I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve Oklahoma APA as Chapter President for the next two years. During the last five years as planning director of Oklahoma City, and adjunct professor of planning at OU, I have had the opportunity to meet many OK APA members and to more clearly define some of the major planning issues facing our State. Right now I see two key priority areas for focusing my energies. They are planning education and Oklahoma enabling legislation reform.

In terms of planning education the chapter has had an ongoing project of developing and publishing a “Handbook for Oklahoma Planning Commissioners” for several years. A draft edition of the “Handbook” is almost completed and will be finalized this spring. I hope to get the “Handbook” and related multimedia training materials to all the planning commissions in the state by this summer. I will also be inviting volunteers to answer questions and provide some technical assistance on planning issues. Also related to planning education in Oklahoma is the opportunity for the chapter to provide practicing planners with up-to-date training on current issues, trends and practice. I hope the chapter can offer a statewide planning conference sometime in the next two years.

The second primary concern I have is about the state of our planning enabling legislation in Oklahoma. Believe it or not, most of our planning laws were adopted in 1926 when most states adopted the federal model enabling legislation. Much of our procedure for planning, zoning, platting and other planning functions follow the 1926 model…Much has changed in the last 80 years and our planning processes should reflect the state of the art in planning today. I plan to set up a special APA Board-level committee on legislative changes and foster statewide discussion about what needs to be changed

(continued on Page 6)
On November 16, 2005, Tulsa celebrated the completion of another trail, the Osage Trail. With completion of the Osage Trail, another five miles have been added to the Tulsa metropolitan trails system, which now totals nearly 90 miles. These 90 miles of trails connect with more than 30 miles of Tulsa area bikeways, providing recreation opportunities and options for non-motorized transportation.

The Osage Trail, also known as the Midland Valley North Trail, begins at OSU-Tulsa and extends north along the right-of-way of the former Midland Valley or Osage Railroad. The trail also will link up with the KATY Trail, the Third Street Bikeway and the extension of the Midland Valley Trail, thus providing a future connection to the popular RiverParks trails.

Using 2001 Third Penny Sales Tax and federal funds, the City of Tulsa constructed this $1.2 million, 10-foot-wide trail within its city limits, to 56th Street North. Keith Franklin of LandPlan Consultants Inc. designed the trail. The contractor, Horizon Construction, began work last spring and is finishing this fall.

Both freight and passengers traveled on the former railroad. Although passenger service ended in 1934, freight service continued until 1998. The railroad’s last owner, the Watco Group in Kansas, donated the right-of-way to Land Legacy, a Tulsa nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and enhancing landscapes to improve the quality of life. Land Legacy, in turn, donated the right-of-way to the City of Tulsa.

To extend the trail north from Tulsa’s city limits, Tulsa County is using Vision 2025 sales taxes to construct (continued on page 4)
This past September, INCOG completed its 4th annual summer BikeToWork series. Over 100 cyclists working in and around downtown Tulsa participated.

BikeToWork (BTW) is part of a national campaign to promote bicycling as a viable means of transportation. Wherein most communities designate a day or a week to BTW, INCOG has extended the event throughout the summer, staging one BikeToWork Day per month from May to September. On each designated BTW Day, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., commuters would stop by to enjoy light refreshments and sign-up for prizes. Bicyclists also received information during the stop on a number of bicycle issues, such as tire repair, trails/bikeways, road riding tips, bike buddy program, and upcoming events.

BTW is INCOG’s attempt to make bicycling more visible in the Tulsa MSA region. The program seeks to accomplish the following goals:

• Educate bicyclists and others that the bicycle is a sensible and beneficial means of transportation,
• Make available basic information on bicycle commuting to potential riders,
• Encourage people to try bicycle commuting, and
• Increase the general public’s awareness and respect of bicyclists.

As the program develops, it will continue to serve as a positive reminder to the public of the many benefits of bicycling. Bicycling is a great solution to many of our society’s current challenges – public health, air pollution, traffic congestion and sprawl development. Promotions like BikeToWork help make bicycling and bicyclists more visible and accepted on our public roadways, where too often there are conflicts and crashes with motorists. Unfortunately, many of our streets and communities are not friendly for bicycle riding or commuting. However, where cycling is embraced and supported, communities benefit economically and socially.

