



The Oklahoma *Update*

National parks in Oklahoma

National park areas are more than just pretty places; they are reflections of America as a whole, with a wide range of stories, experiences, and opportunities. Below are a few items of interest that reflect what's happening in Oklahoma national park areas. For more information on these topics or to plan a trip, please visit our official park websites at www.nps.gov/chic, www.nps.gov/okci, and www.nps.gov/waba

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Oklahoma's oldest national park area, Chickasaw National Recreation Area has been a refuge for outdoor traditions for over a century. Springs, streams, and lakes attract visitors to Chickasaw National Recreation Area, named for the Indian nation from whom the United States purchased the land for the park in 1902.

For more stories and information about the Chickasaw NRA, please turn to pages 2-3.

Oklahoma City National Memorial

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killed 168 people, and injured more than 650. The memorial is a public/private partnership established to honor the memory of the victims, their families, the survivors, and their rescuers.

For more stories and information about Oklahoma City National Memorial, please turn to pages 4-5.

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

The park preserves the site of the November 27, 1868, battle where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and more than 100 Cheyenne were killed or captured. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

For more stories and information about Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, please turn to pages 6-7.



Volunteers working on rerouting a short section of the Rock Creek multi-use trail.

IMBA Trail Care Crew conducts trail-building training

Park Ranger Eric Leonard

At the invitation of the park, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Trail Care Crew recently made their way to the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. On Saturday, March 6, 2010, the Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crew led by Chris and Leslie Kehmeier provided both classroom instruction and on-the-ground training in support of bike trails in Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Leslie Kehmeier stated that the number of participants "was one of the largest we've had in our eight months of traveling."

The Trail Building School was attended by park staff, bike club members, equestrians and other interested citizens from throughout the state, all shared an interest in learning more about maintaining the trails open to users in the park. Participants traveled from as far away as Edmond

and Tulsa for this hands-on learning experience. Following some classroom work the weekend's trail building activities focused on a series of projects along the Rock Creek multi-use trail. Rock armoring, re-routes, and maintenance were conducted along several hundred yards of trail. By the end of the day the revitalized trail had already seen traffic by equestrian and mountain bike riders.

Park Superintendent Bruce Noble hiked the trail as the work progressed, and visited with the volunteers. "This kind of hands-on stewardship better connects park visitors to the resource they are using," said Noble. "If we can work with IMBA and other partner organizations to develop our trail infrastructure, the potential for improved mountain biking use at Chickasaw National Recreation Area is very favorable," he added.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

In Brief

Park Hosts Spring Conference

On Saturday, March 27, Chickasaw NRA hosted the Oklahoma Alliance for Geographic Education (OKAGE) *Spring!* Conference. Over 35 Oklahoma educators gathered for a continental breakfast, provided by the Friends of Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Western National Parks Association, at the Travertine Nature Center. Park rangers led guided hikes and an exploration of the park's historical geography as part of the conference.

Park Logo Items Now Available in Bookstore

Early in the year the park bookstore began selling items bearing a new park logo. Developed by the Western National Parks Association in collaboration with park staff, the logo features the Lincoln Bridge. Logo items currently include t-shirts, pins, patches, and magnets.



New Junior Ranger Ambassador

For the second year the park is hosting a Junior Ranger Ambassador intern, Shelley Turner, of Daphne, Alabama. Sponsored by the National Park Foundation and the Student Conservation Association, the Junior Ranger Ambassador works in the park's Junior Ranger Station, and will continue to reach out to visiting children from June into the autumn.

2010 Teacher-Ranger-Teacher

Chickasaw welcomed its third Teacher-Ranger-Teacher this summer. Moore, Oklahoma Pre-K teacher Marcie Doussette will work as a uniformed park ranger for four weeks, conducting interpretive programs, staffing the Travertine Nature Center, and creating curriculum-based lesson plans.

Flow reduced from the Vendome Well

The park has recently implemented a procedure to reduce the amount of water flowing from the historic Vendome Well in Chickasaw National Recreation Area's Platt Historic District. Recent data demonstrates that the flow from artesian wells in the vicinity of the Park has dropped 87-100% over a 90-100 year period. The park has recently installed an automatic valve that will reduce the flow to approximately 50% between the hours of midnight and 4:00 a.m. The result will be a savings / reduction of 108 million gallons per year. The total reduction is approximately 36%.

Oklahoma Teachers explore "Teddy Roosevelt's Dream"

Park Ranger Eric Leonard



Participants in the summer institute discussing hydrotherapy and the history of Platt National Park at Pavilion Springs. (Amy Trenkle)

This summer the park and the Oklahoma Alliance for Geographic Education (OKAGE) collaborated to offer a four-day summer institute aimed at familiarizing Oklahoma educators with the National Park Service (NPS) and the units of the National Park System found in the state of Oklahoma.

