



# Inside

## Page 4

Board Report - July/August

### OMPA MEMBER CITIES

Altus, Blackwell, Comanche, Copan, Cordell, Duncan, Edmond, Eldorado, Fairview, Fort Supply, Frederick, Geary, Goltry, Granite, Hominy, Kingfisher, Laverne, Lexington, Mangum, Manitou, Marlow, Mooreland, Newkirk, Okeene, Olustee, Orlando, Pawhuska, Perry, Ponca City, Pond Creek, Prague, Purcell, Ryan, Spiro, Tecumseh, Tonkawa, Walters, Watonga, Waynoka, Wetumka, Wynnewood, Yale. Also serving Clarksville, Arkansas, Paris, Arkansas, and Electra, Texas.

A member of the American Public Power Association, Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma and Southwestern Power Resources Association.

2701 West I-35 Frontage Road  
Post Office Box 1960  
Edmond, Oklahoma 73083-1960  
Phone: 405-359-2500  
Fax: 405-359-1071  
www.ompa.com

OMPA is a wholesale power company owned by 42 municipal electric utilities. OMPA provides economies of scale in power generation and related services to support community-owned electric utilities. The members of OMPA serve approximately 250,000 Oklahomans. This publication is issued by OMPA as authorized by the OMPA General Manager. 425 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$700. [74 O.S. § 3105(B)]

Happy Retirement!  
Page 3



# outlet

news from your Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority

## Signed Into Law



Gov. Kevin Stitt held a signing ceremony for legislation related to the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority on Aug. 10. He was joined by bill sponsor Sen. James Leewright and OMPA staff. For more, see page 5.

## Phil Johnston to be inducted into HOF

Ponca City Energy General Manager Phil Johnston will be inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame for City and Town Officials, during the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Sept. 15 at the Doubletree Downtown Hotel in Tulsa.



Phil Johnston

inducted.

The event will be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference Banquet for the Oklahoma Municipal League.

Johnston and White will be the 77th – 78th inductees into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since 2001.

Past inductees from Kay County include: Jerry Johnston, former mayor of Braman; John Ramey, former Tonkawa City manager, and Ponca City past and current officials, Gary D. Martin, Homer Nicholson, Marilyn Kay Andrews, Craig Stephenson

El Reno mayor Matt White will also be

Continued on Page 3

# Costs remained higher than normal in power markets throughout the summer

OMPA sent out a communication to its member cities in August, regarding wholesale power prices at the time. Cities could use the communication as a way to update their customers about unusually high market prices throughout the summer.

The customers of member cities would have felt the impact of the high prices on their bills, through the implementation of the Power Cost Adjustment or Fuel Cost Adjustment.

Some of the reasons cited in the communication for power costs this summer were:

- **Fuel.** In May and June of this year, OMPA's system fuel cost averaged about 65 percent higher than the previous two years. Natural gas costs, in particular, have been well above their average, with Henry Hub prices peaking at approximately double what they were the previous April through July.

- **Demand.** The markets in the Southwest Power Pool set all-time records for peak demand multiple times throughout the summer. Those demands force the least efficient generation available to be used on the

grid, resulting in higher prices. OMPA's system energy delivered in May and June was also approximately 17 percent greater than the previous two years.

