

**2008 HFA Annual Awards**  
**Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency**  
**Communications: Annual Report**  
**2007 OHFA Annual Report: *The Journal of Okie Dokie***

**Problem or Opportunity**

In 2007, the State of Oklahoma celebrated its Centennial. The year was filled with numerous special events that celebrated, honored and commemorated Oklahoma's 100-year birthday. Oklahoma's Centennial is a major source of pride and joy for many individuals, and Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency wanted to capitalize on these feelings in its 2007 Annual Report. As a state trust, OHFA wanted to do its part in commemorating such a monumental milestone. **Previous surveys of OHFA's annual reports** have revealed that the success stories of individuals in OHFA's programs are extremely popular with readers. For that reason, OHFA's Annual Report Committee wanted to focus on success stories in the 2007 Annual Report.

**Target Audiences**

Each year, the annual report is distributed to OHFA's employees, OHFA's board of trustees, elected officials, community organizations, companies with which OHFA conducts business and other interested parties. In addition, the report is utilized at various events throughout the year as an informational piece.

**Goals and Objectives**

One of OHFA's **business goals** is to provide **customer education**. Its annual report serves as the primary way it communicates the agency's many achievements, both to its internal and external audiences.

The specific **objectives** of this annual report were:

1. To utilize a theme that incorporates the Oklahoma Centennial.
2. To showcase success stories of Oklahomans – both famous Oklahomans and Oklahomans who benefited from OHFA programs.
3. To tell OHFA's 2007 accomplishments in a unique and memorable way that elicits positive reactions from readers.

**Project Implementation and Production**

In thinking about a way to combine Oklahoma's Centennial with the success stories of individuals, OHFA came up with the concept of a fictional 100-year old man named Okie Dokie and his journal. In creating the character of Okie, he was envisioned as a friendly, good-natured cowboy with a sense of humor and full of pride and love for the State of Oklahoma and its people. He also likes to sketch in his free time, and he is very talented. After all, he has been sketching for nearly 100 years.

In his journal, Okie describes how his great-granddaughter Josephine, a fictional OHFA employee, introduces him to individuals within OHFA's programs. After meeting them and learning about their accomplishments, Okie is reminded of other remarkable individuals he knew in his lifetime who shared similar characteristics to the people in OHFA's programs. These individuals are the famous Oklahomans Will Rogers, Jim Thorpe, Gene Autry, Ada Lois Sipuel and Mickey Mantle. Okie decides to write down their stories in his journal as a tribute to the State of Oklahoma.

The concept of Okie allowed OHFA to tell its story from an individual person's viewpoint, making the content more personal. Since OHFA began consistently issuing annual reports in 1998, information has always been presented from a third-person viewpoint. Okie's journal also allowed information about

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OHFA's programs, accomplishments, and the success stories of the people in its programs to be told in a **story format**. People remember stories, not facts, because they become engaged from beginning to end. The concept of Okie also provided the opportunity to illustrate the majority of the annual report with sketches instead of photographs, which have always been used in the past.

In producing this annual report, **OHFA's responsibilities** included coming up with the concept, writing and editing the copy, selecting the sketches to be created, and taking the photographs. OHFA hired the graphic design firm Old Hat Creative to design the cover and layout, to produce the sketches, and to manage the printing process.

### **Budget**

Each year, OHFA budgets \$25,000 for the creation of the annual report. However, for the past three years, OHFA's Communications Team has committed itself to producing a first-rate annual report without using the entire amount of the allotted budget. Two years ago, it spent \$7,000 and last year it spent \$12,000. For the 2007 Annual Report, OHFA spent \$4,500 on graphic design services provided by Old Hat Creative and \$6,320 for the printing, a total of **\$10,820 for 1,500 copies**. Staff salaries and mileage costs were also budget considerations. However, these are not considered line-items.

### **Results and Evaluation**

Objective 1 - Incorporate the Oklahoma Centennial.

