

# Capitol Network News

Today's news from Oklahoma's best government information resource

Daily Edition, Thursday, November 7, 1996

## FIERY DEMOCRATS CAUCUS, ELECT PRO TEMPORE

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Sixty-five fiery House Democrats caucused Thursday, dividing their time between serious legislative and caucus matters and attacks on Republicans, particularly the governor.

It was during the speaker pro tempore nomination speeches that the Democratic lawmakers' feelings began to be made known.

"We have just endured one of the most vicious political onslaughts in history," Rep. Dwayne Steidley, D-Claremore, said in his endorsement of Rep. Larry Adair, D-Stilwell, who went on to be elected speaker pro tempore, "and we have emerged with our integrity and a new sense of purpose to pursue a common sense, progressive agenda, which we will dare the governor to veto if he has the audacity to do so."

Steidley characterized Republican attacks during the just-ended political campaigns as "filled with untruths, half-truths, distortions and character assassinations brought forth in the name of religion and conservatism." The truth, Steidley said, was that those who advanced such positions were

"more intolerant, less compassionate and more regressive" than those they attacked.

Adair pointed his finger squarely at the governor, accusing him of leading the assault against Democratic lawmakers.

Rep. Jack Begley, D-Goodwell and Adair's challenger for the post, called the recent election a learning experience, particularly for his family.

"My family learned I voted to have condoms passed out to homosexuals, to release prisoners from prison to raise millions of dollars of fees, against teachers and small business and the taxpayers, apple pie and Chevrolet," Begley said.

That type of campaigning, Begley said, had to be stopped, adding that he was willing to sponsor legislation aimed at requiring political advertising be true and disclose from where certain information came.

By secret ballot, Adair won the post by a vote of 35 to 30.

Representative Loyd Benson, D-Frederick, who was named Speaker of the House-designate by acclamation during the caucus, also took the governor to task, accusing him of campaigning against all Democratic incumbent lawmakers by attempting to brand them with the "liberal" label.

"He came up with zero," Benson said to the applause of his fellow Democrats.

Joining Benson and Adair in leadership positions was Rep. Fred Stanley, D-Madill, who was named caucus chairman by acclamation.

Named to the caucus' ethics committee were Rep. Betty Boyd, D-Tulsa; Rep. James Hager, D-Pawhuska; Rep. Bill Mitchell, D-Lindsay; Rep. Ron Langmacher, D-Carnegie; and Rep. Randall Erwin, D-Nashoba.

## HOUSE TURNOVER FALLS BELOW AVERAGE

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The state House of Representatives saw its lowest turnover in recent memory as a result of Tuesday's general election, according to the director that legislative branch's media services, giving some credence to the idea that incumbency had its advantages.

"Usually, the turnover is from 22 to 25 percent," said House media services director Mike Wray. "This time it was only 15 percent."

More of the turnover, Wray noted, was the result of lawmakers' actions rather than the decisions made by voters at the polls. A total of six representatives retired from public service at the end of the 45th legislative session. Five others left their House seats in search of higher office.

Only three were defeated in Tuesday's general election.

Combined with one new lawmaker who will fill a previously-existing vacancy, that means 16 new faces will grace the House floor when the 46th Legislature convenes

next year, including:

- Mike Wilt, R-Bartlesville, District 11;
- Bobby Frame, D-Checotah, District 15;
- Dale Turner, D-Holdenville, District 24;
- Terry Ingmire, R-Stillwater, District 34;
- Jim Newport, R-Ponca City, District 37;
- Wallace Collins, D-Norman, District 45;
- Raymond G. McCarter, D-Marlow, District 51;
- David B. Braddack, D-Altus, District 52;
- James Covey, D-Custer City, District 59;
- Hopper Smith, R-Tulsa, District 67;
- Darrell Gilbert, D-Tulsa, District 72;
- Phil Ostrander, D-Collinsville, District 74;
- Mark Liotta, R-Tulsa, District 77;
- Mary Easley, D-Tulsa, District 78; and
- Al Lindley, D-Oklahoma City, District 93.

Some of those new members will get a baptism by fire. Although not scheduled to be sworn in until later this month, Republicans and Democrat representatives were set to caucus on Thursday to discuss various matters concerning the 46th legislature.

