

the advocate

THE VOICE OF OKLAHOMA'S STATE EMPLOYEES

JULY 2011

State Revenue Is Rebounding

Oklahoma state revenue has begun to rebound, with growth of more than 15 percent in June and an end-of-year deposit to the Rainy Day Fund of \$219 million. The revenue report for June shows gross collections at \$1.001 billion, up \$134.53 million, or 15.5 percent, from June of last year. The deposit to the Rainy Day Fund is the first since 2005 and begins to replenish the fund, which was depleted during the years of shortfalls and reduced revenue.

"With state revenues recovering, it is time to address the critical needs of state government," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "At the top of the list should be a total compensation package for state employees to help recruit and retain workers to provide quality services to the citizens of Oklahoma."

According to the latest Office of Personnel Management Compensation Report, state employee pay lags 16 percent below market. The last general pay increase for state employees was in 2006.

At the Delegate Assembly on Aug. 27, OPEA members will discuss "The State of State" (Continued on page 8)

Supreme Court Sides With OPEA In Birth Date Case

The Oklahoma Supreme Court released a ruling June 28 that affirmed OPEA's position that state employee birth dates should remain confidential and not be subject to exploitation.

"We determine that when the balancing test is applied to the facts presented, where significant privacy interests are at stake while the public's interest either in employee birth dates or employee identification numbers is minimal, release of birth dates and employee identification numbers of state employees 'would con-

stitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy,'" the Oklahoma Supreme Court decision stated, in a 7-2 decision.

"This is a great victory for OPEA and state employees," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "The Association followed through on this critical issue all the way to the Supreme Court because we believed state employees, who dedicate their lives to public service, should not have their private information released to the press or other

individuals."

The issue came to the forefront in February 2010, when reporters from *The Oklahoman* requested all state employee names and birth dates from the Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management. OPEA filed an injunction to protect state employees from this unwarranted invasion. Representing OPEA were Kevin Donelson and Carole Houghton of Fellers, Snider, Blankenship, Bailey & Tippens.

"We are delighted" (Continued on page 8)

OPEA Members Will Plan For The Future We've Got Your Back Is Theme Of Annual Convention

OPEA members from across the state will gather at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Oklahoma City Aug. 26 and Aug. 27 for the Association's 2011 Convention and Delegate Assembly.

"We've got your back" is the theme for this year's meeting.

"OPEA has certainly protected state employees during the recent year and legislative session," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "The Association preserved the state employee health insurance benefits four times this session and the Supreme Court recently upheld OPEA's case to protect state employee birth dates from media exploitation."

"Oklahoma has been through rough times," Zearley added. "OPEA also protected jobs and services by working to minimize state agency budget cuts."

The most important part of the Convention will be the Delegate Assembly on Saturday, when OPEA conducts its annual business meeting and adopts a Platform for 2012. Platform planks or resolutions have been forwarded from regional meetings across the state. During the morning session on Saturday, delegates will discuss the challenges and opportunities ahead in a session called "The State of State Employment."

At the annual awards luncheon, OPEA will honor members and chapters that have excelled in the past year. In addition, OPEA's Legislator of the Year award will be presented.

"OPEA's Annual Convention is not just business; it's an opportunity to network and have fun with the people who make Oklahoma work – state employees," said Zearley.

The Convention will open with a poolside meet and greet from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The Friday night event will include a live band, hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. State legislators have been invited to attend.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. Saturday, with the opening

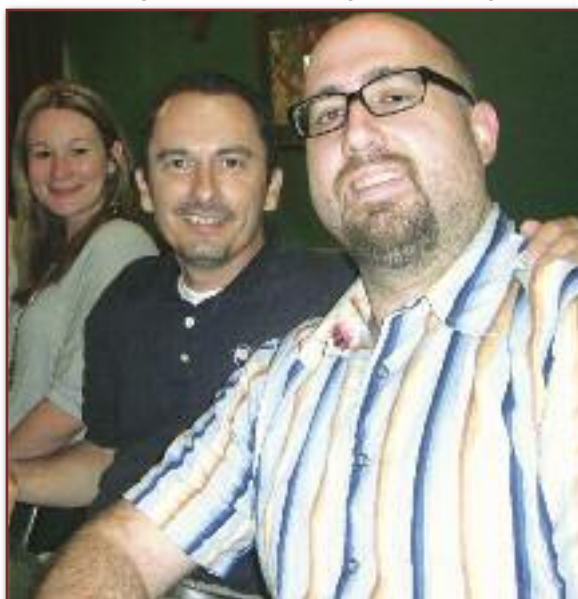
gavel of the Delegate Assembly falling at 9 a.m. The Convention is scheduled to come to a close around 4 p.m., after OPEA members have adopted the Association's Platform.

"OPEA members are encouraged to help set the course for the future by participating in this year's Convention," Zearley said. "With state revenue recovering, we must be ready to recover lost ground and move forward."

The Convention registration form on page 9 should be filled out and returned to the OPEA office at 13 N.E. 28th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105 or faxed to (405) 524-4671. Online registration is also available on the OPEA website – www.oepa.org. The registration

fee is \$15 until Aug. 5 and \$20 after that. The fee includes the Friday night event and breaks and lunch on Saturday.

OPEA has reserved a block of rooms at the Crowne Plaza for Friday night at a rate of \$72 plus tax. Double occupancy rooms are available at the same rate. Saturday breakfast is included with the room. To reserve a room, call (405) 848-4811 or (888) 444-0401. You must call by Aug. 11 to receive the special rate.



Tulsa OESC Vice President Jaimie Barnett, left, and Tulsa State Office Building chapter President Cory Scheer, right, with OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley at the Region 8 Platform meeting held in June.

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EDITORIAL PAGE

Dedicated State Employees Surviving The Summer



Summer is here, which is an understatement, as most state employees know. Some of you have to work outside in the hot, dry weather, while for others, this is a really busy time of the year. My thoughts are definitely with you. People who think state employees are not dedicated to their jobs and the Oklahoma citizens they

serve should follow a state employee around for a few days. I wonder how many of them would want to work the way you do.

I hope members in Regions 3 and 5 will take the time to cast your ballots for the Board elections coming up in August. It is very important that you consider the candidates, decide what is important to you and cast your vote. Board members work hard to make the right decisions for all state employees; when you receive your ballot, please do the right thing and cast your vote.

The Convention Committee is working hard to

make this year's Convention one of the best. They are meeting and getting every detail worked out. I hope each of you will attend. Committee members are planning for you to have a lot of fun, and we will also be conducting the business of the Association. We are excited about the Platform that will be presented. It looks like a lot of work and foresight went into the regional meetings and that exciting new ideas came from those

People who think state employees are not dedicated to their jobs and the Oklahoma citizens they serve should follow a state employee around for a few days.

meetings. So pack your bag and come to the Crowne Plaza for a fun time and the opportunity to help your Association complete an important task.

At the Convention, you will hear about the state of our Association. Even though it has been a rough year, OPEA is surviving and doing well. As our treasurer so often has been heard saying, "Our legal bill is so high," but we have also won some hard-fought battles in the courts. I would like to thank Sterling, the OPEA Board and employees who have worked tirelessly to make this happen.

Our membership staff has continued to get out to state offices and recruit employees every month, and the Board also has been meeting the challenge to recruit new members, and even the office staff is helping out. So put your recruiting hat on, join us and see how many new members you can introduce to the Oklahoma Public Employees Association.

State parks are being closed and juvenile facilities are being shut down. It's imperative for you to join OPEA in the fight; your park or facility might be the next to go.

