

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-2016 Performance Report

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

OETA's mission is to provide essential educational television content and multimedia services that inform, inspire and connect Oklahomans to ideas and information that enrich our quality of life.

The intent of OETA is to assure that new educational technologies, both over the air and online, benefit all citizens of the state. This opens new opportunities for more educational content, improved local services, increased civic engagement, and more coverage of state government and innovative bandwidth management. With the right investment in equipment and personnel, the state of Oklahoma will be able to provide instant, statewide, essential two-way communication for emergencies/public safety, training and citizen involvement via OETA's broadcast spectrum and ancillary bandwidth.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

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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:

- Ms. Joy Hofmeister, 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. Larry Rice, 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
- Dr. Richard Beck, Claremore, District 2
- Garrett King, Weatherford, District 3
- Mr. Clarke Stroud, Norman, District 4
- Ms. Denise Castelli, Edmond, District 5

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-16 Performance Report

- 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 2015](#)
- [October 2015](#)
- [December 2015](#)
- [January 2016](#)
- [February 2016](#)
- [April 2016](#)
- [June 2016](#)

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 \$1.8 (34.7%) million in state appropriations, OETA has had to streamline many of its functions over the last several years. As employees have left the agency, other employees have had job duties rearranged to help fill the vacancies.

As for other cost-cutting efforts, some expenses were eliminated from the OETA annual budget by closely examining all functions and prioritizing their essentialness. 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.

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-2016 Performance Report

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

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:

- Increased OETA LEARNING MEDIA educator usage by more than 400%. Currently more than **7,100 Oklahoma educators** use OETA's online library of more than **100,000 free classroom tools and teacher resources**.
- Partnered with Oklahoma State Parks to provide interactive science and nature learning experiences at state parks based on **OETA's STEM programming for children**.
- Doubled attendance to **Read Across Oklahoma**, with more than **6,000 at-risk preschoolers, as well as children and families** from the general public attending a day full of interactive literacy activities and receiving free books.

OETA partnered with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries to **leverage our children's programming and ensure children build literacy skills**.

Through professional development opportunities for daycare providers, teachers and parents, literacy events and stories written and illustrated by children in grades K-3, OETA's children's educational services provides learning opportunities for each Oklahoma child.

- OETA conducted a **statewide teacher professional development training** program to help educators to best leverage OETA content in the classroom, as well as available community level programs. Training covered topics that explain the use of tools such as LearningMedia, OETA children's programming and Ready to Learn initiatives in the classroom.
- OETA has expanded its content services to include digital projects like **"What's the Deal?" a STEM-focused online-only series targeting Oklahoma middle school students**. Educational materials for the classroom are available for this series.
- **"A Conversation With ..."** provided In-depth, thought provoking interviews with well-known Oklahomans, such as Roy Clark in 2015.

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-16 Performance Report

- “**The OETA Movie Club**” has enjoyed a quarter century of extreme popularity, thanks in no small part to its host, the incomparable BJ Wexler. Viewers not only enjoy commercial-free classic movies, but they also learn the back stories or little-known tidbits about the stars and the people who created such terrific films that are always entertaining. “**The OETA Movie Club**” is a fountain where interesting film fare and information flows as freely as the popcorn.
- “**Gallery**” explores the arts and culture of Oklahoma, giving viewers an opportunity to see how artistic passion and expression manifests itself through literature, dance, music, stage performance, paintings and sculpture.
- In 2015, “**Gallery**” introduced viewers to Rick Sinnett, an artist who is devoted to creating huge murals in public places, such as a grain silo near Bricktown. His story took nearly three years to document. “**Gallery**” also gave viewers a glimpse into the pioneer spirit of the people who settled Oklahoma Territory, using the famous Arcadia Round Barn as an example. Its creation, utilitarian use, decline, and ultimate salvation and preservation reflects the Oklahoma attitude about ancestry and practicality.
- “**Back in Time**” brings Oklahoma history to life with memorable storytelling and visuals. These programs are frequently used as teaching tools in Oklahoma classrooms. We also explored the Civil Rights Movement as seen through the eyes of those who lived it in Oklahoma, and provided evidence that peaceful protest can provide a positive outcome.
- “**ONR**” is your source for news and information that matters for all of Oklahoma. ONR (Oklahoma News Report) is Oklahoma's only statewide newscast in High Definition - delivering news and information that matters to all Oklahomans. ONR features **in-depth reporting on important issues affecting the state and comprehensive year-round coverage of state government, making OETA your source for open, transparent government.**
- “**Oklahoma FORUM**” is a **weekly conversation providing civil, meaningful discussions of news and issues that impact citizens statewide**. Plus stories from around the state in "Hometown News."
- In 2015 alone, OETA programs won three Emmy Awards. Other competitions, such as Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters (OAB), Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), Oklahoma Associated Press Broadcasters (OAPB), and National Educational Telecommunications Association, regularly recognize OETA entries, with more than two dozen awards given for news and programming entries.

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-2016 Performance Report

Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA – 266)

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.