

OCEA Register



July 2021

Upcoming Events:

- August 25th -27th -
Basic Code Class
- Sept. 7th-9th - OML
Conf in OKC
- Nov. 17th-19th -
Basic Code Class

2022 Spring Educational Conference

Make plans to attend the 26th Annual OCEA Spring Conference next year in Norman. The schedule is coming along with some fabulous classes!

Conference Location: NCED Hotel &
Conference Center

Thurs. March 31/Fri. April 1, 2022

2801 E. Highway 9, Norman, OK

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AACE—American Association of Code Enforcement

- ◆ Code Officer Check-In zoom calls are continuing this year— August 5 and December 9 are the dates. AACE should send out info prior to these dates with the link to participate.
- ◆ The next AACE Conference will be in Glendale, Arizona on October 20-22, 2021. Visit the AACE website soon for more info— <https://www.aace1.org/>



From your President—Felix Nance, City of Hominy

Hello Fellow Code Officers - Code Officers and Building Officials have certainly been in the National spotlight following the tragedy in Florida. The lives lost, and those who lost everything after the remainder of the building was demolished have been on everyone's mind. It is too early to point fingers and make accusations, although lots of this has been done. While this horrible event, half way across the country, and the under construction building in DC that collapsed during severe weather made the news, right here in Oklahoma we also had a building collapse in Eufaula. There have been several reports in the media in the last few weeks about incidents such as this.

The recent rains, some areas having received close to ten inches, have soaked the old buildings and can lead to catastrophic consequences. As Code Officials, we must be ever vigilant to watch the conditions of property, to help prevent injury and possible death from collapse.

The heavy rains have made for a challenge for people in maintaining their yards. Now that we are seeing the sun, you can almost watch the grass grow, with needing time lapse photos. Keep in mind that tall grass hides things. Beware of the possibilities of snakes and other critters that can injure you when investigating calls for service. Over grown and unkempt property are not just a blight, but may also lead to other issues, from illegal drug growing to the hiding of stolen property. Your safety, and the safety of the community are important! Stay aware of your surroundings at all times. Make sure dispatch or your office know where you are.

From your 1st VP—Maverick Fritsche, City of Okmulgee

I hope everyone is well and managing the new "normal" that a lot of us are experiencing. I know a lot of you are trying to keep up with the constant changes that seem to occur daily, while dealing with the chaos of the busy season. Don't be discouraged if it gets overwhelming at times. Just know we are all trying to manage a similar chaos and that you are not alone. You are making your communities a better place to live, work and raise families.

I want to thank all the members for allowing me to be your 1st Vice President for this year and look forward to continue serving you and this organization. On a side note, everyone please keep an eye out this Fall and Winter for legislation that may come across your desk or emails. We need all of your support to protect our profession. I urge all of you to get to know your Representatives and Senators for your districts, so that when the time comes to support or fight a bill, you know who to contact.

Our OCEA board is here to serve and represent all of you. If you have questions or need assistance, feel free to contact any of our board members listed on the OCEA website. Thank you for all you do to keep your communities safe and beautiful.



From your 2nd VP—Travis Guess, City of Prague

To all of my Colleagues,

I would first thank everyone for your continued support and confidence in my ability to serve you and this organization by voting me in as 2nd VP. Any position on the Board is very important and comes with its own special assignment. I'm excited to be in charge of the Education Department and looking forward to serving in this capacity. Please read any future email blasts that will come from Janita as they may contain a survey on future education opportunities or other important surveys and information. In addition as a Board Member on the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation please view the website. I helped form this Organization with fellow Oklahoma Code Officials in mind. Reporting incidents is crucial so that we have statistics as part of our information to promote legislation statewide as well as federal that effects us all. The site allows you to report your encounter anonymously if you would like. If you're unsure about reporting please call me. What you may think is insignificant most likely is not. Here is a link to the website — <https://www.codeofficersafety.org/>

Furthermore, don't forget to come and do a "Ride-Along" with me. It may be possible that I come to you. Looking forward to seeing you at the next conference. In the meantime be safe and God bless.

