2022-2023 Chair Report

Will Daugherty

Thanks to all the hard work of our activists and support of our members, this has been a phenomenal year for the Oklahoma Libertarian Party. The party was able to run more statewide candidates than ever before and see consistent growth in Libertarian voter registration. New leaders and activists have joined our ranks, bringing new ideas and efforts with them.

We started off the term strong in April with 7 statewide candidates filing to run as Libertarians. These include Kenneth Blevins, Robert Murphy, Natalie Bruno, Chris Powell, Lynda Steele, Greg Sadler, and myself, Will Daugherty. The party was able to fund the filing fees for many of these candidates, an effort spearheaded by Todd Hagopian and Jake Spann. Thanks to this effort and some incredible campaigning, the OKLP has secured ballot access through 2026.

In May, we participated in our first-ever community clean up, uniting Libertarians from across the state to pick up trash in Altus, OK. This event was organized and led by Dillon Feazel and included the participation of the city’s mayor. We ended the month of May by sending 12 delegates and 2 alternates to the Libertarian National Convention in Reno, Nevada, where they represented our state party in electing a new LNC board.

In July, Natalie Bruno and her campaign led multiple sign waving events, bringing the Libertarian message to the general public of Oklahoma City. Later in the month, Jeff Fortune, Jessica Daugherty, and I attended the official ballot drawing at the State Capitol, where Libertarians were selected to appear first on every Oklahoman’s ballot. To close the month out, Ashley Sowder organized and hosted the Oklahoma Young Libertarians laser tag event in Midwest City.

In August, we held our first party-wide canvassing event, knocking on doors and dropping off tri-fold pamphlets in The Village, OK. Jeff Fortune led the party in pinpointing Libertarian and independent voters, so we could speak to those who our message would resonate with most. Ashley Sowder and Cherise Norton designed the tri-folds which included libertarian messaging and listed all 7 of our statewide candidates. During August, we also joined forces with the ACLU by signing on as co-plaintiffs to sue the City of Oklahoma City for banning sign-waving in medians.

September was a very exciting month for field development, as Clint Rapp organized and led the OKLP booth at the Oklahoma State Fair. We successfully manned the booth for two weeks, reached thousands of Oklahomans, and were invited back for the 2024 State Fair. In addition to the state fair, David Greer and the Southeast Region hosted a booth at the City of Springs Car Show in Sulphur, OK. Our party also hosted a Defend the Guard protest at the State Capitol, where multiple libertarian veterans spoke in favor of requiring a formal declaration of war from the US Congress before deploying Oklahoma National Guard troops. Among these were National Guard veteran Lynda Steele and Marine Corps veteran Chris Powell.

In October, the Southeast Region led the charge once again by manning a booth at the Poteau Balloon festival, which attracted 25,000 attendees. We were also able to advertise the OKLP to voters prior to the election by purchasing three billboards in Stillwater, another effort led by Mr. Hagopian.

November was marked by multiple watch parties and exciting election results as four of our statewide candidates cleared the 2.5% hurdle to secure Libertarian ballot access. With 26.24% of the vote, Lynda Steele broke the record for highest percentage received by a statewide Libertarian candidate in Oklahoma. Congratulations to Ms. Steele and a huge thanks to Jake Spann and Todd Hagopian for recruiting such incredible candidates. In addition to our state-level success, Libertarian Grant Miller was also elected to the Tulsa City Council.

In December, Ashley Sowder displayed her leadership and commitment to our community by hosting our first-ever Adopt a Highway Clean-up Day on North Portland Ave in Oklahoma City. Ashley organized the OKLPs participation in the Adopt a Highway program, giving long-term advertising to the party and a consistent way for us to serve our community. Also in December, the Bylaws & Platform Committee held the first of two Town Hall meetings, during which the bylaws amendment recommendations up for consideration this weekend were introduced to interested Members and opened for feedback.

Lynda Steele joined the ExCom as the Legislative Director in January of this year and has let no grass grow under her feet since. Her inaugural effort involves assisting inmates, who are participating in the James Crabtree Correctional Center’s Writers Guild, with learning to file grievances. She intends to turn this into a one- to three-year project to increase legislative action from this demographic.

Our IT Director, Jay Norton, has been added to the LP National core infrastructure team, which provides support for the hosting service and CiviCRM database administrative efforts. This results in the OKLP enjoying considerably more control and management over our own CRM information and increases our access to quick support when we need it.

Overall, Libertarian voter registration in Oklahoma grew by 14.89%, reaching 19,974 Libertarians by January of 2023. We also saw our social media presence grow on every platform, reaching more than 6,000 followers on Twitter and 9,500 on Facebook. The OKLP’s messaging was featured multiple times by the national Libertarian Party, further extending our voice. Under Todd Hagopian, the OKLP adopted and implemented a budget management system, which streamlined spending and improved accountability. Thanks to our Secretary, Cherise Norton, there is now an online document and resource library, allowing future OKLP Executive Committees to access crucial information and records. In addition to this, Cherise also wrote and organized a full policy and procedure manual, ensuring successful continuity for OKLP leadership for years to come. During this past year, we also formed and strengthened coalition partnerships with Ignite Justice, Death Penalty Action, the Oklahoma Coalition Against People Abuse, and the ACLU. Many of these partnerships were organized and fostered by Natalie Bruno during her campaign for governor.

While there is always more action to be taken and effort to be contributed to the fight for liberty, you should be extremely proud of what you accomplished this past year. This party has made waves in Oklahoma through elections, events, and community involvement. Thanks to every supporter, activist, candidate, and leader who made this year possible. Let’s make the next one even better.

In liberty,

Will Daugherty