



## ODOT receives national award for cleanup efforts

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There have been many great partners in the world: Butch and Sundance, Starsky and Hutch, Batman and Robin, peanut butter and jelly. Now the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and Keep Oklahoma Beautiful can be added to the list of great partners. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation was presented with the National Partner Award at the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Keep America Beautiful Conference Jan. 29 in Washington, D.C.

The Keep America Beautiful and the U. S. Department of Transportation Partner Award is given to state departments of transportation for exemplary contributions and support of Keep America Beautiful and its Great American Cleanup effort. Keep Oklahoma Beautiful nominated ODOT for the award.

The biggest contribution ODOT makes to the effort is logistics. Many sponsors donate items throughout the year such as trash bags, bottled water, plates, cups and other items to Keep Oklahoma Beautiful. Through ODOT's network of field divisions and maintenance yards, those donated materials get to the community groups and volunteers for use in cleanup efforts.

"We move materials donated by many sponsors from our warehouse to our field divisions and our field divisions get the materials to the local maintenance yards. This ensures that every community gets the materials it needs to make the Great American Cleanup of Oklahoma a success," Melody Johnson, ODOT Beautification Coordinator said.

During March, April and May of 2012, Oklahoma's Great American Cleanup effort saw 346 cleanup events held across the state. More than 60,000 volunteers in all 77 counties removed more than 5 million pounds of litter.

More than just highways, streets and roads were cleaned or beautified. Parks, nature trails, playgrounds, shoreline, wetlands and illegal dumpsites were also cleaned. The combined effort of these events has an economic impact for Oklahoma that totals more than \$6 million in money saved or costs avoided by state, county and municipal governments, nearly doubling the 2011 Great American Cleanup effort in Oklahoma, according to Keep Oklahoma Beautiful.

This marks the fourth consecutive year that events were held in all 77 counties in Oklahoma for the Great American Cleanup.

"Getting every county in the state to participate in the event is an ambitious undertaking and Oklahoma is one of the few states that gets statewide representation for this effort. ODOT's partnership with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful has elevated the program leading to greater success which benefits all citizens with a more beautiful Oklahoma," Gail Ederer, Executive Director of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful said.

Pride in McAlester was the standout organization at the 2012 Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Awards Banquet. They earned the Devon Energy Great American Cleanup Achievement Award. Devon Energy is the statewide sponsor and must evaluate each community's contribution. Along with the award, Pride in McAlester received a \$1,000 check, provided by Devon Energy, which they reinvested in further cleanup activities.

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Many other communities had great contributions, as well. The Lawton Enhancement Trust Authority collected more than 100,000 pounds of litter and debris, that's the weight equivalent of a fin whale. Main Street Pauls Valley collected more than 6,000 pounds of aluminum cans for recycling, that's enough aluminum to make 136 four-cylinder engine blocks. Friends of Lake Overholser/Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge cleaned more than 600 miles of nature and walking trails. Main Street Guymon collected 1,000 pounds of clothing for reuse. Keep Broken Arrow Beautiful cleaned and beautified 85 miles of streets, roads and highways.

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**(Editors and News Directors: For more information call the ODOT Media & Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)**





At Monday's meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Executive Director Gail Ederer presented the Keep America Beautiful National Partner Award to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for its partnership with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful and support of the Great American Cleanup in Oklahoma. Pictured left to right are State Maintenance Engineer Kevin Bloss; Gail Ederer; ODOT Beautification Coordinator Melody Johnson; Transportation Commission Chairman Greg Love and ODOT Chief Engineer Gary Evans.



At Monday's meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Executive Director Gail Ederer presented the Keep America Beautiful National Partner Award to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for its partnership with KOB and support of the Great American Cleanup in Oklahoma. Pictured left to right are Former KOB President and ODOT Chief of Media and Public Relations Terri Angier; ODOT State Maintenance Engineer Kevin Bloss; ODOT Beautification Coordinator Melody Johnson; Gail Ederer and Sonny Wilkinson, who was instrumental in recruiting participation from all 77 counties for the Great American Cleanup.