

NO RETREAT FROM SQ669 POSITION, SAY STATE RETAIL LUMBER DEALERS

From Mid-America Lumbermens Association

■(GIT) "Contrary to what folks may be hearing, I want to make it clear that we have not retreated from our position on State Question 669," Ed Stuart, Stillwater lumber dealer said today.

Stuart is Oklahoma vice president of the Mid-America Lumbermens Association, a five-state regional association. "Oklahoma members of this association are still just as strongly opposed to this question as when we announced our position in December," he said.

SQ669 will appear on the March 12 ballot. It would roll back and freeze property taxes at levels that existed in 1993. Thereafter, taxes could only be increased by a maximum of 3 percent, providing 60 percent of the voters agreed to do so.

Stuart said members of his group have never promoted passage of SQ669, "and, in fact, we are not neutral on the question as some have speculated. That's not us. That's another group."

He said, "We are opposed to SQ669 for the same reasons most responsible people are opposed to it. Not only do we believe it will hurt our public schools and vo-tech system, it will significantly reduce revenue used to provide important city and county services."

Stuart said there has been so much inaccurate and misleading information fed to the public by those who are pushing the question that "it's no wonder the question is being called a fraud" by Taxpayers For Fairness, the coalition formed to fight passage of the question.

"How can the proponents continue to say approval of SQ669 will not hurt schools? They must be the only group in Oklahoma that does not know our public schools rely on local property taxes for 30 to 35 percent of their operating funds. Vo-tech schools derive from 58 to 65 percent of their funds from property tax," he said. "Shut down that flow of operating revenue and guess what will happen to your public school."

He said the question is being promoted by a privileged class of people who are promoting their own selfish interests at the expense of the greater good of all Oklahoma citizens.

"That has an un-American and un-Oklahoman smell to it," Stuart said. "We reject that kind of narrow-minded thinking and urge the citizens of Oklahoma to join with us and vote 'No' next Tuesday on State Question 669."

The Mid-America Lumbermens Association (MLA) is a leading trade organization of independent retail lumber and building material dealers and suppliers in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. The Association is voluntarily governed and supported by over 1,000 retail lumber dealers and 350 associate member firms working together to improve their own management, merchandising and marketing skills.

Organized in 1889, the MLA has received national recognition for its broad range of services, educational and training programs, trade shows and legislative representation for independent building material suppliers of a five-state area.

"Everything you read in the newspapers is absolutely true, except for that rare story of which you happen to have first-hand knowledge."

Erwin Knoll