

DOING VERY WELL WITH VERY LITTLE

By Gerry Cherry
Staff Writer

■ (GIT) With a tiny yearly budget of \$129,000, the film commission of the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation is bringing dollars into the state far in excess of its funding. The legislature's appropriation to the film commission covers three salaries, space rental, trade shows to advertise Oklahoma as a film location and "pens and postage," as Film Commission Director Robert Davis said. The movie *Twister* garnered more than \$11 million for Oklahoma, but Davis said smaller projects and more of them would help just as much as one big film. "The movie industry brings dollars in and does not take anything out," Davis said, noting more than \$3 million was paid to local carpenters, electricians, etc. who worked on *Twister* — money that stays in Oklahoma.

At the monthly Tourism and Recreation Commission meeting in Oklahoma City Monday, Davis listed projects already filmed here and some we may see in the coming months.

After a quick tour of Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Guthrie and Norman by Spelling Productions three weeks ago, Davis got the word this week that a writer has been assigned to craft a series along the lines of *Dynasty*, *Dallas* and the movie *Giant*. The film commission's budget didn't include helicopter use for the movie moguls, or motel rooms, or meals; but private industry bridged the gap, donating helicopters and time, motels and meals for the visiting team. "We had four problems that kept Spelling and others out of Oklahoma," Davis said. "We have addressed these problems, and that's why Spelling came here." The problems solved were:

- A sales tax rebate goes directly to the film producers.

- Equipment rental is handled by the film commission. "When the production company needs any item, they tell the film commission and we get it there," Davis said. Previously, film crews had to rent equipment in Dallas.

- Right to work and crews are no longer problems, after cooperation from the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Local 112 of the union agreed to provide workers for films from union rosters. If the union can't fill the jobs needed Davis said, the production company can hire workers from outside who do not have to join the union to work on the movie.

Other filming in Oklahoma included:

- More than \$1.5 million has been spent

to film national commercials in Oklahoma this year.

- A portion of a Dick Clark special was taped on the Tallgrass Prairie near Pawhuska.

- HBO filmed a documentary on children and religion at Stroud.

- The Marland Mansion in Ponca City was filmed for a segment of the A&E channel's *American Castles* series.

Coming up, two Oklahoma independent film companies have contracts and funding to make and release *Faded Love*, a movie indirectly about Patsy Cline, with a \$1.5 million budget and *Night Race*, with a \$2 million budget. A remake of the Broadway hit, *Oklahoma* as a miniseries is planned for this

winter. Filming should begin in February and continue through July or August Davis said. Next spring, *The Bill Pickett Story* will begin filming.

Davis said he and Lt. Gov. Mary Fallin were guests of Dreamworks in California recently. "After much practice," Davis said, "last year we honed our little dog and pony show. I lead off," he said, "and then say 'Lt. Gov., what about . . . ?' then I bow out and Mary takes over. She's right at home with the heavy hitters," Davis added.

Hoping for a bigger appropriation from the legislature next year, Davis is planning to take the state's advantages as a location site on the road, advertising at trade shows.

AG ASKS FOR OG&E'S RATES TO BE CUT BY \$79.8 MILLION

From Office of Attorney General

■ (OKLAHOMA CITY) Attorney General Drew Edmondson filed testimony on behalf of Oklahoma ratepayers Monday asking that OG&E's rates be cut by \$79.8 million per year.

OG&E asked the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to reduce its rates by approximately \$14.2 million per year beginning March 1, 1997. Monday was the deadline for parties wishing to file responses to OG&E's request.

"We commend OG&E for coming forward and asking for a rate reduction," Edmondson said. "However, we believe that the evidence will support a much greater rate reduction than the company proposed. Our responsibility is to make sure Oklahoma ratepayers are paying the lowest possible rate for electrical service. Our filing is based on the maximum rate reduction we feel can be supported by the evidence, while still allowing OG&E a fair rate of return."

The attorney general's testimony was prepared by a group of expert consultants who have been analyzing OG&E's application since August.

"Our consultants have conducted a very thorough examination of the company's filing and have discovered a number of additional adjustments that need to be made," Edmondson said. "These include adjustments to OG&E's anticipated revenue and expense levels, as well as to its Oklahoma jurisdictional rate base. These combined adjustments would result in a \$79.8 million reduction for OG&E's customers," Edmondson said.

Among the recommended adjustments to OG&E's filing is a \$46.8 million reduction in Oklahoma's rate base to recognize the

value of cash working capital supplied to the company through the payment of monthly utility bills.

"Our recommendation on this issue is consistent with the most recent commission orders on this issue," Edmondson said.

The attorney general's testimony also recommends a reduction in the amount of compensation OG&E is allowed to pay to Enogex, its wholly-owned subsidiary, for fuel related costs. OG&E is requesting the equivalent of \$0.813 per MCF for natural gas transported by Enogex, while Enogex transports gas for other shoppers and its own affiliate at rates of \$0.16-0.17 per MCF.

"While there are clearly some significant differences between the two types of transportation services, we don't believe that the degree of disparity is justified by the company in its filing," Edmondson said.

The attorney general recommends that OG&E's compensation to Enogex be set at lower level on an interim basis, subject to refund, until the commission completes its examination of the issue.

Edmondson also recommends the elimination of nearly \$7 million in marketing and advertising costs. These costs are aimed primarily at competing with natural gas utilities for a finite amount of customer load.

"The Corporation Commission accepted a similar recommendation in a recent Oklahoma Natural Gas rate case," Edmondson said. "We're just trying to be consistent. We don't believe it is in the best interest of ratepayers of either electric or gas utilities to fund this sort of competition for the same customers."

Edmondson indicated it is too early to
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