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# TULSA COUNTY NEWS

COVERING SOUTHWEST TULSA AND ITS NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

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## First Ozone Alert!

Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality has declared the first Ozone Alert! for the season in the Tulsa Metropolitan Area.

Persons with lung or heart disease should be aware that increased pollution may cause them to experience adverse health effects. Ozone affects people differently. Symptoms include chest pain, coughing, sneezing, nausea, headache and pulmonary congestion. Active children, adults and especially people with respiratory disease such as asthma should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

### Take Action on Ozone Alert! Days

- Leave your car at home. Walk, bike, carpool, ride the bus or telecommute.
- Avoid long idle times. Walk in rather than drive thru.
- Postpone refueling. Wait until evening or not at all.
- Postpone mowing and using other gas-powered lawn tools.
- Postpone errands. Do them another day.

### Take Action All Summer Long

- Drive less. Leave your car at home one day a week. Try walking, biking, carpooling, riding the bus or telecommuting. Log your miles at [www.green-traveler.org](http://www.green-traveler.org).
- Avoid long idle time. Turn off your car after 30 seconds when not in traffic.
- Refuel in the evening and don't top off the tank.
- Do your garden chores gasoline-free. Avoid gas-powered lawn tools until evening.

## New policy could affect 25 positions

One result of the lawsuit settlement between the Black Officers' Coalition and the City of Tulsa is the "Adoption of Specialty Assignment Policy." The proposed policy dictates the manner in which the Tulsa Police Department posts, selects and maintains "Specialty" positions.

Specialty positions included but are not limited to: Narcotics, Gangs, Detective assignments (Robbery, Homicide, Burglary, etc), K9 Unit, Task Force, Traffic Enforcement Units, Street Crimes and Vice Units, Helicopter Unit, and other assignments that are not directly related to field operations.

A portion of the proposed policy specifies that "no officer may serve in one or more specialty assignments

See **Police staffing** on page 5



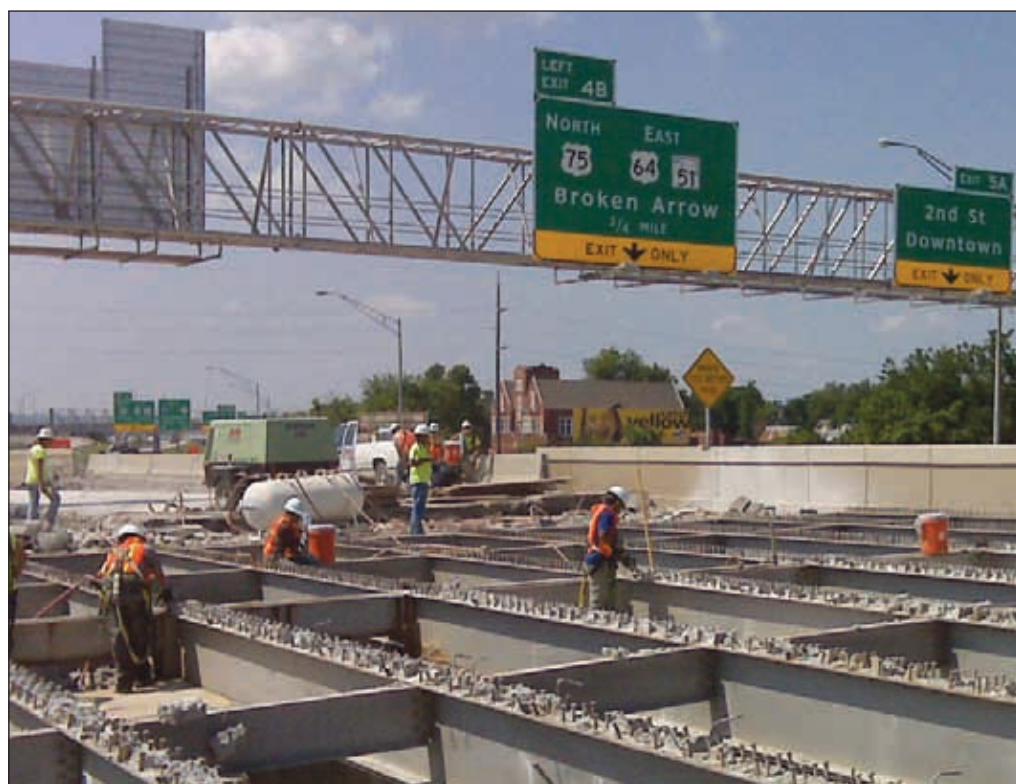
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The Webster Booster Club honored Butch Stegeman as the Volunteer of the Year at its annual Athletic Banquet.

See story and more photos on page 10.



A construction crew contracted by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation removes a bridge deck on eastbound I-244 over Brady. It is one of about 20 bridges that will be removed in the third and final phase of the Interdispersal Loop reconstruction project. SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Final phase of IDL construction begun

By Tracy LeGrand

The final phase of downtown's Inner Dispersal Loop \$75 million rebuilding reconstruction project got under way May 20 and officials say it will be complete in early 2011. The project began June 8, 2009 and is the single largest project ever awarded in the history of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Currently all lanes are closed eastbound on I-244/US-412 – the north and west legs of the IDL, according to the ODOT Media Contact Kenna Mitchell.