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## ELECTION IMPACTS REFORMERS, LIBERTARIANS

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Tuesday's general election did little to change the face of the state legislature and gave the state its first 100 percent Republican-controlled congressional delegation.

But the election outcome's biggest impact may have been on the state's Reform and Libertarian parties. Preliminary results indicate that the Reform Party will retain its status as a recognized party through the 1998 election, while the Libertarian Party will cease to exist as a recognized party in the state.

State law mandates that recognized parties receive 10 percent of the vote in a presidential or gubernatorial election in order to maintain their status as recognized parties, State Election Board Secretary Lance Ward explained. The Reform Party's presidential candidate, H. Ross Perot, received 10.8 percent of Oklahoma's presidential ballots, while the Libertarian Party's candidate, Harry Browne, received only .46 percent of the votes. Those results are scheduled to be certified by the State Election Board on Friday.

Pending the results' certification, Ward said, "The Reform Party will remain a recognized party in the state, having received 10.8 percent of the vote. All that was required was that they receive 10 percent. The Libertarian Party will cease to exist once the results are certified."

That means, Ward added, that in order for the Libertarian Party to have candidates appear on future ballots that they will have to seek the signature of several thousand registered Oklahoma voters again.

"Essentially, it means that they have to start all over," said Ward.

There are two routes the party could go, Ward added. They could seek recognized party status, meaning voters could register to vote under the party's name, it could hold a primary and could field a candidate in any race, or they could become an unrecognized party, having only the right to have the party's candidates for president and vice president appear on the general election.

Becoming a recognized party requires the signatures of registered voters equal to or more than five percent of the electorate participating in the general election. To become an unrecognized party, only three percent of those signatures is required.

The Libertarian Party was an unrecognized party in 1992, rising to recognized status for the 1996 election. The party conducted its first primary election — for US Senate — and fielded candidates in the Fourth District congressional race and 45th House District race. Each candidate finished a distant third, garnering from 1.2 percent to 3.5 percent vote.

Those voters currently registered as members of the Libertarian Party, Ward added, will automatically become registered independents once the general election results are certified and the party is declared to no longer be recognized.

The Reform Party employed a similar

manner to get a position on this year's ballot, obtaining the signatures of five percent of the number of voters participating in the last general election.

Besides its presidential and vice presidential candidates, the Reform Party fielded one legislative candidate — Mike Thompson in House District 48 — who received 2.9 percent of the ballots in that three-way race.

A new challenge, Ward noted, now faces the Reform Party:

It must field a gubernatorial candidate in 1998 or it risks losing its status as a recognized party.

"The law is clear," Ward explained. "To remain a recognized party, parties have to receive 10 percent of the votes in a presidential or gubernatorial election. If the party doesn't file a candidate, it can't get that 10 percent of the vote, and therefore, would cease to be a recognized party."

Ironically, it was the Libertarian Party which had the larger number of registered voters going into Tuesday's election — 141 compared to the Reform Party's 129.

Currently, the Reform Party also has a suit pending against the State Election Board. Filed in late October, the suit alleges the board, its members and employees acted illegally when they failed to have new voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications printed that included the party as a recognized party.

## CONGRESSIONAL SPENDING FOR '96 ELECTIONS REACHES \$469 MILLION

### From Federal Election Commission

■(WASHINGTON) U.S. Senate and House candidates involved in Tuesday's general election raised \$562 million and spent \$469 million from Jan. 1, 1995, through Oct. 16, 1996. This represents a modest increase over 1994 totals. Congressional campaign fundraising increased by 8 percent, while spending is up by 4 percent. Senate and House candidates reported \$145.1 million cash balances as they entered the last three weeks of the campaign.

Through Sept. 30, all Congressional candidates, including primary losers, reported raising over \$617 million and spending \$489 million. This is an increase of 12 percent in fundraising over '94 and only 10 percent in spending over both '92 and '94 totals of \$445 million.

Senate races for '96 include that group of small population states where campaign

finance activity has traditionally been less than for corresponding states. This remains true for 1995-96. Senate candidates have raised \$187.8 million and spent \$168.3 million. They reported \$28.8 million in cash reserves for the last weeks of campaigning.

