

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**January 4, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR NEWS DIRECTORS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

**The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has scheduled public utility deliberations for 9:30a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 5, in Courtroom 301 on the third floor of the Jim Thorpe building at 2101 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City.**

**The Commission will receive a report on the results of a staff investigation into Kiamichi Electric Cooperative. The Commission requested the staff review to determine if Commission action was necessary to protect the Cooperative's members from alledged abuses.**

**The Commission will also receive a report from staff on discussions held between staff and OG&E regarding all crucial components of a comprehensive plan to achieve the 7/2002 restructuring date.**

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**January 4, 2000**

## **Y2K READINESS ENCOURAGED BY CORPORATION COMMISSION AND EXECUTED BY OKLAHOMA'S PUBLIC UTILITIES HELPED NEW YEAR PASS WITHOUT INCIDENT**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)—**The many public utilities serving millions of Oklahoma consumers helped make the Y2K transition go off without a problem last weekend. Encouragement for nearly two years to make regular reports to the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) about the status of their Y2K preparedness helped the various electric, natural gas and telephone utility services in the state learn just how ready they were and complete preparations. All facility-based utilities, realizing the importance of uninterrupted service to their Oklahoma customers, became Y2K compliant before the end of 1999.

**Commission Chairman Bob Anthony said "The fact that no Y2K-related service outages were reported during the key hours of concern is a tribute to the utility companies determination to serve their customers and to the hard work of the staffs of the Public Utility, Consumer Services and Data Processing Divisions of the Commission."**

**OCC General Administrator Jay Edwards said "The Commission, through its public utility staff, analyzed hundreds of quarterly reports starting in 1998 and made the information on Y2K readiness available to the public. It was the final compilation of those reports which the OCC made available to the state's Y2K emergency operations center (EOC) and the Governor's Y2K task force which helped ease the concerns of consumers."**

**It was at the EOC during the final few days leading up to New Year's Eve and New Year's Day where interested and concerned citizens talked with employees staffing the phones and learned again about the high degree of readiness of their utility services.**

**Anthony said "Both the utilities and the Corporation Commission will continue to be vigilant with regard to future service problems whether or not they are related to Y2K ."**

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**January 5, 1999**

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR ASSIGNMENT DESKS AND NEWS DIRECTORS**

### **Who, What, When, Where:**

**Commissioner Denise Bode will be sworn in for a full six-year term as the 35<sup>th</sup> Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner since statehood during ceremonies on Monday, January 11.**

**Bode will take the oath of office at 10 a.m. in the main third floor courtroom #301 of the Jim Thorpe Building located at 2101 N. Lincoln Boulevard in Oklahoma City.**

**Administering the oath will be the Honorable Alma Wilson, Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court.**

### **Background:**

**Bode won election to the statewide office in Nov. of 1998 after being appointed by Governor Keating in 1997 to serve the unexpired term of former Commissioner Cody Graves.**

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# Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Ed Apple Commissioner

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January 11, 2000

## APPLE BACKS RESTRICTED USE OF TOBACCO FUNDS

Wants to See Lasting Legacy

Thinks Money Should be Allowed to Grow

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Ed Apple says he believes Oklahoma's tobacco settlement money should be placed in an interest-bearing account and left there to grow instead of being spent immediately. Apple says "Short term gain is just that. Let's leave a lasting legacy."**

**In a letter to Oklahoma Representative Jari Askins of Duncan, Apple applauded her stand to restrict expenditure of the tobacco settlement funds. Apple told Askins "Your effort to create a trust or other special fund to protect as much of the principal as possible is surely the most sensible approach."**

**Apple called it "beneficial to the citizens of Oklahoma" for the principal to remain in an interest bearing account for at least one year. The commissioner suggests that letting the interest compound "over a number of years would greatly enhance the value of the settlement funds to the state of Oklahoma."**

**Apple said "As an elected official, I am always concerned about the judicious use of state funds." He urged Askins' House and Senate colleagues to give serious consideration to placing the tobacco settlement funds in an interest bearing account and delay spending for the greatest benefit possible.**

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January 19, 2000

## **LAKE OOLOGAH WELL-PLUGGING PROJECT BEGINS**

### **Joint Effort with OERB and EPA May Cap More Than 1,000 Abandoned Wells**

**OKLAHOMA CITY –** After nearly four years of planning and preparation, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Oil and Gas Division will start plugging some 250 abandoned and leaking oil and gas wells in a pilot project near Lake Oologah's eastern shore.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established an on-site command post to oversee what has been designated as a pilot for a larger cleanup program that may eventually plug more than a thousand wells near the lake, Mike Battles, Corporation Commission Oil and Gas Division director, said.

The EPA's Region 6 Administrator Gregg A. Cooke called it a "win-win situation." Cooke said "The agencies involved have formed a good partnership which will help the environment and the state of Oklahoma." In addition, Cooke said the Coast Guard's three member Gulf Coast Strike Team from Mobile will assist with emergency responses, site safety and cost documentation.

Cooke adds that continuing inspection of a six section area believed to contain the largest concentration of old well sites has resulted in the discovery of more than 800 sites. The entire scope of the project covers land in 42 sections (42 square miles) east of the lake.

The EPA hired the Corporation Commission as the pilot project general contractor. Battles said "initially 81 wells will be plugged under supervision of the commission's Oil and Gas Division and contractors to plug them have been determined." "Most of these wells are very shallow, about 500 feet deep, and we should be able to plug up to four wells a day," Battles said.

The Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) will handle site restoration, including removal of soil contaminated by crude oil leaks and old equipment left by operators at the well sites. "This is an unprecedented opportunity for our state and industry," said OERB Executive Director, Mike Terry. "This is a first for these three agencies and the largest project of its kind ever attempted. The OERB has

### **Page 2, Oologah project**

restored more than 1,500 oilfield sites in 54 counties since 1995, but this may be our most important project ever."

The pilot project is divided into three phases. SimpcO, Inc. of Nowata, Oklahoma submitted the winning bid for the first phase plugging. Costs have been estimated at about \$2 per foot.

Most costs will be paid from the federal Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, because surface water runoff from the area of the leaking wells is considered a threat to Lake Oologah, a part of the U. S. navigable waters system.

Mike Schmidt, Oil and Gas division deputy director, said "Federal funds will pay only for plugging abandoned

**wells considered an environmental threat to Lake Oologah. But federal funds will also reimburse the Corporation Commission and the OERB for their services, and this may provide funds for plugging and restoration of some additional wells after the pilot project," Schmidt said.**

**Many of the wells in the project were drilled in the early 1900's and produced from the Bartlesville Sand formation. Many are fewer than 165 feet apart on the surface. They were abandoned either unplugged or plugged with early-century technology, which consisted of dropping a log down the bore hole and filling the rest of the hole with mud.**

**Extensive preparation for the program was required because there are few records available concerning the location or condition of the nearly 100-year-old wells. The Corporation Commission has been assisting and supporting the EPA by conducting land and title searches in addition to well plugging and abandonment operations. The EPA hired and will fund the Commission staff for this assistance via the Pollution Removal Funding Authorization.**

**The Commission will pay for and conduct its own removal, plugging and abandonment at many wells that the EPA cannot address because of other public acts criteria.**

**The Oklahoma Energy Resources Board is also partnered with the EPA for funding from the Pollution Removal Funding Authorization for soil and equipment removal from abandoned well sites.**

**-OCC, EPA, OERB-**

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**January 31, 2000**

## **COMMISSION'S TOP ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE FOR NEW CHALLENGE**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – The man who has held the top administrative position with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission longer than anyone will take on a new challenge outside the commission beginning April 1.**

**Jay Edwards has announced he will become president of the Aerospace Science and Technology Educational Center (ASTECC) in Oklahoma City. In a meeting with commission directors, Edwards said "it was time for a new vision," and time to "get up on the next plateau" as he described his future duties with the non-profit organization.**

**Edwards says the vision of ASTECC is to expand Oklahoma's rich heritage as a leader in aviation, space, technology and the quality of life. The Center, located at Shepard Mall, is currently a part of Oklahoma City University but will separate from the University to become not for profit concurrent with Edwards new position.**

**Corporation Commission Chairman Bob Anthony praised Edwards saying "I wish Jay Edwards well with his future endeavors in aeronautics and education. Under his six years of leadership as General Administrator, he has done a magnificent job of modernizing the Corporation Commission and improving services to the public. His patriotism and dedication to public service, first through a distinguished military career and later at the commission, set a high standard for the youth of Oklahoma."**

**Anthony said one of the goals Edwards accomplished "was to change the culture of the Corporation Commission from a strictly regulatory environment to an atmosphere that thinks of the public as customers and how to best satisfy the needs of those customers."**

**Edwards became general administrator in November 1993. His service of six years and two months is nearly twice as long as that of any of his six predecessors since the position was created by the Oklahoma Legislature in 1979.**

**Edwards was hired by Commissioners Bob Anthony, Cody Graves and J.C. Watts. He was one of five finalists selected by the commissioners from among 76 candidates**

**-continued-**

**page 2, Edwards**

**certified as qualified by the state Office of Personnel Management from 370 applicants.**

**Edwards, a career Air Force officer with 28 years of service, retired as a major general in 1982 after serving two years as commander of the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker Air Force Base.**

**He was executive director of the University of Oklahoma Energy center from 1982 until 1985 and president and chief operating officer of CMI Corporation from 1986 to 1991.**



**Edwards worked for Tennessee Associates International, a management consulting firm, until joining the Corporation Commission.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Office of Public Information — Phone: (405) 521-4180 FAX (405) 521-6945

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference:O&G2700-10

## 2000 State-Funded Well Plugging Trails 1999 Pace

OKLAHOMA CITY – Halfway through fiscal year 2000, Oklahoma has paid to plug about one-third as many abandoned oil and gas wells as it did in all of fiscal 1999, Corporation Commission records indicate.

In 1999, the state spent \$341,426 to plug 95 wells. So far this year, contracts have been let to plug 37 wells at an estimated cost of \$117,577.

State funds are used to plug wells when no responsible party can be found to pay the costs, such as old wells drilled by companies that no longer exist. Money for plugging is provided by the oil and gas industry through payment of excise taxes on production.

There is no shortage of wells needing attention, but the rate of plugging is limited by the amount of money in the state plugging fund. In mid-January, Corporation Commission records listed 129 wells with plugging orders pending at estimated costs of \$313,816, and 267 wells in various stages of the bid process with estimated plugging costs of \$1.2 million. But there was only \$151,490 available in the state well plugging fund.

The commission gives plugging priority to wells that pose an immediate danger to public safety or seem likely to pollute the environment.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patrick K. Petree

Reference: O&G21500-11

## Through November, 1999 Oil, Gas Production Trails 1998 Yields

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma produced 5,601,276 barrels of oil and 74.1 billion cubic feet of natural gas in November, preliminary figures compiled by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission indicate.

Oil production of 64,379,938 barrels through November was down 11.12 percent from production during the first 11 months of 1998. Gas production of 1.3 trillion cubic feet was 11.24 percent below production during the first 11 months of 1998, according to the preliminary figures.

Larry Claxton, Corporation Commission statistics manager, said the preliminary figures are subject to revision as late production reports are filed with the state Tax Commission.

The average price paid for Oklahoma oil in November was \$23.73, compared to an average price of \$17.33 for the first 11 months of 1999. The average price for Oklahoma gas in November was \$2.79 per thousand cubic feet. The average price for the first 11 months was \$2.07.

Preliminary figures indicate that the top 10 oil-producing counties in November were Carter, 660,892 barrels; Stephens, 471,463 barrels; Grady, 346,149 barrels; Osage, 314,351 barrels; Texas, 305,613 barrels; Garvin, 297,411 barrels; Lincoln, 224,005 barrels; Caddo, 203,762 barrels; Creek, 201,000 barrels; and Pontotoc, 199,528 barrels.

The top 10 gas-producing counties were Latimer, 7.518 billion cubic feet (bcf); Grady, 6.630 bcf; Roger Mills, 6.009 bcf; Washita, 4.898 bcf; Caddo, 4.391 bcf; Texas, 4.342 bcf; Beckham, 3.525 bcf; Pittsburg, 3.460 bcf; Custer, 2.785 bcf; and Stephens, 2.523 bcf.

-OCC-

*[ Editors: Oil and gas monthly production figures for all Oklahoma counties are available by contacting Larry Claxton by telephone at (405) 521-2273 or by e-mail at [www.l.claxton@occmil.occ.state.ok.us](mailto:www.l.claxton@occmil.occ.state.ok.us) ]*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: O&G22500-12

## OCC Staff Recommends Continuance of Present Gas Production Cap

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Corporation Commission staff will recommend continuance of the present cap on Oklahoma gas production from unallocated wells when the commission meets on March 1 to consider proration factors for the second and third quarters of 2000.

Unallocated wells are not regulated by production limits for specific fields.

The present cap of the greater of 65 percent of calculated wellhead open flow or 2 million cubic feet of gas per day for unallocated wells has been in effect since the second quarter of 1999. No recommendations for changing the cap were offered at a public technical conference on Feb. 9.

The production cap affects only a few high-volume wells since most of Oklahoma's 29,000 unallocated wells are not able to produce enough gas to reach the allowed limits. Restricting production from high-volume wells is designed to give all producers a chance to share in the available market for Oklahoma gas. The Corporation Commission is required to review the production limits twice each year, before the start of the summer and winter gas-buying seasons.

The proration factor hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 1, in Room 301, Jim Thorpe State Office Bldg., 2101 Lincoln Blvd, Oklahoma City.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: TRN2-29-00-13

## Kingfisher Rail Corridor Project Wins Approval

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has approved a railroad corridor safety improvement project in Kingfisher that will upgrade two Union Pacific Railroad crossings and close four others.

Pedestal-mounted flashing light signals and gate arms and new concrete crossing surfaces will be installed at Bowman and Roberts streets. Barricades will be erected and crossings will be closed at Baker and Sykes avenues and Don Blanding and Admire streets.

The project cost is estimated at \$765,300. Federal railroad crossing safety improvement funds will pay 60 percent, or \$459,180. The railroad will pay the other 40 percent, or \$306,120, according to documents filed with the commission.

Projects that use federal railroad crossing safety improvement funds must be completed within 12 months.

The Corporation Commission also approved a project in Blackwell that lets the South Kansas and Oklahoma Railroad close its Ferguson Street crossing and transfer the flashing-light signals and gate arms to its 13th Street crossing.

The commission also approved closure of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe crossing at Ash Street in Ada.

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For Immediate Release  
March 7, 2000

For More Information  
Contact Linda Guthrie

**NEWS ADVISORY: NEWS DIRECTORS AND  
ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

**NEWS CONFERENCE CALLED TO DISCUSS RELIEF  
FROM GASOLINE PRICES**

(Oklahoma City) – Corporation Commission Vice-Chairman Denise Bode and other industry experts will discuss solutions to the recent increase in high fuel prices.

The press conference will be held in Room 432B of the Capitol Building at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2000.

*Commissioner Bode is a tax attorney who served as energy and tax aide to David Boren during his service as Governor and U.S. Senator, was the President of the Independent Petroleum Association of America, and is considered one of the leading experts on national energy policy.*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: PUD3900-17

## 8 Counties Receive Funds to Upgrade 911 Emergency Call Systems

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has approved reimbursements of \$549,669 for enhanced 911 emergency call systems in eight counties. The money pays the costs of purchasing and installing eligible equipment.

Since 1998, the commission has approved reimbursements of \$1,475,906 to 19 counties.

An enhanced 911 system identifies the location of the caller so police, fire, medical or other emergency responders may be dispatched quickly to the scene.

Commission Chairman Bob Anthony said the grants are one of the most important safety assistance programs administered by the commission.

"Approval of these grants will assist the requesting counties and communities in obtaining the equipment needed to rapidly locate the caller. This can be especially important in emergency situations when saving seconds is vital and the person calling may be unable to speak," Anthony said.

