

MORE THAN \$9 MILLION AWARDED FOR DRUG AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

From U.S. Dept. of Education

■(WASHINGTON) More than \$9 million in grants for drug and violence prevention programs has been awarded to schools and communities across the nation, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced last week.

The awards support two year projects that tackle youth drug use and violence by:

- infusing research based knowledge about "what works" into the design, development and implementation of school based efforts to prevent drug use among youth;
- preventing students from bringing firearms and other weapons into schools;
- preventing truancy and addressing the needs of youth who are out of the education mainstream (dropouts, truants); and,
- preventing violent, aggressive, intimidating or other disruptive behavior arising from bullying, sexual harassment or other causes.

SPECIAL VETERANS DAY PROGRAM

From Okla. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is urging all women from throughout Oklahoma to participate in a unique Veterans Day Program.

On Nov. 11, 1996, the women veterans of Oklahoma will be honored for the first time statewide. All men and women veterans across the state, whether serving now or many years ago, are invited to attend.

Ceremonies will begin at 11:00 a.m. just south of the State Capitol at the Historical Building. The guest speaker will be Lieutenant Colonel Denise O'Hara-Webb of Tinker Air Force Base. The presiding Chaplain, from Altus Air Force Base, will be Captain Gerri Birnbaum.

Also, Joel McClung of the Bagpipe group "Highlanders," will be present. The Master of Ceremonies will be Lynda Waldroop, State Women Veterans Coordinator and Veteran Service Officer for the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs. Performing the national anthem will be Jody Miller and religious music will be sung by Ora Nixon. A laying of a special wreath to honor past and present veterans will conclude the program.

The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is committed and proud to assist in this patriotic endeavor.

Three quarters of the 28 grantees are located in Empowerment Zones or Enterprise Communities. Such economically depressed communities develop strategic plans that link economic development with education and training, and use public safety, human services, and environmental initiatives together to strengthen and revitalize communities.

Each application was evaluated and scored by three non-federal reviewers drawn from drug and violence prevention experts from around the country. Grants were awarded on the basis of highest average score. Funding for the grants was provided under the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act appropriations.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools Federal Activities Grants Program supports development of innovative programs that help ensure safe and drug free schools and communities and makes available models of proven effective practices that can help schools and communities improve their programs.

CCC LENDING RATES FOR NOVEMBER 1996

From U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

■(WASHINGTON) The interest rate for 1995 and prior crop year commodity loans disbursed by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation during Nov. 1996, is 5.625 percent, down from the Oct. 1996 rate of 5.875 percent. For 1996 crop year commodity loans, the interest rate is 6.625 percent for loans disbursed during Nov. 1996, down from 6.875 for Oct. 1996.

Past monthly releases announcing interest rates charged by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation on commodity loans disbursed for that particular month reflected the interest rate charged the CCC by the U.S. Treasury for that month. This was the interest rate specified by the CCC since Jan. 1, 1982, but the process of establishing the interest rate was changed by a provision of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, enacted on April 4, 1996.

Section 163 of the Act requires that monthly interest rates applicable to commodity loans are to be 100 basis points — or, one percent — greater than the rate determined under the applicable interest rate formula in effect on Oct. 1, 1995. This formula resulted in a rate equivalent to the amount the U.S. Treasury charged the CCC for borrowing for the month.

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR INTERCITY RAIL PROJECTS PUBLISHED

From Federal Railroad Administration

■(WASHINGTON) The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) last week announced the publication of a reference guide to assist states and localities considering investment in public-benefit intercity rail and rail-related projects.

The guide is designed to assist local and state planning agencies in their transportation decision-making and to encourage them to consider rail projects in transportation plans and programs in their determination of cost-effective allocation of transportation resources.

The guide provides information about federal and state transportation planning processes; rail project evaluation and priority setting; existing rail projects funded under the various categories of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA); assessment of societal/environmental benefits of intercity rail; and innovative financing methods.

Also included in the guide is information on a new computer model designed to assist states and localities in analyzing the economic and financial benefits of public sector investment in rail and rail-related projects.

The reference guide was developed and published on the initiative of FRA Administrator Jolene Molitoris as a response to Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena's innovative financing initiative, the Partnership for Transportation Investment (PTI) program and an executive order on federal infrastructure investment.

"We wanted to pursue the financing options and partnerships available for rail projects under ISTEA. A dozen rail projects have been approved under ISTEA and the PTI, and all are public-private partnerships that stretch limited public dollars," Molitoris said.

To receive a copy of the reference guide, contact the FRA's Office of Policy at (202) 632-3131, fax (202) 632-3705.

"The first time you meet Winston [Churchill] you see all his faults and the rest of your life you spend in discovering his virtues."

Lady Constance Lytton