

STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED

by less than one percent in October. Motor vehicle tax receipts were up 8.5 percent for the four months and were 6.6 percent above the estimate.

The four major taxes combined produced \$239.2 million in October, 5.3 percent or \$11.9 million above the prior year, and \$8.9 million or 3.9 percent above the estimate. Year-to-date receipts from the four major taxes totaled \$1.009 billion, a whopping \$69.4 million (7.4 percent) above the prior year and \$49.6 million or 5.2 percent above the estimate.

The total October General Revenue receipts of \$288.8 million will be supplemented with half a million dollars from general revenue receipts from prior months to meet November allocations of \$289.3 million to state agencies. This will leave a cash-flow balance of \$202.4 million, including \$62.6 million from current year collections, plus \$139.8 million remaining in the general revenue cash flow reserve fund.

—OFFICE OF STATE FINANCE
11/12/96

STATE CHAMBER TO RELEASE GOVERNMENT REPORT

■(GIT) Oklahoma 2000, Inc., the research affiliate of The State Chamber, will release the results of its two-year study of the implications a citizen-imposed limit on tax increases on state government on Monday.

Entitled "In Search of Smaller Government: The Case of State Finance in Oklahoma," the study focuses on the impact of State Question 640, which was approved by voters in 1982 and is considered one of the most strict measures so far in placing limitations on the legislature to raise revenues.

The study also examines governmental responses to the limitation imposed by the constitutional amendment, which indicates that officials have adapted to the amendment by identifying alternative methods of increasing funding without invoking the amendment's requirements, and a survey of voter opinions indicates a conservative orientation of the public toward government and further limitations of the program reduction prospects and revenue raising alternatives available to state government officials.

An important question raised by the study, according to the chamber, is whether the amendment has created the condition for a structural or long term deficit and whether this is insufficient to maintain the existing

level of services. Although revenues will grow with economic expansion, the study concluded, the rigidity of the present tax structure is a further limiting factor. From a review of the tax structure and the changing program emphasis in Oklahoma, the study finds that it is most likely that revenue will grow less rapidly than both the overall economy and expenditure needs.

—SHAWN ASHLEY
11/14/96

WILDLIFE

HUNTER, ANGLER NUMBERS UP IN OKLAHOMA, CONSTANT IN U.S.

■(GIT) The number of hunters and anglers remained relatively constant during 1995 even as expenditures for licenses, tags, and other permits continued to rise, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced last week.

In Oklahoma, the price of a deer tag for fiscal 1996 went from \$14.75 to \$16.75, except for the new class of tag for youth under 18, who still pay the \$14.75 fee.

Oklahoma hunters bought 64,884 resident annual hunting licenses in fiscal 1996, up from 60,923 for fiscal 1995. Fishermen bought 303,904 fishing licenses last fiscal year, up from 257,593 the previous year. Waterfowl hunters bought 11,551 stamps in fiscal 1996, up from 10,814 in fiscal 1995. The sale of tags was down last year, however, from 128,926 in fiscal 1995 to 120,100 in fiscal 1996. Deer gun tags accounted for 64,581 sales, and the new youth deer tag option was purchased by 7,699 people.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported 15.2 million hunters bought licenses

last year, a slight decrease from 15.3 million in 1994. Hunters bought 32.1 million licenses, tags, permits, and stamps compared to 31.6 million in 1994 — spending \$532.6 million compared with \$525.8 million in 1994.

Meanwhile, the number of anglers rose slightly to 30.3 million last year from 30.2 million in 1994. Anglers bought 37.8 million licenses, tags, permits and stamps, about the same as in 1994, but spent considerably more to do so, \$448.6 million compared with \$424.7 million in 1994.

Revenues raised through license sales support state wildlife agencies, their conservation projects, and their hunting and fishing safety and education programs.

License sales figures are compiled annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from information submitted by state fish and wildlife agencies. The figures are part of a formula to determine the amount of funding each state receives through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration programs, both administered by the Service. Under these programs, sportsmen and women pay an excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment such as firearms, ammunition, and tackle. The money is, in turn, distributed to the states in the form of grants to conserve wildlife; teach hunter safety; and provide fishing, hunting, and boating opportunities.

The number of hunting license holders has declined in the past 13 years from a record high of 16.7 million in 1982. Meanwhile, the number of fishing license holders has been about the same for the past decade.

—GERRY CHERRY
11/12/96