On Monday, June 28, the group traveled to the Chickasaw National Recreation Area for a day-long exploration of the surface water resources, mineral springs, artesian wells, and aquifers serving the area, and learned more of the historical, aesthetic and American Indian tribal prerogatives that led to the preservation of the area under federal control. The teachers also explored several sites and structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s.

On Tuesday, June 29, the group headed west across the state and paused briefly at the Wichita Mountains NWR, to discuss Theodore Roosevelt's vision of public lands and his own visit there in 1905. The group spent much of Wednesday, June 30, at the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site.

Washita staff and Arapaho Chief Moses Starr discussed the story of the site, and opportunities for object-based learning.

Thursday, July 1, the teachers experienced a ranger-led program at the Oklahoma City National Memorial. Museum staff led a tour of the archives, which contains memorabilia and relics of the 1995 bombing. After lunch a survivor spoke to the teachers, and the museum's education staff discussed educational opportunities there.

Accompanying the group as a "ranger-in-residence" was park ranger Eric Leonard, and Amy Trenkle, last summer's Teacher-Ranger-Teacher as a Teacher-Consultant, providing insight into how to integrate park stories in a classroom setting.

Participants of the institute greatly enjoyed the experience, and remarked that the trip allowed them to see parts of Oklahoma in a completely different way. Among the ultimate goals of the institute is the posting of these teacher-created materials on the NPS web site for use by educators worldwide.

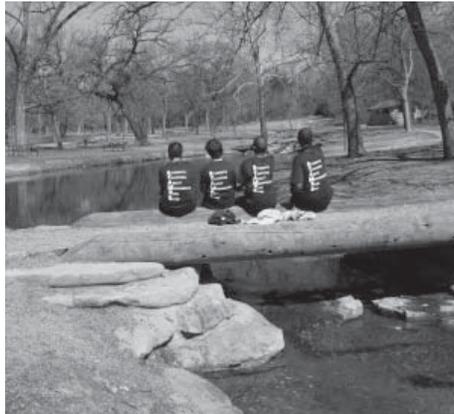
Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Returns from Washington, D.C

Park Ranger Lauren Gurniewicz

On Monday, March 29, Chickasaw National Recreation Area welcomed back 2009 Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT), Amy Trenkle, who brought with her four of her 8th grade students from Washington, DC for spring break. The students, Courtney Thomas, Jr., Jordan Person, Nick Heim, and Owen Duffy, are members of Students Teaching About Monumental Park Sites (STAMPS), created by Trenkle and Park Ranger Jennifer Epstein from the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, DC. STAMPS members visit national park units and share what they have learned with other students. Park Ranger Lauren Gurniewicz worked closely with Trenkle to prepare for their return to Oklahoma and coordinate a special event with Sulphur 6th grade teacher Jessica Mueller.

STAMPS visited over 100 Sulphur 6th graders at the school safe room, where Ms. Mueller's students shared a power point presentation about Oklahoma's three national park sites and Trenkle's STAMPS members gave a power point presentation about Washington, DC's national parks. The students were then able to interact by asking each other questions about their hometowns. The Sulphur students then invited their special visitors to join them on the school playground. According to Trenkle, "Jessica's 6th grade class did a fantastic job of introducing us to Oklahoma's three National Parks. They shared with us the history of each park, along with interesting facts. It really helped to set the scene for the beginning of our trip!"

During their visit STAMPS held a conference call with park Superintendent Bruce Noble to learn more about park management and careers in the National Park Service. They spent the remainder of their day exploring the park.

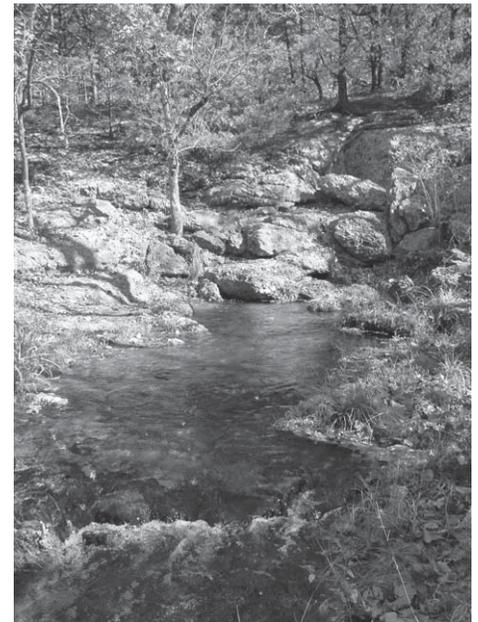


Top: STAMPS students enjoy Flower Park.

