OKI is a council of local governments, business organizations and community groups committed to developing collaborative strategies, plans and programs to improve the quality of life and economic development potential of the Tri-State.
Heading into 2003, no one could predict the transformations that were in store for OKI. Changes in leadership, projects and even our physical location were all a part of this year of growth for the organization. What might have been a difficult year of transformation was, instead, an exciting rebirth for OKI. This rebirth has provided the OKI Board and staff with a revived sense of purpose and a renewed dedication to the OKI mission of improving the quality of life and the economic development potential of the entire region.

Our service-oriented mission speaks not only to the goals and objectives of our organization, but also to the way in which these elements are carried out. OKI strives to continue to be an asset to the regional community through cooperation, coordination and communication with our many constituents and the citizens of the region.

This year of growth has provided clear insight into the impact OKI’s decisions have on the region as a whole. OKI is where it all comes together for this area – from transportation to economic development to the environment. Through its many projects, OKI continues to define itself as a leader in developing a broad-based vision that can move this region forward.

In the following pages, it becomes apparent that our achievements and successes continue. These accomplishments were and are made possible by an exceptional professional staff and a determined Board of Trustees. These same people show a steadfast devotion to continuing to work towards a better tomorrow for this region.

OKI will continue its commitment and dedication to serving as a leader of positive change for our region. We look forward to working with you in the upcoming years to make a clear difference in our region.

Kenneth F. Reed
OKI President

Mark R. Policinski
OKI Executive Director
The Division of Corridor Studies focused the past year on finalizing the North South Transportation Initiative (I-75 Corridor Study), initiating a transportation assessment of the roadways in Dearborn County and participating in an advisory capacity to the Eastern Corridor project. Meetings with stakeholders in other corridors were held to initiate plans to be advanced in the coming year.

**NORTH SOUTH TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE**

The North South Transportation Initiative is a study of the I-75 highway and rail corridor. The I-75 highway and rail corridor is a major transportation system that not only carries people and goods through the Cincinnati and Dayton regions, but extends through six states.

Following a three-year study, OKI’s Study Oversight Committee made recommendations for the preferred program of projects in late 2003. In addition to the System Modification Alternatives and Access Modification Alternatives, the following Corridor Capacity Alternatives were recommended: four continuous lanes on I-75 throughout the Ohio portion of the OKI region with an auxiliary lane to be added in areas of congestion; high frequency light rail and enhanced bus service; and the study of multi-modal freight movement that would examine improved freight connections, truck restrictions and additional freight rail.

Upon adoption of the Oversight Committee’s recommendations, the projects were positioned to move forward in the implementation phase. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 8 took seven projects before Ohio’s Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) to secure funding to advance these “major new” projects on behalf of the region. Funding in the amount of $350 million was secured. OKI staff will continue to be involved in the projects in a coordinating role on behalf of the local communities.
Dearborn County Transportation Assessment  In April of 2003, OKI and Dearborn County undertook the Dearborn County Transportation Assessment. Dearborn County is one of the fastest growing counties within the OKI region. With a population of nearly 45,000 in 1995, Dearborn County is expected to grow over 60 percent by 2030. The Transportation Assessment comes at an opportune time in the county’s history. The county is benefiting from its proximity to the Cincinnati urban core and from the success of attractions such as Argosy Casino and Perfect North Slopes. The area between I-74, I-275 and SR 1 is rapidly developing and includes the communities of St. Leon, Bright, Hidden Valley Lake, Greendale, Lawrenceburg and Aurora.

While residential and commercial development is on the rise within Dearborn County, the infrastructure remains mostly rural. Many of the county’s rural roads were not designed to operate under increased volumes. Several roadways now serve thriving communities but are too narrow and do not meet current standards. The infrastructure of the area needs to be improved to accommodate the existing and future needs of Dearborn County. The Transportation Assessment will provide Dearborn County with a framework for future projects and will include a complete evaluation of the county roadway infrastructure.

Eastern Corridor Study  OKI continues its role in the Eastern Corridor Study as a member of the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners. Under the direction of the Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District (TID) Board, this project continues to evaluate multi-modal solutions to the transportation issues facing eastern Hamilton and western Clermont counties, as well as their impacts on Northern Kentucky.

It is projected that the population within the Eastern Corridor will increase by seven percent by the year 2030 and that employment will increase by about 23 percent. The Eastern Corridor project is a multi-modal study, evaluating long-term transportation solutions necessary to meet the growth in the area covering nearly 200 square miles. The Study extends east from downtown Cincinnati into eastern Hamilton and western Clermont counties. It includes portions of Northern Kentucky as the transportation network is entwined between the two states. In addition to new transit options, walking trails and road improvements, the Eastern Corridor Study has made groundbreaking efforts in land use planning. The Study’s Land Use Vision Plan has been an important guide for refinement of alternatives in the Eastern Corridor.

