

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



tendance is 95,000 per year, according to the American Association of Museums (AAM). Omniplex averages 350,000 visitors a year.

- *Parents Magazine* recently recognized Omniplex as one of the nation's best museums for children.

- Omniplex is one of 743 fully accredited by the above-mentioned AAM.

Another measure of respect, Austin said, is Omniplex' charge to develop educational programs for NASA.

Now, Austin said, the museum is planning the largest project in their 40-year history, the OmniDome. It will be the first in Oklahoma and one of only 80 in the U.S. Surrounding states have 15 IMAX theaters. Omniplex has already raised more than \$3.2 million of the money needed, and plans on a total of \$5 million in private donations. "We've never asked for state help before," Austin said, "but we'll not be able to fully fund the project through private donations."

Trustees of the museum are hoping for a loan of about \$2 million from the state, to be repaid — they hope — from sales taxes collected at Omniplex, in the amount of \$200,000 annually.

State statute 68 OS 1991, Section 1356, allows for tax exemptions for colleges and universities. Omniplex trustees hope to add "accredited museums" to the exempted facilities.

Rep. Ray Vaughn, R-Edmond, agreed a bill would be drafted to change the statute if the committee feels it would be advantageous.

—GERRY CHERRY
10/17/96

TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION HITS THE ROAD

■(GIT) Members of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission will hit the road in October and November to conduct nine transportation summits designed to discuss Oklahoma's current and forecasted transportation demand.

The summits are scheduled on Mondays and Tuesdays, beginning Oct. 21 and 22. Each commissioner will attend his multi-county area summit and the entire commission will attend the statewide summit set for Oklahoma City.

Department of Transportation officials

will present a 45-minute overview of Oklahoma's current funding versus projected needs at each summit, followed by a 45-minute feedback or public comment session. Citizens will be encouraged to present specific transportation goals for their area either in person or in writing.

The dates and locations of the meetings include:

- Oct. 21, Lawton, 5 to 6:30 p.m.;
- Oct. 22, Altus, 2 to 3:30 p.m.;
- Oct. 28, Durant, 5:30 to 7 p.m.;
- Oct. 29, Ada, 1 to 2:30 p.m.;
- Nov. 4, Oklahoma City (statewide summit) 3 to 4:30 p.m.;
- Nov. 18, Enid, 5 to 6:30 p.m.;
- Nov. 19, Woodward, 10 to 11:30 a.m.;
- Nov. 25, Muskogee, 2 to 3:30 p.m.;
- Nov. 26, Tulsa, time to be announced.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
10/17/96

UTILITIES

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

■(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."

"Difficulty is the excuse history never accepts."

Edward R. Murrow
on President John Kennedy's
inaugural address
Oct. 19, 1959

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.

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, whole 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.

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.

Edmondson indicated it is too early to tell how the recommended rate reductions would be distributed among the various OG&E customer classes. Edmondson anticipates filing this so-called "rate design" testimony next week.

The current scheduling order in the case calls for the hearing to be held Nov. 22 through Dec. 13, with an order to be issued by the end of the year.

—OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
10/14/96

TASK FORCE REVIEWS ELECTRIC UTILITY RESTRUCTURING

■(GIT) Oklahoma is one of many states currently debating the value of electric utility restructuring, members of the Joint Interim Committee on Electric Utilities Task Force and representatives of such companies were told Tuesday.

According to Matthew Brown, a senior energy policy analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures, the move to restructure the production and delivery of electricity to consumers comes on the heels of technological advancements that have improved delivery systems and an excess in production capacity. While those factors, Brown said, should have led to a reduction in prices, they have not, due largely in part

Continued on next page