The President's Pen
By *Connie Stockton*
OPEA President

Striking Back Against The Evil Empire



A long time ago in a state not so far away, actually the state of Oklahoma, an evil empire built a death star in north Oklahoma City.

Under the guise of transparency, the empire launched a full-scale attack on state employees, demanding to obtain information including their date of birth and employee identification numbers. If these nefarious attacks had been successful, they would have spawned an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy and threatened the safety of state employees.

Standing in the way of the evil empire's diabolical plans was the Oklahoma Public Employees Association and its loyal friends. In 2010, they began to fight back, to stand up to the evil empire's unfounded attacks against the people who serve the people of Okla-

homa. A long and difficult journey through the state's court system, sustained by OPEA's persistence and perseverance, finally came to an end June 28, 2011, when the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that state employees do not surrender all privacy rights by accepting gov-

If these nefarious attacks had been successful, they would have spawned an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy and threatened the safety of state employees.

ernment employment. The court also stated that "release of birth dates and employee identification numbers of state employees would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

I would like to thank the members of the Oklahoma Supreme Court for their brilliant insight and ruling on this critically important issue.

We need to celebrate this victory, but we also need to remember that the empire could again rear its ugly head. We need to be prepared for the next attack.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that OPEA's Annual Convention will be held Aug. 26 and Aug. 27 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Oklahoma City. The details of the Convention are in this month's *Advocate*. I encourage you to attend so you can play a role in planning the future of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association.

A Sterling Example
By *Sterling Zearley*
OPEA Executive Director

The Advocate

The Advocate is published by the Oklahoma Public Employees Association • 13 N.E. 28th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105 • (405) 524-6764 • (800) 880-OPEA • Fax: (405) 524-4671 • E-mail: general@opea.org • website: www.opea.org.

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The Advocate (USPS 016-153) is published bimonthly by the Oklahoma Public Employees Association. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, Okla. 73125. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Advocate, Oklahoma Public Employees Association, 13 N.E. 28th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105. Subscriptions: \$4 per year, included as part of OPEA membership. Reproduction in whole or part prohibited without written permission. Advertising rates upon request. Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertising.

OPEA Meets With CIO

About IT Consolidation

Representatives of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association met in early June with Alex Pettit, Oklahoma's chief information officer, and the governor's office to discuss implementation of IT consolidation in state agencies.

HB 1304, authored by Rep. David Derby and Sen. Clark Jolley and passed during the recent legislative session, transfers the information technology assets and employees of many state agencies to the Information Services Division of the Office of State Finance, effective July 1, 2011. Although the bill has an immediate implementation date, the consolidation will take several years to complete.

The first step in the process is to inventory and assess IT assets in all state agencies. To help with this process, the state contracted with Capgemini Consulting, which completed its report in late April.

According to Capgemini's assessment, the state has:

- 76 financial systems;
- 22 unique time and attendance systems;
- 17 different imaging systems;
- 48 reporting and analytics applications;
- three different pension systems;
- 30 data center locations;
- 32,643 workstations (20 percent over four years of age);
- 129 email and BlackBerry servers (with 25 agencies running their own email).

OPEA members have asked if their positions would be privatized and the "Geek Squad" would take over their jobs.

"You are the Geek Squad," Pettit told OPEA.

He went on to say it is important to keep people throughout the state because productivity is lost when an IT person must be dispatched from Oklahoma City to repair a computer.

"Nobody benefits by spending time in a car," he continued.

One of the greatest concerns with the Capgemini

report is the recommendation that data services personnel be reduced from 1,279 to 909 employees. Pettit told OPEA that his office is still assessing how many employees are actually involved in IT-related jobs. Because of the lack of standardization across agencies, some employees who will not be transferred could be included in this count. State agencies will be able to petition that all or some of their jobs be exempt from the consolidation.

The first phase of the consolidation is reviewing IT capacity in state servers to find available space for new resources needed by state agencies. Pettit said an agency could use excess capacity at another state agency instead of using state funds to purchase additional hardware. In addition, networks and cable can be shared among state agencies, which would not be noticed by the end user but would save the state money.

"Why should the state have four systems of cable going into Woodward?" he asked.

One of the goals of consolidation is more cooperation, problem solving and idea sharing across the IT function in state government. Pettit indicated that few people who work in data services across the state have even met each other.

Another goal of the consolidation would be for the state to operate with only one email server. According to the Capgemini report, this would facilitate transparency and record keeping in government, allowing the press or others to access state agency emails easier.

"While this will allow OPEA to request emails when working on a project, state employees should always remember that even now your email is not private," said OPEA Policy and Communications Director Trish Frazier. "Emails can be requested through an open records request for litigation or investigative reporting."

State employee emails regarding client and personnel records are exempt from public requests. In addition,

Consolidated Agencies

The following agencies' IT functions were consolidated by mid-June:

Accountancy Board
Abstractors Board
Arts Council
Aeronautics
Tobacco Settlement
Construction Industries Board
Commission on Teacher Preparation
Ethics Commission
Merit Protection
Governor
State Fire Marshal
Disability Concerns
Human Rights Commission
LP Gas Administration
Motor Vehicle Commission
Long-Term Care Administrators Board
Optometry Board
Police Pension
Professional Engineers And Land Surveyors Licensure Board
Physician Manpower Training
Licensed Social Workers Board
OCAST
Commission on Consumer Credit
Teachers Retirement
Uniform Building Code - Pending
Commercial Pet Breeders

tion, legislative emails cannot be requested because of the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government.

OPEA's concern with the consolidation of services is to protect OPEA members' jobs and make the transfer as seamless as possible for employees. According to merit rule 530:10-11-74, "When a facility or function is transferred from one state agency to another, classified employees may be transferred without change or modification in status." OPEA's goal is to preserve the classified status of the employees and for them to retain or be paid for any leave they have outstanding.

Obviously, the process of consolidating IT will take several years. According to Pettit, most jobs would be lost through attrition. He did warn that agencies are top-heavy in data services management and that some positions could be eliminated.

OJA Board Hears From OPEA About Rader Closing

Sterling Zearley, executive director of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, presented employee concerns about the closing of the L.E. Rader Center in Sand Springs to the Board of the Office of Juvenile Affairs at the Board's meeting June 17 in Oklahoma City.

"The employees at the Rader Center asked that I come here today and present their concerns with the closing of the only secure facility for Oklahoma's troubled youth," said Zearley. "We are asking that you postpone any action on the Rader Center and consider reorganizing, downsizing the property and using any proceeds from selling or leasing the land."

Zearley said OPEA was concerned that the Board, the governing body of the agency, had not voted on this critical issue. OJA Director Robert Christian announced to the staff in April that the facility would close its doors Sept. 30. After gathering information from employees at the Rader Center, OPEA sent a letter to the OJA Board and the Department of Justice.

According to news reports and Rader employees, the OJA administration is citing budget cuts and a Department of Justice investigation as reasons for closing the Rader Center. However, employees were informed on April 13 that the facility would close, and the budget agreement was announced almost a month later on May 10.

"OJA received a 3-percent cut, or less than \$3 million," said Zearley. "This

hardly justifies the closure of the only maximum security facility with a budget of \$10 million. The Association knows of no recommendation by the Department of Justice that OJA should close the only maximum security beds in the system."

"Our members tell us that corporations want to locate in the area and Rader is being sacrificed for economic development," Zearley continued. "This should not be the reason to close this important facility. However, possibly both goals can be achieved by selling or leasing some of the property and decreasing the perimeter."

"This session, the Legislature passed a bill to allow OJA to contract with a jail or juvenile detention center to house juveniles requiring maximum security," Zearley pointed out. "This would be very unfortunate for Oklahoma's most troubled youth. Neither a jail nor detention center would be an appropriate setting to successfully treat juvenile offenders. We all know the next stop will be a lifetime in adult corrections."