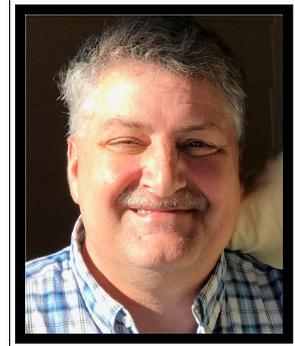


From your 3rd VP—Doug Moore, City of Coweta/Wagoner

I hope all is well and that we are all surviving this year's heat and rain. I know the weeds and grass have been growing like crazy around there. As I had mentioned during The Spring Education Conference, I would like to continue to build the resource library that is available on our association's website. If you have any great examples that you use that you would like to share, please email them to me at colomoore5@gmail.com. I will go through them and work to get them added to our library. Your examples can real help other around the state.

On a personal note, I am in the process of making a job change and am leaving the City of Coweta. I have accepted a position with the City of Wagoner. I will send out new contact information for the website as soon as I can.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!
Doug



From your Treasurer—Andy Templeton, City of Sand Springs

It was good to see many of you at the spring conference and to have such good personal interactions with people who do the same things I do day in and day out. We are a selfless bunch doing what may seem like thankless work. But believe me, people notice that you are making a difference out there whether they say it in positive terms or not.

As for the treasury, OCEA closed out the 2021 fiscal year June 30th with bank balance of \$71,888.44 – a loss of \$2,137.15 from the beginning of the year. Given the pandemic, waiver of membership fees, initiation of community improvement grants and other enlightening activities during a darkened period, we did just fine. The finances of our organization are very stable, and the year's balance sheet is available to you on request.

I'll conclude with an interesting story of dollars and sense. We do a lot of abatements for a small city and are pretty good at recovering our money. But like many cities, we sometimes take our lumps at tax sale time. This year was a little different. We registered an escrow account to participate in the sale and actively bid on properties we had abatement liens on. There were several other interested parties, and the bidding frequently became intensive. The increased sale prices paid off \$47,129.31 in liens and closed 93 abatement cases – mostly on perennial properties that we've mowed for years. Beyond the tangible measures of success, the properties now have new owners who will likely redevelop them for new housing. There are many factors over several years that went into this success, so I wouldn't recommend trying it at home after your first year of abatements. However, it may be a worthy tool in your toolbox to make your communities safer, healthier and more attractive.

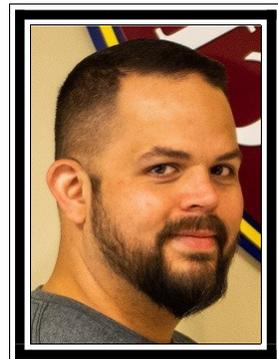


From your Sgt-at-Arms—Brian Henry, City of Perry

Let me start by saying, I am very thankful to be part of this board. I was shocked when I heard I had been elected and equally excited to be a part the future of the OCEA. My name is Brian Henry and I am the Community Development Director/ Code Official for the City of Perry. I have been in Code Enforcement for just shy of six years.

My certifications are in Property Maintenance, Zoning, Permit Tech, Accessibility, Swimming Pool and Spa/ Disaster Response Inspector. I also serve as a Floodplain Admin and Safety Officer. Which leads to a lot of different hats and scatterbrain.

One of the main reasons I decided to run for this office, I have been watching Code Officers lead from the front and was tired of being on the sidelines. In working with legislators, last year we saw a couple bills introduced to establish state law that both helps and protects us who are in the field. Some of my goals are to share the knowledge I have gained and to participate in the work at the state level to help further our profession.



From your Secretary—Janita Hatley, City of Norman



Greetings fellow OCEA members,

I hope you enjoyed our Spring Conference in May. Thanks again to the Code Enforcement team at the City of Moore for helping us secure the location easily. I'm looking forward to things getting back on track fully next year with us holding both of our annual conferences again.

The 2022 Spring Conference in Norman is shaping up to be a dynamic conference with some awesome classes. If you have any class suggestions or recommendations for the 2022 Spring Conference, please share them with me. We aim to please and need your input!

Don't forget to send in your OCEA membership dues. They expired June 30th. Contact me with any questions or Cathy Pulver at OML to inquire about your status.

Remember that all OCEA members are now members of AACE with the AACE Pass-Through Membership. Please visit both the OCEA & AACE websites often for updated info.



From your Pres. Emeritus—Ivan Smith, City of Edmond

Thank you again for the opportunity to have served as your President. I am still here for all of you as your Past President (aka the "has-been") so do not hesitate to contact me.

We will continue to diligently work with the State Legislature this next year to enhance and protect our profession. Look for emails from OCEA regarding legislative activity and be ready to get on the phone to your Senators/State Representatives and let your voices be heard.

