

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SWPA Moving to New Headquarters**

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**SWPA's New Headquarters in Tulsa, OK**

Tulsa, OK – It may not have been with the stroke of his own pen, but Mike Wech, Administrator of Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern or SWPA), changed the course of the agency's history on Thursday, September 5, 2019 when he approved the signing of documents to purchase a stand-alone building to be used as Southwestern's headquarters in Tulsa.

The action culminated years of planning and involved staff from Southwestern's real estate, engineering, legal, and finance divisions, among others.

"We established a series of teams within Southwestern to fully evaluate and provide a recommendation on a facility to meet our needs as an organization," explains Wech. "I offer my sincere thanks to all personnel who have been involved in this effort."

Southwestern has been in its current location in downtown Tulsa since 1989. The agency originally leased three floors of a high rise office building to house staff from the engineering, acquisitions, human resources, finance, legal, resources, rates, power marketing, information technology, and administrative support divisions.

In an effort to put downward pressure on rates, Southwestern leadership began analyzing costs several years ago and identified the cost of the lease as something that could be reduced. After some remodeling and rearranging of staff, the agency was able to relinquish one of the floors in the high rise, resulting in a cost-savings of \$1.5 million over the remaining term of the lease.

"We have been getting creative when it comes to containing costs," explains Wech. "Expenses like rent are something we have at least a little control over."

Wech says the move to the new headquarters building will save the agency even more money in the coming years. "This move should save the agency millions of dollars over the course of the next few decades," he said. "We appreciate the work of the General Services Administration, the Office of Management and Budget, and all of the people at the Department of Energy to get the necessary approvals to move forward."

This is not the first time the agency has moved. It can trace its origins to 1941 in Vinita, Oklahoma, when Southwestern's first Administrator temporarily took over operations of Pensacola Dam to support the war effort.

Following the actual creation of the agency in 1943 and subsequent return of the Pensacola facilities to the State of Oklahoma in 1945, agency headquarters moved to the Kennedy Building in downtown Tulsa. From 1947-50, Southwestern leased space at the Douglas Bomber Plant, located northeast of the city. From there, the agency moved to the Petroleum Building, where it stayed from 1950-67. The agency joined its Federal neighbors in 1967, when it made the move to the Federal Building. It found its current home in the Williams Center Towers in 1989.

"While this change and transition will have its challenges, I think it is in our agency's best interests," Wech says. "Change is not easy, but I believe this initiative positions Southwestern well for future challenges our industry and business model faces."

Wech says there is still much work to be done before Southwestern actually makes the move to the new facility. "We will have some remodeling work and of course the work packing up and making the transition." In the end, he says he is grateful for the team effort it took to make this historical move possible. "My thanks to all who worked to make this effort happen, and I look forward to the changes ahead."