



Upcoming Events:

- Feb. 7-9, 2024—
Basic Code Class
- Feb. 29/March 1,
2024—Spring Conf.
- April 18/19, 2024—
Prop. Maint. Class



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December 2023

OCEA has a new Logo and here it is—

A big Thank You to Brian Henry (1st VP) and Travis Guess (President) for all of their hard work in creating this new logo. There were many emails back and forth between all of the Board members to make final decisions and this is what we all agreed upon. You will start to see this on everything from now on. It may take us a bit to switch everything over. Take a moment to thank Brian and Travis for their hard work on this.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU FROM YOUR OCEA BOARD

Enjoy these photo's taken in Chickasha during our December Board meeting



From your President—Travis Guess, City of Prague

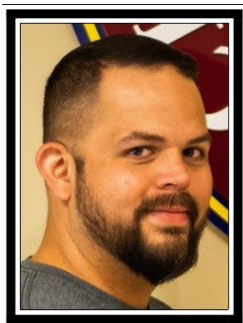


Christmas is almost here!!!! This is a time to reflect and rest, to set the pressures of our job aside, and spend time with those we dearly love. I hope everyone has some plan to just rest, recharge, and reset. The board has been extremely busy this year working on many items to move the OCEA in a great and positive direction. I do not want to steal anyone's thunder, they will tell you what they've been doing in their individual reports, but I will say I am very proud to serve with each and everyone one of them and the outstanding achievements we have accomplished so far.

I have received many calls from newer code officers regarding enforcement and the ordinances they have on their books. The results end on an adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code with amendments I provide that I believe are essential to the success of the implementation of the adoption and enforcement. This saves the community thousands of dollars in attorney fees alone when it comes to creating other ordinances that may not hold up in litigation. If you have not made the IPMC a part of the way you can clean up your community and are interested, please reach out to me and I will get you started.

In the meantime I look forward to seeing you at the Spring conference. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!!!

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



Season's greetings, Christmas time is here!!! I know this because my kids will not stop bringing it up. I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and enjoys time with the family.

I would like to share a few things we have been working on behind the scenes. The OCEA has its first challenge coin! I would like to give a shout out to our board members for their input when putting this together. We hope you all enjoy it as much as we all did in designing it for you all. They will be on sale at the upcoming code classes and spring conference. We also have done a redesign of the OCEA logo and you should see that rolling out in the near future. I would also like to thank Tyson Davis with the City of Perry for his help with this project.

I would also like to remind anyone needing help that we have a ride along program for anyone needing help in how to implement the things you learned in the basic code or property maintenance classes. Above all else please remember the OCEA board is here to serve and represent all of the members. If you have any questions, please reach out to any of us.

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

Negativity Bias

Most of us have heard the saying “bad news travels fast” but, have you ever stopped to think why? It is caused by how our brain processes information. Our brain is hard wired to protect our self from harm. This function of our brain is a result of negativity bias. Here is a short video from licensed marriage and family therapist Emma McAdam that will help explain negativity bias in more detail: (Press Ctrl + link) [Emma McAdam explains negativity bias](#)

You are probably thinking, “What does that have to do with code enforcement”? Consider for a moment the cases code enforcement are involved in on a daily basis. Code Enforcement Officers deal with many situations that are very stressful. The goal for code enforcement is to protect the health and safety of the public. This puts code Enforcement officers directly in the middle of situations where one or more individuals are dealing with a mental health event. When code enforcement is called out to a property on a complaint, it can turn out to be the worst day of the occupant’s life. If your municipality condemns residents for not having tempered water and it results in having the occupant evicted or trespassed then you are going to be involved in a negative experience.

All these negative experiences can stack up in our brain due to negativity bias. This affects us whether we realize it or not and it can cause us to experience health issues as a result. So, how do we cope with these issues? One way is to change what we focus our attention on. Emma McAdam’s [Therapy in a Nutshell](#) channel is a great source to help as well as Dr. Rick Hanson’s [3 easy steps to “take in the good”](#). We see people having trouble with issues such as hoarding and homelessness that can cause our own mental health to decline. Mental health comes with a stigma that can prevent us from seeking help taking care of our own mental health.

Take a few moments to focus on yourself and take care out there.

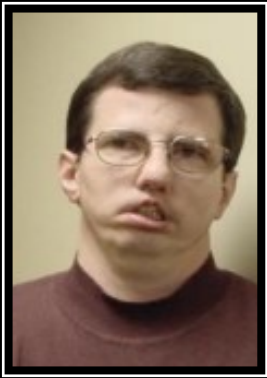


From your 3rd VP—Wayne McCasland, City of Comanche

Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!



From your Treasurer—Andy Templeton, City of Sand Spring



Your OCEA treasurer wishes you the best in 2024. I am pleased to report our organization is doing very well financially. I hope to see many of you at the spring conference in late February and at the AACE conference in October. You will find AACE to be one of the best weeks of your professional life. Most of you know I regularly teach the code class along with some other wonderful folks in our organization. I always tell students that I learn something from each class. Reading the statutes each time may seem a little boring, but I have found numerous things in there that help us do our jobs better. Those tidbits get shared with subsequent classes.

As students, you can often be the best teachers. Years ago, I would read the statute about notices of liens for weed and trash abatements. I would usually follow the reading by saying it is an optional thing and we really don't have to do it. Someone rightly took me to task on that, and the notice of lien quickly became a standard part of our abatement process. It is there for your city's protection – so use it! In a more recent time, I was proudly displaying a photo of a car's VIN plate inside the driver's side door that I had taken while initially serving a tow notice. Someone pointed out to me that I had violated the Fourth Amendment for search and seizure. I had not given due process. Point well taken – and I do not do that anymore!