Bottom: Park Guide Minoma Littlehawk and Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison explore Cheyenne history and culture with the STAMPS students. (Amy Trenkle)

The STAMPS spring break trip continued with visits to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Washita Battlefield National Historic Site. Oklahoma City National Memorial provided the students with an in-depth look at the event, which took place before the students were born. Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison and the staff at Washita Battlefield immersed STAMPS in the history and culture of the site. They left with a greater understanding of what took place and an appreciation for the rangers there.

To follow the STAMPS and Ranger Amy on their Oklahoma adventure visit their blogs, stampsdc.blogspot.com and rangeramy.blogspot.com.



Antelope Springs (NPS/Eric Leonard)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

The park is named to honor the Chickasaw Indian Nation, original occupants of this land. The partially forested hills of southcentral Oklahoma and its springs, streams, and lakes provide swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, hunting, and hiking.

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Oklahoma City National Memorial

Fifteenth Anniversary Remembrance

Park Guide M. Tucker Blythe

Fifteen years. It feels like just yesterday, but at the same time it feels like so long ago. Fifteen years ago, a truck bomb ripped through glass and concrete and steel and changed a community and a nation. Most who were alive can tell you where they were and what they were doing when they heard about or saw news of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City—one of the defining events in our recent history.

In the days and weeks leading up to the fifteenth anniversary, rangers at the Memorial saw an influx of visitors and media. News crews came from across the country and the world to recount that day and to give updates on families and survivors. Visitors came to pay their respects to the victims and experience the power of this place.

On April 19, 2010, fifteen years after a fertilizer and fuel oil bomb detonated in front of the Murrah Federal Building, family members, survivors, rescue workers, and supporters from across the country gathered to remember. They came to remember “those who were killed, those who survived, and those changed forever.”

Mother Nature brought rain for three days prior to the anniversary commemoration. Those rains threatened to knock the bright pink buds off the Oklahoma red bud trees and force the commemoration inside. But the weather cooperated. The buds hung on and people gathered on the terrace benches overlooking the Field of Empty Chairs. The morning was briskly cool, but those gathered to remember were warmed by the sun breaking through the clouds and by the acknowledgement that hope had taken the place of devastation.

The remembrance ceremony focused



Ranger Mike Washington walks among the Field of Empty Chairs after the Ceremony. (NPS/Lindsay Compton)

heavily on this hope and the resilience of the people of Oklahoma and the nation. Pipe Sergeant Kevin Donnelly from the Drug Enforcement Agency’s Black and Gold Pipes and Drums corps led the speakers and the honored guests to the dais. After retired Oklahoma Highway Patrol officer Charlie Hanger read the Memorial’s mission statement, 168 seconds of silence stilled the crowd of over 1500 people.

Each speaker that followed touched on remembrance and hope. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sandy Garrett, announced the signing into law by Governor Brad Henry of House Bill 2750, incorporating the Murrah bombing into the Oklahoma history social studies curriculum. This curriculum change ensures that children will continue to learn about this event for years to come. Oklahoma Congresswoman Mary Fallin read House Resolution 1206, “remembering the victims of the attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building,” the families and survivors, as well as the “courageous response” in the aftermath. Frank and Cathy Keating, former Oklahoma Governor and First Lady, recounted the “Oklahoma Standard,” the outpouring of giving that came from the citizens of Oklahoma City



Canada geese fly over the Oklahoma City Memorial during the Ceremony. (NPS/Lindsay Compton)

and from around the state. And keynote speaker, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano stated, “Above all, we remind ourselves that what defines us as a nation, as a people, and as communities, is not that we’ve suffered, but how we’ve risen above it—how we’ve overcome.”

In the midst of the ceremony, two Canada geese flew over the site multiple times. The geese, with their magnificent wingspans, mesmerized the crowd. Sitting in the midst of the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial, those gathered may not have realized the symbolism of these geese. Canada geese represent the cycle of life and the “breaking free from one place to move on in your life in order to survive.” These geese do not abandon the sick and wounded in the flock—much like the citizens of Oklahoma City who tended to their flock in the aftermath of the bombing. Nature’s fitting tribute to the events of the day.

The ceremony closed after the reading of 168 names by family members, survivors, and rescue workers. The names included mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents, friends and co-workers. People taken from us in an instant, remembered fifteen years later by a community changed forever.

