



Fuel choices

Rising gasoline prices have forced Americans to consider alternatives • page 3



Globetrotters

Courtney and Ashley Paris could team up again in the European leagues • page 9

Red Dirt Journal



Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism

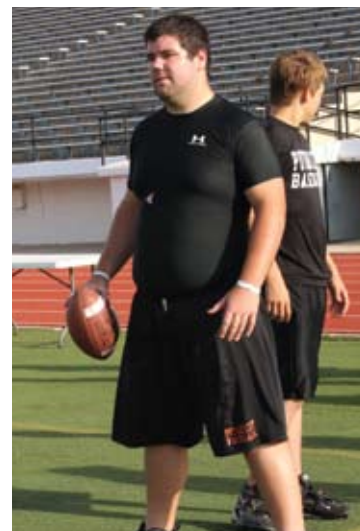
June 8 - 14, 2008 • Volume V, Issue 1

teen moms

More babies
born
to young
mothers
in Oklahoma
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Photo by Althea John



New bill targets obesity problem

Oklahoma's legislature recently voted to double the amount of physical activity required each week for kindergarteners through fifth graders.

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Reporters recall OKC bombing

Making sense out of the chaos was the challenge reporters faced on the scene of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and they say all reporters will face the same challenge when covering disasters.

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OIDJ converges journalism skills

High school journalists practice being broadcast journalists as well as newspaper and online reporters at the 2008 Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism workshop.

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Reporting in a time of crisis

Area journalists explain challenges, offer strategies for covering disasters

BY ELIZABETH CRAIG
Red Dirt Journal

It might be hard for those who don't remember the Oklahoma City bombing to understand, but "nothing like this [had] ever happened," said a television journalist who covered the event.

"It's probably a little hard to understand now in the wake of 9/11, but in '95, this was unheard of," said Tony Stizza, speaking to a group of high school students about his experiences reporting on terrorism.

On June 12, students from the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism summer high school workshop traveled to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum to hear from three journalists who covered the terrorist attack of April 19, 1995.

The three journalists were Stizza, a former KFOR-TV reporter who now works for the museum; Berry Tramel, a sports reporter for The Oklahoman who was pulled off his normal beat to cover the bombing; and Galen Culver, a reporter and photographer for KFOR-TV.

Of the three journalists, Culver was on the scene first. He called it a "spot news environment," where everything was "absolute pandemonium."

"For the first hour, no control. There's no control over basically what you do. There's unbelievable stuff, you've-never-seen-before kind of pictures 360 degrees around you," he explained. "I'd never seen anything before like it, and probably never again."

Culver believes the best way to tell a story in a spot news environment is "to get as close as you possibly can, that means if you can feel the heat of the flames, until some guy with a fireman's hat comes over and says, 'You've got to back up. It's not safe.'"

After the first hour of chaos, the emergency responders had gotten more organized and moved all the journalists to a certain area. They mostly had to be content with press conferences afterward. "The boring stuff that we have to do every day," as Culver put it.

Tramel, who was used to covering sporting events up close, said not being able to get close to the bombing site "was a little bit strange."

"That felt frustrating because it felt like you couldn't find out what was going on," he said.

After the situation became more



Photo by Jessica Donato

REFLECTING ON THE REPORTING: KFOR-TV reporter Galen Culver, former KFOR-TV reporter Tony Stizza and Oklahoman sports reporter Berry Tramel talk to student journalists at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum on June 12. They explained what it was like to cover the Oklahoma City bombing.

ON THE WEB

Covering disasters

Go online for more about reporting on disasters and the Oklahoma City bombing:

DART Center for Journalism and Trauma
● www.dartcenter.org

Poynter Institute
● www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=64160&sid=44
● www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=49&aid=66740

organized, the journalists' priorities began to change from running around getting pictures and video of everything that was happening to being compassionate and being human.

Culver said that once the excitement slows down, it's important to go up to people and ask them how they're doing, talk to them and be human instead of just sticking a camera in their face and hounding them with annoying questions.

The three journalists agreed that the best way to get stories about people is to care about them.

Stizza instructed the students about covering disasters. Although a person might make a great story, "keep in mind that you're dealing with fragile emotions; you're dealing with people who have gone through a lot, and they don't really owe you anything."

However, Stizza also said it's possible to get great stories if one uses the correct approach and tries to be human with people first. "If you approach it correctly, you'll get a lot more than you thought you ever would," he said.

One of the biggest challenges after the Oklahoma City bombing or in any other chaotic situation is accuracy.

Tramel's managing editor has a saying: "We don't print the truth, we just print what people tell us."

"We rely on other people, so if somebody tells us they found 150 bodies, we say 150 bodies were found, and this is who said it," Tramel said.

Culver said the best that anyone can do to cover a disaster accurately is to either get as close as possible to the event or to the people who saw the event happen.

However, Stizza admitted that "there will

be mistakes made in the heat of the battle. In a huge event like this...who knows what the correct information is.

"We try to get it out as quickly as you can, as accurately as you can, at the moment, all the while knowing that we're going to refine the process as the event goes along," he said.

The journalists also emphasized that if an event like the bombing happened today, the news coverage situation would be different.

"If this happened today, most of the images of record would be from people on the street, from their cell phone or camera that they've got," Stizza said.

Especially because so many people have cameras today, Culver's advice to the high schoolers was to "work a crowd" when looking for pictures. He said that many times people will even come to him with pictures.

Culver pointed out another difference in all news coverage today: in the Internet age, everyone is a reporter because of all the blogs and Web sites.

If everyone is a reporter, then what is the purpose of newspapers and television news stations?

"The one thing we can sell still is our reputation for being credible," Culver said.

Gas prices fuel alternative ideas

Americans cope with rising prices by driving less, asking candidates for solutions

BY LAURA CROCKETT
Red Dirt Journal

Sabra Hammett, 17, wobbles precariously on her bicycle. The image stands in stark contrast to the big '92 Jeep Grand Cherokee parked in her driveway. Because of high gas prices, Hammett has decided to ride her bike to close locations instead of driving her car.