The E911 Emergency Service Fund was established by the Oklahoma Legislature in 1997 to help pay costs of upgrading basic 911 service, which does not identify caller location. The fund provides reimbursement for all necessary electronic telecommunications equipment at the location where 911 calls are received. The fund is administered by the Corporation Commission's Public Utility Division.

The E911 Fund is financed by assessments on local-exchange telephone companies. The phone companies may pass the assessment costs through to customers.

Cherokee and Jackson counties each received the maximum \$100,000 allowed for countywide enhanced 911 systems. Three other counties received the full amounts requested: Tillman County, \$93,956; Seminole County, \$81,560; and Bryan County, \$94,956.

An application by El Reno was approved for \$50,000, the maximum amount for a multicity enhanced 911 system. The El Reno system also serves Union City and a part of Canadian County.

Two county enhanced 911 systems received only partial reimbursements.

Hughes County was approved for \$20,585 of a requested \$144,055. Hughes County received \$79,415 in 1999. The \$20,585 reimbursement brings Hughes County to its maximum of \$100,000. The commission denied a supplemental reimbursement for pager radios because they are not eligible equipment.

Creek County was approved for reimbursement of \$8,612 of a requested \$100,000. The commission order said most of the request was disallowed because it was for laptop computers in emergency vehicles. The commission said laptop computers are not necessary for processing incoming 911 emergency calls.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: O&G31700-18

### **Oklahoma's 1999 Oil Production May be the Lowest in 86 Years**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Preliminary figures compiled by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission indicate Oklahoma oil production in 1999 may be the lowest in 86 years.

The figures place 1999 production at 70,063,042 barrels, the fewest since 63,579,000 barrels of oil were produced in 1913.

The 1999 figures will increase as late production reports are filed with the state Tax Commission, but they are not expected to gain the 7.7 million barrels needed to equal 1998 production of 77,796,579 barrels, or even the 3.5 million barrels needed to equal 1914 production of 73,632,000, Larry Claxton, Corporation Commission statistics manager, said.

The preliminary figures also indicate that gas production declined to a 33-year low.

Production of 1.541 trillion cubic feet of gas in 1999 was the least since 1.427 trillion cubic feet in 1966. Gas production in 1999 was about 6.5 percent below 1998 production of 1.649 trillion cubic feet.

Oklahoma oil production has declined for 15 consecutive years, from 168,604,000 barrels in 1984. Gas production has declined for six consecutive years, from 2.016 trillion cubic feet in 1993.

December oil production was 5,446,327 barrels, an average of 175,688 barrels per day. Carter County was the leading oil-producing county with 656,865 barrels.

December gas production was 99.5 billion cubic feet, or 3.2 billion cubic feet per day. Latimer County was the leading gas-producing county with nearly 9.6 billion cubic feet.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: O&G3200-14

## Corporation Commission Keeps Gas Production Cap at Present Level

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has voted unanimously to continue the present limit on gas production from unallocated wells through the second and third quarters of 2000.

The production limit of the greater of 65 percent of calculated wellhead open flow or 2 million cubic feet of gas per day has been in effect since the second quarter of 1999. Unallocated wells are not regulated by production limits for specific fields.

The commission order issued late Wednesday (March 1) said continuing the present production allowable will "preserve a stable regulatory environment and maintain important incentives to the domestic petroleum industry."

The commission staff recommended the continuance. No one opposed it.

Limiting production from high-volume wells is designed to ensure that all producers have a chance to share in the available market. Duncan Woodliff, production/proration manager, said demand for natural gas remains strong and there are ample markets for Oklahoma gas.

Commissioner Denise Bode said she voted to continue the current production allowable because "with natural gas having the opportunity to provide great economic growth for Oklahoma, we want to encourage drilling activity in the state.

"As we begin deregulation of the electric industry, we must position our gas industry to take advantage of the opportunities as they present themselves."

Chairman Bob Anthony noted that natural gas production contributes more than \$3 billion annually to Oklahoma's economy. He said continuing the present production ceiling encourages additional production by rewarding those willing to invest in high-cost deep drilling with an opportunity to receive a reasonable return on that investment.

The production ceiling affects only a few wells because most of Oklahoma's approximately 29,000 unallocated gas wells don't produce enough gas to reach the limit.

The Corporation Commission is required to set gas production limits twice each year, before the start of the summer and winter gas buying seasons.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Larry Lago,

(405) 521-2261 Reference: OCC 3200-15

## OG&E Customers to Receive \$11 Million Bill Reduction

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Customers of Oklahoma Gas and Electric Co. will see a credit of nearly \$11 million per year starting this month as the result of an order approved Thursday, March 2, by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

The 1996 rate reduction settlement authorized the utility to collect an acquisition premium for the purchase of Enogex over three years, beginning in March 1997. The three year period having expired, the credit will be used to back out this charge until new tariffs are approved in the next OG&E full rate case.

Commission Chairman Bob Anthony said the credit will bring nearly a \$1 million per month benefit to the utility's retail customers.

"Today's action effectively removes a charge from customer bills," Anthony explained. "We thank OG&E for its cooperation in getting this savings to ratepayers on schedule."

Commissioner Denise Bode said "I am especially pleased anytime we can return money to Oklahoma ratepayers. I believe that as we move forward with deregulation of the electric industry in Oklahoma, we must work to ensure that the ratepayers are better off."

The credit will be applied to customer bills as .0586 cents per kilowatt hour of electrical usage. This is the amount incorporated in OG&E's 1996 rate case to cover the acquisition premium on the utility's purchase of Enogex, the intrastate pipeline and natural gas processing plants used to deliver fuel to OG&E's gas-fired electrical generating facilities.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference:O&G32400-20

## Darity Will Monitor Southwest District Oil and Gas Operations

OKLAHOMA CITY – Gayland R. Darity has been hired by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission as an oil and gas field inspector for Kiowa, Tillman and Washita counties.

Darity lives in Velma where he owned and operated T&T Trucking from 1982 to 1999. He is a 1979 graduate of Velma-Alma High School.

Field inspectors monitor oil and gas field activities to assist operators and ensure compliance with Corporation Commission drilling, production and environmental rules.

Darity is one of 17 managers and field inspectors covering the southwest quadrant of Oklahoma from district headquarters in Duncan. Southwest quadrant boundaries are Interstate 40 on the north, Interstate 35 on the east and state borders on the south and west.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: TRN32400-19

## Bailey Turnpike Overpass Upgrade Near Chickasha Approved, Started

### ***Other Rail Crossing Improvements Due near Mustang and Pryor***

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has approved and work has started on a \$1.3 million renovation of an overpass over Union Pacific Railroad tracks southeast of Chickasha.

Deck replacement and substructure repair on the half-mile-long project on the H.E. Bailey Turnpike are due for completion by summer, according to the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority. The renovation is being financed from toll revenue.

Corporation Commission approval was required because the overpass spans railroad tracks and is classified as a railroad crossing. The commission has had jurisdiction over the opening, closing and modification of railroad crossings since Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

In other recent railroad actions, the commission ordered the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway to make permanent repairs to the surface of its crossing at State Highway 152 east of Mustang by late May. That highway is a major traffic link between southwest Oklahoma City, Mustang and U.S. Highway 81 west of Mustang.

The commission also approved installation of flashing light signals and gate arms and an 80-foot-long concrete crossing surface at the Union Pacific Railroad crossing at State Highway 69A in the Pryor Industrial Park south of Pryor. The safety upgrade is being done in connection with widening and reconstruction of the highway from two lanes to four lanes within the industrial park.

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**March 27, 2000**

## **Pat Petree Remembered**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)-Patrick K. Petree, Public Information Manager with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission since 1982, died of a heart attack Saturday, March 25, at Edmond Medical Center. Petree, 64, is survived by two sons and a daughter. They are Larry Petree and his wife Lori of Conifer, Colorado; Brian Petree and wife Stacy of Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Linda Blackman and husband Tom of Hoffman Estates, Illinois; one sister, Patricia Snider of Macomb, Michigan and three grandchildren.**

**Among his many accomplishments at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, Petree founded and refined "The Regulator," a monthly commission newsletter reflecting activities within all divisions of the commission. Prior to coming to the commission, Petree worked in public relations with Kerr-McGee Corporation in Oklahoma City and with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. in Akron, Ohio.**

**At the time of his death, Petree was an adjunct professor of english and journalism at Rose State College where he taught for a number of years. He was a 1956 graduate of Oklahoma City University with a B.A. degree in journalism and a 1983 graduate of Central State University with a master's degree in education.**

**With all of Pat Petree's work in the media and public relations, it is important to remember that he had a special love for and life-long interest in baseball. Petree was the last play-by-play radio announcer for the Oklahoma City Indians and remained active and interested in baseball and its history. He continued to serve as an official scorer for the Oklahoma RedHawks home games.**

**Petree wrote a book in 1980 on the history of Oklahoma City baseball entitled "Old Times To The Goodtimers." Most recently he was a contributing editor to a new book called "Glory Days of Summer, A History of Baseball in Oklahoma." From 1958 through 1966, Petree worked as a member of the KMBC radio and TV news and sports staff in Kansas City, Missouri and as a reporter for the Kansas City Star. Pat later worked as a part time writer and copy editor for The Daily Oklahoman sports department.**

**Funeral Services are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Thursday, March 30, at Baggerly Funeral Home located at 930 S. Broadway in Edmond. Burial will be at Rose Lawn Cemetery in Mulhall.**

**-OCC-**

All news releases by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission are available for downloading on the OCC Web Site at [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)



# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**March 28, 2000**

## **COMMISSIONER BODE TESTIFIES ABOUT U.S. DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN OIL**

**(WASHINGTON D.C.)-Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode spent the day in the nation's capitol to testify at the invitation of a joint U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and Energy and Natural Resources. Bode was asked to address the issue of "America at Risk: U.S. Dependency on Foreign Oil."**

**It was Commissioner Bode who while president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) in 1994 asked for a thorough investigation of the national security threat posed by oil imports. That investigation was coordinated by the Department of Commerce upon the application of the IPAA.**

**Highlights of Bode's testimony before the joint Senate Committee include:**

- Bode points out that the 1994 study and another one in 1999 both reveal national security risks as a result of increased use of foreign oil in America.**
- Bode cites evidence that each time there has been a shock in the price of oil it has resulted in a larger share of the American oil industry being lost.**
- The oil price shocks increase U.S. dependence on unreliable foreign oil sources.**
- Low priced crude oil rapidly erodes the domestic oil industry and makes it harder on the industry to recover leaving high unemployment and the loss of skilled workers.**
- The Clinton Administration has done nothing but allow greater dependence on foreign oil while begging for relief from the OPEC countries.**
- Bode calls for relief at the gasoline pump with a holiday on gasoline taxes and the bipartisan formulation of a national energy policy to revive the domestic oil industry and reduce the threat created by oil imports.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases are available for downloading at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

March 31, 2000

## LONG DISTANCE COMPETITION LETS CONSUMERS BYPASS SOME OF THOSE BASIC MONTHLY FEES

### But Caution is Necessary

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)- Many Oklahoma consumers are concerned with the minimum monthly fees they find on their long distance bills even when they don't make any long distance calls. Consumers need to know their options.**

**Corporation Commissioner Ed Apple wants Oklahoma consumers to know that they have a wide choice in today's competitive world of telecommunications including the option of not selecting a long distance carrier. He points out that there are over 300 long distance services doing business in Oklahoma. Consumers can get a list of licensed long distance services by going onto the Corporation Commission web site ([www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)) and clicking on public utilities then clicking on "interexchange services" (IXC's) and on "resellers."**

**Apple said "some people have successfully saved money by switching to the so-called '10-10' access codes for their long distance. This is where shopping is very important."**

**"10-10" options are so numerous that it is impossible to review them in this release. It is important to remember that some "10-10" services charge a minimum monthly fee whether you place a call or not just like the more commonly known major carriers. If a customer does not follow the service's specific time, day and length-of-call restrictions, the call can end up costing much more than expected.**

**When shopping for a long distance service, the consumer should watch for monthly fees or minimum talk times and ask for a printed rate card so savings claims can be carefully reviewed.**

**So-called "casual rates" of several dollars per minute can be imposed by "10-10" services along with added fees if a customer does not stay within the access code restrictions. The result can be a much higher bill than anticipated.**

**-continued-**

**page 2, LD options**

**If a consumer chooses not to select a long distance carrier, LD calls may instead be placed through the local carrier or by using prepaid phone cards or calling cards as your long distance service. Prepaid phone cards may be purchased in minute or dollar denominations. The rate depends on the amount of time you buy plus any per-call surcharges. To avoid pitfalls, purchase phone cards from companies and establishments you know and trust. Some complaints include companies going out of business leaving customers with useless cards. Watch for cards that are limited to certain areas or don't have the full number of minutes purchased.**

**Some long distance companies only bill once a quarter instead of monthly meaning that certain minimum monthly charges are multiplied by three to reach a total for the billing. This often confuses people until they carefully read their bill.**

**The variety of basic monthly long distance charges are not mandated by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission but by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Congress, the State Legislature and local municipalities. These charges include the so-called minimum monthly charge authorized by the FCC. That means companies are allowed but not required to charge the "minimum monthly." Other charges such as the universal connectivity charge and carrier line charge are mandated by the FCC. Then there are the federal, state and local taxes authorized by those various jurisdictions and not the Corporation Commission. When you add up these basic charges and multiply by three they can appear to be significant especially when someone has not made a single long distance call during the time covered by the bill. But remember the bill is for three months and not for one.**

**-OCC-**

All Corporation Commission news releases are available for downloading from the Commission's web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

April 3, 2000

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR NEWS DIRECTORS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS:**

**Corporation Commission tests new video conferencing equipment with real court case by long distance.**

**WHO: Oklahoma Corporation Commission Administrative Law Judge Dan Evans in Oklahoma City, Mack Energy Co. represented by Attorney Ronald Corley in Duncan**

**WHAT: Judge Evans will hear a Grady county pooling application filed by Mack Energy.**

**WHEN: Tuesday, April 4, 11:00 a.m.**

**WHERE: Main courtroom #301, third floor of Jim Thorpe Building at 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd. In Oklahoma City and at the Commission's Duncan district office at 1020 Willow Street.**

**MEDIA COVERAGE IS INVITED in both Oklahoma City and Duncan. Please set cameras and microphones up prior to 11 a.m. start time.**

**-OCC-**

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[www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**April 4, 2000**

## **COMMISSION ADVANCES ITS USE OF VIDEO-CONFERENCING**

### **SEEKS GREATER SAVINGS FOR CONSUMERS AND BUSINESS**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)-What started as a vision by Corporation Commissioner Ed Apple has evolved into the forerunner of a comprehensive telecommunications process designed to save everyone who does business with the Commission time and money.**

**On September 1 last year, Commissioner Apple started a Corporation Commission first. After choosing to work from the Duncan district office to be closer to the people, Apple set up a minimum two-way video communications system test phase linking the Duncan office with the other two Commissioners at the main courtroom in Oklahoma City.**

**After more than 6 months of successfully using the primitive camera and monitor system linking the Commission's main courtroom with the Duncan offices, the Commission has taken another step up in using modern telecommunications to bring the Commission still closer to the people.**

**The new system, which uses two Polycam cameras with built-in microphones, two TV's and one document camera for the main courtroom, is operated over an existing T-1 line between Duncan and the Commission's Oklahoma City headquarters. The project was thoroughly researched by Data Processing Director, now interim General Administrator, Larry Shaver, before equipment was purchased and installation begun on February 21. Installation and testing was done by Information Technology Network Management Specialists Shawn Baker and Preston Morrison.**

**The Commission is studying plans to possibly use the equipment being replaced for a future video hookup between the Oklahoma City and Tulsa Commission courtrooms. Other future plans under study include video conferencing links between courtroom 105 on the first floor of the Jim Thorpe Building with the other three field offices of the Commission in Kingfisher, Ada and Bristow and eventually at Woodward. The savings with such video links in both trip and legal expenses would be significant for those individuals and companies who do business with the Commission.**