To learn how your community and/or company can participate in next year’s BikeToWork events, visit www.tulsacommuter.com or contact Rachel Kelley, Alternative Transportation Programs Manager, or Aaron Bell, Senior Transportation Planner, at 918.584.7526 for more information.

Are you thinking about taking the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Exam in the near future? If so, you are invited to join an AICP study group in either Tulsa, Oklahoma City, or both. For more information, please contact Steve Boettcher, OKAPA – Professional Development Officer, (918) 579-9453, sboettcher@incog.org.

Legislative (continued from pg 1)

SB 1991 by Sen. Morgan
Changing the definition of the term "buildings" as it relates to the State Architectural Act.

SB 1043 By Brogdon of the Senate
Cities and towns; authorizing municipal government to adopt building standards; providing for ordinances passed with an emergency clause.

SB 1044 By Gumm of the Senate
Cities and towns; modifying annexation procedures and requirements.

(Editor’s Note: from www.oml.org):

Conservation Easements. HB 2619 by Rep. Walker (D-Elk City) and Sen. Nichols (R-Norman)
Allows any municipal governing body to borrow money and issue bonds to make improvements and obtain conservation easements within the municipality. The measure would prohibit municipalities from using eminent domain to obtain conservation easements. It would also prohibit conservation easements from being located in an area that would restrict or in any way modify an existing use, easement or zoning ordinances that relates to military installations.

The statutes define conservation easements as a nonpossessory interest of a holder in real property imposing limitations or affirmative obligations the purposes of which include, but are not limited to, retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open-space values of real property, assuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreational, or open-space use, protecting natural resources, maintaining or enhancing air or water quality, or preserving the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural aspects of real property. This is a request bill from the City of Norman. HB 2619 has passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and awaits a vote by the full Senate.
the Osage Prairie Trail from 56th Street North along the railroad right-of-way to Sperry and Skiatook. The combined length of Tulsa’s Osage Trail and Tulsa County’s Osage Prairie Trail is 16 miles. Many schools and parks are located near the Osage Trail. In addition to OSU-Tulsa, the trail passes Carver Middle School, Hawthorne Elementary School, Whitman Elementary School, Cherokee Elementary School, and the Tulsa Technology Center Peoria Campus. Parks along the trail include Lacy Park, Hawthorne Park, Chamberlain Park and Crawford Park.

Other recently completed and/or upcoming trail projects include:

- **Creek Turnpike Trail** extension was completed in October 2005. The 4-mile trail runs parallel to the turnpike between Memorial Drive and Garnett Road, then northward to the intersection of Highway 169 and 81st Street.

- **West Bank Trail Phase II** is scheduled for construction in spring 2006. This trail will connect with the West Bank Phase I trail at Interstate 44 along the base of Turkey Mountain and join with the bicycle/pedestrian trail at the Turkey Mountain parking lot at 67th Street and Elwood Avenue, where the trail already connects to the 71st Street crossing (bridge) over the Arkansas River. Estimated cost for this 2.13-mile trail is $1 million.

- **Cherry Creek Trail** is scheduled for construction in 2007. This trail will run 1.18 miles, connecting Philpott Park on West 36th Street near U.S. Highway 75 to the West Bank Trail near 51st Street and South Elwood Avenue. Estimated cost for this trail is $500,000.

**The following three Mingo Creek Trails** have recently received approval from the Oklahoma Transportation Enhancement Funding Program. City sales taxes and general obligation bond issues will provide the local 25 percent match for federal funding. The trails will be designed in 2006 and construction is estimated for 2007.

- Mingo Creek Trail between 11th Street and Mingo Road. This trail will run alongside Mingo Creek and has an estimated cost of $864,000.

- Mingo Creek Trail between 51st and 41st streets south. This trail will run along the west side of Highway 169 and south of the Broken Arrow Expressway, west to Mingo Road, then on existing streets north to 41st Street South. The estimated cost is $879,000.

- Mingo Creek Trail between 71st Street and 81st Street. This trail will run on the west side of Highway 169, west of Mingo Creek. The estimated cost is $417,000.

**Conference Announcement**

Courtesy of Suzanne Lennard, Ph.D. (Arch.), Director, International Making Cities Livable Conferences

44th International Making Cities Livable Conference on "True Urbanism & Healthy Communities"

Co-sponsored by the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture

La Fonda Hotel, Santa Fe, NM, May 18-22, 2006

Topics include:

- Principles of true urbanism
- The built environment & health
- Regional planning for the healthy city
- Community participation & democratic planning
- Urban fabric, social life & healthy communities
- Traditional town planning & civic values
- Transit-based planning
- Reviving America’s town squares
- Making places for civic engagement
- Ensuring the city’s ecological & social sustainability
- Child & family friendly communities
- Village style development
- Transforming suburban sprawl
- Teaching urban planning for healthy communities.