Hammett teaches guitar at the University of Oklahoma and works at the Norman Institute for the Performing Arts.

"About 50 percent of what I make goes to gas," she said, highlighting the problem working teens face as petroleum costs rise.

Americans use about 385 million gallons of gasoline each day, according to the federal Energy Information Administration. Gas prices have risen from a national average of \$3.14 in May 2007 to \$4.04 in June 2008.

"The only way the price is going to fall is if ... the producers were producing a lot more gas, and that's not there. One of the things going on now is that the supply is very tight, and demand is very high," explained Frank Levy, an economist in Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Department of Urban Studies and Planning.

Gas prices are determined by supply and demand. Supply is growing smaller as petroleum is being used up, and demand is increasing as American consumption of gasoline grows. From February 2007 to February 2008, America's average oil consumption rose by 11,552 barrels to 479,691 per day, according to the federal government.

This small supply and high demand drives up prices, giving a lot of power to OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. How much petroleum OPEC produces ultimately determines approximately 73 percent of the price of gas.

Political conflicts in OPEC countries, which include Iran, Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela, spike prices. The declining value of the U.S. dollar inflates petroleum costs as well.

As prices rise, Americans turn to political leaders for solutions. Presidential candidates Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama are assuring



Photo by Elizabeth Craig

PAY AT THE PUMP: With gas prices reaching \$4 per gallon, Norman residents, like all Americans, are thinking of ways to cut back on their fuel costs. Those who drive sport utility vehicles and trucks, which tend to be less fuel efficient, have decided to drive their vehicles less to reduce how much they pay for fuel.



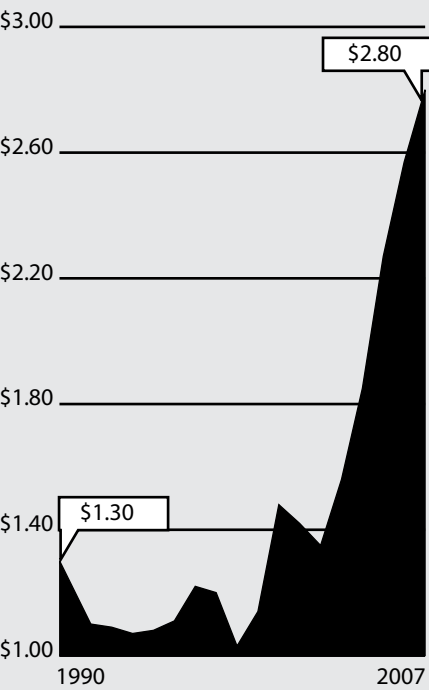
Photo by Red Dirt Journal staff

PEDAL POWER: Sabra Hammett has parked her Jeep Grand Cherokee and turned to pedaling around Norman for short trips or errands because of rising fuel costs.

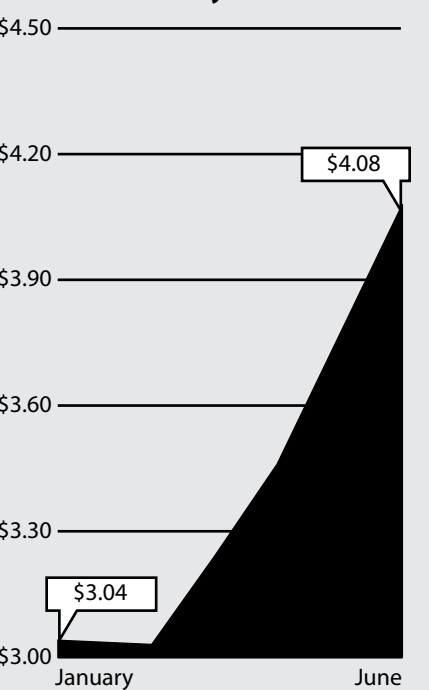
FAST FACTS Rising fuel costs in the U.S.

Americans have been paying higher gasoline prices over the past 17 years, but the price per gallon has risen sharply since 2008.

Costs from 1990 to 2007



Costs from January to June 2008



Source: Energy Information Administration (prices adjusted for inflation)



Photo by Elizabeth Craig

FUELING THE RACE:

Rising fuel costs have been fueling debate in the presidential race between Democratic candidate Barack Obama and Republican candidate John McCain. Obama has been campaigning on the need to invest in alternative fuel sources to cut back on the reliance on oil. McCain believes the U.S. should cut its reliance on foreign oil sources and refine and distribute from its own sources. McCain also supports a gas-tax holiday.

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Americans that their solutions will provide relief.

Obama, in contrast to McCain, said he plans to support and promote renewable energy sources by investing more than \$150 billion into bio-fuels and the promotion of commercial-scale renewable energy in the next 10 years.

When a product becomes expensive, Levy said, "You have to work on a lot of different things, solar and wind and bio-fuels . . . and try to get as much substitution as fast as you can."

Obama's solution relies heavily on investing in bio-fuels.

Some experts argue bio-fuels do not hold all the answers, and investments should be handled with care. "Bio-fuels are just one solution, not a panacea," said John Hontelez, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau, in a statement on the focus on bio-fuels.

Most cars are designed to accept only gasoline, requiring an overhaul of cars if Obama replaced gasoline with bio-fuels.

Obama said pressuring the auto industry to design cars that use less gasoline would help relieve the gas crisis. Fuel-efficient cars are becoming more popular, as people grow more wary at the pump. In June, General Motors announced that it would evaluate the future of the Hummer line. Sales of hybrid cars increased by 25 percent in the first four months of 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

A problem with relying on fuel-efficient cars to stem America's appetite for oil

ON THE WEB

Perspectives

Go online to watch videos of other Norman residents and our reporters explaining how they are dealing with the rising cost of gasoline.

Red Dirt Journal

- <http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj/reddirtjournal>

is that any relief would be far off in the future. "Eventually you end up consuming less gas," Levy said, "but that's a long-run process."

McCain advocates a gas-tax holiday, in which the federal government would suspend its 18.4 cent gas tax and 24.4 cent diesel tax from Memorial Day to Labor Day – the peak times for high gas prices.