"I hope you will consider the concerns of the dedicated people who carry out OJA's mission every day," Zearley concluded. "Rader has traditionally been the last chance for Oklahoma's most violent and aggressive youth to turn their lives around. Unfortunately, troubled youth will continue to commit crimes and engage in predatory behavior. The state must have a maximum security facility to ensure public safety while they are in treatment."

Setting The Record Straight

OPEA Responds To News Article About Longevity Pay

In response to an article about state employee longevity pay, the Oklahoma Public Employees Association issued a press release asking the *Tulsa World* and *The Oklahoman* to publish the full story about state employee compensation and longevity pay.

On June 19, the *Tulsa World* published an article about state employee "bonuses" that was reprinted in *The Oklahoman*. The article criticized longevity pay, which is a lump sum payment state employees receive on their anniversary date equal to approximately \$100 for each year of service.

"The average state employee longevity check is \$1,184," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "Longevity pay is an important part of state employee total compensation. State employees haven't received a pay raise since 2006.

Longevity is critical to help retain experienced workers to provide essential state services."

In 1984, step increases were removed from state jobs, and state employees became dependent on the

Legislature for pay raises. Federal employees, teachers and the Highway Patrol still receive step increases, and teacher steps of \$400 per year and Highway Patrol steps of as much as \$3,700 per year in the first seven years add to base salary. Meanwhile, state employee longevity is a lump sum payment that does not increase salaries.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, state employee compensation lags behind the Oklahoma market by 16 percent. Longevity is included in this calculation.

"It is time state leaders addressed the issue of state employee total compensation," Zearley pointed out. "State employees have critical jobs that affect the daily lives of Oklahoma's citizens. We must provide a competitive package of salary, health insurance and retirement in order to recruit and retain Oklahoma's workers."

In response to the press release issued by OPEA, *The Norman Transcript* published an editorial about the need to review state employee total compensation, one of OPEA's long-term goals.

The *World* reported that the state has given employees nearly \$42 million in longevity pay. The program was started in the early 1980s when the state had trouble keeping employees. Major employers such as the University of Oklahoma, cities and towns all established incentives and pay raises to keep workers from going to work in the oil patch, at General Motors or in other booming industries.

Below is an excerpt from *The Transcript's* editorial.

"In 1984, step increases were removed from state jobs and state employees became dependent on the political process for pay raises. Unlike the federal government, teachers and the Highway Patrol, Oklahoma state employees do not receive step increases. Teacher steps of \$400 per year and Highway Patrol steps of as much as \$3,700 per year in the first seven years add to base salary. State employee longevity is a lump sum payment that does not increase salaries.

"State workers have been asking for a review of total employee compensation for many years.

"They claim it lags the Oklahoma market by 16 percent, including longevity pay. Perhaps the Legislature's discussion of the issue will include that needed review of total compensation."

"State employees haven't received a pay raise since 2006. Longevity is critical to help retain experienced workers to provide essential state services."

- OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley

Creek County Chapter Hears From Pre-Paid Representative



Members of OPEA's Creek County chapter discussed legislation and legal representation at their June 7 meeting. Among those attending were Michelle Littleton, left, and Robin Somers.

Approximately 35 members and guests were in attendance when OPEA's Creek County chapter met June 7.

OPEA Membership Director Haley Blood introduced Kenny Meredith as the new Creek County OPEA membership representative. He discussed the benefits of being a member of OPEA and explained that membership dues can be paid through payroll deduction. He also advised the group that OPEA can be located on two social network sites: Twitter, at OklaPEA, and Facebook, as Oklahoma Public Employees Association.

Blood presented an update on the 2011 legislative session. She informed members of OPEA's successful efforts to help defeat legislation that would have been harmful to state employee pensions and the state employee benefit allowance. She also summarized some proposed funding cuts aimed at dealing with state

budget shortfalls.

Virginia Burnett, a representative of Pre-Paid Legal, also talked with the group. She outlined the benefits of membership and the payroll deduction feature and advised members of the group about the buying power benefit through OPEA by payroll deduction.



Members of OPEA's Creek County chapter met June 7. Among those in attendance were Ana Massey, left, and Carmen Ross.

Number Of Prisoners In DOC Facilities Finally Falling

After years of unprecedented growth, the Department of Corrections offender population is finally decreasing. According to DOC officials, the total offender count in the system is down by 495 from last summer. The population grew between 2009 and 2010 by 721.

"It's really too soon to pin the decrease on something or really call it a trend, but we are hopeful," said Neville Massie, executive assistant and DOC legislative liaison. "The CSG (Council of State Governments) initiative will be investigating the data in order to recommend policies to continue to reduce the population and ensure public safety."

In June, Gov. Mary Fallin, House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman an-

nounced the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a bipartisan effort to engage in a data-driven approach to public safety. Part of this initiative will be to analyze trends and develop policies to improve the justice system, hold offenders accountable and reduce costs.

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is a partnership of the Council of State Governments, the Pew Center on the States and the U.S. Department of Justice. Fourteen other states are participating in the program. According to the CSG, Texas has adopted policies that reduced recidivism and saved \$443 million in FY 2008-2009, all while crime rates across the state continued to decline as a result of implementing this program.

In addition to the new initiative, the Legislature

adopted HB 2131, which will increase eligibility for community sentencing and GPS monitoring. Offenders with lower-level, less-violent offenses will have a more streamlined process for parole. These reforms could increase the need for staff in probation and parole to monitor offenders in the community. DOC is currently developing a staffing plan to address the increase in community sentencing.

"We hope these initiatives will provide some relief for our DOC members who have been furloughed and forced to work with low staff in stressful conditions," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "Fewer inmates will make prison conditions safer and take some of the pressure off the DOC budget."



Cory Scheer serves as the president of OPEA's Tulsa State Office Building chapter.

Tulsa State Office Building Chapter Plans For The Future

By R.C. Scheer

Since its inception last summer, the OPEA Tulsa County State Office Building chapter has seen steady growth both in participation and membership.

In June of 2010, State Rep. Eric Proctor, an OPEA member, attended a membership drive intended to begin recruitment and membership activities in the multi-agency building, and that's where the story begins.

That July, a new group of chapter officers was trained and developed a new program of involvement. Most of the

chapter officers had never participated in OPEA at this level before and were eager to become OPEA leaders. They began by holding monthly meetings in the building. After chapter President Cory Scheer and Vice President Hilary Haines attended the 2010 OPEA Convention, their motivation to develop their chapter increased.

In October, the group invited another OPEA member, State Rep. Seneca Scott, to join them at their monthly meeting and hear the concerns of state employees. Since Scott was an OPEA-endorsed candidate, SOB chapter members canvassed several neighborhoods in his district, helping him win his election.

Since then, Scott has sought legislative committee assignments that enhance his ability to become a better champion for state workers.

Between legislative sessions, members of the Tulsa SOB chapter attended the in-

terim study on the privatization of child welfare. They were there not only to support child welfare workers but also to support their vice president, Haines, who testified at the study.

The chapter's activities increased once the 2011 legislative session got underway. Following an OPEA Day training session, the chapter brought more than a dozen state employees to OPEA Day at the Capitol. In addition, both Haines and Scheer were interviewed by the *Tulsa World*. They explained how the issues discussed with

legislators would affect state employees and the Oklahoma citizens they serve.