For more information, see www.LivableCities.org or contact Suzanne.Lennard@LivableCities.org

(Graphic courtesy of http://www.incog.org/transportation/Documents/TulsaTrails_2006.pdf)
Oklahoma is a large state in area, with 77 counties and some fairly long driving distances between our cities and towns. We have a varied economy, geography, and history. In Oklahoma, as in most states, the focus of most people tends to be towards the larger metropolitan areas. OKAPA is a statewide organization and we would like to visit the four corners of our state and talk to APA members in those areas. Too often the cities and towns in our state outside of the metro areas are referred to as “out there”. Our goal is to provide a little more information about various parts of our state and to encourage our members to travel all across Oklahoma. This time we are looking at the Southwestern Corner of Oklahoma and the City of Altus (population 21,447) in Jackson County. The city is home to Western Oklahoma State College (a two-year college) and is a regional education, medical, and shopping hub for Southwestern Oklahoma. Altus Air Force Base is the area’s major employer. Oklahoma City is about two and a half hours driving time from Altus. Dallas is about 3 hours away.

Barbara Burleson is the Planning Director for the City of Altus, a position she has held for 4 and 1/2 years. Barbara is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a Masters of Regional and City Planning (2000) and undergraduate degrees in Architecture and Interior Design. She has been a member of APA since joining as a student member at OU. Barbara grew up in Virginia in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., so she has experienced living in both a large urban area and in non-metropolitan areas. Her primary interests outside of work involve her family. She is part of the “sandwich generation” and lives with her parents to manage their healthcare needs. She also recently became a grandmother and has a grandson age 3 months and another grandson age 19 months.

Steve Boettcher, Professional Development Officer with OKAPA, spoke with Barbara in February 2006 and asked her some questions of interest to our newsletter readers.

**What do you consider to be the best kept secret about your corner of the state?** The quality of life in Altus and Southwestern Oklahoma is great. The land is beautiful and the people are friendly. Quartz Mountain State Park is a very scenic place and a great place to visit. It is only 17 miles north of Altus and it has great facilities, including a lodge which is situated between the lake and the mountains. The weather in Altus is usually a little warmer and drier than the rest of the state. This is a great place for outdoor activities such as golf, hiking, biking, and seasonal sports.

**What are the local issues that concern the citizens the most in your community?**

From a planning perspective, I would say community appearance. The City recently adopted its first comprehensive plan since 1976. As a result of the public meetings, many citizens are concerned about the overall appearance of the community while other residents don’t understand the need for municipal regulations. A citywide effort, New Altus Neighborhoods, was started to give all citizens information about the importance of community appearance and how it is tied to economic development and the future vitality of the community. The Mayor and City Council have been very supportive of planning efforts and code changes that will help to improve the community.

**What is the economy like in your area and is your city experiencing growth at the present time?** Altus and the surrounding area were definitely holding their breath during the BRAC announcements last year to see what would happen to Altus Air Force Base, our largest employer in the region. The recent BRAC announcements spared the air base from major cutbacks or closure.

Are You Ready to Take the AICP Exam?
By Jennifer Evans-Cowly, PhD, AICP and Chris Steins

Beginning in 2004, the AICP* exam moved to a computer-based format (CBT) after 25 years of the traditional pen-and-paper exam. The exam will be given at over 200 testing sites in the U.S. and Canada, and offered twice a year in two testing windows for 12 days each in May and November.

**How, When To Register?**
Beginning with the 2005 exam cycle, AICP has introduced a new application that combines the application and registration steps into one form and one fee. This eliminates the previous two forms and separate fee payments, and makes the process easier for applicants. Education and employment verifications for each degree and job listed in the application will continue to be required in order for your application to be considered complete for review.

AICP is now accepting applications for the May 2006 exam with a March 1, 2006 deadline.

