

NEWS N' BRIEFS

Put ASCOG to Work for Your Community

We are here to serve. Just ask one of our Community and Economic Development Planners how we can partner with you to make our communities safer and more affordable, help communities draw in new businesses and create jobs, and take care of your residents. Here are some links to a few of the projects we can work on together:

Federal Opportunity Zones and Economic Development Grants – We have several in our eight-county area. Opportunity zones are designed to stimulate long-term private investment in low-income urban & rural communities, the federal Opportunity Zones (OZ) program allows investors to realize significant federal tax benefits by investing capital gains in Qualified Opportunity Funds. For more information, contact CED Director **Tom Zigler** at 580.736.7971.

COVID-19 impact relief – COVID-19 is not done with us yet. We are constantly advocating and scanning for resources to help our local governments deal with the financial impact of COVID-19. For more information, contact **Shannon Yarbrough** at 580.736.7965.

Capital Improvement Planning and GIS Surveys – In order to apply for most government grants, you must start with a plan. That's where our CIP and GIS programs can come in. For more information, contact **Danielle Carpenter** at 580.736.7969.

Transportation Planning – One of the greatest catalysts to growth and health of rural Oklahoma is transportation. That is why we are partners in the Southwest Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SORTPO). If you have questions about or wish to provide input into the transportation plan for southwest Oklahoma, contact **Ron Peel** at 580.736.7024.

Rural Economic Action Plan Grants – Our most important program to impacting rural Oklahoma is REAP. Our deadline for this year's applications just passed. It's now time to start planning for next year. For more information, contact one of the planners listed above.



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REAP Spotlight on Fort Cobb

The Town of Fort Cobb's standpipe needed rehabilitation. It had been 25 years since the standpipe had any reconditioning. Because of the expense, only the interior was reconditioned.



ASCOG AAA Launches New Season for Seniors



ASCOG AAA is pleased to announce that we will be scheduling appointments for Medicare Open Enrollment which is October 15th-December 7th yearly. If you have any problems with your current Medicare health insurance, prescription plan, supplemental coverage or any other questions related to your Medicare beneficiary benefits, please reach out to schedule an appointment by phone or in person at 580.736.7036 to meet with an ASCOG Certified Medicare Counselor. During the Covid-19 pandemic ASCOG AAA realizes that many seniors are struggling to gain access to the programs and services they need or are uncomfortable with the technology-based options available. Please remember we are here to be of service to you or your family members and we are happy to assist you in any way that you need. The State of Oklahoma is also offering the Covid-19 Call Center available at 877-215-8336. For ASCOG you can reach us online at www.ascog.org, by following our Facebook page, by phone at 580.736.7036, or by email at manr_kr@Ascog.org.

ASCOG Office will be CLOSED

Wednesday, November 11 in observance of **Veterans Day**; and Wednesday and Thursday, November 25 and 26th in observance of **Thanksgiving**.



Public Safety Report



The inventory will be starting this month in Comanche and Caddo counties with at least fifty percent (50%) of the total loaned equipment in the ASCOG area. The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry has been closed or working with limited personnel and may cause a few 80/20 grants and other related items be a little slower.

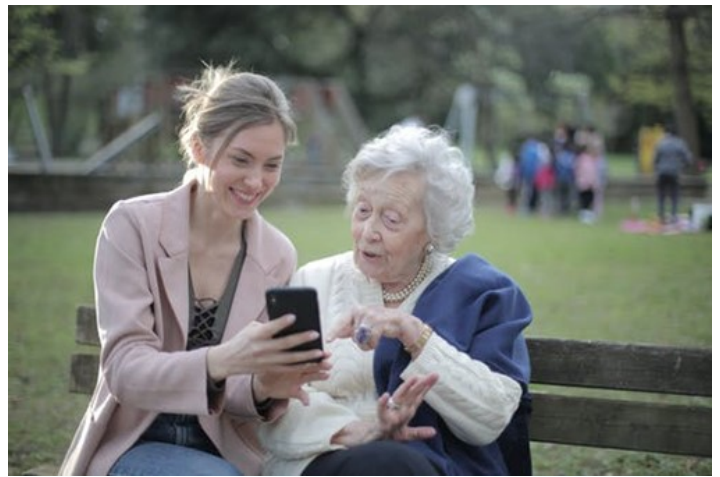
A total of four departments shared the funding on the 80/20 grant with equipment purchases for wildland gear and related equipment as this year there is an abundance of fuels (grass) which could lead to a busy fall season.

Fight the Flu this Fall:

Before the Coronavirus outbreak, there was another ferocious virus. While we focus now on COVID-19, this forgotten foe will surface once again – the flu. Older adults have always been at a higher risk of contracting the flu, but now with the overlap of COVID-19, they will face even more barriers than before. It is more important than ever older adults get the valuable information they need. CMS launched a campaign to increase awareness about flu vaccinations for low-income Medicare recipients. CMS created a compilation of resources, free of cost! They can be accessed by following this link: <https://www.cms.gov/outreach-education/partner-resources/flu-vaccine-partner-toolkit?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=3ef3d99a-74a8-41e5-b426-7a8abe894378>. For more information on how you can prepare for this year's flu season, contact **Kylee Sohl** by phone 580.736.7036 or email (ohl_ky@ascog.org). Stay safe and spread the word!