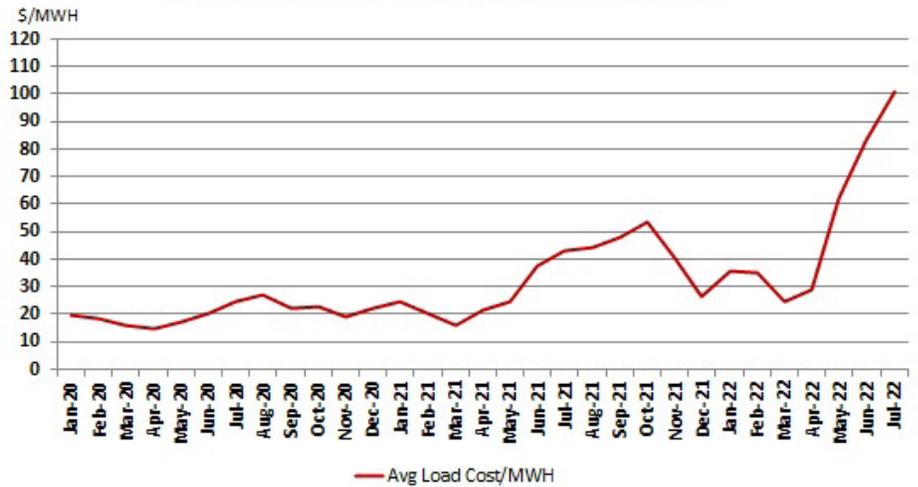
The communication also offered ways for customers to conserve energy to keep costs down, including keeping thermostats at the highest comfortable temperature, making use of ceiling fans, keeping blinds closed during the day

and turning off lights and appliances that are not being used.

Member cities fielding high-bill complaints are encouraged to remember that OMPA offers free residential energy audits that can be used to find ways to make their homes more efficient.

OMPA staff is available to assist in marketing the audits, at the request of members.

Southwest Power Pool Avg Load Cost per MWH



Excludes Feb 2021's \$695/MWH

## New Bucket Truck



The City of Frederick showed off a new bucket truck in July and adorned it with the Our Local Power banner. Frederick, in southwest Oklahoma, was one of the original 26 OMPA members.

## Ponca City Energy Retirement



Long-time Ponca City Energy employee Cindy Heidlage celebrated retirement in August with a party in her honor at Ponca City Energy offices. Heidlage had been instrumental in Ponca City Energy operations for many years and served not only as the Competitive Utility Program (CUP) Coordinator for Ponca City, but also as the Chair of OMPA's CUP Committee.

## Johnston: Continued from Page 1

and Mike Vanderburg.

The hall of fame is supported by eight organizations of Oklahoma municipal government officials or service organizations.

Formed in 1999, the Oklahoma Hall of Fame for City and Town Officials Foundation recognizes individuals for outstanding achievements or contributions to city and town government. To be selected, an honoree must make significant contributions to Oklahoma local government, through their positive spirit of public service, with unquestioned ethics.

The website [www.okcityandtownofficials.org](http://www.okcityandtownofficials.org) highlights the careers of each inductee in the past 21 years. Visitors to the website are able to navigate through biographies, video and photo features about each inductee.

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame Foundation is supported by the Oklahoma Municipal League, The Mayors Council of Oklahoma, the City Management Association of

Oklahoma, the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma Inc., the Oklahoma Municipal Assurance Group, the Oklahoma Municipal Retirement

Fund, the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority and the Oklahoma Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officials Association.



Phil Johnston, middle, received the Our Local Power Champion award for the City of Ponca City in 2019. Also pictured are OMPA General Manager and Ponca City Mayor Homer Nicholson, who is also the OMPA Chair.

# An update on gas prices and what's next

I wanted to add a few additional comments to the article discussing the current high cost of power. Much of this is the continued fallout of Winter Storm Uri. The natural gas markets have never rebounded from that event. In energy markets, such as the Southwest Power Pool, gas prices tend to set the market price. The war in Ukraine is also playing a role in this, as European countries look to other sources of gas in lieu of buying Russian gas.

U.S. producers are enjoying

## General Manager's Report

David W. Osburn



higher profits by sending gas to other countries.

The U.S. Energy Information

Administration is predicting that gas prices will stay high through the winter and start to recede next spring and summer. We certainly hope this is true. But, unfortunately, it looks like we in for higher gas prices for several months. We are also hoping that overall energy prices will start to drop once we get past the high summer temperatures and the electrical demand starts to drop.