In contrast, House races have increased 27 percent in fundraising and 23 percent in spending. Candidates have raised \$374.1 million and spent \$300.7 million, with \$116.3 million left for the final weeks.

Funds from candidates themselves, either in the form of loans or direct contributions, are down by more than \$22 million, mostly due to a decrease in the amounts Senatorial candidates have used of their own funds — \$19.4 million compared to \$42.2 million in '94. (This is predominantly due to the last California Senate race.) House candidates have reported tapping slightly more of their

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### Capitol Network News

A division of

GIT, Inc.

P.O. Box 61206

Oklahoma City, OK 73146-1206

Office (405) 528-2546

Fax (405) 521-9807

Net: gitinc@ionet.net

Web: <http://www.exoweb.com/git>

Darwin P. Maxey, Publisher

Mary Millen, Editor

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## HIGHER LIABILITY COVERAGE FOR OKLAHOMA MOTORISTS?

By Gerry Cherry  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Do Oklahoma motorists need higher liability insurance coverage?

That was the subject members of the Public Safety Committee discussed Thursday in Interim Study 96H-50, chaired by Rep. Shelby Satterfield, D-Tulsa, requested by Rep. Jack Bonny, D-Burns Flat. "This interim study was brought about because I had a car wreck," Bonny said. "The guy who ran into me had 10-20-10 insurance, which paid for my car. Then his insurance ran out and my medical bills were picked up by my insurance."

"A lot of people have told me the same thing, so I wanted to hear the pros and cons from everyone," Bonny said.

Representatives of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, State Insurance Department, the Department of Public Safety and

four major insurance companies—Allstate Insurance, Farmers Insurance, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance and State 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. At this time, a driver can be ticketed for not wearing his seat belt only after the driver is stopped for another reason. A primary law would allow law enforcement to stop and ticket a driver for not wearing a seat belt.

"Oklahoma is 47th in seat belt usage in the country," Bryant said. "Only 45 to 47 percent of Oklahoma drivers use a seat belt." California has an 83 percent seat-belt usage rate, and a primary seat belt law. As usage increases, lives are saved and thousands of injuries are prevented Bryant added. A primary seat belt law would also help find the uninsured motorists Bryant added.

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. All those at mini-

mum level now," Walters said, "will fall into the uninsured category. A certain segment of people choose between auto insurance and food on the table," he added. "Just to raise limits without doing anything else won't solve the problem," Walker said.

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."

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.

## KAW NATION SPONSORS VETERANS MEETING

From Okla. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Kaw Nation will sponsor a Veterans Benefits Town Hall Meeting 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 14, at the American Legion Post 14, 407 West South Avenue in Ponca City.

Representatives will be present to help all veterans with questions.

The Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, Oklahoma Veterans Centers, Oklahoma Employment Commission, Veterans Counseling Center, Family Hospice, Navita and other distinguished guests will give presentations.

Updated information dealing with service and non-service connected compensation and pensions, service records, awards and medals, emergency assistance grants, veterans centers, medical benefits, death benefits and widow benefits will be discussed.

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

## AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE, THE LAWS GET TOUGHER

By Gerry Cherry  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) It wasn't so long ago that Oklahoma didn't even require drivers to be insured. The first compulsory insurance law went into effect in December 1976.

In July 1983, driver's were required to provide proof of insurance in the form of a security verification.

An additional fee was required in November 1988, if a suspended person did not meet the compulsory insurance requirements or they could surrender their driver's license and tag within 30 days.

In July 1991, the insurance cancellation law went into effect, giving the law enforcement community the authority to confiscate the license and tag of an uninsured motorist.

According to the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, (DPS), the percentage of uninsured drivers before the compulsory law went into effect was between 25 and 35 percent. The percentage now is between 13 and 15 percent, DPS statistics show, based on accident records.

Oklahoma has 3.5 million registered vehicles and three million licensed drivers DPS records indicate. Of that number, four percent, or 104,000, are currently under suspension.

## Spending, cont. from page 2

own funds than in '94, investing \$23 million.

Financing for Senate races came in the form of \$124.1 million from individuals and \$34.1 million from PACs. House candidates received \$211.1 million from individuals and \$126.3 million from PACs.

## TASK FORCE URGED TO CONTINUE FUNDING OF INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) A joint task force was urged Thursday to protect the state legislature's appropriation to indigent legal services agencies in the state.

