

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



"I'll be right up front with you," Jackson began. "I've moved my RV registration to Texas, so this is not a personal thing with me anymore."

"I thought you did RV owners a disservice raising the tags 150 percent; but it was really a disservice to Oklahoma," Jackson said.

Presenting statistics compiled from the National RV Owner's Association and the Oklahoma Tax Commission, Jackson showed committee members the national growth of RV ownership and the stagnation of RV registrations in Oklahoma.

Jackson illustrated his statistics with a real-life scenario, based on current registration fees in Oklahoma and Oregon. A 1994 Monaco Dynasty was purchased new in 1994 with a list price of \$202,000. In Oklahoma, the one and 1/4 percent registration rate would have been \$2,525. Adding the excise tax of 3 and 1/4 percent cost \$6,565. An \$11 title fee brings the total to \$9,101 in taxes added to the cost of purchasing the vehicle in Oklahoma.

In Oregon, on the other hand, fees are based on weight and vehicle length. A two-year registration on the above vehicle would be \$201.50 plus a title fee of \$10.00 and a plate fee of \$32.50.

Jackson also noted that Oklahoma charges \$150 maximum to register a boat, of any size or price.

Committee Member Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska, asked if a proposal is being kicked around and Committee Chairman Harold Cotner, D-Altus, suggested revamping the excise tax law. But, Cotner reminded members, changes in the excise tax law would mean changes in the state's revenue stream. "It's not that easy to solve," Cotner said. We have to consult with the tax commission on this thing."

"The business of government is not directly to make the people rich, but to protect them in making themselves rich; and a government which attempts more than this is precisely the government which is likely to perform less. Governments do not and cannot support the people."

*Lord Macaulay
speech on parliamentary reform
March 2, 1831*

The next meeting will be a closed session, between election day, Nov. 5 and swearing-in, 15 days later. Cotner is retiring after this session, and said he would use the closed meeting to tell his peers goodbye.

—GERRY CHERRY
10/08/96

TAX EXEMPTION FOR BOYS HOME STUDIED

■(GIT) Goodland Boys Home near Hugo houses and educates troubled boys under the aegis of the Presbyterian Church. The home receives cash donations from the ministry and individual congregations. At this time, Goodland is not tax exempt, except for the purchase of food and clothing purchased for the boys. Rep. Randall Erwin, D-Nashoba, wants to classify Goodland with the Baptist Children's Home, which is completely tax exempt.

Rep. Howard Cotner, D-Altus, chaired the meeting of the House Revenue and Taxation Committee Tuesday. The committee is currently working on Interim Study 96-23, the question of whether Goodland Boys Home should be tax exempt.

A bill authored by Rep. Erwin last session, to exempt the home from taxes, went nowhere. Erwin is trying to get legislation written and pre-filed before this year's session.

The boys homes save taxpayers a great deal of money, Erwin said. "If these boys weren't in these homes, we'd be taking care of them at taxpayers' expense," Erwin noted, and added, "I'm looking for guidance from this committee."

Cotner said "there's no question its a good issue. Consult with the tax commission and prefile legislation," he told Erwin. "We'll be glad to work with you."

—GERRY CHERRY
10/08/96

TREASURER'S INVESTMENT EARNINGS TOP QUARTERLY ESTIMATE

■(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.

"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," said Butkin.

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.

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.

—OFFICE OF STATE TREASURER
10/10/96

SPORTS

OKLAHOMA, TEXAS GOVERNORS PUT BARBECUE ON THE LINE

■(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, Gover-

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