

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

“OETA’s mission is to provide educational and public television programming to the people of Oklahoma on a coordinated statewide basis. OETA’s creative use of telecommunications technologies will deliver essential educational and public television programs and value-added services to enrich the quality of life for all Oklahomans.”

--Adopted by the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority board in response to the mandate set forth in the original 1953 enabling legislation.

OETA – The Oklahoma Network, represents more than just television, it will be the “portal of choice” for statewide telecommunications services and the gateway for public media in Oklahoma. The Network will deploy broadband services to families, schools, teachers, and students of all ages.

--The original mission statement and the further purpose is reaffirmed each year by the OETA board when setting budget work programs for the coming fiscal year.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Daniel Schiedel, Executive Director
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GOVERNANCE:

OETA is governed by a 13-member board made up of both public officials and private citizens. This makeup is required by legislation.

Six public officials are members of the board by virtue of other positions they hold within state government:

- Dr. Janet Barresi, State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- Dr. Glen Johnson, Chancellor of the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education;
- Dr. James Utterback, representing presidents of two-year community colleges;
- Dr. Cindy Ross, representing presidents of regional four-year universities;
- Mr. David Boren, President of the University of Oklahoma; and
- Mr. Burns Hargis, President of Oklahoma State University.

Seven private citizens are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate. These members serve terms of seven years each with one position rotating to vacancy each June 30. Members are appointed to represent the five Congressional districts and two members are at-large:

- Ms. Suzanne Lair, Tulsa, District 1
- Ms. Lisa Harbison, Muskogee, District 2

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

- Dr. Jerry Nye, Weatherford, District 3
- Mr. Clarke Stroud, Norman, District 4
- Mr. Brent Houston, Shawnee, District 5
- Mr. Fritz Kiersch, Oklahoma City, at-large
- Ms. Elaine Hobson, Lexington, at-large

The board has an Executive Committee and a Finance Committee.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the chair, vice-chair and secretary-treasurer of the OETA board. They function to discuss and convey information to other members during the year between regular board meetings conducted each February, April, June, August, October and December.

The Finance Committee helps give oversight to OETA budgeting and functions as the audit committee. This group bids, selects and interviews potential auditing firms to make an official recommendation to the board for the annual audit conducted after the close of the fiscal year.

Other committees or study groups may be appointed from time to time to further examine certain areas of interest or concern. These are temporary appointments and committees.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

August 2011

October 2011

April 2012

June 2012

August 2012

There is no official board attendance policy, although members generally attend the regularly scheduled board meetings. A quorum of seven members is required and any action item must receive seven affirmative votes for passage.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

With the loss of \$1.3 million in state appropriations, OETA has streamlined several functions within the organization due to a self-imposed hiring freeze. As employees have left the agency other employees have had job duties rearranged to fill the vacancies.

An example would be the loss of reporters and photographers from one department being filled temporarily by employees of another department. Although this has resulted in cost savings it also has eliminated a number of OETA productions and has caused the production of state nightly news to be reduced to one night per week, eliminating a 30-year service to the state.

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

As for other cost-cutting efforts, some expenses were eliminated from the OETA annual budget by closely examining all functions and prioritizing their essentialness. Contracts for three news and interview program personnel were eliminated. Remaining OETA employees absorbed many of these duties and three regular weekly programs were eliminated. Also technical equipment maintenance contracts for the most part have been eliminated and repairs have been accomplished with as-needed contracted services. Rather than a 24-hour service availability some repairs or replacements have taken up to a week or more to restore the use of affected equipment.

OETA has no waste as the operation has for many years had a value goal to become the most efficient state public broadcasting network in the nation. This is being accomplished despite additional responsibilities with the digital conversion and fewer employees than were on staff since the 1990s.

With the appropriation reductions taken over the past several years and being short on staff OETA was able to still provide for the citizens of Oklahoma the following services this past year.

- Greatly expanded our **educational services** by launching OETA LEARNING MEDIA, an online library of more than **20,000 free classroom tools and teacher resources**. Currently more than 1,000 Oklahoma educators have begun using this free and easily accessible resource.
- Conducted a **statewide community engagement** project surrounding THE DUST BOWL, partnering with state conservation groups to foster awareness of Oklahoma conservation issues and resources as well as share and preserve Oklahoma's experience – and resilience during “the worst hard times.” More than 3,000 Oklahomans of all ages participated in the project's events, conducted in OKC, Tulsa, Altus, Woodward, Stillwater and Guymon.
- Hosted **Read Across Oklahoma**, with more than **2,000 at-risk preschoolers** and the general public attending a day full of interactive literacy activities and receiving free books at the OKC Zoo and hundreds more attending a second event in Tulsa.
- Partnered with The Journal Record on a **yearlong investigation that revealed patterns of abuse and neglect at state VA centers**. The story, appreciated by Governor Fallin and Secretary of Military and Veterans Affairs Gen. Rita Aragon, resulted in new measures to protect Oklahoma's veterans as they enter their senior years.
- OETA leveraged its news gathering partnerships to broaden the weekly news program and provide **comprehensive live election night coverage in 2012**.
- Continued to engage participating schools in our Electronic Field Trip Program, taking **thousands of Oklahoma students through U.S. history via a live broadcast** that includes Q&A with historians and experts of U.S. history.

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2013-14 Performance Report

- Delivered adult literacy services through **GED Connection and TV 411**, programs designed to strengthen Oklahoma's workforce through GED tutoring and resources, as well as job training.
- Replaced on-air server and increased storage capability that will allow OETA to **store and air even more Oklahoma-focused programs.**

CORE MISSION:

OETA is functioning within its core mission and has not been mandated to provide any services outside that mission.

OETA functions are not being duplicated by other state agencies (or other entities). Other state agencies depend heavily upon OETA to accomplish their missions of getting information to the people of Oklahoma. Video productions from other entities (education, game and wildlife, agriculture, career development, etc) are aired on OETA in order to get statewide distribution.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

No other private entity performs the functions of OETA as the mission is much different from those of commercial broadcasters.

OETA is prohibited by federal and state regulations from operating as a commercial television network, any other television broadcaster is free to provide the services now provided by OETA. That does not happen in Oklahoma or any other state.

OETA works closely with private enterprise to accomplish its goal and also help businesses meet their needs. Tower agreements, in-kind donations to OETA and carriage on more than 300 cable systems reflect private businesses capitalizing on OETA functions, none of which would be accomplished by any single entity.