Many leading economists believe that the gas tax holiday would provide only temporary relief. "A tax holiday would provide very little relief to families feeling squeezed," stated more than 308 American economists in a letter opposing the gas tax holiday.

They cited evidence that the holiday would encourage consumption instead of giving incentives to move away from petroleum.

"The gas tax plan doesn't get at it," Levy said. "The gas tax thing is not a solution at all. If you took off the gas tax, the price might fall for a couple of minutes, but then



Photo by Elizabeth Craig

PREMIUM PRICES: Nationally, gas prices have risen 90 cents over the past year and are expected to continue to rise in the coming months.

as the price fell, more people would start bidding for it and you would end up with the price right up to four dollars a gallon."

McCain has promised that the gas tax holiday would help perk up the economy.

"The effect will be an immediate economic stimulus – taking a few dollars off the price of a tank of gas every time a family, a farmer or trucker stops to fill up," he said in a speech on April 15 at Carnegie Mellon University.

McCain said he would reduce America's dependency on OPEC by diverting oil from America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Under McCain's plan, the U.S. government would stop taking a percentage of America's petroleum and instead distribute it to oil refineries. These refineries would supply gasoline to gas stations, which would increase the supply and help lower prices.

Until gas prices drop, teens and adults alike are suffering. Many teenagers are wary of jobs that require lots of driving because the cost of gas eats into their paychecks.

Hammett used to work three to four times a week at the Norman Institute for the Performing Arts, which is seven miles from her home.

"Now I work there about once a week because I can't afford to drive out there every day," Hammett said. "I'm thinking of just riding my bike around town instead of driving."

Many teens struggle to meet the cost of gas. Some look to alternatives such as biking. Jobs that require lots of driving, such as pizza delivery, become less desirable.

"We've lost a couple [of delivery workers]," says Michael Rodgers, an assistant night manager of the Pizza Shuttle in Norman. "The ones that drive the trucks and SUVs, they're trying to find new jobs, and I don't blame them."



CHILD'S PLAY: Mother Ashley Harris, 19, and her daughter Ariana, 4, enjoy a moment together reading one of Ariana's books. Ashley became a mom at age 15.

Photo by Althea John

Teen birth rates spike in 2006

Ineffective sex education is partly at fault for ending 14-year decline, expert says

BY EMILY ROBINSON
Red Dirt Journal

Teen births in Oklahoma spiked by over 500 births in 2006 after 14 years of decline, according to figures provided by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.

The number of babies born to teen mothers in Oklahoma rose from 6,795 in 2005 to 7,320 in 2006, the first increase since 1991.

Teen childbearing causes numerous problems for society including higher rates of school dropouts and poverty.

Teen births cost state taxpayers \$149 million in 2004, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Experts are looking for what caused the sudden upsurge in teen births.

The increase is caused by several factors including peer pressure, media influence, alcohol and other drugs; but mostly it is due to a lack of effective sexual education, said Tommy Chesbro, vice president of Education and Advocacy for Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma.

However, no one feels the impact of teen pregnancies like the teens themselves.

Natalie Benham of Nowata gave birth to her daughter, Hailey, 4, when she was 18. Today she is also the mother of another daughter, Hannah, 2, and remains married to the father of both girls.

Although Benham and her then boyfriend used condoms whenever they could, both teens felt uncomfortable buying them, Benham said. As a result they sometimes failed to use protection.

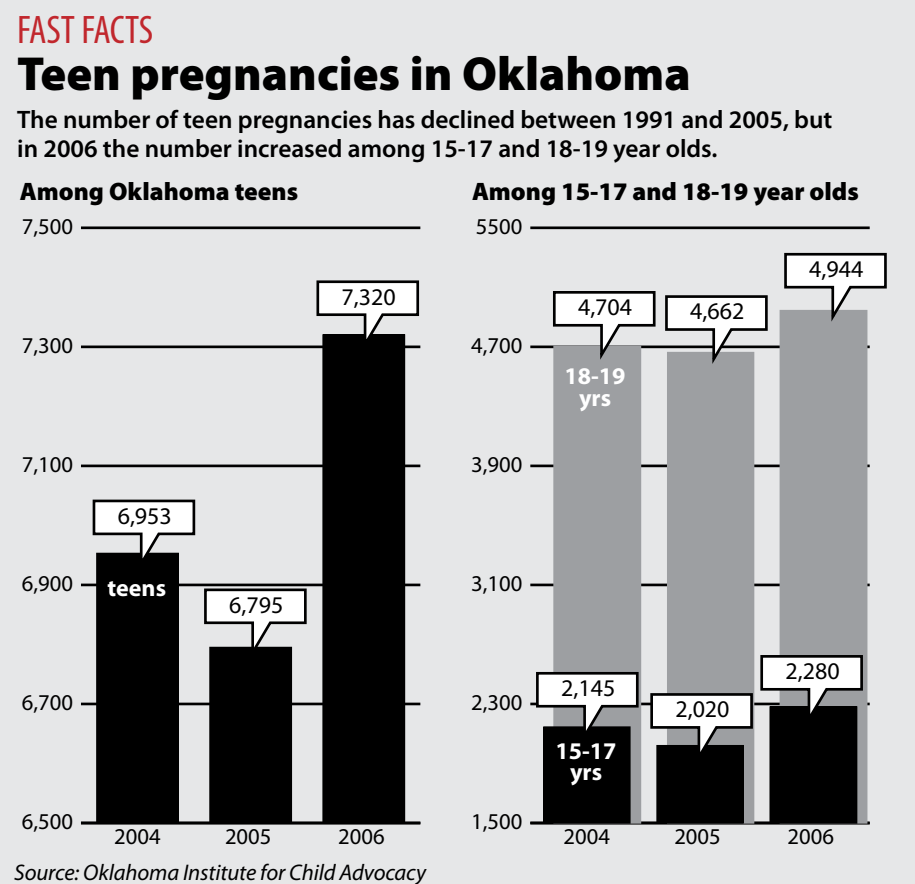
Benham believes she was unprepared by the sexual education she received at school.

