



Upcoming Events:

- Sept. 28, 2023— Fall Conf. McAlester
- Nov. 1-3, 2023— Basic Code Class

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September 2023

OCEA at the OML Conference

OCEA made several great contacts at the recent OML (OK Municipal League) Conference in OKC. Several small communities that are just beginning Code programs or planning to begin programs stopped to chat about upcoming classes and more. We met some new contacts for possible speakers at our upcoming conferences, and new associations to connect with. Janita enjoyed sitting on a panel/round-table group for the Women in Municipal Govt. class.



Travis, Jessica and Janita wrangling the OCEA table



Janita speaking at the Round-table during the WiMG session. session



Women in Municipal Govt. Reception

From your President—Travis Guess, City of Prague



Fall conference is upon us!!! I hope to see all the familiar faces as well as the new recruits who have attended the recent Basic Code Class. As many of you know I accepted the gavel in July as your President and I am humbled as well as honored. Working with the Board, there are initiatives as well as projects that we are working on to engage you the members as well as exemplify our status as professionals in our state.

We are in the process of developing a Challenge Coin that distinguishes us as professionals from others in the state. This is just one of many items you will be hearing about in the coming months. I would also like to remind everyone that I am a Board Member on the national Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation, which offers safety education for Code Officers in the field. We offer scholarships for these classes as well as for vests. At the end of the day, the most important thing is that you go home to your family and the way to achieve that is through education so you are aware of the dangers in the field. Just because it hasn't happened doesn't mean it won't. Education is power and only you can control whether or not you become a statistic. I do not want to see an Oklahoma Code Enforcement Officer on the list.

In closing, remember that Board Members are just a phone call away. We are here for you and will do what ever we can to help you to become and remain successful in your chosen profession. I am sure I don't have to remind you, so I am just going to state that what you do is extremely important for the community that you serve.

From your 1st VP—Brian Henry, City of Perry



Summer is officially over and we made it! Grass has officially stopped growing 10 inches in 20 minutes at least in Perry. Give yourself a pat on the back for another tall grass season in the books or for some your first season. That said, job well done.

As we inch closer to November 1, it would be a great idea to go back review the legislative sine die on the OML website. This is a recap of all the bill summaries from this years legislative session. There are some significant bills coming into effect November 1 that will greatly impact how we function in our roles. Take the time to read through each item as some pertain to us indirectly.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the Fall Conference!

From your 2nd VP—Shane Barnard, City of Midwest City

Food For Thought

Have you ever thought about how the traditional lawn we know today became a thing? It starts way back in history during the early 1700s; during this time landscape designers in Europe began to experiment with the concept of clean-cut grass in the interior of castles, gardens, and courtyards of the hierarchy. This trend quickly took hold as a symbol of the elite. How did this trend come to America? The answer is in the early days of our independence.

After the United States won its independence from the British, notable dignitaries such as Thomas Jefferson visited and sought to recreate the lush gardens and courtyards they witnessed on their travels in Europe. Jefferson and Washington converted substantial portions of their estate into acres of fields of green grass imported from Europe. Just as it had in Europe, the lawn quickly caught on in the eye of the American elite.

It wouldn't be until the end of World War II that the traditional lawn would become accessible for the middle class. After WWII, home ownership started to skyrocket. According to an article published by History.com titled "How the Perfect Lawn Became a Symbol of the American Dream" by Farrell Evans (2021) it is stated that: - In 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better known as the G.I. Bill, to provide educational and home loan benefits for millions of veterans returning from World War II. According to the Department of Veteran Affairs, the program backed 2.4 million low-interest home loans for veterans between 1944 and 1952. As homeownership rates rose from 44 percent in 1940 to almost 62 percent in 1960, owning a home became synonymous with the American Dream.

Another contributor to the traditional lawn was golf and the color television. In 1966 The Masters Golf Tournament was televised in color for the first time. Many Americans tuned in and were amazed at the beauty of lush green grass fields. Sarai Hertz-Velázquez (2021), an Instagram Story Reporter at Wellesley College, quoted an author for Sports Illustrated following the tournament. The author writes: "having seen what is possible, millions of homeowners feel compelled to go and do likewise." The invasion of the traditional lawn had taken over and conquered America.

