

## LABOR SURPLUS AREAS NAMED IN OKLAHOMA

By Michelle Boyd Waters  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The U.S. Department of Labor designated 19 counties and two cities in Oklahoma as labor surplus areas until Sept. 30, 1997. DOL designated a total of 1,370 areas across the United States as labor surplus areas because of high unemployment, said Cynthia Grindstaff, an Oklahoma Department of Commerce research analyst.

The nineteen Oklahoma counties include Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Hughes, Kay less Ponca City, Latimer, Le Flore, McCurtain, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee less the city of Muskogee, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Pawnee, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, Seminole, Sequoyah and Stephens Counties.

The two Oklahoma cities that have been named surplus areas include Ponca City and Muskogee.

Labor surplus areas are eligible for federal procurement preference and are listed in a federal register. The areas are given priority over foreign bids when government entities are seeking bids for goods or services, Grindstaff said. According to Executive Order 10582, government entities can reject bids from foreign companies in favor of local companies located in a labor surplus area.

Labor surplus areas also automatically qualify for Enterprise Zone status, however, the areas must apply for the status. Compa-

nies within or relocating to an Enterprise Zone become eligible to receive doubled longer lasting incentives given by the state. According to Grindstaff not all the areas in Oklahoma have applied for that status.

This year, Oklahoma had only one or two additions to its list of labor surplus areas, Grindstaff said.

An area must have had an average unemployment rate of at least 7.1 percent for the two-year period 1994-1995 to be designated as a labor surplus area. The qualifying unemployment rate of 7.1 percent is a substantial decrease from the 7.8 percent qualifying rate for Fiscal Year 1996 and stems from a decline in the national unemployment rate.

Many observers look to this data as an indication whether the economic condition of a geographic area is improving or declining.

Areas with an unemployment rate under 7.1 percent in 1994 and 1995 may be considered for classification as labor surplus areas

on the basis of exceptional circumstances. These might include a sudden increase in unemployment that is not temporary or seasonal in nature and that results from such circumstances as plant closings, natural disasters or cancellations of contracts.

The labor surplus area classification list is effective October 1, 1996, through September 30, 1997.

The list of labor surplus areas and a complete description of the classification criteria — as well as updates to the annual list — are contained in "Area Trends in Employment and Unemployment," a monthly publication prepared by the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

The publication is available at a cost of \$41 for a 12-month subscription or \$4.50 for a single issue. To subscribe or receive a copy, contact the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (202-783-3238).

## NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR OKLAHOMA

From Oklahoma Dept. of Commerce

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Secretary of Commerce Ronald Rosenfeld announced the appointment of Peter W. C. Mather as the new Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Technology Wednesday. In his new role, Mather will explore ways to maximize technological impact for economic and community growth across Oklahoma.

For the past 15 years, Mather was Vice President of Management Information Services for Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. a \$4 billion chemicals and industrial gases company, with operations in more than 30 countries. He reported to the chairman and was a member of this Fortune 200 company's management committee. His responsibilities included developing worldwide strategy, implementation and operation of the company's information resources involving an annual operating expense budget of \$150 million.

"The State of Oklahoma and the lead economic development agency should feel very fortunate to have Mather on board," Secretary Rosenfeld said. "His vast expertise will be an asset in encouraging future technology advancements for Oklahoma.

"It's not every day a state agency is able to attract a major league player of Mather's caliber. I'm anticipating his association with Commerce will be a major factor in the continued economic growth the state is currently enjoying," Rosenfeld said. "When you're trying to increase high-paying jobs and im-

prove the quality of life, you need some heavy hitters who can make things happen. Mather is one of those people."

Mather holds an MBA from Lehigh University and is a graduate of the Advanced Management Program of the Harvard Business School. He has extensive experience in evaluating, transferring and assimilating advanced technologies. For the past 20 years, Mather has been a recognized leader and spokesman for the information technology community.

He is past president of the International Society for Information Management and past chairman of the Chemical Process Director's Group. He led the U.S. Postal Service project on President Reagan's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (the Grace Commission).

Mather recently moved to Oklahoma from Pennsylvania, where he was a member of the board of governors of Cedar Crest College and co-founder of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. He and his wife Karen and two children live in Edmond.

*"Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself."*

James Stephens

### Freshmen Senators, cont. from page 4

education candidate, she said, but doesn't plan to sponsor legislation this session. "I'm going up there and learn what's going on. I will support the Governor's economic plan. I don't want my daughter to get out of school and leave the state," she said.

Worker's compensation reform and education are also on Wilcoxson's support list.

**Sen.-Elect James Williamson, R-Tulsa,** is a former teacher, a former Oklahoma House member — District 76, 1981-1986 — and an attorney. He ran for the district 35 seat because he "wanted to keep the Senate district Republican, and to support Governor Keating in his proposals to move the state forward economically."

Williamson is interested in supporting economic legislation to "reduce worker's compensation costs to business," as well as improving education in Oklahoma, a goal he also sought as a House member. His other interest is in seeing that "transportation gets its fair share of the dollars, and that we continue to funnel resources into that area."