"I wish I'd been talked to more," Benham said. She explained she didn't understand how easy it was to become pregnant.

"I wish I would have known then about the family centers they have there in Bartlesville where you could go and get condoms, and any kind of birth control without necessarily having your parents [know]," she said.

The sexual education teenagers do

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receive often doesn't keep them from having sex.

Chantell Brown, 18, is expecting a child in December. She said she was aware of the risks of being sexually active but made bad decisions.

Kelly Keith is a family advocate who works with teen mothers at Emerson High School in Oklahoma City.

"I'm, like, pro-abstinence but I'm also not going to be naive, in that you know teenagers are having sex," Keith said. So she also tells them about contraceptives when she knows they are sexually active.

The numerous theories about preventing teen pregnancy range from providing more abstinence only education to getting teens more involved with their communities.

A study conducted by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center indicates that teens that are involved with their communities, through volunteer work and personal relationships, are one and a half times less likely to have had sexual intercourse.

Although most people agree that community involvement is an effective way of keeping teens on the right track, some believe that more needs to be done to prevent teen pregnancy.

Leona Chapman is the center director at the Eden Clinic in Norman. She is a strong proponent of abstinence until marriage.

"I think education [is needed] for the community, and education not only for the students in our community, but also education for our adults," Chapman said.

Chesbro believes the message must be broader than abstinence only. He said that although Planned Parenthood supports abstinence as the safest approach, the group recognizes that teens need to have comprehensive



Photo by Emily Robinson

SEX EDUCATION: Kelly Keith, a family advocate in Oklahoma City who works with teen mothers, educates high school students about abstinence and safe sex practices.

sexual education, including information on birth control and contraceptives.

In contrast, Chapman said she does not give out information on contraceptives unless directly asked by a client. She believes abstinence-only education is the single way to help young women be prepared for the difficulties they will face in life.

Teen mothers have their own ideas about ways to prevent others from getting pregnant.

"Have more information about the options available out there for birth control if [teens] do decide [to have sex] because telling them not to do it is not going to stop people," said Benham. "There needs to also be information out there to let them know where to get protection if they decide to have sex."

Although teen pregnancy creates problems for the individual as well as society, sometimes becoming pregnant can help a troubled teen take control of her life.

Ashley Harris, 19, is the mother of a 4-year-old daughter, Ariana. Harris explained the ways her unexpected pregnancy positively affected her life.

"I didn't have a job before, but I've been working ever since I was pregnant with her... I just matured."

Harris also went to night school to get her high school diploma after the birth of her daughter.

Teen moms Harris, Brown and Benham agree on one point: although they love their children, they wish they had made better decisions and not gotten pregnant so young.

PROFILES

Family Portraits

Behind the statistics are the stories of the challenges faced by young mothers. Two moms talked about their situations.

Shelly Johnson

Shelly Johnson was 16 when she became pregnant, but taking care of a baby was no surprise for her. Eighteen months earlier, when Johnson was 15, her mother died while giving birth to a baby boy.

Because Johnson was the oldest, she took the responsibility of caring for her newborn brother, and raising him when she was not attending junior high school. Now at 16, she has a 7-month-old baby boy of her own.

She knows teen mothers pay a price for getting pregnant so young. She didn't tell people in her community about her pregnancy because she knew people would look down on her and tell her that her life was over.

She gets help from her extended family and from social services.

She has some advice for other young people who might be putting themselves in the same situation.

"You're not going to get enough sleep, and the hardest part is when the baby is sick and cries and cries and cries," she said. "It's hard to hear your baby cry, especially when he is in pain."

Johnson sings traditional Native American songs to her baby every day because she wants her son to remember his culture. Johnson believes that schools should teach more about teen pregnancy and birth control. She said she received no sex education in school and didn't know anything about getting pregnant.

Today Johnson is a junior at her Arizona high school and hopes to graduate. But she admits that if no family member is home to watch her baby, she has to stay home with him and miss school.

Natalie Benham

Natalie Benham, 22, had her first daughter, Hailey, at age 18. Benham was a senior in high school when she became pregnant. She and the baby's father married and moved to Virginia where he was stationed in the Navy.

When she first told her parents she was pregnant, she moved out of their house for awhile because they were so angry, but they later accepted her situation.

Benham got help from her high school counselor. Among other things, the counselor helped in transferring her credits from Virginia so Benham could graduate with her high school class in Bartlesville, Okla.

In high school Benham had little education on pregnancy and how to prevent it.

"I wish I had known more about the whole baby process, and how to prevent pregnancy," she said. "I didn't know how easy it was to get pregnant. We used condoms but not every time.



Photo provided



Photo provided

ALL IN THE FAMILY:

Shelly Johnson, 16, (above) and her 7-month-old son live in Arizona. Natalie and Todd Benham (left) and their daughter Hailey live in Oklahoma.

ON THE WEB

Helping hand

Go online to read Annie Taylor's story on work done by family advocate Kelly Keith who works with teen moms in Oklahoma City.

Red Dirt Journal

• <http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj/reddirtjournal>

We felt scared getting condoms. We worried about what people thought."

She also wished she had known about the family center in Bartlesville where she could have obtained contraceptives.

Benham said she and her husband loved each other and planned to get married, but not so soon.

"The hardest part of being a mom is not being able to do the things that I could do at my age," she said. "I gave up my freedom to take care of my baby."

Benham said the best part of having a baby is loving her and watching her grow.

— Althea John

Battling the Bulge

Legislators approve PE requirements to thin out number of obese children

BY MARCIA MCINTOSH
Red Dirt Journal

Gov. Brad Henry has signed a bill he hopes will rein in Oklahoma's childhood obesity rate.

"A number of experts have indicated that this younger generation may be the first in some time whose parents outlive them," Henry said during an interview in June. "A lot of that has to do with leading an unhealthy lifestyle."

Senate Bill 1186, effective July 1, requires 120 minutes of physical education per week for grades kindergarten through fifth, which doubles the current requirement.

