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April

# THE BONDSMAN

2016

## CONTINUING EDUCATION TIME AGAIN

By law, each year the OBA sponsors two continuing education programs to help Oklahoma bondsmen obtain the educational hours required for re-licensure. Two identical programs are provided each year in the area of Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Members may choose which program they want to attend.

Under Oklahoma law bondsmen are required to seek renewal of their license every two years and must present documentation to show they have accumulated sixteen hours of continuing education in the last two years. The OBA sponsored programs allow its' members to accumulate eight hours each year and provides the necessary documentation of attendance. This year's programs have been submitted to the Oklahoma Insurance Department for approval.



This year's programs will be held in Midwest City (Oklahoma City) at the Sheraton Hotel & Reed Conference Center on Tuesday, June 7; and in Catoosa (Tulsa) at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Tuesday, June 28.

For both programs on-site registration will open at 7:30 am and the program will start at 8:00 am. After the opening formalities, the first speaker will be OBA President Dudley Goolsby to report on THE STATE OF THE BAIL BOND INDUSTRY AS IT PERTAINS TO OKLAHOMA.

Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John Doak has been invited to address the meeting, followed by Buddy Combs from the Department. Mr. Combs will bring a WRAP UP OF REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO BONDSMEN.

The speaker just before lunch will be Jeff Kirkpatrick, MCBA, speaking on USING MODERN ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR BUSINESS. He is vice president for industry relations for Universal Fire & Casualty Insurance Company in Jackson, Michigan. He also serves as Executive Vice President for PBUS, Professional Bail Agents of the United States.

After lunch the first speaker will be Gene Newman with Bail South in Jackson, Mississippi. His topic will be BETTER THAN A SHOEBOX. This will be a discussion of different plans and strategies needed to successfully close a bail bond business because of death or retirement . Mr. Newman currently serves as the Treasurer for the Mississippi Bail Agents Association.

Our next to last speaker will be Eric Granof, Vice President for Corporate Communications for the Allegheny Casualty Company. His topic will be WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A BAIL AGENT IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE.

The last speaker on the program will discuss BEHAVIOR THAT CAN ENDANGER YOUR LICENSE. We have invited attorney John Miller, one of the Administrative Law Judges that conduct disciplinary hearings for the Insurance Department, to bring this topic.

The last few minutes of the meeting will consist of finishing the attendance documentation.

A long standing tradition of giving out door prizes will be continued again this year. About 15-20 door prizes will be given out in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Both programs should adjourn about 5:00 pm.

## OBA CALENDAR

**Note:** While we will try to stay with these dates, they are tentative and subject to change. Please check the OBA website for updates.

Monday, May 23	11:00 a.m. Associated Bail Agents of Tulsa (ABAT) @ David L. Moss Center/ Training Room
June 2 & 3	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Pre-Licensing Education #2 at OBA
Monday, June 6	2:00 p.m. OBA Board Meeting & Annual Membership Meeting @ OBA
Tuesday, June 7	CE #1 – Reed Conference Center (Midwest City)
Tuesday, June 28	CE #2 – Hard Rock Hotel & Casino (Catoosa)
Monday, June 27	11:00 a.m. Associated Bail Agents of Tulsa (ABAT) @ David L. Moss Center/ Training Room
July 10-13	Mid-Year PBUS Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi
Monday, July 25	11:00 a.m. Associated Bail Agents of Tulsa (ABAT) @ David L. Moss Center/ Training Room

[www.okbondsman.com](http://www.okbondsman.com)

## NEW BONDSMAN LICENSES

- Threesa Crawford ..... Grady County
- Tavfulabi Crook..... Tulsa County
- Amanda DeLozier ..... Oklahoma County
- Michael Duncan ..... Cleveland County
- Garet Edwards ..... Major County
- Eric Fox..... Custer County
- Cody Garnett..... Osage County
- Jessy Haney..... Sequoyah County
- Sherry Higgins ..... Love County
- Ray Jones ..... Delaware County
- Krista McCray ..... Comanche County
- Jay Ramos ..... Oklahoma County
- William Shelton..... Oklahoma County
- Sharon Watson ..... Pittsburg County
- Houston Whaley..... Oklahoma County

## REMINDER !!!

With the two year license for bondsmen, grandfathered bondsmen are the ONLY bondsmen that are exempt from taking Continuing Education classes. In order to bank your credit hours for renewal, you MUST take continuing education every year!

*In Memoriam*

**Johnney Johnson (02/16)**  
**Scott Dark (02/16)**

# JUDICIAL REFORM IN OKLAHOMA MAY AFFECT BONDSMEN

Because of jail over-crowding, judicial reform has become a hot topic for the Oklahoma Legislature. With Oklahoma having one of the highest incarceration rates in the United States, and the highest for females, coupled with budget cuts for the operations of jails and prisons, the Legislature is being pressured to find ways to cut down incarcerations.

Governor Fallin has signed into law four bills that were being closely followed by the OBA. Known as the Criminal Justice Bills, each will have some effect on the bail bond business in Oklahoma.