You can now register to take the exam online on the APA’s website: [http://www.planning.org/certification/](http://www.planning.org/certification/)

(Continued on Page 10)
President’s (continued from pg 1)

or updated legislatively. We should have a frank discussion about the need for and feasibility of statute changes that could address innovative topics and techniques, such as, transfer of development rights, density bonuses, mandatory comprehensive plan elements, farmland preservation, environmental impact assessment, public hearing procedures, platting alternatives and many other planning and development issues. Many other state APA chapters have had key roles in updating their state planning statutes. It is time for us to do so as well.

Planning is alive and well in Oklahoma, and its going to improve over the next few years. I am looking forward to working with all of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at john.dugan@okc.gov to discuss any aspect of the American Planning Association in Oklahoma.

Sincerely, John M. Dugan, AICP

AICP Exam (continued from pg 5)

Do You Qualify?

In order to take the exam, applicants must meet the following requirements:
1. Be a current member of APA
2. Be engaged in professional planning
3. Have completed a requisite number of years of education and professional planning experience (2 years of experience with a graduate degree in planning, 3 years with a bachelor’s degree in planning, but other combinations are possible: http://www.planning.org/certification/eligible.htm )

Preparing for the Exam

There are a variety of ways to prepare for the exam:

Seminars
There are a variety of possible preparation techniques. Many APA Chapters have professional development officers that provide or arrange for day-long seminars that introduce the exam and some of the topics. Contact your Chapter’s PDO for more information CPC

Study Manual for the AICP Exam
A good place to start is the APA’s Chapter Presidents Council’s CPC Study Manual. The purpose of this self-study manual is to help review basic planning concepts and to practice skills that are necessary for taking a multiple-choice test. More information on the CPC Study Manual:

Online Courses
If you’d like to start your studying early, and interact with students from around the US, consider an online course to guide your studying. The Planetizen AICP Exam Online Preparation Course, for example, is organized into a series of eight topics with a total of about 30 lessons. Each lesson is about 20-30 minutes to complete, enabling you to fit in a little studying whenever you have time -- during a lunch break, before work, or after you put the kids to bed. The course also provides over 450 sample questions, including a pretest exam and two sample exams. The course also includes five discussion forums to interact with other students and course staff, and ask any questions you might have as you prepare for the exam. More information about Planetizen’s AICP Exam Online Preparation Course: http://www.planetizen.com/courses/aicp/

Study Groups
If you live in an urban area, there are likely to be many others who will also be taking the exam. Using your Section’s PDO or individual networking to create a study group of 4-6 people. Take turns preparing sample questions and “study sheets” on specific topics to share with the other members of the group. Study groups can be a great way to keep you motivated and studying for the exam when things get busy at work.

What’s on the Exam?
The AICP Comprehensive Planning Examination consists of 170 multiple choice questions (20 of which are pre-test and do not count toward the final score) in two main areas: Knowledge (40 percent) and Skills (60 percent). The exam is weighted as follows:
• History, Theory and Law [15%]
• Emerging Issues and Trends [10%]
( includes impacts of social, economic, demographic, and technological changes, and Current topics (e.g., smart growth, neo-traditional, sustainable development)
• Plan Making (methods, strategies, and techniques) [20%]
• Functional Topics [20%]
(such as Natural resources and environmental quality, land use, Infrastructure, energy, recreation, transportation, housing, urban design, etc.)
• Plan Implementation [20%]
• Code of Ethics, Public Interest, and Social Justice [15%]

More details: http://www.planning.org/certification/subjectmatter.html

About the Authors

Jennifer Evans-Cowley, PhD, AICP has been a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners for the last six years and is an Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning at the Austin E. Knowlton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University. Dr. Evans-Cowley regularly teaches courses to prepare candidates to take the AICP* exam and serves as the professional development officer for the Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association. Dr. Evans-Cowley is the instructor of Planetizen’s AICP Exam Online Preparation Course.

Chris Steins, M.PL is co-editor of Planetizen (www.planetizen.com), and CEO of Urban Insight, a Los Angeles-based web development firm focused on providing technology services to the urban planning community. Chris Steins is the former Chair of the APA’s Information Technology Division, and former technology coordinator for the APA’s Los Angeles Section. He is the technology coordinator for the Planetizen AICP Exam Online Preparation Course. AICP is a registered trademark of the American Planning Association (APA) and the APA’s institute. Neither APA nor AICP are affiliated with the authors of this article in any way, except as stated.
The Oklahoma City Planning Department is implementing a new urban forestry program funded through a grant from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Services. NeighborWoods, which provides residents with free trees for their front yards, is one element of this growing program.