**-occ-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**April 6, 2000**

## **ALL THREE CORPORATION COMMISSIONERS APPROVE OF THE PAY RAISE BILL FOR STATE EMPLOYEES WITHOUT THE INCLUSION OF STATEWIDE ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)-Oklahoma's three sitting Corporation Commissioners are not eligible to receive a pay raise even if Governor Frank Keating signs the state pay raise bill into law.**

**According to the Oklahoma Constitution, the salary of a state elected official may not be raised during that official's term of office. Corporation Commissioners are elected to staggered six year terms with one commission seat on the ballot every two years. A commissioner is locked in to the salary in effect at the time he or she takes office for the full six years of their term. Consequently the three commissioners earn different salaries for doing the same job. Currently, the statutorily set salary is \$82,004 per year. SB959 would increase that amount to just over \$87,000 effective for whoever fills that office beginning in January 2001. Salaries of the other two commissioners would remain frozen at the rate in effect when they took their oath of office.**

**Commissioners Bob Anthony, Denise Bode and Ed Apple all support the proposed \$2,000 pay hike for state employees which was the main purpose of the legislation.**

**Bode said she "fully supports the position of Governor Keating and members of the legislature who want to remove the last minute pay raise for statewide elected officials, including commissioners, from the bill." Bode added "it is her desire for any pay raise to go to the low paid state employees for whom it was intended."**

**Apple said "as a statewide elected official he fully understands why he is not eligible for a pay raise but realizes the importance of state employees receiving a well deserved pay increase."**

**-occ-**

All OCC news releases may be downloaded from the commission's web site at: [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**April 12, 2000**

## **COMMISSION WEB SITE RANKED 4<sup>TH</sup> NATIONALLY AS FRIENDLY, CUSTOMER ORIENTED SITE**

**(OKLAHOMA)—The Oklahoma Corporation Commission web site has been recognized as one of the five finest in the nation in a survey of all 50 state energy regulatory bodies, the District of Columbia and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The survey, conducted by the Energy Regulatory Commission (Energy E-Comm.com), used approximately 30 evaluation criteria that have been determined by its research to be critical. The evaluations of the web sites were performed by a panel of technology and content experts.**

**Energy E-Comm.com said its thesis for web site evaluations focuses on the customer's experience --- does the web site provide an experience that will encourage the visitor to return repeatedly to transact with the host. It is the prospect of visitation that creates the value on the net.**

**The Oklahoma Corporation Commission web site ([www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)) is described as "An excellent site that provides content in an easy to read format, provides search capabilities to enable easy targeting of information and is overall a very friendly, customer-oriented site."**

**Other public utility commission web sites ranked in the nation's top five with Oklahoma are Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts and Wyoming.**

**Commission Chairman Bob Anthony calls the OCC web site an example of many modernizations made by the commission in recent years.**

**Larry Shaver, Director of Data Processing and acting General Administrator for the Corporation Commission, said "the OCC is always looking for ways to improve its internet communications." Shaver and all three Commissioners have implemented suggestions from Oklahomans and users worldwide to continually update the site and increase its user friendliness.**

**-OCC-**

**This and all OCC news releases are available for downloading on the web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**April 19, 2000**

## **Oklahoma oil production continues to drop while a gas lease booms in Pushmataha county**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)—Preliminary figures compiled by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission indicate a continued drop in oil and gas production for the state. Early January oil figures show a decline of 551,455 barrels from December. The 73,526,416 barrels of oil produced in 1999 were the lowest totals for Oklahoma since 1913 and are part of a 15 year decline.**

**January oil production was 5,411,121 barrels or a daily average of 174,552 barrels. The average price for a barrel (42 gals.) of crude in January was \$26.08.**

**January gas production was 99.6 billion cubic feet or a daily average of 3.2 billion cubic feet. The average price for gas during January was \$2.17 per mcf (thousand cubic feet).**

**Gas production statewide continues to be the lowest since 1933 and remains on a six year decline. But in Pushmataha county in southeastern Oklahoma, a single gas lease puts that county in the production column for the first time in nearly a decade. OCC statistics manager Larry Claxton said it's the first time since he has been compiling statistics for the commission that Pushmataha county has shown any activity. Claxton says the lease started operating in late December and still produced 167.2 million cubic feet of gas. Figures for the first full month (Jan.) of the lease's operation revealed 581.1 million cubic feet of gas produced.**

**Latimer county in eastern Oklahoma is the heaviest gas producing county in the state at 19.1 billion cubic feet during January, an amount nearly double November and December production for that county.**

**-OCC-**

All Corporation Commission news releases are available for review and downloading from our web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)



# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**April 21, 2000**

## **Commission Closes the Y2K Cause**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)—What started for the Oklahoma Corporation Commission in November of 1997 came to an official end this week when the Commission voted to close the Y2K causes with a final status report. Two and a half years ago the Commission began surveying all regulated water, gas, electric and telecommunications utilities in the state to assess the extent of Y2K readiness. Guidelines were established and quarterly reports were compiled to provide public information on the status of utility preparedness. All of the work was designed to make sure there would be a minimum of Y2K, utility service interruptions in the lives of Oklahomans.**

**The Commission inquired into utility preparedness for both the year 2000 and the leap year transitions. The detailed description of the Y2K plans of facilities-based utility companies operating in the state helped encourage further readiness and provided a single base of public information on Y2K. This information was shared with Oklahomans statewide through the Commission's internet web site, regular news releases and the commission's weekly radio program and monthly TV show.**

**In an effort to remain informed on relevant Y2K issues, Commission staff continued to monitor national Y2K web sites, participated in the Governor's Y2K Task Force and web site, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions (NARUC) Ad Hoc Y2K Task Force along with continuous reviews from other states and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Commission staff also engaged in a Sapulpa town meeting, a Tinker Air Force Base Partnership Forum and a presentation to the Office of Emergency Management Contingency Workshop at OU.**

**The last status report in response to letters from the Commissioners was at the end of last September. Phone calls from staff resulted in 100% compliance by December 15. Final status reports were submitted in January prior to the leap year event.**

**The facility-based utilities all reported Y2K readiness including all 34 electric companies, all 12 gas companies, all 44 incumbent local exchange telephone companies, all 8 interexchange telephone companies, all 6 competitive local telephone exchange companies. The water companies regulated by the Commission are small and manually operated so Y2K problems were not anticipated as long as they continued to receive electricity.**

**(continued)**

**page 2, "close Y2K causes"**

**The Commission assessed the utility groups as they had the greatest impact on Oklahoma customers due to their ownership of facilities and their operation of supply and delivery networks.**

**-occ-**



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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**April 24, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR NEWS DIRECTORS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

**Important deliberations before the Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**It affects everyone in Oklahoma**

**What is it?**

**It is the largest consumer issue facing Oklahoma's future...electricity deregulation (restructuring). The three corporation commissioners will be given a thorough update by staff experts on the status of proposed Congressional and Oklahoma legislation. Among those invited to attend are state lawmakers, consumer groups and the general public.**

**Cameras and microphones are welcome in the courtroom.**

**WHEN: Wednesday, April 26, 9:30 a.m.**

**WHERE: Main Commission courtroom #301 on the third floor of the Jim Thorpe state office building at 2101 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases are available for review and downloading on the our web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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April 26, 2000

## **COMMISSION HEARS UPDATE ON ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING LEGISLATION**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)—Public utilities division director Ernest Johnson and energy chief Ken Zimmerman presented a status report on electricity restructuring legislation to the Oklahoma Corporation Commissioners (OCC), consumer groups, some members of the legislature, representatives of electric utilities and spokesmen for interested organizations.**

**The commission staff update talked about the good intentions of the proposed legislation but clearly cited several concerns and issues. Among the eleven areas of concern were rates for small consumers, the unbundling of services, consumer education, consumer protection and bill of rights, affiliate transactions and code of conduct, competition and enforcement, market monitoring, stranded cost recovery, reliability and quality of service, licensing of marketers, jurisdiction and public benefits.**

**Staff recommends that the price of electricity must not increase due to restructuring, particularly for small consumers (residential and small commercial). The staff calls for structurally deregulating electricity assets at fair market value so ratepayers can at least share in the value above book.**

**The status report calls for consumer education to begin immediately and continue for at least 5 years at a funding level of \$12-14 million. Staff wants a clear and comprehensive customer bill of rights to be established and enforced by regulators.**

**Staff recommends the state have full latitude to establish stringent affiliate rules and oversee actions of municipal retail electric sellers.**

**Regulators must be allowed to establish definitions of competition, continually assess its existence and take action to promote competition.**

**Staff calls for allowing the commission to assess and remedy market power problems and work to prevent mergers that harm competition.**

**-continued-**

**Page 2, electric update**

**The report says regulators must be allowed to assess and determine the amount of recoverable stranded costs for an electric utility.**

**Staff recommends the quality, reliability and safety of customer service must not decline due to restructuring. Regulators must be allowed to oversee coordinated efforts to ensure this result.**

**Regulators must be allowed to develop and enforce customer related standards for retail electricity providers.**

**Existing customer protections must continue.**

**Full regulatory authority and review of unbundling and the existence of competition must not be diminished without a demonstrated benefit to customers.**

**Public benefit programs such as universal service and low income service must be established and funded. Customers must be informed of changes by every means possible and access to customer information must be stringently safeguarded.**

**The commission staff also presented an alternative plan for electricity competition in Oklahoma. The "Oklahoma Plan" provides three options for customers. First, it allows large industrial and commercial customers to buy electricity at unregulated rates from retail energy suppliers. Secondly, it provides small consumers a portfolio of several electric service options through their local utility, including an environmentally friendly or "green" choice. Thirdly, all customers have the option to continue buying electricity under a cost-of-service rate that is regulated by the commission.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**May 2, 2000**

**Contact: Kevin Knutson or Linda Guthrie at 405-521-2267**

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 3**

### **ATTN: NEWS DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

**Live on the internet Wednesday, May 3 from 12 to 1 p.m. EDT. , 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. CDT**

**COMMISSIONER BODE INVITED TO LECTURE AT NATION'S TOP CONSERVATIVE  
THINK TANK**

**AMERICA'S HEAVY (60%) DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL IS AN INCREASE OF 20% IN  
10 YEARS. IT IMPACTS NATIONAL SECURITY AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR  
ALLIES**

**BODE WILL ADDRESS PRESTIGIOUS HERITAGE FOUNDATION IN WASHINGTON D.C. LIVE ON  
THE INTERNET**

**SHE WILL SPEAK ON THE IMPORTANT BUT OVERLOOKED CONNECTION BETWEEN ENERGY  
POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Bode joins former Secretary of Energy Donald Hodel at the Heritage Foundation's Lehrman Auditorium at 214  
Massachusetts Ave, N.E. in the nation's capital.**

**The lecture will be carried live on the internet at [WWW.HERITAGE.ORG](http://WWW.HERITAGE.ORG). which will also be linked on the  
commission's web site at [WWW.OCC.STATE.OK.US](http://WWW.OCC.STATE.OK.US)**

**-OCC-**

**All news releases and advisories may be reviewed or downloaded at the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

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**May 3, 2000**

## **AMERICAN RELIANCE ON FOREIGN OIL JUMPS 20%**

### **FEWER VITAL AMERICAN JOBS AND A DRASTIC LOSS OF DOMESTIC OIL PRODUCTION CREATE HIGH NATIONAL SECURITY RISK**

#### **105,000 HIGH PAYING OIL JOBS LOST AND 1.1 MILLION BARRELS PER DAY OF DOMESTIC OIL ELIMINATED FROM THE MARKET SINCE 94.**

**(WASHINGTON D.C.)—Out of 800 active American drilling rigs, only 160 are searching for oil. At the new, greatly increased, 60% level of foreign oil imports, the OPEC cartel manipulates America's price strings determining whether Americans pay \$0.70 cents or \$2.00 for gasoline.**

**Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode told the Heritage Foundation that each of these OPEC cartel manipulations of America's oil supply result in price shocks for both oil and gasoline. But they also fire another volley across the bow of domestic oil. Bode said "each incident forces more U.S. production to be plugged and lost forever, investment is driven away, qualified employees are terminated and valuable infrastructure is destroyed."**

**Just last month Bode answered questions as part of a panel with former National Security Advisor Richard Perle in an unusual joint session of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Bode was there in her capacity as trustee of Oklahoma's resource base and in her prior capacity as President of the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) to discuss a successful trade petition filed for the IPAA. That 1994 petition resulted in a Presidential finding of a national security threat posed by rising oil imports. The finding said "the United States and its allies may find themselves constrained from pursuing either unilateral or multilateral foreign policy actions for fear of provoking producer countries into actions that could result in the manipulation of oil prices and increased prices for consumer countries."**

**Bode recalls a bipartisan group in Congress presented the Clinton/Gore Administration with a domestic production plan calling for action on several fronts including tax credits, the elimination of penalties, federal royalty problems and export limitations. No action was taken. Later the Administration added 4.3 cents to the gasoline tax.**

**-continued-**

**Page 2, Bode Heritage lecture**

**To understand America's security risk, it must first be realized that there is no free oil market in the traditional sense and never has been. Bode cites manipulations first by the old Standard Oil Trust, then government rationing and price controls followed by OPEC's nation quotas.**

**Actions by the OPEC cartel since 1997 have destroyed 105,000 American jobs in oil production and resulted in a dramatic loss of 1.1 million barrels of domestic crude oil production each day.**

**A second Presidential finding released the end of March, again found an increasing national security threat.**



**Twenty-eight states now have incentive programs for production with eleven states, including Oklahoma, enacting 25 new incentives since 1998. Oklahoma enacted a reduction in the gross production tax for low oil prices during a special session of its legislature. Bode proposed a similar holiday from part of the fuel tax to help protect consumers from OPEC shock.**

**Bode said she agrees with former National Security Advisor Perle who believes America needs a viable domestic production option to deal with the OPEC cartel. She believes the bipartisan congressional proposals from 1994 are a good starting point. Highlights of those proposals were:**

- **A tax credit to preserve marginal production**
- **A tax credit to encourage new drilling**
- **Elimination of tax penalties and updating of tax rules on geological and geophysical cost, percentage depletion, and enhanced oil recovery**
- **Open up access to production in frontier areas on federal lands such as the Artic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)**
- **Provide for federal royalty productions for marginal production and production in frontier areas such as the deep Gulf of Mexico**
- **Eliminate the limitation on exports or swaps of Alaskan crude**
- **Fix the overreaching of the Oil Pollution act of 1990**
- **Resolve federal royalty collection problems that limit production of natural gas**

All commission advisories and news releases are available for review or downloading on the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**May 4, 2000**

## **Oil and Gas Division names new Technical Services Manager**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)—The Oil and Gas Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission announces the promotion of Larry Fiddler to Manager of the Technical Services Department. He replaces Ray Smith who retired at the end of April.**

**Fiddler is a 1979 graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology. He has 17-years of experience with mid-sized to small independent oil and gas companies. Fiddler has served both the domestic and international petroleum industries in the mid-continent area and in Turkey and Syria.**

**Serving the Commission for more than four years, Fiddler has been an Oil and Gas Field Inspector and Manager of Underground Injection Control. In his new position, Fiddler is responsible for a department that is the repository for all official Commission oil and gas records including most oil and gas-related permits, maintenance of financial assurance mechanisms, documenting operations and tracking production.**

**Larry and his wife Debbie reside in Edmond with their son Justin and daughter Katie.**

**-OCC-**

**All news releases are available for review and downloading on the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

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**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**May 10, 2000**

**Solutions sought to bring more Oklahomans "online"**

## **COMMISSIONER BODE ENCOURAGES EXCHANGE OF IDEAS TO CONTINUE IMPROVING THE STATE'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM**

**Luncheon to bring key business and state government leaders together to discuss ways to improve all Oklahoman's computer literacy and access to the internet**

**When: Wednesday, May 10, 12 noon**

**Where: Petroleum Club, 100 N. Broadway, Oklahoma City**

**For two years, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission has worked closely with the telecommunications industry, government leaders and consumers to provide Oklahomans with a first rate telecommunication system. A first rate system provides everyone with high quality, reasonably priced, voice services, universal access to the internet and high speed data transmissions.**

**With support of the Governor and the Legislature, the Commission has written a new plan for telecommunications in Oklahoma. Bode said she sees the challenge to both industry and policy makers to make sure the tools of the Information Age reach all Oklahomans. Right now only about 26% of Oklahomans actually have access to the internet.**

**Clive Smith, President and CEO of New Deal, Inc. will speak. His company has developed software to bring new functionality to "obsolete" computers ranging from 286 to Pentium PC's with the hope of offering more Oklahomans computer-internet reality.**

**-occ-**

All news advisories and releases are available for downloading on the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)

May 12, 2000

## **First Michael Jenkins Award Presented**

### **Victim's parents work selflessly to educate children about safety around oilfield equipment as the push continues**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode presented the first Michael Jenkins Award Thursday evening during special ceremonies at the Omniplex. Commissioner Bob Anthony joined her on stage for the presentation. The award is in memory of Michael Jenkins who lost his life in an accident on oilfield equipment in 1993. Seven Oklahoma children have died in and around oilfield equipment in recent years.

