

Other information is gathered for consideration by academy members. It's no wonder Conaster's lunch ran late.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

The ultimate goal of the academy's spring conference, Conaster said, is a series of recommendations that can be presented to the legislature. The group has a long list of recommendations that have been submitted and nearly an equally long list of successes.

"I think that because we are nonpartisan," Conaster explained, "that our recommendations are looked upon a little more favorably. The legislators know we're not giving them information that's predisposed one way or another."

The academy's successes seem to bear that out.

The Economic Development Act of 1987, HB1444, which reorganized the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, created Oklahoma Futures and the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology was partly based on the academy's 1986 work on

economic development.

The academy's work in education helped lead to the creation of Task Force 2000, which resulted in the introduction of HB1017. The group has also made recommendations concerning ad valorem taxes, small business development and recently completed a discussion of crime which focused on private detention and community involvement.

Next spring, the academy will once again turn its attention to education, including early childhood education through lifelong learning, Conaster said.

One thing that is obvious looking over a list of the academy's conference topics is that the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals is often years ahead of the public and lawmakers when it comes to tackling important issues.

The academy, for example, first talked about ad valorem taxes in 1985, followed by a discussion of the state's economic expansion in 1986. Education topped the academy's 1988 agenda and the academy made sweeping recommendations in 1990 covering top-

ics such as education, infrastructure, crime prevention and health care.

Asked why it seems the academy acts before other groups, Conaster said:

"I think it's because we're talking about a group of people who are sincerely concerned about Oklahoma and is attuned to what is happening nationally, as well as internationally. It only stands to reason then that what is done in the state must help it to fit into that global community and move it ahead.

It's not often one hears of the important issues of the day from a group not promoting a particular social or political agenda. That is certainly the case, however, for the Oklahoma Academy of State Goals.

By bringing together community leaders and interested citizens, the academy helps to focus the attention of the state on the important issues of today, and more often than not, of tomorrow as well.

THAT'S GOOD FOR OKLAHOMA!!

OKLAHOMA ACADEMY FOR STATE GOALS RECOMMENDATIONS, 1985 TO 1996

1985 Oklahoma Revenue

Ad valorem tax reform

1986 Economic Expansion

Create State Department of Commerce

1987 Oklahoma's Future

Create Constitutional Study Commission

Strengthen cabinet system

Systematic restructuring of K through 12 system

Ad valorem tax reforms

1988 K-12 Education

Form statewide education task force to implement following recommendations:

- Establish new quality preschool programs
- Improve quality of existing preschool programs
- Develop improved statewide curriculum
- Implement measurable learner outcomes
- Introduce statewide competency testing
- Public district-specific competency test score results

• Strengthen teacher preparation, performance & evaluation

• Significantly increase statewide education funding

• Set standards for school boards & districts

• Governor should directly appoint the Oklahoma State School Superintendent of Public Instruction

• Become national leader in utilization of education technology

1989 Developing Human Potential

Increase access to prenatal/perinatal health care

Promote strengthening of family/community values

Coordination of law enforcement, social & educational agencies

Emphasize drug abuse education & prevention

1990 Oklahoma's Future: Choice or Chance

Establish goal to fund education per peer institutions

Promote a major higher education capital bond issue

Clarify missions/roles of colleges & universities

Initiate statewide infrastructure planning and funding program

Create state bond pool for community level infrastructure

Build/support 21st century telecommunications infrastructure

Create separate Department of Juvenile Corrections

Centralize all state law enforcement agencies

Increase access to prenatal/perinatal health care

Strive for immunization rate of 90 percent of 2-year-olds

Task Force 2000 should pursue the "school choice" policy analysis

Create a permanent ASG Education Council for liaison purposes

Make state health care responsibilities market/education focused

Explore public/private tourism related partnerships

Task Force 2000 should pursue the "school choice" policy analysis

Determine economic impact of tourism as an industry

1992 Governor's Conference on Telecommunications

The Oklahoma 2007 Vision should be pursued

Governor should host a formal telecommunications policy retreat

1993 Public Awareness of State Budget Needs

Forward conference developed budget balancing recommendations to the governor, state legislature, state legislative appropriations leadership and the Office of State Finance

1994 Entrepreneurial & Small Business Development

Oklahoma should establish an "Entrepreneurial Institute"

Promote in-state investor tax incentives to generate risk capital

Establish organization to formalize a network of risk capital

Tort reform should become a major focus of the Academy

State Workers' Compensation Fraud Unit should be fully funded

Remove all barriers to university based technology transfer

1995 Better Government Competition

Transformation of the Grand River Dam Authority

Restructuring county government

Privatization of some duties of fire departments

Modify assessment testing of adults learners