

Oklahoma Country

SPRING 2009
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU



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Farm Bureau's In The House

The Law Of The Land

Planting New Experiences

The Thrill Of Victory

WHY FOOL AROUND WITH THOSE OUT-OF-STATE CLOWNS?



You may think all insurance agents are a bunch of clowns. Well, if that's true, the agents at Oklahoma Farm Bureau are more like the kind of clown you'd find at a rodeo. We're always there for you, ready to take the bull by the horns if things get serious. After all, we're from Oklahoma, too. And if there's one thing Okies know how to do, it's take care of their neighbors. You can trust our agents to give you good advice, a good price, and fast, friendly service when you need it. As for those out-of-state guys, well, let's just say you'd have better luck talking to a mime.

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We're OK, so you're okay.

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Hidden number worth \$50!

One member family's Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership number is hidden somewhere in this issue of OKLAHOMA COUNTRY, and could earn that member family \$50.

To claim the cash prize, the member family must find its own hidden membership number and contact Mike Nichols before the last day of the month Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to

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The OFB membership number hidden somewhere in OKLAHOMA COUNTRY must match the number on the face of your individual OFB membership card for you to claim the cash prize. The membership number that appears on your magazine's mailing label is not the hidden number, but must match the hidden number for you to claim the cash prize.



Cover Image
New Representatives
Eddie Fields, Leslie Osborn and Steve Kouplen pose at the state seal near the south steps of the Oklahoma Capitol.



BY MIKE SPRADLING
*President,
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
& Affiliated Companies*

Do you have what it takes to be a leader?

Leadership” as defined by Webster Dictionary seems fairly straightforward. But sometimes a definition needs further defining, as in this case. Webster defined the word leadership as “the activity of leading.” How can something so complex and involved be so simple to define? In January the Young Farmers and Ranchers held their Winter Conference in Stillwater where Dr. Sue Williams, professor and head of Human Development and Family Sciences at Oklahoma State University, presented a program on understanding leadership.

I have no attention on going over her entire program, but I would like to share some of her thoughts on the topic.

The definition of leadership has evolved over the centuries. It used to be a common belief that a leader was born that way – the “Great Man” theory. But in the 1900s, a new definition of leadership began to evolve, associated with the following list of traits and qualities:

Inspirational charisma; concentration of achieving goals, results, learning, flexibility; world-mindedness; sense of humor; coalition building; scheme of priorities; motivation/morale building; competence and credibility, stamina, energy, tenacity, courage; transformational character/integrity, honesty, morality; reasonableness; risk-taking; understanding power; ability to persuade; intelligence; and sense of direction.

Through the years there have been many individuals study leadership, but most would agree that leadership reflects four main themes: **1.** Getting things done. **2.** Building relationships. **3.** Creating a “Can Do” environment. **4.** Teaching leadership to anyone with a desire to learn. When we speak of getting things done, think of that intangible quality exhibited by a person who encourages and influences people to take

action. Are you one of these people who get things done? Do you encourage or can you influence people to take action? Thinking of yourself as a Farm Bureau leader do you exhibit sufficient trust or authority to motivate others to achieve a shared objective? When it comes to creating a “can do environment” can we agree that leadership is manifested through relationships of trust and common benefit. Have you ever thought of yourself as a teacher – “leaders create leaders who create leaders?”

There are many characteristics that are associated with a leader, some being: ambitious, broad-minded, caring, competent, cooperative, courageous, dependable, determined, fair-minded, forward-looking, honest, imaginative, independent, inspiring, intelligent, loyal, mature, self-controlled, straightforward, supportive.

These are the characteristics I see in each of you as leaders of Oklahoma Farm Bureau. When people look at these characteristics they rank the three highest as honest, forward-looking, competent. There is one other characteristic which is found in almost every successful farmer and rancher in this country, the instinct to never give up.

A well-known world leader on Oct. 29, 1941, gave one of the world’s most influential speeches ever, as well as one of the shortest. Many of you know who I’m talking about, Prime Minister Winston Churchill. He stood before a group of students at Harrow School and made this statement: “Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, give in, never give in, never give in, never give in.” Then he sat down. Though this characteristic of a leader was not mentioned by the average person earlier, it seems to be a common characteristic of most agriculture leaders.

