

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY



AGRICULTURE

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE MUST CONDUCT HEARINGS ON LAND

■(GIT) The Oklahoma Board of Agriculture must conduct hearings for protesting landowners who present factual allegations showing that proposed feed yard operations may be a direct impact on their property, according to an attorney general's opinion released Friday.

The opinion, requested by Sen. Ben. Brown, D-Oklahoma City, says, in part, "When written comments received by landowners within the vicinity of the proposed feed yard operation present specific factual allegations showing that the proposed feed yard operation may have a direct, substantial and immediate affect upon their property or legal interest, the Board of Agriculture must hold an individual proceeding for the protesting landowner."

The opinion also says that landowners living within one-half mile of a proposed feed lot operation must receive notice when an application for a feedlot permit is received. The landowner also has the right to supply written comments to the board, protesting the permitting of the operation.

"A number of Oklahomans have raised serious concerns about the impact of hog farms and feedlot operations on their property and water sources," said Attorney General Drew Edmondson. "The law clearly states that feed yards must meet specific requirements to avoid pollution of ground and surface water and other types of pollution. As these lots are permitted for operation, there must be a careful review by the Board of Agriculture as to the impact on property owners and other residents in the vicinity."

The opinion, No. 96-76, was prepared by senior assistant attorney general Neal Leader.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/12/96

"As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular."

Oscar Wilde
"Intentions"

The Critic as Artist
1891

ARTS

OKLAHOMA CONSIDERS OPEN STUDIO PROJECT

■(GIT) Oklahoma Arts Council representatives are working with the National Endowment for the Arts to put 10 local artists and local cultural organizations on the Internet through a project called Open Studio, said Nancy Huff, Arts Council public information director.

"We will know more when we return from the state arts conference in Memphis, Nov. 21-24," Huff said.

The representatives will discuss the state's eligibility to participate in the project at the conference in Memphis.

"Open Studio is a groundbreaking project that will increase cultural and arts resources on the information superhighway and make the Internet a reality for people everywhere," NEA Chairman Jane Alexander said.

The NEA is working with the Benton Foundation on the nation's first initiative to provide community access to the arts on the Internet at sites in all 50 states as well as propel the nonprofit arts online by helping them to become effective information providers on the World Wide Web.

This \$1 million initiative, called Open Studio — The Arts Online, is a collaboration between the NEA and the Benton Foundation to help nonprofit arts organizations and artists go online, increase the arts and cultural presence on the Internet, expand the online arts audience, and provide public Internet access at arts and community institutions. Open Studio is funded through an NEA Leadership Initiative award of \$500,000, which the Benton Foundation is committed to matching as part of a cooperative agreement.

Fourteen pilot sites were launched October 22. Kansas and Texas are participating as pilot sites, along with California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Minnesota, New York, Massachusetts, Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Colorado and Illinois. Remaining sites will be selected through a competitive process, with awards announced in February 1997.

A national advisory group will guide Open Studio. The Benton Foundation has recently hired Anne Green as the project coordinator for Open Studio. Green, who has a law degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, was most recently the

coordinator of People For the American Way's Artsave Project, a nationwide research and public education project in the visual and performing arts.

—MICHELLE BOYD WATERS
11/12/96

BUSINESS & LABOR

FALLIN GIVES COMMISSION LESSON IN LAW MAKING

■(GIT) Lt. Governor Mary Fallin gave her commission on workers' compensation reform members a lesson in law making Wednesday, emphasizing that passage of the panel's proposed recommendations would likely draw some opposition.

Fallin, who formed the so-called Fallin Commission on Workers' Compensation Reform earlier this year, said some shots had already been fired at her and the commission, ranging from the claim that she was planning to use the commission's work as a springboard to seek the governor's office to accusations that the panel was dominated by big business and excluded lawyers. None of those claims, Fallin stressed, were true.

Those claims and others, Fallin said, would be part of the plan of attack launched by those she said support the status quo. That attack, she added, would be aimed at defeating the commission's efforts before the legislature.

Fallin has reiterated since the commission's start that her reason for calling together those involved, which include representatives of small and large employers, as well as representatives of the medical, legal and insurance industries, was the result of her discussions with state business people who complained that the workers' compensation system was too costly and cumbersome.

Fallin also outlined Wednesday some of the components to be included in the legislation resulting from the commission's work and introduced Sen. Jim Maddox, D-Lawton, who has agreed to carry the legislation during the 46th Legislature.

Recommendations for inclusion in the yet-to-be-written bill include:

- Legislative establishment of a clear statement of the intent of the purpose of the workers' compensation;
- Creation of a legislatively-sound, statewide mediation system;

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