The purpose of NeighborWoods is to facilitate tree planting projects in low to moderate income neighborhoods by connecting local businesses who purchase the trees with residents who plant and care for the trees. This model, established by the city of Austin’s Urban Forestry Department, has been successfully adopted in many communities throughout the United States who have identified the positive social, environmental, and economic impacts of maintaining a healthy urban forest. Results from scientific studies on the benefits of a healthy urban forest include:

- Increase in property values
- Decrease in energy costs
- Improvement in air quality
- Reduction in storm water runoff
- Decrease in soil erosion
- Improvement in water quality
- Creation of wildlife habitat
- Increase in community pride
- Positive impact on consumer behavior
- Increase in recreational opportunities
- Improvement in health and well-being
- Reduction in noise levels
- Creation of buffer zones

Oklahoma City’s debut NeighborWoods project, sponsored by Chesapeake Energy Corporation, took place this December in the Helm Farm and Douglas Edgemere neighborhoods where volunteers and neighborhood residents together planted 175 trees in front yards and along street right of ways. Thanks to this innovative program, the rejuvenation of the aging urban forest within low to moderate-income neighborhoods is becoming a reality.

Thanks to this innovative program, the rejuvenation of the aging urban forest within low to moderate-income neighborhoods is becoming a reality.

Local businesses benefit by fostering a positive image in the community. Likewise, city residents gain by participating in a community stewardship project that stimulates pride in their neighborhoods and promotes a healthier environment.

For more information, contact Oklahoma City Planning Department at 405-297-2576 or the NeighborWoods Coordinator, Steve Neiroda at 405-297-3538.

Oklahoma City Beautiful, has resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response by the public toward the new program. Additionally, the city’s NeighborWoods coordinator has received many phone messages and letters from residents of the Douglas Edgmere and Helm Farm neighborhoods expressing their delight in the program and their wishes for its continued success.

There are dozens of low to moderate-income neighborhoods in Oklahoma City that would qualify for future NeighborWoods projects. Currently, the city is securing donations, and program sponsors as well as dependable volunteers to assist in the delivery and planting of trees. The Planning Department hopes the NeighborWoods program will eventually facilitate tree-planting projects in all qualifying areas and renew declining tree canopies in our older neighborhoods.

The deadline for returning your APA/AICP Election Ballot is April 13, 2006. Please see www.planning.org/elections for more information.
Start with 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Let your body be your guide. Don’t overdo it. If you can’t carry on a conversation or if you feel severe pain during the activity, you are probably pushing yourself too hard.

In our communities, opportunities for physical activity are available or becoming increasingly available. Sidewalks, stairs, trails, paths – whatever your choice – individuals should recognize these as not only routes to our destinations but also routes to better health. Make it fun!

You don’t need to be an all-star athlete to exercise; just grab a friend (or not), and enjoy a nice conversation, or be quiet and enjoy the surroundings. It’s these moments that we benefit from our surroundings to find peace in a walk or a bicycle ride. Don’t forget! Trails, parks and community centers are some of the most inexpensive and convenient locations for physical activity.

Want more information about physical activity, arthritis and other conditions? Visit www.health.ok.gov/program/apep or call (405) 271-5600. Sources: CDC Oklahoma State Department of Health Arthritis Prevention and Education Program.

Oklahoma responds!

Oklahoma is expanding its trail and sidewalk development especially in the Oklahoma City metro area according to Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG). ACOG is a voluntary association of city, town, and county governments in the Central Oklahoma area. As a metropolitan planning organization, ACOG coordinates all regional transportation planning efforts. In recent years, Oklahomans have realized that bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide users with direct routes to recreational and non-recreational destinations, serve commuter needs, satisfy other travel desires, and provide an alternative means of travel.

Contact Lisa Kehoe at lkehoe@acogok.org or visit http://www.acogok.org for information that will benefit communities across Central Oklahoma.

Have you heard?

Oklahoma City, Norman and Tulsa are providing healthy commuting opportunities with programs such as “Ride to Work” and “Bike and Ride.” Buses and trolleybuses equipped with bicycle racks have been big successes in both Tulsa and Norman, and these will soon be seen throughout Oklahoma City. The bike and bus combination is not just healthy, it will save commute time for existing as well as “wannabe” bus commuters since cycling to or from the bus is so much faster than walking.