What are the chances that a person with the following track record could become an

enduring leader? Lean on looks, talent, education, and early positive environment. Lost his job and a seat in the state legislature. Failed in business. Elected to the state legislature two years later, but suffered the loss of his sweetheart, who died. Had a nervous breakdown. Lost the nomination for Congress. Elected to Congress, but failed to be renominated two years later. Rejected for the position of land officer. Defeated for the Senate. Defeated for the nomination for the Vice Presidency of the United States. Defeated again for the Senate two years later. This person never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, gave in, he never gave in, never gave in, never gave in. Under these or similar circumstances, what would you have done? Would you have given in? Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860.

This is the same determination I have seen in many of our Farm Bureau leaders for years. Many of you reading this column were already involved as leaders of Farm Bureau when I became a member 36 years ago. You are of the individuals Winston Churchill spoke of. You have the determination to take the lead and see a project through to its completion. It’s that attitude that makes Oklahoma Farm Bureau what it is today, whether it is policy development, policy execution, member services, communications, safety, or protecting the assets of our members, as a group of leaders, be it our members or our employees, we all vow to never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever give in, never give in, never give in.

Be proud of your leadership talents and exercise those abilities every chance you get. Your involvement makes a difference.

Mike Spradling

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Country Kitchen

SWEET AND SOUR BEEF LO MEIN

- 1 pound *Certified Angus Beef* top round steak, cut into small strips (1/4 x 1/4 x 1 inch)
- 2/3 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 10-ounce jars prepared sweet and sour sauce
- 1 8-ounce can pineapple chunks with juice
- 12 ounces egg noodles or Chinese-style, thin egg noodles
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil



1. Drain juice from pineapple and combine juice with soy sauce and crushed red pepper. Marinate beef strips in pineapple mixture in refrigerator 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Discard marinade.
2. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Set aside.
3. Heat sesame oil in large, nonstick skillet; brown beef over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Add pepper and mushrooms; sauté 3 to 5 minutes. Add noodles and pineapple.
4. Stir in sweet and sour sauce and sesame seeds. Heat 2 to 3 minutes until hot throughout, stirring constantly; do not boil. Top with green onions. Serve immediately.

QUICK PORK FAJITAS *Serves 4*

- 1 pork tenderloin, about a pound, thinly sliced
- 2-3 tablespoons fajita seasoning or marinade
- 1/2 onion, sliced
- 1/2 green pepper, sliced
- 4-6 flour tortillas, warmed

In a shallow bowl, toss pork pieces with fajita seasoning. In large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, stir-fry pork pieces with onion and green pepper until all is just tender. Wrap portions in flour tortillas with salsa.

Placing pork tenderloin in freezer for about 20 minutes makes slicing easier.



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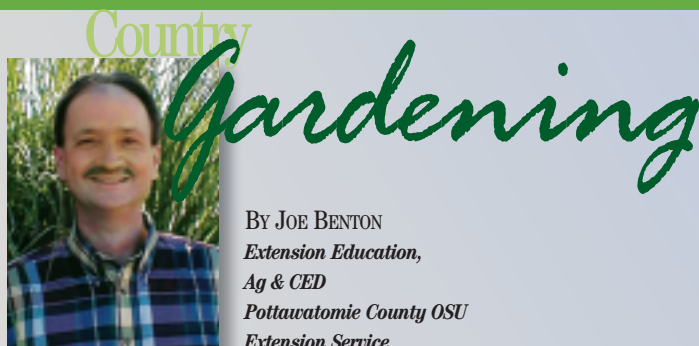
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BY JOE BENTON
*Extension Education,
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Shrubs fill many important landscaping roles

Shrubs serve an important role in landscaping. They can be used as hedge borders, focal points, along the foundation of a home to "tie" it to the ground by softening strong architectural lines, and to fill large areas. Shrubs screen and separate private areas, create garden rooms and absorb noise. Many are evergreen, providing a backbone for the winter landscape.

Unlike annual flowers, or even some herbaceous perennials, shrubs are usually planted with permanence in mind. As such, it is important to carefully select plants to ensure long-term success. It is important to consider the plant's adaptability to the proposed planting site, as well as its mature size. For best results, choose a plant that is best adapted to the climatic zone or region and will fit in the space designated for planting, even after it reaches full size.