Michael's parents, Bill and Ellen Jenkins, received the award in recognition of their efforts to get the message to Oklahoma's children. Commissioner Bode stated, "The Jenkins came to us last year with a request that we step up oilfield safety education efforts. The Jenkins have devoted untold hours to educating the children of others so not one more parent need go through the grief they have suffered. This award is an effort to recognize and encourage greater work in such safety education. But it is just the first part of our campaign to encourage our kids to be safe."

The Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) announced last night that it has also agreed to step-up activity. It announced that it is airing \$100-thousand worth of public service announcements on radio and TV about the dangers of oilfield equipment. It has also created a safety video called "Play It Smart" for use in the classrooms with the OERB's Petro Pro program.

Commissioner Bode added, "OERB's timing in stepping up the airing of these safety ads is critical because it is the summer when our children are most likely to explore this equipment."

Commissioner Ed Apple, who was instrumental in initiating the idea of a safety video, applauded the Award and the safety efforts it represents.

In addition to the OERB, the "Safe Kids Coalition" has been active in helping to educate children about oilfield hazards.

-occ-

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**May 17, 2000**

## **Downward production trend continues for Oklahoma oil and gas**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** The monthly report from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Oil and Gas Conservation Division shows a continuation of the decline in oil and gas production from January. The early crude oil figures for February reveal a drop of about 8% or 444,096 barrels from the previous month. Natural gas output declined by nearly 33.3 million (mcf) or about 28%.

**Total liquids for February reached 5,349,539 barrels. February's total gas was 88,930,285 mcf.**

**Larry Claxton, manager of oil and gas statistics for the Commission, said the production from a gas lease in Pushmataha county in southeastern Oklahoma, which began in December as the first gas production in that county in many years, has greatly increased. February production for the lease is up about 39% over January.**

**Oklahoma's total crude oil production for the year through February is 10,787,470 barrels. Natural Gas production through February is 196,312,464 mcf.**

**The average price for crude oil during February was \$28.63, an increase of \$2.58 per barrel. The average price for February natural gas was \$ 2.42, up \$0.25 from January.**

**-occ-**

All news advisories and releases are available for review or downloading at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

FOR RELEASE 5-22-00 Contact: Larry Lago

521-2261

## **ANTHONY PLAN USHERS IN NEW ERA IN LOCAL PHONE SERVICE**

A new era in local telephone service in Oklahoma officially opens this month with the mid-May effective date of Oklahoma Corporation Commission rules fundamentally changing the way regulation has been applied since statehood.

The new rules stem from "The Anthony Plan", named for Corporation Commission Chairman Bob Anthony who used his office to fashion a compromise agreement between Southwestern Bell, other incumbent telephone service providers, potential competitors, the Office of the Attorney General and Commission public utility and legal staffs. The rules allow telephone companies serving 75,000 or more access lines in the state the option of moving from traditional rate-of-return regulation, which restricts investments companies can make in Oklahoma, to an alternative form of regulation which sets prices for consumer services based on the cost and market conditions of providing that specific service.

Although just becoming formally effective, the plan has already shown early benefits as many reputable companies file for certificates to serve the Oklahoma residential and business telephone markets.

"Opening the local market to competition will provide customer choice while encouraging companies to develop service packages tailored to customer calling patterns," Anthony said. " In addition to the customer benefits, these companies bring jobs to our state ranging from sales to technical support.

"Southwestern Bell's commitment to infrastructure development, along with the investment by new companies entering the market, will provide Oklahoma the telecommunications network needed to support the rapid growth in electronic commerce, enhanced research and educational opportunities and Oklahoma's excellent telemedicine system. Through the Internet and a strong telecommunications network, Oklahomans can bring goods and services to their home, school or local health care facility."

Jim Epperson, president of Southwestern Bell-Oklahoma, noted that shifting from rate-of-return regulation has allowed Bell to significantly increase its investment in Oklahoma. Bell recently announced a new call center to be located in Catoosa that will be the second largest employer in that community. The company is also significantly expanding its high-speed Internet access service bringing DSL technology to 39 rural communities.

"While all three of the corporation commissioners played a significant role in gaining approval of the final plan," Epperson said, "it was Commissioner Anthony who took the lead by proposing the document that became the final working draft and bringing all parties to consensus.

"In earlier writings Chairman Anthony laid out a vision for telecommunications in Oklahoma. That vision is becoming a reality and Oklahomans will win because of his pacesetting work," Epperson said,

Commission Vice Chairman Denise Bode also thanked Anthony for his leadership in structuring the negotiations.

"This was an issue that had been under study for some months before our Telecommunications Advisory Group," Bode said. "But, discussions reached a stalemate. By stepping forward with a streamlined framework proposed by the chairman's office, Bob was able to break the logjam and keep negotiations on track resulting in an agreement containing strong consumer protections and receiving support from virtually all of the competitors in the telecommunications industry."

Anthony explained the basic concept was to provide a regulatory plan that addresses today's high-tech, global

marketplace.

"When telephone service was first being installed in this country, it was very expensive to run cable and maintain the necessary switching equipment," Anthony explained. "To have an opportunity to meet these expenses, companies were assigned service territories where they operated as a monopoly. In exchange, government oversight agencies set the maximum return the company was allowed to earn on its investment. This overall return was then divided into prices for the individual services.

"Today's new technologies have revolutionized the telecommunications industry. Oklahoma needs a regulatory format that brings these new products and services to the consumer at affordable prices, while allowing telephone companies an opportunity to realize a return on their investment. Technology has made telecommunications a global industry, and Oklahoma must be ready to compete for investment and job opportunities in that global economy," Anthony said.

In return for shifting to alternative regulation, the company must agree to open its local service market to competition. Realizing that it will take time for competitors to expand into the market, the rules cap basic local exchange rates at their current level for up to five years. Capping, rather than freezing, means rates can not go up, but may come down as competitors enter the market. Even after the five-year period, these rates are restricted to increasing only by inflation less 1 percent per year until the Commission makes a finding that competition exists for that exchange. By comparison, the state's smaller phone companies by statute adopted in the mid-1980s are allowed to raise basic local exchange rates a maximum of \$2 per month once a year without Commission approval.

To participate in alternative regulation a company must have an approved "transition plan" on file with the Commission. Currently, two companies would be eligible for this type of alternative regulation program. Bell's transition plan was approved last December. Valor recently completed its acquisition of the local telephone service of GTE in Oklahoma. To become eligible for alternative regulation, Valor would also have to receive approval of its transition plan.

Bell's transition plan contains incentives for competition by offering promotional discounts for those network elements competing companies may lease from the incumbent carrier.

"We told them we wanted the best rates offered within the Southwestern Bell region," Anthony said. "Bell was willing to offer the promotional rates for a period of five years. New customers cannot be signed up under the promotional rates once 25 percent of the residential and 25 percent of the business lines are served by competitors for that exchange. "

Potential competitors noted it takes seven months to recoup the initial investment and start earning a profit from a residential connection. In the plan, Bell was willing to accept 50 percent of the non-recurring cost up front and to waive the remaining 50 percent if the competing company can prove they did not retain the residential customer for at least seven continuous months. Bell contacted competing local exchange companies certified in Oklahoma in mid-May with the promotional discount period becoming effective in mid-June.

In the transition plan Bell also agreed to upgrade the remainder of switches so it will have a 100 percent digital network and to expand its high-speed data transfer and Internet access to all communities with either 10,000 access lines or a four-year state university, a total of 22 towns. This program was so well received that Bell has moved forward completion of installation to the initial 22 communities to the end of 2000 and has added 17 additional communities to the list.

Although Bell must continue to pay its assessment into the Oklahoma Universal Service Fund, the company agreed not to pass this charge through to its customers for the next five years. The OUSF fluctuates annually based on the amount needed to meet its legislative mandate for that year. At the current level of 9 cents per customer line per month, not passing through the charges for five years would be a customer savings of approximately \$8 million. However, the assessment has run as high as \$1.48 per month.

"Taken together the rules and transition plan present a well-rounded package," Anthony said. "The program contains strong incentives for competitors to enter the market while providing ratepayer protections through price caps until

competition is established. Customers further benefit from accelerated infrastructure development and a five-year holiday from the OUSF fee."



# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

May 24, 2000

## NEWS ADVISORY

### ATTN: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS

The [attached letter from Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode](#) to Oklahoma Representative Fred Stanley, thanking him for inviting her to appear before the House Democratic Caucus last week to explain her views on electric restructuring, describes in a clear and precise way what she believes are the key elements important to Oklahomans about electric restructuring as they relate to the recently passed SB220. Some of the issues Commissioner Bode highlights in this letter are:

Electric Restructuring is about rates.

Rates will rise under current legislation

This legislation poses a \$20 million dollar tax increase

Additional generation

A finding of competition

A cap versus a freeze on rates

Transfer of assets

Functional or structural change

Affiliate rules

No other state has allowed...

**YOU WILL ALSO FIND A FACT SHEET PUT TOGETHER BY COMMISSIONER BODE ON KEEPING OKLAHOMA'S ADVANTAGE OF CHEAP, ABUNDANT ENERGY.**

The Commissioner is available for comment.

[Attached Letter From Commissioner Denise Bode to Oklahoma Representative Fred Stanley](#)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**May 26, 2000**

## **COMMISSIONER BODE URGES VETO OF FLAWED ELECTRIC RESTRUCTURING BILL (SB220)**

### **CONSUMERS, THE COMMISSION, COMPETITORS NOT INVITED TO THE RE-WRITE PARTY**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) Senate Bill 220 (Reg. No. 3589) passed by the state Senate late Thursday does not make changes recommended by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) or consumer groups and it does not reflect all the changes suggested by Attorney General Drew Edmondson in his May 25 letter to Speaker Benson which he said were needed for him to support the measure.**

**Consumer groups, the Commission and competitors were not invited to participate or be present during the most recent re-write of the bill. The electricity bill is flawed without the constitutional authority (OCC) and competitors at the table.**

**Commissioner Bode makes it clear she cannot support the bill and calls for its veto by the Governor.**

**Bode emphasized in a letter at the time of her appearance before the House Democratic Caucus last week that the electric restructuring bill would result in both a rate increase and a tax increase. The tax hike will total about \$20 million.**

**Residential and small business electric consumers will suffer the most under SB220 as it is currently written.**

**-OCC-**

All news releases and news advisories are available for downloading from the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us).

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)

May 30, 2000

## **COMMISSION APPROVES \$20 MILLION ONG RATE DECREASE**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) Residential and small commercial customers will receive the lion's share of a \$20 million Oklahoma Natural Gas Co. (ONG) annual rate reduction contained in an order approved unanimously by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission May 30, with additional savings possible through competitive bidding on natural gas supply and transmission.**

**The Commission order approves a joint stipulation reached between the company, the Commission's Public Utility Division staff, the Office of the Attorney General, Enogex Inc., Transok LLC, Public Service Company of Oklahoma and Octagon Resources Inc. The order calls for a net reduction in ONG rates of \$20,642,366 with 70 percent of the reduction targeted to residential and small commercial customers to be applied after the initial pricing block.**

**Commission staff estimates that the average residential customer using natural gas for space heating and hot water will see an annual reduction of \$23.55, with most of the savings occurring in the heavier use winter months.**

**In a concurring opinion, Commission Chairman Bob Anthony said "This is a balanced order that provides immediate ratepayer savings while opening the door to a competitive market in natural gas utility service in Oklahoma. In addition to the cost savings, the order contains other significant ratepayer benefits. ONG is authorized to conduct a five-year cathodic protection plan on its pipeline system, and to assist customers with maintenance of service lines on the customer's property. With repair, replacement or new installations, ONG will work with customers to find mutually acceptable meter locations, taking into account safety, cost and aesthetics."**

**Anthony said "This will result in substantial savings to ratepayers faced with repair or replacement of service lines and improve public safety through the routine periodic testing of those lines. ONG has promised in their testimony to contract with local licensed plumbers to assist in this work. This will hold down labor costs to the utility while helping to mitigate the impact of the change on the plumbers and supply companies currently providing service line repair and replacement."**

**-cont'd-**

**Page 2, \$20 million rate reduction cont'd**

**Commissioner Denise Bode said "The conclusion of this rate reduction is not only important for the \$20 million in savings provided to consumers today but also for future savings we have guaranteed through a competitive gas marketplace."**

**The order also merges Kansas Gas Services's Oklahoma customers into Oklahoma Natural and completes the unbundling process by separating Oklahoma Natural Gas, the distribution company, and ONEOK Gas Transportation LLC, the transmission company, into separate utilities. ONG is in the process of taking competitive bids for both natural gas supply and transmission services for the upcoming heating season, which begins Nov. 1. Should the company receive a bid to provide lower cost transmission service to a particular geographic area, the current transmission cost will be backed out and the new charge inserted. Transmission**

**rates will then be determined on a statewide basis so that all customers share in the savings.**

**-OCC-**

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**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**June 2, 2000**

## **COMMISSIONER BODE KEYNOTES OIPA LUNCHEON**

### **"America at Risk"**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode will keynote the Monday, June 5 luncheon at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association (OIPA) at Shangri La Resort near Grove. Bode will talk about "America At Risk," the need for a national energy policy.

**On May 3, Commissioner Bode, former president of the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), was invited to lecture at the Heritage Foundation, the nation's top conservative think tank, in Washington D.C. There, she took center stage with former Secretary of Energy Donald Hodel to talk about the important but overlooked connection between energy policy and national security.**

**It was March 28 when Bode was asked to testify in the nation's capitol before the joint U.S. Senate committee on Foreign Relations and Energy and Natural Resources. She was asked to address the issue of America's reliance on foreign oil and how it poses a threat to national security. The Commissioner warned the Senate committee of the need for a national energy policy to bolster America's independent oil production and reduce its dependence on foreign crude.**

**-occ-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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June 2, 2000

## **NEWS ADVISORY FOR ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS**

### **Mark Your Calendars for International Road Check 2000**

**WHO: Safety Inspectors from the Transportation Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**WHAT: Will roll out their new Mobile Scale House to take part in "International Road Check 2000"**

**WHEN: Tuesday through Thursday, June 6, 7, 8**

**WHERE: The new Mobile Scale House with OCC Patrol Cars and Inspectors will be located at El Reno (I-40 East Bound, mile marker 129), Inspectors also available at Warner (I-40 West Bound), Hugo scales and Davis Scales (I-35 North Bound)**

**WHY: Three days of intense safety inspections of commercial vehicles including semi-trailer trucks and tanker trucks. Some may recall that the I-40 East bound scale house at El Reno was demolished when a truck crashed through it. The Commission authorized a mobile unit be built so inspectors would have an office with appropriate facilities, communications and signage to stop trucks for safety inspections.**

**-OCC-**

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**June 8, 2000**

## **OCC enforcement officers complete "road check 2000"**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Corporation Commission's (OCC) motor carrier enforcement officers have finished three days (June 6,7,8) of truck safety inspections concentrating on commercial vehicles along Oklahoma's heaviest traveled roads.**

**Nineteen certified OCC safety inspectors working at roadside scale locations at El Reno, Davis, Hugo and Warner diverted as many as 300 trucks per hour from Interstates 35 and 40 and other major highways. Inspectors selected tankers, 18-wheelers and other vehicles hauling both hazardous and non-hazardous cargo for inspection.**

**Road Check 2000 was organized by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) to improve safety on the road in all 50 states, Mexico and Canada.**

**Inspection results from the OCC's enforcement officers show they inspected a total of 336 trucks and trailers during the three days taking 105 out of service for various violations. Seven drivers were taken out of service. OCC officers examined 22 hazardous material loads removing 5 from service.**

**OCC inspectors rewarded 95 vehicles with CVSA decals for exemplary safety inspection results. Thirty-one trailers were also awarded the decals.**

**-occ-**

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June 16, 2000

## **Price Increases Fail to Spur Oklahoma Oil and Gas Production**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** The downward trend of Oklahoma Oil and Gas production continues as the prices go up. Larry Claxton, manager of oil and gas statistics for the Commission, said preliminary figures for March 2000 show a 13.2% drop in crude oil production while the average price for a barrel of crude oil rose \$0.77 or 2.7% to \$29.38. A 4% decline in March natural gas production was accompanied by an average nickel or 2% price increase to \$2.46 per million cubic feet (mcf).

