

GARRETT ANNOUNCES STATE SCHOOLS CONSIDERED AMONG BEST IN NATION

From Okla. Dept. of Education

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) State Superintendent Sandy Garrett announced Monday that she is nominating six Oklahoma schools for the 1996-97 Blue Ribbon Schools Elementary Recognition Program. The program is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Education and recognizes outstanding schools.

"These schools are models of excellence and are recognized as being six of the top 300 best schools in the nation," Garrett said. "I wish each of them all the best as they now compete for this national honor, but they are already winners in my book."

The schools nominated for Blue Ribbon status are:

- Almor West Elementary, Lawton Public Schools
- Clara Reynolds Elementary, Harrah Public Schools
- Coronado Heights Elementary, Putnam City Public Schools
- Pershing Elementary, Muskogee Public Schools
- Pioneer Park Elementary, Lawton Public Schools
- Western Oaks Middle School, Putnam City Public Schools

A state review committee comprised of educators reviewed the state Blue Ribbon applications and presented Garrett with its six recommendations. The USDE allows each state to submit six nominations.

Now that the state nominations have been announced, the USDE will arrange to visit each school this spring. During their visit, USDE staff will gauge the schools' effectiveness by determining if the schools have: challenging standards and a rigorous curriculum; student focus and support; extensive leadership and organizational opportunities; school, family and community partnerships; a learning centered environment; high daily student and teacher attendance rate; and various avenues for professional growth and collaboration. Those schools receiving the most favorable evaluations will be named Blue Ribbon Schools by the White House in May.

Edmond's Sequoyah Middle School and Woodward Middle School were selected for the honor last year.

"Belief is harder to shake than knowledge."

Adolf Hitler

COMMENTS INVITED ON REQUEST BY ROSE GROWERS

From Environmental Protection Agency

■(WASHINGTON) The Environmental Protection Agency is inviting comments on a request from rose growers to allow workers to harvest roses by hand earlier than would otherwise be permitted under the Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

Among other things, the WPS prohibits agricultural workers from entering pesticide-treated areas for specified periods of time ranging from four to 72 or more hours (depending upon the toxicity of the pesticide) following pesticide applications. The WPS is intended to reduce the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural employees who may be exposed to pesticides while performing hand-labor operations in or on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses, as well as pesticide handlers who mix, load or apply pesticides.

The request by Roses Inc. covers all cut-rose production in greenhouses throughout the United States. According to Roses Inc. without an early-entry exception allowing for harvest of cut roses two times per day, cut-rose growers will lose a significant portion of their crop and therefore suffer substantial economic harm. Roses Inc. also maintains that health risks to workers would not be increased.

In 1994, EPA granted an exception that allowed, under specified conditions, early entry into pesticide-treated areas to harvest roses by hand for a maximum of three hours during a 24-hour period. The exception expired in June of this year. In granting the 1994 exception, EPA noted that if rose growers needed an exception beyond the two years, the industry would need to provide additional information concerning economic hardship, as well as measures to mitigate risks to workers.

EPA is soliciting comments on whether

the data submitted are adequate to support granting the requested exception.

Comments on the request by Roses Inc. are due to the Agency by Nov. 29 and should be sent to: Public Response and Program Resources Branch, Field Operations Division (7506C), U.S. EPA, 401 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. The Federal Register notice of this announcement appeared on Oct. 30.

NHTSA CONCERNED ABOUT CHRYSLER HATCH LATCH REPLACEMENT RATES

From National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

■(WASHINGTON) While reporting good progress overall on the repair campaign under which 1984-1995 Chrysler minivans can receive a stronger, safer rear liftgate latch, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said that the response rate by owners of the oldest models continues to be very low.

NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez, M.D., said that the repair campaign began in September 1995 on a phased-in basis. The completion rate for the later-model year vehicles is high — 62 percent of the 1993-95 models with the remote latch release feature and 60 percent of the 1993-95 models with a manual latch release have had new latches installed. However, NHTSA is concerned that only about 26 percent of the 1984-89 minivans without the remote release feature and 14 percent of the 1984-89 minivans with the remote release feature have had new latches installed.

"Automobile safety on our roads is our highest priority, and we strongly urge minivan owners to obtain the stronger, safer rear latch from their dealers as soon as possible," Dr. Martinez said.

At the insistence of NHTSA, Chrysler made a commitment to undertake a number of measures to encourage owners to bring the vehicles to their dealers for repairs. This included follow-up owner notification letters, phone calls and advertising. These activities will continue in an effort to boost the completion rate for the older vehicles.

"3 o'clock is always too late or too early for anything you want to do."

Jean -Paul Sartre

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of widespread injury prevention education programs.

The task force reports that injuries kill more children than all other causes of death combined and are the leading cause of death for adult Oklahomans up to age 44. Oklahoma's injury death rate is 20 percent higher than the national average.

The task force was formed following the airing of a national TV news program which pointed out apparent flaws in Oklahoma's system.