



## The Oklahoma Department of Human Services

# Staff Across State Celebrates 65 Years

It took an area the size of Oklahoma to hold the birthday party thrown August 6 for the Department of Human Services.

On that day, all across the state, DHS workers took time to celebrate and to look back on 65 years of service provided to Oklahomans in need.

Those who work for DHS seldom gather without thinking of the people served. And, a birthday food drive conducted the month before the party brought in more than 58 tons of foods and non-perishable items to be ready when someone is in need.

It was a great party, and then everyone went back to work. Perhaps a little renewed.



↑ **Cutting Up at the Birthday Party** - Enjoying the ceremonial cutting of the 65th birthday cake are, from left, DHS Director Howard H. Hendrick, Lt. Gov. Mary Fallin, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Human Services Jerry Regier and Chairman of the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services Steve Bailey. The birthday cake at the State Office celebration measured 3 1/2 feet by 6 1/2 feet and weighed 150 pounds.

← **Make That 116,000 Pounds** - The posted weight of foods and non-perishable items collected statewide during the July food drive as of August 6 increased somewhat with late-arriving tallies. These are "pounds" that can make a big difference to families served by DHS.

From the Daily Oklahoman of  
Monday, August 3, 1936

## STATE PENSION BOARD NAMED BY GOVERNOR

Gomer Smith One Of  
Nine Members.

### THEY'LL GET NO PAY

Four City Residents  
Given Appointments.

Governor Marland Sunday sent telegrams to four Oklahoma Citizens and five other state men and women asking them to accept appointments on the nine-member board which will administer his old age pension-social security bill.

Included in the list was Gomer Smith, attorney and Townsend candidate for the United States senate, who attempted without success to throw the support of his following to Governor Marland in the runoff primary.

Others from Oklahoma City were Mrs. George E. Calvert, prominent in Parent-Teacher association activities and civic affairs, Rabbi Joseph Blatt and Bishop Francis Kelley.

Others requested to serve on the board are Mrs. George S. Abbott and Mrs. E. E. Chaney, Tulsa; Mrs. W. V. Vandivort, Nowata; Mrs. A. Work, Durant; and Raymond D. Thomas, dean of the school of commerce at Oklahoma A. and M. college.

Members of the commission will receive no salary above expenses. Despite that and indications that appli-



↑ **Making Hot Dogs Hot** - DHS workers outside the Sequoyah Building keep the grill going for the state office 65th birthday celebration.

↓ **It's in the Bag in Carter County** - Reviewing the results of Carter County's 65th birthday food drive are, from left, Chari Duncan, administrative tech, and Lou Bigger and Shelly Ward, both health care management nurses. DHS workers gathered and sacked more than 300 pounds of food pantry items for distribution to those in need.



cations for pensions will be double the anticipated number, the governor said hundreds of applications for the board places had been received.

#### Law Sponsored by Governor

The law under which the commission is authorized was sponsored by the governor and in the first primary brought charges that he was attempting to use county social service boards to bring about his election to the senate.

The bill provides care for the aged, blind and for dependent children.

Funds are being raised through the medium of a 1 percent sales tax, which under present indications will provide \$8,000,000. If the number of applications doubles the anticipated number that amount of money will be sufficient to pay only half of the maximum \$30 a month pension provided for the aged.

Marland announced he had called a meeting of the board for Friday at his office in the state capitol.

From the Daily Oklahoman of  
Saturday, August 8, 1936

## RELIEF BOARD WILL CHOOSE CHIEF MONDAY

Welfare Plan Awaits Action  
On Director's Place.

Oklahoma's big experiment in social welfare by assistance to aged and blind persons and dependent children was about to get underway Friday as the machinery was thrown into action by the Oklahoma public welfare commission.

The next step will be selection of a director of public welfare by the commission at a meeting Monday. John Eddleman, director of the Oklahoma emergency relief administration, is considered a likely choice.

Although the commission announced Governor Marland made no recommendations, it was reported Eddleman may be in line for the place. A committee of the commission members was named to receive applications and canvass the field of available persons. The committee consists of Raymond D. Thomas, chairman; Mrs. George H. Abbott, Tulsa, and Mrs. W. M. Van Divort, Nowata.



↑ **Serving It Up** - McCurtain County Director Susan Helms (center) performs official cake cutting at the 65th birthday celebration. Associate District Judge Tony Benson (right) and Cody Cox, WorkForce Oklahoma, assist.

