

The confrontation with the banker signaled the start of Farm Bureau in Johnston County. Elrod and some of his buddies began talking about organizing.

They found a prospect as an agent, and Elrod broke a tie in the board meeting that resulted in the hiring of the first Johnston County Farm Bureau agent, Denny Estes.

"I said let's give him a try. The first thing we knew we were doing pretty good."

Over the years, business improved and the county went through several offices at different sites in Tishomingo.

A Charter Member

"It just kept getting better and better. Denny retired," says Elrod, "and we got Dean Wiles from Ada. We talked him into taking it over. Marilyn (Wiles' wife) wound up as his secretary. We got bigger and bigger and hired another secretary. We wound up with two agents. We still got 'em, and both are good people."

Needless to say, Elrod is a charter member in Johnston County. And he still serves on the county Farm Bureau board of directors after serving many of those early years as county president.

"I've got a lot of respect for Farm Bureau. I've had Farm Bureau Insurance and had to use it just once."

He also served 22 years on the Johnston County Soil Conservation Service and 25 years on the Johnston County ASCS Committee.

"I had a good wife, and she kept me straightened out," he said.

That's probably why he never told his wife, Lena, that he didn't like the house they moved to from the farm.

"I didn't like it, but I wouldn't tell Lena that. My wife was thrilled that I sold out and (she) wanted to come to town."

He's more comfortable with his new place after living there the past 12 years or so. The neatly manicured yard, which Elrod still cares for himself, contains many trees and brightly colored mums and other flowers plus a flagpole with Old Glory flying high.

"I spend my time nowadays in that chair and watching TV," said Elrod. "I try to find things to do."

"I've had a pretty good life, and pretty rough life. I had a good wife, and she kept me straightened out."

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Oklahoma certainly isn't immune to snow and ice in the wintertime. This snowfall came in quickly last winter, making travel treacherous. Oklahomans should be prepared for winter weather, and have plans in place when snow or freezing rain come.

Prepare for winter storms before they hit

When it comes to preparing for winter storms, one of the key rules is to listen to the latest weather reports on local radio and television.

In preparing for a severe storm or blizzard, a family should have the following items readily on hand at home: several days supply of non-perishable food and drinking water, extra blankets, a battery-operated radio, flashlight and fresh supply of batteries.

"Also, be sure to check for an adequate supply of heating fuel and be aware of the fire hazards posed by the prolonged use of stoves, fireplaces and space heaters," said Justin Grego, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Safety Services director.

The safest place to be during a winter storm or cold snap is indoors. However, farmers often have to venture outdoors to check livestock and other animals.

"Be sure to dress properly when you do head outside. Remember to wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be water repellent and hooded," said Grego.

He also cautioned about traveling during hazardous winter weather. However, if you must travel during hazardous weather Grego said be sure to inform someone of your route.

"That is important. Make sure they know your destination and expected time of arrival, too. And remember to keep your gas tank near full."

Avoid overexertion when outdoors, especially when doing activities like snow shoveling.

"Be aware that cold weather itself, without

any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on the heart," said Grego.

He also recommended that families develop a plan for winter storms.

"It is important to develop a winter storm specific family plan. Oklahoma is not immune to the perils of winter weather. Just remember the ice storms we've had over the past several years that left many of us without power or stranded at home."

When developing a winter storm family plan, Grego said there are several items that need to be incorporated. They include:

- Acquire snow shovels and purchase rock salt or other ice-melting products for walkways and driveways.
- Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use. Create a kit for your car with starter cables, shovel, kitty litter or shingles for extra traction, extra blankets and 000609169 energy snacks.
- Take a first aid course to learn how to treat exposure to cold, frostbite and hypothermia.
- Create a winter supply kit which includes appropriate winter outdoor clothing including coat, mittens or gloves, hat and water-resistant boots for each family member; acquire extra blankets and warm clothing in the event of power outages, and extra water and food that doesn't require cooking if there are power outages.

"Everyone in your family should know what to do in case all family members are not together," said Grego. "Discussing winter storms ahead of time helps reduce fear and lets everyone know how to respond."