The average price of Oklahoma natural gas is up 54% over the same period last year while crude oil prices are up about 155% over the same time in 1999.

Total liquids for March were 5,180,771 barrels. Total March gas reached 108,594,173 mcf.

Oklahoma's crude oil production for the year through March totals 16,321,265 barrels. Natural gas production through March of this year totals 326,612,075 mcf.

The heaviest natural gas producing counties in the state during March were Latimer in southeastern Oklahoma with 9,715,491 mcf. Grady county in southcentral Oklahoma came in second with 7,747,483 mcf followed closely by Roger Mills and Texas counties in western Oklahoma.

Counties with the highest totals in crude oil production were lead by Carter county in southcentral Oklahoma with 644,205 barrels. Stephens, Texas and Osage counties each produced just over 300,000 barrels each while Grady and Garvin counties producing approximately 294,000 and 244,000 barrels respectively.

-OCC-

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# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

June 16, 2000

To schedule an interview regarding this news release contact Commissioner Denise Bode's office at 405-521-2822

## What's Behind The Price At The Pump?

(OKLAHOMA CITY) It does not appear there are any quick and easy answers to this question because of its complexity but one primary reason found in the history of gasoline prices is "supply and demand." At this time, supplies are low and demand is increasing.

A common denominator in the price of gasoline at the pump is OPEC and its ever increasing flow of crude oil to America. American Petroleum Institute (API) figures for May 2000 reveal crude oil production from the lower 48 states and Alaska has dropped 1.7 percent during the past year as foreign imports of crude have jumped 2.1 percent. This means the U.S. is importing more than 56 percent of its oil. The API reports crude oil inventories dropped 12.4 percent in May from the same period last year. At the same time, API figures show an increase in gasoline production and deliveries which means a hike in demand.

Key factors in demand and higher gasoline prices at the pump:

1. Higher crude oil prices for more imported oil
2. Lower crude oil inventories
3. Significant pipeline disruptions cause slowdowns and shortages.
4. Increased summer driving and more gas guzzling sport vehicles
5. Higher Chicago area prices can draw gasoline from Oklahoma and increase local prices.

Commissioner Denise Bode said "the good news is that as oil supplies in the Gulf make their way into the Midwest, prices will begin to stabilize within a few weeks". In the meantime, Bode's office will monitor the oil and gasoline situation and keep Oklahomans informed. You are invited to call 405-521-2822 or make your comments on the commission's "Feedback Corner" at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us).

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**June 20, 2000**

## **SHAVER NAMED AS GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) W. Larry Shaver, who has served the Oklahoma Corporation Commission since 1989 as manager of Finance and most recently as Director of Data Processing, has accepted the job of General Administrator (GA) of the Commission, the agency's highest administrative position. Shaver's selection came after Commissioners completed a nationwide search to replace former General Administrator Jay Edwards who resigned March 31 to accept a position in education.**

**Shaver served as interim-General Administrator from his position as Director of Data Processing. He becomes the Commission's seventh General Administrator.**

**Before coming to the Commission in July of 1989, Shaver was with Tenneco Oil Co. for 26 years including 10 years as administrative manager for Tenneco's Mid-Continent Exploration and Production Division where he directed accounting, purchasing, computer systems and technical support functions.**

**He was named supervisor of Tenneco's Oklahoma City district office in 1973. In 1985, Shaver negotiated contracts for construction of the Tenneco Building at Northwest Expressway and Rockwell Ave.**

**Shaver is a native of Eagle Lake, Texas. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.**

**-occ-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

June 29, 2000

## **NEWS ADVISORY: Attention News Directors and Assignment Editors**

**Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode will be in Washington D.C. on Thursday, June 29, at the request of the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. The Committee meets at 1p.m. EDT in SD-342 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.**

**She has been asked to testify and answer questions on "the oversight of rising oil prices and the efficiency and effectiveness of Executive Branch responses." Bode is in the first panel on the witness list which includes two U.S. Department of Energy experts and the Governor of Ohio.**

**Commissioner Bode most recently had her views about the impact of imported oil and the OPEC cartels control of the American market quoted on the nationally syndicated Rush Limbaugh talk show. Limbaugh quoted Bode from a May 9 story on "Worldnetdaily.com" as saying "The OPEC cartel clearly understands that the Clinton energy policy is based on instant gratification seeking low gasoline prices and ignoring future consequences with a foreign cartel in charge of our national energy future."**

**On May 3, Bode addressed the prestigious Heritage Foundation in Washington on America's increased reliance on foreign oil.**

**Bode testified on March 28 before the joint U.S. Senate Foreign Relations and Energy and Natural Resources Committee at the request of Chairmen Jesse Helms and Frank Murkowski on "America At Risk: US Dependency on foreign oil".**

All OCC new releases and advisories are available for downloading and review on the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

July 3, 2000

## Warning and Advice on Refueling Your Vehicle

By Jennifer Wilson of the Petroleum Storage Tank Division

**OKLAHOMA CITY –** Although refueling a vehicle is generally a safe operation, research shows there has been a marked increase since last fall in the number of flash fires caused by vapor ignition at gas pumps reported to the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI).

From September of 1999 through January of 2000, 36 vapor ignition fires were reported to the PEI. The increased frequency of these fires caused PEI to investigate further establishing that static electricity was the source of ignition in all cases. The API reported receiving less than 15 reports of flash fires due to static electricity distinct from the PEI reports but issued a refueling advisory for consumers in February.

Though static electricity has long been known to cause vapor ignition fires, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, taking its cue from the increase in incidents, sends a warning to gasoline consumers with API and PEI safety guidelines.

The primary problem at gas pumps, research and questionnaires have shown, is customers returning to their vehicles during refueling because sliding across car seats generates some static electricity. Though the gasoline hose itself is grounded, when a human charged with static comes into contact with the fuel nozzle handle, an electrostatic spark can ignite vapors. Rubber-soled shoes were worn in 94% of PEI's reported fires where footwear could be identified; rubber soles insulate the path of the electricity, keeping the charge generated by the person sliding across the car seats from grounding.

**Tips For Refueling From Both PEI and API include:**

- Stay near your vehicle's fueling point; Do Not Go Back Into Your Vehicle When Refueling, regardless of whether you use the nozzle's hold-open latch.
- If you MUST re-enter your vehicle while refueling, discharge the static electricity by touching a metal part of the outside of your car, AWAY FROM THE FILLING POINT, before removing the gas nozzle.
- Always turn your engine off before refueling.
- Never smoke, light matches or use a lighter while refueling
- To avoid spills, do not overfill or top off your gas tank. Let the fuel dispenser shut off automatically.

-continued-

**Page 2, Safety Tips for Refueling**

- When dispensing gas into a portable container, always use an approved container. Always place the container on the ground and keep the pump nozzle in contact with the container when refueling to avoid a static electricity ignition of fuel vapors. Never place the container inside a vehicle, in the truck, on the bed of a pickup or flat bed or on the roof of a trailer while fueling.

## **In The Event That a Vapor Ignition Fire Does Occur:**

- **Leave the nozzle in the fill pipe and back away from the vehicle.**
- **Notify station attendants at once so dispensing devices and pumps can be shut off with emergency controls.**
- **If the facility is unattended, use the emergency intercom to summon help and the emergency shutdown button to shut off the Pump.**

(Source: API Gasoline Refueling Advisory and Safety Guidelines for Customers, February 3, 2000, [www.api.org](http://www.api.org))

**-OCC-**

**All OCC news releases and advisories are available for downloading and review from the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**



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**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**July 12, 2000**

## **ENCOURAGING NEWS FOR OKLAHOMA'S OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION COMES FROM NEW DRILLING PERMITS, THE ACTIVE RIG COUNT AND A CLEAR UPWARD PRODUCTION TREND IN THE FIRST QUARTER**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – If you are looking for good news in Oklahoma's oil and gas production fortunes, there are some encouraging numbers which indicate a turnaround from last year's oil and gas depression.**

**The number of permits-to-drill filed with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Oil and Gas Division climbed to 420 during June. This is a 93% increase since January. Permit figures for the first six months of this year compared with the same period in 1999 reveal a 40% hike.**

**Commissioner Denise Bode said "hopefully, with these higher numbers, producers are beginning to feel a little more confident about their ability to drill and produce wells without fear of OPEC sending prices back to the basement. Certainly, with the impact of higher gasoline prices on consumers, everyone is more aware of the need for a domestic energy policy to protect the nation from foreign market control."**

**More good news for Oklahoma can be found in the number of active drilling rigs. As of June 29, there were 120 drilling rigs. In January there were only 88.**

**Commission Chairman Bob Anthony, encouraged by the numbers, said "The increased drilling activity is the result of hard work by many people. Certainly the higher price plays a major role, but so do advancing technologies which bring better return for a company's investments, the legislature's willingness to extend the production incentives program and the Commission's streamlining of processes to reduce the cost of regulation."**

**Crude oil production figures for the first quarter of 2000 are up over the first quarter of 1999. The first quarter total last year was 16,984,221 barrels compared with this year's higher first quarter total of 17,241,968 barrels. The average price of crude during the first quarter of last year was \$11.51 per barrel while this year's first quarter price averaged \$28 per barrel.**

**Natural gas production during the first quarter of this year was also higher than the first quarter of 1999. Last year's first quarter totals were 346,829,015 mcf (thousand cubic feet). This year's first quarter was higher at 350,478,295 mcf.**

**Page 2, (oil and gas production continued)**

**The average price of natural gas during the first quarter of 1999 was \$1.60 per mcf increasing during the first quarter of 2000 to \$2.34 per mcf.**

**The average price for a barrel of crude oil during April 2000 was \$25.29, down from \$29.28 in March.**

**The average April price for natural gas was \$2.71 per mcf, up from \$2.42 per mcf in March of this year.**

**-occ-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**July 13, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY: News Directors and Assignment Editors**

**Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode will address a panel of public utility commissioners and moderate a panel on "A State Perspective on Electric Industry Restructuring, Pipeline Safety and the Future for Natural Gas."**

**Bode will address the panel Friday, July 14, 8:30 a.m. at the INGAA (Interstate Natural Gas Association of America) Security Analysts Conference at the Silverado Country Club & Resort, Napa, California.**

**Commissioner Bode will moderate a panel between 8:30 a.m. and 12 Noon made up of utility commissioners from Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Idaho, Georgia and commissioner William Massey from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)**

**A copy of Bode's prepared remarks are available by Fax on request.**

**-occ-**



# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**July 18, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY**

**ATTN: NEWS DIRECTORS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

### **TULSA SPEAKING SCHEDULE FOR COMMISSIONER DENISE BODE**

**Wednesday, July 19, 2000**

**7:30 a.m. at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Tulsa**

**Commissioner Bode will be the keynote breakfast speaker for this year's Oklahoma Transportation Summit. She will address the Corporation Commission's role in transportation, the impact of recent legislation, oil production, the price of gasoline and taxes on gasoline and oil.**

**12:45 p.m. Bode will address the Tulsa Downtown Rotary Club at the First United Methodist Church, 1115 S. Boulder, Tulsa.**

**The Commissioner will speak to Rotary on the impact of OPEC, the struggles of Oklahoma's oil and gas industries, the need for a national energy policy and streamlining the regulation of telecommunications, electricity and natural gas industries in the state**

All OCC news releases and news advisories are available for downloading and viewing at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**July 26, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY: ATTENTION NEWS DIRECTORS, ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

### **BODE IN PHILADELPHIA FOR REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode is in Philadelphia as a delegate to the Republican National Convention. She is also a volunteer for the RNC Committee on Official Proceedings in managing the convention floor delegates.**

**Commissioner Bode is available for media interviews regarding issues before the Corporation Commission or on her involvement with the convention. Bode may be reached in Philadelphia at (215) 561-1776. If you wish to schedule an interview, you may do it through her Oklahoma City office by contacting Jennifer Haynie at (405) 521-2267.**

**The Bode's son Sean was selected as a Page to the Convention from Oklahoma.**

**-occ-**

**All OCC new releases and advisories are available for review and downloading on the OCC web site at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**July 27, 2000**

## **VALOR TELLS COMMISSION IT IS WORKING TO HELP CUSTOMERS**

**OKLAHOMA CITY –** Valor Communications of Dallas, which on July 1 took over operations of what was GTE in Oklahoma, said it is working hard to resolve transitional difficulties for its customers.

**Bill Burnett, Director of the Corporation Commission's Consumer Services Division, said his complaint investigators report numerous calls from Valor customers in eastern Oklahoma and the Tulsa area about long delays in being unable to reach Valor's customer service representatives.**

**Burnett and other Commission staff met with Valor executives from Oklahoma and the company's headquarters in Dallas. Valor told the Commission that it is working to overcome a series of problems related to the July 1 transition involving the flow of information, equipment compatibility, a backlog of service orders and the training of new service representatives.**

**As Valor works on its transitional problems in Oklahoma, it asks for patience from customers or potential customers trying to establish service.**

**Oklahomans may contact Valor at the following numbers:**

**Customer Service 1-877-520-5220**

**Credit and Collections 1-877-520-5230**

**Repair 1-877-520-5210**

**If you are unsuccessful in resolving your issue after talking with Valor, you may contact the Commission's Consumer Services Complaint Investigators toll free, statewide from outside the Oklahoma City metro by dialing 1-800-522-8154 or log on to [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us) and click on "public complaint" or "feedback corner" and tell us about your problem. You also may write the Commission at 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2000. Please provide contact information with your complaint.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**July 28, 2000**

## **NOTICE OF PROPOSED OIL AND GAS RULEMAKING**

**OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has issued notice of a proposed emergency rulemaking to amend certain oil and gas conservation rules.**

**Focus of the rulemaking is to implement changes to the oil and gas conservation rules in Chapter 10 covering gross production tax exemptions prompted by Senate Bill 1048.**

**The public is invited to attend a technical conference at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, August 15 in the Commission's conference room 105 on the first floor of the Jim Thorpe Building located at 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd. in Oklahoma City. The purpose of this conference is to receive public comment and suggestions on the proposed rules.**

**The Commission also requests information from business entities on the financial impact of the proposed rules. The information is sought in the dollar amounts of increased fees, indirect costs or any other cost to a particular entity as a result of compliance with the proposed rules.**

**On Thursday, September 14, the Commissioners will consider the emergency and permanent approval of these rules at a public hearing scheduled for 9:30 a.m. in the Commission's courtroom 301 on the third floor of the Jim Thorpe Building at 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City.**

**Further information on the rulemaking may be obtained from Michael Decker, Deputy General Counsel, or from Jim Hamilton, Assistant General Counsel, both of Oil and Gas Conservation, 400 Jim Thorpe Building, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2000. They may be reached by phone at (405) 521-2255.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases and advisories are available for review and downloading at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**August 4, 2000**

## **COMMISSION PROGRAM IS THE BEST, SAY THEIR PEERS**

**(Oklahoma City) – Saying nobody does it better, members of the National Association of State Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Funds have chosen the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Petroleum Storage Tank Division clean-up program as the best in the United States.**

**Meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona recently, Association members decided unanimously that when it comes to getting the most bang for the buck, creating and implementing ideas that work, working with the public, and getting the overall job done in protecting the environment, the division's program is the example for the rest of the country to follow.**

**"We are the only program in the nation that offers a kind of 'one stop shopping' for those covered by the program," said Division Deputy Director Dave Kelley. "Oklahoma is also one of the states that have succeeded when it comes to keeping our clean-up fund solvent. In many other states, the so-called 'indemnity fund' is broke."**

**Kelley explained there are a variety of reasons behind the successful administration of the fund. "For example, we have the only 'pay for performance' plan for contractors in the nation," he said. "Under the plan, contractors agree to clean up a site for a set amount, and they don't get the cash until established goals are reached."**

**Oklahoma's indemnity fund receives money from a one cent per gallon assessment on gasoline and diesel fuel.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases and advisories are available for review and downloading at [www.occ.state.ok.u](http://www.occ.state.ok.u).