↓ **Bingo, Burgers and Beach Boys Tunes.** Bryan County celebrated the DHS 65th with a beach party theme and shared an obvious good time with folks from juvenile services, vocational rehabilitation and employment services. In addition to fun, the county office food drive, coordinated by Scott Price, collected 800 pounds of non-perishable items, which were given to a local food pantry.





← **Bryan County Busy People** - The Bryan County birthday planning committee not only planned a beach party celebration, but also did the decorating, the food preparation, and cast out a big net pulling in more than 115 bingo prizes and door prizes donated by local merchants. Committee members are, from left, Sarah Singleton, Sandra McAdoo, Nancy Thrasher, Brenda Simpson, Leah Nabors, Jody Williams, Margaret Coxsey and Becky Britton.



↑ **Party, Party, Party** - Muskogee County workers celebrate the 65th Birthday with horns, balloons, and all the trimmings. In the foreground is Tammy Blanchet; in back, from left, are Antonette Peete (behind the yellow balloon), Pat Adams, and Jan Bolinger.

↑ **LeFlore County Cracker Wall** - A wall in the county office in Poteau is lined with boxes of crackers contributed to the LeFlore County food drive by Bremner Cracker Company. DHS workers collected more than 3,000 pounds of food in the 65th birthday drive. The collected items were distributed to 11 food banks in four towns.

→ **Ready to Serve** - State office workers stand by outside the Sequoyah Building ready to ladle up chili for the hot dogs sizzling on grills down the line.





← **Passing It On -**  
*Unloading boxes of crackers donated to the LeFlore County food drive are, from left, County Director Sevilla Vance, Linda Lynn and Frances Shankle. In addition to the food drive part of the 65th Celebration, county office workers arranged to have Health Department nurses at the offices to give school immunizations.*



↑ **Kay County Cake -** County Director Carlan Kindred shows off the 65th birthday cake ready for DHS workers and visitors.



← **Probably Talking Child Welfare –**  
*Alice Curry, left, Coal County child welfare supervisor, visits with Pauline E. Mayer, former director of DHS Child Welfare Services, during the 65th birthday celebration at the county office. Ms. Mayer worked in social services in 1934 and worked to pass the constitutional amendment establishing a department of public welfare. She joined the department in 1936 and remained with the department for more than 47 years. The Oklahoma County children's shelter is named for her.*



← **A Little Help from the Fire Department -** Seminole County workers hitched their wagon to a fire truck and took their 65th celebration food drive around Wewoka with flashing lights and an occasional siren wail. It worked. The county office had a goal of 1,000 pounds for the drive and the final total was 2,011 pounds.

# Happy 65th, DHS



↑ **A Birthday Best When Shared** - DHS workers in Sequoyah County delivered a part of their food drive collections to Catholic Charities. Making the delivery are, from left, Maria Rogers, Rhonda James, Barbara Harkreader, Melissa Cloud and Lois Farmer.



↑ **McCurtain County Committee** - Plans for a festive 65th Birthday celebration in McCurtain County were made by, from left, Charollette Brown, Rene Hall, Donna Sharpe, Carol Gilham, Julie Whitten, Pat Bean and Creds Impson.



↑ **Smookittin'** - Junior Simpson, husband of Bryan County social services specialist Kay Simpson, provided his smoker-on-wheels and his burger-flippin' talents for the county office beach party celebrating the DHS 65th birthday.



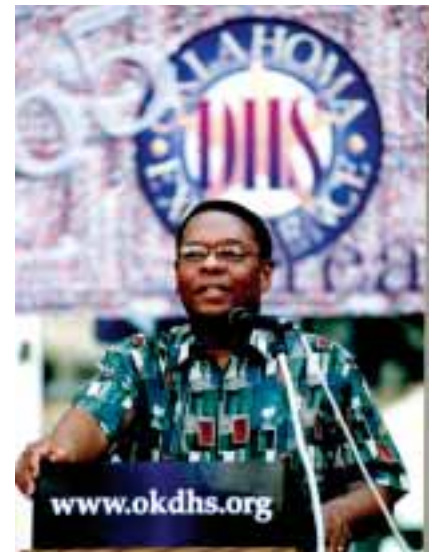
↑ **Just Clownin' Around** - Director Hendrick shares a chicken sandwich with ConfewZd Clown, aka Debbie Drain, DCFS, during the state office celebration of the 65th birthday of DHS. More than 700 DHS workers, retirees, and guests shared hot dogs, birthday cake and fall tales outside the Sequoyah Building. More than 1,700 people viewed the proceedings on a SATTRN live telecast.