When selecting shrubs for the landscape, it is also important to consider each plant's ornamental characteristics. Consider plant height, width and shape; foliage color and texture, including fall color; bark attributes; and flowering and fruiting habits, to obtain the right shrub for your landscape design.

Many shrubs are planted for their showy floral displays. You can develop a long season of bloom by planting various types of shrubs. The time any shrub remains in bloom varies from a few days to a few months; however, the time of year a shrub blooms remains the same year after year. Use a variety of shrubs that bloom in sequence to develop a planting with a long blooming period. Most landscapes have lots of flowers in spring, with few in summer or fall. Prolong the ornamental season through careful shrub selection. Choose shrubs known to bloom at alternate times of

the year, or choose plants that provide other ornamental traits during hot weather and into the fall such as colorful bark, fall foliage or fruit.

The first two or three years are the most important periods in the establishment of newly planted shrubs. Good cultural practices during this period help reduce transplant stress and create a favorable environment for shrub growth.

WATERING

The key to watering newly planted shrubs is to check the moisture status of the plant's root-ball or root-mass. The roots of newly planted shrubs are initially confined to the plant's root-ball (balled and burlapped trees) or root-mass (container-grown plants). Newly planted shrubs should be watered when the root-ball or root-mass (not the surrounding soil) begins to dry out. Frequently check the moisture status of the root-ball or root-mass as it can dry out quickly. To water the root-ball or root-mass, slowly apply water to the base of the shrub. The frequency of watering can be reduced and the watering area enlarged as the root system begins to grow into the surrounding soil. Newly planted shrubs should be watered for at least two to three growing seasons and during drought thereafter.

MULCHING

To help conserve moisture, place two to four inches of mulch, such as wood chips or shredded bark, around shrubs. Mulches also help control weeds, moderate soil temperatures, and reduce the risk of mechanical damage from errant lawnmowers and string-trimmers.

When mulching shrubs, do not place mulch against the shrub. Keep the mulch at least

three inches away from the main stem. Mulch piled against the plant may create favorable conditions for fungal cankers, root rots, insects and rodents.

FERTILIZATION

It is generally not necessary to fertilize newly planted shrubs with nitrogen. Apply phosphorous and potassium according to a soil sample. If the shrubs are growing poorly two to three years after planting, fertilization may be beneficial, according to soil sample test results. Poorly growing shrubs often exhibit sparse foliage, yellow-green leaves or short annual twig growth.

PRUNING

Shrubs utilize sugars and other carbohydrates manufactured by the foliage for plant growth. Therefore, avoid the temptation to severely prune newly planted shrubs. Severe pruning reduces the plant's ability to manufacture food and actually slows plant growth. Newly planted shrubs require only corrective pruning. Remove structural defects, diseased, dead, broken or crossing branches.

One of the important parts of shrub long-term health is putting the right plant at the right location. I am often asked to identify plants that can grow in the shade, full sun, attract wildlife, have fall color, can tolerate wet and/or dry conditions. This can be a daunting decision for a homeowner.

A new Extension Fact Sheet, HLA-6439, "Selecting Shrubs for the Landscape," can be obtained at your local OSU Extension Office. This fact sheet has an extensive list of over 350 plants that can be planted in these situations and other spots specific to their needs.

See you next time!

When the Oklahoma Legislature opened its 52nd session in February, three more chairs in the House of Representatives were occupied by Farm Bureau members.

"It is nice to have Farm Bureau leaders elected to the Oklahoma Legislature because they bring an understanding of agricultural issues and what's important to rural Oklahoma to the legislature," said Lori Peterson, vice president of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Public Policy Division.

As a steward of Farm Bureau's interests at the state capitol, she is understandably pleased that former OFB President Steve Kouplen, Osage County Director Eddie Fields and Grady County member Leslie Osborn now have the title of State Representative before their names.

They are three of the members of the current class of 17 freshmen in the state House. With their election, the 101-member House now has a one-in-four Farm Bureau member ratio. The three also will serve in the first Legislature where the majority party in both salons is not the Democrats.