Oklahoma Farm Bureau purchased the reserve grand champion wether meat goat and many other prize-winning animals that made the annual premium auction at the 2008 Tulsa State Fair Junior Livestock Premium Auction Oct. 3. The reserve grand exhibitor Meagan Rhodes of Fairview FFA is pictured with, from left, Director Charles Sloan, Director Roland Pederson, Miss Tulsa State Fair Molly Colvard, President Mike Spradling and Vice President Billy Gibson.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau received the Frank Sanders Memorial Award at the Tulsa State Fair Junior Livestock Auction Oct. 3. The award goes to the buyer purchasing the largest volume of prize-winning animals at the previous year's auction. It was the seventh consecutive year OFB received the award, which is a portrait displayed by Frank Sander Jr., son of the award's namesake. Pictured in the photo, from left, are OFB Director Charles Sloan, OFB President Mike Spradling, Sanders, OFB Director Roland Pederson, OFB Vice President Billy Gibson and OFB Director Phyllis Holcomb.

The Kingfisher FFA team won the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Tulsa State Fair Livestock Judging Contest Oct. 3. The team will be Oklahoma's representative at the National Western Show in Denver, where the best judging teams from across the nation compete for the national championship. Members of the team, from left, are McKenzie Clifton, Josh Lippoldt, Audrey Gruntmier and McKenzie Walta. Oklahoma Farm Bureau presented a \$750 cash prize to the Kingfisher teens to help the winning team defray its expenses at the National Western Show.



OFB is a top buyer at Tulsa Fair

Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies was a major buyer at the 2008 Tulsa State Fair Junior Livestock Premium Auction Oct. 3.

The state's largest farm organization purchased the reserve grand champion barrow and reserve grand champion wether meat goat and 26 other prize-winning animals that made the annual premium auction.

Farm Bureau was recognized prior to the auction with the 2007 Frank Sanders Memorial Award for last year's premium auction, marking the seventh consecutive year for Farm Bureau to be recognized for purchasing the largest number of animals in the sale.



Oklahoma Farm Bureau also sponsored Tulsa State Fair FFA Livestock Judging Contest Oct. 3, and awarded a \$750 cash prize to the winning Kingfisher FFA team in the senior division. The team will be Oklahoma's representative at the National Western Show in Denver, where the best judging teams from across the nation compete for national championship. Members of the Kingfisher FFA team included McKenzie Clifton, Josh Lippoldt, Audrey Gruntmeyer and McKenzie Walta. The monetary award is presented to help the winning team defray its expenses at the National Western Show.

The 28 exhibitors of the prize-winning animals Farm Bureau purchased during the premium auction were:



- Kyle Wheatley of Morrison FFA for his barrow, which was the reserve grand champion in the market swine show.
- Meaghan Rhodes of Fairview FFA for the reserve grand champion wether meat goat.
- Macy Griswold of Payne County 4-H for breed champion Chianina steer.
- Ryan Sharry of Hughes County 4-H for the reserve breed champion Angus steer.
- Rashele Blakely of Oologah FFA for the reserve breed champion Limousin steer.
- Jessica White of Woodward FFA for the breed champion Spot barrow.

