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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

Perspective

March 17, 2017

OKFB dedicates new plaza in commemoration of 75th anniversary

Oklahoma Farm Bureau recently announced the celebration of the organization's 75th anniversary in 2017. To commemorate this milestone, OKFB dedicated a new plaza March 7 in a private event at their headquarters located near the State Capitol in Oklahoma City.

With 95,000 members statewide, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is connected to County Farm Bureaus in all 77 Oklahoma counties. The plaza contains 77 pillar sculptures, each one in the shape of one of the state's counties. Each sculpture also contains soil from the county it represents.

"The new plaza is beautiful, but my favorite thing about it is the connection it makes between Oklahoma Farm Bureau and our members across all 77 counties," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "This is a tribute to their dedication to the farming and ranching lifestyle that provides the food, fiber and fuel that powers Oklahomans' lives. We look forward to our next 75 years of serving them."

There is an elevation change in the four planting beds containing the pillars which represents the quadrants of Oklahoma topography as seen on an elevation map.

"We wanted the design to reflect that culture of Oklahoma Farm Bureau," said



Zach Murphy, landscape designer at Studio W, the Oklahoma-based architectural design company that oversaw design of the plaza. "It was important to highlight the diversity of our geography in Oklahoma and pay homage the farmers and ranchers who can be found in all corners of our state."

Members of the public are welcome to tour the new plaza between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily. It is located on the southeast side

of the building at OKFB headquarters at 2501 N. Stiles in Oklahoma City.

OKFB will continue their anniversary celebration throughout the year, including the launch of a dedicated 75th anniversary website this spring. The website will feature stories and pictures from the organization's past. A historical pictorial book developed in conjunction with the Oklahoma Historical Society will also be debuted.



Top: OKFB members and guests browse through the brand-new outdoor space on the building's southeast side. Above right: Attendees listen as OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke welcomes the crowd. Above left: Each county is represented by a pillar sculpture containing soil from that county.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau partners with Love's Travel Stops, Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma to fund fire relief

As the largest general agricultural organization, it is important that in the wake of the devastating wildfires, we look at the long-term implications and how we can meet those needs. Hay and fencing supplies are going to be an immediate need, but as hay donations continue to pour in, it is fuel which will serve as life support for our efforts and will continue to be vital in the weeks and months of this tragedy.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has partnered with Love's Travel Stops and Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma to fund relief for fire victims. The three organizations have furnished gift cards for fuel to those transporting donated hay to the affected area.

"It's in these times of disaster that we see the true spirit of Oklahomans. As farmers and ranchers, it's our duty to help each other when in need," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "We consider it a privilege

to play a small part in the relief efforts."

More than 2 million acres of land have burned, devastating farmers and ranchers throughout northwest Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas. Ranchers in the area are in dire need of feed for the cattle.

"Farmers and ranchers have seen severe damage in western Oklahoma," said John Grunewald, Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma president and CEO. "Families have lost homes, livestock, equipment and hay. We, with all Farm Credit associations in Oklahoma, are proud to be a part of the recovery efforts of the area."

In addition to funding transportation of the donated hay, Grunewald said Farm Credit Associations of Oklahoma also will provide 0 percent interest agricultural operating loans for those directly impacted by the fires.

"These are proud, hardworking people," Grunewald said. "We know they'll make it

through this."

A staple in the northwest Oklahoma community, Love's Travel Stops also appreciated the opportunity to serve the farmers and ranchers in the area.

"We've been a part of the Woodward community for 40 years and we understand that local farmers are extremely important to the area," said Jenny Love Meyer, Love's Travel Stops vice president of communications. "Giving farmers the tools they need to feed their livestock during this difficult time means more than feeding animals; it means protecting the community our employees have come to know and love."

Gift cards will be distributed at the hay drop off locations. If interested in donating additional funds, please contact the Oklahoma Farm Bureau office at (405) 530-2681.

OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Golf Classic to be held May 12

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers will hold their 15th annual YF&R Golf Classic May 12 at SilverHorn Golf Club in Oklahoma City.

The annual scramble-style tournament opens with check-in at 11:30 a.m., and golfers will tee off at 1 p.m. Several prizes will be awarded, and lunch will be provided. All proceeds from the event will be given to benefit the OKFB Legal Foundation.

Registration is being accepted now through May 5 for teams and individuals.

The cost is \$350 per team of four golfers or \$90 per individual. Mulligans can be purchased for \$10 each, with a limit of three per person. Costs must be paid in advance.