"I just want the legislature to do its job and work together," said Kouplen, a Democrat who is the new representative for District 24. "I'll work with anybody and everybody to get something done."

"I feel we all need to be here to work for Oklahoma," said Mrs. Osborn, a Republican who is the new representative for District 47. "We don't need to worry about who gets power."

"I want to do what any good steward would do," said Fields, a Republican who is the new representative for District 38. "I'm seeking the betterment of our state and the people I represent."

Kouplen and Osborn were first time candidates, filling seats vacated by incumbents. Fields won his seat on try number two, defeating the incumbent who beat him by less than 500 votes in 2006 in the 2008 election by a 59 to 41 percent edge.

"I thought I'd give it one more try," said Fields, who hails from Wynona. "Congressman Lucas . . . told me it took him three times to win."

Fields contracted the "political bug" during his senior year in high

school when he served as a page in the Oklahoma Legislature.

"I said, some day I'd like to serve."

He has prepared for his new job since serving as a page. He was active in student organizations while earning his bachelor's degree at Oklahoma State University, where he returned in 2007 to work on his master's degree. He was elected to and served on his local school board for 14 years, has served on the county Farm Bureau board about five years, and has been a leader and member of the county and state Cattlemen's Association.

"I used all that as a building block for running, and it was all very helpful," he said. "I worked smarter than I did two years ago. My name recognition was better this time, and more people knew me."

Fields did his campaigning by going door-to-door in his district, attending town hall meetings, riding in numerous parades and attending fundraisers. He based his campaign on how he could best represent the people of the district at the capitol and help to move the state forward in a positive manner.

He and his wife, Christina, a fourth grade teacher at Cleveland Public Schools, have three daughters, Tailor, Jacie and Tristan.

"The girls helped me campaign. Without their support I wouldn't be here today. They're sacrificing for me to be here." His wife was accustomed to political life since her father was a county commissioner, and Fields says "she kind of knows" what to expect.

The new representative from Osage County is a third generation rancher, coming to the area when he was just an infant. Fields Ranch maintains a herd of Angus and Hereford cows.

"Farmers and ranchers would be better off with less government," Fields asserted while admitting there are needs in his district and the state that must be addressed.

The majority of the district is Osage County with a bit of northern Tulsa County added to the mix. Most residents of the district rely heavily on farming and ranching and the oil and gas industry for their livelihoods. Fields said a Wal-Mart, a correctional facility and the Osage Tribe are the biggest non-agricultural employers in the district.

Farm Bureau's in the House

Trio of members takes State Representative seats

By Mike Nichols

"We don't have a lot of manufacturing opportunities. . . I would like to bring job opportunities and give residents a place to work were they don't have to drive so far."

The job opportunities issue was a major concern constituents expressed to Fields during his campaign. Since taking office, he has met with city and county officials, Chambers of Commerce, school boards and superintendents, and the jobs issue also was on their minds.

"I want to help create a better quality of life and attract businesses so people can stay and raise their families," Fields said. "We need to attract our young people to stay here. They're our legacy. We need to take care of them."

He pre-filed 14 bills, addressing topics such as education, economic development, agriculture and natural resources, wildlife and workers compensation. He serves on the House Agriculture and Natural Resources, Education,

Transportation and Wildlife Committees.

Fields believes water will be a big issue for legislators this session.

"We need to meet our needs first, take care of our own first," he declared, referring to proposals to sell Oklahoma water to other states. Fields also said he has found that rural water districts in Oklahoma may need to be expanded, citing examples from his district where

constituents still must haul water for their homes and livestock.

"There are a lot of needs that we (the legislature) need to address. We've got a lot of good things to offer (in Oklahoma).

But we need to improve and get the most bang for the buck for our taxpayers.

"It is a privilege and honor to serve the people of District 36. You always need to give something back, and being a public servant is one of those avenues. I'm trying to give back. At the end of the day, I want to lay my head down and say I gave 110 percent," Fields said.



Eddie Fields, an Osage County Farm Bureau director who is a rancher from Wynona, unseated the incumbent to take the district 36 State Representative office in the 2008 election. He's pictured here in his capitol office.



