



Board of Directors Regular Meeting

March 4, 2022

MEETING BRIEFING

The SODA Board of Directors met for its regular February meeting on March 4, 2022 at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. The meeting was delayed for a week due to winter weather conditions on the scheduled date of February 25, 2022.

SODA Conference and Disaster Operations Center

The Board of Directors approved building design plans for the new SODA Conference and Disaster Operations Center. The 2,200 sq. ft. facility will be constructed as an extension of the north end of the existing SODA office building. (see attachments)

SODA Holidays for 2022

The Board of Directors approved adding the Juneteenth National Independence Day holiday to the schedule of holidays on which the SODA offices will be closed. For 2022 Juneteenth holiday, which is June 19th, will be celebrated on Monday, June 20.

SCORTPO Planning Work Program

The Board of Directors approved the annual Planning Work Program (PWP) submitted by the SCORTPO Policy Board. The PWP is an annual report that is submitted to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to identify the tasks SCORTPO plans to accomplish during the succeeding year.

Re-employment of Executive Director

The Board of Directors approved retaining Steve Mills as the Executive Director of SODA.

Legislative Priorities

SODA along with the other Oklahoma Councils of Governments (COGs) are advocating for a substantial increase to REAP to increase funding opportunities for small communities, towns, counties and other organizations serving populations under 7,000 that have limited access to state and federal funding programs. SODA is also advocating for Rural Fire Coordination to be funded at \$75,000 per COG and Substate Planning to be funded at \$75,000 per COG. (see attachments)

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SODA Website - www.soda-ok.org

Visit the SODA website for more information about SODA programs and services. To view demographic data about your county or community, click on [Dashboard](#).



SODA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR NAME

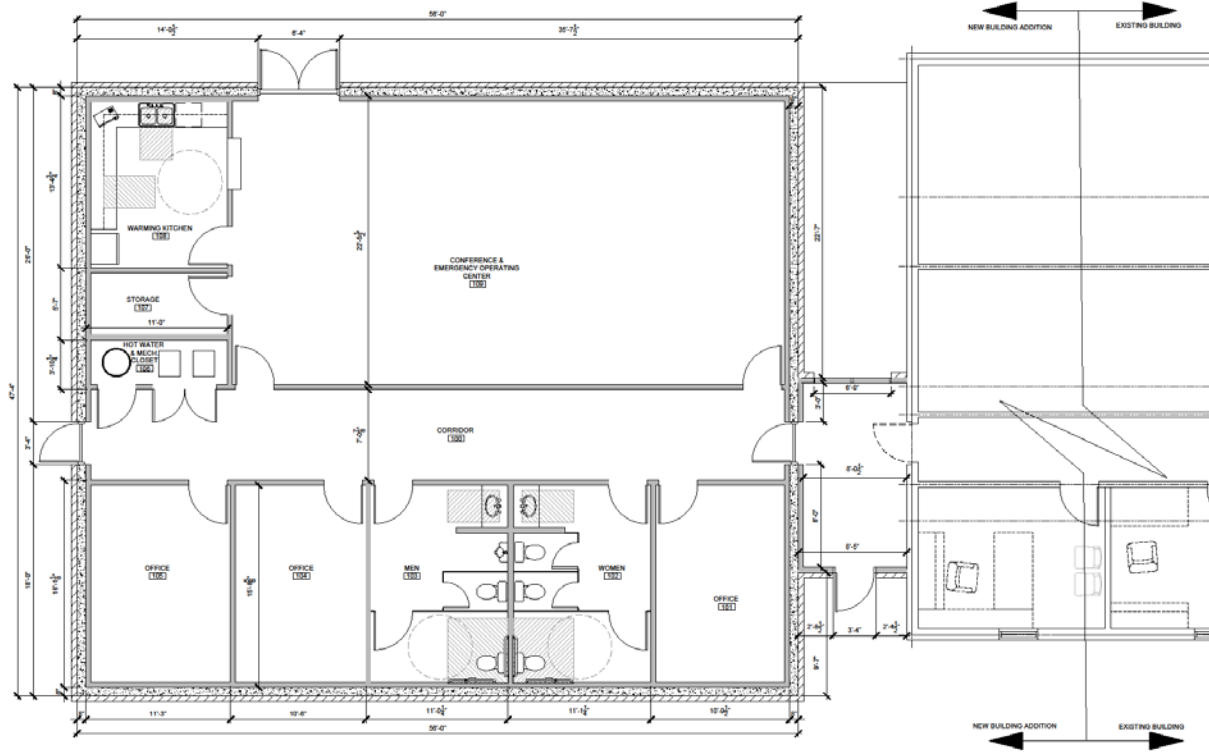
Sammie Adams
Gary Ayers
Scott Chaney
Cacy Cribbs
Johnnie Crutchfield
Marvin Dale
John Dean (Secretary/Treasurer)
Danny Delay
James Eldridge
Rick Ellis
James Fullingim
Andy Holland
Darrell Hudson
Linda Hyman (Past President)
Sally Jantz
Nick Lee
Kristi McElroy (Vice President)
Joe David McReynolds (President)
Don "Salty" Melton
Rebecca Niernberger
Ian O'Neal
Jay Perry
John Redman
Gary Starns
Bob Stick
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

AFFILIATION

Bryan Co. Conservation District
Garvin County
City of Marietta
Johnston County
Arbuckle Conservation District
Atoka County
City of Durant
City of Atoka
City of Ada
Coal Co. Conservation District
City of Madill
City of Davis
Murray County
Love County
City of Healdton
Coal County
City of Ardmore
Carter County
Marshall County
City of Lindsay
City of Lone Grove
Bryan County
Choctaw Nation
Pontotoc County
Chickasaw Nation
City of Calera
City of Pauls Valley
City of Sulphur
City of Tishomingo

The next SODA Board of Directors meeting is April 22 at 10:00 am at Oak Hill Country Club, Ada, Oklahoma.