As this project advances with the refinement of alternatives and the identification of funding strategies, OKI will continue to partner with the City of Cincinnati, Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority and Clermont and Hamilton counties to develop innovative funding strategies that will allow construction of these much needed improvements without burdening the taxpayers of the region.
NORTHWEST BUTLER TRANSPORTATION STUDY  The Northwest Butler Transportation Study (NBTS) is an in-depth study of the transportation needs and possible solutions to transportation-related problems in a 125-square-mile area. The Study is centered on US 27 and SR 73 in northwest Butler County, Ohio. The purpose of this study was to develop a long-range strategic plan of implementable improvements for future transportation in the NBTS area.

In September 2003, the Advisory Committee reached consensus to advance a recommended plan to the OKI Board of Trustees. The Board adopted the findings and recommendations of the plan in October 2003. The key components of the plan include: upgrading key intersections and roadway sections; realigning US 27 and SR 129 in Millville; widening US 27 to four lanes from SR 128 to Millville; widening US 27 to three lanes from Minton Road to McGonigle and Stillwell Beckett to Chestnut Street; constructing a new two-lane connector between US 27 and SR 73 and between US 27 and SR 732 (south of Oxford); and consideration of re-routing US 27 over local roads.

CAMPBELL COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STUDY  The Campbell County Transportation Study was initiated in 2002 to develop a plan that identified the transportation needs within the county and prioritize projects that address those needs. The Study was sponsored by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and the Campbell County Fiscal Court and managed by OKI. County, state and federal routes were all analyzed. A major product of the Study was an updated county roadway database in Geographic Information Systems format, which has already been used by the county staff and leadership. The Study’s Advisory Committee developed concurrence on high priority state and federal projects to be advanced to KYTC. The Committee also identified 20 locations on roads maintained by the county that were in need of improvement. The OKI Board adopted the Campbell County Plan in September 2003.
The OKI Board adopted the Kenton County Transportation Plan in April 2003. The Plan was sponsored by the Kenton County Fiscal Court and jointly funded by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, OKI and the county. The Plan addresses Kenton County’s transportation needs through 2030. Its recommendations are for improving a multi-modal system within the constraints imposed by financial resources. The recommendations account for existing and emerging land use and trends in population and job growth. The Plan was developed under the auspices of a 58-member task force, which prioritized $2.5 billion worth of needed improvements.

One of this plan’s unique features is its approach for linking transportation planning with land use. This linkage is demonstrated by the application of a methodology that can be transferred to other areas of the region. Another unique feature of the Plan is the recommendation for a new transit initiative called Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. This initiative is a network of bus-only lanes to speed commuters between suburban communities and Covington’s business district and also to penetrate to downtown Cincinnati.

The Dixie Highway Corridor Study was initiated to improve traffic flow and safety on one of the region’s most heavily traveled arterials. The momentum for this study came from Dixie Highway’s selection as the highest priority transportation problem area in the Kenton County Transportation Plan and as a high priority for the application of advanced transportation technologies in OKI’s Intelligent Transportation System Plan.

This study will focus on improving traffic operations through the application of a coordinated adaptive signal system, incident management coordination with I-71/I-75 and linkage with ARTIMIS, deployment of signal pre-emption by emergency vehicles and conceptual design of intersections in need of improvements and segments requiring access management.
**SOUTHWEST WARREN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STUDY**  
The Southwest Warren County Transportation Study was initiated to address the transportation needs in one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The area is centered on the I-71 corridor and sandwiched between I-75 in Butler County on the west, and SR-48 on the east. The north-south borders are SR-63 and the Warren County line.

This study will address the need for maintaining accessibility along major transportation corridors after the area is more fully developed. It will take into account safety, connectivity, capacity and operational shortcomings. As part of the Study process, task force participation and public input will help identify transportation problems and needed improvements as a basis for identifying and evaluating alternatives and developing a strategic plan.

The Study has the strong support of the county, municipalities and townships in the affected area. These governments are participating in the Southwest Warren County Transportation Study through their involvement on the task force and their contribution to funding.

**REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROGRAM**  
OKI’s commitment to providing the region with a variety of transportation options is exhibited through the regional bicycle and pedestrian program.

As the majority of cycling takes place on ordinary roads with no dedicated space for cycling, one objective of the regional bicycle program is to have on-street bicycle facilities included in highway capacity and transportation system management projects. County Bike Route Guides are published to assist cyclists in identifying suitable routes for commuting or recreational travel. The Regional Bicycle Plan contains a summary of existing bicycle facilities and recommendations for improving cycling conditions in the region.

OKI also continued to assist local efforts in planning and developing separate shared use paths for cycling, hiking and other non-motorized modes. There are 10 such paths in various stages of development including the Williamsburg-Batavia Hike/Bike Trail initiated in 2003.

