

Capitol Network News

Today's news from Oklahoma's best government information resource

Daily Edition, Thursday, October 10, 1996

MENTAL ILLNESS INSURANCE PARITY TASK FORCE EXAMINES OTHER STATES

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Other states' laws related to mental illness insurance parity were the focus Thursday of the Task Force on Mental Illness Insurance Coverage.

The task force, chaired by Sen. Angela Monson, D-Tulsa, briefly examined four states' laws designed to promote parity of coverage between medical/surgical insurance and mental illness insurance. The goal of the task force is to make legislative recommendations designed to bring mental illness insurance coverage on par with other forms of insurance coverage, particularly medical and surgical insurance coverage.

House staffer Claudia Durrell told the panel that the states — Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire and Minnesota — vary in their approaches to the definition of mental illness and the amount of parity required by their laws.

Maine and New Hampshire, Durrell explained, limit their required coverage to only "biologically based mental illnesses," while Maryland and Minnesota also have provisions related to emotional disorders and substance abuse or chemical dependency.

The costs of the required coverage also varies from state-to-state, the House staffer noted.

In addition, a mental illness parity pro-

vision recently enacted by Congress was addressed. That provision, part of HR3666, prohibits group health insurance plans that already have mental illness components from having financial differentials between that coverage and the other forms of coverage, particularly medical and surgical, included in the plan.

Some panel members, as well as Monson, were critical of the federal law, noting that it applies only to group plans and that it has an opt-out provision tied to costs.

The task force will focus its attention next on the concerns of those in the business community, the psychiatric community and the insurance industry related to mental illness

insurance parity. Monson said it is her hope that the meeting, which will include testimony from representatives of the different groups, will help lay the groundwork for the panel's legislative recommendations. That meeting will be held on the morning of Oct. 31 at a site to be announced.

Two additional meetings are also planned — Nov. 14 and Dec. 16. During the November meeting, Monson said she will ask the panel to put together its final recommendations for legislative action. The Dec. 16 meeting will be dedicated to completing that effort and preparing the recommendations for submission to the legislature by the panel's legislatively-imposed Jan. 2 deadline.

ADOPTION REFORM COMMITTEE SETS LEGISLATIVE GOALS

By Gerry Cherry
Staff Writer

■(GIT) In their 12th meeting Thursday, the Adoption Law Reform Committee, appointed by the legislature in 1995, set time constraints for recommendations to the 46th legislature and discussed the impact of public hearings on member opinions.

Public hearings were held in Oklahoma City and Tulsa to enable committee members to hear suggestions from adoptees, adoptive parents and others involved with the adoption process. Several committee members are adoptive parents, although none are adopted.

The overwhelming opinion expressed at both meetings, Rep. Russ Roach, D-Tulsa said, is adopted adults want access to adoption records held by the state. In some cases, adoption records of many years ago are incomplete, preventing adopted people from gaining knowledge of their own medical and/or social history. In other cases, adopted adults want to make contact with their birth parents. "We have the issue of absolute, open adoption records," Roach said, "and on the other hand, the people who want to preserve their privacy."

Adopted adults who search for their birth parents are sometimes disappointed when they find them, the committee learned from

testimony at the public hearings.

"An adoptee who does the research on his own and makes contact anyway has no assurance he'll get any emotional satisfaction from the contact," Roach said. One committee member mentioned an adoptee who wanted to make contact with a birth parent, but the birth parent was not interested in meeting the adoptee. Testimony of this nature indicated a qualified, confidential intermediary might be helpful, both to the birth parent and the adopted adult.

Other ideas that came out of the public hearings included counseling for birth parents, before and after the adoption takes place; making all adoption records open to the adoptee at age 18 and allowing adoption agencies to have access to Department of Human Services records concerning the child to be adopted.

Concerning opening the records, member Jack Petty, an attorney, said, "this is obviously an area we need to deal with, but I approach it with fear and trepidation." Attorney John O'Connor said if adoptive parents knew from the start that records would be open to adoptees at age 18, it might make it easier for everybody.