During the past year, chapter activities have drastically improved involvement in and communication with OPEA and also have shown state employees the value of OPEA and the importance of being a member. Not only has recruitment increased, but more members are taking an active role in the Association. Chapter attendance for the annual regional council Platform meeting doubled from last year, and chapter members are dedicated to increasing attendance at the 2011 OPEA Convention.

Scheer and Haines, who were re-elected as president and vice president of the chapter, recently welcomed new Secretary Tina Phillips and Treasurer Tonya Carter to the chapter officer team. The chapter officers and all members of the OPEA Tulsa State Office Building chapter are committed to building OPEA's future. Are you?

If you work in the Tulsa area and need information on becoming active in the Tulsa SOB chapter, contact R.C. Scheer or Hilary Haines at (918) 581-2033.



Tulsa State Office Building Chapter Vice President Hilary Haines with the chapter's new and improved OPEA billboard.

OKDHS Employees Won't Face Furloughs In 2012

There are no plans to furlough employees of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services in 2012.

The proposed OKDHS budget was the main topic of discussion at the OKDHS Commission meeting June 14.

"I think everyone agrees there were no easy decisions for those who determined where the cuts would take place, but we at OPEA are very grateful that our OKDHS members will not see furloughs, according to the plan," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley.

Zearley was not alone in recognizing the difficulty in making budget decisions this year. In his report from the Budget Committee, Rev. George E. Young Sr., a member of the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services, cited his anxiety when determining this year's budget. In the end, the budget that was adopted avoided cuts to senior nutrition, rates to DDSD providers, rates to ADvantage waiver providers, rates to child care providers, foster care rates, adoption subsidy rates and social services contracts primarily for child welfare services, as well as cuts that would have resulted in furloughs for OKDHS employees.

To avoid these cuts, decisions had to be made to reduce funding for other areas of the agency. One of the most discussed areas of reductions were those that affect child care, including changes in co-pays as well as eligibility standards for future applicants. The lowest family co-pays will increase from \$6 per month to \$8

per month and the highest family co-pays for families with households under five and four or more children receiving care will increase from \$439 per month to \$492 per month. For families with one child, the highest family co-pay will increase from \$189 to \$246.

According to OKDHS Director Howard Hendrick, the increase in co-pays will amount to a savings of approximately \$5.8 million. He pointed out that this is the first co-pay increase in 14 years, while rates have been increased six times in the last 11 years.

The agency also expects to save approximately \$2.5 million by reducing eligibility for future applicants. Hendrick said income levels that remain eligible in Oklahoma would not be in most other states because we have relatively high maximum eligibility levels. While no one currently receiving child care benefits will be dropped from the program, the following income

standards will be affected:

- Future family applicants with one child and annual income exceeding \$25,500 will not be eligible; presently the limit is \$29,100.
- Future family applicants with two children and annual income exceeding \$29,100 will not be eligible; presently the limit is \$35,100
- Future family applicants with three or more children and annual income exceeding \$35,100 will no longer be eligible; presently the limit is \$43,500.

The Department of Human Services also saved money by reducing contracts for social services, computer services and training. The agency offered voluntary buyouts to employees through June 30, 2011, and plans to announce another VOBO for employees eligible to retire Sept. 30, 2011.

If you have any questions regarding the OKDHS budget, contact OPEA Membership Director Haley Blood at haleyb@opea.org.

"I think everyone agrees there were no easy decisions for those who determined where the cuts would take place."

- OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley

OPEA Loses Member In Transportation Accident

OPEA member and transportation inspector Terry Clubb died June 14 after a construction accident at Interstate 40 and Interstate 35 in Oklahoma City. He lived in Harrah and had worked for the state of Oklahoma for 13 years.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Clubb's family, friends and co-workers," said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley. "Our ODOT family has more losses than any other agency in state government. Unfortunately, keeping the people of Oklahoma safe can be a hazardous job. We appreciate his years of dedicated service."

"Too often the public does not realize the risk involved in transportation jobs," Zearley added. "OPEA salutes the dedication of our ODOT members and requests that all OPEA members respect work zone speed limits and instructions."

State Insurance Plans Will See Minor Changes

The Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board and the Employees Benefits Council will set the insurance rates for calendar year 2012 during the third week in August. Before rate-setting day, there is no way to anticipate the HMO rates because of the bidding process. However, OSEEGIB does not anticipate increases in rates for the HealthChoice plan.

OPEA members successfully fought off attacks on the state employee health insurance plan four times during the last legislative session. Several proposed bills would have allowed agency budgets to be balanced with savings from the state employee benefit allowance.

“While OPEA understands that state employee health insurance should be addressed, the last minute proposals in the midst of the session did not give the time needed for full consideration,” said OPEA Executive Director Sterling Zearley.

At the OSEEGIB Advisory Board meeting in July, participants discussed a possible change in the deductible for HealthChoice members – a \$750 deductible for tobacco users, compared with a \$400 deductible for those who don’t use tobacco. According to information from other states, plan members would have to sign an affidavit and risk losing coverage if they were not truthful.

The Legislature did pass some minor changes at the end of the session. OPEA negotiated the provisions of HB 1062 with its authors, Rep. Dustin Roberts and Sen. Josh Brecheen. For state employees, the most important section will allow legislators and state employees to opt out of the state insurance plan as long as they can prove they have other group coverage. If they choose this option, employees may keep a stipend of

\$150 per month. According to OSEEGIB’s actuaries, this would have little impact on the state risk pool as long as employees are required to have group coverage.

In addition, HB 1062 directs OSEEGIB and the Office of State Finance to contract with a vendor to provide health savings accounts for state employees who choose the high-deductible health plans. State employees could deposit funds into their accounts before the money is taxed. Currently, employees must open their own personal accounts, deposit funds after taxes and wait for a refund at tax filing the following year.

HD/HSA Plans

Before the session, the EBC sponsored a presentation by the Indiana governor’s office about that state’s use of high-deductible health plans with health savings accounts. In Indiana, state employees must choose an HD/HSA to receive the full benefit allowance. Several Oklahoma legislators attended the meeting and promoted the Indiana plan throughout the session.

In HD/HSA plans, the employer pays the premium for a high-deductible plan and then funds a health savings account from which members pay their health care costs. The funds can carry over from year to year and are not taxed until they

are withdrawn for non-health-related expenses. Preventive care is usually free to plan participants. If an employee is healthy and rarely uses medical insurance, funds accumulate in the account. For individuals who have health care costs, care beyond the deductible is the traditional 80/20 co-pay. There also is an out-of-pocket maximum similar to that of most insurance plans.

OSEEGIB currently offers an HD/HSA plan for state employees. Participants pay a lower premium and can deposit their remaining benefit allowance in their health savings account. At the end of the year, any remaining funds can be rolled over to the next year and saved for retirement or when the funds are needed for medical expenses. Beginning in January 2012, employees can access the new state HSA accounts and have deposits made before the money is taxed.

Ismat Esrar will fight against further erosion of your benefits.

Thomas K says “I support Ismat because he will bring unique perspective to the OPEA leadership. I respectfully ask for your vote.”

Ismat Esrar
Sr. Environmental Engineer, ODEQ

For **OPEA Board of Directors**
Region 5



HealthChoice

- * Free health risk assessment
- * Free preventive service visit
- * Free metabolic and lipid panel blood tests
- * \$5 copay for certain prescription tobacco cessation medications
- * Increased number of well child/preventive visits



Focusing on your health!

Birth Date Case *(Continued from page 1)*

the Supreme Court has upheld the ruling to protect the privacy rights of the employees of the state of Oklahoma,” said Donelson.

“OPEA was concerned that an employee’s birth date could be the missing puzzle piece in both financial and health care identity fraud,” Zearley said. “In addition, the safety of corrections officers, child welfare workers and other employees who work with the public could be put in jeopardy.”

