

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

Oklahoma Water Resources Board

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Here a simple statement of the adopted mission of the agency should be provided, along with the entity or person(s) who adopted the mission statement and when it was adopted.

To enhance the quality of life for Oklahomans by managing, protecting and improving the state's water resources to ensure clean, safe, and reliable water supplies, a strong economy, and a healthy environment.

The agency adopted the current mission statement (that was just a slightly modified version of previous mission statements) in August of 2010.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Here the name, title and contact information for the lead administrative person should be listed.

**J.D. Strong, Executive Director
405.530.8800
JD.Strong@owrb.ok.gov**

GOVERNANCE:

Here a brief description of the agency's governance structure should be provided. Is the agency headed by a Governor appointee? **No**. An appointee of an independent board? **Yes**. Who selects the board, **the Governor** and who are the current members of the board.

Board information can be found here:

<http://www.owrb.ok.gov/about/management/board.php>

Does the Board have any committees or subgroups? If so, please provide a detailed listing of the subgroups and their areas of focus.

Please see attached information on 2013-2014 OWRB Ad Hoc Committees. The Committee assignments are reviewed by the Chairman following Board Officer elections each June.



Final
CommitteesAdHoc 20

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please provide copies of the minutes for any Commission/Board meetings the agency has had since July 1, 2010 in electronic format (Only in PDF format) Is there an attendance policy for board members/commissioners? If so, is it being followed? **Copies of the meeting minutes can be found here:**

<http://www.owrb.ok.gov/news/meetings/board/board-mtgs.php>

There is no formal policy for attendance.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Please provide a listing of all government modernization efforts undertaken by the agency in the last twelve months. Additionally, please provide any authorizing statutory changes that prompted the modernization efforts and whether those efforts have led to cost savings or additional cost burden.

Document Imaging Initiative

The OWRB's document imaging program was initiated in the wake of the 1995 Murrah Federal Building bombing that resulted not only in significant damage to the agency itself but also to its significant volume of physical records and data. This comprehensive imaging initiative continues today, greatly enhancing staff productivity through improved access to critical information, streamlining workflow, and significant savings of both time and money. Imaging also helps the agency provide the public with unprecedented access to current and archived agency records and documents through the OWRB's website.

To date, the OWRB has imaged all documents and records associated with the state Dam Safety Program and significant progress has been made on those assisted with water rights/use administration, a core agency function. The imaging system implemented in the OWRB's Financial Assistance Division is nears completion, establishing a near paperless workflow for staff and resulting in much more efficient exchange of information among staff, enhanced service to loan and grant customers, and improved transparency for funding agencies, auditors, and inspectors.

Oklahoma Advantages Assessment and Scoring for Infrastructure Solutions (OASIS) System

The OWRB and partners have developed the Oklahoma Advantages Assessment and Scoring for Infrastructure Solutions (OASIS) system, a computer-based model that quantifies the social, economic and environmental benefits of a community's water and wastewater infrastructure investments. OASIS synthesizes comprehensive information on individual communities to demonstrate and measure sustainability benefits of Oklahoma water and wastewater systems, assisting them in making wiser choices regarding the services that they provide to Oklahoma citizens.

Streamlining Applications for Financial Assistance

In a continuing effort to simplify the loan process, the OWRB has streamlined its applications for water and wastewater project financial assistance. Systems applying for loans for both water and wastewater infrastructure are now required to submit only one application covering both projects. Soon, all financial assistance forms will be available electronically through the OWRB's website.

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Infrastructure Financing Software (IFS)

The Financial Assistance Division is implementing multiple enhancements to its Infrastructure Financing Software (IFS), which tracks the agency's complex funding system, including more than \$3 billion in approved projects to date. The enhancements include a variety of reports allowing more timely and accurate programmatic and financial data to OWRB management, funding agencies, legislators, and the public. Additionally, IFS has been integrated with OWRB's map viewer to allow the public immediate access to details on past agency-funded projects.