Don't hesitate to reach out to OMPA staff for additional information on this very important issue.

## Board Reports

### *Highlights From July 2022 Board of Directors Meeting*

- Approved CUP recertification award to Granite Public Works Authority with one award valued at 1 point.
- Approved the nomination of Patty Witchey of the Town of Laverne to the Board of Directors for the remainder of the term expiring at the Annual Meeting in 2023 to replace Dave Andren.

### *Highlights From August 2022 Board of Directors Meeting*

- Approved CUP recertification award to Marlow Municipal Authority for four awards valued at 3.5 points
- Approved CUP Interim Review Award to Blackwell Municipal Authority for three awards valued at 2.5 points
- Approved purchase of a used transformer from People's Electric in the amount of \$6,000
- Received ERM Monthly Risk report on rising interest rates

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled to be held at 10 a.m. on September 8 at OMPA offices in Edmond.

# OMPA legislation has become law

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt recently held a signing ceremony at the Capitol for two bills related to the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority.

The legislation was Senate Bill 1529 and House Bill 4075.

The Senate bill amends the legislation that created OMPA. Under the original legislation, the Authority was not eligible to sell power to public utilities that weren't in existence at the



time of OMPA's creation. That restraint was removed with the Senate bill. The

legislation also removed a restriction in OMPA's original act that prohibited them from an interest in nuclear generation projects. The bill was sponsored by Sen. James Leewright and Rep. Mike Dobrinski.

The House bill eased requirements on OMPA with regard to the Competitive Bidding Act. It was sponsored by Rep. Kevin Wallace and Sen. Chuck Hall.

## Long-time Treasurer for Town of Laverne added to the OMPA Board of Directors

Patty Witchey of Laverne was approved to the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA) Board of Directors at its July meeting.

She is the first addition to the Board since October of 2020. An opening was created after Mangum's Dave Andren took a position at the City of McAlester, which is not an OMPA member.

Witchey is the Treasurer for the Town of Laverne, where she has been employed for 26 years, including the last 20 in her current position. She also

sits on OMPA's Competitive Utility Program (CUP) Committee.

Laverne was one of the original 26 OMPA members, meaning it began receiving power from OMPA in 1985. The town, which owns its own small generation, previously had a representative on the Authority's Board from 1988-98.

A wholesale power supplier with 42 municipal members throughout Oklahoma, OMPA is governed by its 11-member Board of Directors, who are elected by representatives of the

members. The board is comprised of elected officials, city managers and others who are involved in the operating or governing of their electric systems. Board members serve staggered three-year terms, with one-third of them coming up for election each year.

The OMPA Board has a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The current Chair is Ponca City Mayor Homer Nicholson, who assumed the position in 2020 as the 7th person to do so.

### City Update

## Family, friends remember city employee

Friends and family of Tonya Brand are reflecting on her life.

Brand was a City of Altus employee who died after being critically injured while working at the city landfill in



August.

An investigation is underway into the accident at the Altus City Landfill, on Aug. 2, which resulted in the death of 50 year old Tonya Brand.

Tonya's sister Rachel Mills was too upset to appear on camera, but she said the entire family is in shock and devastated.

"She was selfless, she was kind, she never said no to anyone in need, any free moment she had whether it be an animal shelter, or the red cross, you name it she donated," said Mills.

Brand was seriously injured while operating a 2006 Caterpillar Road Scraper. She was flown to Oklahoma

**Continued on Page 9**

# Prepare Now For



OMPA members who intend to hold events for Public Power Week in 2022 should start planning now. Public Power Week has been scheduled by the American Public Power Association (APPA) for Oct. 2-8.

Any OMPA member wanting assistance from OMPA with an open house, school safety event or other event associated with Public Power Week should contact OMPA's Ryan Piersol at [rpiersol@ompa.com](mailto:rpiersol@ompa.com).

