



Capitol Network News

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LAWMAKERS APPROVE MORE APPROPRIATIONS

By Brandon Beard & Shawn Ashley
Staff Writers

■(GIT) Four appropriations bills cleared the House and the Senate on Wednesday as lawmakers near the deadline for their consideration of spending bills.

SB818, by Sen. Enoch Kelly Haney, D-Seminole, appropriates funds to the Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement (ABLE) Commission, the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET), the State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI), the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Board of Medicolegal Services.

Though every agency in the bill received additional funding for the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) contribution and the state employee pay raise, most agencies found themselves with no additional operating funds for the upcoming fiscal year.

Exceptions include an additional \$131,513 for data processing charges and secretarial support.

CLEET receives an additional \$19,000 to cover rent increases.

DPS funding increased by \$1,200,072 to support academy funding and intoxilizer equipment. In a separate appropriation, through the general appropriations bill (**SB837**) passed earlier this year, DPS received \$692,000 to fund a lease-purchase agreement for a new plane for the executive branch.

Though most appropriations bills addressed this year have gone smoothly, rarely sparking debate, Senate lawmakers Wednesday

objected to the measure's almost static funding for the Board of Medicolegal Investigations. The agency had asked for additional funds to staff an additional pathologist.



Sen. Ed Long

Sen. Ed Long, D-Enid, said the agency deserves more, not only because of their performance during the Murrah Building tragedy, but for the work they do day-to-day.

"We are going to give some \$78 million
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"We are going to give some \$78 million to higher education. They will probably use it to hire some more football coaches. But we can't solve criminal cases because we can't hire another pathologist in Tulsa — it's wrong wrong."

Sen. Ed Long

\$45 MILLION PROPOSED FOR DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Lawmakers are expected to consider appropriating some \$45 million to the Department of Corrections on Thursday — enough money to meet the department's immediate needs, but not enough to meet the anticipated growth in prison population, according to DOC estimates.

SB820 is expected to be moved from the

General Conference Committee on Appropriations to the House and Senate floors sometime Thursday. The bill was laid over by the House division of GCCA in a postadjournment meeting on Wednesday.

The bill appropriates \$45 million in growth money to the Corrections Department, as well as an additional \$90,708 to the Pardon and Parole Board.

Earlier this month, Department of Corrections Executive Director Larry Fields outlined a \$96.7 million request to the GCCA's subcommittee on judicial, law enforcement and public safety services. That request was nearly double the growth money available to the subcommittee for allocation.

Included in the proposal to be considered by the legislature is \$18 million to annualize the supplemental appropriation received by the department earlier this year. That money went to lease private prison space in Oklahoma and Texas for 969 inmates. Also included in the proposal is an additional \$12.8 million to provide 800 new private prison beds in fiscal year 1997.

That, however, may not be enough, according to DOC estimates provided to the

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