

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



people to the industry, I don't think you're going to do it by saying they have to take their \$50,000 or \$100,000 and put it in the bank and get three percent interest."

Kirby's arguments to the contrary failed to sway a majority of the House's members and the conference committee report was rejected.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
05/16/96

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Department of Commerce Thursday officially welcomed Guillermo Mondlak as its new trade representative in Mexico in ceremony in Mexico City.

Mondlak has been contracted through the International Division of the Commerce department to seek new markets, trade and investment for Oklahoma companies from Mexico interests, according to Kevin Chambers, director of the International Division.

Chambers said Mondlak's contract is performance based and is a more efficient system. "This innovative program works more like business in the private sector and will save the state money. Costs will be spread among those using the services on a performance based compensation system," added Chambers.

Firms in the state may sign contracts with Mondlak to serve as a distribution agent and pay a commission based on first year sales. Another option for state firms is to pay a \$250 fee through a U.S. Department of Commerce program to find a distribution agent.

Mondlak will be available for interviews in Oklahoma in June. For more information, please contact the International Division of the Commerce Department at (405)841-5289.

—OKLA. DEPT. OF COMMERCE
05/16/96

CRIME

PREDATORY SEX OFFENDER LEGISLATION BEING REFINED FOR CONSIDERATION

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) While President Clinton considers whether to sign "Megan's Law," state legislators are refining a similar proposal that would authorize public disclosure of sexual predators, the principal au-

thor of the measure said Monday.

"Recent televised reports that our legislation is dead were erroneous," said Rep. Bill Paulk and Sen. Ben Brown.

House Bill 2617 by the two Oklahoma City Democrats is in the hands of a House/Senate conference committee that has been fine-tuning the measure.

The bill is a composite of at least three pieces of legislation introduced this year: **House Bills 2610** and **2617**, both filed by Paulk, plus **House Bill 3005** by Rep. Jack Bonny, D-Burns Flat, and Sen. Gilmer Capps, D-Snyder.

"Megan's Law"—federal legislation named for a 7-year-old New Jersey girl raped and murdered two years ago by a twice-convicted molester who lived on her block—would require notification of local officials whenever dangerous child molesters or rapists are released from prison and move into their communities.

Similarly, **HB2617** would loosen restrictions on revealing the identification of sex offenders, Paulk and Brown related.

Sex offenders who exhibit characteristics indicating "a tendency to victimize or injure others" would be publicly identified as "predators."

Every convicted sex offender who remains in Oklahoma would be compelled to register with the state Corrections Department for 10 years, and with local law enforcement agencies for five years.

Under current law, a convict who completes a sex offender treatment program is required to register with the Department of Corrections for only two years after his release from custody.

Convicts whose names appear on sex offender registries would have to supply their street address, as well. Some have been circumventing the intent of the law by listing only a post-office box, Paulk explained.

Sex offender rosters maintained by local law enforcement agencies would be made available to "any parent using a child care provider" and to area churches, as well as to all public and private elementary schools and child care facilities in their vicinity, and state agency that licenses individuals to work with children, and to other entities that provide services to children.

Any violation of the Sex Offender Registration Act would be considered a felony, as would hiring any sex offender to work in

a child care facility or day care center.

"Senator Brown and I don't intend to let this session end without passage of a tougher sex-crimes law," Paulk vowed.

—HOUSE MEDIA
05/13/96

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEGISLATURE APPROVES RURAL ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

■(GIT) A plan to pump \$17 million into rural economic development efforts passed the House and the Senate on Thursday, nine days after legislative leaders and the governor announced their agreement on the proposal.

HB1434, by Reps. Randall Erwin, D-Nashoba, and Mike Mass, D-Hartshorne, and Sen. Frank Shurden, D-Henryetta, establishes the so-called Rural Economic Action Plan, or REAP, a program designed to enhance economic development in communities of less than 7,000 residents. The bill won House approval by a 91-6 vote and passed the Senate by a vote of 40-6.

The funding mechanism for the program, **HB2830**, by Reps. Jim Hamilton, D-Poteau, and Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, and Sens. Cal Hobson, D-Claremore, and Enoch Kelly Haney, D-Seminole, also passed the House by a vote of 91-7 and the Senate by a vote of 42-4.

The \$17 million included in the funding bill — \$5 million to the State Treasurer for general economic development; \$4.5 million to the Water Resources Board for water and sewer improvements and \$7.5 million to the Department of Transportation for road and highway improvements — will be divided equally among ten regions within the state as defined by the so-called COGS, or local government organizations.

That means, Erwin noted, small towns within each of the ten areas will divide \$1.7 million among them.

While a part of the legislative-executive budget agreement announced a little more than one week ago, passage of the bills, particularly in the House, followed some contentious debate.

Rep. Wayne Pettigrew, R-Edmond, led the charge against adoption of the measure's conference committee report in the House. Urging members to consider the intent of the bill — "to bring jobs to rural Oklahoma" —

Continued on next page