



March 2021

## Upcoming Events:

- April 22-23—Prop. Maint. Class
- May 13 — 1-day Spring Conference
- August (dates TBD)- Basic Code Class
- Nov/Dec (dates TBD) —Basic Code Class

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## Spring Educational Conference

Our 1-day Spring Conference on May 13th in Moore is nearly FULL. The facility has opened up more seating, so if you were told it was full, please send in your registration again or contact us. We are hopeful to get back on schedule in 2022 with our conferences, and will try to have our 2-day conference in Norman in March 2022.

Conference Location: The Station at Central Park—in the Meeting Room.

8am—4pm

700 S. Broadway, Moore, OK 73160



## AACE—American Association of Code Enforcement

- ◆ AACE is offering some Virtual Trainings this year. 4/8/21—Manager to Leader course, taught by Kerry & Carl Simpson and 5/13/21—Aspiring Manager course, taught by Kelvin Beene, both classes 1pm-3pm MST (2pm-4pm CST) \$35 for AACE Members (which all OCEA members are AACE members with your pass-thru membership). Register online at <https://www.aace1.org/> and log in to your account.
- ◆ Code Officer Check-In zoom calls are continuing this year—May 6, 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—Ivan Smith, City of Edmond



Fellow Code officers,

I hope that this letter finds you as well as your families all healthy and well. 2020 is officially in the rear view mirror, and I for one couldn't be happier about that! Between the Murder Hornets, Covid-19 and the elections, just to mention a few, it was definitely one for the books. 2020 did however bring me a new perspective on an old saying. As a child I can remember my mother saying from time to time "the cream will always rise to the top". I first heard her say that while we were on a trip to grandma's house. Grandma lived on a farm in Iowa. There were cow's, chickens, pigs and every other kind of thing that you would expect on a farm, including a butter churn. I won't ramble on about my childhood, but will elaborate on that churn. Come to find out with a little hard work you can make your own butter. It's a simple process of separation, getting the cream to come to the top through constant agitation and turbulence.

Well 2020 was turbulent to say the least. The cream (your board) did rise to the top for sure. In this past year your board did some amazing things. Travis (3<sup>rd</sup> VP) implemented a ride along program helping mentor new members, Shawn better known as Maverick (2<sup>nd</sup> VP) spearheaded getting HB 1134 back in front of the legislation (and this time we got a real chance of it passing), Felix (1<sup>st</sup> VP and incoming president) took a grant idea and turned it into a reality (WOW!!), Janita (OCEA Secretary) has not only found us a site for a in person conference, but got them to let us use the facility for free and Andy (President Emeritus along with Treasurer) has not only helped guide me as President, but also made sure that we could fund all of these endeavors in a year where no one had to pay any membership dues.

Friends if that isn't the cream rising to the top I don't know what is. I can't wait to see what we can get done this year 2021. Stay safe, stay healthy and hopefully see you all soon.

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## From your 1st VP—Felix Nance, City of Hominy

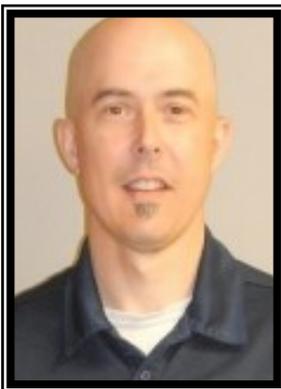


As I write this it appears we now have a date, time and place for our in-person spring conference and business meeting. The bad part about the good news is that attendance will be somewhat limited. Your board has worked diligently under the leadership of our President, Ivan Smith to deal with and work around the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. Even with restrictions, size of classes, social distancing and mask requirements we have kept up an active training program for our Code Officers.

This year we initiated a new grant program to help our member communities. These grants will help meet our mission to promote the health, safety and welfare of our communities. Now with the upcoming business meeting it is time for YOU to get involved. Elections for board positions will be held at the business meeting. Consider running for office, put your name in the hat, make an impact!

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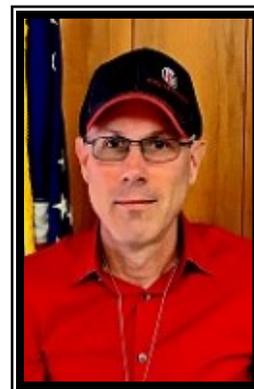
## From your 2nd VP—Maverick Fritsche, City of Okmulgee



I hope everyone is doing well and managed to make it through 2020 with everything intact. As you all know, we all had to adjust and make concessions throughout 2020 to create a "new normal" for the time being. The board had to make a lot of tough decisions last year to keep everything rolling, but at the same time, protect the well-being of all our members throughout the state. We did manage to have our basic code classes and a property maintenance class in 2020 while practicing Covid-19 restrictions. We were not, however, able to have any of our conferences. With 2020 behind us and looking further into 2021, we have many plans that we hope to accomplish this year. We are planning to have two more Basic code certification classes and a property maintenance class this year, as well as a spring conference and business meeting. (Note: CEU requirements will be reinstated upon completion of our first in-person conference). Attending the Spring conference will meet the 4 hour CEU requirements, as well as a multitude of other trainings available out there. (A non-inclusive list of possible training and topics is available on our OCEA website).