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)**

**August 9, 2000**

## **CORPORATION COMMISSION ASKS FOR PUBLIC'S HELP LOCATING ABOVEGROUND STORAGE TANKS**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) - The Petroleum Storage Tank Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) is asking for public cooperation in locating Aboveground Storage Tanks (ASTs) in Oklahoma.**

**In an effort to avoid strict federal regulation, Oklahoma has adopted new and specific AST rules covering airports, marinas, service stations, commercial facilities and fleets, bulk plants and municipal water and sewage treatment plants.**

**Each AST owner should register all tanks and obtain an appropriate copy of the rules. Copies of the AST regulations may be obtained on the OCC web site at [www.occ.sstate.ok.us](http://www.occ.sstate.ok.us) (click on 'Commission Rules' under 'Legal Business', select a document format, then select chapter 26).**

**The owners of aboveground storage tanks have a number of years to comply with the rules but are required to register their tanks no later than January 15, 2001. The cost of registering a tank is only \$25 but there are penalties for those who fail to register. The Petroleum Storage Tank Division has employees who will visit any AST site and advise the owner what, if anything, needs to be done to come into compliance. Even though tank owners have several years to comply, early knowledge of what is required will help them plan ahead.**

**Owners of unregistered or non-compliant aboveground storage tanks or those with information may contact the OCC at:**

**Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Petroleum Storage Tank Division**

**Attn: Robyn Strickland**

**P.O. Box 52000-2000**

**Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2000**

**Toll free number: 1-888-621-5878**

**E-mail: [R.Strickland@occemail.com](mailto:R.Strickland@occemail.com)**

**All OCC news releases and advisories are available for review and downloading at [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)**

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

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**August 9, 2000**

## **CORPORATION COMMISSION STAFF LOOK TO UNLOCK MOTHER EARTH'S POLLUTION-FIGHTING SECRETS**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) - Environmental analysts at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission are working to shed more light on Mother Earth's seemingly mysterious ability to rid herself of some of the pollution caused by fuel spills.**

**After years of overseeing and monitoring clean-up efforts of sites where soil and groundwater has become polluted with gasoline or diesel fuel, the Technical Department of the Commission's Petroleum Storage Tank Division has amassed a huge amount of data. Using a statistical formula refined in-house, analysts are hoping to come up with some answers to questions that have thus far been unanswerable. The initial phase of the process is expected to take at least two years.**

**"The earth's ability to eventually render gasoline or diesel fuel into something harmless is called natural attenuation," said Project Environmental Analyst Supervisor Neil Garrett. "What we want to do is analyze the data in hopes of developing information that will tell us when we can walk away from a site knowing the natural process will do the remaining work, and that the site will not pose a future threat to, for example, a homeowner planning to dig a water well in the area."**

**Leonard Billingsley, Project Environmental Analyst, compares the process to a hungry teenager. "There are types of bacteria that form naturally in the presence of such things as a gasoline spill, and under the proper conditions, devour the fuel. It is rather like studying conditions in which a teenager is living in a house, and Twinkies are disappearing from the kitchen cabinet," he said. "We know who is doing the eating, but we want to know how fast he is eating them, and under what conditions. Does the type of cabinet they are stored in make a difference? Does it vary from house to house? If so, how and why?"**

**Project Environmental Analyst Frank Vernon said, "We hope the project will result in the development of an assessment tool which will give those responsible for the clean-up of a given site the means to know the site's potential for natural attenuation, how long it will take, and if and how man should help the process along."**

**-OCC-**

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# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

August 18, 2000

## OIL PRODUCTION IN OKLAHOMA, CARTER, STEPHENS AND OSAGE COUNTIES LEADS STATE TO SLIGHT INCREASE DURING MAY, NATURAL GAS DECLINES

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Thirty-seven of Oklahoma's 77 counties showed increases in crude oil production from April to May. In some counties it was only a few barrels while in others it was thousands of barrels.

Overall the increase in crude was only 4.2% or about 222,000 barrels. Natural gas showed a decline statewide of 11.4% or approximately 12,656,000 mcf.

Both casinghead gas and condensate oil showed slight drops of -3.8% and -5.9% respectively.

Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode said "While both crude oil and natural gas prices are up from last year, we still haven't overcome our infrastructure losses from the devastation of 1998's low prices. Production is still off from previous years and the rig count, while consistently improving, is still not where it needs to be to replace the two years of lost production. I remain concerned about the level of gas production and what that means for gas consumers this winter."

Bob Anthony, Commission chairman, concurred. "The low prices of the past several years reduced the pool of experienced oilfield workers and left companies repaying accumulated debt. The industry is coming back, but it will take time to reverse the production declines. There are forecasts these lower production levels will translate into higher natural gas prices this winter. The Commission has undertaken several proactive initiatives through utility unbundling and competitive bidding requirements to help mitigate these higher prices for natural gas utility customers."

The average price of Oklahoma crude in May was \$28.48 per barrel, up \$3.28 from April, and more than twice the \$13.38 price in May of last year. Oklahoma's average natural gas price dropped \$0.36 from an average \$2.70 in April to \$2.34 in May but remained well above the \$1.71 price in May of 1999.

-OCC-

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**August 25, 2000**

## **Cancer Claims Life of ONEOK Chairman & CEO Larry Brummett**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – "A passion for life and service to Oklahomans," "a visionary" are some of the reflections by Oklahoma Corporation Commissioners about ONEOK Chairman Larry Brummett, 49, who died yesterday evening after a courageous two-year battle with cancer.**

**A native of Tulsa, Brummett was born August 31, 1950, and spent much of his life in Oklahoma City. He joined Oklahoma Natural Gas Company in 1974 and after working in engineering and operations management positions, was named chairman and CEO of ONEOK in 1994.**

**Commissioner Ed Apple remembers Brummett as "A visionary who displayed special talents by amassing a strong leadership team at ONEOK. He was a man of highest integrity with whom I enjoyed my association. He will be missed. I extend my condolences to his family."**

**"Larry had a passion for Oklahomans and demonstrated it in the way he led his company. The native son worked hard to serve his customers and to improve the life of all Oklahomans," said Commissioner Denise Bode.**

**"Larry Brummett and I were both members of the first Leadership Oklahoma class in 1987-88," said Commissioner Bob Anthony. "My sincere condolences go to his wife Debbie and the entire Brummett family. He chaired ONEOK during a period of dramatic change as the regulated monopoly natural gas utility moved toward a competitive market."**

**Brummett is survived by his wife, Debbie; daughter, Kari; son, Chris; stepdaughter, Brooke; parents, the Rev. and Mrs. H. A. Brummett; and brothers Ken and Jim.**

**Funeral services will be 11 a.m. on Monday, August 28, at Tulsa's Woodlake Assembly of God Church.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases and advisories are available for downloading and review at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)**

**August 31, 2000**

## **COMMISSION ACTS TO PROTECT RATEPAYERS WHILE EXPANDING PHONE SERVICE**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – State Corporation Commissioners are working to make sure a new federal mandate lets low-income Oklahomans living on or near tribal lands receive phone service without increasing Oklahoma Universal Service Fund charges.**

**The Federal Communications Commission order expands existing programs by allowing qualified persons to receive basic local phone service for as little as one dollar per month by employing discounts of up to \$25 for monthly service and \$70 for new installations.**

**Maintaining the concept of maximum ratepayer protection and maximum benefits, the Commission has instructed that an order be prepared which complies with the new FCC-ordered program by allowing local phone carriers in Oklahoma to file their required tariffs.**

**The Federal mandate requires local phone companies to expand existing programs aimed at helping the low-income get phone service. It allows carriers to recover their costs through the Federal Universal Service Fund.**

**The Oklahoma Corporation Commission order includes language to insure the Oklahoma Universal Service Fund will not be used to pay for the federal program.**

**Commission Chairman Bob Anthony applauded the intent of the federal program to make affordable telephone service universally available. "But, we have a responsibility to protect Oklahoma telephone customers," he added. "Today's order authorizes Oklahoma telephone companies to fully participate in the program mandated by the federal Communications Commission. At the same time, it insures that all funding will come through the federal program and that state fees will not increase as a result."**

**Sounding a note of warning, Vice-Chairman Denise Bode pointed out many questions remain. "Since the federal government has failed to provide a clear answer as to how many people will be covered, it is not yet known how much the FCC's mandate may increase federal tariff charges on Oklahoma phone bills."**

**-OCC-**

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# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**September 1, 2000**

## **COMMISSION RESPONDS TO NATURAL GAS SUPPLY CONCERNS**

**(Oklahoma City)** – As analysts across the nation sound warnings of a possible shortage of natural gas this winter, Commissioners have given those with unallocated gas wells in Oklahoma the green light to produce as much product as possible.

Commission Chairman Bob Anthony stressed that while the dire predictions from some analysts should be a cause of concern, Oklahoma consumers shouldn't panic.

"While the tightening market conditions will undoubtedly be reflected in higher energy prices this winter, all indications are that our state utilities will have an adequate supply of natural gas to serve their customers during the upcoming heating season," Anthony said.

Commission Vice-Chairman Denise Bode called the Commission order a move to help both Oklahoma consumers and the energy industry.

"The Commission's action to continue the wide open flow policy for Oklahoma natural gas wells should assist in keeping our Oklahoma gas flowing for the benefit of consumers," she said.

But Commissioner Bode warns the order is not an answer to the entire problem, pointing out that "maximum production of existing wells will not replace new production. The numbers show gas production is relatively flat. Even though the higher prices have prompted a renewed interest in exploring for additional gas, on average it will take at least two years before we see any impact on the total output. At the same time, any gain could be offset by the loss of aging, existing wells. When coupled with the expected increased demand for natural gas for electric generation, it becomes clear a problem exists."

The Commission is calling for actions aimed at addressing problems over the long term.

"The Commission needs to get input from the industry, consumers and other policymakers on other actions we can take to increase gas exploration and production in Oklahoma to make sure Oklahoma consumers continue to be supplied with abundant, reasonably priced energy," Bode said.

Specifically, the Commission proration order issued Thursday will continue to allow unallocated gas wells in Oklahoma to produce the greater of 65 percent of calculated absolute open flow (CAOF) or 2 million cubic feet per day.

In practical terms, those numbers are the maximum amount the best well can produce in Oklahoma. The order applies to the fourth quarter of this year and the first quarter of 2001.

**-OCC-**

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# ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS

## News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer

Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

September 11, 2000

### ADVISORY

**Just how high will the average Oklahoman's heating bill go this winter, and what can be done about it? That's just one of the questions posed by the run-up in natural gas prices, and the forecasts of even more price hikes this winter.**

**With an eye toward defining the problem and exploring ways to ease the impact on Oklahomans, the Commission will host a natural gas summit Wednesday, September 13 at 9:30 a.m. in Commission Courtroom 301. Representatives of consumer groups and regulated public utilities will attend.**

**Please note: Another meeting is set for September 27, same time and place.**

**-OCC-**

All OCC news releases and advisories are available for review and downloading at [www.occ.state.ok.u](http://www.occ.state.ok.u).

# **ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

## **News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**September 11, 2000**

### **ELECTRIC ENERGY ADVISORY**

#### **CORPORATION COMMISSIONER, ENERGY CHIEF SPEAK TO TULSA ELECTRIC RESTRUCTURING SYMPOSIUM**

**Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode and the commission's Energy Chief will both address the electric restructuring symposium sponsored by the Oklahoma Industrial Energy Consumers (OIEC) Tuesday, September 12, in Tulsa.**

**Joining other state and industry experts, Commissioner Bode and Energy Chief Ken Zimmerman will each address the symposium Tuesday morning, September 12. Bode will speak at 10:45 a.m. on electric restructuring in Oklahoma: a regulator's perspective. Zimmerman will participate at 9:45 a.m. in an analysis of SB220 with representatives of the Attorney General's office, AARP and the OIEC. Later, at 11:45 a.m., Zimmerman will take part in a panel discussion on the future of electric restructuring in Oklahoma.**

**The OIEC electric restructuring symposium is being held on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor in the offices of Hall, Estill, Hardwick, Gable, Golden and Nelson, P.C. located at 320 S. Boston in Tulsa.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**September 15, 2000**

**ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS & NEWS DIRECTORS**

## **ADVISORY**

### **OKLAHOMA PHONE BILLS AND COMPETITION FOR LOCAL PHONE SERVICE AT CENTER OF COMMISSION HEARINGS**

**WHAT:** Sworn testimony will be heard by Commissioners on whether competition exists for local phone service in areas now served by Southwestern Bell (SWB).

**WHY:** Federal law does not allow SWB to move forward with its plans to offer inter-state long distance service to Oklahomans until the Commission finds they are in compliance with rules to allow full competition for local phone service.

**WHEN:** Monday, September 18, 9:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Main courtroom 301, third floor, Jim Thorpe Bldg., 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City

**-occ-**

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# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

September 15, 2000

## ONE CALL DOES IT ALL

*As the OCC looks forward to working with the FCC to eradicate slamming*

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Oklahoma's Corporation Commissioners have voted unanimously to take primary responsibility for resolving Oklahoma consumer's "slamming" complaints. "Slamming" is the unauthorized changing of a customer's long distance telephone service without their prior approval. This scam marketing technique has cost Oklahoma phone customers in lost money, time and business.

By its vote, the Commission has optioned in to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) state-referral program. That means the FCC will refer all of its Oklahoma complaints to the OCC, giving it the responsibility and authority to resolve the complaint.

"Due to the Commission's aggressive enforcement actions against slamming," Commissioner Denise Bode said "the number of consumers abused in Oklahoma have decreased. With this new authority, it will be even easier for Oklahoma consumers to have 'one stop' shopping to protect their rights for choice in long distance."

The following process is established for efficient filing of slamming complaints:

Consumers may file their slamming complaints by phone, fax, online electronic complaint form, letter or by appearing in person at the Corporation Commission.

Toll-free consumer complaints phone: 1-800-522-8154

Fax Phone: 1-405-521-2087

Internet online complaint form: <http://occ.state.ok.us>

Mailing address: Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Consumer Services Division

P.O. Box 52000-2000

Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2000

No fee is required to file a complaint with the Corporation Commission.

-continued-

Page 2, slamming investigations continued...

An investigator will request a copy of the consumer's telephone bill showing the alleged unauthorized carrier's charges. The investigator will contact the carrier for proof that prior to the switch it obtained proper authorization from the consumer. All unpaid charges are removed from the consumer's bill until a final determination is made.