"I hope this committee will recommend the continuation of last year's appropriation," Gayla Mitchell, director of Oklahoma Legal Services, told the Joint Task Force to Study Fees for Indigent Legal Services.

If that appropriation, which totaled \$450,000 for fiscal year 1997, is not continued, Mitchell warned the task force, "We will have a terrific budget shortfall that will result in staff cutbacks."

Unlike Oklahoma's Indigent Defense System, which provides legal services in criminal cases, indigent legal services provide attorney assistance in non-criminal, civil matters. Like the state's indigent defense system, however, the various agencies involved in providing civil legal service have seen their financial support dwindle, particularly that provided by the federal government.

The task force, Mitchell noted, is charged with discussing possible alternatives for funding the legal services.

A possible alternative, discussed at length during the task force's early October meeting, is the expansion of the IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts) program from a voluntary program to an all-inclusive or opt out program. Tony Scott, who administers the program for the Oklahoma Bar Association, told the panel Thursday that such a move would likely increase the money flowing into the program from approximately \$300,000 annually to just under \$600,000. Approximately 42 percent of the state's active attorneys participate in the program, which was established by the state's Supreme Court, Scott said.

The program is funded, as its name implies, with interest earned on attorneys' trust accounts.

"We won't know how much additional money we might bring into the system until we actually make such a move," said Scott, noting that the amount generated in other states has varied when a similar conversion was made.

Scott also warned the task force that a recent Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision threatens the continuation of the IOLTA programs. Specifically, he explained, the court ruled that similar programs in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas were unconsti-

tutional because they unfairly deprived citizens — the attorneys' clients — of property.

If that decision is upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, Scott said, "The IOLTA program in its present form will most likely go away."

Even voluntary programs such as Oklahoma, Scott added, would likely be harmed by such a decision, because attorneys would likely be required to obtain their clients' consent to send the interest earned on their money to the program, creating a problem in terms of administration.

Scott said the Supreme Court would likely hear the case because of the different lower court opinions concerning such programs. Two circuit courts of appeals, the First and

the Eleventh, he said, have upheld the programs as constitutional, as have a number of state supreme courts. The Internal Revenue Service, it was noted by a task force member, indirectly recognizes the program by not requiring attorneys' clients to pay taxes on the interest earned on the money while it is held in their attorney's trust accounts.

Sen. Bernest Cain, D-Oklahoma City, and Sen. Jerry Smith, R-Tulsa, the only two lawmakers in attendance because of the House's Democratic caucus, expressed support for protecting the legislature's appropriation to indigent legal services, saying other methods of funding the efforts, such as fee increases, would not likely survive lawmakers' scrutiny.

## QUALITY JOBS PROGRAM GETS RESULTS

By Gerry Cherry  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program Act, the Saving Quality Jobs Act and the Former Military Facility Development Act — an umbrella of job incentive legislation passed in 1993 in Title 68 of the Oklahoma Statutes — was renewed in 1996 through SB689. An original target of the program was assisting industries which generally export their goods and services, and creating growth in industries, which would otherwise not occur. The new law eliminates the sunset provision of the original legislation and requires the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to submit a report every three years, documenting the results of these programs and their cost effectiveness.

First quarter figures are in for the program, and in the first quarter of fiscal 1997, the program has added 1,335 new jobs to Oklahoma, with a final total of 1,832 jobs created when the project is complete, through funding of expansions and new businesses in the state.

Vacuumschmeize Corporation expanded their facility with 510 new jobs of 650 projected total jobs created in Oklahoma City.

North American-Nutron Company, Inc. of Oklahoma City added 100 new jobs and is looking at a total of 180 positions at their new facility.

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. of Bentonville, AR expanded their Bartlesville facility with 350 new jobs now and a total of 500 jobs when expansion is complete.

Word Industry Fabricators, Inc. of Tulsa, expanded with 225 new jobs of 300 total jobs in the future.

LORI, Inc., also of Tulsa, added 150 new jobs and will have created a total of 202 when their expansion is complete.

Overall, the Quality Jobs Program has added 31 new locations to Oklahoma and expanded 94 Oklahoma companies since their first year of business. Most projects have been in the larger cities of Oklahoma (57.6 percent) but even the small towns have benefited. According to Department of Commerce records, 11 new projects have benefited towns with fewer than 5,000 people, and 3,601 jobs have been added.

