

OCEA Register



Upcoming Events:

- August 21-23, 2024
Basic Code Class
- Oct. 3, 2024—
OCEA Fall Conf.
- Oct. 22-25, 2024—
AACE Conf.
- Nov. 13-15, 2024—
Basic Code Class

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May 2024

OCEA Community Improvement Grant Winners:

We had 35 total grant entries that were all for very worthy projects. As always, it was a tough selection process. Here are the 10 grant winners for 2024.

Ada Chickasha Choctaw Grove Jet Minco
Noble Pond Creek Terral Tryon

OCEA Spring Conference Update:

Our 2024 Spring Conference was well attended with 137 wonderful OCEA members. Everyone really enjoyed the first day with Mitch Hammes, from Colorado Springs. Our western-themed banquet was even well received. Members approved our bylaw amendment, we had a successful election, we honored the nominee's and winner's of our Awards and overall had a fabulous time. Looking forward to the next conference.

Your 2024/2025 OCEA Board that begins on July 1st is:

President—Brian Henry	1st Vice President—Maverick Fritsche
2nd Vice President—Shane Barnard	3rd Vice President—Jessica Green
Treasurer—Andy Templeton	Secretary—Janita Hatley
Sgt-at-Arms—Sheridan Lowery	President Emeritus—Travis Guess

Your OCEA Code Officer of the Year is Tabetha Howell from McAlester!!! Congrats!



The nominee's for Code Officer of the Year were—Gary Arnold, Broken Arrow; Bradley Boyles, Nowata; Elyse Cummings, Midwest City; Tim Edwards, Newcastle; Jennifer Gandara, Guymon; Jessica Green, Chickasha; Brian Henry, Perry; Elaine Nelson Lewis, OKC; Jimmy Robinson, Porum. Congrats to all for a job well done!

The OCEA Scholarship went to Robert Bruce Wallace from Calumet.

From your outgoing President—Travis Guess, City of Prague



To all my fellow Colleagues,

This will be my last address to you as your President and it has truly been an honor. I did not get to accomplish everything I had hoped, but I believe with the help of the other board members we were able to accomplish quite a bit for you, the association members. From the new logo, to the challenge coin, and education I hope that my service was satisfactory. I will remain on the board as president emeritus, and am looking forward to working with the incoming president Brian Keith Henry, as well as the other board members. I was truly blessed to be able to serve in the position as president and look forward to many years interacting with the OCEA and all of you.

I am excited to see so many new officers coming into the field who are passionate about their new career choice. We have the fall the conference coming up, plus we are hosting the AACE conference this year!!!!, So I hope to see all of you there. I would like to welcome aboard our new Sergeant-at-Arms, Sheridan Lowery to the group. I would like to thank Brian, Maverick, Shane, Jessica, Wayne, Janita, and Andy for their friendship as well as their professional service to the OCEA. They are a dedicated group that deserve everyone's respect and admiration for their tireless efforts to serve you, the members.

Again, I thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you and I hope to see all of you soon and you can always call me on my cell (405) 473-1755.

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

Hello membership,

Tall grass and weeds season is among us and I am sure you have all been slammed with inspections already, This season is always a mixed bag, tons of complaints but job security. I want to encourage all of you to just remember this too shall pass, so load up on mosquito spray!



As we get underway and continue on in these summer months, it is important for us to remember why we do what we do. Yes, we all need a job, but we picked this particular field because we care about our community. Every time a dilapidated house is demolished or a neighborhood starts to look better because of your hard work, take a second to pat yourself on the back. Also remember to send us pics of your big accomplishments, we want to share in your good news.

A few board members spoke at an OML luncheon and spot on hot topics in code enforcement. We were encouraged to see engaged city manager, clerks, attorneys and other staff. They were interested in several topics of discussion and were enlightened to hear the lack of protections offered to all of us. The biggest point we tried to hammer home was supporting staff through education and appreciation.

Just know that we at the board all appreciate the work you do in each of your communities and know that you are making Oklahoma a better place to live in because of it. Look forward to seeing you all in the fall and representing you as your President-elect.

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

What Happened to Spring

How is everyone doing? I know we have several cities and towns that have been devastated by the recent tornadoes that have ravaged our state as well as our nation. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those that have been affected by these storms. As beautiful as this time of year is, it often comes at a cost. I hope everyone in our code enforcement family here in OCEA is safe and sound. Hang in there, winter is coming.

On a more positive note, I would like to share the results of our recent Property Maintenance Code Class in April. We had a total of 33 participants and a passing percentage rate of 97% with an overall class average test score of 88%. Very well done! Members that attended that class give yourself a round of applause, you deserve it! I know those tests can be tough. This class was very engaging with questions and interaction with the presenters of the class. Everyone seemed well prepared for the class on test day.

