

## OKLAHOMA CUTS SIZE OF STATE GOVERNMENT, BUCKS REGIONAL, NATIONAL TRENDS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Oklahoma has been more successful at cutting state government than any other state in the region over the last five years, according to a national trade publication.

A report in the latest issue of State Policy Reports documented the effectiveness of state government downsizing efforts in the 50 states during a five year period from December 1990 to December 1995.

According to the study, Oklahoma was one of just seven states in the country to cut state government during that period.

Oklahoma was the only state in the region to cut the size of state government. Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Missouri, Colorado, Louisiana all increased government employment.

"We've done a great job of streamlining government," said Senator Larry Dickerson, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government and Transportation. "Most other states are adding state government workers. We're bucking the national and regional trends."

"I think this sends a great signal to business recruits around the country," said Senator Dickerson. "It tells them that Oklahoma is running a cost-efficient state that is using its resources wisely."

The Poteau legislator says the decline in state government should also bolster support for a state employee pay raise program he authored this year.

Under SB1128, state employees who receive a performance evaluation score of "meets standards" or higher, would receive a raise of \$1,200. In addition, state nurses and other health care professionals who are significantly below the market salary average would have their pay raised. The estimated cost of the pay program is approximately \$42 million.

If it is implemented, the program will bring the average pay of state employees a little closer to the average private sector salary. According to a survey conducted by Deloitte and Touche for the Office of Personnel Management, state employee pay is currently between 13 and 16 percent below market.

"We've been successful in making state government leaner and meaner," said Dickerson. "It's time that we reward our best state employees with a pay raise so we can prevent them from jumping to the private sector. When we constantly have to rehire and retrain workers, it costs the state money."

SB1128 was approved by the full Senate today on a 44-0 vote. Its next stop is the State House of Representatives.

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## OCC SEEKS SUGGESTIONS ON NEW SALTWATER DISPOSAL TECHNOLOGY

From Oklahoma Corporation Commission

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Corporation Commission is seeking information and suggestions from well operators, engineers, geologists and other petroleum technology specialists on how the regulatory agency could help encourage use of a new method of disposing of salt water that is a byproduct of oil and gas production.

Presently, the salt water is separated at the wellhead and pumped into approved underground formations through licensed disposal wells. The process is costly since an on-site disposal well must be established or the salt water must be hauled to a designated disposal well at another location.

Some companies have started using a new technology called simultaneous injection and production which separates the petroleum from the salt water underground at the reservoir and pumps the salt water directly into an approved deeper disposal reservoir in the same well.

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*Sen. Larry Dickerson  
D-Poteau*