An update of OKI’s 1993 Regional Pedestrian Plan began in 2003 to address improving pedestrian travel, facilitating a more active lifestyle and coordinating with the recommendations of the OKI Regional Land Use Commission for a more inclusive inter-modal transportation system. The Plan will be completed in 2004.
URBAN AREA TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT GRANTS  Through a portion of Ohio’s TEA-21 annual Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding, 16 Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Ohio were awarded funding for distribution within their respective counties.

Three million dollars was awarded to 15 applicants from the OKI region in May 2000. During the first cycle of the program, from 2000 to the end of 2003, six of these projects utilizing $1,000,000 in TE funding were completed, four developments using $1,300,000 were under construction and two more, totaling $420,000, were scheduled to start construction in 2004.

In early 2003, revisions to the procedures for future grant awards were developed and a second program cycle was initiated. By the end of the year, seven projects had been programmed, utilizing $3,900,000 in OKI TE funding and four more projects totaling $1,376,000 were continuing through the project development stages.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS  The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division established an operational system during 2003 by acquiring the necessary hardware and software and developing initial datasets.

A GIS is a computer system capable of capturing, storing, manipulating, updating, analyzing and displaying geographically referenced information. It goes beyond traditional computer cartography and mapping by allowing the user to analyze relationships between spatially referenced datasets.

In 2003, the following regional GIS datasets were assembled: street centerlines, aerial photos, traffic analysis zones, bicycle routes, urbanized area boundaries, watershed boundaries, stream networks, 100-year flood plains, national wetland inventory, census polygons, parks, soils and digital elevation models.

During the past year, progress was made toward integrating the OKI GIS street centerline database with the OKI travel demand model. When completed, this will enable OKI staff to display any of the travel demand model output variables - such as speed, capacity and volume - on the street centerline layer with additional datasets including accident data, congestion data and planned transportation projects.
OKI’s RideShare service helps thousands of commuters save money and time and reduce stress by forming carpools and vanpools. In 2003, RideShare staff initiated four new vanpools and maintained the ridership of approximately 17 vanpools in operation. RideShare currently has over 1,800 commuters in its database.

RideShare offers a “Guaranteed Ride Home” program that provides commuters with extra insurance so they can get home in case of an emergency or unexpected overtime. The Guaranteed Ride Home program offers commuters 80 percent reimbursement of the cost of cab fare or transit fare home.

For over twenty years, OKI’s RideShare program has offered Tri-State commuters an alternative to driving to and from work alone. In addition to helping commuters, the RideShare program provides major benefits to hundreds of companies in the region by offering ease of employee recruitment, enhanced corporate image and a reduction in the need for on-site parking.

The Regional Ozone Coalition (ROC) serves as OKI’s vehicle to improving air quality in the region. The ROC is a voluntary association of local governments, organizations and businesses committed to reducing smog in the Tri-State through public and business education, involvement and outreach.

In 2003, the ROC continued its successful “Do Your Share For Cleaner Air” campaign that spreads the word about air quality issues in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area. The campaign continued to gain name recognition through special events like the 2003 Clean Air-A-Thon, the advertising campaign, air quality workshops and quarterly meetings that provided attendees with the latest information on the region’s air quality.

Imperative topics addressed by the Coalition in 2003 were impending air quality issues such as the 8-hour standard and particulate matter pollution, and various year-round air quality issues.
OKI continues to work with park officials, city, county and township planners, non-profit conservation organizations and the OKI Land Use Commission to identify gaps in regional “green infrastructure” data. The Regional Greenspace Office’s program objectives were redefined and alliances with Miami University and Northern Kentucky University were established.

In 2003, there were several important advancements to the greenspace program. The most notable among these included: working with students from Miami University’s Institute of Environmental Science to understand the impacts of urbanization on greenspace; collecting, mapping and analyzing natural systems data for the OKI region; mentoring University of Cincinnati students as they helped process data; gaining a better understanding of natural systems and greenspaces; and assisting the OKI Land Use Commission in planning and policy development.

OKI works with numerous public, private and non-profit partners to improve the region’s water resources management. OKI’s partners include cities, counties, townships, the region’s soil and water conservation districts that work together as the OKI Regional Conservation Council, wastewater treatment providers, water purveyors that form the OKI Groundwater Committee, state and federal agencies and businesses. OKI also works with the Mill Creek Watershed Council, which represents 37 jurisdictions in OKI’s urbanized core, the Little Miami River Partnership, the Friends of the Great Miami and the Tanners Creek Watershed Steering Committee in Indiana.