The northbound and southbound US-75 ramps to eastbound I-244 on the southwest corner of the IDL have all lanes currently closed, she said. The on/off ramps at Cincinnati/Detroit to and from the eastbound direction are also closed.

Southbound on the Tisdale Parkway the off-ramps to westbound and eastbound US-412/US-64/State Highway-51 are closed, said Jennifer Tyler,

ODOT project manager for IDL reconstruction.

Now completed, the first phase of the project involved surface repairs along the east and south legs of the IDL which include portions of I-44, US-75, US-64 and State Highway 51, Mitchell said. These changes were made first as the east and south legs are the main detour routes during the reconstruction of the north and west legs.

The second phase saw all westbound lanes of the north leg and southbound lanes of the west leg closed, said Tyler. This phase was completed about two weeks ago.

"The IDL's north and west

leg in the west bound direction are now open and completed," said Mitchell. "Every inch of concrete was pulled up and replaced and this includes more than 20 bridge decks and several miles of highway pavement. Now we are doing the same thing on the eastbound north and west leg."

### Patience is asked for.

"Since we've shifted to the east bound, for the first few weeks there will be some drivers who haven't figured out yet that they need to leave earlier or perhaps choose a different route," she said. "There will be

See **Construction** on page 3

"Every inch of concrete was pulled up and replaced and this includes more than 20 bridge decks and several miles of highway pavement. Now we are doing the same thing on the eastbound north and west leg."

**KENNA MITCHELL**  
ODOT Media Contact

## Teepee Tunnel builds Webster spirit



Katleyn Stegeman and Hilary Admire stand in front of the new Webster High School blow-up. It was used at graduation as well. It was bought by the Webster Booster Club and the school and is to be used by all sports. See story and more photos on Page 10.

PHOTO BY ANNA F. BROWN

# Campaign starting gun set next week

By Gary Percefull

Some candidates like Howard Pidcock and Glen Mulready already have been campaigning for months. They are vying for a soon-to-be-vacant seat – House District 68 which covers much of Southwest Tulsa County. Held by Chris Bengé since 1998, it will become open because of term limits.

Candidates for a handful of other county, state and federal offices already have launched vigorous campaigns. But no one becomes an official candidate for office in November's elections until next week. Monday

through Wednesday, incumbents and contenders for a number of offices will file at county and state election boards to put their names on the ballot.

One race that will directly impact Southwest Tulsa County is for House District 68. Bengé, who was House Speaker for the past two years, must retire after 12 years in the House. Fellow Republicans Pidcock and Mulready have jumped headlong into the race along with Democrats Troy Zickefoose and Seth Watkins.

See **Campaign** on page 5



Tom Hufford rehearses the "Life Jacket Song" with the Pendleton family musicians, Marina and Emma Pendleton, the daughters of Scott and Virginia Pendleton. PHOTO BY ANNA F. BROWN

# Hufford expands his firefighter clown role

By Tracy LeGrand

While he is a busy man, Tom Hufford finds time to clown around. The longtime firefighter signs his E-mails with several "also known as" descriptions – "Firefighter Tom, Huffy the Safety Clown, President of Huffy and Friends, President of the Tulsa Firefighters' Educational Clowns and founding member of Tulsa Safe Kids."

His latest contribution to the community is a fire safety television program filmed at Webster High School's media studios.

A native Tulsan, Hufford went to work for the Tulsa Fire Department in 1984 and different assignments had him working as a first responder in Southwest Tulsa including a stint at "Fire Station 26 by West 51st Street and Union," he said. "I worked the west side of Tulsa until I was promoted to Assistant Fire Marshal in 2005. I now work out of the OTC Glass Building in downtown Tulsa."

A desire to help people is the best reason to be a firefighter,

he said.

"It is kind of like being Superman," Hufford said. "We're always there when someone calls. I will be with the TFD for 26 years as of June 8."

Firefighters are not highly paid, he said. This often leads to having a second job and for him lawn mowing and home remodeling were nowhere near as enjoyable as putting on some face-paint and oversized shoes.

"I also helped my father with his company, United Service and Repair, and we repaired audio visual equipment for school systems all over Oklahoma," he said. "Sometimes I'd be wearing a shirt with 'Tulsa Firefighter' on it. Teachers started asking me if I would talk to the class about Fire Safety."

The safety talks caught the attention of Hufford's district chief, B.C. Dow, who had been head of the Tulsa Fire Department Clown Society from 1983-1986.

"I over took the Tulsa Fire-

See **Huffy** on page 3

## Memorial Day tribute



Chuck Sittler places a U.S. flag at the cemetery of a Korea veteran at Meadowbrook Cemetery on South 65th West Avenue. PHOTO BY ANNA F. BROWN