NEW EXPANSION TO SODA
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

NEW WALLS AS SHOWN SHADED
DEMOLITION WALLS AS SHOWN DASHED

DATE: _____

SODA EXPANSION
SODA
PROJECT No. _____

OKLAHOMA

DURANT

REVISED

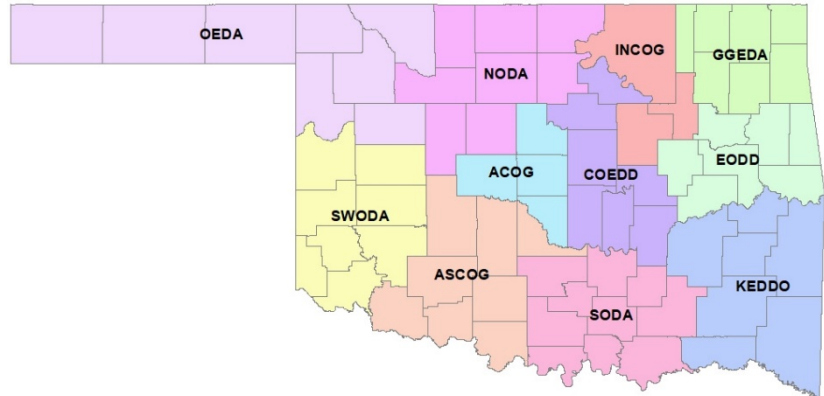
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LARRY K. BLACKLEDGE
ARCHITECT



OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

OARC 2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC) represents the eleven Oklahoma Councils of Government (COGs). The 11 Oklahoma COGs are comprised of over 650 local jurisdictions in Oklahoma.



OARC's purpose is to represent the Oklahoma COGs and advocate for them and their respective member jurisdictions before the legislative and executive branches of the state and federal governments. OARC supports the COGs in fostering regional collaboration among local governments, business interests and community representatives. OARC works to strengthen the resources and capabilities of the COGs to better serve their local member jurisdictions.

OARC Policy Positions

- Maintain the capability to support and assist Oklahoma's 800+ rural fire departments through Oklahoma's 11 Rural Fire Districts
- Maintain the vibrancy of the rural Oklahoma economy with economic planning and development resources through Oklahoma's 11 Economic Developments Districts
- Continued expansion of the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) program to help grow the local economies for Oklahoma's 500+ small, rural communities each year
- Increased funding for services for Oklahoma's expanding, aging citizenry through Oklahoma's 10 Area Agencies on Aging

Legislative Priorities

Rural Fire Defense Program

The Rural Fire Defense Program supports and equips rural fire departments in protecting lives and property of rural Oklahomans. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) contracts through OARC for the COGs to employ a Rural Fire Coordinator. Coordinators annually certify approximately 875 fire departments across Oklahoma for state operational funding. Rural Fire Defense Coordinators assist rural fire departments with training, grant writing, inventory and equipment support and maintaining or improving Insurance Service Organization (ISO) ratings. State funding for the Rural Fire Defense program has declined over the last decade from about \$75,000 per COG to \$61,000. Program costs now average \$90,000 per year and the COGs must absorb the deficits. Increasing state funding to reduce the funding gap is essential to ensure public safety and affordable insurance rates in rural Oklahoma.

Recommend: Increase Rural Fire Coordinator Contracts to \$90,000 per all 11 Oklahoma COGs and make it a line item in the State budget through the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture.

Fiscal Impact: Nominal (\$380,000 above current allocation of \$610,000)

State Support of COGs

Substate planning funding through the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) allows COGs to leverage local funds to help COGs provide matching funds for federal and state grant programs through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Title III Older Americans Act to supplement local resources. Substate funding has declined by 86% over the last decade from \$50,000 to its current level of \$8,000.

Recommend: Increase Substate planning funding to \$75,000 per all 11 Oklahoma COGs and make it a line-item in the State budget through the Oklahoma Dept. of Commerce.

Fiscal Impact: Nominal (\$737,000 above current allocation of \$88,000)

Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP)

REAP provides grants to small communities, towns, counties and other organizations serving populations under 7,000 that have little or no funding capabilities. REAP grants require no match, which is a necessity for small communities and organizations. There are currently 538 municipalities in Oklahoma under 7,000 in population (90% of all Oklahoma municipalities). REAP grants can be used to fund capital improvements for infrastructure and public facilities and road and street construction and equipment for health and public safety. State funding for REAP through the COGs reached a high in the last decade of \$17.9 million. For FY22 the REAP allocation was \$15.5 million. Increasing REAP funding will enable more small, rural communities to receive REAP grants to help sustain their economic viability.

Recommend: Increase REAP funding to \$25-\$30 million, which by statute will distribute equal REAP allocations to all 11 Oklahoma COGs.

Fiscal Impact: Low (\$10+ million above current allocation of \$15.5 million)

Extend Teleconferencing Participation for Open Meetings

As Oklahoma communities persist in the “new normal” and utilize technology available statewide, local governing boards need to be freed up to continue to conduct necessary business without putting governing board members and the public at risk. Open meeting teleconferencing enables increased participation by governing board members and greater access to and transparency for public meetings.