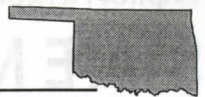


STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



the pregnancy or prior to entry of the adoptive parents. In the event that the biological parents' rights are not severed, the birth father's parental rights would remain intact and his duty of support would not be extinguished.

Next, a Subcommittee recommended a statutory requirement that a birth mother may not be able to execute a consent to adoption or relinquish her parental rights within 72 hours of the birth of a child. A majority of the Committee was in favor of this proposal. However, chairman Roach suggested that the Committee consider if a better solution would be to only let a mother give consent after a doctor has said she is capable. This would allow consent to be given before 72 hours, or extended if needed, depending on the patient's condition. Michael Normura with Dillon International, Inc. suggested the possibility of the time period being set at 24 hours after a doctor discharges the new mother.

A final recommendation was made addressing hospitals practice of withholding discharge of a child for non-payment. The Committee unanimously agreed that "holding the adoptee hostage" is unacceptable. Propositions to remedy the problem ranged from creating a statutory tort of false imprisonment of a child to criminal sanctions. The suggestion of statutory language making it clear that pre-adoption expenses remain the responsibility of the natural parents or a framework for reimbursement of adoptive parents by natural parents if the adoption is not completed seemed to be the most plausible answer.

The Adoption law Reform Committee will reconvene on December 12th to discuss further recommendations including discussion of the limits on expenses paid by adoptive parents to the biological parents.

—BRANDON WEBB
11/21/96

"To buy books would be a good thing if we could also buy the time to read them; as it is, the mere act of purchasing them is often mistaken for the assimilation and mastering of their contents."

Schopenhauer
"On Reading and Books"
Parerga and Paralipomena, 1851

OCCY DISCUSSES SYSTEM OVERHAUL

■(GIT) Following an extended executive session Thursday, members of the Commission on Children and Youth tackled several of the complicated issues and concerns shared by the members and the public regarding an apparent breakdown in the current system responsible for addressing child abuse and foster care problems.

"The best we can hope to do is fix pieces and hope it results in a systemic change," Thomas S. Kemper, director of the Commission, said.

Members agreed that the juvenile system which handles child abuse cases needs to be changed to eliminate situations like the death of Shane Coffman from occurring again.

Kemper said the Coffman case was an example of each person involved doing only what was minimally required of them by law.

The case slipped through the cracks until Coffman's death because the authorities and citizens involved had no way to compare their information and see all of what was happening.

Details of the recommendations from the Governor's task force on overhauling the juvenile system will be discussed by the commission at its Dec. 19 meeting.

In other business, the commission appointed John Brown, a representative of the Department of Human Services, to the Child Abuse Prevention Training and Coordination Council.

—MICHELLE BOYD WATERS
11/21/96

TRANSPORTATION

CORPORATION COMMISSION APPROVES 10 RAILROAD CROSSING UPGRADES

■(GIT) The Oklahoma Corporation Commission recently approved applications by the Burlington Northern Railroad for safety and facility upgrades of 10 railroad crossings.

G. R. (Buddy) Combs, Corporation Commission railroad manager, said that the intersections ranged from being too rough to being dangerous. He said that each railroad crossing in Oklahoma is given a priority. When the crossing reaches the top of the priority list, it is repaired, Combs said.

ODOT and Burlington worked on terms agreeable to both organizations and then

ODOT sent the application to the commission.

Federal railroad grade crossing improvement funds will pay 90 percent of the estimated \$840,825 cost of the upgrades. Cities, counties and the railroad will provide the required 10 percent matching funds.

The upgrade applications approved are:

- **ALTUS:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 40 foot concrete crossing surface at Ridgecrest Road. The estimated project cost is \$103,000. The city of Altus will pay \$10,300.

- **BEGGS:** flashing-light signals with gate arms at a county road approximately two miles south and two miles east of Beggs. The estimated project cost is \$76,800. Okmulgee County will pay \$7,680.

- **ENID:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 70 foot concrete crossing surface at East Chestnut Avenue. The estimated project cost is \$71,500. The City of Enid will pay \$7,150.

- **FOYIL:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 48 foot concrete crossing surface at State Highway 66. The estimated project cost is \$90,000. Rogers County will pay approximately \$9,000.

- **HENRYETTA:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 40 foot concrete crossing surface at Corporation Street. The estimated project cost is \$100,000. The City of Henryetta will pay \$10,000.

- **HOLDENVILLE:** two 32 foot timber crossing surfaces and two railroad crossing advance warning signs at a county road about 1 mile south of Holdenville. The estimated project cost is \$32,845. The Burlington Northern Railroad will pay about \$3,285.

- **OKMULGEE:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 32 foot concrete crossing surface at Auction Barn Road. The estimated project cost is \$52,000. Okmulgee County will pay \$5,200.

- **OKMULGEE:** flashing-light signals with gate arms and a 56 foot concrete crossing surface at Sixth Street (State Highway 56). The project cost is estimated at \$156,400. Of the 10 percent required matching funds, the state will pay \$12,360 and the Burlington Northern will pay \$3,280.

- **SAPULPA:** flashing-light signals with gate arms, two railroad crossing advance warning signs and two sets of pavement markings at Armory Road. The estimated project cost is \$75,780. The City of Sapulpa

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