

# DEQ PLANET

March 2011 • Volume 2

Issue 3

## Message from the Executive Director



As I'm sure you are aware, Oklahoma's 53rd Legislature, 1st Session, 2011 began on February 7. Our first-ever female Governor, the Honorable Mary Fallin, kicked off Session with the State of the State address and rolled out her agenda for helping Oklahoma recover from budget shortfalls, among many other goals.

While I know it can be alarming to read and see stories in the media regarding budget cuts, I urge you to stay focused on the services we provide for Oklahoma. It is an honor to be a civil servant and serve our great state. Our mission statement explains the DEQ's goals of enhancing the quality of life in Oklahoma and protecting the health of the citizens by protecting, preserving and restoring the water, land and air of the state. I am proud of our agency's commitment to these goals and the work we do for our community from onsite inspections to working with communities to help formulate a solution for their environmental issues, and I know that you do as well. Let's keep up the good work!



## Oklahoma Green Schools Conducts Second Year Pilot Program

As a founding member of the Oklahoma Green Schools Committee, DEQ has contributed in many ways to this program, including assembly, storage and distribution of toolkits, an online newsletter, design and printing of a brochure, and a display for events. In its second pilot year, the committee is still working on streamlining the Green Schools Program through input from participating schools.

The Oklahoma Green Schools Program has multiple tracks.

**Track One** is educational and designed to be used in the classroom by conducting Project Learning Tree (PLT) classroom investigations in one or more of five areas: energy, water, waste & recycling, environmental quality, and school site. These student-led, hands-on investigations are downloadable from the PLT website GreenSchools! section at [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org). In addition to the toolkit checkout form, a variety of other resources for assisting with these investigations are available on the Green Schools website, located at [www.okgreenschools.org](http://www.okgreenschools.org). This program is intended to be simple, fun and inspiring. It is voluntary, and there are no costs involved.

**Track Two** utilizes EPA's Energy Star for Schools tool. It is aimed primarily at energy and carbon dioxide reduction in the school, saving money in the process and is often utilized by the school facility manager.

**Track Three**, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for schools, is for schools interested in achieving LEED certification for new schools or schools undergoing major renovation.

Schools completing the first year pilot program now include Deer Creek Middle School, Inola Middle School, Sapulpa Junior High School and Skyline Elementary in Stillwater. These schools have received an Oklahoma Green Schools flag and a free professional energy audit. Beggs Middle School,



Deer Creek Middle School received its flag for participating in the Green Schools Program.

Norman High School and Edmond Memorial High School are expected to complete the requirements soon.

If you know a teacher who might be interested in learning more about the Oklahoma Green Schools Program, please forward this information to them. The committee members would love to help them get started. Registration is available anytime during the school year by visiting <http://www.okgreenschools.org/pages/application.html>.

### Inside...

- Agency Equips Floors with Defibrillator ..... 2*
- Do You Have Radon in Your Home?.....2*
- Toastmasters Offers Opportunity.....2*
- Green Team Helps Students .....3*
- Lunch Presentation About Tree Care .....3*
- Harvesting Rainwater Can Save Money.....3*
- Garden Tip..... 3*
- New Faces Around DEQ.....4*
- Sounds Good.....4*

# Agency Equips Each Floor with an Automated External Defibrillator

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a deadly condition which can happen anytime and anywhere with little or no warning. The good news is that many people suffering from SCA can be helped by lifesaving treatment from an AED or Automated External Defibrillator. These special devices are designed to be used even if bystanders have no special training or first aid experience. This is critical, since every minute lost - even for waiting for emergency services to arrive – can dramatically reduce a victim's likelihood of survival.

DEQ has installed AEDs on all occupied floors of the central office. Most are located close to the floor's first aid kit in or near the handicapped restroom or in the floor's kitchen area. Each is contained in a wall-mounted box, which is unlocked for rapid access.

Anyone can use an AED; once activated, the unit tells you step-by-step, with voice and visual prompts, what to do. Once the unit is switched on, it will direct you to attach the one-piece (z-shaped) electrode to the

victim's chest and then give further step-by-step instructions.

AEDs function by automatically analyzing a victim's heart rhythm for life threatening problems and delivering an electrical shock, known as defibrillation, if such a condition is present.

The decision to shock is automated, but the shock itself requires the operator to press a button to deliver. This is a safety feature which ensures that everyone is safely away from the victim when the shock is delivered. The AED will not allow a shock to be administered unless it is required. If a shock is advised by the unit, it will instruct everyone to stand clear and direct the operator to push the button after everyone is clear. The AED also helps by telling you how to do CPR.



## Do You Have Radon in Your Home?

Have you heard of radon? It is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that comes from the breakdown of uranium inside the earth. The only way to know if there are elevated radon levels inside a home is to test for it.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. EPA estimates that 1 in every 15 homes nationwide has a high radon level at or above the recommended action level of 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. EPA also estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Radon is dispersed in outdoor air, but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such

overwhelming evidence that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

For more information about radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction in Oklahoma, visit [www.deq.state.ok.us/radon](http://www.deq.state.ok.us/radon).



## Toastmasters Group Offers Opportunity to Improve Skills



Community clubs can provide an avenue for networking, building on leadership and communication skills, and making new friends. The Downtown Recyclers Toastmasters Club has been around for several years and has been meeting once a week since 2000. The club was on hiatus for a little while due to

job transfers and retirements. However, the remaining members want to make the club active once again.