Say Goodbye to Computer Vision Syndrome—By Kevin D. McCullough

Prior to March of last year, I was aware that I spent way too much time staring at my computer screen(s). Since working remotely from home for most of 2020 and ALL of 2021, so far, I found myself experiencing tired, burning, itchy eyes at the end of most work days. I finally broke down and made an appointment with my eye doctor. After visiting with my doctor and her staff, I came away with a better understanding of what I was experiencing and why.

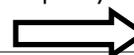
Computer vision syndrome (CVS) may be spreading faster than any virus. Fortunately, proper eye care and simple adjustments are all that most adults need to reduce eye strain. Studies show that up to 90% of computer users experience at least one symptom of CVS. You're at risk if you average 3 or more hours online each day. That probably describes most of the population, especially when they're spending more time at home. The main symptoms include blurry or double vision, dryness, itching, redness, and sensitivity to light. CVS can also cause headaches and muscle soreness.

Preventing Computer Vision Syndrome

One study found that 71% of students sat too close to their monitors and 66% had their monitors set too high. Take a look at your environment and technology habits.

These tips can help prevent CVS:

1. Position your screen. Most experts recommend sitting about 24 inches away from your monitor and having the center of your screen about 4 to 5 inches below eye level. Adequate distance and looking down helps to prevent your eyes from drying out and working too hard.
2. Increase font size. Do you have trouble reading from that far away? Enlarge the type rather than squinting or stretching your neck.
3. Reduce glare. Online images are blurrier than print materials. Focusing will be easier when your screen is brighter than your surroundings. If necessary, pull the shades and switch to lower watt bulbs.
4. Shift your gaze. You may have heard of the 20-20-20 rule. Rest your eyes by looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds each 20 minutes.
5. Take breaks. Go offline for at least 15 minutes after working for two hours straight. Exercise, eat a healthy snack or chat with someone face to face.
6. Blink more. Research shows that we blink slightly less online, but that adds up over time. Remind yourself to blink frequently to rehydrate your eyes. Using a humidifier and avoiding fans on your face will help too. (Continued Next Page)





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Founded in 1994, the Oklahoma Code Enforcement Association is dedicated to the study and advancement of Code Enforcement activities at the local, county and state levels. Its membership represents both large cities and small towns that have an interest in enhancing neighborhood and community health, safety, welfare and aesthetics.

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7. Quit smoking. Eye strain is one more reason to give up tobacco. Make a concrete plan and set a date to quit.
8. Limit screen time. Healthy habits will make your time online more pleasant, but only if you observe sensible boundaries. Block out technology free zones each day, like mealtimes and 2 hours before bed.

Treating Computer Vision Syndrome

Left untreated, even minor eye issues can interfere with your productivity and wellbeing. See your eye doctor at least once a year.

These strategies will help you deal constructively with CVS:

1. Update your prescription. Are you tilting your head or leaning toward your screen? You may need new glasses.
2. Use special lenses. Maybe you need a different set of glasses for working online. Progressive lenses can help if you often switch between printed material and your screen. Special coatings can increase contrast and cut down on glare.
3. Apply drops. If your eyes are extra dry, let your doctor know. They may recommend over the counter moisturizing drops or give you a prescription.
4. Train your brain. Brain and eye coordination is another issue that can lead to CVS. An ophthalmologist can perform special tests to make a diagnosis. If necessary, they'll prescribe visual therapy and give you exercises you can do at home.
5. Keep a log. Tracking your symptoms is a proven way to increase the quality of care you receive. Make a list of concerns and questions you want to discuss with your doctor.

After my latest doctor appointment, I put some of my new knowledge to work. I adjusted my monitors to the suggested distance and I have a pair of prescriptions glasses that I use only when I'm working in front of my computer.

Computer vision syndrome can make you uncomfortable and interfere with your daily activities. Find relief by establishing healthy computer habits and talking with your eye doctor. It also helps to set sensible limits on the time you spend online.

Tidbits from Janita:

Please send me photos, funny or interesting stories from some case that you've worked, or a Before/After from a case that you've worked and I will add them to the newsletter. Our members would really enjoy seeing things from fellow OCEA members across the State.

You can email your newsletter submissions to me at Janita.hatley@normanok.gov and you can call me at (405)623-8009 or in my office at (405) 366-5318.

Thankful for our Partners/Friends



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