

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



as for the 1996-97 school year.

Money for the 1996-97 school year — \$15 million — will come from the state's general revenue fund under the terms of **SB834**. The bill passed the House by a vote of 99-0 and cleared the Senate on a 42-0 vote.

The bill also includes general revenue fund appropriations of \$6.3 million for mid-term adjustments for the 1994-95 school year and \$6.7 million for the 1995-96 school year.

**HB2824** provides the remaining funding for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years from the Rainy Day fund. Some \$6.3 million was appropriated from the account for the 1994-95 school year, while an additional \$6.7 million will be drawn from the Rainy Day account for the 1995-96 school year.

That bill was approved by the House in a 90-8 vote. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 44-1.

(See related story, *Rainy Day Fund Appropriations*.)

—**SHAWN ASHLEY & BRANDON BEARD**  
05/16/96

## RAINY DAY FUND APPROPRIATIONS APPROVED

■(GIT) Lawmakers in both houses gave their approval on Thursday to appropriations totaling \$22.6 million from the state's Rainy Day Fund.

The House voted 90-8 and the Senate followed with a 44-1 vote for **HB2824**. The bill makes appropriations to a variety of state agencies from the Rainy Day Fund.

The bill mirrors an agreement announced last week by legislative leaders from both houses and parties and Governor Frank Keating.

Appropriations in the bill include:

- ✓ \$6.3 million for 1994-95 midterm funding;
- ✓ \$6.7 million for 1995-96 midterm funding;
- ✓ \$1.5 million for a student tracking system;
- ✓ \$1.6 million for rural fire departments;
- ✓ \$1 million for weather modification;
- ✓ \$1 million for the governor's emergency fund;
- ✓ \$2.9 million to cover the costs of converting the Medicaid system to a managed care program;
- ✓ \$1.19 million for an Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy and to purchase vehicle for the new troopers; and
- ✓ \$320,428 for National Guard armory

maintenance.

House speaker Glen Johnson, D-Okemah, hailed the bill's passage as another step in a bipartisan effort toward addressing the state's immediate financial needs and toward an orderly adjournment.

Members of the Senate also praised specific components of the bill.

Governor Frank Keating indicated his support for the Rainy Day proposal earlier this month when he and a bipartisan group of legislative leaders announced the terms of a three-part budget agreement.

—**SHAWN ASHLEY**  
05/16/96

## COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

### GOODYEAR CEO PRAISES LAWTON FACILITY

■(GIT) Calling the Goodyear tire plant in Lawton the best in the world and the "crown jewel" of the company's operation, Goodyear President and CEO Samir F. Gibara said his Oklahoma visit Wednesday was to focus on positioning the Oklahoma facility for the future.

"We have a major commitment to Oklahoma...we have every intention of keeping it that way," Gibara said in a meeting with reporters. "The tire industry is becoming a global industry — we need to be in a position to compete with them."

He praised the Legislature for its economic development efforts, saying, however, that such areas as workers' compensation reform still needed some attention. "More can be done," he said.

Reasons for the success of the Lawton facility include its "very modern" equipment and systems personnel. The ability to work together and continuous education also play a key role, he said.

"We consider it a center of excellence."

He said skills, knowledge and talent were three keys to the plant's success.

When asked if right-to-work was an issue with Good Year, Gibara said it was not.

Calling Goodyear the last American owned tire company with worldwide interests, Gibara asked the U.S. Congress to "level the playing field" in terms of worldwide competitiveness. "Some other worldwide competitors get assistance from their governments," he said.

His message was much the same when

he spoke to a joint session of lawmakers in the House chamber.

"In the global economy, competition is not just North America against Japan against Europe. It is also Lawton against Topeka against Tokyo," he said.

"I think change is here to stay," Gibara said. "We need to not only be responsive to change, we need to preempt change."

Gibara visited the capitol while on his way to Lawton, where he was scheduled to attend the Lawton Chamber of Commerce and Industry's annual banquet Wednesday night.

—**BRANDON BEARD & SHAWN ASHLEY**  
05/15/96

### HOUSE REJECTS PAWN SHOP CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

■(GIT) The House on Thursday rejected the second conference committee report for the so-called pawn shop bill.

Originally designed to limit the number of pawn shops in Oklahoma communities, the bill was reformed to require only a higher net asset value for those who apply for a pawn shop license, **HB2172's** author Rep. Ron Kirby, D-Lawton, told the House.

It was that very element, however, that appeared to persuade a majority of House members to vote 37-59 against acceptance of the bill's second conference committee report.

Rep. Dan Ramsey, R-Chickasha, called the definition "one of the most unusual I have every seen." As defined by the proposed bill, net assets "include the investment made in cash, bank deposits, merchandise inventory, and loans due from customers excluding the pawn service charge." Excluded from the definition by the proposed measure were "investments made in fixed assets or real estate, furniture, fixtures, or equipment, investments made in stocks, bonds, or other securities, or investments made in prepaid expenses or other general intangibles."

The Lawton Democrat said the point of the bill was to protect pawn shop customers by establishing a minimum investment level that would insure the customers could recoup their property if the pawn shop was forced to shut its doors.

Rep. Richard Phillips, R-Warr Acres, told Kirby that he might actually be driving away those he was hoping to attract to the industry.

"If you're looking to attract prudent

*Continued on next page*