- Taylor Davis of Walters FFA for the second place Yorkshire barrow.
- Shannon Rose of Alva FFA for the reserve breed champion Poland barrow.
- Kade Lamle of Beaver FFA for the third place Hampshire barrow.
- Jill Davis of Guthrie FFA for the breed champion Suffolk wether lamb.
- Olivia Mason of Fairview FFA for the breed champion Dorest wether lamb.
- McKenzie Clifton of Kingfisher FFA for the reserve breed champion crossbred wether lamb.
- Elizabeth Goodwin of Tonkawa FFA for the reserve breed champion Suffolk wether lamb.
- Brittany Blakinship of Mulhall-Orlando FFA for the fourth place Shorthorn steer.
- Jaime Haas of Hollis FFA for the fifth place Chianina steer.
- Ross Taylor of Okfuskee County 4-H for the third place Duroc barrow.
- Abby Rakestraw of Stillwater FFA for the fourth place Yorkshire barrow.
- Ally Riley of Alva FFA for the eighth place wether meat goat.
- Chelsey Evans of Fairland FFA for the ninth place wether meat goat.
- Sydney Johnston of Sapulpa FFA for the fourth place AOB steer.
- Jamie Thorp of Timberlake 4-H for the eighth place Maine-Anjou steer.
- Callie Ross of Stilwell FFA for the eighth place Chianina steer.
- Blake Kennedy of Pottawatomie County 4-H for the ninth place crossbred barrow.
- Logan Rea of Sallisaw FFA for the eleventh place crossbred barrow.
- Dalton Berg of Minco 4-H for the fifth place Duroc barrow.
- Lane Daniel of Hollis FFA for the ninth place crossbred wether lamb.
- Marcia Goodwin of Ponca City FFA for the ninth place natural colored wether lamb.
- Kale Thompson of Duke FFA for the twelfth place wether meat goat.

Investing in efficiency of home, appliances results in safe tax free savings

In these rough economic times, finding a safe and productive place to invest money seems nearly impossible.

However, research done at the Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory in 2001 showed that 10 common efficiency investments in a home and appliances could result in a 16 percent average annual return. That is better than the Dow Jones Industrial Average high performance of 14 percent from 1990 to 1997.

"By investing in the efficiency of your home and home appliances, you can realize returns that are safe, tax free, directly in your control and profitable," said Justin Grego, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Safety Services director.

All 10 of the energy efficiency measures in the study at Lawrence Berkley outperformed the traditionally safe investments of 30-year bonds (4.2 percent), money market accounts

(3.5 percent) and the more unpredictable dividends on common stocks.

So, what are these 10 measures and how do they perform?

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1. Changing lights to new fluorescent lamps and fixtures averages a return of 41 percent.
2. Sealing heating and cooling ducts averages a return of 41 percent.
3. Upgrading to Energy Star when replacing a clothes washer averages a 37 percent return.
4. Upgrading to an Energy Star programmable thermostat has an average return of 30 percent.
5. Installing an R-12 water heater insulation jacket averages a 28 percent return.
6. Upgrading to Energy Star when replacing a refrigerator averages a 37 percent return, assuming the old one is no longer used.
7. Upgrading to an Energy Star heat pump

when replacing the furnace and air-conditioning system, averages a return of 19 percent.

8. Upgrading to Energy Star when replacing a dishwasher results in an average return of 18 percent.

9. Weatherizing and sealing the home to limit air changes to less than 0.5 per hour has an average return of 9 percent.

10. Increasing wall and attic insulation to 1997 Department of Energy recommended levels have an average return of eight percent, representing the highest cost of nearly at \$1,800.

Grego points out that the Lawrence Berkley study used 1997 costs. In the 10 years since that study, fuel costs have increased and the cost of many of the energy efficiency technologies have dropped. That means a person can realize an even greater return on these investments now.

Other opportunities can be realized by taking energy efficiency tax credits and utility rebates.

"The conclusion is very simple. An investment ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars can have a very real return to you with a much lower risk than what exists in today's market," said Grego.

TULSA FARM SHOW

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Field Representative Robin Landrum, right, visits with Wagoner County Farm Bureau member Harvey Lamberson at the 15th annual Tulsa Farm Show. OFB's booth at the show featured the Kids Fire Safety trailer plus safety videos running on television along with stacks of brochures about the farm organization. State Director Charles Sloan also stopped by the booth to visit. The crew that manned the booth during the Dec. 11-13 show at the indoor Quick Trip Center included, from left, Landrum, Safety Service's David Turner, Dusty Applegate and Micah Martin, and Safety Director Justin Grego.



Ever tag a tractor?

