

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

Later in session however, Brown made the motion to reconsider the vote in which the measure passed at a later legislative date. He has three days to bring the bill up again, or the bill will die.

—HEATHER MYERS
05/08/96

DEPT. OF REHABILITATION SERVICES REOPENS SERVICES FOR NEW APPLICANTS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) A \$1.5 million supplemental appropriation recently approved by the state House and Senate and signed by Governor Frank Keating has enabled the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services to reopen vocational rehabilitation and independent living services for applicants with severe disabilities, effective April 25.

As part of budget control measures implemented Dec. 12, 1995, Rehabilitation Services had been forced to place all eligible applicants for Visual and Rehabilitative Division services on waiting lists, based on the severity of their disabilities and dates of application. The agency has continued to provide services for more than 22,100 Oklahoma consumers who were receiving services on or before Dec. 12.

At this time, funds are not available to open services to all applicants. Individuals who do not meet the severe disability criteria will continue to be placed on waiting lists.

—DEPT. OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
05/08/96

COMMISSION COMMITTEE ELIMINATES 70 POSITIONS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) An Oklahoma Commission for Human Services committee met all day May 8 in Oklahoma City reviewing questionable positions identified in the recently released Peak Marwick study of the Department of Human Services Central administration.

Human Services committee chairman Joe Sam Vassar of Bristow said, "We were able to identify 70 of the 170 questionable positions as positions which could be eliminated. There are another 54 positions which may be eliminated; however, it would require help from the Oklahoma Legislature on providing retirement incentives."

Vassar, speaking for the committee said it would be important for the Legislature to also take action, giving DHS the right to

identify positions whose incumbents could be offered separation plans. The positions targeted would not need to be replaced.

After the nine-hour meeting, the committee directed DHS Director George A. Miller to have additional meetings with DHS division heads to identify other questionable positions that may be eliminated in the near or not-too-distant future.

The 170 positions reviewed is an adjusted and more accurate questionable positions figure, reflecting the agency's organizational structure and is different from the previous number of 220 positions reported originally in the Peat Marwick report.

—OKLA. DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES
05/09/96

NEW McALESTER DHS BUILDING APPROVED

■(GIT) A resolution approved Thursday by the House of Representatives clears the way for the construction of a new Department of Human Services office in McAlester.

SCR49, by McAlester lawmakers Sen. Gene Stipe and Rep. Lloyd Fields, authorizes the Commission for Human services to enter into a lease-purchase agreement for office space for local units of the Department of Human Services in Pittsburg County. The resolution was adopted Thursday by the House and has already received Senate approval.

Pittsburg County Commissioners have said they would help the state with a building, but only if the country was not financially liable and only if bonds to finance the purchase were secured by a DHS lease-purchase contract, such as the one approved on Thursday.

Before any additional action can take place, both Pittsburg County officials and the Commission on Human Services will have to react to the resolution.

Fields amended Thursday's resolution to increase the term of the lease-purchase agreement from 10 years to 15 to 20 years.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
05/09/96

"Those who are fond of setting things to rights have no great objection to setting them wrong."

William Hazlitt

SPORTS

OSB ATHLETIC DIRECTOR TO COORDINATE PARALYMPIC AND OLYMPIC EVENTS

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Stephen Kearney, athletic director for the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) in Muskogee, has been selected by the International Paralympic Committee to coordinate the sport of goalball for the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games.

The Paralympic Games are the country's second largest sporting event, bringing together over 4,000 athletes with disabilities from all over the world. The games have been held every Olympic year since 1960. This year, the city of Atlanta will host both the Paralympic Games as well as the 1996 Summer Olympics. The Paralympic Games are scheduled for August 15-25.

Kearney will work at both events; as competition manager for Paralympic's goalball and as an administrative staff assistant for the Olympiad's badminton games.

Goalball is a unique sport with a storied history. It was developed by two European men shortly after World War II as a way of encouraging recreational participation for the voluminous numbers of war veterans who were blind or severely visually impaired.

"The game (of goalball) has progressed every year since then. Right now, it's being played in over 60 countries around the world," Kearney said.

Kearney has served as an athletic director, teacher, wrestling coach and physical education instructor at OSB since 1972. OSB is a division of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, a state agency serving people with disabilities.

"The U.S. team which will enter the stadium at the Paralympic Games in Atlanta will be 500 strong. We'll have 106 athletes in the track alone. You cannot imagine how many people with disabilities there are in this world. Athletic competition gives them and everyone the chance to participate and increase their personal opportunities."

—DEPT. OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
05/07/96

OU-TEXAS GOVERNOR'S CUP NOW ON DISPLAY IN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma-Texas Governor's Cup, symbolic of the win-
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