Today, the lawn is the largest crop grown in the United States that serves little purpose other than to be admired and offer soil stabilization. It may not be a crop that is grown for human consumption, but it is food for thought.



From your 3rd VP—Wayne McCasland, City of Comanche

It has been a busy and hot summer! Lots of good things are happening around the State. I would like to remind people that there are several programs to not only assist officers, but also the community we work for and with.

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to contact any of us on the OCEA Board.

Hope you are all being safe and I hope we end the mowing season soon!



From your Treasurer—Andy Templeton, City of Sand Spring



It has been a long summer here with my open cases exceeding 100 each week. My proactivity has been limited to what I see going from case to case, and I'm nearing the 500 case mark in just three months as a one-hit wonder, so to speak. I do between 1,000 and 1,200 cases in a normal year, so things are definitely on a record-setting pace.

I am fortunate to have Jenny Bettinger as our office administrator. We work well together getting abatement notices out, and Jenny does all the cost assessment and lien filing work now as a deputy city clerk. Her life is never dull. The building inspectors also help me greatly, and other city departments do their part when asked. I am very fortunate to be surrounded by good employees who come to work each day wanting to make a difference.

As OCEA treasurer, I guess I should say a few words about our treasury. Let us say there is ample and sustainable money for the beneficial things we do for our members and their communities. We will need some of those resources when AACE comes to town in 2024. They pay their own way, but host states usually provide extras to enhance the experiences of conference attendees.

I hope you can all attend the AACE conference. I have been to several of them over the years and have found that the attendees are just like us. They come from places large and small. Someone once told me the names and faces may change from town to town, but the problems are always the same. Finding effective solutions is the key. What may work in Miami, Florida, may not exactly work in Miami, Oklahoma. However, you may be able to latch on to nuggets of wisdom from others that collectively lead to effective solutions for your wide spot in the road. So let us go out there and keep working those cases by sharing and supporting each other, and appreciating those around us who let us to make those wide spots in the road safer, healthier and more prosperous. And hey, hey, hey ... let's be careful out there!

From your Secretary—Janita Hatley, City of Norman

I'm sure you noticed some changes with our online registration for this Fall Conference. Thank you for being patient with us and with OML as we use their online program and set up the initial log-in for each OCEA member. I am hopeful that once each person is set up in OML's system that we will have a much easier time registering for all of our Conferences and Classes. We will soon have a deadline/cut-off date for registering for our events to make things easier for us as we have to submit numbers for our food orders and work with facilities to set up the training rooms.

We are beginning to work on the speaker line-up for our Spring conference in Midwest City on Feb. 29/March 1, 2024. Candidate submission forms will be sent out just after Jan. 1st for the open OCEA Board positions which are Sgt-at-Arms, 3rd VP and 1st VP. The election will be held during the Business Meeting on Feb. 29th. We are looking for a location for our 2024 Fall Conference—are you interested in hosting? We need a facility that can hold 130-150 people.

The OCEA Community Improvement Grant process will open up again just after Jan. 1st. If you received this grant in 2023 and have not yet submitted your reimbursement documents, please do that ASAP.

I am running for the AACE 3rd Vice President Board position. If you haven't yet voted in the online AACE election, please take a second to log-in to your AACE account and vote at www.aace1.org. I am excited about representing OCEA next week at the AACE Conf. in Orlando. Try to ask for more training money in your budget so that you can attend the 35th AACE Conf. in OKC next year.

Keep up the great work in your Communities and never hesitate to contact me with any questions!
Sincerely, Janita



From your Sgt-at-Arms—Jessica Green, City of Chickasha



Hi friends! It has been a long summer, but the good news is that we can finally say grass season is over! Well, it's at least almost over. I wanted to take a minute to update you all on what is happening in my world.

I was recently promoted to Senior Code Enforcement Officer, and I'm excited to be leading in my new role. This fall I enrolled at Mid-America Christian University and plan to graduate with my bachelor's in business administration and ethics in late 2025. My goal with this degree is to grow my department and become the Director of Code Enforcement.