Childhood obesity rates in Oklahoma have reached crisis proportions, according to Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition. Since 1980, the percentage of children who are overweight has more than doubled, and rates among teenagers have tripled. The reasons are clear: too much junk food and not enough exercise.

Even 220-pound Josh Ramirez, a senior at Putnam City High School, admits to flaws in his generation's health habits.

"I've always been a little chubby," said Ramirez. "It kind of got to me a little bit in elementary school, but then I started working out."

Ramirez, who plays linebacker, even knows how the extra pounds add up.

"I guess we're always in the car going home from work, stopping at McDonald's getting fast food and getting home late. We don't have time."

"I do football," Ramirez said. "Workouts start at 6:30 a.m. We run a lot. I'm used to staying about three extra hours for lifting and running."

The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta have developed a system to identify obesity.

Barbara Smith, school health coordinator at the State Department of Health, said obesity is determined by plotting the weight of children against their height. If this percentage is above 95 percent, the child is obese.

To see an example of this calculation go to <http://www.shapeup.org/oap/entry.php>.

If the percentage is between 95 percent

FAST FACTS

Obesity in Oklahoma

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett has called upon Oklahoma City to go on a diet and lose a million pounds. The verdict is still out on whether the goal is reached.

Why does obesity present a problem for Oklahoma?

- The percentage of the children who are overweight has doubled.
- Oklahoma is dead last in the nation in numbers of children who eat the recommended five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Oklahoma City ranked in the top 10 in eight categories based on junk foods purchased including ice cream, carbonated sugar drinks and pizza..
- Snacking on junk foods contributed to the city's 27.5 percent obesity rate.
- 37 percent of Oklahoma students are enrolled in P.E. compared to 55.7 percent nationally
- 44.7 percent of Oklahoma kids spend an average of two to three hours watching television or playing video games on an average school day, compared with 37.7 percent nationally.

Source: Forbes Magazine, Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition, National Survey of Children's Health

and 85 percent, the child is overweight; and if the percentage is below 85 percent, the child is normal weight.

Smith mentioned serious health consequences of obesity including diabetes. She said more children are developing Type 2, or adult onset, diabetes. The youngest case was diagnosed at age 4.

Obesity has also been directly linked to cardiovascular problems, hypertension, depression, and strokes among younger people.

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Photo by Kristina Rodriguez

PHYSICAL PROWESS: Putnam City High School student Toby Lambkin admits he was "chunky" when he was younger but now says he's in shape thanks to working out, being involved in sports and watching what he eats.



Photo by Chinh Doan

FITNESS TOGETHER: Freshman Crawford Dozier spots freshman Darrion Brown during a weightlifting session at Putnam City High School.

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The problem is being attacked in both education and advocacy.

State Superintendent of Schools Sandy Garrett explained how the mandated physical activity time can be used.

"The first 60 minutes is very supervised," she said. The second hour does not need to be in a physical education class. The exercise could be done in the classroom.

Norman Public Schools Health Coordinator Sharon Howard suggested a creative approach to meet the new requirement.

"They could do math jumping jacks," Howard said.

She also advocated a Norman program called Oklahoma Fit Families, which is being used to battle obesity.

The Fit Families program identifies overweight children and invites them to take part in nutrition counseling and physical activity.

"What they do ... not only involves the child but also the child's family," Howard said.

Governor Henry said the state has taken steps to curb the problem.

"We have tried at the state level to do things to help, like taking vending machines out of schools and doubling the physical education requirements," he said.

"The government can only do so much though. I ultimately think parents have to get involved too and make sure their children make smart



Photo by Marcia McIntosh

UNHEALTHY OPTIONS: Steering teenagers away from eating too much fast food too often is crucial to curbing Oklahoma's obesity problem.

choices and lead a healthy life style."

Toby Lambkin, a senior football player at Putnam City High School, attributed his success in controlling his weight to his parents' involvement.

"When I was younger, I was kind of chunky, but I started running every day, I got into sports, and I got in shape," said 290-pound center.

"My mom and dad make sure I eat right. They make sure I do things right and don't do bad things like drinking and doing drugs or anything. (They) make sure I go a straight line."

Legislator champions physical ed

New bill doubles weekly activity requirements

BY KRISTINA RODRIGUEZ

Red Dirt Journal

Oklahoma's obesity rates for children are among the highest in the nation, several studies show. That's why state Sen. Mary Easley sponsored a bill to double the physical education requirements for elementary students from one hour to two hours per week.

"With changes in society and our lifestyle, we have decided that it would be good for kids to have more activity," said Easley, even if they take 10 minutes a day and exercise in the classroom.

"We've taken out activity to do the basics," the senator said. "But I believe in order to score well, to be healthy and be able to learn, we need to have more physical activity."

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children get 60 minutes per day of moderate exercise. Oklahoma's current law requires only 60 minutes per week.

Easley's measure, Senate Bill 1186, will become law July 1. It will require students in kindergarten through fifth grade to have two hours of physical education per week.

Some lawmakers who opposed to the bill said their local school officials were telling them that the new requirements could force elementary schools to hire physical education teachers at a time when their budgets are decreasing.

Easley and other lawmakers compromised. To fulfill the new requirements, school officials can count such activities as recess and health and nutrition classes.

The lawmaker worked with the Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition and other partnerships to pass the bill.

Easley said she wished the new law would extend the expanded physical education requirement to students through the eighth grade.

Ameyka Pittman, project coordinator for the coalition, said Easley was a key legislative champion who was very instrumental in getting the bill passed.

The coordinator said the coalition sees the child obesity problem leveling off. "There's not been an increase but there's not been a decrease either," Pittman said. "We're working for those rates to decline."

Pittman said increasing physical activity in schools took wide-based community partnerships. They all worked for "the common cause of reducing childhood obesity in Oklahoma."



SEN. MARY EASLEY

ON THE WEB

Obesity in Oklahoma

Go online to watch videos of people who were interviewed for this story.

OIDJ

• <http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj>



Photo by Brooke Hamilton

HOOPING AROUND THE WORLD: Courtney and Ashley Paris take a break from their summer classes in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication in the Edith Kinney Gaylord Library. The twins explained the possibility of their playing overseas together after they finish their college careers at the University of Oklahoma.

