

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



Farm Insurance—met to discuss the issue.

Brad Bryant of the property and casualty insurance department for the state said approximately 20 percent of the vehicles we meet on the road are not covered by insurance. Bryant's department recommends revising the law to stagger the safety inspection and tag purchase times so proof of insurance will have to be shown at least two times a year. He also recommended impounding vehicles of uninsured motorists for 30 to 90 days, or until proof of insurance—perhaps a non-refundable policy—is provided.

All states surrounding Oklahoma require at least 20-40-15 liability coverage, Bryant said. His department estimates rates for Oklahoma drivers would rise about 15 percent for higher liability coverage.

Bryant also mentioned a change in the seat belt law, from secondary to primary. A primary law would allow law enforcement to stop and ticket a driver for not wearing a seat belt.

State Farm representative Jim Walker said his company understands the nature of the problem, but is "not supportive of increasing [liability] limits. Our concern is affordability," Walker added.

"We [State Farm] believe the percentage of uninsured motorists is greater than 20 percent, more like one-third," Walker said, and the percentage of drivers with 10-20-10 coverage is also about a third. "If we raise the liability limits to 25-50-25, it will drive up the price for everyone."

Representing Oklahoma Farmer's Bureau Mutual Insurance Company, Al Jennings cited some figures from his company files. "In 1965," Jennings said, "we started pre-matic, and clients can pay one-sixth of a six month premium monthly. On our standard risk policy, 35 percent lapse within the first six months. On our preferred risk policy, only six percent lapse in the first six months."

"If a man really knew himself he would utterly despise the ignorant notions others might form on a subject in which he had such matchless opportunities for observation."

George Santayana

Despite the problems, Jennings said his insurance company did not support a liability coverage increase either. "We feel affordability is a key issue," Jennings said.

Both insurance company representatives agreed if motorists opted to buy uninsured motorist coverage, the premium rate could go down for all drivers. "We'd be getting a premium from everyone," Jennings said, "instead of 70 percent."

The meeting adjourned with the promise of more information to come from studies in other states.

—GERRY CHERRY
11/07/96

TOURISM & RECREATION

HISTORIC AREA PROMOTES CHISHOLM TRAIL

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Tri-County Historic Chisholm Trail Commission, an alliance of southern and central Oklahomans living in the vicinity of its namesake late 1800s cattle drive trail, is stepping up efforts to promote the area's economic development through tourism.

Residents of each of the three counties, Jefferson, Stephens and Grady, are active in the Commission's work, with participation open to anyone willing to work for economic growth along the historic trail.

The Chisholm Trail was named after Jesse Chisholm, a Chickasaw Indian trader, who established the route as his trading itinerary. It later became known as a cattle trail. The commission is the brainchild of Oklahoma State Senator Carol Martin, who wants to bring the trail back to its original purpose. "We intend to complete the cycle," she said, "making the historic trail once again an economic trade route."

The Commission's long-term objective is to promote increased tourism as an economic development tool for the area. With the Chisholm Trail as its focus, the program is similar to the Green Country concept used to promote the state's forested eastern sections, but with a thematic rather than regional approach.

After funding is raised by the Tri-County group, development of a brochure featuring attractions, sites and accommodations along the Trail will be published by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation.

A Home Page on the Internet is being

produced, donated by Chisholm Trail Internet Services, a Duncan, OK firm. Martin said that Tri-County presence on the Internet opens a world wide market for area attractions, referring to international fascination with America's western heritage.

Concrete markers should soon be in place in Jefferson and Stephens counties, placed with the help of Trail historian Bob Klemme of Enid. The markers, donated by Ringling, OK ranch and farm realtor Mike Turner, will be spaced about one mile apart along the actual site of the cattle trail.

—SENATE MEDIA
11/07/96

WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE COMMISSION DISCUSSES LITIGATION, PERSONNEL

■(GIT) At the regular monthly business meeting in Oklahoma City, Monday, the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission honored longtime staffers, discussed legal issues, voted to provide a new home for the Durant Fish Hatchery manager and approved acquisition and exchange of real property in Deep Fork and Packsaddle Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

The STEP (shotgun training education program) got a helping hand from the National Rifle Association Foundation of Oklahoma, with a \$1,983 donation to buy shotguns for youth in the program.

Director Greg Duffy reported on a meeting in Texas last week between Texas and Oklahoma legislators. The Wildlife Conservation Department will ask Governor Keating's assistance in opposing the Red River Chloride Project. Currently, release of the draft supplement of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public comment on the project has been put on hold in Washington, Ross Adkins, public affairs spokesman for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said.

In 1957, Congress passed the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and authorized the U.S. Dept. of Health to find the source of chlorides running into the Red River. The Corps was authorized to find a solution to the pollution, after the source was determined to be an old inland sea Adkins said. Currently, a daily average of 3,600 tons of chloride goes into the Red River Adkins said.

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