From the Oklahoma State Coordinator

We are now in the middle of what is arguably the busiest summer in the 104 year history of Chickasaw National Recreation Area and Platt National Park. I understand that this is a pretty bold statement considering all the years included in that time span. However, with several American Recovery & Reinvestment Act projects in full swing, I am confident that this summer is certainly among the most active seasons that the National Park Service has experienced in more than a century in Sulphur, Oklahoma.

Some projects are already underway, such as the Eastern redcedar removal project. If you want to see the positive results of this work, drive through the Point Campground. You will notice the total absence of Eastern redcedars and you will see views of the lake that have not been visible in decades. The ultimate goal of this project is to completely remove Eastern redcedar from approximately 60% of the nearly 10,000 acres included in the park. The trees will be cut this summer, allowed to dry on the ground this fall, and then burned with prescribed fire this winter. This project will help preserve water in the aquifer by eliminating these very thirsty trees, and it will improve wildlife habitat in the park.

Major changes are also about to begin at Veteran's Lake. Starting on Monday, July 19, the Veteran's Lake area will close for a six to nine month period. While we regret the necessity of closing this area during this time of very heavy construction activity, I think the community will be very pleased by the positive changes that will take place at the lake. One project will complete the pedestrian trail around the entire lake. This will create a safer and more esthetically-pleasing walking experience for the public. In addition, the first significant upgrade to Veteran's Lake Dam will begin since it was built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. While the dam is by no means unsafe, this project

will bring it into alignment with modern dam safety standards for decades to come. (This project will be funded by National Park Service Dam Safety funds, the only project I will mention in this article not funded through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act.)

Other improvements will begin this September at the Travertine Nature Center. This beautiful building has not had a major renovation since it was dedicated by Carl Albert in 1969. In the meantime, the building is moving closer to a catastrophic failure of its antiquated heating and air conditioning system. This project will replace the heating and cooling systems, much to the benefit of park visitors and employees working in the building. Additional work will be done to improve windows, doors, and the roof.

The sum total that these projects will reinvest in the park will exceed \$5 million. You may well experience some temporary inconveniences while these projects take place, but the long-term benefits for the park and the public will be enormous. The magnitude of this work at Chickasaw National Recreation Area and across the national park system will rival the contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. I very much appreciate the hard work being put into these projects by both park employees and contractors. I hope you appreciate their contributions as well.

In the meantime, summer is here in all its glory and the weather seems to be hotter than normal for this time of year. We can be thankful for the opportunities to picnic in the park in a shady grove, to take a cool swim at Little Niagara, or to boat on the refreshing waters of the Lake of the Arbuckles. At the same time, please take the chance to observe and appreciate the enormous progress taking place in the park during the months to come.

Bruce Noble, Superintendent



The East Gate (NPS/Amy Trenkle)

Oklahoma City National Memorial

The Oklahoma City National Memorial was created to honor those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever by the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The memorial is a public/private partnership established so that the American public can honor the memory of the victims, their families, the survivors, and their rescuers.

Since 2004, the Oklahoma City National Memorial has been managed as an Affiliated Area of the National Park Service with the Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation owning and operating the Memorial and Museum and the NPS providing interpretive services at the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial.

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Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

What's Been Happening

January 12 – the park hosted the monthly meeting of the Oklahoma Indian Tourism Association (OITA) meeting. OITA is an organization through the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum which links related sites in Oklahoma to preserve native stories and cultures and to promote authentic Native American experiences for visitors travelling to our state.

January 21 – the Oklahoma Prairie Heritage Alliance held its annual meeting at Washita.

February 27 – Seven Iowa State Architectural Design Students visited the park. They were accompanied by Dr. Henrietta Mann, President of the Cheyenne and Arapaho College in Weatherford, and several college officials. The students are working on designs for the new Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College in Weatherford, Oklahoma.

March 5 – Park Guide Joel Shockley led students from Fort Sill's Air Defense Artillery Captains' Career Course on a staff ride to the park as part of their academic curriculum. There were approximately 30 students plus seven international students. These rides are an invaluable opportunity for soldiers to walk the actual terrain of a historical battle, as they analyze the actions of the combatants and commanders and review decisions made by each.

April 16 – Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison traveled to Canute, Oklahoma to swear in 80 new junior rangers. The fourth and fifth grade classes from Canute had previously visited the park and were told if they completed their Junior Ranger Booklets, Ranger Harrison would go to their school and swear them in.

May 25 – Harper's Ferry Center museum specialist, Larry Bowers visited Washita Battlefield National Historic site to install artifacts relating to the event. These articles are on loan from the Oklahoma Historic Society and were previously displayed at the former Black Kettle Museum in Cheyenne. The artifacts include a Spencer Rifle, a 7th Cavalry uniform and articles that would have been found inside a tipi on the Washita landscape.