In 2010, Rep. Randy Terrill and Sen. Debbe Leftwich authored legislation to protect state employee birth dates. This legislation was supported by members of the public safety community concerned with the security of state employees who may be identified by this information.

Terrill said the Supreme Court ruling is a victory for the personal privacy and safety of Oklahoma citizens who have state jobs.

“Today’s decision vindicates past legislative efforts to protect the privacy rights and safety concerns of Oklahoma citizens who happen to work for the state,” said Terrill, R-Moore. “The decision makes clear that the blanket release of state employees’ personal identifying information would constitute a clearly unreasonable and unwarranted invasion of privacy.”

“This is the end of a long journey,” said Zearley. “OPEA is proud of this great accomplishment for current and future state employees.”

A Long But Successful Journey

OPEA’s long journey to protect state employee privacy began in February 2010, when *The Oklahoman* asked the Office of Personnel Management to release information about all state employees, including full name, employee ID number, agency, job description, start date and date of birth.

Journalists cited the public’s need to know if the names and birth dates of state employees matched up with court records indicating state employees had committed crimes or had been involved in another type of wrongdoing.

“This is subjecting all state employees to an invasion of privacy so reporters can use computer data mining to make their job easier,” said Zearley. “If reporters believe a state employee has committed a crime, we have no problem with them requesting information about that individual. But conducting a witch hunt with the information of thousands of state employees is going too far.”

OPEA filed an injunction in District Court in March 2010, seeking to protect state employees’ confidential information. In April, the Troopers Association filed a similar injunction.

On April 9, 2010, Oklahoma County District Court Judge Bryan Dixon halted the release of state employee information by granting a temporary restraining order to a courtroom packed with OPEA members and staff, troopers and media representatives.

Earlier in the 2010 session, Leftwich and Terrill authored SB 1753, which was aimed at protecting state employee ID numbers and birth dates from release. While the bill made it through the Senate, it was not heard in the House, leaving OPEA to continue its fight in the courts.

In the fall of 2010, the action continued in district court when Dixon ruled that state agencies had the sole authority in determining whether or not releasing birth dates would be an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

OPEA discouraged agencies from releasing their employees’ private information and continued to the Supreme Court. In June, the Supreme Court concurred with OPEA that the release of state employee birth dates would be an invasion of privacy and could subject workers to identity theft or harassment.

“Although state employees’ privacy interests may be diminished somewhat by taking a position in an agency subject to public scrutiny, they do not surrender all privacy rights by accepting public employment,” the ruling stated. “However, [it] is important to note that the policy of disclosure is purposed to serve the public interest and not to satisfy the public’s curiosity.”

From The OPEA Website

Here are a few examples of comments posted on the OPEA website about this important victory.

Commission Lass:

Thank you very much for your diligence in putting this issue to rest.

4. Eloise:

Thank you, OPEA, for protecting our right to privacy. All state employees may not be members of this organization, but when we win, all state employees win. So my hat is off to this fine organization. I am a member of 20 years or more!!!

Jackie:

Thank God for OPEA!

Scott:

Thank you, OPEA; job well done.

Julia:

Awesome!!! Thanks for your commitment to this issue and our concerns!

Tony:

Good job, OPEA.

Brenda B:

Great job!!! And thank you! I feel we are safer now. ... too many people want to know way too much! Maybe they need their personal info placed on the front page (without editing rights – hhhmmmm). Thank you again.

Robert R:

I for one know. ... my specifics were once compromised in a health care instance. Believe you me, it’s a hassle to try getting things straightened out.

Patrice:

Excellent work.

Revenue Rebounding *(Continued from page 1)*

Employment” and prepare for the next legislative session. This part of the Convention will provide an opportunity for OPEA members to strategize, prioritize and come up with a competitive total compensation package that balances pay, health insurance, retirement and other benefits.

“State employees are facing numerous challenges, recovering from past budget cuts, privatization of services and the important problem of retention of employees,” said Zearley. “Not only does turnover cost in lost productivity and training, but the citizens of Oklahoma are not receiving the best value for their dollar.”

OPM estimates the state’s cost of employee turnover to be approaching \$90 million per year.

“Fall is approaching and session will be here before we know it,” Zearley concluded. “OPEA members should be meeting with their legislators immediately to discuss the need to address state employee issues early in the session.”

Let’s “Rumble” Together For OPEA ...

- Let’s keep our sights on the prize and get ready to “rumble” with our legislators until we succeed ...
- Vote for Carrie Croy for Region 5 director.



Carrie Croy

My name is Jann Ensz and I am asking for your vote for Region 3 director. I have been an OPEA member since 1983, the chair of the Platform Committee for eight years and an OPEA Board member since 2006. I was the DHS Council communications liaison from 2002 until the councils dissolved. I attended the last OPEA Leadership Class, and I have knowledge of OPEA policies and procedures.



Jann Ensz

**OPEA's 2011 Delegate Assembly
Saturday, Aug. 27
Crowne Plaza Hotel • Oklahoma City**

Registration	8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Delegate Assembly	9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.
	Call to Order
	Welcome
	Flag Salute
	Prayer
	Introductions
OPEA President's Address - Connie Stockton.....	9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
State of the Association - Sterling Zearley, Executive Director	9:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.
Break	9:45 a.m. to 10 a.m.
Presentation and Discussion: The State of State Employment . <i>Where are we now? Where do we want to be?</i>	10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Delegate Assembly	11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
	Credential Report
	Adoption and Explanation of Rules
	Platform Committee Report
	Discussion and Vote on Platform Planks
Lunch and Awards	11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
Break	1:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Delegate Assembly - Reconvene	1:30 p.m. to ?
	Establish Quorum
	Discussion and Vote on Platform Planks

Friday Night Convention Kick Off

Poolside Meet and Greet

Friday, August 26, 7- 10 p.m.

Hors d'oeuvres • Cash Bar • Live Band

Plan to attend and meet the best people in Oklahoma - fellow OPEA members.

Legislators and elected officials have also been invited

Registration Form

OPEA Convention and Delegate Assembly

Aug. 26 and Aug. 27, 2011 • Oklahoma City

Name _____

Agency or retiree _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Daytime phone _____

Number attending the Friday night reception _____

Name(s) of guest(s) _____

Registration fee includes:

- Friday night meet and greet event
- Convention registration
- Saturday breaks • Saturday lunch

Accommodations:

Crowne Plaza (Breakfast included with room)
 2945 Northwest Expressway
 Oklahoma City, Okla. 73112
 (405) 848-4811 • (888) 444-0401

Please return this form to:

OPEA

13 N.E. 28th St.
 Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105
 or fax to (405) 524-4671

Early Bird Special:

**The registration fee is only \$15 if
 you register by Aug. 5.
 The fee will be \$20 after that date.**

OPEA's Proposed 2012 Platform

Below are resolutions that have been forwarded from OPEA regional meetings held earlier this summer. Between now and the OPEA Annual Convention, take time to review the proposed resolutions.

During the Delegate Assembly, the author, his or her designee or a member from the region proposing the resolution may move the resolution for consideration after it is read by the Platform chair. After being moved for consideration, the resolution must receive a second from another delegate.

The person moving the resolution can then give a short explanation of the

idea, followed by an opportunity for questions from the floor. The resolution may be amended, followed by debate and the vote.

A new resolution may be considered by the Delegate Assembly if a participant gathers 10 delegate signatures. After gathering the signatures and presenting the completed paperwork to the Platform chair, a member may move the resolution.

Remember: The time for adoption of the Platform is limited, so plan to keep your comments brief and to the point.