Eleven projects with a total of 3,875 jobs have been working in municipalities with between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

In population areas of 10,000 to 50,000 people, 31 projects have brought 10,509 jobs to these areas, and cities with 50,000 to 100,000 people have received 13 projects and added 3,842 jobs.

Cities with over 300,000 population, such as Oklahoma City and Tulsa, have benefited from 59 projects with 30,848 new jobs added.

In three years, 52,675 jobs have been projected on 125 projects, with about 15,000 new jobs right now, Dan Gorin, chief economist with the Department of Commerce, said. Overall, Gorin said, the Quality Jobs Program accounts for 15 percent of the job growth in the state.

*"New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common."*

*John Locke*

## USDA CONDUCTS WETLANDS PROGRAM SIGN UP

From U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

■(STILLWATER) Oklahoma landowners can have their wetlands and be paid for them, too.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) is conducting a sign up for the Wetlands Reserve Program. The sign up began Nov. 4.

Instead of the conventional two or three week sign up periods that were scheduled in previous years, the sign up will continue for an indefinite period.

The program is competitive and applicants will improve their opportunities for participation by early enrollment.

"The program now offers landowners

more options for wetlands restoration and more time to work with NRCS conservationists to develop a plan to restore and protect wetlands," Ron Clark, NRCS state conservationist, said.

Landowners can sign up at any local NRCS office. Information about the program is also available from local conservation district offices, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Cooperative Extension Service.

To be eligible for WRP, land must be restorable and provide significant wetland and wildlife habitat. The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum 10-year duration. The restoration cost-share agreements provide

financial and technical assistance for implementing wetland restoration practices and do not require recorded easements.

No new permanent easements can be enrolled after Oct. 1, until at least 43,333 acres of non-permanent easements are enrolled in the program nationwide.

WRP has restored 325,000 acres of high quality wetlands across the nation. The goal for the next six years is to restore an additional 650,000 acres. Oklahoma is in the process of restoring over 12,000 acres of wetlands enrolled in 1995 in the first state WRP sign up.

All programs of the USDA are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.

## NICKLES REQUESTS PROBE OF TATUM MURDER

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles on Wednesday asked Secretary of State Warren Christopher to work closely with Russian authorities to fully investigate the murder of Oklahoma businessman Paul Tatum.

Tatum was gunned down over the weekend in Moscow.

"All Americans are deeply concerned about this tragic incident and its implications," wrote Nickles. "Mr. Tatum's murder was a deliberate, execution style killing, carried out with no apparent fear of retribution. We in Oklahoma are especially troubled to see one of our neighbors so brutally killed."

Tatum's murder, some believe, may have been linked to his business dealings in the Russian Republic, raising concerns about the safety of other American citizens doing business there. That concern prompted Nickles to also ask Christopher what steps the U.S. government is taking to prevent further such attacks.

"I would also like to know what steps our government is taking to work with the Russian government to prevent further attacks against American businesses and entrepreneurs," Nickles wrote.

"This must be done in order to secure not only the interest of the United States, but also the successful development of Russia's fledgling free-market economy. We need to make every effort to ensure the safety of U.S. citizens and businesses operating in Russia and the former Soviet Union."

Nickles is scheduled to visit Oklahoma City on Friday.

## HISTORIC AREA PROMOTES CHISHOLM TRAIL

From Senate Media

■(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.

"It's exciting to see the enthusiasm of ordinary people devoting extraordinary time and effort, without any government funding or official backing, to the future of their region," Martin said in praise of the group.

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.

Meetings of the commission are usually at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday each month, at the Fuqua Museum, U.S. 81 and Beech in Duncan. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, Martin said, the November meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 14, at the museum in Duncan.

*"There is no occupation concerned with the management of social affairs which belongs either to women or to men, as such . . . and every occupation is open to both."*

*Plato  
The Republic—  
ca. 390 B.C.*

## EPA STOPS DISCHARGE OF OIL AND GAS WELL POLLUTANTS

### From Environmental Protection Agency

■(WASHINGTON) Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol M. Browner increased protection to public health and the coastal waters along the Gulf of Mexico and Cook Inlet, Alaska, by requiring coastal oil and gas production facilities to stop pollutant discharges into the Gulf of Mexico and reduce such discharges into Cook Inlet, eliminating nearly two billion pounds of contaminants that annually reach these waters.