**The investigator reviews all evidence provided by the consumer and listens to any third party tape verification or reviews any letter of authorization provided by the carrier who switched the service. If the investigator finds the carrier authorization complies with state law, no slam has occurred. If the finding is that the verification was inadequate, then a slam has taken place and both federal and state remedies apply. If the carrier fails to provide proof of authorization or does not respond, then a slam did occur.**

**A carrier or consumer who is not satisfied with the informal resolution of a slamming complaint may file for a hearing before an administrative law judge at the Corporation Commission for a \$35 filing fee.**

**The Corporation Commission's Consumer Services Division staff enters each slamming complaint that is investigated into the Commission's complaints database. The OCC agrees to regularly file information with the FCC that details slamming activity in Oklahoma to facilitate joint enforcement activities.**

All OCC news releases and advisories are available for downloading or review at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)



# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**September 22, 2000**

## **COMMISSIONER BODE BLASTS ADMINISTRATION FOR MISLEADING CONSUMERS OVER USE OF NATION'S STRATEGIC OIL RESERVES**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode called the announced use of 30-million barrels of crude oil from America's strategic oil reserves "all for show" by the administration.**

**Bode, who frequently speaks to consumers about the impact of not having a national energy policy, described the announced release of reserve crude oil as "live-for-today, short term thinking." The Commissioner blasted the use of the nation's "one insurance policy" intended to help consumers when other oil sources are shut down. She said the administration's move "misleads consumers" and ignores the fact that "our nation's energy infrastructure is shot."**

**The Commissioner points to the fact that the strategic reserves are sour crude and not many refineries can process sour crude. Combine that with the fact that most heating oil is shipped in, there is little or no available tanker space and she asks if the administration's action will have any impact on heating oil supplies.**

**-occ-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

September 27, 2000

## **ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

### **ADVISORY**

#### **GAS SUMMIT CONCLUDES**

**The Oklahoma Corporation Commission will conduct the second and final part of its natural gas summit Wednesday, September 27, 9:30 a.m., Main courtroom #301, Jim Thorpe Bldg., Oklahoma City.**

**Commissioners are interested in how they can work to help mitigate the impacts of higher natural gas prices on consumers and facilitate a healthy natural gas production industry in Oklahoma. The meeting will focus on details of the natural gas supply problem and how to maximize production in Oklahoma. The Commission seeks input from the industry and other experts on needed policy changes.**

**-OCC-**

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**September 27, 2000**

## **WE CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE, WARN ENERGY PRODUCERS**

**(Oklahoma City) – Citing the "unprecedented growth" in the demand for natural gas coupled with a shortage of equipment and personnel, energy producers and other experts warned those attending the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Gas Summit that there needs to be a radical change in public policy and perception if the nation is to have any hope of meeting demand and averting a severe natural gas shortage.**

### **Among their findings:**

- **Demand for natural gas is expected to grow by at least 32 percent over the next ten years, while producers are barely able to meet current demand.**
- **Policy makers on the federal level don't understand that supply doesn't automatically translate into the ability to deliver that supply to the consumer.**
- **Investors, be they companies or individuals, have little incentive to risk capital on risky energy related ventures complicated by the instability of energy prices. At the same time, a federal study estimates it will take an investment of 1.5 trillion dollars to meet the projected energy demands over the next ten years.**
- **Most of the on-shore domestic rigs are older than 20 years, and with only three rig makers left in the world, trying to get replacements is next-to-impossible.**
- **Questionable environmental regulations discourage exploration and development of existing supply.**

### **Recommendations from the Summit included:**

- **Tax incentives to encourage exploration and development, particularly deep drilling.**
- **Recognize Oklahoma's role as a leading producer state, and make Oklahoma "user friendly" to small energy companies and independents to encourage production and development that will help the rest of the country as well.**
- **Work with federal and state agencies toward a policy that will merge environmental and energy concerns, and allow access to supply on federal lands.**
- **Develop a program with Oklahoma's Vo-Tech system to train badly needed workers for the energy sector.**
- **Tap the "intellectual capital" afforded by the universities in the energy-producing states to provide Federal with a greater understanding of the problem.**
- **Work with state legislators to develop programs to help lower-income consumers who will be hard hit this winter by increased heating bills.**
- **Raise public awareness of the problem**

**Commissioner Ed Apple was particularly struck by the producers citing of federal rules that make drilling needed wells difficult in some areas and impossible in others, at a time when production is desperately needed.**

**"Instead of a national energy policy, we have the EPA," said Apple. "We are looking at a huge problem for the entire country, one that should be the biggest blip on the Federal government's radar screen, and I'm not sure they even have the screen turned on when it comes to this issue."**

**Two weeks ago, the Commission held a summit on the problem from the perspective of the consumer. Today's**

**hearing explored the issue from the producer's viewpoint.**

**Commission Chair Bob Anthony noted the importance of the sessions to the state and the nation.**

**"Oklahoma can set an example for the nation as we face higher energy costs this winter," said Anthony. "We can advise consumers of the developing situation and explain the need for incentives and policies which promote domestic production to increase reliable supplies of oil and gas."**

**Vice-Chair Denise Bode agreed, pointing out that any hope of meeting the demand for natural gas rests with the big producing states, of which Oklahoma is one.**

**"Oklahoma exports 70 percent of the gas we produce," said Bode. "The decisions we make regarding how to increase production are vitally important to the rest of the nation."**

**Anthony, Bode, and Apple noted the Federal government has had ample warning since as far back as 1971 of the threat posed by the lack of a national energy policy.**

**"Now the crisis is here," said Bode. "And the irony is it comes at a time when the U.S. still has plenty of supply in the ground. The problem is the government discourages all efforts to get it to the consumer."**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**September 27, 2000**

## **ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT EDITORS**

### **TELECOM ADVISORY**

**Commissioners to vote and make public comment on their decision regarding how well Southwestern Bell has opened up to local competition. The decision affects Bell's application to provide long distance service.**

**The Commission meets at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, September 28, in the main courtroom #301 of the Jim Thorpe office Bldg. at 2101 N. Lincoln, Oklahoma City.**

**The decision and subsequent order will conclude five days of hearings conducted last week followed by review of the testimony and proposals made by all the participants to the hearings.**

**Background: The 1996 Telecommunications Act required the regional Bell operating companies, which includes Southwestern Bell, to show they have opened their local markets to competition before they are allowed into the long-distance market. The federal Act spells out a 14-point competition checklist for Bell compliance prior to selling long-distance service. An OCC administrative law judge found Bell not in compliance with six of the points on the checklist.**

**The Texas Public Utilities Commission found Bell in compliance this year and the Federal Communications Commission approved Bell's long-distance application in June.**

**Approval by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission would allow Bell to proceed with its Oklahoma long-distance application to the FCC.**

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## **News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**September 28, 2000**

### **COMMISSIONERS QUESTION WHETHER BIDDING PROCESS WILL SAVE RATEPAYERS MONEY**

**Citing their "grave concern" over the bidding process involved, Corporation Commission Chair Bob Anthony and Vice-Chair Denise Bode today took under advisement a contract between OG&E and Enogex, an OG&E subsidiary. The contract involves the transportation of natural gas to OG&E generation facilities.**

**Anthony and Bode question whether the rules governing the bidding process insured the lowest bidder would get the business, with the resulting savings to be passed on to OG&E ratepayers.**

**"We're telling the ratepayers competitive bidding will save them money, but when the process is set up so only an affiliate of the company can win the contract, there is obviously a problem," said Anthony.**

**Bode said the Commission's credibility in monitoring the restructuring of the utility industry is on the line in this matter.**

**"This is fundamental to the public interest," said Bode. "We can't bless something as being 'open competition' when it clearly isn't. The process needs to be fixed. Competitors will not come to the table if they know the process is flawed and consumers will be hurt."**

**Commissioner Ed Apple dissented, and argued for a vote on the matter in Thursday's session.**

**"We are in the midst of a difficult transition from monopoly to competition," said Apple. "We delude ourselves if we think we can get a level playing field instantly. The genie is out of the bottle, and this is only an incremental step. In the end, only market forces will create a truly competitive market."**

**Apple noted the delay in deciding the matter means ratepayers won't see the first month of a more than two million-dollar annual savings.**

**"Not acting today means money lost," argued Apple.**

**Anthony and Bode argue ratepayers will save more money in the long run if problems in the bidding process are corrected now.**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**September 28, 2000**

## **COMMISSION TAKES HISTORIC STEP TOWARD INCREASED TELEPHONE COMPETITION**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – By a unanimous vote, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) has taken an historic step involving Southwestern Bell which began 4 years ago with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The Commission finds that Bell is now allowing facilities-based competition for both residential and business customers in Oklahoma without discriminating against competing carriers. As a result, the Commission recommends approval of Bell's application to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide long distance service for Oklahoma customers.**

**While finding that Bell has met the required checklist items for local competition and while recommending approval to the FCC of Bell's application to provide long-distance services within the state, the Commission, in its order, has still set forth certain terms and conditions designed to monitor Bell's continued compliance and improve the competitive environment for Oklahomans.**

**Those terms and conditions are spelled out in the "O2A" known as the Oklahoma 2000 Agreement. The "O2A" is an operational interconnection agreement between Bell and other competitive local exchange carriers (CLECS).**

**There is also a "most favored nation clause" in the agreement which means that if Bell offers better terms in another state that the same terms must be offered to Oklahomans. Data pertaining to certain performance measures will also be reviewed.**

**Commission Chair Bob Anthony said "The order is balanced and demanding. It means the competitive process is moving forward." He said "Oklahomans should be able to choose SWBT for their long distance service, and this agency will be able to monitor the transition to an open market in order to protect consumers and facilitate competition."**

**"There is competition. This decision means that consumers will have more choice in long distance service" said Vice Chair Denise Bode. She described the agreement**

**Page 2, Bell recommendation**

**and the monitoring of the competitive process as "fair and open and in the public interest."**

**Commissioner Ed Apple said the commissioners "have tried to remove every barrier blocking entry into the marketplace. He said the quicker we move through the process the better." Apple called the Commissioners' recommendation on behalf of Southwestern Bell "a major move toward offering Oklahomans full choice in both their local and long-distance service making the customers the real winners."**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

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**October 6, 2000**

## **COMMISSION APPLAUDS PRO-CONSUMER DECISION BY ONG**

**(Oklahoma City) – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has granted a request by ONG aimed at giving customers the freedom to choose when it comes to whether to participate in the Temperature Adjustment Clause (TAC) program.**

**Commissioners are pleased with ONG's request that it be allowed to waive the original deadline for customers to opt out of the TAC.**

**Commission Chair Bob Anthony thanked ONG for giving customers a second opportunity to choose whether to participate in the program.**

**"An explanation of the Temperature Adjustment Clause was included in summer billing statements informing customers they would be automatically enrolled unless they notified the company by September 1," Anthony said. "Several customers complained they did not see the notice. I thank ONG for giving their customers another opportunity to make a decision on whether they wish to participate."**

**Commission Vice-Chair Denise Bode congratulated the company for "stepping up to the plate."**

**"It is obvious they recognize that in moving forward in a competitive environment they must respond to their customers," said Bode. "Their request to change their Temperature Adjustment Clause shows they are willing to go the extra mile for their customers."**

**Commissioner Ed Apple pointed to the importance of giving the consumer the power to choose.**

**"The TAC should be an option for the customer and a reasonable solution has been proposed by ONG. I am pleased that choice will be a part of the program," said Apple.**

**The Temperature Adjustment Clause is used during the heating season (November through April) to reduce the impact of weather extremes on both customers and ONG. It is based on historical weather information and has the effect of reducing bills in colder-than-normal winters and increasing bills in warmer-than-normal winters.**

**This is the first year customers have the option of not participating in the program. Some customers apparently did not see the notice on the matter ONG sent to them, and therefore missed the original "opt-out" deadline of September 1. The company requested and received permission to drop the original deadline and allow customers to opt out of the program at any time during this upcoming heating season.**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Matt Skinner, Public Information Officer**

**Phone: (405) 521-4180, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

10/9/2000

## **A D V I S O R Y**

Oklahoma Corporation Commission Vice-Chair Denise Bode will be the keynote speaker at the IPAA (Independent Petroleum Association of America) regional meeting Tuesday, October 10 at the Dallas Petroleum Club, 11:30 A.M. .

Commissioner Bode will speak on "Implications of the November 2000 Election for Energy Policies and Practices".

Commissioner Bode is considered one of the leading experts on national energy policy, and has testified before Congress on the matter on numerous occasions. She is past president of IPAA.

The Dallas Petroleum Club is located at 2200 Ross Avenue in Dallas.

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**October 17, 2000**

## **ADVISORY**

### **Attention Assignment Editors, News Directors**

**What: OKLAHOMA HOSTS NATIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE**

**When: Tuesday, October 24, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Where: Phillips Pavilion on the grounds of the Oklahoma Governor's mansion in Oklahoma City.**

**Why: To examine the issues of "energy shortages in an energy rich America: Causes, Consequences & Possible Solutions." Highlights include two morning panel discussions, a luncheon address and a third panel discussion in the afternoon.**

**The moderator will be Becky Norton Dunlop, Vice President of the Washington D.C. based Heritage Foundation.**

**The first panel (10 a.m.) will tackle the issue of "Starving in the Midst of Plenty: The Reality of the Energy Shortage." Those on the panel include the chairmen and CEO's of Anadarko Petroleum, Williams Gas Pipeline and Simmons & Co. Intl. Also participating will be the Director of the University of Oklahoma School of Petroleum Engineering.**

**A second panel (11:15 a.m.) will take on "Threatening America's Prosperity: Implications of the Energy Crisis." Several corporate energy and national energy association executives will participate along with the Executive Director of Oklahoma's Association of Community Action Agencies.**

**The luncheon keynoter is Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode who will talk about "Energy Shortages in an Energy-Rich America: Why?"**

**The afternoon session will be highlighted by a panel discussion (1:30 p.m.) on "Planning for Our Energy Future." The panel will include Oklahoma Congressman Wes Watkins, University of Oklahoma President David Boren, Independent Petroleum Association Chairman Jerry Jordan and Angela Antonelli, Director of the Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies, The Heritage Foundation.**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**October 24, 2000**

## **NEWS MEDIA ADVISORY**

**WHAT: National Energy Conference in Oklahoma**

**WHY: "Energy Shortages In An Energy Rich America: Causes, Consequences and Possible Solutions."**

**WHERE: Phillips Pavilion on the grounds of the Governor's Mansion in Oklahoma City.**

**WHEN: Tuesday, October 24, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

The conference will be carried live in its entirety via satellite and will be **streamed live on the internet**. The OCC web site home page has a link to the coverage at [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us) and it is also live from the Heritage Foundation home page at [www.Heritage.org](http://www.Heritage.org).