Public power utilities across the U.S. celebrate Public Power Week the first full week of October every year to help customers and stakeholders understand how they can better engage with their community-owned utility and benefit from all its offerings. American Public Power Association member utilities can use the sample resources and templates to spread the word and help celebrate in your

communities.

Municipal electric systems bring many advantages to the communities they serve, the most significant of which is probably reinvestment. This is especially the case for Oklahoma's utilities. While Public Power utilities on a national level transfer an average of 5.6 percent of operating revenues to the general fund, Public Power in Oklahoma transfers approximately 19 percent. This is largely due to the limited ways in which cities and towns in Oklahoma are able to recoup revenue. Financially, Public Power also benefits from donated electricity and labor, locally-purchased materials and employee salaries that filter back through the local community.

Public Power utilities are governed by officials that are elected by the community, and they are able to make decisions with the interest of

their community in mind, knowing best what their needs are. They are also typically more accessible than those who run other utilities.

The employees who work on municipal electric systems often times live in the communities they serve, meaning they are keeping the power on for their neighbors, family and friends. This also makes them able to respond quicker to emergencies and outages.

Unlike private power companies, public power utilities are public service institutions and do not serve stockholders. Instead, their mission is to serve their customers. They measure success by how much money stays within the community through low rates and contributions to the city budget, not how much goes out to stockholders across the country and around the world.

# How To Celebrate



Public Power Week is a great time to teach elementary students about electric safety. Many OMPA cities and towns hold such events in their local schools, providing students with handouts like coloring books and more information on safety. OMPA has a display, the Little House of Hazards, that can be loaned and is useful for such events.



Marlow is one of several cities that routinely invites the media out to cover Public Power Week events, giving the city staff an opportunity to publicly discuss the benefits of having a municipal-owned electric system. Some cities and towns also invite local radio stations to events, allowing for conversations over the radio waves.



Some cities, such as Edmond, use Public Power Week as an opportunity to showcase an open house for the entire city. This brings together, not just the electric department, but also other parts of the city, such as the fire department, parks and recreation, waste, urban forestry and many more.

Many OMPA members use Public Power Week as a way to express customer appreciation by cooking lunch for the public or handing out giveaways. Some of these giveaways are distributed during Open House events, while others like having them in city offices for when customers come in to pay their bills.



Many cities and towns bring entertainment to their open house events during Public Power Week by rolling out the electric department's bucket trucks and giving children a bucket ride. Qualified linemen are responsible for operating the rides, following all safety guidelines.

## City Update

# Utility authority approves meter proposal

Duncan Public Utilities Authority trustees gave the green light with a 3-1 vote in July to pay over \$405,000 for a patch for current smart meters in the city ahead of a new system installation that's about 18 months away.

The first item in regards to the smart meters before the trustees came for a purchase of a remote meter-reading system upgrade from Honeywell Smart Energy with a price tag of \$92,954.30.

City Manager Kim Meek said the request comes as customer service, IT, water and electric departments deal with the "continual degradation of the existing Elster Meter Data Management operating system" which she said is "out of date and out of technical support options."

"To make up for the many and varied shortcomings of the obsolete Elster System our departments are making do through the application of more labor; labor mostly coming from reducing system maintenance hours worked by field crews and sometimes via overtime work in all departments," Meek said. "Even with the extra effort and reduction in water and electric systems maintenance, still, the long slow descent into complete meter reading and customers utility consumption billing ineffectiveness continues. There is a solution available to replace the outdated system and to make the existing meters more useful until the water meters can be replaced."

In Duncan, smart meters rolled out in 2010 when Honeywell implemented the smart metering network in an effort to help the City of Duncan improve conservation in the area and make collecting data a simpler process.



In creating the network, Honeywell reportedly replaced existing meters with more than 9,000 electric meters and 12,000 water meters, which came from Elster Integrated Solutions. The project reportedly totaled \$14.2 million, according to Banner archives.