### INTERNATIONAL TEAMS REVIEW VERIFICATION MEASURES AT DOE SITES

#### From U.S. Dept. of Energy

■(WASHINGTON) The United States has joined with the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a new initiative aimed at increasing the international verification of weapons-usable nuclear materials. The purpose of the initiative is to verify that fissile materials no longer needed for U.S. and Russian defense purposes are not reused to produce new nuclear weapons. As the first step in the initiative, representatives from Russia and the IAEA visited three Department of Energy sites this week.

The delegations visited Argonne National Laboratory-West in Idaho on Nov. 4 for demonstrations of remote monitoring technology. They visited the Hanford Site in Washington state on Nov. 5 and the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site in Colorado on Nov. 6-7. The visits to Hanford and Rocky Flats focused on how IAEA inspections have been carried out at those sites to verify that excess plutonium at those sites is not reused for weapons.

Following the site visits, the Russian and IAEA delegations will travel to Washington, D.C., for meetings on Nov. 8 with senior U.S. officials to discuss how to proceed in carrying out the trilateral initiative.

Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary, Russian Minister of Atomic Energy Viktor Mikhailov and IAEA Director General Hans Blix announced the trilateral initiative in September at the IAEA's 40th General Conference in Vienna, Austria. The initiative, which will result in a joint report by June 1997, advances the commitments made by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin to ensure the transparency of nuclear arms reductions and the control of fissile material removed from weapons.

Browner said, "This action will fully protect the sensitive environment of these coastal waters and reduce Americans' exposure to cancer-causing pollutants in our oceans and beaches."

Under a final Clean Water Act rule, Browner set limits for pollutants discharged into coastal waters from oil and gas production facilities along the Gulf of Mexico and Cook Inlet, Alaska, the last two remaining U. S. coastal areas receiving such discharges. These limitations are expected to reduce current discharges of toxic pollutants, including arsenic, cadmium and lead, by more than two hundred thousand pounds per year; conventional pollutants, such as oil, grease and solids, by approximately 2.8 million pounds per year; and non-conventional pollutants, such as chlorides, ammonia, and aluminum, by approximately 1.5 billion pounds per year. The major waste streams being limited are

produced water, drilling fluids and drill cuttings. EPA is conducting additional studies on discharges from Cook Inlet before any additional action is considered.

At the same time under the rule, Browner incorporated into federal law state issued zero-discharge standards already in place for such facilities along the California, Florida and Alabama coasts and along the North Slope of Alaska.

EPA estimates that total annual costs of the final rule are \$16.2 million. State and federal permitting authorities will work with individual facilities to establish schedules for compliance, studies and interim controls. The "Final Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Coastal Subcategory of the Oil and Gas Extraction Point Source Category" was signed Oct. 31 and will be published in the Federal Register within the next few weeks.

## PUBLIC LAW 480 COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS ANNOUNCED

### From U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

■(WASHINGTON) The U.S. Department of Agriculture this week announced preliminary fiscal year 1997 allocations of \$205.0 million for 21 countries to cover commodity financing extended under Title I of the Food for Peace Program (Public Law 480), and commodity grants under the Food for Progress Program, funded by Title I appropriations.

According to Christopher E. Goldthwait, general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, this week's announced allocations reflect a P.L. 480 program level for fiscal year 1997 of \$226.9 million for concessional credit financing, and \$13.9 million for ocean freight differential costs associated with cargo preference requirements. The commodity allocations reflect current market conditions, particularly for feed grains and soybeans.

"Situations can develop that cause a change in allocations during the fiscal year, so these allocations do not necessarily represent final U.S. commitments to participating governments or private entities," Goldthwait said.

Title I of the Food for Peace Program is a concessional sales program to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster broad-based sustainable development in recipient countries. The program provides export financing over payment periods of up to 30 years, low interest rates, and maximum grace periods on payments of principal of up to five years.

Private entities, including agricultural trade organizations, are authorized to participate in the program.

