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News Release

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Pride in McAlester Recognized as an Oklahoma Clean Community

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in partnership with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB), will recognize Pride in McAlester (PIM) as an Oklahoma Clean Community during a special ceremony scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on September 5, 2018. The ceremony will be held at the Venue, 120 E Choctaw Avenue, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501. PIM will be recognized as a Level I, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Oklahoma Clean Community. This is the highest recognition a community can receive under the Oklahoma Clean Community Program.

For the past decade, PIM has grown to expand their environmental and beautification impact in the city and encourages citizens to adopt sustainable practices. PIM hosted 21 volunteer projects and maintained three programs aimed at keeping McAlester clean, green, and beautiful from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. 694 volunteers contributed 2,311 volunteer hours towards painting projects, stormwater marker installation, planting trees and flowers, conducting cleanups, litter pickups, recycling promotion and assistance, and more. Further, the organization completed projects supporting Main Street, Farmers Market, and the Community Garden.

PIM collected 963,000 pounds of bulk waste, electronics, Household Hazardous Waste, tires, metal, paper shredding, and prescription drug disposal during Fall and Spring Cleanups. As part of the Great American Cleanup PIM installed a Community Garden Pollinator Bed on May 19, 2018. PIM encouraged residents to “leave the leaves” in social media posts and an email newsletter in Fall of 2017. Additionally, PIM painted one building, 73 fire hydrants, installed two murals, painted five trashcans, and painted curbs and parking lines at two schools. They partnered on several projects with McAlester Main Street including loaning equipment for improvements at the downtown farmer’s market, installing the two murals in their district, and assisting on a “better block” temporary build-out of streetscape plans. PIM continuously works with the City of McAlester and Kibois Community Action in the promotion and operation of the McAlester Recycling Center. In the last year, PIM helped with the design and funding for the move of the Recycling Center to a larger facility.

Residents who support these programs and employees that work hard to provide the services are instrumental in making McAlester a cleaner and greener community. As a result of their efforts, PIM has reduced many risks to human health and the environment. Pride In McAlester is now an Oklahoma Clean Community.

DEQ and KOB recognize entities that participate in at least one tire collection event annually, the Great American Cleanup and other environmental service projects. DEQ

encourages entities to coordinate a community-wide cleanup of used tires. DEQ's Tire Recycling Indemnity Fund will pay to haul off old, unused, or abandoned tires. Tire piles can be an eyesore and attract unwelcome pests, such as mosquitoes and rodents. After cleanup is complete and all criteria for other service projects are met, a community can be recognized as an Oklahoma Clean Community.

More information on the Used Tire Recycling Program is available at <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/lpdnew/TireRecyclingPrg.htm> or by contacting Ferrella March at ferrella.march@deq.ok.gov or 405-702-5175.