A recent edition of APA’s award winning Planning magazine states that the very layout of our cities tends to encourage obesity and reinforces a sedentary, unhealthy lifestyle (and arthritis) because the car seems or sometimes is the only practical way to get around. In Oklahoma, more and more civic-minded people understand that neighborhoods with sidewalks and pedestrian/cycling trails (or shortcuts) are good for both the quality of life and the quality of health. Staying out of our cars and substituting an occasional walk to the store or even taking a longer walk from the parking lot at our job is a healthy start too.

The mantra “Pedal more, drive less” can be lead to good therapy for arthritis and our heart health. Visit www.gometro.org, for more information on the bike and bus program.
APA Lunches Back by Popular Demand!
by Larry Hopper, AICP, Oklahoma City Principal Planner, METRO Transit/OKC Transit Services Department

The Oklahoma Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) will resume holding Wednesday lunches in conjunction with the Oklahoma Alliance for Public Transportation (OKAPT). These will all be held at the new Winnie Mae Café located within the new State History Museum (2401 N.Laird) in Oklahoma City on NE 23rd just across from and northeast of the Capitol. FYI- You DO NOT have to pay admission to the museum to attend!

Each topic will be of interest to both community and regional planners as well as to transit advocates. Lunches will help OKAPA’s members have more fellowship and let us network some. Sandwiches and other food there is quite a bargain: we will dine at the Winnie Mae at 11:20 (amazing soaring space with an incredible view) and then go downstairs about noon to Classroom “B” to hear the AICP or other presenter and their Powerpoints. Should be done by 12:30.

- Weds., April 12, Larry Hopper, AICP: “The Future of Rail Transit and Better Bus Service in the OKC Metro: Not Just Diesel Anymore.” Learn about the recommendations of the recently concluded fixed guideway study from this PowerPoint- and a lot you did not know about light rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, and more. In fact, Larry will throw in some trivia from his own historical research on the impact of trolleys and railroads on the City’s early development. Note to planners: San Antonio National APA is the week of the 24th.

- Weds., May 10: Two topics to be announced (Tentatively: 2006 Oklahoma Legislative Update and the OCARTS 2030 Plan). By then we may need to thank some legislators who have been our friends…

Invite a Colleague and Be There!

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Campus Corner by Dr. Charles Warnken, University of Oklahoma

No...this message does not have anything to do with eminent domain.

Two key announcements:

1. ***SAVE THE DATE***
Friday, March 31st during the afternoon.

The Student Planning Association and the Division of Regional and City Planning (RCPL) have invited Carol Barrett, FAICP, current planning director of San Marcos, TX and a long time contributing member to the APA to campus that afternoon. Many of you may be familiar with her work on planning ethics and environmental justice matters.

Her travel schedule is currently being arranged and a formal announcement with an agenda will follow.

We anticipate a luncheon and a seminar/workshop during the early afternoon with a focus on a number of planning issues, including the recent changes to AICP code of ethics. The plan is to also have an early evening event: happy hour/dinner. Everyone is welcome for all events.

Plans are being arranged and I will provide a formal announcement with times and locations on campus when completed. We welcome anyone with an interest in attending this event. I am pitching it as a semi-formal event, one where students have a chance to spend time directly with her and feel free to ask her anything about the profession.

If any of you have any questions regarding ethics or any other items that you would like addressed, feel free to pass them on to me. I am going to give her a stock of items to discuss prior to her arrival.

2. RCPL will be hosting an alumni reception at the APA conference in San Antonio. It is scheduled for 6:30-8pm on Monday night, April 24th in room x110 of the Conference hotel, the Marriott Rivercenter. Some special announcements will be made at this event so try to make it. Alumni are encouraged to attend and anyone with even a vague affiliation to RCPL is welcome. Refreshments and drinks will be served. Check your conference program upon arrival at San Antonio to make sure there has not been a room change to this event.

Hope all is well.

Comments and/or questions can be directed to me.

Thanks.
Charlie-

and just to be official........

*******************************
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A mini construction boom has occurred since the BRAC announcement with the opening of an Applebee’s and construction of a Microtel, a Hampton Inn, a Walgreen’s, several new fast-food restaurants, 1.4 million dollar medical complex and the expansion of Jackson County Memorial Hospital. The population of the City of Altus has stayed fairly close to the 22,000 mark.

