

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S COUNCIL MEETS TO DISCUSS LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Michelle Boyd Waters
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The state of Oklahoma only spends a nickel — or 5 percent — of its annual revenue on police, prisons and prosecutors, said Bruce Walker, executive coordinator of the District Attorney's Council. The council and the Law Enforcement Alliance will hold a town meeting in Stillwater on Monday to discuss the problems associated with Oklahoma's underfunded justice system.

"The Law Enforcement Alliance is trying to inform the public about what is truly happening in the criminal justice system, so that the public can decide how much public safety it wants," Walker said. "The cost to the average Oklahoman to make our criminal justice system funded at the national average level is fifteen pennies a day."

Each Oklahoman would be spending approximately \$55 on law enforcement per

year. Currently, each person is spending just over \$18 per year. The additional money would go to funding agencies involved in investigating, arresting, prosecuting, defending appeals of, imprisoning and supervising criminals, Walker said.

More than 20,000 felony guilty pleas were submitted in 1995, Walker said. However less than 6,000 people convicted of the crimes were sent to prison.

Oklahoma came in 48th when its criminal justice spending per crime was compared to all 50 other states. Arkansas and Mississippi were 49th and 50th, respectively. Missouri came in just above Oklahoma at less than \$4,000 per crime. The top state in nation was Alaska, which spends nearly \$12,000 per crime.

The council has planned several more meetings.

NEW MAPPING, SURVEYING METHODS UNDER STUDY

By Gerry Cherry
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) awarded a contract to complete a study of the surveying and mapping activities of federal civilian agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector last week. The National Academy of Public Administration won the contract. The Academy's study will be a collaborative effort of the BLM, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Forest Service, all of which are funding the study. The study began in early October and is expected to be completed by June 1997.

"As an agency that manages 270 million acres of public lands on behalf of all Americans, the BLM is committed to finding better ways to meet the needs of the land and the people who depend on it," said BLM Acting Director Mike Dombeck. "Mapping and surveying are essential components of effective land management. This study will help the BLM and other federal agencies advance their efforts to improve mapping and surveying activities."

Neil Suneson, a geologist with the Oklahoma Geological Survey, said the new techniques being studied involve satellite location mapping and sensitive aerial photography with infrared and ultraviolet camera techniques. "I go out in the field and look around," Suneson said of the way surveying has been done for centuries. Geographical Positioning Satellites (GPS) can pinpoint a specific location to within a three-inch circle Suneson said, and elevations can be determined with these satellites also. Use of these new technologies is being studied to see if there is a more accurate way to map and survey.

Other areas of concern in the study is who does the mapping and surveying and why. Could some current federal mapping and surveying activities be better handled at the state or local level? Could some of the work be turned over to private or commercial enterprises with cost-effective results? Should the federal government consolidate or restructure surveying and mapping activities? These and other issues will be addressed in the study.

For example, Dombeck noted, accurate maps are necessary for locating and preserving threatened and endangered plant species. In addition, he said, accurate land surveys

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Nida also said that those with chronic liver disease are at increased risk for complications and death due to infection from this disease.

Those at high risk of acquiring hepatitis A are children who attend a child care setting such as day care, persons whose children attend a child care center or similar institution. Also, persons who live in or travel to counties with epidemic rates of hepatitis A or persons who travel internationally to developing countries where hepatitis A is endemic have increased risk or infection, Nida said.

Smithie said that restaurant workers with Hepatitis A have not been a factor in propagating this epidemic. No outbreaks have been reported from cooks to the general public, she said.

"The real risk has been related to personal contact," the director said.

According to the City-County Health Department of Oklahoma County, the best way of preventing the spread of the virus is practicing good personal hygiene. Conscientious hand washing after using the restroom is an effective way of avoiding this illness.

The State Health Department has issued public health warnings. Also, Smithie said the department is currently working on a media campaign. Immune globulin can be effective in preventing the disease if it is administered within a short time after exposure.

Immune globulin is a short-term, one exposure preventative measure. But in the case of high-risk population or prolonged exposure, the disease can be prevented by immunization with the new hepatitis A vaccine.

Salmonella, on the other hand, is transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food, such as chicken and eggs. The foods transmit the bacteria when they are not cooked properly, the director said.

The best way to prevent Salmonella poisoning is to wash fruits and vegetables and to properly cook meats.

E.Coli 0157:H7 cases have increased since the United States began requiring that all cases be reported, Smithie said. She also added that laboratories have gotten better at identifying the bacteria.

The bacteria is transmitted through improperly cooked ground beef.

The most cases reported have been from individuals who did not properly cook their beef at home.

Legislature Swearing In Tuesday, November 19

Senate 11 am
Senate Chamber

House at noon
House Chamber