Hole sponsorships are also available to companies, organizations and groups at three different levels:

- Platinum hole sponsorships at a cost of \$1,000 include green fees for four players, a meal and door prizes, two free mulligan per player and a sponsored hole named for your team.

- Gold sponsorships at a cost of \$750 include green fees for four players, a meal and door prizes, one free mulligans per player and a sponsored hole named for your team.
- Silver sponsorships at a cost of \$500 include green fees for four players, a meal and door prizes and a sponsored hole named for your team.

To register for the YF&R Golf Classic, or for questions, call Zac Swartz at (405) 205-0070.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online



Meet the Legislator - Sen. AJ Griffin

Have you been keeping up with OKAgPolicy's Meet the Legislator series? Last week's video featured Sen. AJ Griffin, chair of the Senate rural caucus, as she shared how the Senate Republican agenda benefits rural Oklahoma. Griffin represents Senate District 20, which includes Kingfisher, Logan, Noble and Pawnee counties. Watch all of the videos in the series at OKAgPolicy.org.



Additional photos of OKFB's 75th commemorative courtyard

Want to see more photos from the dedication of the OKFB 75th commemorative courtyard? Visit our Facebook page for more photos and a video from last week. Additional information about the history of the courtyard will be featured in the next Oklahoma Country magazine.



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www.okfarmbureau.org

Oklahoma Farming & Ranching Foundation announces OK AG Social Media Challenge

By Amanda Rosholt, Director of Fundraising and Public Relations

Spring is upon us and for many of us in agriculture, it signifies a time for new beginnings. We have been surrounded by a lot of noise in the last year, but as your Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation, our message has been strong, consistent and clear. Oklahoma's farming and ranching families are our state's

heritage and our future. That message does not change with the political climate and is more important now than it ever has been.

It is our mission to share the truth – that Oklahoma's farming and ranching families are advanced; we are efficient; we are exceptional stewards of our resources; and we truly care about the food products we

raise for our families and for families around the world.

A recent study by the Center for Food Integrity indicates that 80 percent of consumers want to know more about farming. It is our responsibility to ensure that they have an opportunity to learn from the true experts – the farming and ranching families who grow the food that sustains them.

Please join us in the OK AG Social Media Challenge to share the positive impact agriculture has on our state. For full program information, visit www.okfarmingandranchingfoundation.org. We must not grow weary in doing good – in fact, the work has only just begun.

#OKAGCares

- How do you care for livestock on your farm or ranch?
- Why is food safety important to you?
- Why is it important to you to provide a quality, affordable product for consumers?
- What community service or civic organizations are you involved with in your community?
- Why is affordable food important in addressing food insecurity?
- Why is environmental stewardship important on your farm or ranch?
- What conservation practices do you employ to improve your natural resources?

#OKAGProvides

- What foods or consumer products are produced from your farm?
- What jobs are provided by agriculture in your community?
- What is the economic impact of agriculture in your community?

#OKAGEndures

- What is your family history in agriculture or are you beginning on your own?
- What legacy do you hope to leave to future generations of your family?
- Why do you choose to be involved in agriculture?

#OKAGAdvances

- Why is technology important on your farm or ranch and how do you use it?
- How have improvements in seed technology benefited your farm?
- How does technology improve your environmental stewardship or animal care?

Blaine County Farm Bureau offering two \$2,000 scholarships

Blaine County Farm Bureau is now accepting applications for two \$2,000 scholarships for students attending Watonga, Geary, Okeene or Canton public schools who plan to pursue a higher education degree in agriculture after graduation.

Students applying for the scholarship must be a graduating high school senior,

must have a 2.5 GPA or better, and must enroll full-time in an agriculture program at an accredited Oklahoma institution of high learning. Scholarships will be given after proof of a second-semester enrollment in an agriculture program.

Applications must be postmarked no later than April 15, 2017. For applications, visit

the Blaine County Farm Bureau at 101 E. Main Street in Watonga. Mail completed applications to: Blaine County Farm Bureau Ins. Co., Attn: Cindy Bills, 101 E. Main St., Watonga, OK 73772.

For more information about the scholarship, please contact Cindy Bills at (580) 623-5339 or cbills@okfb.com.