What would you say to someone about Altus (an individual or from a firm) that was considering relocation? Again, I would stress the high quality of life that we have here. Altus is a family oriented town and a great place to raise children. One major advantage to living in a smaller city is that you have so much extra time to spend with your family because the commuting times are so short. Many members of the military move to Altus for their careers and many have chosen to stay in Altus upon retirement from the military.

Are there any issues about annexation, zoning fence lines, or long range planning that are currently on the front burner? The City of Altus has a three-mile zoning review boundary around the city. There is no planning or zoning in Jackson County. Annexation has occurred with a series of small tracts being annexed to the city at various times. So annexation is not a major issue. The new comprehensive plan was done by Bret Keast, of Kendig Keast Collaborative, a national planning firm, and Gary Brickley, of Fox and Dreschler a local engineering firm. The consultant team addressed growth polices and also encouraged more city-county cooperation in long range planning. Keast has also been hired by the city to complete a Unified Development Code with a master plan for the City Reservoir budgeted.

What is the housing situation like in Altus? We have developers building in three large additions with several preliminary plats to be submitted before April. There is some multi-family housing construction such as four-plex development. Infill development is encouraged whenever possible. There is a need for affordable housing with incentives for builders who are interested in constructing affordable single-family housing units proposed in the new Unified Development Code.

Are there historic preservation efforts in the city? Altus is a Main Street Community. On the downtown square there is a 1940’s era movie theater that was recently reopened by a private group. In addition to showing movies again in the Downtown, the theater has been used for vaudeville productions and benefits and it is a great place for live entertainment. In the residential areas, one house was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places; however there is not a significant number of residential properties to form a historic district.

Have you added walking trails, a skate park, an aquatic center, or other new recreational features to your city in recent years? At one time a trail connection to Quartz Mountain State Park was proposed, however the plans stalled and the project was dropped. There is a new proposal for a trail system around the City Reservoir. We encourage the development of cluster residential development with trails in the open space. The city is using hotel/motel tax revenues to construct a $200,000 water slide and recreation complex at the existing municipal swimming pool. This recreational facility attracts people from outside the city to Altus during the summer months. Imagination Station, a community built playground with the assistance of Leathers and Associates, a national design firm, always has families children enjoying the playground which also features artwork and sculptures.

How do you access information from other cities and professional planners? I use the INTERNET and look at the municipal code websites. I try to attend any training and/or conferences about planning, community or economic development. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Oklahoma Municipal League offer training and programs which have helped with community development.

Is there another city that serves as an inspiration or model to your planning efforts in the City of Altus? I lived in Norman before moving to Altus and brought their zoning ordinance with me. I also look at Stillwater and Ardmore and other cities of our size to see what is happening in those places. Altus is a member of the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority and I often refer to other member cities. In addition, I serve on the board of the Oklahoma Community Institute and was a graduate of the first Citizens Academy. I have enjoyed traveling all across Oklahoma to attend our sessions. With an upcoming Citizens Academy continuing education opportunity, I look forward to making my first trip to Guymon in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

When did you first hear about city planning as a profession? As a child growing up in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., we were taught in grade school about the history of Virginia and Washington, D.C. and city plans including the L’Enfant Plan. We also made school trips every other year to Williamsburg, Virginia and saw the layout of that historic city. So as children we were aware that someone or some group planned cities or laid them out. As an adult, planning became closely tied to my studies in the College of Architecture at OU.

What can the Oklahoma Chapter of APA do to better serve your corner of the state? It would be nice to see a regional meeting in a non-metropolitan part of the state, maybe a rotation between the four quadrants of the state. Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center would make an excellent place for a statewide conference. It can be challenging to be a member of OKAPA and not feel like you are “lost” in the organization because of the geographic distance.

Any thoughts about the State of Oklahoma and the big cities vs. the rural areas “out there” mindset? We are all part of the State of Oklahoma and issues such as the closing of our military installations or the General Motors Plant in Oklahoma City affect us all. Any loss of jobs impacts our state with the lost population. I am particularly concerned about losing another seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.
Your Article Here!

The *Oklahoma Planner* is your Newsletter. Article submittals are welcome and encouraged. If you see or know of an article or other useful information, please email the newsletter editor at eennyart@incog.org. Thanks!

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Quartz Mountain Resort near Altus, OK (photograph acquired from [www.quartzmountain.org](http://www.quartzmountain.org)).