Countries eligible for the Title I program are those developing countries experiencing a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and difficulty meeting all of their food needs through commercial channels. The factors that determine priorities for country allocations include food needs, potential for becoming a commercial U.S. market, and likely improvement of food security through agricultural projects and economic measures. The allocations take into account changing economic and foreign policy situations, market development opportunities, existence of adequate storage facilities, and possible disincentives to local production.

The Food for Progress program is an independently authorized program that may be funded with Title I monies. This program is used to support countries that have made commitments to introduce or expand free enterprise elements in their agricultural economies. Elements may involve commodity pricing, marketing, input availability, distribution, and private sector involvement. Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Tajikistan are the countries currently expected to receive commodity donations through this program.

*"Originality is the art of concealing your sources."*

*Anonymous*

# Calendar of Meetings & Events

## Friday, November 8, 1996

**10:00**                      **War Veterans Commission**  
Conference Room, Oklahoma Veterans Center, Sulphur, OK

**Red River Boundary Commission**  
State Capitol, Room 511-A

**Noon**                      **Red River Boundary Commission**  
Joint meeting with the Texas Division of the Commission  
State Capitol, Room 511-A

**2:00**                      **Senate Interim Study 96S-103, Law Enforcement Policy Study**  
Third Meeting, Room 419-C, State Capitol

## Tuesday, November 12, 1996

**9:00**                      **Commissioners of the Land**  
State Capitol, Governor's Large Conference Room

## Wednesday, November 13, 1996

**9:15**                      **Joint Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development**  
123 Animal Science Building, Oklahoma State Univ., Stillwater, OK

**1:30**                      **Senate Committee on Small Business**  
Public hearing on small business issues and concerns  
OSU Extension Center, Conference Room, 316 E. Oxford, Enid, OK

## Thursday, November 14, 1996

**1:30**                      **Oklahoma Tax Commission**  
Room 501B, State Office Building, 440 S. Houston, Tulsa

## Friday, November 15, 1996

**1:00**                      **Managed Care Task Force**  
Conference Center, Conference Room C & D, Integris Baptist Medical Center,  
3366 NW Expressway, Oklahoma City

# Calendar of Meetings & Events

**Wednesday, November 20, 1996**

**9:00**                    **Police Pension & Retirement Board**  
1001 NW 63rd Street, Suite 305, Oklahoma City

**10:00**                    **Adult Day Care Task Force — DHS**  
312 NE 28th, Oklahoma City

**Thursday, November 21, 1996**

**9:00**                    **Horse Racing Commission**  
Shepherd Mall Activity Center, 2426 Plaza Prom, Oklahoma City

**Commission on Children & Youth**  
4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 114, Oklahoma City

**9:30**                    **Joint Interim Committee on Electric Utility Task Force**  
Created by SJR 37  
State Capitol, Senate Chamber

**Monday, November 25, 1996**

**10:00**                    **Rehabilitation Services Commission**  
3535 NW 58th Street, Second Floor Large Conference Room, Oklahoma City

**Tuesday, November 26, 1996**

**10:00**                    **Commission on Children & Youth**  
4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 114, Oklahoma City

**Monday, December 2, 1996**

**10:00**                    **State Board of Equalization**  
State Capitol, Governor's Conference Room

**11:00**                    **Oklahoma Transportation Commission**  
200 NE 21 St., Commission Room, 1st Floor, Oklahoma City

**Tuesday, December 3, 1996**

**9:30**                    **Oklahoma Commission for Human Services**  
Room 214, Sequoyah Office Bldg., Oklahoma City

# Calendar of Meetings & Events

**Tuesday, December 10, 1996**

**9:00**                      **Commissioners of the Land**  
State Capitol, Governor's Large Conference Room

**Thursday, December 12, 1996**

**1:00**                      **Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Prep**  
Dyer Room, Oklahoma Education Association, 323 E. Madison, Oklahoma City

**Friday, December 13, 1996**

**1:00**                      **Board of Corrections**  
Lexington Correctional Center, Lexington, OK

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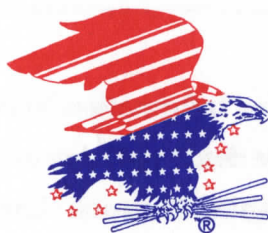
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one of the clowns who runs this department."*

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