In a somewhat ironic turn of events, Kouplen follows Dale Turner in the District 24 seat, which encompasses a small portion of Creek County and all of Hughes, Okfuskee and Okmulgee counties. Kouplen did his student teaching under Turner just before graduating in 1973 from Oklahoma State University with his bachelor's degree in ag education.

"Who would have known... that I would have followed him?"

Kouplen grew up in Okmulgee County at Beggs on his family's farm and ranch. He had planned to teach following graduation from OSU, but his son was hospitalized for an extensive period.

"I spent so much time at the hospital, so I started some farming along with the ranch." With an unkind farm economy, he returned to OSU to get his master's degree and fully intended to pursue a teaching career.

However, by the time he finished his masters in 1982 the farm economy had improved and "I

wound up never teaching." Between the time he earned his bachelor and master degrees, Okmulgee County Farm Bureau's Russell Miller convinced Kouplen to accompany him to a county meeting.

That meeting was the kickoff of a Farm Bureau career. Kouplen was elected to the county board in the '70s, and served continuously with

more than a decade as county president before being elected to the OFB state board as the district nine director in 1992.

His peers on the OFB board elected Kouplen as secretary, treasurer and vice

president during his service. He sought the OFB president's office and won it for the first time Nov. 14, 1999. Kouplen served in that capacity through 2007 when he became the organization's first president to leave office because of term limits.

As president of Farm Bureau, he traveled extensively both domestically and worldwide to promote agriculture. He also was routinely



Former Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Steve Kouplen now serves as State Representative for district 24, winning the seat in the 2008 primary election. Kouplen has a ranch and farm near Beggs in Okmulgee County. He's pictured here in his capitol office.



involved in dealings with state lawmakers during his tenure.

"Farm Bureau is really what awakened the political instinct in me because I got to go lobby and got involved with governmental issues. It was intriguing to me."

It was intriguing enough that he considered a run for a state senate seat while he was still OFB president.

"I had really thought about it. But, if I had ran for the senate I'd have to resign as Farm Bureau president and I wanted to be the first president to term limit out."

While he was in his last few weeks as Farm Bureau president, Kouplen's wife, Anita, died unexpectedly.

"I needed something to keep me busy. I realized Dale was terming out, and I thought I'll run," he remembers.

His candidacy for state office was a much different process than he'd experienced in Farm Bureau.

"In Farm Bureau, all county leaders are listed in a directory, so they're easy to identify. It wasn't that easy in the representative race because on that level you didn't know who the movers and shakers were. You had to head out and start sailing, meet people and get to know them."

Kouplen was successful in building a network of people to work in his campaign, which pitted him against the Hughes County assessor in the Democratic primary. It was winner take all, since no Republican filed for the office.

"It wasn't a me campaign, it was a we campaign. I was happy to win."

Kouplen carried Okfuskee and Okmulgee counties by overwhelming margins, but lost in Hughes County by just a few more than 300 votes.

"We did really well," he said, looking back at the election that saw him win with 57 percent of the popular vote.

"In the legislature, the perception of how things are and reality don't always sync," said Kouplen. "In government, there's lot of tradition and it is not always fruitful. A lot of the time is not utilized to its fullest extent."

The freshman lawmaker, who serves on the House Agriculture and Rural Development, General Government and Transportation and Energy and Utility Regulation Committees, pre-filed eight bills dealing with issues important to him and many constituents.

One bill he hopes to see enacted would make the money youngsters receive in livestock premium sales be classified as scholarships rather than income for tax purposes. Another he submitted would amend the Ag Link laws to allow veterinarians to access the funds if they do a certain percentage of their practice on large animals.

"Large animal vets are quickly disappearing, even in some rural areas. We need more vets for large animals," said Kouplen.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association there will be a 13 percent increase in demand for veterinarians involved in the food supply chain by 2016. However, there is a 4 to 5 percent shortage in the number of people willing to take those jobs. Only about 10 percent of all veterinary school graduates are choosing to work with livestock.

Two of the other bills Kouplen pre-filed deal with inequities in the retirement programs for teachers and state workers plus another to help rural firefighters by increasing funds for operations.

He also said he believes water will be a big issue during this session

as well as the state budget process since revenues have declined.

"Things will not be so tough this year, but next year I think they'll be tougher," Kouplen said referring to the budget issue. "I think a conservative approach is needed on spending."