Club meetings offer a learn-by-doing workshop. Participants have the opportunity to hone speaking and leadership skills in a friendly environment.

"Toastmasters has provided a great way for me to meet friends and make contacts in different areas of DEQ," said Mike Broderick from the Land Protection Division.

"Toastmasters helped me develop my communications skills in a constructive, friendly, environment, and then I was able to demonstrate these skills practically in the workplace," said Justin Bain from the Administrative Services Division.

For more information, check out [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) or contact Paul Davis at extension 5132 or email [j.paul.davis@deq.ok.gov](mailto:j.paul.davis@deq.ok.gov).

# Green Team Makes Scholarship Donation

The agency's Green Team recently donated \$500 to a scholarship fund for two new degrees offered at the University of Oklahoma. OU created new Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Environmental Sustainability. These degrees bring together instructors from 14 departments and programs at OU.

"The creation of this new program recognizes the fast-changing world we live in with many challenges in resource availability and management as well as economic growth and survival," said Fenton Rood, DEQ Director of Waste Systems Planning. "Education of this new generation of college students is key in continuing to promote and achieve sustainability."

OU's goal is to prepare students to recognize current needs without compromising future generations. The university will begin offering courses in environmental sustainability this year. More information is available at [geography.ou.edu](http://geography.ou.edu).

The Green Team made the donation from the proceeds of the sale of locally roasted organic-fair trade coffee. The Green Team hopes to continue to support academic endeavors of this type through continued donations to this or similar programs.

"The DEQ Green Team hopes its scholarship donation will help students who are committed to improving the environment," said Kelly Dixon, the Land Protection Division Assistant Director.



# Lunch Presentation Features Discussion on Planting and Caring for Trees



A recent brown bag presentation, sponsored by the Green Team, covered urban forestry and included discussion on planting and caring for native trees. Mark Bays, Oklahoma Urban Forestry Coordinator with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, talked about how trees can help improve things such as physical health and real estate property value.

Bays handed out a guide on planting and caring for trees at the presentation. If you were not able to attend or did not get a copy of the guide, visit:

<http://www.okc.gov/roots/PDR.pdf>.

Flyers for future brown bag presentations will be posted on the agency's bulletin boards.

# Harvesting Rainwater Can Help Save Money



One way to save on your water bill this summer, and be an environmental steward is to use a rain barrel to collect and store rainwater from your roof. EPA estimates that lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40 percent of total household water use during the summer. Water stored in a rain barrel can be used to water plants, wash your car, or to top off a swimming pool. According to EPA, a rain barrel will save most homeowners about 1,300 gallons of water during peak months.

Ready-made rain barrels can be

purchased from a number of hardware and garden supply stores or you can make your own. More information on rain barrels is available at <http://www.epa.gov/region3/p2/make-rainbarrel.pdf>.



# Sounds Good...

## Garden-Fresh Farfalle Pasta & Chicken

- 3 cups bow-tie pasta, uncooked
- 1 cup baby carrots, diagonally sliced
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup KRAFT Tuscan House Italian Dressing and Marinade
- 1 can (14 oz.) fat-free reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1/2 cup KRAFT Finely Shredded Italian\* Five Cheese Blend



Cook pasta in large saucepan as directed on package, adding carrots and peas to boiling water the last 3 minutes. Cook and stir chicken in large nonstick skillet 3 to 4 minutes or until no longer pink. Remove from skillet; cover to keep warm. Add onions and dressing to skillet. Cook 5 minutes or until onions are crisp-tender, stirring frequently. Return chicken to skillet. Stir in broth. Bring to boil; simmer on medium-low heat 3 minutes or until chicken is done, stirring occasionally. Drain pasta mixture. Add to skillet with basil; stir. Serve topped with cheese.

*-submitted by Rachel Hudgens*

## Hot Crab Dip

- 1 lb. package cream cheese
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 dashes hot red pepper sauce

Blend and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve with crackers.



*-submitted by Jeanette Nance*

### Newsletter Notes

This edition and future editions of the DEQ Planet are only available electronically. This is an effort to be a good steward of the environment.

It isn't too early to start thinking of stories for the next edition. Please submit stories to Skylar McElhaney at [skylar.mcelhaney@deq.ok.gov](mailto:skylar.mcelhaney@deq.ok.gov) no later than May 13, 2011.

### New Faces around DEQ Full-time

Administrative Services  
Madison Carey  
Tyler Earman  
Grant Thompson

Air Quality  
Kathryn Burke  
Camas Frey

Customer Services  
Cody Danielson

ECLS  
Corey Friend  
Tracie Verkler

Executive Director's Office  
Jeanette Nance

Land Protection  
Rachel Francks  
Jennifer McAllister  
Elizabeth McCaskill  
Emily Rimmel

Water Quality  
Hebret Bokhru

### Temporary

Administrative Services  
Tad Alford  
Jimmy Baker-Lattie  
Thomas Connelly  
Luke Marshall  
Indu Nagarajan  
John Stoner

Air Quality  
Brooke Clay

ECLS  
Lora Pryor

Land Protection  
Alisha Grayson  
Savannah Smith