Globe-trotting Paris twins

Ashley and Courtney Paris could team up again in Europe if they play abroad after graduation

BY CHELSEY KRAFT
Red Dirt Journal

With a year remaining in their college hoops career, twins Ashley and Courtney Paris are weighing the possibilities of playing basketball in another country following their 2009 graduation.

“A lot of women basketball players go overseas and play,” said Courtney Paris. “There’s just better opportunities over there right now.”

Although the formation of the Women’s National Basketball Association in 1996 offered college players the chance to play professionally in the U.S., overseas leagues, especially in Europe, have attracted large numbers of American players.

Of the 24 players who were selected for the EuroLeague Women’s All-Star Game, half had played college ball in the United States, according to the FIBA Europe Web site. The EuroLeague is Europe’s equivalent of the WNBA.

“Players go overseas to gain

more experience, prove they belong in the WNBA and get on a roster,” said Jenni Carlson, sports columnist for The Oklahoman.

Higher paychecks also attract players to the European leagues, Carlson said.

As a rookie in the WNBA, salaries range from \$30,000 to \$39,000, said Jared Thompson, a sports information director for the University of Oklahoma. In Europe, players earn anywhere from \$50,000 to \$600,000.

Both strong inside presences for the Oklahoma Sooners, Courtney and Ashley Paris could prove to be formidable forces in the European leagues.

Courtney Paris, who stands 6 feet 4 inches tall, led the nation in rebounds, averaging 15.3 per game, according to SoonerSports.com. She ranked fourth in the nation for blocks, swatting away 338, and ranked 26th in points per game averaging 18.6.

Courtney Paris’s performance for the 2007-08 season earned her several national honors, including being named to the Associated

ON THE WEB

Reporter’s Notebook

Go online to watch videographer Jessica Donato’s video clips of the Paris twins’ interview and read her column about interviewing for broadcast.

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Press All-American First Team and The Wooden All-America Team.

Ashley Paris, who is 6 feet 3 inches tall, averaged 11.3 points per game and pulled down 7.9 rebounds in her first season as a starter, according to SoonerSports.com.

If the Paris twins were to select a path overseas, they would not be the first Sooners to do so.

Dionnah Jackson, a member of the Sooners from 2002 to 2005, currently plays in a women’s basketball league in Israel.

Jackson said she is happy she is playing there.

“Playing overseas is great for your career,” said Jackson, according to a news Web site about the Israeli basketball leagues. “If you play in the WNBA or you don’t, playing out here is just a way to keep playing year round.”

Courtney Paris is already familiar with international competition, having spent time overseas since 2004, according to the USA basketball Web site. In 2007, she helped Team USA go undefeated in the FIBA Americas tournament in Valdivia, Chile.

And Ashley and Courtney Paris both recently returned from a 10-day trip to Europe with the OU women’s basketball team. While there, they played five friendly matches against teams in Italy and Greece.

Ashley and Courtney Paris know they probably won’t play in the WNBA on the same team after graduating, but do they think there is a possibility that the standout twins will join forces again in Europe?

“Maybe,” Courtney Paris said.

Q&A

Paris twins

Ashley and Courtney Paris talk about topics ranging from high-school best friends to playing tennis.

Ashley Paris

Q: What do you miss the most about California?

A: California is the dreamland, so I just miss living in the dreamland.

Q: Do you have any childhood friends that you miss?

A: Yes. I have a few childhood friends that I still keep in touch with.

Q: Who was your best friend in high school?

A: Anna Kringle, she was on my basketball team.

Q: What do you think about going to the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication?

A: I really like it. I’ve heard a lot of stories about what it used to be before they built this and it is a nice building. I am just grateful to have been a part of this building and this college.

Courtney Paris

Q: If you could be any person for the day, who would it be and why?

A: I would be Coach Coale and I would let us have a day off practice and I would give everybody snow cones.

Q: Other than basketball, which sports do you enjoy playing the most?

A: I was just at Red Earth and they had a little tennis set-up to teach people to play tennis so probably I wish I could be good at tennis.

Q: If you could visit any place in the world, where would it be and why?

A: Oh, Paris. I would visit Paris and see the Eiffel Tower and stuff. I’ve never been there.

Q: What is a random fact someone may be surprised to hear about you?

A: I own my own house.

— Brooke Hamilton

Participant profiles



ELIZABETH CRAIG

As a ninth grader at Norman High School, Elizabeth Craig helped start her school paper, the Tiger Tribune. Since then, the 17-year-old has served as a co-editor-in-chief and plans to serve as an editor in her upcoming senior year. With both her parents obtaining journalism degrees from Northwestern University, Craig was bound to find her way into journalism. In her spare time, Craig loves reading. "My favorite author is J. R. R. Tolkien, and I love the 'Lord of the Rings,'" she said. Craig came to the OIDJ workshop in hopes of learning more about journalism and taking it back to the Tiger Tribune staff. She hasn't decided which college she would like to attend but knows she wants to go where she has the opportunity to study either journalism or engineering.

— John Riley

LAURA CROCKETT

Laura Elizabeth Crockett, a 17-year-old senior at Holland Hall High School in Tulsa, has a passion for writing and the Spanish language. "I believe that words are one of the most powerful tools in life," said Crockett, who writes for the teen section of the Tulsa World. Crockett attended the OIDJ workshop with the goal of becoming a better writer. "I hope to polish up my writing and better express myself through writing," she said. Crockett, who is in the National Spanish Honor Society, got her passion for that language from her first Spanish teacher, who made Español seem more fun than learning French. For June, Crockett had a trip planned to Costa Rica, where she would be living with a family for six weeks. "Studying the Spanish language has opened up another world to me," said Crockett.