He continues today to operate a commercial Hereford cow-calf herd started by his parents. In addition, he also grows wheat and grass hay. Kouplen's son and daughter-in-law, Sean and Angela, and their two daughters, Emery and Kennedy, reside in Bixby. His son-in-law and daughter, Richard and Shanna Gomez, and their daughter, Sydni, and son, Blake, reside in Beggs.

"I enjoy working with people. When it's not fun anymore, I'll do something else," Kouplen answered when asked about his future in politics.



"One of the first things I've learned," says Mrs. Osborn with a smile, "was that I needed a bigger calendar. I've just learned to juggle my schedule."

She grew up in Indiana on her parents' Hereford ranch, where her father was president of the Indiana Hereford Association. When she graduated from high school, her parents decided to move to Texas and dropped her off at Oklahoma State University on the way.

She graduated there with a degree in business administration, and met and married her husband, Tim, during her senior year on campus. The couple settled in the Tuttle area where Tim's family had been in agriculture for generations.

The couple now owns and operates a large farm and ranch in Grady County, with wheat, cotton and alfalfa plus a commercial cow herd.

"Diversification is our key," said Mrs. Osborn, who also owns and operates Osborn Pickup Accessories, which markets grill guards and tool boxes.

"We're losing our rural voice. I have a love for the land. There are just so many from the metro areas that don't understand agriculture."

It was that thought that pushed her into the political arena. She'd always been interested in politics, and was active in student government while at OSU. But the closest she'd ever been off-campus was several years of service on the Grady County FSA.

District 47 incumbent Susan Winchester decided not to seek re-election, and a few days after that announcement Mrs. Osborn was convinced to seek the office.

She hired a consultant to take care of mailings, and then she started knocking on doors in the district which covers Grady and Canadian counties including all of Chickasha, all of Tuttle and Amber, about 75 percent of Mustang and half of Pocosset.

"I wanted to go knock on doors and meet the people. I knocked on every door in the district, every Democrat and every Republican. . . It was more work than I thought it would be. It takes an incredible amount of time to knock on every door. It was six days a week eight hours a day."

She even had a debate during the Republican primary, and a major televised debate in Chickasha with her Democratic opponent prior to the general election.

"It boiled down to mainly rural versus urban," Mrs. Osborn remembered. "I count myself fortunate to get in the first time."

She won both the primary and general elections, taking 67 percent of the vote in each.

She hopes to keep all legislation “farm and ranch friendly” and is firmly opposed to the consolidation of smaller schools. She, too, sees the state water plan as a major issue facing lawmakers as well as the state budget.

“Oklahoma will probably see five percent across the board cuts in state spending this year, and that’s really not too bad. There already are lots of cries to use the rainy day fund, but I would prefer to get by for a year without using it. I believe Oklahoma can make it through this year by being conservative.”

Mrs. Osborn requested and was granted assignment to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. She’s also on the Natural Resources and Regulatory Services Committee as well as the Public Safety and the Government Modernization Committees.

“We will always be energy and agriculture in Oklahoma. I think we should drill, but we have to focus on other sources. We’ve got to focus on alternative energy. It will help our economy and America.”

She also is looking to eliminate mandates on general revenue spending, and hopes to

introduce a resolution regarding the initiative on education funding that voters will likely see on their 2010 ballots.

Passage of that state question would send about 85 percent of the state’s total budget to education, leaving just about 15 percent for everything else.

“I don’t,” Mrs. Osborn said, “believe that would be workable.”

Looking at the first few months of her life in politics, she said that

she’s “thoroughly enjoying it. I’m learning a lot, but there’s really nothing unexpected.”

Her husband has been “very supportive” of her decision to enter politics. The

couple’s two children, Will, a sophomore at Oklahoma State University, and Katie, a senior at Amber-Pocasset, backed their mother’s decision, too.

“By the time you get in, it’s almost time to start thinking about the next election,” Mrs. Osborn said with a smile. “I have no other political aspirations, but I’d like to serve more than one term.”



Leslie Osborn, a Grady County Farm Bureau member from Tuttle, won her first-ever race in the political area, taking the district 47 State Representative seat in the 2008 general election. She’s pictured here in her capitol office.