I am enjoying my time serving as OCEA's Sergeant at Arms. My goal during my tenure is to work with smaller communities and help them develop a code enforcement department or program. I know firsthand how smaller communities need code enforcement and the impact this department can make in civic pride, cleanliness, development, and safety. I also understand the struggles and challenges faced by my fellow code enforcement officers – if you need help brainstorming or a safe space to share frustrations, please reach out!

I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about how I can help influence change in how people perceive code enforcement.

From your President Emeritus—Shawn “Maverick” Fritsche, City of Okmulgee

Fellow Members and Colleagues,

Happy Autumn, a favorite time of year for me personally! The leaves begin changing to vibrant, beautiful colors, the cool, crisp air will start seeping in; allowing us subtle reminders that winter will soon follow. The best thing about Autumn is the mowing will soon be over. Oh, and it is PIE season!



As your president emeritus, I do not feel the necessity for any specific targeted area of focus, so this quarter I would like to offer you some considerations regarding the proper selection process for a compliant latrine site within your municipalities. Step one would be to find a location 200 feet away from all water sources and relatively untraveled by people. Step two in your process would be to find a location with deep humus. Such soils have higher organic levels sufficient to adequately decompose fecal matter. If that is not possible, some exposure time to direct sunlight via an open pipe can compensate for low organic loading in the soil. Finally, Step three, choose a location that is elevated above heavy rain/flood inundation event levels; current stormwater regulation requires fecal matter run-off to be mitigated. It cannot be stressed enough that proper location is the fundamental factor in a successful latrine system and should be carefully regulated and clearly articulated within your ordinances. If you need any ideas on ordinance language or basic legal and political maneuvering on how to start a latrine regulatory system in your municipality, reach out by phone or email and I will try to help you out.

That entire last paragraph was just a joke to see who is actually reading and enjoying these articles. We do not have a latrine program in our municipality, although we occasionally have people call and ask if it is legal to go to the bathroom in their yards. This has been your quarterly reminder to always expect the unexpected, stay on your toes, and watch your six, because in this occupation someone somewhere is going to do something to strain the limits of your credibility.

On a more serious note, I pray you are doing well and have managed through a rough mowing season this year. I hope to see you all at the Fall conference in McAlester.

Thank you for all you do to keep your communities safe and beautiful! Once again, it is an honor to serve this membership and I appreciate you all.
Shawn “Maverick” Fritsche

Training Opportunities & Resources

- Code Official Safety Specialist—Online Course thru Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation—set at your own pace. Visit this link for more info. <https://www.codeofficersafety.org/training>
 - OMAG offers Scholarships to our Basic Code Classes and our Spring Conference that covers the registration fees. They also offer all sorts of Online Training. Visit their website for more info at <https://www.omag.org/>
 - AACE Virtual Training opportunities— https://www.aace1.org/events/event_list.asp—look for more dates in 2024
 - 2024 OCEA Spring Conference— February 29/March 1, 2024 in Midwest City at the Reed Center/Delta Hotel. Info will be shared on our website by first of the year.
 - AACE—35th Annual Conference in OKC—Oct. 22-24, 2024 at the Sheraton OKC Downtown Hotel—make plans to attend and let's have a large Oklahoma presence at the conference.
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Here is where I could share interesting stories/articles/photos
from our Members.....
Send me something for the next newsletter.



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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.

Like us on Facebook



AACE—American Association of Code Enforcement

- ◆ AACE is doing several national check-ins to ensure we are providing our members the best possible service. We learn so much from these check-ins and have enjoyed networking during these video calls.

The dates are listed below and will be held on Tuesday's at 3pm CST:

October 17, 2023

- ◆ If you are not receiving periodic emails from AACE, please contact Janita so we can make sure your AACE pass thru membership is valid. Visit www.aace1.org for more info.

Don't forget that OMAG offers scholarships for all of OCEA's Basic Code Certification Classes and to our Spring Conference. Please contact Jason Delonais (Law Enforcement Specialist) &/or Randy Jacox (Risk Management Specialist) to learn more at -<https://www.omag.org/ocea-conference-scholarship>

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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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