Through the eyes and life of Okie Dokie, a man born the same year Oklahoma became a state, readers of the 2007 Annual Report were reminded of the wonderful people who helped shape Oklahoma's history. The stories of Will Rogers, Jim Thorpe, Gene Autry, Ada Lois Sipuel and Mickey Mantle promoted state pride.

Objective 2 – Showcase success stories of Oklahomans.

The creation of the fictional character Okie Dokie allowed OHFA success stories and the success stories of famous Oklahomans to be combined into a single compelling story. In addition, pairing the two groups according to a similar characteristics demonstrated that a person does not have to be famous to be worthy of admiration and respect.

Objective 3 – Tell OHFA's accomplishments in a way that elicits positive reactions.

The 2007 Annual Report's success and effectiveness is also measured by the feedback received from its readers. Many readers, within both OHFA's internal and external audiences, have positively and enthusiastically expressed how much they enjoyed Okie Dokie, his story, and his sketches.

OHFA employees were the first to receive copies, and many of them immediately oohed and aahed when they were handed their copy. Additional copies of the annual report placed on an office table with other OHFA literature quickly disappeared as employees took extra copies home with them. The stack of copies needed to be refilled on a regular basis within the first two weeks of its distribution. One employee said, *"Excellent job on the Annual Report! Good display of creativity and 'thinking outside the box.' I like the technique of presenting facts in the form of a story; makes for a more interesting presentation and holds the attention longer."* Another employee specifically asked for an extra copy to give to her son to read. OHFA's Communications Team also received phone calls and emails from employees telling them how

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they enjoyed reading the annual report and how they looked forward to sharing it with customers.

OHFA's Board of Trustees Chairman Richard Lillard and his wife Cindi repeatedly expressed how much they enjoyed reading the annual report. Mrs. Lillard even said, *"It should be a collector's item!"* A former Board of Trustee member also called OHFA to say how *"wonderful"* it was and that *"you guys always do such a good job up there."*

OHFA's Executive Director Dennis Shockley also received high praise from individuals he knew. He received an unexpected phone call from Ray Ackerman, founder of Oklahoma City's largest advertising and marketing agency Ackerman McQueen, congratulating him on such a *"great"* and *"fantastic"* piece and to ask for the name of the artist who produced the sketches. In addition, in a meeting Shockley had with OHFA's strategic planning consultant Lon Doolin, Doolin asked to be introduced to a member of OHFA's Communications Team so he could have his copy of the annual report autographed.

Among the respondents to the 2007 Annual Report Survey, 70 percent indicated that they read it front to back. Some of the comments received through the survey include:

- *"Most Annual Reports are status quo...and although OHFA Annual Reports are usually extremely creative the 2007 Report blew me out of the water...it was incredible...tying it to the Oklahoma Centennial, Oklahoma history, the cover design as a journal and the artwork and story line...all of it."*
- *"I have worked in the marketing and communications field for 25 years. My master's thesis work was completed in publication management. The die-cut cover made me want to open it and read it from cover to cover."*
- *"It was great and surprisingly original. It was better than the last. GREAT JOB!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"*
- *"This annual report had a creative story and concept behind it, unlike some other annual reports that just has facts listed."*
- *"The story line made it very easy to follow what OHFA is doing. And learned a few history lessons in the process."*

Other positive responses to the 2007 Annual Report received by OHFA were:

- Federal Housing Finance Board Chair and Presidential appointee Ronald A. Rosenfeld personally wrote OHFA a letter to express his thoughts on the annual report. He wrote, *"I thought it was really clever, and it certainly reflects the great work that you folks have done over the years."*
- *"I just opened and read, cover to cover, the OHFA annual report. I think it's the first annual report I have ever read. What a great publication! I continue to learn about our famous Oklahomans and this report was great in that it highlighted actual recipients. The report is a keeper!"*
- One reader enjoyed the *"originality of Okie Dokie in telling OHFA and Oklahoma's story"* and another liked *"the story from Okie Dokie about our great state!"*
- Former Oklahoma State Senator Ben Robinson, who currently works for U.S. Congressman Dan Boren, called OHFA to say how impressed he was with the annual report.