Member Benefits

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Do you have plans for Spring Break? Make sure you get where you're going without busting the bank! Enterprise Rent-A-Car makes it easy to travel with everyday low rates on great cars, plus an OKFB member discount. With the largest fleet in North America and a wide variety of vehicles, Enterprise has you covered. Reserve now online or call 1-800-rent-a-car and reference Customer Number OKFARMB.

www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits

Calendar

Congressional Action Tour

March 28-April 2 • Washington, D.C.
Contact: Tasha Duncan (405) 530-2681

Ag Day at the Capitol

March 29 • Oklahoma City
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

Farm City Festival

April 4 • Oklahoma City
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

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STAFF DIRECTORY

Executive Director

Monica Wilke 405-523-2303

VP of Strategic Corporate Communications

Becky Samples 405-523-2528

VP of Public Policy

John Collison 405-523-2539

Director of Corporate Communications

Dustin Mielke 405-530-2640

Director of Public Policy Communications

Hannah Nemecek 405-523-2346

Communication Specialist

Clarissa Walton 405-523-2530

Brand Specialist

Jeff Canton 405-523-2465

Oklahoma Farm Bureau
2501 N. Stiles
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

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OKFB offers statement regarding wildfires in northwest Oklahoma

Oklahoma Farm Bureau, in acknowledgement of Gov. Mary Fallin's recent executive order supporting relief efforts for extreme drought and dangerous fires affecting thousands of acres across northwest Oklahoma, offers a statement in support of those affected by this disaster.

"Our hearts go out to the Oklahomans and others who have been affected by this serious wildfire situation," said Tom Buchanan, Oklahoma Farm Bureau president. "We must stand by the farmers, ranchers, and rural residents who have experienced serious threats to their homes and livelihoods. These are the good people providing our food, fiber and fuel every day, and today our neighbors in northwest Oklahoma need us to band together with them."

For those who would like to make donations toward wildfire relief efforts, visit the OKFB website or the OKFB Facebook page. Donations can also be made online at www.okcattlemen.org.

OKFB commodity tour to visit central OK

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members will travel to the Heart of the Arbuckles in central Oklahoma during OKFB's annual commodity tour May 3-5.

The three-day tour will feature history, way of life, customs, industry and commodities of the south-central area. Attendees will have the opportunity to visit a variety of farms and agribusinesses, including Valley View Pecans, Red Oak Farms, the Noble Foundation and much more.

The latest tour schedule is provided, and updated schedules will be available on the OKFB website as tour details become finalized.

Buses will load for the tour at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City. Tour attendees will stay two nights in a Sulphur-area hotel. Meals will be provided during the tour.

The cost is \$250 for an individual or \$300 for two people sharing a room. Find the registration form on our website. For more details, contact Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2405 or mirvin@okfb.org.

OKFB Commodity Tour Tentative Schedule:

Wednesday, May 3

7:30 a.m. Load buses at home office
9 a.m. Valley View Pecans
11 a.m. Tour & Lunch
Darrin Bond
Red Oak Farms

Thursday, May 4

7:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel
9 a.m. OK Wire Products
12 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. DH Cattle
Noble Foundation
5:30 p.m. Crawfish Farm

Friday, May 5

7:30 a.m. Breakfast at hotel
8 a.m. Chickasaw National
Recreation Area &
Chickasaw Cultural Center
12 p.m. Lunch
Head back to OKC

OKAGPOLICY

today

Nine state leaders receive OKFB Champion award



OKFB honors its 2016 Champions at the Legislative Leadership Conference March 6. Top (L-R): Senate Pro Tem Mike Schulz, Speaker Pro Tem Harold Wright, Sen. Bryce Marlatt. Bottom (L-R): Sen. A.J. Griffin, Sen. James Leewright and Rep. Casey Murdock. Not pictured: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, House Speaker Charles McCall and Sen. Don Barrington.

Nine of Oklahoma agriculture's top advocates were honored with the 2016 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Champion Award at the OKFB Legislative Leadership Conference March 6 in downtown Oklahoma City.

The award is given to state leaders and lawmakers who went above and beyond to defend agriculture and rural Oklahoma during the 2016 legislative session. The Champions

were honored at a reception with OKFB members and more than 40 other legislators in attendance.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau's mission of protecting agriculture and improving rural Oklahoma is crucial, now more than ever before," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "We're thankful to have our OKFB Champions fighting alongside us each and every day at the state Capitol."

The award recipients included EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Senate President Pro Tem Mike Schulz, Speaker Charles McCall, Sen. Don Barrington, Sen. A.J. Griffin, Sen. James Leewright, Sen. Bryce Marlatt, Rep. Casey Murdock and Rep. Harold Wright. Pruitt, Barrington and McCall were unable to attend.