— Tynesha Wiley-McClendon



CHINH DOAN

Chinh Doan, 18, is fit, outgoing, friendly and speaks English and Vietnamese. Her birthday is on Christmas. Doan wants to know everything that is going on in the world. She watches television news every night about 10 p.m. She became interested in how "the news impacts the people's lives." She looks up to Anne Curry, who is not only a news broadcaster but also Doan's definition of hard work. She wants to help her family in Vietnam. Her role model is her mother. Her family encourages her with thoughts and prayers. Doan is a busy woman with leadership skills who graduated from Putnam City High School. She is a lector and altar server at her church. Doan plans to go to the University of Oklahoma to be a broadcast journalist. Her favorite food is Vietnamese food and she likes to drink bubble tea.

— Althea John

JESSICA DONATO

Jessica Rocio Donato moved to Oklahoma City from Chihuahua, Mexico, when she was five. Being fluent in both English and Spanish, she excels in her honors classes at Pathways Middle College High School, located on the Oklahoma City Community College campus, where she will be a junior in the fall. Born Sept. 1, 1991, to Rocio and Gabriel Donato, she is the second of three sisters, between Perla and Claribel. Donato enjoys playing defense on the Pink Panthers city soccer team. Although she has yet to choose a major field of study, she plans to take a college course in psychology at OCCC this fall. While her future career plans are still uncertain, Donato particularly likes journalistic writing because it helps her "stay current and learn about new stuff."

— Annie Taylor



BROOKE HAMILTON

Brooke Hamilton is the older of two children; she is 16 and her younger sister Heather is 14. Hamilton writes for the Norman High School Tiger Tribune, and also participates in the varsity pom squad. She is in the student congress and the junior senator of 2008-2009. Hamilton has studied dance for 12 years and now competes. She likes a variety of music and moves to it all. She enjoys reading, watching television, and hanging out with her friends and family in her spare time. She is always smiling, energetic and ready for more. She enjoys eating anything having to do with cheese, especially Chili's queso. Hamilton has come to the journalism workshop to learn more about broadcasting. After high school Hamilton sees herself as a broadcast journalism student at the University of Oklahoma.

— Kristina Rodriguez

ALTHEA JOHN

Althea Ivana John, a Navajo who is fascinated by Spider-Man and photography, came to the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism to learn more about taking pictures. John's love for photography was nurtured by her hero, her journalism teacher Susan Latham. "She taught me everything I know about cameras, and she worked in the newspaper industry," John said. Besides being the youngest participant at the workshop, John also has the longest hair. Her dark brown, shiny ponytail measures 39 inches. The mashed-potatoes-loving 15-year-old also traveled the farthest to get to OIDJ this year. She flew from Albuquerque, N.M., which is about a three-hour drive from her home in Navajo, N.M. When she is not busy daydreaming about Spider Man or taking pictures of everything from nature and people to sports, she enjoys "playing video games, catching a few Zs, or helping mom."

— Chinh Doan



CHELSEY KRAFT

Driven, determined and outgoing, 17-year-old Chelsey Kraft plays basketball and softball, and is a member of student council, her school's Quiz Bowl team captain, class president and editor of the Hooker High School Yearbook. Chelsey says that journalism has always been a major part of her life and that it "runs in the family." One of her greatest influences is her aunt Connie, who spent most of her life in a wheelchair. "Connie always had a smile on her face and it taught me that no matter what, I can find a reason to smile," said Chelsey. She plans to attend the University of Oklahoma and major in journalism. She aspires to work for ESPN.

— Brooke Hamilton

Participant profiles



MARCIA MCINTOSH
 Marcia McIntosh was 17 when she began work on her first novel. Today, she continues to pursue fiction writing, but she is also branching out into journalism, starting with the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism workshop. Between singing for her Bartlesville high school choir, playing in its orchestra, and dancing at a private studio, McIntosh has collected many academic awards such as a letter of commendation from the National Achievement Scholars program, and recognition as an Oklahoma Academic Scholar. She decided to give journalism a try when her sister Michelle, who has been involved with the workshop for the past two years, suggested she apply. McIntosh will begin her first year of college next fall at Washington University in St. Louis where she plans to major in English.

— Emily Robinson



JOHN RILEY
 John Riley, an 18-year-old graduate of Davenport High School, loves sports and wants to turn that love into a career. But instead of going the typical route of playing sports, he has chosen to go into broadcast journalism in hopes of getting to work at a network such as ESPN or FSN. This past spring, he was one of 10 high school students hired as a reporter by KOCO-TV to shoot video of games and interviews and upload them to the Oklahoma City station's High School Playbook Web site. Riley will be attending Oklahoma City University this fall, double majoring in broadcast journalism and English. He chose the smaller university because of the personal attention and easier transition from the small town of Davenport, Okla. (population of nearly 900). Riley, who is one-eighth Miami, will have his education at OCU paid for by the Gates Millennium Scholarship, which is awarded to minority students based on demonstrated leadership.

— Laura Crockett



EMILY ROBINSON
 While some kids were given teddy bears and little pink bubble gum cigars on their birthdays, Emily Robinson was handed a pen, and a proud heritage in journalism. Her father, a former journalist turned engineer, and her mother, a journalism adviser at the University of Oklahoma, were blessed with their second child on Oct. 14, 1989. Robinson kept up the family tradition by working on her high school newspaper, the Norman High School Tiger Tribune. She enjoys yoga, cooking, soccer, and walking her dog Abby near the OU campus. A year ago Robinson made the decision to become a vegetarian, thanks to U.S. treatment of animals, and hormone-injected meat. After camp Robinson will return home to her two cats, Noche and Nimbus, and prepare for her freshman year at OU in the fall.

— Marcia McIntosh



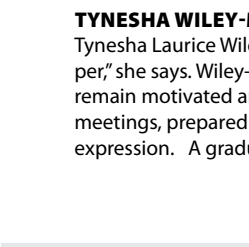
KRISTINA RODRIGUEZ
 Although 17-year-old senior Kristina Rodriguez may spend her Friday nights watching John Cena wrestle, she spends her weekdays hard at work studying to prepare for her future. Following graduation from Santa Fe South High School, where she is active in creative writing and Web design, Rodriguez hopes to attend the University of Oklahoma, major in nursing and eventually become a doctor. A former wrestler, she currently loves spending her time shopping and with her boyfriend. Two of her obsessions include the TV show America's Best Dance Crew and French fries. The oldest of four siblings, Rodriguez finds herself setting examples. "I try my best to talk to and help out my 13-year-old sister because she tells me that she views me as a role model," she said.