My fellow instructors are also good teachers for me. When the topic of drained and abandoned swimming pools came up, one mentioned that his city fences around it to mitigate the danger of people falling in a deep hole. I have had two cases this summer where that tip has come in very handy. We learn constantly from each other, and classes and conferences are citadels of learning. A great opportunity beckons in 2024 for you to grow yourself while also having fun and meeting people from across the state and nation who do exactly what you do. We are all in this code enforcement thing together!

From your Secretary—Janita Hatley, City of Norman

I cannot believe we are at the end of 2023 now! OCEA has been hard at work with trying to update and improve our processes. From now on, ALL of our class and conference registrations are strictly online. We will no longer be accepting scanned, faxed or emailed registration forms. You may have noticed they have been removed from our website. We will have an online link to each class/event that OML will provide for us. If you are ever having trouble registering, please reach out to me or to Sarah/Jenny at OML for assistance. We are also implementing a 7-day Cancellation Policy for all of our classes and conferences. It has become difficult to plan and pay for students/food, etc. when we don't have an accurate head count. So, if you register for one of our events and you need to cancel or reschedule, you need to make sure and do so before the 7-day deadline prior to the event, or you will be out the registration fee anyway.



The Spring Conf info and registration link will be sent out right after the first of the year. February 29th and March 1st are the dates, so plan to head to Midwest City at the Reed Center/Delta Hotel. We are bringing in Mitch Hammes, from Colorado Springs, CO for the entire first day of training. We also had a great suggestion from one of our OCEA Conference Committee members for a class, so on Friday, March 1st, we will have a Q&A session but you will be able to fill out a card on the first day of the conference with a question that we will include during the session the following day. Oh, and Travis our President has selected a Rodeo Theme for the Banquet, so get your boots, hats and bandana's ready. Candidate submission forms will be sent out soon for the open OCEA Board positions which are Sgt-at-Arms, 3rd VP and 1st VP. The election will be held during the Business Meeting on Feb. 29th. There will be a few Scholarship opportunities also.

Remember that we are hosting the 35th Annual AACE Conf in OKC on Oct 22nd-24th. Plan to attend! Keep up the great work in your Communities and never hesitate to contact me with any questions! Sincerely, Janita

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



Hello friends,

Merry Christmas! How is the year nearly over already? Today I wanted to tell you guys about two new programs in Chickasha: our Voluntary Demolition program and Chickasha Cares. First, for open code cases on dilapidated properties, qualifying property owners can reach out to us and sign a contract to have our Public Works Department demolish and clean up the property. We charge \$1 per square foot, plus the administration fee. Property owners are given six months to pay the City.

Through this program, we have removed 10 unsafe structures! Next, Chickasha Cares is a resource supply share program that we use to help property owners get their properties into compliance. We have many builders in Chickasha who have extra supplies, including shingles, paint and OSB board that they donate. As of today, we have helped six property owners and passed out more than 100 gallons of paint. Recently, a bank purchased a building, and they even donated the windows out of that property to our program! I would love to share more about either of our new programs if you are interested in implementing something similar in your community.

As we look toward 2024, I am excited to be working with Wayne McCasland to help smaller communities implement Code Enforcement. I believe this will be beneficial for our entire state! Great things are happening. We are working hard to make changes to Code Enforcement and make things easier for all of us. I am looking forward to an exciting 2024! I hope you all have a Merry Christmas!

Respectfully,
Jessica Green

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



Fellow Members and Colleagues,

Well, it is that time of year again. The weather is getting colder and the sun is setting earlier, but thankfully only until Dec 21st. We can anticipate being indoors or in our vehicles a lot more; feeling confined and closed in, until we get back to those spring days. Winter is a time that all of us need to be more attuned to our mental well-being. We deal with a lot on a day-to-day basis throughout the year, but in the winter, it can be even tougher to maintain. Please take care of yourself and check on your loved ones throughout this season.

On a brighter note, we now have an author for our proposed legislative changes to penalties for assault and battery against code enforcement officers. Please be on the lookout for upcoming emails about this legislation, and thanks to the Board for your hard work on this subject.

If at any time you have questions or feel yourself just needing to vent give us a call! We are all one big code family and we have to look out for each other.

I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I pray you all have a blessed New Year! Thank you for all you do to keep your communities safe and beautiful! Once again, it is an honor to serve this membership and I appreciate you all.

Shawn “Maverick” Fritsche

OCEA President Emeritus



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Founded in 1994, the Oklahoma Code Enforcement Association is dedicated to the study and advancement of Code Enforcement activities at the local, county and state levels. Its membership represents both large cities and small towns that have an interest in enhancing neighborhood and community health, safety, welfare and aesthetics.

Like us on Facebook



Job Openings in Oklahoma

Tulsa has 4 openings for Neighborhood Inspector— Click here for more info -

www.cityoftulsa.org/jobs

Do you have any job opening you'd like to share? Please send to Janita Hatley and we can post them on our website and share with the Members.

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

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OMAG

Tidbits from Janita:

Please send me photos, funny or interesting stories from some case that you've worked, or a Before/After from a case that you've worked and I will add them to the newsletter. Our members would really enjoy seeing things from fellow OCEA members across the State.

You can email your newsletter submissions to me at Janita.hatley@normanok.gov and you can call me at (405)623-8009 or in my office at (405) 366-5318.

Thankful for our Partners/Friends



OMAG



AACE

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CODE ENFORCEMENT

**OKLAHOMA
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