Compensation

1. OPEA will pass legislation that brings state employee total compensation to market over a period of three to five years. The legislation would establish a trigger at which employee compensation would increase when state revenues reached a certain point.

Submitted by:

Rusty Miller, Region 11
Betty Weber, Region 4
Dixie Jackson, Region 6
Brandy Jackson, Region 10
Ismat Esrar, Region 5

2. OPEA will pass legislation providing state employees with a 5-percent pay increase.

Submitted by:

Treva Kuzma, Region 2

3. OPEA will pass legislation providing step adjustments to state employees.

Submitted by:

Sharita Ramsey, Region 5

4. OPEA will pass legislation that doubles longevity for state employees.

Submitted by:

Pam Eaton, Region 1
Ismat Esrar, Region 5

5. OPEA will pass legislation that increases longevity for state employees every year instead of in alternate years.

Submitted by:

Treva Kuzma, Region 2

6. OPEA will work to ensure that cost savings for reforms are used to increase salaries for state employees.

Submitted by:

Vanessa Wedlake, Region 3

Insurance

7. OPEA will work to protect health insurance benefits for state employees and dependents.

Submitted by:

Tricia Naifeh-Parker, Region 5
Ismat Esrar, Region 5
James Smith, Region 6

Insurance

8. OPEA will work to increase insurance options in rural areas.

Submitted by:

Karen Sawler, Region 4
Jess Callahan, Region 11

9. OPEA will work to reduce health insurance out-of-pocket costs without an increase in premiums.

Submitted by:

Betty Weber, Region 4

Retirement

10. OPEA will pass legislation allowing a pension system to provide cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) when the system reaches 80-percent funding.

Submitted by:

Tricia Naifeh-Parker, Region 5

11. OPEA will investigate reducing employee retirement notification from 60 to 30 days.

Submitted by:

Lana Daugherty, Region 10

12. OPEA will pass legislation raising the state match for deferred compensation (SoonerSave) from \$25 to \$100.

Submitted by:

Forrest Rush, Region 5

13. OPEA will pass legislation increasing the retiree health insurance stipend to match the cost of the HealthChoice Medicare supplemental insurance.

Submitted by:

Cheryl Horsley, Retiree West Region

14. OPEA will pass legislation increasing the retiree insurance stipend to cover the cost of retiree HealthChoice premium rates.

Submitted by:

Cheryl Horsley, Retiree West Region

15. OPEA will pass legislation allowing up to five years of consecutive active duty military time to be considered in the state employee retirement calculation.

Submitted by:

Carrie Croy, Region 5

OPEA's Proposed 2012 Platform

Personnel

16. OPEA will pass legislation requiring that state employees receive at least a 30-day notice prior to furloughs.

Submitted by:
Hilary Haines, Region 8

17. OPEA will work to reduce the unclassified service to no more than 10 percent of an agency's positions.

Submitted by:
Cody Burns, Region 8

18. OPEA will investigate a better method of performance-based evaluations.

Submitted by:
Debbie Dixon, Region 7

19. OPEA will pass legislation or rules to allow unclassified employees to apply for classified positions after their probation period, using a form 4-B.

Submitted by:
Connie Stockton, Region 11

20. OPEA will work to ensure that agencies first make cuts to personnel and other areas of the agency which do not interact with clients.

Submitted by:
Pam Eaton, Region 1

21. OPEA will attempt to move all agencies that pay on a monthly basis to a semi-monthly basis.

Submitted by:
R.C. Scheer, Region 8

Benefits

22. OPEA will pass legislation standardizing shared leave policies for all state agencies.

Submitted by:
Dixie Jackson, Region 6

23. OPEA will pass legislation increasing the annual leave balance cap from 480 to 620 hours. (Examine how this could be included in a total compensation package.)

Submitted by:
Ashley Cardinal, Region 8

24. OPEA will pass legislation increasing organizational leave from 24 to 48 hours per year.

Submitted by:
Laurie Kelso, Region 5

25. OPEA will examine establishing a Roth IRA SoonerSave program.

Submitted by:
Larry J. Meilleur, Region 6

Benefits

26. OPEA will work to fund tuition reimbursement for state employees at state colleges and universities.

Submitted by:
Valorie Adair, Region 6

27. OPEA will work to increase state employee holidays, such as Columbus Day and Good Friday.

Submitted by:
Lana Daugherty, Region 7

Government Reform

28. OPEA will continue to oppose privatization of state agencies with OPEA membership, including but not limited to child welfare and state-owned properties.

Submitted by:
Tricia Naifeh-Parker, Region 5
John Martin Sr., Region 2
Sam Westfall, Region 7

29. OPEA will pass legislation prohibiting legislators from becoming employed with private companies for whom they author legislation to privatize state jobs.

Submitted by:
Yvette Onkst, Region 8
Cathy Gervasio, Region 8
Becky Laipple, Region 8

30. OPEA will pass legislation requiring that the proceeds from the sale of state property be used to benefit the facilities/clients/employees where the land originated and not be deposited into the state General Fund.

Submitted by:
James Smith, Region 6

31. OPEA will work to maintain Southern Oklahoma Resource Center and Northern Oklahoma Resource Center as viable centers and allow client admissions to the centers.

Submitted by:
Brent Gilbert, Region 6

32. OPEA will work for the purchase or lease of Diamond Back Correctional Facility in Watonga for state operation.

Submitted by:
James Kroth, Region 6

33. OPEA will work for the reform of the state purchasing system.

Submitted by:
Susan Adams, Region 6
John Martin Sr., Region 2

OPEA's Proposed 2012 Platform

OPEA Operations

34. OPEA will change residency policies to allow members to run for regional office in the region in which they reside or work.

Submitted by:
R.C. Scheer, Region 8
Mark Schemet, Region 8
Candace Scarpitti, Region 5

Miscellaneous

35. OPEA will work with the agency or pass legislation allowing employee names to be redacted from charts given to patients in mental health facilities.

Submitted by:
Kathy Underwood, Region 7

36. OPEA will investigate requiring all employees in the Department of Transportation submit to the same drug testing program as maintenance employees.

Submitted by:
Rita Heath, Region 7

37. OPEA will investigate providing security in lobbies and offices.

Submitted by:
Brandy Philpot, Region 10

38. OPEA will investigate allowing workers access to psychologists and counselors.

Submitted by:
Brandy Philpot, Region 10

39. OPEA will investigate state employee access to immunizations.

Submitted by:
R.C. Scheer, Region 8

40. OPEA will investigate why the Superior Courts received a 38 percent increase in funding for FY 2012.

Submitted by:
Rita Health, Region 7

41. OPEA will investigate more specific guidelines for NGRI (not guilty by reason of insanity).

Submitted by:
Rita Heath Region 7

42. OPEA will work to obtain one free week of per year of state park rentals for active and retired state employees.

Submitted by:
James Kroth, Region 6

Miscellaneous

43. OPEA will work to obtain half-price entrance fees at state museums for state employees and retirees and immediate families.

Submitted by:
James Kroth, Region 6

44. OPEA will work to obtain half-price fees at state parks for state employees and retirees and immediate families.

Submitted by:
James Kroth Region 6

45. OPEA will pass legislation providing state employees with a \$3,000 tax credit in lieu of a pay raise.

Submitted by:
James Kroth Region 6

46. OPEA will pass legislation providing the children of state employees with at least 10 years of service free tuition at state colleges and universities.

Submitted by:
Cody Burns, Region 6

47. OPEA will pass legislation making state employees exempt from the state income tax.

Submitted by:
Jess Callahan, Region 11

48. OPEA will increase hazard pay for employees working in direct care.

Submitted by:
Lynn Graham, Region 7

49. OPEA will work to require that mandatory training shall first be approved by a majority of the permanent staff who will be required to attend the training.