Oklahoma Department of Human Services Established New Portal for Reporting Elder Abuse

OKDHS is bringing awareness to elder abuse issues and promoting a new portal, AbuselsNotOK.org, to report allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation to Adult Protective Services. An [educational website](#) with important information about understanding and preventing elder abuse and a [partner toolkit](#) have also been developed to spread the word about protecting Oklahoma's vulnerable adults.



Visiting Loved Ones in Long-Term Care Facilities during the Holidays

With the holiday season fast approaching, it's time to put some thought into visiting family and friends living in long-term care facilities. Thanksgiving and Christmas can be a lonely time for residents. Memories of happier times and past family gatherings added to their present situation can cause a deep sadness. Not having anyone to visit them can sometimes turn temporary sadness into serious depression.

Many residents receive gifts for the holidays but become discouraged with not having the ability to give in return. If you are planning to visit a loved one at a nursing home, consider the following activities: taking along some wrapping paper and have them wrap gifts, adding their name to the gift tags, bringing an extra box of holiday cards and filling them out together, and or making a wreath together for the resident's door. Give a gift that does not need reciprocation, like spending time together doing an activity such as taking a walk, watching a movie, reading out loud, or talking about family and current events.

Since there is a limited amount of space for personal belongings in long-term care facilities, look for items that are useful as well as appreciated such as: clothing with large buttons, non-skid slippers, lap blankets, stationery or note cards, framed artwork from a relative or grandchildren, large print puzzle books, calendars with important dates marked, gift cards or gift certificates. Remember to add any new belongings to your loved one's inventory sheet and mark the item with their name.

Take pleasure in your visits and the joy you can share with others. Although your loved one may not be able to converse the way they once could, it is important to spend time together. Take the time to check with staff concerning upcoming holiday events

that the facility may have planned such as parties and holiday meals. Many residents anxiously anticipate the arrival of their loved ones on these special days. (Visitation restrictions during the pandemic vary by facility. Contacting the facility ahead of time to make visitation arrangements is recommended.)

Bring a smile to our elders that are in the nursing home by reminiscing old statements like "April showers bring May flowers" or just visit with them for a couple of hours by becoming an Ombudsman Volunteer. Ombudsman Supervisors are always looking for Ombudsman Volunteers. To learn more on how to help others or become an Ombudsman Volunteer contact, **David Sexton** or **Malcom Hutchinson** at ASCOG Area Agency on Aging at 580.736.7036 or Senior Info Line 1.800.211.2116 or write to them at P.O. Box 1647 Duncan, OK. 73534. Ombudsman Supervisors are available to speak to your group or organization upon request. Flexible training schedules are available to become an Ombudsman Volunteer.



2020 Stress – excerpt from an article by Joanne M. Flanders MSN, RN:

How do we decrease the effects of the stress we're facing from the "not normal" situation we're experiencing? Have we accumulated so much stress from the many major challenges we've experienced over the years? What have these major stressors—The "Spanish" Flu, The Depression, World War II, The Korean Conflict, The Polio Virus, The Viet Nam War, Watergate—done to our bodies and our minds? Actually, I believe we've developed coping skills and survived but somehow this time seems different. Are we tired? Are we more impatient? Does this time seem worse? Is our support system unavailable? I believe we'll overcome these challenges just as we did the others. Here are a few ideas for managing our time at home:



- 1) We can distance ourselves from others—not "isolate" but protect ourselves from the droplets that spread the COVID-19 virus;
- 2) We can avoid large groups;
- 3) We can clean surfaces that are frequently touched;
- 4) We can use the time for self-reflection;
- 5) We can find comfort in religious writings;
- 6) We can be aware of the civil unrest and, if the TV scenes are upsetting, we can turn the TV off or turn to a program that's cheery, funny or non-news;
- 7) We can encourage those who are depressed to seek professional help;
- 8) We can read a NOVEL that transports us to another land or clime for awhile;
- 9) We can reconnect with "long lost" friends using cards and letters or electronic devices;
or
- 10) We can seek out help and/or accurate information from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the CDC (a very RELIABLE source of information regarding the virus) or the National Institutes on Aging.

Remember, we ARE all in this together!

See the full article here - <http://www.ascog.org/2020-stress-by-joanne-flanders/>

T-Mobile for Education Offers Free Internet Access and Mobile Hotspots:

Close the Homework Gap, T-Mobile has stepped up to ensure our kids are staying connected. Families across the United States are facing challenges in 2020 and T-Mobile is stepping up to ensure connectivity is not one of them. T-Mobile launched its T-Mobile 10Million Project just over 6 weeks ago. The 10Million Project, is designed to award 2 million hotspots a year over the next 5 years across the United States. Included with the hotspot is 100 GB of data for a year for a 5-year period. The State of Oklahoma has been awarded 22,000 FREE mobile hotspot devices with education grade filters on all devices to eligible students and currently approximately 1,900 have been distributed.



Each school district across the state is eligible to apply for the hotspots. In order to qualify the students must be in grades K-12, do not have internet at home and a household with at least one child in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Not only is each school district eligible to apply for the hotspots but T-Mobile is offering additional data and tablets at a discounted rate. T-Mobile is offering Chromebook and a laptop at their cost. To learn more visit T-Mobile.com/P10M. For more information, click here - <https://www.t-mobile.com/business/education/project-10-million>.