

# State water discussions kick off at Beaver

By Donald Stotts

BEAVER, Okla. - The future is now for Oklahomans who live in and near Beaver County, as they will be the first state residents to have an opportunity to share their opinions about what should be included in Oklahoma's upcoming 50-year water plan.

The first of approximately 40 meetings across Oklahoma will begin at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 12, at the Beaver County Fairgrounds Pavilion, located at 1107 Douglas, which is the route for Highway 23.

"Oklahoma's future depends in large part on the availability of clean water," said Mike Langston, assistant director of the Water Research Institute. "Our government leaders need to know the concerns Oklahomans have about the state's water resources."

The Oklahoma Legislature mandates that the Oklahoma Water Resources Board develop and periodically update a comprehensive water plan. The OWRB, in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers and other organizations, is also conducting technical studies of projected water demands and water supply infrastructure needs.

The Water Research Institute, located at Oklahoma State University but serving all of Oklahoma, is assisting the board with the planning process. The institute focuses on two major thrusts: citizen input and research to investigate identified issues and concerns.

"As a state, we're facing difficult decisions on a variety of water-related issues that will affect us, our kids and their kids," Langston said. "We strongly encourage all citizens to attend at least one meeting in their area, this is their opportunity to set the agenda for the water plan."

Though the ultimate responsibility for writing the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan lies with the OWRB, Langston said the WRI promises that every issue raised, concern expressed, question asked and suggestion offered will be faithfully communicated to the OWRB.

More information on the planning process is available at <http://okwaterplan.info> on the Internet.

Anyone seeking additional information about the upcoming Local Input Meetings should contact Jeri Fleming by e-mail at [waterplan@okstate.edu](mailto:waterplan@okstate.edu) or by phone at 405-744-9994.