**Satellite coordinates** for the televised program are C-Band: Telstar 5, Trans 5 (vertical), 97 degrees west longitude , downlink frequency 3800 MHZ, channel 5, Audio: 6.2 & 6.8 MHZ, Mixed Mono. KU -Band: Telstar 7, trans 17 (vertical) 129 degrees west longitude, downlink frequency 12040 MHZ, Audio: 6.2 & 6.8 MHZ

**Local, National and International experts on energy have been invited to participate in three panel discussions:**

**The first panel at 10 a.m. will discuss "Starving in the Midst of Plenty: The Reality of the Energy Shortage."**

**The second panel at 11:15 a.m. will address the issue of "Threatening America's Prosperity: Implications of the Energy Crisis."**

**Luncheon address by Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode: "Energy Shortages in an Energy Rich America: Why?"**

**The third panel will tackle the task of "Planning for Our Energy Future."**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

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**October 26, 2000**

## **WARNING!!...THIS IS NO DRILL...THIS IS REAL**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Ed Apple said he feels compelled as a commissioner to continue to warn Oklahomans that high energy costs are going to be for real this winter for both natural gas and most electricity. Commissioner Apple emphasizes that there is nothing anyone can do in the short term to change the trend in high energy costs.**

**The Commission and utilities serving Oklahomans have issued public statements since this summer about the rising costs of natural gas and electricity. ONG has projected increases of 50-60 % for its customers. Other companies have estimated increases ranging from 20% to 75%.**

**Apple said "these problems, which require long term solutions, are beyond our present control. That is why it is so important for consumers to act now to keep their costs as low as possible through the use of conservation measures and precautionary planning."**

**"The Corporation Commission is doing all it can to inform users of the impact of higher energy costs," said Apple. The Commissioner insists "it is now up to the consumers, businesses, individuals, schools and public facilities to be prepared for the budgetary impact of higher energy costs and to conserve where possible." He called on families, businesses, school boards, universities and government agencies to plan their actions.**

**Meanwhile, Apple said consumers should be aware that the new, detailed break-out of items on their monthly gas bills are not new charges but are the same charges they have always had, individually identified for explanation purposes. These charges have not been increased.**

**The Commissioner said it's also important for all consumers to know that the increase in the bills will be only for the cost of fuel. Utilities pass through the cost of their fuel and are not permitted to make a profit on that cost.**

**Consumers having difficulty paying should act before their bill is due by contacting their utility and working with that utility.**

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# News from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Jim Palmer, Director of Information

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October 26, 2000

## "OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE IS AT STAKE"

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – With those words, Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode closed her keynote address to some two hundred participants in a national energy conference co-sponsored by Governor Frank Keating and the Heritage Foundation of Washington D.C. Her remarks to the nearly 200 industry officials and experts gathered Tuesday inside the Phillips Pavilion on the grounds of the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion emphasized the need for a blueprint for a more secure energy future.**

**Bode called for protection of consumers in the short term through greater federal and state support of the low income through LIHEAP and free weatherizing programs. Conservation and alternative fuels must also be a part of the plan.**

**The Commissioner said "to ensure abundant supplies of energy at reasonable prices for the long haul, the United States must immediately state its intention that 'in the national interest' it will encourage the rebuilding of our national energy production, refining and delivery systems and allow access to federal lands to provide reliable, abundant energy to fuel this high-tech, energy intensive American economy."**

**During a panel discussion entitled "Starving in the Midst of Plenty: The Reality of the Energy Shortage," the Director of OU's School of Petroleum and Geological Engineering, Keith Millheim, Ph.D., suggested that the amount of money being invested in research and development in the oil and gas industry is way down. He said the large number of mergers are a contributing factor. Millheim said the failure to invest in research has created a "big lag time of some 10-14 years." He also called "shocking" the loss of quality, trained personnel in the industry brought on by both the recent (97-98) price declines and the downsizing created by the mergers.**

**Matthew R. Simmons, President of Simmons and Co. International, called the decade of the 90's a wasted decade during which America climbed deeper into the energy crisis. He described the crisis as a "savage crisis" from which the nation will have to rebuild its infrastructure "brick by brick." He said the "future will be a tough-tough challenge for all."**

**Cuba Wadlington, Jr., President and CEO of Williams Gas Pipeline, said "the energy crisis is not a resource problem but an infrastructure problem." He said**

**Page 2, energy conference**

**"new power generation facilities are needed now, not 5 years from now." Wadlington insists that market driven solutions are always the answer.**

**Red Cavaney, President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, points to the internet as the largest driver in the use of more power and he expects that to continue. He said there has been an "alarming erosion of the energy infrastructure." Cavaney cites the fact that "not one major refinery has been built in the last 25 years." Cavaney said the nation must have a more contemporary energy policy. He said America must realize that oil drilling is increasingly global and that access to federal lands is an increasing problem.**

**During the final panel discussion of the conference entitled "Planning for our Energy Future", Jerry Jordan**

**who chairs the Independent Petroleum Association of America and Jordan Energy, Inc., said "oil and natural gas equal 65 % of America's energy supply with demand for gas expected to increase by 30% over the next five years." He said "domestic energy policy must help independent producers and free the market."**

**Michael Johnson, Conoco's Vice President of Natural Gas and Gas Products, pointed out that propane and butane are equally important with natural gas because of their use in the petro-chemical industry which employs hundreds of thousands of U.S. workers. Johnson called for "predictable government policies" and suggested that "high-tech companies have attracted a lot of the available capital that would otherwise be used for small to medium sized old economy companies." He also said painful and difficult changes will have to be made to transition to stronger companies and industry.**

**The Director of the Heritage Foundation's Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies, Angela Antonelli, indicated that when supply and demand are out of sync it triggers calls for reform. She said the best policy minimizes the role of Governments in micro-managing. Antonelli said domestic energy markets must be allowed to develop. She called the energy tax code probably as unfair as the individual tax code and cited a "downright dislike of our energy resources" by the federal government. She described the legitimate role for government as an education and information role.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Office of Public Information — Phone: (405) 521-4180 FAX (405) 521-6945

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: TRN11300-4

## BNSF Fined \$2,000 for Blocking Tiger Switch Crossing

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has fined the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway \$2,000 for illegally blocking its Tiger Switch rail crossing northeast of Tulsa four times.

The crossing, at 161st East Avenue, is in a largely rural area about two miles north and west of Catoosa in Rogers County. About 25 to 30 trains go through the Tiger Switch daily, a BNSF official told the commission. The road crosses a main line track and a siding track.

G. R. Combs, Corporation Commission railroad manager, said the illegal blockages occur when trains are switched onto the siding to await the passage of another train. He said the commission has received several complaints about crossing blockage.

Susie Ruby, a Rogers County resident, documented seven crossing blockages that exceeded the 10 minutes allowed by commission rules. The commission dismissed three alleged blocking incidents because they occurred in connection with a locomotive failure that caused a train to stall.

Commission rules allow crossings to be blocked for more than 10 minutes if a train is in continuous motion or is stopped for emergency reasons.

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# **News** from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Office of Public Information — Phone: (405) 521-4180 FAX (405) 521-6945

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: TRN11300-3

## Permanent Repair of SE 25th and Shields Rail Crossing due by July 1

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has ordered the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway to make permanent repairs on a rough grade crossing at Southeast 25th and Shields Blvd. in Oklahoma City by July 1.

In the meantime, the commission will require the railroad to make frequent inspections and temporary repairs as needed to prevent the crossing surface from becoming a danger to public safety until the permanent repairs can be made.

G. R. Combs, Corporation Commission railroad department manager, said the rails and crossing surface are about two inches lower than the street surface, and that crossing surface boards have become loose.

Permanent repairs will include replacing ballast, ties and rails; installing a concrete crossing surface and raising the crossing surface to street level, Combs said.

Robert Ellison, a BNSF track supervisor, told the commission a budget for permanent repairs has been requested. He said he should know by February or March when the permanent repairs can begin. He did not estimate the cost of the repairs.

Combs said the Corporation Commission will monitor the temporary repairs to make sure the crossing remains safe for public use.

-OCC-

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[www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Office of Public Information — Phone: (405) 521-4180 FAX (405) 521-6945

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Patrick K. Petree Reference: OGC11400-5

## Robert D. Allen Joins Corporation Commission Legal Staff

OKLAHOMA CITY – Robert D. (Bob) Allen, former Oklahoma City municipal counselor and deputy state insurance commissioner, will join the Oklahoma Corporation Commission as a public utility attorney on Jan. 18, Bill Burkett, general counsel, announced.

Allen has practiced law in state and city government, private industry and private practice since 1955. He has more than 25 years experience in telecommunications law and regulation.

"Bob's experience during this period of transition for the telecommunications industry will be a great asset to the Corporation Commission in developing new forms of regulation for the new century," Burkett said.

Allen served as deputy insurance commissioner and general counsel for the Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner from 1958 through 1963. He was as an attorney for Southwestern Bell and vice president and general counsel for Illinois Bell Telephone from 1963 until 1983 when those companies were subsidiaries of AT&T.

Allen returned to Oklahoma and has been in private law practice in Oklahoma City since 1983, when AT&T was separated from the Bell operating companies. He has represented AT&T as its local regulatory counsel. He also served as Oklahoma City's chief legal officer and supervisor of the law department from 1984 until 1989.

Allen received a bachelor's degree in government and economics from the University of Oklahoma in 1951 and a degree in law from the OU law school in 1955.

-OCC-

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[www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)

# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occeweb.com](http://www.occeweb.com)

November 8, 2000

## **ANTHONY WINS LANDSLIDE VOTE FOR RECORD THIRD TERM**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) — The Chairman of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission easily cruised to a third term Tuesday, Nov. 7, by garnering more votes than any Oklahoman running for state office since statehood. Bob Anthony won his third consecutive six year term on the three member Commission, a record for an Oklahoma Republican candidate seeking state office.**

**Anthony called the election "a wonderful victory for the ratepayers of Oklahoma."**

**Unofficial election results show Anthony received a record 771, 609 votes, 66 percent of the total vote, a record for an Oklahoma state office candidate, Republican or Democrat.**

**The Commission is the state's most economically powerful agency, regulating public utilities, oil and gas, underground storage tanks and certain motor carrier functions.**

**Anthony said "I'm proud of what we have accomplished at the Commission and honored to receive the opportunity to continue our efforts to create jobs, promote our industries and play a role in protecting the state's environment."**

**"Over the past several years public utility regulation has undergone the most fundamental change in state history," Anthony said. "Utility monopolies are being replaced by market forces. Through Commission rulemaking, this process is well underway in telecommunications and natural gas, while continuing to provide oversight and consumer protections. The overwhelming support I received as we discussed these issues during the campaign is an endorsement for bringing the benefits of customer choice and competition into the utility arena."**

**"The Legislature is considering a process for restructuring electric utilities. As the governmental entity with the expertise, the Commission can play a meaningful role in this process, protecting consumers by ensuring a competitive market and strict codes of conduct in exchange for reducing regulatory oversight," he said.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

**Jim Palmer, Director of Information**

**Phone: (405) 522-2100, FAX: (405) 522-1623, [www.occ.state.ok.us](http://www.occ.state.ok.us)**

**Nov 9, 2000**

## **BODE REPRESENTS COMMISSION IN EFFORT TO HELP NEEDY OKLAHOMANS SAVE ON THEIR WINTER UTILITY BILLS.**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Oklahoma Corporation Commission Vice Chair Denise Bode joins representatives from the natural gas and weatherproofing industries to help the Oklahoma City headquarters of the Salvation Army distribute at no cost materials some Oklahomans might not otherwise be able to afford to make their homes more energy efficient.**

**With the help of Oklahoma Natural Gas Company (ONG) and M-D Building Products, the Salvation Army headquarters, located at 311 S.W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street (directly across from the main Oklahoma City post office), will be the site of what is called "Keep The heat." The special campaign will give away more than 17 tractor-trailer loads of products such as caulk, sealers, weather-stripping, insulation wrap, water heater blankets, plastic sheeting, door thresholds and expert advice on how to install and use the products.**

**There are two phases to the "Keep The Heat" campaign. The first phase is Friday, Nov. 10, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for distribution to social service and community agencies. The general public is invited during the second phase on Saturday, Nov. 11, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Commissioner Bode calls for all Oklahomans to become involved with their communities to make sure less fortunate individuals and families who can't afford to weatherize their homes or meet this season's higher winter energy costs receive the help they need. She will be at Salvation Army headquarters Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**November 16, 2000**

## **COMMISSION APPROVES 911 IMPROVEMENTS**

**The Oklahoma Corporation Commission today gave approval for installation of an E911 system for Haskell County and improvements to the existing E911 system in Craig County. The counties will each receive 100 thousand dollars from the E911 fund to pay for the installations.**

**Commission Chair Bob Anthony explained today's action is part of a continuing coordinated program to improve public safety by making it easier to report and receive assistance in emergency situations.**

**"By approving these two applications, the Commission helps enhance Oklahoma's emergency response capabilities," Anthony said. "Funding is made available through fees included by the Legislature in the Oklahoma Telecommunications Act of 1997."**

**Commissioner Ed Apple noted the importance of such systems for areas which have many visitors, such as Haskell and Craig Counties.**

**"Both counties attract visitors from all over the state and region because of the recreational sites that are in their respective areas. It is vital there be a system in place to allow emergency workers to quickly locate those who need help, but might not be exactly sure where they are. I would also like to compliment the officials of both counties for the outstanding work they did on their respective applications and presentations made today before the Commission."**

**Haskell County currently has no 9-1-1 system in place. Both counties have 18 months to complete their respective installations.**

**The "E" in "E911" stands for "Enhanced", meaning the system gives the E911 dispatcher the ability to know where a given call is coming from. However, that ability varies depending on the technical level of the system.**

**In the course of today's deliberations, the Commission made use of telecommunications equipment that allowed the officials of both counties to make their presentations and answer questions from their county seats, rather than having to travel to Oklahoma City.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**December 5, 2000**

## **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO S.W. BELL FILING BUSINESS AS USUAL, SAY COMMISSIONERS**

**"No surprise." That basically sums up the reaction of Oklahoma Corporation Commissioners to action taken this week by the U.S. Department of Justice. The DOJ has filed a recommendation with the Federal Communications Commission, asking it to further review Southwestern Bell's application to offer interstate long distance service in Oklahoma and Kansas.**

**"The DOJ has taken similar actions in every other case of this kind," said Oklahoma Corporation Commission Vice-Chair Denise Bode. "It's important everyone have the time they need to review all the filings carefully and be fully educated on all the details."**

**Bode was in Washington, D.C. this week meeting with DOJ and FCC officials on the matter.**

**"SBC filed its application with the FCC on October 26 for permission to offer long distance service in Oklahoma and Kansas," explained Bode. "I have met with DOJ and FCC officials on the matter over the past few weeks, and look forward to answering any more questions and concerns the FCC might have as the application process continues."**

**Commission Chair Bob Anthony noted the DOJ recommendation was one step in the overall process.**

**"All interested parties were given the opportunity to file comments. DOJ has recommended two areas for further FCC study," Anthony said. "The next step will be an opportunity for all parties to file responses to the issues raised in the initial round of comments."**

**The FCC has 90 days from the October 26 date to review and act on the filing. The Oklahoma Corporation Commission endorsed SBC's long distance application on September 28.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**12/11/00**

## **"RUMORS OF OUR DEATH HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED...."**

**(Oklahoma City) That could easily be the title of an upcoming annual petroleum industry program sponsored in part by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Commissioner Ed Apple says another possible title is "Change: Manage It Or It Will Manage You."**

**"If there is one thing I have learned in my 40-plus years of working in and around the Oil Patch, it's that 'change' is the norm," said Apple. "Much has changed just in the five years since the Commission put together the first program of this kind, and there can be no doubt that 'change' will be the by-word for the future. To succeed in this difficult business, we have to equip ourselves with the tools that will enable us to anticipate and manage change, rather than allow it to manage us. That's what this program is all about."**

**Presented in conjunction with such groups as the Western States Land Commissioners Association, the Society of Petroleum Engineers, the Oklahoma City Geological Society, and the Oklahoma City Association of Petroleum Landmen, the program will be presented January 8, 2001 at Oklahoma City's Myriad Convention Center. It will include presentations on topics of vital important to the industry. These will feature experts on such topics as "Technology: The Key to Domestic E&P success," "Public Land Access: Dealing with Federal Impediments," and "Customized Weather Decision Support Systems for the Energy Industry" (to name just a few).**

**The program presentations begin at 1:30 pm. The session includes a social hour and dinner. Anyone with any interest at all in the energy industry is urged to attend. Reservations for the programs can be made by calling Carol Delong at the Oklahoma City Geological Society, (405) 236-8086 ext 11. Those simply wishing more information can call the Oklahoma Corporation Commission at its main number: (405) 521-2211, or the OCC's district office nearest you.**

**-OCC-**

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# **News** from the **Oklahoma Corporation Commission**

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**December 20, 2000**

## **NEWS ADVISORY**

### **ATTENTION ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS**

**WHO: Chairman Bob Anthony, who won his third consecutive six year term on the Oklahoma Corporation Commission by garnering more votes than any candidate for a state office since statehood, will be sworn in for his new term.**

**WHAT: Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Hardy Summers will officiate and administer the oath with the Anthony family present.**

**WHEN: The ceremony will take place Wednesday, January 3, 2001 at 3:30 p.m.**

**WHERE: in the Commissioners Courtroom on the third floor of the Jim Thorpe Office Building, State Capitol Complex, 2101 N. Lincoln Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK.**

**Note: A new media friendly sound system has been installed in the main courtroom**

**-OCC-**

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