If anyone wishes to take their certification further and wants to dive into ICC certification let me or anyone on the board know and we would be glad to help you on your adventure. In closing, what happened to spring? It was cold and now it's hot, it could just be me, but it seems spring came and left in the blink of an eye. The only evidence I have noticed is all the tall grass and weeds, speaking of that I need to get out and do some work.

Take care out there and be safe,

Shane Barnard, CCEO
Code Enforcement Officer IV—City of Midwest City
2nd Vice President Oklahoma Code Enforcement Association
405-739-1013



From your incoming 3rd VP/outgoing Sgt-at-Arms —Jessica Green, City of Chickasha

Hello friends,

Summer is in full swing, and that means it's time to dust off those lawnmowers and get ready for another lush mowing season! As we gear up for the months ahead, I'm excited to share some exciting updates, including my new role as the 3rd Vice President of OCEA. I can't wait to get started with this new role.

Also, I started a new role as the co-chair for the Marketing team for the Code Enforcement Officer Safety Foundation. Safety is always a priority when we are in the field. Being a part of a community where we can share our experiences and learn from each other can help keep us all safe. If you need more info about the class that the foundation offers, please reach out to me.

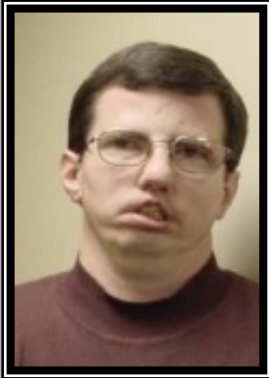
The City of Chickasha is currently getting ready for the new budget year, and we plan to request funding to attend Edu Code Conference. One of my passions is continuing education and working to find new innovative ways to help those in my community. I am looking forward to attending the AACE Conference here in Oklahoma in October and I hope to see several of my OCEA members there with me.

Our code enforcement division works with Keep Chickasha Beautiful Committee a branch of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. We were able to apply for a small grant of \$300.00 to help someone clean up their property. In the coming months we plan to bring several cases to committee and be able to assist someone in need with these dollars.

I am currently also working on our Chickasha Cares program and tool lending program. We have some funding from a past council member, and we plan to purchase items like lawn mowers, saws, paint, and other supplies for our nonprofit groups and homeowners to rent for free for property clean up. I would love to hear from you all if you do something similar.



From your Treasurer—Andy Templeton, City of Sand Spring



As your treasurer, I could talk a lot about green stuff – OCEA has an adequate amount of green stuff (money) to do the things we plan to do in the coming months. We have budgeted for our activities at the 2024 AACE national conference in Oklahoma City, and we will be doing Oklahoma proud when folks from across the nation gather in October. We will be sponsoring a nice evening reception where folks can mingle in a relaxed environment. I have attended seven AACE conferences over the years, and one of my best experiences is meeting people from other states who do exactly what I do each day. I hope you can attend in October. It is a great opportunity to grow yourself in our profession.

We have also dedicated green to the annual Community Improvement Grant program, and funds are accruing in the challenge coin program for officer safety equipment. Come July, we will again have a permanent secretariat services agreement with the Oklahoma Municipal League, and OMAG (the Oklahoma Municipal Assurance Group) is currently giving our code class curriculum the legal once-over. Look for a few changes with the August class. Although the 2025 spring conference may not be on your radar screen, it is on ours as we work through contracts for conference rooms, hotel rooms, and food and beverage costs.

Then there is that other green – grass season! We have had copious amounts of rain this winter and spring in northeastern Oklahoma, and the grass has certainly responded. It may seem overwhelming to those who are new to the profession – especially if your community looks a little ragged. Patience is a virtue. Most people will catch up with their mowing as soon as they can. The buzz of lawnmowers and weed trimmers is a joyous sound on a sunny weekend. I know there will be less code cases come Monday.

Everything works out eventually. Green is good!

From your Secretary—Janita Hatley, City of Norman

I hope you are all planning on attending some of the important events this year. Our Fall Conference will be Oct. 3rd in Chickasha at the Grady County Fairgrounds. We will have the online registration link available soon on our website. It is still a free conference to OCEA members, and \$50 for non-members. The rest of the info will be on our website in June.

We can't forget the 35th Annual AACE Conference being held in OKC, Oct 22-25. The conference actually begins on Oct. 23rd, but the registration and sign-in starts the afternoon of Oct 22nd, and the AACE Welcome Reception is Tuesday evening. OCEA is hosting a Reception on Wednesday evening from 6:30-8:30 for AACE attendee's. They will be needing proctors for classes, so I know we have many wonderful volunteers in OK that can help with this. Please let Maverick know if you are interested in helping Proctor an AACE class and he or I can help answer questions. OCEA will be offering a few scholarships to OCEA Members which will cover AACE conference registration plus a few nights at the hotel. More detailed info will be sent in an email blast with the scholarship form available.