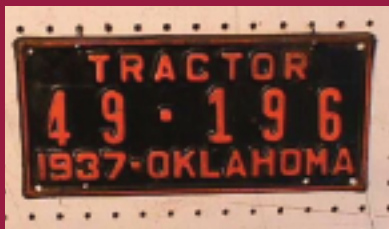
If you can remember being required to put license tags on tractors, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member would like to talk to you.

"I'm looking for people I can interview that remember having to put license plates on their tractors," said Gus Oliver.

He said research he has completed found that Oklahoma required registration of tractors from the time cars were first registered in 1915 until 1941.

Oliver said he already has found one person who remembers having to tag tractors and has a couple of old photos of tractors displaying license tags.

If you can help, contact him via email at gus8470@yahoo.com.



Tractor tags once were issued in Oklahoma as this relic from 1937 proves. An OFB member hopes to contact those who can remember putting license plates on tractors.

Dodge adds vehicles to FB rebate program

Dodge has announced that it will add all Dodge cars to the Farm Bureau vehicle incentive program.

That means all Oklahoma Farm Bureau members in good standing who purchase a new 2008 or 2009 Dodge vehicle will qualify for the \$500 rebate program available only to members.

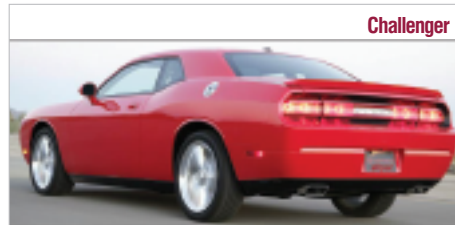
The addition to the member-only rebate program includes the Avenger, the Challenger and the Caliber. Dodge, however, does not include SRT models, the Viper or the Sprinter van in the incentive program, which is consistent with the previous incentive program.

Dodge has notified its business centers and all dealers about the expansion of the rebate program to include the cars to the rebate program.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members must obtain Dodge \$500 bonus certificates from their county Farm Bureaus to take advantage of the program.

Those wanting to take advantage of the rebate must be an OFB member for at least 30 days to be eligible for the rebate.

Challenger



Avenger



Caliber



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Members' daughter captures trophy at North American

McKenzie Clifton, 17, led her grand champion wether, Pistol, through the curtain and onto the fresh, green woodchips in the ring. In a matter of 90 seconds, bids jumped from \$3,000 to \$12,000, and Clifton's Hampshire lamb was sold.

"Winning the North American is very exciting," Clifton said. "It lets you know all your hard work has paid off – staying at the barn every night until 11, working with your animals – it all pays off in the end."

The Kingfisher senior is the daughter of Kingfisher County Farm Bureau members Shane and Mandy Clifton.

She has shown sheep since she was 8-years-old, and has exhibited at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky., for the past six years. While this is the first overall championship banner she has taken home from the NAILE, the Louisville winners' circle is not unfamiliar territory to Clifton.

In addition to a slew of wins in Oklahoma and other national shows, Clifton serves as her Kingfisher High School's FFA chapter president. This fall, her parliamentary procedures team placed in the top four at the National FFA Convention.

She was a member of the Kingfisher FFA team that won the Oklahoma Farm Bureau-sponsored livestock judging contest at the Tulsa State Fair in October. She has also placed as top individual in several livestock judging contests in the past year.

Clifton will conclude her showing career in March at the Oklahoma Youth Exposition, but said she will never forget the valuable lessons she has learned in the past nine years.

"I've gained a lot of responsibility," she said. "I feel like I'm a lot farther along in my experience with the real world – in winning and losing, working hard and being dedicated."

Next fall, she plans to attend Oklahoma State University as an animal science major. The \$12,000 check from the NAILE sale will most likely go towards her education at OSU, she said, but it will also help her expand her sheep flock.

McKenzie Clifton braces her 146-pound grand champion wether and is pictured with the buyers at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky. The buyers were Bluegrass Coca-Cola, Louisville, Ky., Musselman Hotels, Jefferson County Farm Bureau and the Louisville Ag Club, all of Louisville, Ky., and Mick Hancock and family of Eubank, Ky.