↑ **Getting with the Program** - Muskege County workers whoop it up in celebration of the 65th birthday of the Department of Human Services.



↑ **A Noble Celebration of 65th** - DHS workers in Noble County are ready to start the birthday party. From left are Tony West, child welfare specialist; LouAnn Hunt, social services specialist (under the red balloon); Don Brown, county director; Annette Phillips, administrative technician; Darla Lambott, administrative technician; Nanette Skidgel, social services specialist; Nellie Cervantes, secretary; Kelly Lighty, social services specialist; Connie Adaire, social services specialist; Joseph VanWinkle, social services specialist.



↑ **Welcome to the Party** - DHS Director of Public Relations George Johnson welcomes DHS workers, family members, retirees, guests, and SATTRN viewers across the state to the 65th birthday celebration at the Sequoyah Building.

→ **Cherokee County Line** - DHS workers and guests in Cherokee County line up for picnic fare and birthday cake in celebrating the 65th birthday of the Department of Human Services.



↑ **Sweet Tooth Table** - Ready to serve cake or cookies at the Washington County celebration is Debra Patterson, child welfare supervisor, who baked one of the cakes and helped cut the one donated by Wal-Mart.



↑ **Waiting in the Shade** - The Blaine County lunch line winds among the trees at Roman Nose State Lodge. The birthday celebration was combined with a previously scheduled Judge's Youth and Networking Conference enabling foster children to take part in both.



↑ **An opportunity to visit** is part of the Lincoln County birthday celebration as County Director Randall Miller talks with State Rep. Kent Friskup and Judy Friskup.



↑ **Birthday Banquet** - Sequoyah County lays a bountiful spread in celebration of the DHS birthday.



↑ **Dewey County Doin's** - Celebrating the 65th in Dewey County are, from left, Gerry Moore, social services specialist; Gayla Foster, DDS case manager; Norma Pike, administrative assistant; Carl E. Henry, county director; and Leatha Crispin, OSU Extension secretary.



↑ **Kingfisher County Celebrates** - Taking part in the Kingfisher County party are, from left, Anita Ellerbee, family support supervisor; Sara Tebow, Department of Rehabilitation Services; Mandy McDonald, Office of Juvenile Affairs; and Brittney Harviston and Donna Struck, both child welfare aides.



← **In From the Beginning** – Jan Stowers, Marshall County director, left, was delighted to meet Elizabeth Nance who came by the office Aug. 6 for the birthday celebration. Ms. Nance told of working in 1934 on the petition drive, which brought about a vote on the constitutional amendment to establish a public welfare department. She also worked hard for the election effort in 1935-36. She worked for the state for six years in Marshall, Bryan and Oklahoma counties. Ms. Nance recalls visiting the hungry and needy living in “dugouts, dog houses and covered wagons.” She remains active in organizations that provide food for the needy.



← **Years and Years of Experience at Coal Celebration** - DHS workers, current and retired, are, from left, front row, Pauline E. Mayer, who began in social services in 1934 in Coal County; Delores "Pee-Wee" Childers, DAP supervisor in Coal County, who retired in 1979; Mary James, secretary, who retired in 1996; and Mary Jo Johnson, receptionist, who retired in 1999; back row, Gaylin Childers, family support supervisor and nephew of Pee-Wee; Bill Wilson, former Coal County director and currently programs manager in the Area IV office; Tom Hyde, family support worker, who retired in 1992; and Phyllis Brister, current Atoka and Coal County director.



→ **Kay County Committee** - Members of the planning committee for Kay County's birthday celebration are, from left, John Hunt, Julie Scheirman, Janell White, Marsha Crilly, Chartze Goodno and Timilyn Crank.



↑ **Party Preparations in Coal County** - Mary Holt, family support worker, foreground, applies the proper sauce in the correct places, and Ann Casey, secretary, demonstrates multi-tasking by talking on the phone while doing something with the goodies.



↑ **Celebrating in Custer County** are, from left, Lorie Rivera, social services specialist; Anthony Adigwe, adult protective services specialist; Jan Stanley, social services specialist; Carl E. Henry, Custer County director; Pat Easter, administrative technician; Brenda Hawkins, Area I director; and Mary Rayner, director of Clinton's women's shelter.



↑ **Lincoln County Celebrates** - Marking the 65th birthday of DHS are, from left, Debra Madden, family support services; Barbara Kolar, family support services; Kellie Mullen, child welfare supervisor; State Sen. Kelly Haney; Randall Miller, county director; Debbie McFarlin, county director secretary; Jerry Durbin, foster parent.

