

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



tember, when collections are bolstered by quarterly filing of individual and corporate income tax estimates. Collections normally fall below monthly needs in October and November, requiring draws on cash-flow funds before rebounding in December and January.

Earnings by the State Treasury yielded \$8.4 million for the month and \$23.0 for the first quarter. September receipts exceeded those of a year ago by \$3.3 million or 63.6 percent and were \$1.2 million or 16.2 percent above the estimate. The first quarter total was \$5.6 million or 32.1 percent above the prior year and \$4.4 million or 23.4 percent above the estimate.

—OFFICE OF STATE FINANCE
10/15/96

SENATE BUDGET LEADER LAUDS ECONOMIC GROWTH, LATEST REVENUE REPORT

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The latest revenue report from the Office of State Finance is further evidence that Oklahoma's economy is growing and state economic policies are working, according to a Senate budget leader.

"Just when it seems like we've peaked, our economic numbers get better," said Senator Kelly Haney, D-Seminole, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "The latest numbers indicate that we're doing a lot of things on the economic development front."

Senator Haney was referring to the September revenue collection report issued by the Office of State Finance Tuesday.

According to the report, tax collections increased by \$27.7 million in September, an 8.5 percent increase from the same period

last year. The tax collection total for the first quarter of this fiscal year is up by \$67.8 million or 8.1 percent higher than the same period last year.

Senator Haney is hoping other state leaders will recognize the good news and use it to promote the state.

"I hope Governor Keating takes a good look at the latest report and recognizes all the positive things that have been happening in Oklahoma.

"Good economic news like this can be a great business recruitment tool. The Governor needs to spend more time talking our state up instead of running it down."

—SENATE MEDIA
10/16/96

TOP STATE OFFICIALS ENDORSE TAX QUESTIONS

■(GIT) Four top state officials announced Thursday their support for three state questions designed to lower and impose limits on property tax increases in Oklahoma.

Governor Frank Keating, Senate President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor and House Speaker Glen D. Johnson said they have agreed to serve as honorary co-chairs of a campaign to win passage of State Questions 675, 676 and 677. Joining the three in their support of the questions was State Treasurer Robert Butkin.

Keating, Taylor and Johnson will work with Oklahomans for Property Tax Relief, a coalition of state business leaders from both sides of the fight over State Question 669, the failed property tax reform effort from the spring.

"The legislative leadership and I wisely sought help from a group of citizens to come up with these meaningful reforms of Oklahoma's antiquated property tax system," said Keating. "These three state questions are exactly the direction we need to go to bring real relief to taxpayers."

Taylor called the state questions the result of a bipartisan effort and urged their approval.

Speaker Johnson said he supports the questions because they offer taxpayers a well-deserved and larger voice in the taxation process.

Butkin, too, praised the bipartisan effort that put the questions on the ballot and urged approval of the questions.

"I am most pleased with the provision that freezes property tax values on homes

owned by senior citizens earning \$25,000 or less per year."

The three questions make up one-half of the state questions which will go before voters during next month's general election.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
10/17/96

TOURISM & RECREATION

A BIG 'WELCOME' TO OKLAHOMA

■(GIT) At a cost of more than \$300 per square foot, the Welcome to Oklahoma center on the Cherokee Turnpike (Hwy. 412) near Kansas, Oklahoma may be too expensive, one Tourism and Recreation commissioner said at the Commission's monthly meeting, Monday.

Jonathan Helmerich questioned the prohibitive cost, asking, "Are we being prudent with taxpayers' money?"

As part of a long range plan to provide information in an attractive atmosphere to those driving into the state, information centers are already open along major thoroughfares near Oklahoma's borders—at Sallisaw, Miami and Oklahoma City. Funding for the centers was mandated by general obligation bonds in 1993, including \$2.5 million for the construction of welcome centers, Kathleen Marks, director of the travel and tourism division, said.

Walters, OK has a new center under construction adjacent to its former site and Colbert and Thackerville are replacement sites. Miami, Kansas, Catoosa, Colbert and Walters were each funded at \$500,000, Marks said. An additional half-million dollars was added for Catoosa's facility after the 1992 tornado blew the old one away.

Low bid on the Kansas, Oklahoma facility along the Cherokee Turnpike was \$640,000. The site for the welcome center is farm land, Marks said. All utilities will have to be brought in and all drives and paving will be brand new.

Helmerich questioned the feasibility of building on the site near Kansas, Oklahoma, asking, "Do we need to build it at all on that one highway?" Driving up the cost is the absence of water anywhere near the site. The bid price includes a lift station to pump water over the turnpike to the site, plus piping over the highway.

There was no disagreement among commissioners that Oklahoma needs first-class

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"You know, the greatest epitaph in the country is here in Arizona. It's in Tombstone, Arizona, and this epitaph says, 'Here lies Jack Williams. He done his damndest.' I think that is the greatest epitaph a man could have. Whenever a man does the best he can, then that is all he can do; and that is what your President has been trying to do for the last three years for this country."

Harry S Truman
remarks in Winslow, Arizona
June 15, 1948