House Bill 2472 gives prosecutors the right to file charges for non-violent crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies. The reason this is important is that a felony conviction almost always carries a minimum sentence of one year in prison, while a misdemeanor allows for time to be served in a local jail. This might help reduce the prison population, but could have an adverse effect on jail populations.

HB 2751 raises the dollar amount for a felony property crime from \$500 to \$1000.

HB 2479, given the number of incarcerations each year for drug possession, 2479 may have the greatest impact on prison over-crowding by getting certain prisoners out in a shorter time.

It reduces mandatory minimum and maximum sentences for drug possession crimes by cutting the mandatory maximum sentence for a first offence from ten years to five, and reduces the mandatory sentences for subsequent offenses.

HB 2753 allows first-time drug possession offenders to be sent to the state's drug court and for community sentencing.

Two pending state questions may become moot with the passage of the four Justice bills. The four actually accomplish the same changes called for if the two state questions are passed by the people in an election. It will be up to the question sponsors to withdraw the petitions or seek a statewide vote.

State Question 780 would reclassify many non-violent crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, especially property crimes causing less than \$1000 damage and simple drug possession.

State Question 781 is a companion measure to SQ 780 and would capture the savings from putting fewer people in prison and direct the funds to county services, including mental health programs.

The Legislature is also considering a number of other bills that would reform the judicial selection process for Oklahoma judges.

## OKLAHOMA COUNTY DISTRICT COURT CHANGING INITIAL APPEARANCE PROCESS

Oklahoma County's new presiding judge is, according to THE OKLAHOMAN in a March 19 story, promising to require judges who see jailed inmates for the first time to use discretion in setting bail and not just rigidly following a bond schedule.

The newspaper quotes District Judge Don Deason as saying, "It is my intention to make some changes in .... Setting bonds ... We need to have practices in place that mandate that we exercise discretion in appropriate circumstances ... not rubber stamp it." The interview comes at a time when there is a national movement to prevent the poor from being mistreated by the judicial system when they are accused of crimes.

A letter from the U.S. Justice Department to all state judges across the country called on them to review local bonding procedures to assure that they comply with due process, equal protection and "... sound public policy."

Judge Deason said, "The philosophy behind ... (the decision to change the system) ... is that we need to take into account a person's individual circumstances including the nature of the crime, criminal history -if any- and ability to make bond." This

change will obviously take more time in the initial appearance when the bond amount is set. This will require some major adjustments in the process.

At the present time most initial appearances in Oklahoma County are done by video before a Special Judge, who typically spends under a minute with each inmate to notify them of the crime or crimes accused of and the amount of their bail.

The Oklahoma County Public Defender's Office has announced its intention to help out the new system by employing an attorney to be at the jail when inmates appear by video for the first time before a judge. They will argue for appropriate bail and will try to identify inmates with medical or mental health needs so they can be diverted from jail to treatment facilities.

At the state level, the Oklahoma Legislature is considering a number of bills proposing changes to the court system, including bonding procedures, to help ease the county jail and state prison over-crowding in the state. These bills are being carefully monitored by the OBA.

## ANNUAL CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS HOTEL INFORMATION

**Tuesday June 7**  
CE#1 -Midwest City Reed  
Conference Center and  
Sheraton Hotel  
5800 Will Rogers Road  
Midwest City, OK 73110  
405/455-1805  
OBA Room Rate \$95.00 + tax

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**Room Rate Cut-Off Date**  
**May 17, 2016**

**Tuesday June 28**  
CE#2 – Hard Rock Hotel &  
Casino  
I-44 & Exit 240-A  
Catoosa, Oklahoma  
1-800-760-6700  
OBA Room Rate \$109.00 + tax

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**Room Rate Cut-Off Date**  
**June 4, 2016**

## 2016-2017 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ELECTED BY DEFAULT

The only candidates standing for election as an OBA officer or director for this year, 2016-17 were those automatically nominated by virtue of their current service on the OBA Board. No other nominations were received by the March 1st deadline established by a change in the Association's bylaws. The Association's General Counsel, Larry Tedder, had previously ruled that no formal voting needed to be conducted if no formal nominations were received. The bylaws provide that no nominations will be allowed from the floor or by "write-in", leaving only those automatically nominated by currently holding office.

Officers and Directors declared elected for the coming association year:

**Vice President:**  
**Treasurer:**  
**NE Region #2:**  
**SW Region #4:**  
**At-Large:**

**Raymond Merrill**  
**Wayne Holder**  
**David Hamilton**  
**Joe Bob Nelson**  
**Rusty Roberts**

*Next year, 2017, the officers of President, Secretary, NW Region Director and SE Region Director will be up for election.*

## ABAT DUES ARE DUE!

**ABAT, the Tulsa County association, is requesting that all interested bondsmen pay their 2016 annual dues of \$120. ABAT is very active at the local level in Tulsa County. Come join ABAT!**

## ABAT OFFICERS FOR 2016-2017

The Tulsa bondsman association, ABAT held the annual election of officers during their April meeting. Congratulations to the following ABAT officers for 2016-17:

**President:**  
**Vice President:**  
**Secretary:**  
**Treasurer:**

**Rusty Roberts**  
**Denny Wharton**  
**Salomon Dionicio**  
**Walter Armstrong**