Submitted by:
Michael J. Beadles, Region 2

50. OPEA will work to separate state employee longevity from regular paychecks.

Submitted by:
Rusty Miller, Region 11
Treva Kuzma, Region 2

51. OPEA will review the legislative per diem compared to state employees.

Submitted by:
Susan Adams, Region 6

Ballots For OPEA Elections Will Be Mailed Soon

The Oklahoma Public Employees Association's 2011 elections will be held during the first two weeks of August, with contests in Region 3 (north central Oklahoma) and Region 5 (the metropolitan Oklahoma City area).

In Regions 1, 7, 9 and 11, only one candidate filed. The following OPEA Board members have been re-elected for a term beginning Jan. 1, 2012: Region 1: Mike Rogers - Department of Corrections; Region 7: Rita Heath - Department of Transportation; Region 9: David McCollaum - Grand River Dam Authority; Region 11:

Jess Callahan - Department of Human Services; Retiree West: Cheryl Horsley - retired from Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

Ballots will be mailed July 29, and the election closing date will be Aug. 15. OPEA members in Regions 3 and 5 can vote by Internet or phone, using the code on the ballot.

As in the past, the election will be conducted by VR Election Services. If you live in Region 3 or 5 and have not received a ballot by Aug. 5, call VR Election Services at (800) 218-4026.

The Candidates

Region 3



Jann Ensz

Department of Human Services/Northern Oklahoma Resource Center

I graduated from Ringwood High School in 1969 and NWSU in 1973 with a BA. I taught school three years before coming to work

at DHS in 1976 as a secretary/central records supervisor.

I have been a member of OPEA since the early 1980s. I've served as chapter secretary/treasurer, DHS Council communications liaison and for two years as Region 3 director. I have been a Board member for five years. I've attended all Lobby Days for OPEA.

I've served as the Platform Committee chair. I'm currently serving as the Policies/Procedure Manual chair. I also participated on various other committees.

I feel these activities/training prepared me for the duties to serve as your Region 3 director. The region is now functioning, but there's a lot that needs to be done, and I would like to be able to finish what I

helped start.

My priorities will be to maintain current benefits during difficult budget times, return to the rule of 80, fight to maintain jobs, insurance and retirement benefits, establish more Region 3 chapters and get members to be active.

If elected, I will keep the region informed of important issues and will work hard to represent you.

I would appreciate your vote.



Jamie Beck

Department of Human Services - Child Welfare

Hometown: Ponca City

Employment location: OKDHS Area I Resource Unit (Foster Care) serving Kay, Noble, Pawnee, Payne and Logan Counties

Position: Child Welfare supervisor

Years of state service: Eight years

Background

Born and raised in Ponca City, Okla.; graduated from Tulsa University with a BA in Psychology; received a master's degree in Family Development and Education from Friends University; currently a candidate in the Certified Public Manager Program through the Office of Personnel Management.

OPEA Experience

OPEA member for eight years; initiated the Osage County chapter and served as chapter president; revitalized the Kay County chapter and currently serving as the chapter president; also serving as the Region 3 vice president.

Priorities

- ✘ Increasing membership and participation in OPEA for a more influential voice;
- ✘ Maintaining current compensation and positions during times of budget shortfalls;
- ✘ Protecting current benefit packages for employees;
- ✘ Protection of state employee managed programs vs. privatized services.

Region 5



Carrie Croy

Department of Corrections - Probation and Parole

Background

- ✘ DOC, Probation and Parole Officer III;
- ✘ Eight years of state service;
- ✘ Navy veteran;

✘ BA from UCO in Criminal Justice;

✘ MS from Capella University in Human Services;

✘ 2010 Employee of the Year for Department of Corrections-Community Corrections.

OPEA Experience

✘ Member for eight years;

✘ OPEA Board of Directors since 2008;

✘ One term as Board secretary;

✘ Vice chair of Public Safety chapter (Oklahoma City).

Priorities

Obtaining market pay for state employees; educating state employees about the benefits of OPEA and what we can do as a united group; working toward the rule of 80 for all state employees; maintaining our current benefits as state employees; and working against privatization in state agencies.

After serving for 10 years in the U.S. Navy and now as a state employee for the past eight years, I feel all public servants deserve fair and equitable pay and benefits, as well as respect for the jobs they perform. This past legislative session we were able to maintain some of our benefits, but it is an ongoing fight. Through unity we can accomplish more in the future to prove how vital state employees are to the growth and future of Oklahoma.



Lisa Shaw

Department of Human Services - Child Welfare

Background

✘ Resident of Oklahoma City;

✘ Lived in Oklahoma almost all my life;

✘ Graduated from Madill High

School in Madill, Okla.;

✘ Associates degree in Child Development from Murray State College in Tishomingo, Okla.;

✘ Bachelor's degree from University of Central Oklahoma in Elementary Education;

✘ Employed with the Department of Human Services - Child Welfare permanency worker.

OPEA Experience

Currently serving as treasurer of my chapter for OPEA in Midwest City, Okla.

Priorities

- ✘ Educate legislators regarding the needs for state employees, such as market pay for state employees and stopping privatization of state agencies;
- ✘ Increasing membership opportunities by educating all who are not already members about how OPEA is impacting their workforce.

I will dedicate this position to you, the people of OPEA, and be your ear and voice to share your wants, needs and concerns.



Sammy D. Nye

Department of Rehabilitation Services - Disability Determination Division

Background

✘ Native Oklahoman - born in Ada;

✘ Resides in Midwest City;

✘ U.S. Army veteran;

✘ University of Oklahoma graduate;

(Continued on page 14)

Region 5

Continued from page 13)

✘ 17+ years of state service:

- CompSource (1993);
- Department of Corrections (1995) - CLEET certified peace officer;
- Department of Rehabilitation Services/
- Disability Determination Division, administrative programs officer and certified procurement officer (since 2000).

OPEA Experience

I am an active OPEA member and the top recruiter for 2010. I am a charter member of the Disability Determination chapter, where I currently serve as vice president.

Priorities

- ✘ Growing Region 5 and statewide membership by educating workers about the important role OPEA plays on behalf of state employees;
- ✘ Defending the total compensation package for state employees;
- ✘ Working for fair pay to help workers maintain their buying power in an ever-increasing market;
- ✘ Stopping privatization of state jobs;
- ✘ Educating lawmakers about the sense of pride we take in serving our state.

Closing Remarks

Elect me as Region 5 director and let us work to grow OPEA! Educating the employees and lawmakers alike can foster a friendlier relationship between the two. Working together, we can create a greater Oklahoma for all who live, serve and retire here.



Tricia Naifeh-Parker

Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board - Retiree Specialist
 ✘ Resides in Oklahoma City;
 ✘ Employed at the State Insurance Board as a member service rep/retiree specialist;
 ✘ 10 years of state service.

Background

- ✘ Born in Tulsa, Okla.;
- ✘ Attended Bishop Kelley High School in Tulsa but graduated from Drumright High School;
- ✘ Graduated from Oklahoma State University with a BS degree in Advertising and Public Relations;
- ✘ Married with two children.

OPEA Experience

- ✘ Member for 10 years;
- ✘ OPEA Board for three-and-a-half years;
- ✘ Two terms as OPEA secretary;
- ✘ One term as OPEA treasurer.

Priorities and Closing Remarks

- ✘ If elected, I will make job security my top priority for all state employees;
- ✘ I will continue working to retain our benefits and oppose all privatization efforts;
- ✘ I will work to make sure all state employees are well-represented.



