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## News Release

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### **DEQ Funding Opportunities in Solid Waste Management**

Through the Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act (Act), the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has resources that can help local governments fund certain solid waste system improvements. The Act created a system of state solid waste fees that help fund DEQ's environmental protection programs. The funds can also help local governments develop better methods of handling solid waste.

The Act directs DEQ to invest in projects to help implement county solid waste management plans. The funding program is administered directly by county governments through the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma. The funds from this program are limited.

In the past, county commissioners have used this funding to clean up illegal dumps, hire trash cops, develop facilities like convenience centers to manage bulky waste and buy brush chippers to recycle the tree debris from local storms.

This Act also seeks to stimulate recycling by helping governmental agencies acquire recycling equipment. During this fiscal year approximately \$200,000 may be available for local governmental agencies to help purchase recycling equipment.

"I am hopeful that this money will be available, but it is entirely dependent upon income from the solid waste fees. Fee income has declined along with the rest of the economy," said DEQ Director of Waste Systems Planning Fenton Rood.

Rood adds that Oklahoma is a national leader in another unique aspect of recycling. "The law directs DEQ to use materials recovered from solid waste to restore lands damaged by oil and gas production and mining. In partnership with local conservation districts and sub-state planning agencies, we have enjoyed encouraging successes. Through the application of organic materials we have been able to restore barren waste lands into productive pastures."

Applications for funding will be accepted by DEQ beginning July 1, 2011. Assistance will be provided to local governments until the funds are exhausted. Anyone interested in taking advantage of these programs can contact Fenton Rood at P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1677. Interested individuals can also call 405-702-5159 or e-mail [fenton.rood@deq.ok.gov](mailto:fenton.rood@deq.ok.gov).

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