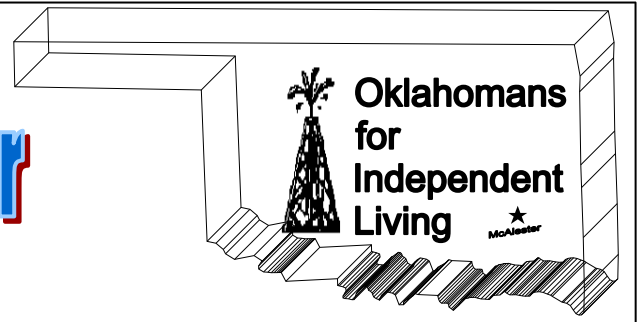


February  
2011

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# OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

601 East Carl Albert Parkway, McAlester, OK 74501, (918) 426-6220 or (800) 568-6821, Fax (918) 426-3245  
(918) 426-6263 V/TDD, OIL Web Page URL ([www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org)), [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))

One thing you can't recycle is  
wasted time.



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and we will remove you from  
our mailing list.

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would like to help save trees,  
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[oilnewsletter@oilok.org](mailto:oilnewsletter@oilok.org)

## FREE TAX ASSISTANCE

The VITA (Volunteer Income  
Tax Assistance) Program  
provides free assistance to  
anyone under \$50,000 annually  
with basic income tax  
preparation. The program helps  
determine if you are eligible to  
receive the Earned Income Tax  
Credit and any other credits  
that are available. They prepare  
a simple tax form and then E-  
File it for you. The service is  
free to anyone that meets the  
income guidelines. They started  
assisting in January and will  
continue through April 15<sup>th</sup>. Call  
the Ki-Bois Community Action  
Program in your area for an  
appointment.

Pittsburg County 918 423-3525  
Haskell County 918 967-3325  
LeFlore County 918 647-3267  
Latimer County 918 465-3381

The Southeastern Public  
Library in McAlester also offers  
free tax assistance and  
volunteers will be available  
beginning in February. Call  
918 426-0930 for details or for  
information on the program in  
your library area.

## TAX BENEFITS AND CREDITS FOR PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING WITH DISABILITIES

This publication presents basic  
information about existing tax  
credits and benefits that may be  
available to qualifying taxpayers  
with disabilities, parents of  
children with disabilities,  
parents of children with  
disabilities, and businesses or  
other entities wishing to  
accommodate persons with  
disabilities. More detailed  
information on these topics can  
be found in IRS Publication  
907, Tax Highlights for Persons  
with Disabilities, and in the  
other publications cited below.

**AS A PERSON WITH A  
DISABILITY**, you may qualify  
for some of the following tax  
deductions, income exclusions,  
and credits. More detailed

information may be found in the  
IRS publications referenced.

**Standard Deduction:** If you  
are legally blind, you may be  
entitled to a higher standard  
deduction on your tax return.  
**See IRS Publication 501**

**Gross Income:** Certain  
disability-related payments may  
be excluded from gross income.  
Veterans Administration (VA)  
disability benefits and  
Supplemental Security Income  
(SSI) may also be excluded  
from your gross income.  
**See IRS Publication 525**

**Impairment-Related Work  
Expenses:** If you are an  
employee and have a physical  
or mental disability that  
functionally limits your  
employment, you may be able  
to claim business expenses for  
attendant care at your  
workplace and other expenses  
in connection with your  
workplace that are necessary  
for you to work.  
**See IRS Publication 529**

**Credit for the Elderly or  
Disabled:** You may be able  
to claim this credit if you are 65  
or older or if you are under 65  
and you retired on permanent and  
total disability.  
**See IRS Publication 524**

**Medical Expenses:** are the costs of diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, and the costs for treatments affecting any part or function of the body. They include the costs of equipment, supplies, and diagnostic devices needed for these purposes. They also include dental expenses.

**See IRS Publication 502**

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC):** is for certain people who work and have low earned income. A tax credit usually means more money in your pocket. It reduces the amount of tax you owe. The EITC may also give you a refund.

Many working individuals with a disability that have no qualifying children, who are at least 25 years of age but under 65 years of age, qualify for EITC.

Earnings for EITC purposes can include disability benefits you receive from your employer's disability retirement plan, until you reach minimum retirement age.

EITC has no effect on certain public benefits. Any refund you receive because of the EITC will not be considered income when determining whether you are eligible for the following benefit programs, or how much you can receive from these programs. However, if the amounts you receive are not spent within a certain period of time, they may count as an asset (or resource) and affect your eligibility.

Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Food stamps.

Low-income housing.

Temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) benefits may be affected. Please check with your state.

**See IRS Publication 596**

**AS A PARENT OF A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY,** you may qualify for some of the following tax exemptions, deductions and credits. More detailed information may be found in the IRS publications referenced.

**Dependents:** You may be able to claim your child as a dependent regardless of age if they are permanently and totally disabled.

\*Permanently and totally disabled:

\*He or she cannot engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a physical or mental condition.

\*A doctor determines the condition has lasted or can be expected to last continuously for at least a year or can lead to death.

**Dependent with a disability working at Sheltered**

**Workshop:** You may be able to claim a dependency exemption for a qualifying child or qualifying relative. Gross income does not include income from services the individual performs at a sheltered workshop however they must still meet the other dependency tests.

**See IRS Publication 501**

**Adoption Credit:** You may be able to claim an adoption credit and exclude employer-provided adoption benefits from your income if you adopt a child with special needs.