I am very pleased with our updated registration process for our classes/conferences. Jenny Morris at OML has been fabulous along with Sarah Lingenfelter. We do have a 7-day cancellation policy for our classes & conferences, so remember to cancel in time if you wish to receive a refund. We are updating our scholarship applications from OMAG and OCEA. OMAG is a wonderful partner with us and helps to cover class and conference registration costs. You must be an OMAG member city to apply for their scholarships. You will see these updated forms on our website soon.

Our 2025 Spring Conference dates we previously announced are the same, March 27-28, 2025. The location has changed and it will now be held at Quartz Mountain State Park. We will have info and registration links on our website later this summer. Make plans to attend!

Stay safe out there, use sunscreen, stay hydrated and be aware of your surroundings !

From your incoming Sgt-at-Arms—Sheridan Lowery, City of OKC



Hello, I'm Sheridan Lowery, a native Oklahoman who has dedicated my adult life to the public sector profession with more than 24 years of experience along code enforcement within the community of central Oklahoma I've seen the central area as well as the state grow and change over the last two and half decades. Throughout my career, I've found a strong emphasis on training and fostering an understanding of how codes can set standards for life within our neighborhoods and communities.

As representatives of safety and order, we uphold these codes to ensure the well-being of our communities. I look forward to working at the state level with our association together to continue raising understanding and awareness for a better tomorrow. I look forward to being a part of this group at the state level for this year.

From your incoming 1st VP/outgoing President Emeritus—Shawn “Maverick” Fritsche, City of Okmulgee

Hello Members and Colleagues,

I hope you are all faring well despite the explosion of grass and weeds trying to overtake your communities. I also pray, that in spite of the barrage of storms we have experienced over the past few weeks, you continue to be well.

Speaking of doing well, the month of May is dedicated to mental health awareness. As I have touched in in past letters; the constant go, go, go of our everyday lives makes it vital that we take care of our physical and mental well-being. According to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration) 1 out of every 5 people will experience some type of mental illness this year. With the constant stress Code Enforcement Officers deal with on a day-to-day basis, it is not unreasonable to assume we are vulnerable to such an event.

With that concern in mind, we need to find healthy ways to relieve the strain daily; to mitigate the chance of “burnout”; so we can better serve our communities and take care of our families. Mental health experts believe a healthy diet, exercise, a consistent sleep routine, amongst other options, are good ways to maintain good mental health. There is no magic solution that will work for everyone. You have to find your own healthy way of maintaining mental well-being, whether it be by: prayer, venting to a comrade, positive social gatherings, or music, etc.

All that to say, I care about you and I care about the impact you are making in your community. You cannot take care of them if you do not take care of yourself. If you ever feel overwhelmed or need to vent, give any officer a shout. We are here for you, and with the many years of experience held by the board officers, most the time we have likely faced a similar situation to what you may be going through. If at any point you or someone you know has gone beyond the point of frustration and into crisis mode please seek professional assistance, expert psychological consultation, or call or text 988 immediately.

I would like to thank our 3rd VP Wayne McCasland for serving OCEA this past term and all he has done for our membership and to welcome Jessica Green into that position in the upcoming year. I would also like to welcome Sheridan Lowery, who is serving in OCEA for his first time this year, as sergeant at arms. We look forward to all that you will bring to OCEA and its membership. Our OCEA board is here to serve and represent all our members. 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.

Shawn “Maverick” Fritsche

OCEA President Emeritus



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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



Job Openings in Oklahoma

Purcell has an opening for a Code Enforcement Officer/Building Official —<https://www.purcellok.gov/jobs.aspx?Uniquelid=103&From=All&CommunityJobs=False&JobID=Code-Enforcement-OfficerBuilding-Offical-10>

McAlester has an opening for a Building Inspector—https://www.cityofmcalester.com/residents/city_services_departments/human_resources/job_opportunities.php

Send me your job listings and we can share with OCEA members!

OCEA Updates:

OCEA Membership Dues have been extended to the end of 2024, after our Bylaw amendment passed at the Spring Conference, which amended our fiscal year. We will now be operating under a calendar year of January 1—December 31.

Member renewal info will be shared this fall to begin the process.

Be thinking ahead of who you would like to nominate for OCEA Awards. There are even some AACE Awards to nominate others for and announcements will be made at the AACE Conference.

If you are interested in joining the OCEA Board, make plans to submit a Candidate form just after January 1st. The election will take place at the 2025 Spring Conference at Quartz Mountain.

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



OMAG



AACE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

**OKLAHOMA
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The Unified Voice of Oklahoma Cities and Towns