



**SCOTT MEACHAM
OKLAHOMA STATE TREASURER**

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**Governor Declares September
"Oklahoma College Savings Plan Month"**

OKLAHOMA CITY — September is Oklahoma College Savings Plan Month in Oklahoma, Governor Brad Henry and State Treasurer Scott Meacham announced at a news conference Wednesday in the Blue Room of the State Capitol.

The proclamation signed by Henry points out the rising cost of a college education and that student loan debt nationwide has topped \$55 billion.

The two state leaders are drawing attention to the Oklahoma College Savings Plan, the state's 529 plan, so named for its designation in the federal tax code. The college savings plan offers state and federal tax advantages, including an enhanced Oklahoma income tax deduction enacted last session by the legislature.

Effective this year, contributions of up to \$20,000 per married couple and \$10,000 per single taxpayer can be deducted from state taxable income. In addition, the contributions grow free from state and federal taxes.

"This expanded tax deduction is a big win for every Oklahoma family saving for college," Governor Henry said. "These changes should encourage more Oklahomans to establish accounts for their children or increase the contributions they have been making to existing accounts. With rising college expenses, parents need to start saving early, and this program helps them do that."

While serving as a state senator, Henry authored the original legislation that created the Oklahoma College Savings Plan.

Treasurer Meacham, who serves as chairman of the savings plan's board, said he is contributing to his own children's college savings.

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“With four children that will be entering college is just a few, short years, it’s important to me and my wife that we do everything we can to prepare for the cost of their higher education. That’s why we’re saving money for them with the Oklahoma College Savings Plan,” Meacham said.

“The Oklahoma College Savings Plan gives every Oklahoma family the opportunity to save for the costs of college for loved ones. The added benefits are the generous Oklahoma income tax deduction and the fact that the savings grow free from Oklahoma and federal income tax.

“I would encourage every Oklahoma family to take advantage of these tax benefits and open an account today. For current account owners, this is a great time to increase your contributions to get full benefit of the tax break.”

Started in April 2000, the Oklahoma College Savings Plan currently has almost \$140 million in total assets. The current number of accounts has grown to just less than 27,000. An overwhelming 92 percent of account owners live in Oklahoma. The average account balance is more than \$5,000.

Information about the Oklahoma College Savings Plan is available at www.ok4saving.org or by calling 1-877-654-6284. Features like payroll deduction, automatic contribution via a personal checking or savings account, online enrollment, and online account access are available.

Key advantages of an Oklahoma College Savings Plan account include:

State Income Tax Deduction - The OCSP is the only 529 Plan with an Oklahoma income tax deduction. Contributions of up to \$10,000 per taxpayer or \$20,000 for couples filing jointly can be deducted from Oklahoma taxable income.

Tax-Free Growth and Withdrawals - Contributions to an OCSP account grow free from federal and Oklahoma income taxes. Withdrawals used for qualified expenses, including tuition, room and board, are free of both federal and Oklahoma income taxes.

Low Expenses - The annual rate of the asset-based management fees currently range from 0.75 percent to 0.77 percent of average daily net assets, depending on the investment option.

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