"We cannot solve with statutes everyone's
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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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Adoption Reform, cont. from page 1
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.

TREASURER'S INVESTMENT EARNINGS TOP QUARTERLY ESTIMATE

From Office of State Treasurer

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) State Treasurer Robert Butkin's investment of state funds generated \$4.3 million more than originally expected for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 1997. Butkin released a report Thursday showing interest earnings on state investments for the first quarter topped original estimates by more than 23 percent.

The report shows total interest earnings for the first quarter of the fiscal year were nearly \$23 million. This was \$4.3 million — or 23.1 percent — above original estimates. Interest earnings are derived from the investment of state funds. The Treasurer managed the investment of more than \$1.7 billion during the first quarter of the fiscal year.

Butkin said the earnings of \$4.3 million above the fiscal year estimate is enough money "to provide annual state education funding for more than 1,500 Oklahoma school children. It's also enough money to pay the annual salaries of more than 140 state troopers," he said. "Interest earnings by the treasury are the sixth largest source of revenues to fund state government, and by far represents the largest source of non-tax revenues."

For the first quarter, interest earnings in all categories of investment performed above estimates originally made in February 1996. Butkin said a number of factors affecting interest earnings are not directly controlled by the treasurer. "Even so, we have been able to capitalize on market development to maximize our earnings," he said. This year's first quarter figures also include \$3 million in

interest on securities due on the last day of fiscal year 1996. This interest was originally estimated to be received last fiscal year but, due to timing differences, was actually realized this fiscal year.

Among the items over which the treasurer has no direct influence is the amount of money available for investment at any given time. "The size of the investable base is a result of how fast money flows in and out of state government and is affected by revenue

collections and the spending patterns of the various state agencies," he said.

The investable base was 14.9 percent above the estimate, while earnings exceeded the estimate by 23.1 percent. The higher percentage for interest earnings above the estimate "demonstrates how well the state's investments are being managed," Butkin said. "Our first consideration is always the safety of each investment. We then make sure the money can be quickly turned into cash, and finally we consider the yield or rate of return."

Interest earnings in the first quarter of fiscal year 1997 were also 31.4% higher than earnings from the first quarter of fiscal year 1996. The Treasurer earned \$5.5 million more than the first quarter a year ago.

OKLAHOMA, TEXAS GOVERNORS PUT BARBECUE ON THE LINE

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Plates of barbecue will be on the line when the Oklahoma Sooners meet the Texas Longhorns Saturday in the annual OU-Texas football game in Dallas.

The governor whose team loses, Governor Frank Keating explained Thursday, will purchase and serve what he and Texas Governor George W. Bush are calling "border barbecue" for the winner. If Texas loses, Bush will serve his dinner to Keating, his wife and others in Altus. Should Oklahoma lose, Keating will feed Bush, his wife and others in Childress, Texas.

"I am looking forward to Governor Bush coming to Altus, donning his apron and preparing the best barbecue dinner his money can buy after the Sooners beat the Longhorns," said a confident Keating, who predicted the Sooners would win by three points. "I think I'll even order slow-roasted longhorn. However, should the unthinkable take place, I know the good people of Childress will honor my credit card."

In response, Bush said, "While the Longhorns are preparing to burn the Sooners, I hope that my friend Governor Keating is taking cooking lessons. I can't wait to celebrate a Texas victory over Oklahoma with a great barbecue dinner in Childress, Texas. I just hope that Frank Keating is as good a cook as he is a governor."

In defense of the Sooners, who are off to an 0-4 start, Keating said, "The annual OU-Texas game is such a classic rivalry that it's very hard to predict the outcome. Past history says that there are always surprises in this game. I have confidence in Coach John Blake and his team. The Big Red will roll into the Cotton Bowl ready to win, and I'll be there cheering them on."

FOOD STAMP IMMIGRANT RESTRICTIONS DELAYED

From Okla. Dept. of Human Services

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Oklahoma will comply with delays in implementing immigrant participation in the federal food stamp programs, according to an Oklahoma Department of Human Services official.