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Farm Bureau delegates voice support for renewable energy



Voting delegates at the 67th annual meeting of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau reaffirmed the organization's position on several major issues during the business session of the convention.

Delegates said they continue to support renewable fuels. This stance was made despite a failed proposal to ease the pressure of higher feed costs for livestock producers.

At the same time, delegates added support for nuclear power as a potential fuel source in Oklahoma. They also voted to support tax incentives for landowners who use wind turbines or solar power as alternative power sources on their farms.

The voting body voiced its opposition to legislation that would increase property taxes. Leading that list is opposition to an initiative petition to increase education funding to the

levels of surrounding states.

"We're concerned this initiative would increase property taxes," said OFB President Mike Spradling.

Other notable policy decisions made by the voting delegates include:

- Support the exemption of farm-tagged vehicles from DOT registration and regulations.
- Support the Wind for Schools (WSP) project under the sponsorship of the Department of Energy.
- Support the Fair (income) Tax Referendum.
- Support tax exempt fuel for rural fire departments.
- Farmers should be allowed to save and plant their own seed after paying any tech fees.

Highlights of the annual convention included a keynote address by USDA Secretary Ed Schafer.

"The farm economy is one of the healthiest segments of our nation's economy right now," Schafer told the farm group.

Lower crop and livestock prices will mean a decline in U.S. farm and ranch income in 2009 after two record-setting years, he said.

Schafer did say the farm economy was in good health, with rising land values, record-high exports and a low debt load. It probably is "the best sector of the economy to weather the storm" of the financial downturn, he said.

"I think net farm income will go down next year," Schafer said.

Also speaking at the Farm Bureau convention was American Farm Bureau Vice President Barry Bashue, and syndicated

Left: OFB President Mike Spradling completed the first year of his two-year term during the 67th annual convention in Oklahoma City. He delivered his first presidential address Nov. 15 to delegates and guests assembled in the Cox Convention Center.

Below: Billy Gibson and Mike Spradling presided over resolution sessions during the 67th annual convention in Oklahoma City. Delegates used two different sessions to debate and enact policy recommendations that will guide Farm Bureau's path during 2009.



Secretary of Agriculture
Ed Schafer



AFBF Vice President
Barry Bashue

agricultural columnist Trent Loos, a strong advocate for animal agriculture.

Loos said livestock producers who had a seat at the table when environmental policy was debated and decided by the Bush administration, worry it won't continue. With greater regulation of U.S. livestock production, meat prices can be expected to climb. Consumers will ultimately bear the burden of those regulations and, at that point, they will no longer be seen as a good thing.

One of the founding fathers and first president of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau was honored when his family presented a bronze bust to the organization. His son, Jim, memorialized the late John I. Taylor during the presentation.

"He believed in Farm Bureau and loved rural people," Jim Taylor said.

John Taylor served as state president from 1942 to 1953.

Those attending the Nov.14-16 convention in Oklahoma City's Cox Convention Center also had the opportunity to attend two special interest conferences. Oklahoma State University Economist Darrell Peel moderated a conference on agri-terrorism while American Farm Bureau Economist Jim Sartwell moderated a conference on 2009's farm commodity outlook.

During caucuses, delegates in districts one, four and seven re-elected sitting directors to three-year terms.

In district one, Ervin Mitchell of Beaver County won his third three-year term as that district's representative on the state board of directors. Mitchell has a 5,000-acre operation

with dryland and irrigated wheat, milo, alfalfa and corn plus a cow-calf herd along with stocker and feeder cattle near Balko.

Murray County rancher Bob Drake won his third three-year term as district four representative on the state board of directors. He and his brother owned and operated Drake Farms at Davis for nearly four decades, succeeding their father who established the noted Angus ranch in 1941.

In district seven, Alfalfa County's Roland Pederson won his second three-year term on the state board of directors. The former teacher has been farming for more than 30 years, raising wheat, grain sorghum, sunflowers, alfalfa, corn and soybeans in addition to a cow-calf and stocker herd on his operation near Burlington.

The state Women's Committee re-elected

