and Water Quality Protection Task Force. Secretary Strong also has been actively involved in efforts to address interstate water pollution concerns.

Secretary Strong is a fifth generation Oklahoman. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with a degree in Wildlife Ecology. Prior to joining the Secretary of Environment's office, he worked as an environmental scientist at the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Oklahoma Rural Water Enrichment Foundation (ORWEF) has mailed scholarship applications to the office of all ORWA member systems. Please copy the application form and make it available to all employees and board members of your system that would like to apply for an ORWEF Scholarship. Persons eligible for scholarships are the board members and employees of ORWA member systems and their dependent children and grandchildren. Scholarships are in the amount of \$1,000.00 for the school year (\$500.00 each semester). The deadline for submitting scholarship applications is February 27, 2009. Twenty-five scholarships were awarded last year to help further the education of some of our finest rural students. For more information please call the ORWA office.

The ORWEF is also accepting donations for scholarships. Donations are tax deductible and should be mailed to ORWEF, P.O. Box 95349, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73143-5349. Your support for this very important program would be greatly appreciated.

OWRB WATER PROVIDER SURVEY

We would like to thank everyone who has completed and submitted the OWRB Water Provider Survey. ORWA mailed surveys to 371 water systems in July. At the end of September, 176 surveys had been returned. We know everyone is busy and we appreciate you taking the time to be a part of this important endeavour.

The OWRB has extended the deadline for completing and returning the survey until October 31, 2008. If you have not already completed the survey, we encourage you to complete it today. A link to the survey is located on the ORWA web site at www.okruralwater.org. If you complete a hard copy of the survey, please return to ORWA, P.O. Box 95349, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73143-5349.

It is important that all systems participate in this process. Information from the survey will help to ensure that your water system's needs are included as the OWRB works to develop a plan for meeting the state's water needs through 2060 and beyond. Please call the ORWA office at 1-800-375-6792 if you have questions or need help with the survey.

WORKER'S COMP RENEWALS DUE

Worker's Compensation renewal packets are due by October 15, 2008. The policy year expires November 1, 2008. Don't be left out, get your information returned ASAP.

Any system that is not currently on ORWA's Worker's Comp Program that would like to receive a free quote, please contact Stephanie Whatley at 1-800-375-6792 or you can submit electronically at swhatley@okruralwater.org.

SOONERWARN

Oklahoma is vulnerable to a variety of natural and manmade hazards that threaten the safety and well being of our water and wastewater systems, local communities, businesses and the environment in general. The formation of the SoonerWARN is driven by a nationwide preparedness initiative based on natural and human caused emergencies and the awareness that utility operations are specialized. Utilities must be self-sufficient to fill the gap between the time a disaster happens and the arrival of government or other forms of aid. The initial WARN systems were developed in Florida, Texas and Louisiana where hurricanes were the trigger for the development of the program. Concerns of public water utilities along with preparedness planning within EPA and FEMA determined every state can utilize and benefit from a WARN system since disasters can occur everywhere.

Oklahoma's Water/Wastewater Response Network (SoonerWARN) is the formalized system of "utilities helping utilities" with mutual aid during emergency situations. The project is designed to reduce bureaucratic red tape in times of emergency. The goal of SoonerWARN is to provide immediate relief for member utilities during emergencies. The purpose is to get personnel with the necessary tools and equipment that can both assess and assist the impacted water and wastewater system as quickly as possible by whatever means necessary until such time that a permanent solution to the devastation may be implemented. SoonerWARN will provide a network of "utilities helping utilities" as the best method for responding to the immediate water and wastewater damage caused by natural disasters. By combining a mutual aid network with a security information collaborative, SoonerWARN will cover all aspects of both natural and manmade emergency assistance.

The Oklahoma Rural Water Association is a firm believer in this undertaking. We are not only backing and promoting SoonerWARN, we are a part of the SoonerWARN team. ORWA is committed to taking the lead in responding to potential water and wastewater system emergencies whenever they might arise.

We encourage you to take the time to learn more about SoonerWARN and determine how being a part of this mutual aid network could benefit your system in times of need. You never know when your system will be the one asking for assistance. Consider becoming a member of SoonerWARN today, there is no cost associated with becoming a member. For more information, visit www.soonerwarn.com.

UPDATE OF THE STATE COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN

The Oklahoma Water Resource Research Institute is in the process of conducting Regional Input Meetings (RIMs) around the state. These meetings are intended to review issues identified during the local input meetings and determine which issues need to be discussed at the next level of the planning process. Results of the RIMs are available at <http://okwaterplan.info> under the Regional Meetings Report link on the left side of the home page. If you would like a copy of the report and do not have internet access call (405) 744-9994.

We encourage you to attend the RIM in your area even if you are not a discussant or alternate. The format of meetings includes an afternoon and evening session. The afternoon session consists of the 30 member Regional Committee. These meetings are open to the public, but only committee members are allowed to make comments. Evening sessions are open to everyone and provide an opportunity for feedback on the decisions made at the earlier meeting. The dates and locations of Regional Input Meetings are posted on the OWRRI website.

AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE BY DECEMBER 12

Do you have a great operator or bookkeeper? Do you know a water system that is doing an excellent job and providing outstanding service? Help us recognize them for their dedicated service and outstanding achievements.

Awards nomination packets have been mailed to the office of ORWA member systems. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to recommend a deserving system or individual for recognition. Award categories include; Outstanding Rural Water System, Outstanding Manager, Outstanding Operator, Outstanding Office Manager, Outstanding Bookkeeper, Outstanding Water Treatment Plant Operator, Outstanding Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Excellence in Source Water Protection and Excellence in Ground Water Protection. Send your award nominations today. If you need nomination forms contact the ORWA Office, or visit our web site at www.okruralwater.org. Nominations are due by December 12, 2008.

Award recipients are selected by the ORWA Awards Committee. Awards will be presented at the ORWA 39th Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon, which is scheduled for April 16, 2009 at the Marriott Southern Hills in Tulsa.