DHS Director George A. Miller said, "We received word late Friday that the budget agreement, signed by the President September 30, contains a provision delaying implementation of the food stamp immigrant restrictions until April 1, 1997."

In August, 2,068 of the 368,112 persons receiving food stamps in Oklahoma were alien immigrants or one half of one percent. Food stamp payments to all Oklahomans totaled \$25.9 million.

"There are still so many things we don't know about the new welfare reform law or the regulations the federal government will develop for states to receive maximum funds through the new federal block grant legislation," Miller said. "However, we still have clients coming to our offices daily needing help, and within our current state plan and our best interpretations of the new law, we are going to help as many Oklahomans as we can reach self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. That's our mission."

Public Law 104-193 bans legal immigrants from receiving food stamps until they become citizens of the United States.

The agreement exempts any person who was receiving food stamps on August 22 or before, the date the new welfare reform law was enacted, from the new immigrant restric-

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ments filed with the FEC, one covering January 1, 1996 to June 30, 1996 and the other covering July 15, 1996 to August 7, 1996.

Cino states the Roberts for Congress committee "either does not know or will not reveal its activities for the first two weeks of July 1996."

Reached at his home in Ardmore, Roberts told *Capitol Network News*, "all contributions and all expenditures are reported. Where the form says July 15, it should read July 1. There was an error."

FEC spokesman Kelly Huff said the commission is aware of the problem, and sent Roberts a note Oct. 1 asking for an amended report by Oct. 15, covering the disputed period.

Roberts was out of the office, Thursday, and could not be reached for comment.

DOE PLANS TO SELL ELK HILLS OIL FIELD IN SEGMENTS

From U.S. Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) Taking the next step in one of the largest U.S. government divestitures ever, Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary on Tuesday announced the Department of Energy's (DOE) strategy to sell the government's portion of the Elk Hills Naval Petroleum Reserve. Rather than marketing the field as a single asset, DOE will offer it in segments. Bids will be solicited for an "operating working interest," where the buyer will become the field's operator, and for multiple, "non-operating working interests," where purchasers will bid for smaller interests in the field.

The Elk Hills field, near Bakersfield, CA, is the 11th largest oil field and 10th largest operating gas field in the lower 48 states.

"By offering multiple interests in Elk Hills, the department can broaden the universe of potential buyers and increase competition. This will help ensure that U.S. taxpayers receive the highest market value," said Secretary O'Leary.

DOE also announced that it will begin outlining the key components of the strategy for prospective bidders at two public meetings next week, in Houston, TX, and Bakersfield, CA. The Houston meeting will be Oct. 15 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Houston. The Bakersfield meeting will be on Oct. 16 at the Red Lion Inn. Both meetings will begin at 2 p.m.

DOE plans to offer an "operatorship interest" made up of a significant portion of the government's approximate 78 percent share of the field. Currently, ownership of the field is divided between DOE and Chevron USA Production Company, and the field is operated on a unitized basis. The buyer of the "operatorship interest" would take over operations of the field.

In addition, DOE will offer undivided, non-operating working interests to allow smaller companies, alone or in consortia, the opportunity to obtain interests in the field. DOE might also consider selling some of the field's surface facilities separately to attract companies that specialize in natural gas processing or power generation.

The strategy was developed from recommendations of CS First Boston and Petrie Parkman & Co., the team serving as investment advisors to the agency.

The strategy is expected to appeal to many smaller, independent producers and refiners in California who use the lighter crude oil from Elk Hills for blending with

heavier oil from surrounding fields, making the heavier oil easier to transport and refine. Having direct access to the lighter crude oil is important to these smaller companies.

Congress set a deadline of February 1998 to sell the field if sufficiently high bids are received. DOE has said it would sell its share of Elk Hills field only if it receives bids that are higher than the value of the asset to the government. Last July, the Department released a new schedule for the divestiture that calls for a solicitation to be issued in April 1997. Target dates, including dates for opening data rooms to prospective bidders, will be discussed at the public meetings.

