

## NEWS RELEASE



### Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts

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**March 25, 2014, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Awards Presented During Conservation Day at the Capitol**

The Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) sponsored “Conservation Day at the Capitol” on March 24, 2014. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) cosponsored the event. Several of the state's local conservation districts displayed exhibits at the events along with partner agencies and other organizations.

The exhibits were displayed in the Capitol Rotunda on the fourth floor from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The displays featured the diverse conservation activities across the state addressing local natural resource needs.

Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb welcomed conservation districts at an awards ceremony held in the State Senate Chamber and said “This state would be very different if not for the work you do every day.” He pledged continuing support for the conservation of Oklahoma’s natural resources and quoted President Theodore Roosevelt’s famous line, “There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country.”

OACD president Kim Farber emceed the awards ceremony. Jim Reese, Oklahoma Sec. of Agriculture, Gary O’Neill, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist, Jim Grego, Chairman of the OK Conservation Commission, and representatives of sponsoring organizations presented awards.

Morgan Brothers Farm of Craig County received the Outstanding District Landowner/Cooperator Award, sponsored by the Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma. He was nominated by the Craig County Conservation District. Hal Clark of Cimarron County, on the board of directors of the Cimarron County Conservation District, received the Outstanding District Director Award, sponsored by the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. Nowata County Conservation District received the Outstanding District Award, sponsored by Chesapeake Energy.

Christina Richards, President of Oklahoma Association of Conservation District Employees, presented Jo Callison, district manager of Craig County Conservation District, with the Employee of the Year Award.

Robert Toole, OCC assistant director, emceed as Mark Thomas, executive vice president of the Oklahoma Press Association, joined Sec. Reese and Commissioner Grego in presenting Excellence in Communication awards. Kay County Conservation District received First Place Excellence in Communication. Deer Creek Conservation District received Second Place Excellence in Communication. Caney Valley Conservation District received Excellence in Innovative Communication. Donna Buckner, advertising executive of *The Express Star*, was recognized for Outstanding Support of Conservation by an OPA Member Newspaper. She was nominated by Grady County Conservation District. Tom Muchmore, publisher of the *Ponca City News* was recognized for

Outstanding Continuing Support of Coverage of Conservation. He was nominated by Kay County Conservation District.

Tom Lucas, NRCS public affairs officer, emceed as State Conservationist Gary O'Neill presented awards to NRCS Conservation Partners. Ron Hays, director of Farm Programming for the *Oklahoma Farm Report* and Mike McCormick, executive editor of the *Shawnee News-Star* were honored as media partners. Frank Acker, district manager of Little River Conservation District was presented with a Special Achievement award. Garfield County Conservation District also received a Special Achievement award. David Milam, district technician for Atoka County Conservation District, Iris Imler, programs coordinator for Cimarron County Conservation District, and Judy Johnson, district secretary for Grant County Conservation District were presented with Standing in the Gap awards for bridging the gap between local, state, and federal conservation services. Jimmy Emmons, district director of Dewey County Conservation District was named Conservationist of the Year.

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(Photos from Conservation Day at the Capitol including award presentations are available upon request from [info@conservation.ok.gov](mailto:info@conservation.ok.gov).)