Highlights of OKI’s water quality program in 2003 included: receiving a $95,000 grant from the Miami Conservancy District to demonstrate stormwater runoff reduction practices in the lower Great Miami River watershed; working with Colerain Township and the City of Springdale on stream restoration projects supported by the Clean Ohio Fund; helping to create an action plan for the upper Mill Creek watershed; and demonstrating stormwater management practices through maintaining and monitoring a five-acre wetland along the upper Mill Creek in Butler County and two “oil and grit separators” in Hamilton County. In ongoing work, mapping continued of the region’s existing and potential water and sewer service areas, and the region’s Water Quality Management Plan was amended in 2003.

Program awareness was increased through stream restoration work, site visits, an article published in *U.S. Water News*, and presentations at state and national conferences. Briefings were sponsored for groundwater utility managers on working with the news media, planning to protect water sources and on the latest research into groundwater quality and quantity.
LAND USE COMMISSION  The OKI Land Use Commission was created to help OKI and its members take a comprehensive look at the complex transportation-land use connection. The Commission’s previously adopted 20-year “Vision for Stewardship” calls for modifications in expensive land use and infrastructure trends as well as more cost-efficient land uses, more mobility choices and adequate infrastructure.

In 2003, the OKI Land Use Commission considered the trends and conditions for 28 previously selected strategic regional issues – the region’s critical challenges or fundamental policy concerns. The trends and conditions helped explain the opportunities, threats and problems associated with achieving the Commission’s mission and vision. The Commission then drafted goals to provide ideal targets for the intended strategic regional policy plan and wrote objectives to mark progress toward the goals.

In the upcoming year, the Commission will work toward producing a strategic plan to link transportation to land use, public facilities and services, economic development, natural systems and housing.

2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN  Continuing work on the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan was a major task in 2003. The update incorporates the latest planning assumptions and travel forecasting techniques and replaces the current Plan adopted in 2001. The Plan, which is updated every three years, serves as a blueprint for transportation projects within the region through the year 2030. It addresses future needs created by growth and development. At the same time, it responds to the United States Department of Transportation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Air Act requirements that call for mitigating congestion and addressing air quality and other environmental, social and financial issues. OKI Board adoption of the Plan is scheduled for June 2004.

Regional growth will cause increased pressure on the transportation system. OKI’s goal is to plan for the expected growth and counterbalance it through the use of the multi-modal transportation plan.
An Energy Framework is being prepared to provide policy support and direction as a starting point for developing a regional policy for conserving energy used for transportation. This document will provide an overview of global and national issues related to the use of oil and a summary of major conservation initiatives already integrated into national policy.

The reason for developing a regional policy lies in the fact that the transportation demand drives the nation’s need for oil, which carries a host of impacts and implications that warrant a reduction in oil use. The transportation system that sustains the economy and current way of life is a system that depends almost entirely on oil.

At the national level, numerous federal policies and innovative technologies are aimed at fuel conservation, but progress depends partly on local efforts. Efforts that slow oil consumption serve the national interest to reduce oil imports and air pollution, but they also address the objectives of regional transportation planning. Many of the same strategies that reduce fuel consumption also reduce emissions and congestion and improve the transportation system’s operating efficiency.

Environmental Justice is an issue that OKI takes special effort to address. OKI has worked hard to recognize and engage the Environmental Justice (EJ) communities by including all minority, low income, disabled, elderly and no-car household populations in the transportation planning process.

During 2003, OKI took on additional initiatives that represent OKI’s commitment to Environmental Justice. Highlighted accomplishments include: a presentation before the Ohio Area Regional Councils (OARC) on OKI’s EJ program; the development of a best practices scoring process for funding applications; the completion of OKI’s Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) report for fiscal year 2003; OKI’s partnership in co-hosting the 17th national American Contract Compliance Association Institute; and hosting the first annual Regional Think Tank.

OKI has had great success with its Environmental Justice program and has placed a tremendous amount of effort into public involvement, policy development and building community consensus. OKI will continue its partnership with related agencies to identify the Tri-State’s strengths and to address the issues of the underserved and disadvantaged in the transportation planning process.
# OKI Leadership

## 2003 OKI Officers

*President:*
Kenneth F. Reed

*First Vice President:*
Gary W. Moore

*Second Vice President:*
Daniel Batta

*Treasurer:*
Mary C. Walker

*Secretary/Executive Director:*
Mark R. Policinski

## 2003 OKI Board of Trustees (*Member of Executive Committee*)

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(*)Member of Executive Committee
2003 Financial Report

2003 OKI Operating Budget
$7,747,643

Revenue Sources

- 76.0% State
- 17.2% Local
- 6.2% Federal
- 0.6% Other

Expenditures by Activity

- 78.6% Transportation
- 14.4% Ozone Awareness and Commuter Services
- 3.7% Environmental Planning
- 2.2% Regional Planning
- 1.1% General and Administrative Activities