Online Water Use Permit Approval System

In response to the recent exponential increase in oil/gas production in Oklahoma and to meet the unique needs of the state's water user community, the OWRB has developed an online application to expedite temporary water use permits for oil/gas drilling. Through this application, developed in close cooperation with Oklahoma's oil and gas industry, staff are capable of processing permits within one day, thus maximizing statewide energy production and further strengthening Oklahoma's economy.

The OWRB has also initiated a companion online application that significantly reduce the time and effort required by Oklahoma's water rights holders to report annual water usage, which is required by state law. This initiative will also reduce or eliminate associated mailing costs.

Online Mapping Tool

The OWRB's Geographic Information System (GIS) department continues to advance its online mapping tools—including, to date, a dozen customized map viewers—that allow customers to easily view the agency's wealth of state water resource information through a graphical interface as well as manipulate associated data for countless individual purposes. For example, oil and gas companies can utilize this convenient tool to locate potential sources of water as well as local water right holders from whom they might purchase or lease rights. This data is updated regularly to reflect the consistently evolving nature of Oklahoma's water resources and its many uses.

Individual viewers have been developed to view information on state dams, floodplains, groundwater wells and levels, water rights, ongoing drought, lake levels and streamflow conditions, public water and wastewater systems, water quality standards, agency loans and grants for water/wastewater projects, lake recreational opportunities, and forecasted water demands. This year, viewer capabilities were expanded to allow access through various internet platforms and mobile devices.

Fieldwork

The OWRB continues to leverage technology to coordinate, refine and reduce fieldwork activities, and to absolutely reduce travel costs associated with dam and floodplain management inspections, complaint response, geo-location of dam sites and water wells, and other required tasks. In 2013, the agency deployed tablet computers and applications

to improve communications among staff and the main office, navigation, effectiveness in the field, and overall customer response.

Water Quality Database

To house the agency's water quality data and facilitate the use of that data, including the anticipated collection of millions of data points over the coming years as a result of the agency's revitalized monitoring programs, the OWRB is creating an entirely new database. Information housed in the database will be crucial to development of water quality standards, determining pollution remedies for surface and groundwater sources (including public water supplies), and in providing long-term trends of water use and availability.

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste? Are there efforts that have been successful which you believe could serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to keep costs minimal?

- 1) We made an effort to seek out on-line training courses for staff which reduced costs and time commitments. We have also made an effort to seek out free or low cost technical training opportunities provided by federal entities and trade associations, and non-profits.
- 2) Seek out opportunities to provide information and training to the public and to other related state and federal agencies through free websites, newsletters, conference presentations and face-to-face meetings. Examples include writing articles and announcements for the Oklahoma Municipal League and Oklahoma Rural Water Association newsletters and direct emails to water suppliers or bringing state and federal infrastructure financing agencies together for a training on water rights to help them make good lending decisions.
- 3) Consolidated document imaging project between agency divisions to improve efficiency and minimize equipment and office space requirements.
- 4) Cooperating with the Bureau of Reclamation to tap into federal funding to maximize the Upper Washita River study.
- 5) Contracted with state Attorney General's office to conduct hearings to expedite water rights application processing while avoiding the hiring of additional full time staff attorneys.
- 6) Out sourced a portion of statutorily required groundwater basin yield studies and stream water availability studies to expedite completion according to Oklahoma Water Plan "Priority Recommendation" and leverage state funds with available federal funds.
- 7) Utilize Carl Albert Executive Fellow and project indefinite positions to hire and train scientists and engineers and cross train employees to build depth and offset the loss of scientists to oil and gas industry.
- 8) Launched an initiative to provide dam breach analyses to communities with dams listed as "high hazard" to assist them in preparing state-required emergency action plans.

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CORE MISSION:

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? **NONE**
Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? **NO** Are there services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere? **NO**

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency? **NO**