## Looking Back . . .

# Pre-Statehood to 1940

Before a state social services department was established in Oklahoma in 1936, territorial and early statehood lawmakers adopted programs to serve the needy.

When statehood was achieved in 1907, the Oklahoma Constitution placed responsibility for the needy with the counties. The Constitution also provided for a Commissioner of Charities and Corrections.

In 1909, the State Board of Affairs was established with certain welfare responsibilities.

Crippled Children's funds were made available in 1923 for children under age 18 and were extended in 1927 to include children under age 21.

In 1929, on October 29, the stock market crash signaled the beginning of the Great Depression.

In 1931 the 13th Oklahoma Legislature appropriated \$300,000

for relief of the needy. In 1933 the legislature appropriated \$600,000 for relief. (Appropriations of about \$3.1 million and \$6.2 million in current dollars.)

On August 14, 1935, Congress approved the Social Security Act providing, among other things, grants to states for old age assistance; for unemployment compensation; for aid to dependent children; and for maternal and child welfare.

Oklahoma created the State Board of Public Welfare and the Commission for Crippled Children.

In 1936, the voters of Oklahoma approved changes to the state's Constitution by adding the Oklahoma Social Security Amendment.

Entered as Section 25 of the Oklahoma Constitution, the amendment begins:

*In order to promote the general welfare of the people of the State of Oklahoma and for their protection, security, and benefit, the Legislature and the people by initiative petition are hereby authorized to provide by appropriate legislation for the relief and care of needy aged persons who are unable to provide for themselves, and other needy persons who, on account of immature age, physical infirmity, disability, or other cause, are unable to provide or care for themselves . . .*

From April 1 to August 1, 1936, Old Age Assistance payments and Aid to Dependent Children payments under a federal-state plan were administered by the State Board of Public Welfare.

On August 6, 1936, the first meeting of the Oklahoma Public Welfare Commission was held. The Division of Child Welfare was created.

By September 1, all 77 counties had Department of Public Welfare Offices.

*Next: The Early Years of the DPW*



← **Adair County Committee for Birthday Celebration** are, from left, front row, Monica Dandridge, Julia Foreman, Lena Taylor; back row, Sherrie Funburg, Pat Funburg, Blake Whatley, Brad Davidson, and Ray Walker. Not shown is Kelli Radtke. DHS workers and community donors provided 120 pounds of non-perishables for the food pantry and enjoyed a celebration luncheon.

# Mercer Reappointed to Commission

Governor Frank Keating reappointed Ronald L. Mercer, Bethany, to the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services to a term that ends August 5, 2010.

Mercer, was appointed to the Human Services Commission in May 2000 to fill an unexpired nine-year term that ended in August.

Commission Chairman Steve Bailey appointed him in June 2000 to the Human Services



Ronald L. Mercer

Budget Committee.

Mercer retired from Xerox Corporation in 1987 after a 26-year career. He served in several senior management positions including President, Xerox Canada, Inc., and Senior Vice President of Field Operations for the U.S.

Operating Co. After retiring from Xerox, he served as President and Chief Operating

Officer of the Dorskocil Companies following their acquisition of Wilson Foods.

He and his family currently own and operate Mercer-Adams Funeral Service in Bethany

He is a director of First Fidelity Bank, Oklahoma City; The Children's Center, Bethany; The Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs; Leadership Foundation of Oklahoma City; and Southern Nazarene University Foundation.

Mercer and his wife, Yvonne, have four children and nine grandchildren.

# Keen Re-Elected Treasurer of National Aging Group

Roy Keen, Division Administrator of the Aging Services Division, was re-elected treasurer of the National Association of State Units on Aging at the association's 37th annual meeting this summer in Washington.

Keen has served as NASUA treasurer since 1985.

NASUA is a private, non-profit national organization whose members represent the 57 state and territorial agencies designated by governors and legislatures as

the focal points for issues related to older persons.

Key sessions in NASUA's summer meeting focused on the new Family Caregiver Support Program; state plans for Real Choice Systems



Roy Keen

Change in home and community based services; state responses to the workforce crisis in long-term care, and other aging issues.

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## More Pictures Than Pages

Thanks to all who sent so many great pictures of the DHS 65th Birthday Celebrations. Unfortunately, there was not enough space for all of them. Perhaps, some will show up in subsequent issues.