

Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees Newsletter April 2026

The Oklahoma SCS/NRCS Retirees met at the Golden Corral Buffet Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 23, 2026. Thirty-three people were in attendance (25 retirees and 8 guests/spouses). They were: **Don Bartolina, Ann Colyer, Barbara and Les Conner, Steve Elsener, Fred Fortney, Dennis Fowler, Joey Freeland, Bonnie and Randy Freeland, Ken Hamar, Larry Hood, Sandra and Terry Hough, Jeanne Jasper, Steve Kelley, Josh Ketch, Nick Lambeth, Janell and Paul May, Kevin Norton, Gary O'Neill, Phil Perryman, Linda and Eddie Rathbun, Brent Reavis, Dan Runnels, Kirk Schreiner, Terry and Jim Smith, Gary Soderstrom, Ed Stinchcomb, and Jamey Wood.** (Pictures on the website)
The 25 retirees represent 850 years total federal service.



President, **Kirk Schreiner**, called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. **Les Conner** provided the blessing for the meal.

Following the meal, President Schreiner again called the meeting to order. First time retirees attending the meeting were: **Steve Elsener, Ken Hamar** and **Larry Hood**. Each provided a brief introduction of themselves. Others in attendance introduced themselves and spouse or guest and told the group how long they had been retired and how many years of service they had upon retirement. **Josh Ketch**, currently the Assistant for Management & Strategies (State Administrative Officer) for NRCS, introduced himself.

Jeanne Jasper, Oklahoma State Conservationist, was asked to introduce herself and provide information about her. Jeanne has 28 years of service with the last 2 years in Oklahoma. Montana is her home state. She was raised in rural Montana. She also provided an update to happenings within NRCS in Oklahoma. The number of current employees is less than 200 employees but they are still obligating 60 million dollars a year in programs and review agreements. They are currently working to upgrade one employee working outside of their grade level. The positions of Chief and Associate Chief are now political appointees not career employees. Watershed rehabilitation funds are available and there are two watershed inspectors employed. There is an EWP (Emergency Watershed Protection) site in Poteau. The USDA Reorganization Plan has not yet been finalized.

Randy Freeland asked the new retirees in attendance to complete an information sheet and other retirees to provide their retirement activities (i.e. volunteer work, travel, part-time work,

activities, etc.) with at least one sentence. This information is used for the Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association newsletter. Our website www.joepad.com is used by those not able to attend the meetings. The website provides pictures, list of attendees, minutes of our meetings, and the newsletter, etc.

Information returned was as follows:

Paul and Janelle May will be traveling with their entire family to Yellowstone National Park in June this year. **Ann Colyer** has been quite active in retirement as she is now on the City Council and Board for Senior Citizens. She owned the local newspaper in Grandfield for about 4 years when she moved back home but has since given it up. **Eddie Rathbun** said he really enjoyed his work with SCS and NRCS Employees through the years. He now works cattle and around the farm with his youngest son. They travel some and work in the garden when his back will allow.



Gary O'Neill, Les Conner, Eddie Rathbun, and Linda Rathbun

Jamey and Sabrina Wood live in Edmond, OK. He is still officiating high school basketball and volleyball games. Their daughter (**Jaybree**) is a teacher in Mustang and son (**Logan**) is a Graphic Designer in Southern California. Volunteering with the Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief Team and volunteering at the OSU Botanical Garden take up much of their spare time for **Les and Barbara Conner**. They also grow a sizeable home garden that they enjoy. **Terry and Sandra Hough** volunteer at St. Mary's Catholic Church 3 to 4 times each month. They are not traveling much but still enjoy camping in their RV occasionally. Sandra volunteers as a poll worker during elections and visits with retirees on the phone and in person on occasion. She is also active with Oklahoma Retired SCS/NRCS Employees Association who meet twice each year. The **Reavis** Family just returned from Gatlinburg, Tennessee. **Brent** says they have a offshore fishing trip planned in June in the Destin, Florida area. He and his wife (**Betty**) spend most of their time with grandkids.