— Chelsey Kraft



ANNIE TAYLOR
 Seventeen-year-old Annie Taylor plans to attend OU in the fall where she wants to major in Journalism. She recently graduated from Durant High School where she was editor in chief of the school's newspaper for two years and an anchor for the weekly school news broadcast. Taylor is interested in journalism because, "I appreciate the job spectrum of opportunities and mass communication aspects." She likes to listen to indie rock, classic rock, emo rock, rap, electronic and techno. She had been a member of her high school's band, Pride of Durant, where she played the drums. Taylor currently has two jobs, one as a waitress, and the other in a clothing store. She still plays bass guitar for fun.

— Jessica Donato



TYNESHA WILEY-MCCLENDON
 Tynesha Laurice Wiley-McClendon, 18, expresses her bubbly self best through writing. "When I'm writing, I feel as if all my problems are draining out of me onto the paper," she says. Wiley-McClendon hopes to write a book about her life's struggles to assure teenagers that they can come from any walk of life and succeed as long as they remain motivated and driven. Writing for The Oklahoma City Friday newspaper and volunteering at The Oklahoma Gazette, where she edited articles and attended sales meetings, prepared her for the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism. The workshop, she hopes, will help her learn more about journalism as another mode of expression. A graduate of John Marshall High School in Oklahoma City, Wiley-McClendon will attend OU, where she plans to study law.

— Laura Crockett



ON THE WEB Video interviews
 Go online to watch video clips from interviews with each OIDJ participant.

Red Dirt Journal
 • <http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj/reddirtjournal>





Photo by Jim Fisher

CONVERGED JOURNALISTS: The Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism class of 2008 were exposed to almost every aspect of gathering and producing news. Students worked on news stories to appear in a newspaper, a television broadcast and a news Web site.

Multimedia expertise

2008 participants produce stories for print, broadcast and the Web

BY JOHN RILEY
Red Dirt Journal

Imagine a place where high school students interested in journalism could go, not only to confirm that interest but also to receive hands-on experience in their field.

That's exactly what the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism workshop offers.

The workshop, held at the University of Oklahoma each summer, offers an opportunity for high school students and recent graduates to explore the print, Web and broadcast side of the media.

The workshop, co-sponsored by Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, is one of the first of its kind to produce projects in all three media.

From writing print stories and shooting interviews, to shadowing reporters at The Oklahoman and touring the KFOR television studio, the Institute's 13 students got a feel for every part of the business.

Participants arrived at OU June 8, not knowing what to expect. Each student was different and brought something unique to the group.

After getting checked into their dorms and saying goodbye to their parents, the students were organized

ON THE WEB

OIDJ

Go online to find out more about the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism

OIDJ

- <http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj>

Dow Jones Newspaper Fund

- www.newspaperfund.org

into groups to cover stories.

The students chose stories that meant something to them. Topics included teen pregnancy, gas prices, childhood obesity and much more.

They had chances to write stories, shoot and edit film, make Web pages, produce television packages, capture photos and learn at least a little about what journalism requires.

Previous workshops focused on the print side of journalism. However, journalism is becoming a multimedia industry and Executive Director Ray Chavez said the Institute should reflect that change.

"The whole industry is changing,

and it is no longer just a paper," Chavez said. "We are exposing these students to a touch of reality."

Chavez is not the only person who realizes the need to teach all three areas.

"Where I teach, we do this," said Jim Fisher, a University of Utah professor and photographer involved in OIDJ.

By the end of the week, the students were a little tired but glad they had a chance to experience the workshop.

"I'm most excited about seeing all the week's work come together," said Chelsey Kraft from Hooker, Okla.

The students showed pride in their accomplishments and were glad to experience all types of journalism.

"I was primarily focused on print," said Norman resident Emily Robinson, "but I found out about how much other media played a big role."

As long as the way society sends and receives information keeps evolving, the media world will have to change to keep up. Having workshops such as OIDJ for young students gives them a chance to see what that world is about and if they want to make it their career.

The workshop is in its fifth year of letting prospective journalism students get a glimpse of what the rapidly changing business is like.

"You want to give it a professional look," said Chavez, "but it's more important for the students to get the experience."

OIDJ Student Participants

Elizabeth Craig, Norman High School
Laura Crockett, Holland Hall High School
Chinh Doan, Putnam City High School
Jessica Donato, Pathways Middle College High School
Brooke Hamilton, Norman High School
Althea John, South Sevier High School
Chelsey Kraft, Hooker High School
Marcia McIntosh, Bartlesville High School
John Riley, Davenport High School
Emily Robinson, Norman High School
Kristina Rodriguez, Santa Fe South High School
Annie Taylor, Durant High School
Tynesha Wiley-McClendon, John Mars

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Sue Hinton, Program Coordinator

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Ken Fischer, University of Oklahoma
Jim Fisher, University of Utah
Lynn Franklin, University of Oklahoma
Keith Greenwood, University of Oklahoma
Mick Hinton, Tulsa World
Chris Krug, University of Oklahoma
Bob Malish, Canon Cameras
Joey Senat, Oklahoma State University
James Tyree, The Oklahoman

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Student Technical Staff

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Tommy Gunter
Bianca Lopez
Kevin Malone
April Vickers
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The Oklahoman • KFOR-TV • Oklahoma National Memorial & Museum • OU Gaylord College of Journalism & Mass Communication • Canon Professional • Dow Jones Newspaper Fund • Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation • Native American Journalists Association • OU Student Media

The annual High School Journalism Workshop is scheduled every summer on the OU campus (specific dates will vary). Students wishing to be considered for participation should notify the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism. Updated application forms and information on the 2009 workshop will not be available until the spring 2009 semester. However, contact the following so you can be placed on the OIDJ mailing list.

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