The award recipients were nominated by county Farm Bureaus and the OKFB board of directors.

OKFB members hear from state leaders during legislative conference



Left: House Speaker Charles McCall shares an update from the state Capitol. Middle: Leon Richards of Texas County Farm Bureau asks a question during a session. Right: Members listen in on the House floor from the gallery at the state Capitol.

Farm Bureau leaders from across the state gathered to discuss policy for agriculture and rural Oklahoma during the OKFB Legislative Leadership Conference in Oklahoma City March 6-7.

The two-day conference gave Farm Bureau members an opportunity to learn about statewide policy issues and visit with state leaders and legislators.

County Farm Bureau members received an update on the state of the organization from OKFB President Tom Buchanan and Executive Director Monica Wilke, who both highlighted Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co.'s continued success including its recent credit rating boost. Both Wilke and Buchanan shared the organization's continued commitment to serving as the voice of agriculture and rural Oklahoma at 23rd and Lincoln.

Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb, a potential candidate in Oklahoma's 2018 gubernatorial race, shared with members his vision for Oklahoma.

"To have a thriving, growing state, you must have a thriving, growing 77-county economy," Lamb said, speaking to the importance of preserving and improving rural Oklahoma.

Lamb also said he supports communities collaborating to prepare for future water needs.

"I'm pro-water," Lamb said, responding to a question about developing Oklahoma water.

House Speaker Charles McCall gave an update from the Oklahoma Legislature, calling the state budget the biggest priority at the state Capitol this year.

Representing a rural seat, McCall said state policy must promote rural Oklahoma, not only urban Oklahoma. "Our state's biggest industries are energy, agriculture and tourism," McCall said. "We need agriculture to have a good 2017."

With Oklahoma public education policy currently debated statewide, Farm Bureau members heard from key statewide leaders in education. State Schools Superintendent Joy Hofmeister told members about the work of the State Department of Education, including a new system of accountability for public schools.

"For Oklahoma to flourish, education must flourish," Hofmeister said.

Hofmeister also emphasized the importance of the home and family, referencing the vast number of Oklahoma students with single parents or incarcerated parents.

"We must continue to invest our finances and our time in Oklahoma education," she said.

Oklahoma State University President Burns Hargis spoke about the impacts of cuts to higher education by the state legislature.

OSU tuition increased an average of 2.2 percent per year over the past 10 years, but Hargis said it rose 7 percent this year after a 16 percent cut in state funding.

"Our work at Oklahoma State is critical to Oklahoma and critical to agriculture," Hargis said.

Dr. Thomas Coon, dean of OSU Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, discussed the role of his division in serving Oklahomans through education, research and extension.

Highlighting last year's budget cuts to higher education, Coon said DASNR's budget has decreased by \$10 million during his three-year tenure. With cooperative extension agents a priority issue for OKFB, Coon asked the members to share OSU DASNR's impact on their livelihoods—whether through education, research or cooperative extension—with state representatives and senators.

Donelle Harder, former communications director for Sen. Jim Inhofe, also spoke to members about utilizing social media to engage with state and federal lawmakers, policy makers, journalists and thought leaders.

Members ended the conference with a visit to the state Capitol and a dedication ceremony of the OKFB 75th Anniversary Commemorative Courtyard.

OKFB praises President Trump executive order on WOTUS rule

President Donald Trump in late February issued an executive order calling on the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to overhaul the Obama administration's overreaching Waters of the U.S. rule. OKFB President Tom Buchanan issued the following statement praising President Trump's actions.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau is delighted today by President Trump's executive order to overhaul the EPA's Waters of the U.S. rule, which is a perfect example of regulatory overreach by a rogue federal agency.

"The WOTUS rule, which defined the waters protected under the Clean Water Act, would have vastly expanded EPA jurisdiction by giving the agency authority over creek

beds, ponds and even ditches. Farmers and ranchers across the country, along with Farm Bureau and hundreds of other agricultural organizations, opposed the rule because it would have unnecessarily stifled the production of safe and affordable food.

"Under the prior administration, the EPA ignored the concerns of the agricultural industry and even used taxpayer funds to lobby in support of its own rules. We look forward to working alongside the new EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt as he reviews the rule. We trust Pruitt will work to protect the environment, while also preserving private property rights. We especially want to thank Sen. Jim Inhofe for his tireless work to ensure reasonable regulations."