STATES TO RECEIVE MORE THAN \$185 MILLION IN INTERIM NATIONAL FOREST PAYMENTS

From US Dept. of Agriculture

■(WASHINGTON) Forty-one states and Puerto Rico will share interim payments totaling more than \$185 million as their portion of national forest receipts collected in fiscal year 1996, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced Wednesday. Oklahoma's interim payment will be \$561,000, with an estimated total payment of \$748,000.

"We estimate these states will eventually receive more than \$247 million in total payments from national forest receipts for the year," Glickman said.

The interim payment represents 75 percent of the estimated total each state will receive as its share of funds collected during the year from the sale and use of a variety of national forest products and services. USDA pays any additional funds it owes the states in December, after determining the actual receipts for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 1996.

By law, the Forest Service pays 25 percent of the revenues it collects from timber sales, grazing, recreation, minerals, and land uses to states in which national forest lands are located. The funds are used for schools and roads. Last year, the states received total payments of more than \$273 million.

The interim payments do not reflect revenues collected from the national grasslands. National grassland receipts are calculated on a calendar year basis, beginning Jan. 1, 1997 and these funds are shared with the counties in the spring.

The largest interim payments will go to Oregon, \$71 million; California, \$27 million; Washington, \$22 million; and Idaho, \$11 million.

PRAIRIE GRASS TO YIELD NEW POWER

From US Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) Merging Iowa's agricultural potential with long-term energy needs is the underpinning for a new, cost-shared cooperative research and development pact between Chariton Valley Research, Conservation and Development (RC&D) in Southern Iowa, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The new public/private partnership — worth an estimated \$20 million over a four-year period, including a 47 percent federal investment — will grow switchgrass on 30,000 to 40,000 acres of underutilized, marginal cropland.

Currently, switchgrass is used primarily to reduce soil erosion. In this program, switchgrass will also be grown as an "energy crop" and used to generate 35 megawatts of electrical power — enough to light some 40,000 homes — by mixing it with coal at existing power plants. The award announced last week by U.S. Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary and Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, is the third in a series of awards under the joint DOE/USDA Biomass Power for Rural Development initiative.

Five hundred local farmers and landowners will be paired in the Chariton Valley RC&D partnership with the combined research and investment power of 14 organi-

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tions until April 1, 1997. Immigrants who are due for food stamp recertification prior to April 1, 1997 will be recertified using the old immigration eligibility rules in place prior to August 22.

States will then have from April 1, 1997 to August 22, 1997, to recertify the eligibility of such immigrants using the new restrictions. States should be encouraged to give immigrants who recertify before April 1, 1997, certification periods that last through August 1997, so they do not lose benefits the end of the extended agreement date.

The Presidential agreement does not effect eligibility of immigrant applicants since August 22. New applicants will be subject to the new immigrant restrictions mandated in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, i.e., most immigrants coming to the United States are banned from the food stamp program for a period of five years.

GRANTS TO PROMOTE WOMEN IN NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

From US Dept. of Labor

■(WASHINGTON) Women seeking to enter and move up in apprenticeship and non-traditional occupations will benefit directly from \$610,000 in technical assistance grants announced Tuesday by Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich.

"The department's twin objectives in this effort are to improve opportunities for good jobs for women while building a skilled American workforce for employers to succeed in today's global market place," Reich said.

The funds come through the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations (WANTO) Act. Under the initiative, four community based organizations are receiving grants both to provide on-site technical assistance to employers and labor unions to help develop strategies to increase the employment of women in apprenticeship and nontraditional occupations; and to develop an ongoing off-site technical assistance

through computer-based telecommunication service and network, including a 1-800 dial-up system.

The grantees are: (1) Chicago Women in Trades, Chicago; (2) Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, DC; (3) Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles, Long Beach, Calif.; and (4) YWCA's Women in Trades, Memphis Tenn.

Women's Bureau director-designate Ida L. Castro praised the program as one that "will enable women to earn good pay and better benefits — giving women more flexibility in managing today's work and family balancing act."