In 2013, more than a year after the project installation completed, The Banner also reported Honeywell replaced 8,000 water modules in Duncan because the ones installed originally were deemed to not work well enough. Additional meter work in 2013 also included replacement of most of the 12,000 water modules installed and also 12,000 new meters.

The topic resurfaced for discussion in 2019 when residents began experiencing high water bills and some instances of "uncharacteristic billing."

In January 2020, City of Duncan entered a contract for consulting services through Diameter Services Inc., which was tasked with evaluating and making recommendations on the city's water meters and its infrastructure.

According to Meek, the Elster Company, along with their products and software systems, were purchased a few years back by Honeywell.

"Elster and now Honeywell continue to market the OS (operating system) to public and private utility customers throughout the USA and Europe," she said. "The most recent upgrade was a complete replacement — not just a 'patch' for bugs — of the Honeywell OS called Connexo NetSense."

Meek said the installation of the new version of Connexo NetSense software, data migration from the old

release to the new release, installation of the latest patches, installation / upgrade / configuration of applicable integration software, and custom configuration on a cloud service of the city's choosing comes at a "discounted price" of \$71,082.70 and an annual system maintenance fee for 2022-2023 or the next consecutive 12 months, based on actual meter count, is estimated at \$21,871.60.

Before the motion went to vote, trustees had several questions, which trustee Nick Fischer opened.

"We've been down the path with these folks before — and I'm not saying good, bad or indifferent — but, are we ok?" Fischer asked.

Meek responded by saying they were in the process of replacing all of these meters.

"Unfortunately, the only available to use is what is already in place, so Honeywell has these meters ... and they're the only ones that can do it," Meek said. "We have their system, we have to use them until we move to the new system."

She said, "this keeps our system running until we can get the new system in place."

Mayor Robert Armstrong asked about the timeline on the new system, and Meek said bid packets went out and are scheduled to be opened on Aug. 10.

"It'll take about a year to 18 months probably to install the entire system," Meek said. "Assuming we get back a bid that is what we borrowed and (we have) enough money."

Armstrong then asked Meek what strain the departments and citizens would face if the agenda item wasn't approved and Meek said more and more meters won't send in the data needed.

"What's happening is that we are having more and more meters that won't send data from the meter to the billing system, so we are actually having to send people out and read meters," Meek said. "We have more and more rereads or actual reads that

**Continued on Page 9**

## Journeyman Linemen



Kingfisher's Travis Phillips, left, and Luke Guthrie recently earned their Journeyman Lineworker certificates. Also pictured is City Manager Dave Slezcicky.

## Duncan: Continued from Page 8

we have to do, so it's more labor and it drives the labor cost up. You'll probably need to hire more people."

Armstrong then directed his attention to City Attorney David Hammond and asked if there was any recourse in the contract and if they spent money on this, what would happen if results don't improve.

Hammond said they entered into negotiations with Honeywell about a year or two ago to get part of those problems resolved.

"On the software purchase, that will be under a new agreement, so we would have recourse on that if it doesn't work," Hammond said. "But my remembrance is we had them shave quite a bit of money off of what we owed previously ... It actually ended their maintenance contract so the new software and the remotes and everything we're ordering now, we'll have recourse in the contract if they don't work."

Peters then asked if the operative point was to use this to keep the city

going short-term until the long-term plan of installing a new system is finished, to which Meek said yes.

Two other agenda items related to the meters then appeared before the trustees.

Before the first one went to vote, Fischer asked about longevity of the system, and Meek broke down how this patch will work.

"So this is the software piece that allows the two pieces to communicate, and those updates didn't get done because we ended that contract," Meek said. "So these new pieces will bring the data over and that makes everything talk to each other in the proper way. Then, in the next item, we're buying more meters so we can remotely disconnect meters and not require people to disconnect meters in somebody's backyard. And then the next one is an IT direct company that does handling of these systems, it's what they do, so that would put them in charge of all of that, and even when we do bring on the new system, they'll continue to handle that

IT portion of it. It keeps your IT portion of it separate from your meter portion instead of having Honeywell doing all the things. So this is a patch to get us until we get a new system. It will last until we have a new system."