OKFB District Seven members visit state Capitol



OKFB District Seven members speak with Rep. John Pfeiffer on the House floor.



Sen. Bryce Marlatt visits with District Seven members.



Sen. Roland Pederson (far right) poses with young OKFB members.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 17

Craig, Delaware, Ottawa
County Farm Bureaus
Legislative Dinner
NEO – Miami

MARCH 23

Deadline for Third Reading
of Bills in Chamber of Origin

MARCH 23

Greer, Kiowa, Jackson, Washita
County Farm Bureaus
Legislative Dinner
Kiowa County FB – Hobart

MARCH 24

Pontotoc County Farm Bureau
Legislative Dinner
Aldridge Hotel – Ada

MARCH 28–APRIL 2

OKFB Congressional
Action Tour
Washington, D.C.

MARCH 29

Ag Day at the Capitol
Oklahoma City

APRIL 9–10

OKFB Young Farmers and
Ranchers Legislative Day
Oklahoma City

APRIL 13

Grady County Farm Bureau
Legislative Dinner
Ken's – Amber

Rural education: stop pointing out problems, start discussing solutions

An op-ed by the OKFB Public Policy Division

Facing a multitude of challenges, our state has lacked leadership and vision for a number of years. The Oklahoma economy and budget has relied on the energy industry since statehood, our healthcare system is overburdened, our prison system is overcrowded, and our workforce pipeline is inadequate to attract new industries and business.

Seventeen percent of Oklahomans now live at or below the poverty line, while 25 percent of children are food insecure; often, the only meal they receive is from a local school. Oklahoma's education system is the root cause of many of these problems.

It's time for change. It's no longer OK to accept mediocrity. Oklahoma ranks at the bottom of the nation in nearly every category concerning education, whether funding or academic performance. Issues including teacher salary, the number of school districts, per pupil expenditures, state curriculum,

standardized tests, teacher evaluation models, educational attainment, administrative bureaucracy, A-F grading, and more have been debated. It's time to stop pointing out the symptoms and start discussing the solutions.

Without a doubt, some schools and districts across the state do a great job of preparing our students for a successful future. Yet, in too many cases, we fall short. Oklahoma education needs leadership and bold ideas to create major reform.

Every Oklahoma child deserves a top-notch education. Whether it's college or career readiness, all

students need access to the best educational opportunities. Every school district needs the ability to provide high quality educational opportunities for their students. Parents and communities must

embrace education and work alongside schools and teachers to ensure all students become successful and productive citizens. But Oklahoma first must change its mindset and put education at the top of the priority list.

It's time for an organization like Oklahoma Farm Bureau to lead with a vision for education. Although the organization represents nearly 29,000 full-time farmers and ranchers, its membership is broad and involves Oklahomans in nearly

every sector of the economy.

Let's begin discussing solutions to reform our education system and "Improve the

lives of rural Oklahomans." To fulfill our mission, Farm Bureau members must be leaders. We must work diligently to make rural Oklahoma a better place, and also make Oklahoma a better state.

“Let's begin discussing solutions to reform our education system and 'Improve the lives of rural Oklahomans.'”

ACTION ALERT: Vote NO on HB1374, SB345

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are urged to contact their legislators regarding House Bill 1374 and Senate Bill 345, which will allow municipalities to access ad valorem—or property—taxes and completely change how ad valorem taxes are used in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has longstanding policy to keep ad valorem taxes low in our state.

HB 1374 talking points:

- I'm (insert name) from (insert town) and a member of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, asking Representative (insert name) to vote NO on House Bill 1374.

- This bill would allow municipalities to access property taxes within city limits for public safety districts.
- Although there is an agriculture exemption in the bill, the concept of municipalities accessing property taxes is poor policy for rural Oklahoma.
- Property taxes are used to fund core infrastructure, not to fund cities and towns.

SB 345 talking points:

- I'm (insert name) from (insert town) and a member of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.
- I'm asking Senator (insert name) to vote NO on Senate Bill 345.
- This bill would allow municipalities

to access property taxes within city limits for public safety districts.

- There is NO agriculture exemption in the bill. If there is agricultural land within the city limits this bill has the potential to increase your property taxes pending a vote by individuals in the city limits. Municipalities having access to property taxes is poor policy for rural Oklahoma.
- Property taxes are used to fund core infrastructure, not to fund cities and towns.

View the Action Alert online at OKAgPolicy.org/action-center.