REDUCTION IN SIDS DEATHS HELPS BRING LOW INFANT MORTALITY

From US Dept. of Health & Human Services

■(WASHINGTON) Saying that more than 50 percent of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) mortality may be preventable if babies are placed to sleep on their sides or backs, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala on Wednesday announced that deaths due to SIDS fell 30 percent between 1992 and 1995. She said the reduction in SIDS deaths has contributed significantly to an historic low infant mortality rate in the United States.

Secretary Shalala credited the public-private 'Back to Sleep' campaign with bringing about the improvement in SIDS mortality, and she said all parents need to hear the message: "Babies should be placed to sleep on their sides or on their backs, but not on their stomachs."

Shalala announced that SIDS deaths declined from 4,891 in 1992 to 3,279 in 1995, according to preliminary HHS data. This includes a 12 percent drop in 1994 and an 18.5 percent drop in 1995, the largest annual declines ever observed in the U.S. and the only large declines observed in two consecutive years. Further, SIDS has dropped from 2nd to 3rd leading cause of infant mortality, behind both low birth weight and congenital anomalies.

The SIDS decline also accounted for about one-third of the total drop in infant mortality for the country in 1995. Infant mortality declined 6 percent in that year, to an all-time low rate for the U.S. of 7.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, according to data released by HHS last week.

ANOTHER CITY ADDED TO THE CLEAN CITIES PROGRAM

From US Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary last week welcomed the Hampton Roads area as the 49th member of the Clean Cities program. The Hampton Roads Clean Cities coalition which includes such cities as Norfolk, Hampton, Newport News, and Virginia Beach among its 29 area stakeholders, becomes the first Virginia-based coalition to join the voluntary Clean Cities Program.

Clean Cities is designed to promote the use of alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles (AFV), alleviate air pollution in major U.S. cities, reduce dependence on imported oil, and stimulate local economic activity. Introduced in September 1993, Clean Cities creates locally based public/private sector partnerships to advance the use of alternative fuels through local investment and infrastructure development. The program brings together utilities, fuel providers, vehicle manufacturers and fleet operators with public sector entities to establish sustainable alternative fuel markets.

Stakeholders in the Hampton Roads coalition are currently operating nearly 150 alternative fuel vehicles and expect to operate nearly 2,000 by December 2000. The most widely used fuel is compressed natural gas (CNG) though stakeholders also operate vehicles powered by propane and electricity. Refueling is available at approximately four publicly accessible CNG stations, 10 privately accessible CNG stations and four privately accessible electric recharging facilities.

Other DOE Clean Cities include Central Oklahoma; Atlanta; Denver; Philadelphia; Wilmington, DE; Las Vegas; Washington, DC; Boston; Austin; Florida Gold Coast; Chicago; Albuquerque; Wisconsin (SE area); Colorado Springs; Long Beach; Lancaster, CA; Salt Lake City; White Plains; Baltimore; Louisville; Rogue Valley; West Virginia; Sacramento, Oakland; San Joaquin Valley; San Francisco; South Bay (San Jose); Western New York; Portland, OR; St. Louis; Norwalk; Waterbury; Norwich; New London; Peoria; SW Kansas; Central New York; Dallas-Fort Worth; Honolulu; Missoula, MT; New Haven; Central Arkansas; Paso del Norte; Pittsburgh; Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG); Los Angeles; Coachella Valley, CA; and Weld/Larimer/Rocky Mountain National Park.

Prairie Grass, cont. from page 4

zations representing a broad cross section of business, community, public utility and governmental interests. The project is a key component of the Clinton Administration's broader effort to combine federal resources and scientific expertise with private concerns to develop and commercialize biomass power systems. Successful collaboration in this area will reduce acid rain and U.S. reliance on imported fossil fuels, while stimulating economic development in the nation's rural communities.

The partners have received authorization from USDA for a 4,000-acre demonstration project supporting the development of energy crops as the Conservation Reserve Program is phased out. If successful, the project will help farmers and landowners to harvest new and sustainable income as a lasting alternative to traditional federal farm subsidies. In addition, the increased use of home-grown renewable energy will keep more energy dollars in Iowa, having the net effect of even greater economic benefits.