The motion passed with a 3-1 vote that saw Armstrong vote no and Trustee Patty Wininger absent.

The next item as Meek said came for the purchase of 2,500 radio read Elster meters from Honeywell for \$312,512.50.

Meek said Duncan Power needs to purchase these for system-wide use and that they must be Elster Electric Meters to work with the wireless meter reading system.

"The meters are for new accounts, stock, non-radio read meter replacement and will be deployed by the staff in an expedited manner," Meek said. "The house meters are required with the remote disconnect feature at \$115 each (\$287,500 total) and there is an unavoidable import tariff of \$25,012.20." - **Duncan Banner**

## MESO Awards For Reliability and Safety



The Town of Olustee earned First Place in the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma's (MESO) Electric Operations and Reliability Competition in the Town Category with an Average System Availability Index of 99.9995 percent in 2021. Additionally, Olustee was recognized for having a perfect safety record for 2021. With the Town's employees working a year (or 7,251-man-hours) without a reportable lost work time incident, either "days away from work," "restricted light duty," or "medical treatment" case.



The City of Tecumseh is recognized for Outstanding Achievement in MESO's Electric Operations and Reliability Competition in the category for cities under 10,000. The utility delivered an Average System Availability Index of 99.9954 percent in 2021.



The City of Marlow earned Outstanding Achievement in MESO's annual Electric Operations and Reliability Competition in the category for cities under 10,000. The utility delivered an Average System Availability Index of 99.9964 percent in 2021.



Prague Power, the city's electric utility, earned Outstanding Achievement in MESO's Operations and Reliability Competition in the category for cities under 10,000 population. The utility delivered an Average System Availability Index of 99.9933 percent in 2021. Additionally, Prague Power was recognized for having a perfect safety record for 2021.



The City of Comanche, and Comanche Electric earned First Place in MESO's annual Electric Safety Competition in Oklahoma in the category for cities under 10,000 population for its exceptional safety record in 2021. The utility's personnel went the year with no reportable incidents, resulting in no lost work time, either "days away from work," "restricted light duty," or "medical treatment" cases in 3,180-man hours.

## City Update

### Edmond to host next lineworker rodeo

The City of Edmond and Edmond Electric will be the host of this year's annual lineworker's rodeo for Public Power in Oklahoma.

The event, hosted by the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma (MESO), will be Sept. 21-22 at Arcadia Lake Spring Creek at 7200 E. 15th St.

Lineworker Rodeos are a tradition at public power utilities across the country. Professionals come together in the spirit of friendly competition to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Both journeyman and apprentice lineworkers gather in a safe environment



**edmond**electric  
The POWER of Edmond

to gain valuable experience.

Unique to the MESO Rodeo is an event designed to simulate Mutual Aid circumstances. The event Job Training & Safety 2022 MESO Rodeo returns to Edmond provides lineworkers the opportunity to build relationships that could prove beneficial during real life mutual aid situations.

The 2022 event will also offer safety training sessions: Why We Ground / Equipotential Grounding and— Substation Issues.

Registration questions may be directed to Deborah Gonzales, Director



of Administration and Finance, at [deborah@meso.org](mailto:deborah@meso.org), and rodeo event and safety training questions may be directed to Tom Dougherty, Director of Job Training and Safety, at [tomd@meso.org](mailto:tomd@meso.org).

## Brand: Continued from Page 5

City where she later died from her injuries.

Altus City Manager, Gary Jones said they are doing everything they can to find out what exactly happened that day.

“We have been working with law enforcement to do their investigation, different agencies, and also the department of labor to go in to see if we can find out exactly what happened,” said Jones.