Junior Ranger Day 2010

Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison

Junior Ranger Day was a resounding success this year at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site. The park drew over seventy-five visitors and twenty-two brand-new Junior Rangers! The highlight of the day was raising the park tipi with the help of Kiowa tribesman, James Coverdale and four hefty volunteers. New this year to Junior Ranger day was long-time Cheyenne resident, Jerry Calvert, who showed the kids some of the different kinds of pipes he had made, and talked to them about the history of pipes.

Park Guide Joel Shockley portrayed Dr. William Renicke, Acting Assistant Surgeon for the 7th Cavalry. He captivated Boy Scout Pack 592 from Stinnett, Texas with an assortment of surgical tools and *faux* leeches.



Another special treat for the kids was the park's first ever scavenger hunt called "How well do you know your Grasslands?" This popular activity was led by Park Guide Drew Hughes. Other activities were to try and win a special feather playing the Plum Stone game, telling a story through Ledger Art and making your own Warrior Shield. All and all it was a great day!

Boundary Fence Replaced

Washita Battlefield NHS was very fortunate to have been included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) by receiving much needed funding to replace the park's entire 3 miles of boundary fence, which was in disrepair in several areas. With assistance from park staff members Carol Mapel and Richard Zahm, a regional project manager, Chickasaw NRA and Lake Meredith NRA, the project was put out for bid in late February. The contract was awarded to Ludemann Fencing Company from Pierre, SD, who began work on April 19, 2010. The crew worked for approximately two weeks to complete the project, despite inclement weather. Their stay in the local area benefitted the community and its businesses. Superintendent Lisa Conard Frost stated,



"This was a great opportunity not only to upgrade and better protect our national park and resources, but also to work together with private landowners, and support the local economy through this ARRA project". For more information on this and other ARRA projects in the National Park Service, please visit www.recovery.doi.gov

New Chief of Interpretation

Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison

Washita Battlefield National Historical Site is pleased to welcome Frank Torres as the new Chief of Interpretation and Operations. Frank arrived at Washita Battlefield NHS in April 2010 from Fort Union National Monument in New Mexico where he served there as Chief of Interpretation.

Frank is a native of Las Vegas, New Mexico. He received his undergraduate degree in Tourism and Leisure Services at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, NM in 1989. As a twenty year veteran of the National Park Service, Frank feels truly blessed to have had such a wonderful career. "Park Service people are dedicated to the mission and do this as a passion" says Frank. "There are many compelling stories to share in interpreting our history and heritage to the public."



He is very excited to be the Chief of Interpretation at Washita and looks forward to leading the park staff to continued success. Frank has previously served at Fort Union National Monument, Petroglyph National Monument, and Coronado National Memorial.



The Washita River (NPS Photo)

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

The park commemorates the November 27, 1868, attack where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and over 100 Cheyenne were captured or killed. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

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141st Anniversary Program

On November 27, 2009, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site hosted "A Day of Remembrance and Reflection" to commemorate the tragic events of that day in 1868, when Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer led troops of the 7th Cavalry in a surprise dawn attack against the sleeping village of Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle.

Approximately 100 visitors attended a blessing ceremony at the park overlook led by Chief Lawrence Hart. Among the speakers were Chief Hart, Dr. Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne tribal member Oveta Lira and Superintendent Lisa Conard Frost.

To mark this special occasion, the park tipi was raised by park staff. The drum group, The Red Moon Singers played during the ceremony, and Marie Whiteman and Ruth Brooks concluded



the ceremony by singing *Amazing Grace* in Cheyenne.

Afterwards all visitors were invited back to the Visitor Center for lunch and to hear a special presentation by Park Guide Minoma Littlehawk on the Place and Native Voice Project.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.™

Friends of Chickasaw NRA

The purpose of the Friends of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is to promote public appreciation of and support for Chickasaw National Recreation Area. This support includes conducting interpretive programs, increasing public awareness regarding the park and its mission, fundraising, and other volunteer activities. The IRS has certified this group as a private non-profit organization (501c3) and membership fees for joining are tax deductible. Anyone interested in receiving a membership application can send an email to chic_superintendent@nps.gov, or call 580 622-7220.

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Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum is a private non-profit organization, and does not receive any annual operating funds from the federal, state or local government. Museum admissions, store sales, the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, earnings from an endowment and private fundraising allow the Memorial and Museum to be self-sustaining.

Valuable gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Memorial help change lives each and every day. Make your donation to the Memorial and volunteer your time. If you would like to help, write to PO Box 323, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101, or call toll-free at 1-888-542-HOPE.