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pressed reservations about the proposal, saying that it could force some companies to have to deal with numerous requests for information about legitimate transactions and might inspire "treasure hunters" to research the records in hopes of collecting money from an underpaid royalty owner.

Speaking on behalf of royalty owners, Paul Barby said the availability of such information would make performance audits easier to conduct. He, too, rejected the idea that such information should be considered proprietary.

"I'm sympathetic to your concerns," said Jacobson, "and I would agree that if the existing language is not adequate to provide the information to those with an interest in it, then we need to look at that."

"One of the biggest cost for mineral and royalty owners," added Barby, "is getting information like this in a usable manner. We don't always know that a royalty owner is being paid, but usually the Tax Commission is."

Rice asked the commission members to review a copy of the proposal, which was presented in the form of a House bill draft, and be prepared to suggest changes in its language when the commission meets next month.

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plan, calling for deregulation to begin as soon as possible as opposed to after national or regional action.

"If you look at every industry that has gone through restructuring," said Shelton, "you will be surprised how (other states) can get competitive real quick."

Additionally, Shelton noted, the task force and lawmakers should look cautiously at the implementation of access and exit fees, "because they could restrict competition, and I think that's what we want to achieve."

The most aggressive blueprint was advanced by Shane Woolbright, executive director of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma, Inc., who called for the state to acquire the assets of private electric utilities and cogenerators and to resell the distribution systems to local government entities. Such a move, he said, would benefit 80 percent of the state residents which currently receive their electric service from non-governmental providers.

Such an acquisition, Woolbright estimated, would cost roughly \$3.5 billion. That money would be recovered, he said, when

ADOPTION REFORM ON THE WAY

**By Brandon Webb
Staff Writer**

■(GIT) Nine members of the Adoption Law Reform Committee met at the Capitol Thursday. Representative Russ Roach, D-Tulsa, chaired the four hour meeting to discuss proposed changes in state adoption laws. The Committee debated recommendations and amendments to several adoption law proposals, before submitting a report to the House staff for bill drafting.

The first issue considered was a Putative Fathers Subcommittee Report. The subcommittee attempted to make waiver of rights by unwed fathers uniform throughout the state. A procedure was established permitting a putative father of a child conceived out of wedlock to consent to adoption prior to or after the birth of a child. If the consent was executed before a District Court Judge, the consent would be irrevocable except for fraud or duress by the adoptive parents or adoptive agency.

Current law allows a birth parent to petition a court to withdraw consent within 30 days. The court may grant this request if they find it is in the best interest of the child. Due to Judges' varying opinions about what constitutes the best interest, there have been inconsistencies in application of the provi-

sions. Some birth parents believe that they have 30 days to revoke their consent, only to find out a Judge is the final arbiter who may or may not grant relief. Making the consent irrevocable will bring consistency and certainty to the process. Birth parents should be advised by the court, as well as any attorney involved in the adoption, that consent is irrevocable.

Tulsa Law Professor, Marianne Blair, unsuccessfully petitioned for revocability for any reason for up to seven calendar days following a birth. Blair said, "Consumer Acts allow you to change your mind after purchasing a refrigerator, but the law won't let you reconsider a child." Committee member John O'Connor suggested future committees discuss whether a Judge must confirm that a biological parent has spoken with an attorney and is aware of all the consequences of relinquishing their rights, before a waiver may be granted.

An affidavit could be signed before a notary public if the father did not want to avail himself of the court. In the event of an affidavit being signed the consent could be revoked for any reason for fifteen calendar days following execution. The affidavit would constitute a waiver of the right to receive notice of any adoption proceeding or any proceeding to terminate parental rights regarding the child. In addition, signing the document would be considered a denial of interest in the child. Therefore, the court could terminate any parental rights the putative father had to the child and approve an adoption without his consent.

Consent executed before the birth of a child would not extinguish the birth father's duty to support the mother or child during 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 right within 72 hours of the birth of a child. The rationale for this provision is to allow a birth mother three days to recover from the trauma of birth and any drugs that may have been administered before signing her parental rights relinquishment. A majority of the Committee was in favor of this proposal. However,

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the state spun off the distribution systems to local government entities.

The generation of electricity, Woolbright said, would be the responsibility of new state agencies, while transmission would be transferred to a single system operator.

In the long run, Woolbright said consumers would pay less for electricity because tax exempt bonds could be used for expansion of generation, transmission and distribution services.

Woolbright said such a plan would take at least one year to put in place, with the sale of the distribution system taking perhaps a bit longer.

Easley, who plans to carry a restructuring bill during the upcoming legislative session, joked that such a plan might invite comparisons to Hillary Clinton, whose work with health care was criticized for growing the size of government.

The blueprints presented Thursday, Easley said, would be evaluated and a bill made up of the best suggestions would be presented to the task force for its consideration when it meets in December.