He said Tonya's death has affected a lot of people.

“We understand the family would be upset, these employees at City of Altus are upset. Our hearts and our prayers go out the family,” he said.

Tanya spent the last 5 years as the

disaster action team leader for the Red Cross in Altus along with her son.

Disaster program specialist, Kim O'Brien said Tanya had a big heart and was absolutely dedicated to the mission of the American Red cross.

“She wanted no recognition, she just gave so unselfishly of herself to anyone at anytime no matter the time of day or night. She'd pick up the phone and say what can I do,” said O'Brien.

She said that Tonya leaves an irreplaceable void in the many hearts that she helped.

A fundraiser in memory of Tonya Brand will be held on August 19th at 6:30 p.m. at the Altus Community Center with a live auction, multiple bands, and a silent auction.

## OMPA Outlet By Email

If you are a recipient of the OMPA newsletter by mail and would instead like to receive only an electronic copy by email, please email [rpiersol@ompa.com](mailto:rpiersol@ompa.com).



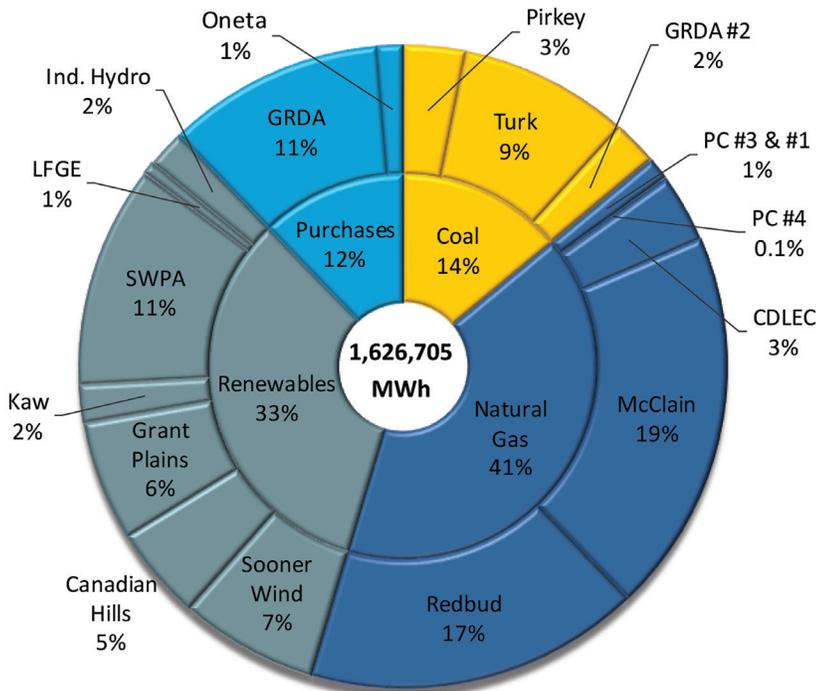


# outlet

News From Your  
Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority  
PO BOX 1960,  
Edmond, Oklahoma 73083-1960

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
EDMOND OK  
PERMIT NO. 298

### Generation Mix Through July 2022



## OMPA Board of Directors

### Chair

Homer Nicholson, Ponca City

### Vice Chair

Jim Greff, Prague

### Secretary

Dave Slezickey, Kingfisher

### Treasurer

Dale Bunn, Purcell

### Members

Glenn Fisher, Edmond  
Gary Jones, Altus  
Kimberly Meek, Duncan  
Dixie Johnson, Perry  
Jason McPherson, Marlow  
Chuck Ralls, Comanche  
Patty Witchey, Laverne

OMPA Web Address: [www.ompa.com](http://www.ompa.com)  
24-Hour Emergency.....1-405-340-8313

OMPA E-Mail Address: [ompa@ompa.com](mailto:ompa@ompa.com)  
Non-Emergency (from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday - Friday).....1-405-359-2500