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 3rd VP—Travis Guess, City of Prague



To all my colleagues, I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and a great frame of mind. As I have said many times, you have chosen the greatest profession on the face of the earth. To be able to serve your community in such a capacity as we do and then get paid for having so much fun is a bonus! I have spoken with so many of you as of late and I know that some days can be frustrating and daunting. Whether it's a supervisor or coworker who doesn't understand what we do, that citizen that thinks we aren't doing enough, or that home/business owner who thinks they are above the law, there is no doubt it can wear on you. I can promise you this, it WILL get better!! Hold your head up, put a smile on your face; even though that can be extremely difficult when you've just been berated, and the most important item of all...Stand on the Code. As long as you do that, you'll always be in the right, you'll always keep your integrity and that's the most important part. It's the one piece of you that no one can take from you unless you give it away! As your 3rd VP, it's my duty to help you with some of these issues in any way I can. As your colleague, your fellow Code Officer, it's my duty and privilege to try and help you with any and all issues I can. I'm including my cell # in this letter and please call me anytime for any questions you might have or to just vent. I may not have your answer right away, but I do have the resources to obtain them. I cannot wait to see you all in person at the conference, and for those of you who are ready, I have openings for the "Code Official Ride-Alongs" to pick up some CEU's.

Sincerely, Travis D. Guess—Building Official/Fire Code Official/Code Enforcement Officer  
City of Prague—Cell # 405-473-1755

## From your Treasurer/Pres. Emeritus—Andy Templeton, City of Sand Springs

### Keeping a Healthy 'Can do' Spirit

Thanks to the foresight of OCEA members and officers past and present, our organization maintained financial stability through the pandemic. That stability let us waive membership fees in 2020 as many communities saw their tax revenues drop. It also provided funds to initiate our first community improvement grant program.

As the one who signs the checks, I am grateful this organization has the sustained resources to act in a "can do" manner for its members and their communities even through uncertain times.

This time of year reminds me of our critical "can do" role in maintaining safe, healthy and attractive communities in Oklahoma. I started my semi-annual sweep through town on a recent gray drizzly day – the type of day that exposes every public nuisance flaw. I soon came to realize the difference code enforcement has made over the years. Many dilapidated rental houses have disappeared from our oldest neighborhoods, and those that remain are largely code compliant. The number of traditional trash violations has diminished sharply, and a process that used to take most of a month now takes less than a week.

Of more significance, investors have found opportunities for infill development. New homes have taken the place of their worn out and often abused predecessors. Neighboring property values have increased, and unsavory elements have decreased.

There is still plenty to do, and the dynamics of code enforcement are constantly shifting. As citizens see fundamental improvement in their neighborhood, and city officials see tangible improvement in the community's tax base, expectations grow for what their community can be. In code enforcement, "can do" equals "can be."

The past year has held many challenges for us, but our individual and collective "can do" spirit has kept our communities safe and healthy while allowing normalcy and prosperity to return.



## From your Secretary—Janita Hatley, City of Norman



This year is looking brighter, and I am very thankful for that. The weeds are beginning to grow, and the workload is about to significantly increase! I enjoy being busy and working to keep my community clean. I am looking forward to our spring conference and feeling a little bit normal again.

If you've been attending OCEA events for several years, you will undoubtedly remember our dear friend Sharon Hutson, that used to be a Code Officer in Mustang. I'm saddened to report that she passed away earlier this month. Keep her family in your thoughts & prayers. We have many fond and funny memories of Sharon!

It is nearing OCEA member renewal time, and renewal notices will soon be sent out.

The OCEA Board has continued meeting regularly and we are always working hard to keep the Association moving forward and helping our members. We are always here for YOU!!

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.

### Photos from 2020



Left—Masked students in Class      Above—OCEA Board at Meeting in Prague  
Below—Fun at OCEA Board Meeting in Norman near Christmas time





**OKLAHOMA CODE  
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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.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

- ◆ Property Maintenance Class —April 22—23, 2021 at MNTC—Conference Room
- ◆ Basic Code Class—August—date TBD at MNTC—Conference Room
- ◆ Basic Code Class—November/December—date TBD at MNTC—Conference Room

*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](mailto: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



**OMAG**

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*The Unified Voice of Oklahoma Cities and Towns*



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