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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL SERVICES ANNOUNCES INSTALLATION OF
SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING AT THE CAPITOL COMPLEX**

OKLAHOMA CITY - The Department of Central Services (DCS) announced today plans to revamp the Capitol Complex landscape design and maintenance practices. The new master plan is centered on reducing present and future water consumption and maintenance requirements, while restoring the natural look of vegetation familiar to Oklahomans.

"DCS is committed to the use of sustainable landscaping practices and materials around the Capitol Complex to minimize maintenance and resource consumption for years to come," said John Richard, Director of DCS. Richard went on to say, "By decreasing the use of gasoline-powered equipment while reducing water and maintenance costs, DCS is positioning grounds management for future efficiencies."

To further reduce water consumption and maintenance needs, native plant life adapted to the notoriously harsh Oklahoma weather patterns will populate the capitol complex grounds. Selecting perennials as opposed to annuals in beds will decrease labor costs and preservation requirements, while planting 40 acres of wildflowers in vacant lots will significantly reduce mowing frequency. The south Capitol Plaza redesign will feature Shumard oak, cedar elm, and sycamore trees complimented by Canaert junipers, multi-trunk Vitex and drought-resistant Buffalo Grass. Funding for the south Capitol Plaza project was supplemented by a \$25,000 tree grant from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) Beautification Office.

"Taking advantage of a grant opportunity to support the mission of our master plan is a no-lose situation." Richard said. "The specific selection of plant-life is intended to reflect the natural appearance of Oklahoma lands as well as the stewardship of Oklahomans."

DCS plans to phase-in a 'smart' irrigation system throughout the complex to avoid wasteful practices such as applying water during weather events and to account for Evapotranspiration (ET) rates. The California Department of Water Resources defines ET as: *The quantity of water transpired (given off), retained in plant tissues, and evaporated from plant tissues and surrounding soil surfaces.* The new system will also provide real-time data from flow sensors allowing swift response to line breaks or other major leak issues.

DCS Office of Facilities Management (OFM) is managing the projects and expects to begin work in early November and complete the major projects by summer 2011.

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