**See IRS Publication 907**

**EITC for parents of children**

**with disabilities:** You may qualify for this credit if your qualifying child is permanently and totally disabled, regardless of age, as long as you meet the other requirements.

**See IRS Publication 596**

**Child or Dependent Care**

**Credit:** You may be entitled to this credit if you pay someone to come to your home and care for your dependent or spouse regardless of their age if they are unable to care for themselves. Persons who cannot dress, clean, or feed themselves because of physical or mental problems are considered not able to care for themselves. Also, persons who must have constant attention to prevent them from injuring themselves or others are considered not able to care for themselves.

**See IRS Publication 503**

**Medical Conferences:** You can include in medical expenses amounts paid for admission and transportation to a medical conference if the medical conference concerns the chronic illness of yourself, your spouse, or your dependent.

**See IRS Publication 502**

## **THREE EXTRA DAYS FOR IRS TAXES**

Everyone will get this extra time to file their taxes this year. They will not be due on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> but Monday the 18<sup>th</sup>. The bonus days come thanks to Emancipation Day, a little-known Washington D.C. holiday that celebrates the freeing of slaves in the district.

Emancipation Day falls on Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup> but it is observed in D.C. on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> which prompted the IRS to extend the tax filing deadline.

Congress waited until late December to pass new tax policies which means that taxpayers who itemize their taxes on a Schedule A form cannot file until February.

**PRE-EXISTING  
CONDITION  
INSURANCE PLAN**

The Affordable Care Act created this new program to make health care coverage available to you if you have been denied health insurance by private insurance companies because of a pre-existing condition. This plan serves as a bridge until 2014 when insurance companies can no longer deny or limit coverage or charge higher premiums because of a pre-existing condition.

Eligible residents of Oklahoma can apply for coverage through the state's Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) run by the Oklahoma Health Insurance High Risk Pool.

To qualify for coverage:

- You must be a citizen or national of the United States or residing in the United States legally.
- You must have been uninsured for at least the last six months before you apply.
- You must have a pre-existing condition or have been denied coverage because of your health condition.

The PCIP covers a broad range of health benefits, including primary and specialty care, hospital care, and prescription drugs. All covered benefits are available for you, even if it is to treat a pre-existing condition.

Monthly Premium	\$137 to \$704
Medical Deductible	\$2,000
Drug Deductible	\$200
Out of Pocket Limit	\$5,950

To learn more about this program, please call 1-877-885-3717 or TTY1-800-735-2988.

**OKLAHOMA PARENT  
CENTER BASIC  
RIGHTS/IEP  
WORKSHOPS**

Poteau – February 1<sup>st</sup>  
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tulsa – February 7<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Tulsa – February 21<sup>st</sup>  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Ardmore – Oklahoma Parent Center Conference - "Building Agreements, Creating Successful Change" on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 – 3:30 p.m.

"What You Need to Know About Special Education Workshop"  
McAlester - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 6:00 p.m, McAlester Public Library  
and in  
Stigler – March 24<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information call the Oklahoma Parents Center at 405 379-6015.

**VALENTINE'S DANCE**

The dance will be on Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 -10:00 p.m. It will be held at the J.I. Stipe Center, 801 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in McAlester. Bring your sweetheart or maybe come and meet one! Please bring a 2 liter of soda pop or a package of chips/store bought cookies. Call for free local transportation.



**NUTRITION AND  
COOKING CLASS**

Beginning on Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, the Oklahoma State University Extension Center will start another eight week

nutrition and cooking class for OIL consumers. It is not only an educational class but you are able to do hands on cooking activities. It is very important that you continue all classes once begun. The classes will meet each Friday, 1:00 p.m. at the OSU Center, 707 West Electric. OIL will be providing free transportation.

**Transportation**

OIL provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area, Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30. A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$1 per pick up in McAlester and \$2 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

\*Prices are subject to change.



**Are you eligible for the  
ADVantage Program?**

Are you a person with a disability who is at least 21 years of age?

If you said "Yes" then answer the following:

Do you require assistance?

1. On a daily basis in order to live, such as eating, toileting, grooming, bathing, dressing, and moving about to accomplish the task
2. In order to maintain or support daily functioning such as taking medication, preparing meals, paying bills, shopping, laundry, transportation, etc.
3. Are you at risk for nursing home placement?

**The ADVantage Program may be able to help. Contact any OIL ADVantage case manager at 426-6220 V/TDD.**

\*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 McAlester Shopping 7 – 10:45 am	4	5
6	7 Mental Health Grp. 1pm	8 HIV/AIDS Grp. 1 pm	9	10 Social 5:30 pm Boomerang Café	11 Valentine's Dance 7 pm J.I. Stipe Ctr.	12 Saturday Transportation
13	14 TBI Grp. 1pm	15 Men's Grp. 5 pm East Gourmet	16 Women's Grp. Noon Taco Bell	17 McAlester Shopping 7 – 10:45 am	18	19
20	21 OIL CLOSED for President's Day	22 Game Day 1 pm	23	24	25 Nutrition & Cooking Class 1 pm OSU Ctr.	26 Saturday Transportation
27	28 TBI Grp. 1pm					

\***Low Impact Exercise Class** meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center \***Alzheimer's Support Group**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 12:00 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 \***Cancer Support Group**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thur., 1:00 p.m., The Van Buren House, 426-5600 \***Diabetes Support Group**, 1<sup>st</sup> Tue., 6:00 p.m., MRHC Wellness Ctr Conf. Room, 421-8656 \*For information on **Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups** – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 \***Bariatric Support Group**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tue. MRHC Wellness Ctr. Con. Room, 5:30 p.m., 421-6600

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Southeastern Oklahoma



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