

KEATING DEFENDS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Governor Frank Keating defended his use of a state airplane for trips that include stumping for Republican candidates, as well as the political consulting work performed by his Secretary of State.

Asked by reporters about his use of a newly-acquired airplane for political events, Keating said, "If it is exclusively a political trip, then it is reimbursed. If it is not, then it's not. I would say in most cases the state is not reimbursed."

Keating attempted to explain the practice by saying that it is difficult to calculate the exact number of minutes of a given trip that are dedicated specifically to politics or to other state business. The governor added, however, that most of his current trips involve both state business and political campaigning.

As an example, Keating pointed to a trip he made to Clinton on Wednesday, during which he spoke to a civic group, school children and attended a fund-raiser for House District 57 Republican candidate Rick Webb, of Custer City.

"I think it's appropriate that if it is solely a political trip that the state be reimbursed," the governor said, "but there are no set standards."

Keating estimated that it costs approximately \$175 per hour to operate the state plane. That cost, he said, is paid by the candidate for whom he appears on those trips dedicated solely to campaigning.

The governor said trips for the purpose of just campaigning were "rare."

"There's so much else to do," he added.

Keating was also asked about renewed allegations by the Oklahoma Democratic Party executive director Pat Hall regarding Secretary of State Tom Cole's political consulting work.

"Tom Cole is so busy conducting push polls and writing contrived political analysis that he doesn't have time to put in the 40-hour work week Oklahoma taxpayers are paying him for," said Hall. "Governor Keating needs to put his foot down once and for all and make Tom show up for work."

Cole is a principal in the Republican political consulting firm of Cole, Hargrave, Snodgrass and Associates, which is currently involved in one statewide race, three US Senate campaigns and ten congressional races in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia and Florida. The firm is also doing some work for the Dole for President Campaign, according to one of the firm's partners, Deby Snodgrass.

In defense of Cole, Keating, who called the firm's polling work "more accurate and more professional" than that of others, said much of the company's work was the result of staff members' efforts and not just the work of Cole.

"The reality is that Tom Cole has to earn

a living," Keating added, attacking Hall for what he called "hiring himself out to the highest bidder."

"I would not be surprised if Tom Cole could raise \$101,000, rather than \$100,000, that Pat Hall would go to work for him," Keating said, alluding to Hall's salary with the Democratic Party.

The governor called Cole's \$40,000 annual salary "modest for what he does" and added that he believed Cole handles his state job with "competence and professionalism."

ROBERTS' RECORD-KEEPING IN SPOTLIGHT

By Gerry Cherry
Staff Writer

■(GIT) After telling *Capitol Network News* Monday that the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) "did this several months ago and never filed a complaint," candidate for U.S. House of Rep. District 3 Darryl Roberts got slapped with a second complaint to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) in three months Tuesday.

Roberts received a campaign contribution of \$5,000 from the Choctaw Nation in June, and the NRCC notified of their intent to file a complaint on Aug. 21. According to the complaint, the Choctaw Nation does not have a political action committee (PAC) or a multi-candidate PAC capable of contributing \$5,000 per candidate, per election. "The most they can contribute is \$1,000, since the Choctaw are considered an 'individual' under FEC law," Maria Cino, executive director of NRCC stated in the press release before filing the complaint.

The relief sought was a return by Roberts of \$4,000 of the money donated by the Choctaws.

Last Monday, Cino said in a press release a complaint would be filed with the FEC that Roberts "illegally and arbitrarily chose to conceal two weeks of his campaign's activity. Roberts' failure to disclose is unlawful and must be remedied immediately," Cino stated. That complaint was filed with the FEC, Tuesday.

Roberts is a Democratic candidate for the District 3 seat currently held by retiring U.S. Representative Bill Brewster. Wes Watkins, R-Stillwater, and Scott Demaree, I-Glencoe, oppose Roberts in the race.

The NRCC complaint is based on two campaign Reports of Receipts and Disburse-

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emotional needs," Roach said. "I doubt if there is anything government can do to predict, provide and fund everybody's emotional counseling," he added.

The committee, 14 Oklahoma residents appointed by various state entities, first met in November 1995, and made recommendations the 45th legislature later passed into law. HB 2957 drops the requirement for filing paternity affidavits when consent for the adoption has been given.

Aiming at the 46th legislative session, members agreed to call in sub-committee recommendations by Dec. 1. Two more meetings are scheduled, Dec. 12 and Jan. 9, to finalize recommendations into legislative language for chairman Roach and co-chair Sherri Finik, executive director of Adoption Affiliates.

"I'm interested in taking whatever the committee recommends and turning it into legislation," Roach said, before sub-committee reports began. The next meeting is set for 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 21, in Conference Room 512-A at the State Capitol.