

# HORSE RACING COMMISSION REQUESTS OSBI CHECK OF APPOINTEES

By Gerry Cherry  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) At the meeting of the Oklahoma Horse Racing Commission Thursday, Commission member Ralph "Butch" Choate suggested submitting to the Legislature a recommendation to include a specific Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation background check for commissioners. Additional appropriations to the OSBI were also suggested to cover the cost of the additional duties. A level three or equivalent check was recommended. After minimal discussion, members voted to recommend an amendment to Title 3A, Sec. 201 of the Oklahoma Statutes, setting forth requirements for becoming a member of the horse racing commissioner.

When the statute was created in 1983, potential members were required to be:

- a U.S. citizen;
- an Oklahoma resident for the five years immediately preceding the appointment; and
- have never been convicted of a felony.

## Natural Gas, cont. from page 5

"It is the intent of this Commission to help the industry and also the agency (OTC) by reducing unnecessary reporting procedures," Maston said.

"This Commission must determine what needs to be done — it is a matter of practice by the industry that needs to change — it is a matter of policy that needs to be changed by the tax commission or the corporation commission — and finally legislation must be written to enable the restructuring to be complete," Maston said.

## RELEASE OF AND ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY TO GAS VALUES

After a brief discussion, the Joint Commission unanimously voted to make gross production tax values public record and through OTC rule making determine how to facilitate efficient public access to that information.

Maston advised some legislation will be needed to implement this recommendation. The Commission moved to present draft legislation to the members at the November meeting.

The next meeting of the Joint Commission on Natural Gas Policy is set for 2 p.m., November 21. The chairman also scheduled the December meeting for 10 a.m., December 17. Materials distributed at the meeting are available on request from GIT.

## RACE DAYS SET FOR SOME TRACKS

Commission members okayed 1997 race day schedules for Remington Park, Blue Ribbon Downs and the Tulsa County and State Fair venues; but tabled the Cottonwood Racing Corporation schedule — at Cottonwood's request — until the November meeting. The schedules are:

- Remington Park will hold a 40-day quarter horse race meeting (March 28-June 1) and a 112-day thoroughbred race meeting (July 11-Dec. 14) totaling 152 live race days.

- Race Horses, Inc. dba Blue Ribbon Downs will hold a 163-live race day meet from Jan. 18 to Dec. 21.

- Tulsa County Public Facilities Authority (Tulsa County Fair) was approved for one of two schedules, either May 30-June 20 (Tuesdays-Saturdays) or May 30-June 20 (Thursdays-Mondays), with a final selection between the two schedules with notification to the commission no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the Tulsa County Fair Meet.

- Tulsa County Public Facilities Authority (Tulsa State Fair) will also select from two schedules, either June 21-July 12 (Tuesdays-Saturdays) and June 21-July 13 (Thursdays-Mondays), with the final dates set and the commission notified no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the season.

- Cottonwood Racing Corporation at Will Rogers Downs in Claremore requested an organization license. A portion of the public hearing for the request was held at the HRC September meeting and commissioners were scheduled to hear the final portion, deliberate and vote on the application for 1997 racing today. At the request of Cottonwood counsel Clark O. Brewster, the remainder of the public hearing was postponed due to the absence of vice chair Tom Drummond.

In other commission action, members added a requirement to the license for Blue Ribbon Downs. Because of their record of delinquent reimbursements to the HRC for race officials and equine testing, Blue Ribbon Downs — in addition to the \$200,000 bond required of all race tracks — will be required to provide personal guarantees. Either the board of directors or the principal owners must sign a personal guarantee for obligations owed to the Oklahoma Racing Commission. In a four to five month period, BRD has been behind up to \$81,000 in reimbursements to HRC. Choate questioned granting a license to delinquent tracks. "If they don't have proper payment," he said, "why do we give them a license in the first

place? Do you want to do business with somebody who never pays you?"

Gordon L. Hare, executive director of the racing commission, said "denying a license is much more draconian than requiring a guarantee."

Public comment will be received on a change in rule 325:25-1-10, Horses Ineligible to Start in a Race, with notice of publication set for November 15.

The Horse Racing Commission is a seven-member board appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Oklahoma Senate. One member is appointed from each congressional district and one at-large member experienced in the horse industry. Members serve a term of six years.

## LT. GOVERNOR FALLIN MARKS OKLAHOMA/MEXICO WHEELCHAIR EXCHANGE

From The Lt. Governor's Office

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Lt. Governor Mary Fallin celebrated the partnership between Oklahoma and Sonora, Mexico as the two states begin a wheelchair exchange program. Wheels for the World and Partners of the Americas donated nine refurbished wheelchairs to Sonora during ceremonies held in the Lt. Governor's office Thursday.

"I'm so happy that my office was able to bring these parties together. Now two American organizations with a strong Oklahoma presence will be able to provide much-needed assistance to Sonora," Fallin said.

Jonie and Friends (JAF) Ministries, the parent organization for Wheels for the World, were introduced to the Oklahoma chapter of Partners of the Americas by Lt. Governor Fallin earlier this year.

Wheels for the World, and its local organization, Wheels for Oklahoma City, are organizations dedicated to refurbishing used wheelchairs for distribution to those who cannot afford them. The group began several years ago with a wheelchair drive in Oklahoma City. They now provide wheelchairs to disadvantaged people throughout the U.S., and in several foreign countries.

Partners of the Americas is a partnership of 48 American and 20 South American states that have come together to share trade, economic, cultural, and educational ideas. Through Wheels for America, the partnership hopes to donate as many as 100 wheelchairs this year.