Steve Elsener provided the following about his activities since retirement: He started as a Soil Conservationist in 1975 at the Bristow Field Office then to Taloga in 1976. In 1978 he joined the Chickasha Watershed Planning Staff as the Biologist. And in 1996 he moved to the Watershed Planning Staff in the Stillwater State Office as a Biologist until his retirement in January 2016. He and his wife (**Sally**) have a son retired from Special Forces in the Army that lives in North Carolina. His daughter is an RN at the Chickasha Public Schools. He has 3

grandchildren. Steve still plays golf as time allows and lives and works part time on their ranch north of Guthrie.



Jamey Wood, Larry Hood, Les Conner, and Steve Elsener

Randy has enrollment forms to join **ARCSE**, Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. Dues are \$18 per year which includes receipt of the newsletter. First time participants receive one free year of membership. He invited everyone to join this organization.

Secretary-Treasurer **Sandra Hough** read the list of known retirees who have passed since October 2025: **Jerry J. Latty**, 81, Soil Conservation Technician, Tahlequah, passed 5/29/25; **Leona Miller**, 85, Clerk Typist Clinton Area Office, 12-year service, passed 11/14/25; **Helen Cole**, 92, widow of Everett Cole, passed 11/17/25; **Odos Henson**, 93, Soil Scientist/Agronomist, Stillwater State Office, passed 12/13/25; **Bobby Sue Gerloff**, 100, Area Clerk, Woodward Area Office, 50+ year service, passed 1/5/26; **Everett “Junior” Evans, Jr.**, 88, Soil Conservation Technician, Oklahoma City, 40+ year service, passed 3/9/26; **Phyllis Adams**, 90, wife of Bud Adams, retired District Conservationist, Altus, passed 3/17/26; **Durl Ray “Wimpy” Burton**, 91, Soil Conservation Technician, Fort Cobb, passed 3/31/26; **Clifford Frick**, retired DC, Guthrie, passed 2/1/26. A moment of silence was observed in their memory. There were two known retirements: **Diana Perry** and **Ron Merrick**.

Meeting notices are still mailed to those who wish to receive a notice through the mail. There were 59 notices mailed with one returned: **Bob Burgarner**, address in Duncan, unable to forward. Retirees should email Randy Freeland freelandrandy50@gmail.com (note this is a changed email address) to request an email meeting notice in lieu of a mailed meeting notice and to report a change in mailing address or email address. Those who may not be receiving a mailed notice and wish to, should email Sandra Hough tshough@sbcglobal.net or send a note to 1308 Littell Ave., Clinton, OK 73601.



Joe Freeland, Gary Soderstrom, Don Bartolina, Dennis Fowler, Ed Stinchcomb, and Kevin Norton

Some of the replies to the meeting announcement email about member retirement activities, are as follows: Randy had heard from **Sherman Lewis** who hopes to attend one of our future meetings. It might be noted that Sherm is providing the Commencement Address this year at Langston University. **Harry Fritzler** is driving Route 66 in his Jeep from its origin in Chicago, Illinois and hopes to end his trip at the end of the Route 66 in Santa, Monica, California covering the 2,448 miles across eight states. Route 66 was officially established on November 11, 1926. This year, 2026, is the 100th year anniversary of the road. **Phil Perryman** reported he had recently talked to **Earl Weisner's** wife. Earl had experienced a stroke and has been in rehab. He is not yet up to attending the meeting. **Lisa Knauf** said she wasn't able to attend today's meeting but will try to come in October and would like to report on what OACD and OCC are doing these days.

Please feel free to send something similar to those above that can be used in the October 2026 Newsletter. Do it now before you forget! Send it to: freelandrandy50@gmail.com

Randy reminded the group again that if they are Civil Service retirees and have not checked with Social Security about drawing a retirement based on their spouse, they should do so as soon as possible. Several have financially benefitted from a call or visit with Social Security.

The next meeting is scheduled for **THURSDAY, October 22, 2026**, at the Golden Corral on MacArthur Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The Golden Corral opens at 10:30 AM so there is extra time for visiting before the meeting starts at 11:30 AM.