Thomas McDonald

Department of Human Services - Data Services Division

Let me introduce myself. I am Thomas McDonald and I am running for Region 5 Director of OPEA. I have been a state employee for 11-and-a-half years and a member of OPEA for the same amount of time. I have previously served as chapter president, agency council director and treasurer of OPEA. When I was serving on the Board previously, I felt that I didn't just represent the Council; I represented every OPEA member and state employee. It was my job to get their voice heard.

Campaign Statement

If elected Region 5 director, I promise to listen to the concerns of every state employee and to represent them to the best of my ability. It is their voice that I

take to the Capitol. I believe my experience as having previously served on the Board of OPEA will give me the knowledge to help the Association move forward and represent state employees to the fullest.

Ismat Esrar



Department of Environmental Quality - Senior Environmental Engineer

Background

- ✘ Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering;
- ✘ Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning;
- ✘ Master's degree in Urban Management;
- ✘ State employee since May 2003.

Top Priorities

- ✘ To achieve market pay and annual cost-of-living pay adjustments;
- ✘ To obtain adequate benefit allowance;
- ✘ To help elect legislators who support state employees;
- ✘ To educate state employees about the benefits of OPEA.

My Vision for the Future

State employees have been providing quality critical services to Oklahoma's citizens, yet our benefit allowance and compensation are under attack. Longevity pay has been criticized in the newspaper. It is now time to join together and work hard to protect our benefits.

I am a life-long activist working for positive changes. I have been active in OPEA activities. I have gone to the Capitol each year on OPEA Day to talk to our legislators. I have taken part in OPEA Platform meetings and conferences.

If elected, I will work tirelessly for fairness in salary and benefits for all state employees. I believe in teamwork, and together we will take OPEA to new levels. I will never move away from these goals, and I respectfully ask for your vote.

OPEA's Board Of Directors



Connie Stockton
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Working For You!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

New Members - The following people recently chose to get involved by joining the Oklahoma Public Employees Association.

Kenneth Abt	Elizabeth George	Whitnee Myles
Cliff Aldridge	Cheryl Gibbon	Robert Nusz
Laney Anderson	Laurie Gilliland	Sarah O'Brien-Parent
Beverly Baker	Emiline Goodner	Michael O'Bryan
Jaimie Barnett	Virginia Gurney	Tylisha Oliver
Michael Basinger	Vickie Guzman	Comfort Oyeniyi
Ann Beadles	Ronda Hall	Angelique Pappin
Michael Beadles	Ivory Hamilton	Ronnie Parris
Natalie Bell	Jan Harper	Tera Pate
NaTasha Broadous	Billie Henry	Gavin Pearson
Alisha Brown	Nikki Henry	Robert Pierce
Heather Brown	April Henson	Carie Pierpoint
Stephanie Bruesch	Dawn Hobbs	Hope Porche
Teri Burke	Michael Hoffpaur	Elsa Ramirez-Ceberg
Mark Cardwell	Sherry Hooker	Bernestine Rentie-McCauley
Missy Carrigan	Nitonjia Ibe	Julie Rohm
Kristi Chavez	Christine Johnson	Steve Rose
Corinna Childress	Sonya Kaiser	Rocky Rosenthal
Pamela Cloud	Micki Kimble	Clayton Russell
Jacquelen Cornwell	Rose King	Sher'Ron Sellers
Wendy Crowder	Melissa Kirby	Elizabeth Sneddon
Karen Davis	Kristina Knutson	Derick Sneed
Robin Davis	Sharon Lechluder	Kelli Sondag
Wanda Dean	Yolanda Lee	Tiffany Stratton
Michael DesLauriers	James Leopard	James Sturgis
Kathy Duncan	Deborah Lovelace	Robin Thomas
Kimberly Dunlap	Sabrina Mackey	Sauretta Tucker
Patricia Edgemon	Rori Matile	Ruth Underkofler
Bobbie Edgington	Mary Mays	Lula Valentine-Hill
Brandi Ellis	Carol McCarn	Brenda Van Scoy
Kathy Evans	Amanda McCaslin	Beverly Walters
Ashley Faulkner	Johnathon McCormick	Aaron Wardwell
Brandon Foster	Frankie McFarland	Katherine Wendell-Davis
Raymond Foull	Candyce McFarlane	Sharon Wesley
Marie Freeman	Kenya Minter	Stephany Wilson
Jarrard Garrett	Paula Morelli	Christopher Wright

15-Year Anniversaries - These OPEA members reached their 15th anniversary with the Association during the past month.

Nina Amason	Carol Hale
Heather Barnwell	Gene Hartman
Jennifer Brown	James Kroth
Mark Brown	Walter McConnell
David Burgess	Larry Meilleur
Cheryl Castillo	Keith Mercer
Linda Christlieb	Claudean Myers
Cathy Douglas	Randy Powell
Dennis Dymek	Virgil Summerfield
Edward Ferrell	Holly Swayze
Alan Froehlich	Jennifer Tamplen
William Graef	Doris Tresemer
Nancy Graham	Stephen Varughese

Who Are You Going To Call?

OPEA members only may call the OPEA office for:

Executive Director
Sterling Zearley



Agency Information
Trish Frazier - Policy and Communications Director



Schedule A Meeting
Haley Blood
Membership Director
Regions 1, 2, 3, 7



Schedule A Meeting
Dustin Green
Membership Representative
Regions 6, 9, 10, 11



Schedule A Meeting
Kenny Meredith
Membership Representative
Regions 4, 5, 8



General Information
Nancy Hughes
Executive Assistant



**General Information -
Joining OPEA**
Rachelle Johnson
Administrative Assistant



**Legal Advocacy Program
Grievance Assistance**
Dixie Jackson
Volunteer Grievance Coordinator



(405) 524-6764 • (800) 880-OPEA (6732)

www.opea.org

13 N.E. 28th St. • Oklahoma City, OK 73105

OPEA Member Spotlight

Name: Mike Christian.

Profession: State representative.

Why did you join OPEA? As a retired state employee, I have known about the OPEA for years. Once elected, I observed firsthand the professionalism of the organization and knew immediately that I should join.

What are your hobbies? Going to the lake with my family and friends.

What is your favorite food? I like a wide variety of things, but Vietnamese is my favorite.


Who is your favorite singer/band? Cross Canadian Ragweed.

Who is your hero? My mom and dad.

What is your advice for OPEA members? Become active in your local chapters and engage your legislators. We work for you.




Mike Christian



Oklahoma Public Employees Association Membership Application

Please return to: OPEA, 13 N.E. 28th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105 or visit www.opea.org.



First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____ Cell Phone _____

Home E-mail _____ Work E-mail _____

Agency _____ Work Location _____ Position _____

Work Location Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Who introduced you to OPEA? _____

Payroll Deduction Authorization

I hereby authorize the state of Oklahoma to deduct from my pay the amount checked below required to purchase dues in the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, subject to my right to revoke this order by written notice to my employer.

Dues Options: Basic - \$15 Bronze - \$20 Silver - \$27 Gold - \$29 Platinum - \$39

Signature _____ SS# _____ Birth Date _____

OPEA's standard dues are \$15 per month. Annual dues: state employees - \$180; retirees - \$60; associates - \$20; corporate affiliates - \$300. Contributions or gifts to OPEA are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, dues payments are deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction. Dues include your annual subscription to *The Advocate* (a \$4 value). Your \$15 monthly dues payment includes a \$2.25 contribution to OPEAPAC. I want \$2.25 per month of my dues to go to OPEAPAC.

Office use only: ___ Amt ___ Proc ___ Tran ___ CC ___ WLC ___ NMP