It is anticipated that a number of other important environmental benefits will also result from the cooperative research project, including the protection and improvement of the local watershed and surrounding wildlife habitats, a reduction in the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and potential opportunities in fuel cell power generation.

Calendar of Meetings & Events

Friday, October 11, 1996

9:30 **War Veterans Commission**
Auditorium, Oklahoma Veterans Center, Tahleah

Oklahoma State Textbook Committee
Public hearing for testimony concerning textbook choices
Board Room, Oliver Hodge Education Building, 2500 N. Lincoln, Oklahoma City

Monday, October 14, 1996

9:00 **Tourism & Recreation Commission**
Clarion Hotel, Senate Room, 4345 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City

10:00 - 2:00 **House of Representatives Economic Development Committee**
Interim Study 96-12, 2nd meeting. Cameron University, Admin. Bldg. Room 200, 2800 W. Gore, Lawton

2:00 **Older Oklahomans Task Force**
312 NE 28th, Oklahoma City

7:30 **Senate Interim Study 96s-110 — Turnpikes**
Canadian Valley Vo-Tech, Helen Ward Seminar Center, 1401 W. Michigan Ave., Chickasha, OK

Tuesday, October 15, 1996

10:00 **Joint Interim Committee on Electric Utility Task Force**
Created by SJR 37
State Capitol, Senate Chamber

Advisory Committee on Mental Retardation Services —DHS
Room 284, Lincoln Plaza, 4545 N. Lincoln, Oklahoma City

Wednesday, October 16, 1996

9:00 **Police Pension and Retirement Board**
1001 NW 63rd, Suite 305, Oklahoma City

10:00 **Adult Day Care Task Force--DHS**
312 NE 28th, Oklahoma City

Senate Committee on Small Business
Public hearing on small business issues and concerns
Southwestern Oklahoma State University Conference Center. Red Bud Hall,
Corner 7th Street and Davis Road, Weatherford, OK

Calendar of Meetings & Events

Thursday, October 17, 1996

9:00 **Horse Racing Commission**
Shepherd Mall Activity Center, 2426 Plaza Prom, Oklahoma City

Commission on Children & Youth
4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City

1:00 **Jail Task Force — Interim Study SJR 34**
State Capitol, Room 419-C

1:30 - 5:00 **Managed Care Task Force - Senate**
Regulation on Managed Care Entities
5:00 - 6:30 **Public Hearing on Managed Care**
State Capitol, Senate Chamber

Thursday, October 24, 1996

10:00 **Senate Energy Administration Reform Task Force**
Created by SB 911
State Capitol, Senate Chamber

House Appropriations and Budget Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Economic development of the beef, poultry and swine industry in rural Oklahoma
Eastern Oklahoma State College, Student Union Ballroom, Second Floor, 1301 West Main, Wilburton

Monday, October 28, 1996

10:00 **Rehabilitation Services Commission**
3535 NW 58 Street, Second Floor Large Conference Room, Oklahoma City

Tuesday, October 29, 1996

10:00 **Commission on Children & Youth**
4545 N. Lincoln, Suite 114, Oklahoma City

Wednesday, October 30, 1996

10:00 **Senate Committee on Small Business**
Public hearing on small business issues and concerns
Metro Tech Vo-Tech, Big Dipper Room, 1900 Springlake Dr., Oklahoma City

Friday, November 1, 1996

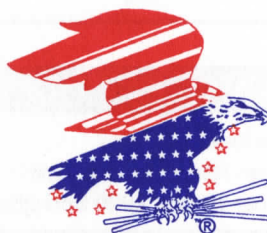
9:00 **Oklahoma Fire Marshal Commission**
Oklahoma City Fire Training Center, 850 N. Portland, Classroom C, Oklahoma City



"It's beginning to show some human characteristics —
faulty reasoning, forgetfulness and repetition."

INFORMATION is POWER

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