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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU *Perspective*

June 9, 2017

Legislative review: OKFB protects private property rights, prevents property tax increases

From OKAgPolicy

With the adjournment of the first session of the 56th Oklahoma Legislature on Friday, legislators' ability to fill the nearly \$900 million state budget shortfall received most of the attention. Despite the chaos at the state Capitol, Oklahoma Farm Bureau achieved several victories on behalf of its members. Below are some highlights from the 2017 legislative session.

Ad Valorem Taxes

HB 1374 by Rep. Weldon Watson and Sen. David Holt

Allows municipalities to increase ad valorem taxes to fund public safety, upon voter approval. The measure contains an exemption for agriculture land, but the exemption easily can be removed at a future date. OKFB believes the bill is bad policy for farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahoma. The bill was passed by the House and advanced through two Senate committees. Though it was stalled in the Senate, the measure remains alive to be heard during next year's legislative session.

Wind

SB 477 by Sen. Joe Newhouse and Rep. Charles Ortega

Regulates obstructions to air navigation – like wind turbines – that could “endanger the lives and property of military aircraft pilots, passengers and training routes.” Though intended to protect air space, the bill directly infringes on the private property rights of Oklahomans. The measure creates zones that prohibit economic development and activity like wind turbines. By removing the landowner from the permitting process, the bill is considered a “take” of private property. OKFB is committed to supporting the military, but found SB 477 as a bill looking



for a problem. The bill was passed by the Senate, but amended by the House. The measure was then tied up in the Senate, as the amended bill was not approved by a Senate conference committee.

SB 593 by Senate Pro Tem Mike Schulz and House Speaker Charles McCall

Specifies how oil and gas companies and mineral owners must be notified of new wind development. The bill also removes a loophole allowing property owners to register land as a private airport to prevent the development of wind turbines. OKFB policy supports the development and support of regulations concerning wind energy development that protect private property rights while still encouraging the development of wind energy. SB 593 does not inhibit private property rights, but instead takes them into consideration while encouraging development of wind energy. The measure passed the House and Senate and was signed by the governor on April 17.

Private Property Rights

HB 1827 by Rep. John Pfeiffer and Sen. Eddie Fields

Allows any person or entity lawfully

operating and in the course of business to use public roads, highways and right-of-ways for pipe and other equipment used in the oil and natural gas production process. Under the measure, the person or entity would not need permission from the bordering landowner, but instead must only receive consent from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. HB 1827 was passed by the House, but was amended in the Senate. The bill then died in conference committee.

Exotic Swine

SB 326 by Sen. Eddie Fields and Rep. John Pfeiffer

Prohibits the importation and possession of exotic swine like warthogs. Out-of-state individuals wanted to import exotic swine into high-fence facilities in Oklahoma. Farmers, ranchers and landowners in Oklahoma already face billions of dollars in damage every year from feral swine. The exotic swine had the same potential to carry disease, reproduce rapidly, and cause damage. The bill was passed through the House and Senate and is now awaiting Gov. Mary Fallin's signature.

See "Legislative review" on the next page

Yates named OKFB vice president of field services and membership recruitment

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has named Mark Yates vice president of field services and membership recruitment. In his new role, Yates will work alongside field services directors and county Farm Bureaus to develop and enhance member engagement and involvement.

“I am confident in Mark’s ability to lead field services directors as they fulfill the vital role of communicating with county Farm Bureau leaders and members,” said Monica Wilke, Oklahoma Farm Bureau executive director. “In his new position, Mark will help guarantee a bright future for our organization by working side-by-side with county Farm Bureaus to strengthen and broaden their membership.”

Yates began his OKFB career in 2016 as director of field operations for the public policy division, where he worked to educate urban communities about agriculture and Farm Bureau at various community and civic organizations.

“Farm Bureau would be nothing without its members,” Yates said. “I look forward to creating new and innovative membership initiatives as we continue to fulfill



Mark Yates

our mission of improving the lives of rural Oklahomans.”

Before joining OKFB, Yates worked as a high school history teacher and coach. He now resides in Edmond, Oklahoma with his wife Stacy and daughter Londyn.

Legislative review

Continued from the previous page

Other

HB 1388 by Rep. John Pfeiffer and Sen. Eddie Fields

Modifies date of operation provisions in regards to determining timeliness for a nuisance action to be brought against agricultural activities on farm or ranch land; adds the term “malicious” to those frivolous nuisance suits that qualify a defendant to recovery of attorneys fees. The bill was passed by both the House and Senate, and was signed by Gov. Mary Fallin on May 16.

HB 1373 by Rep. Dell Kerbs

Requires trailers to register with the Oklahoma Tax Commission and pay an \$11 fee within 30 days of purchase. The fee would be distributed between the Oklahoma Tax Commission and the tag agent. The bill failed to advance out of the House Transportation Committee, and therefore died.

Reminder: YF&R High School Discussion Meet deadline is June 15

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers will hold their annual High School Discussion Meet at Oklahoma State University’s Big Three Field Days in Stillwater on Tuesday, July 18.

The contest is open to current high school students in 4-H or FFA. Each club or chapter may send one participant who must attend a brief orientation on July 18 before the contest begins.

The meet provides 4-H and FFA members throughout the state with an educational opportunity to enhance their speaking, reasoning and presentation skills all while analyzing issues in agriculture.

The top three contestants of the discussion meet will receive the following awards:

- 1st place: \$1,500 scholarship
- 2nd place: \$1,000 scholarship
- 3rd place: \$500 scholarship

Advisors must submit the High School Discussion Meet information sheet by **June 15, 2017**. A competitor’s guide is also available on the OKFB website at okfarmbureau.org/applications

For more information or details about the High School Discussion Meet, call Zac Swartz by phone at (405) 523-2406 or by email at Zac.Swartz@okfb.com.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online

Summer reading and family fun from the Foundation for Agriculture

Need to find something fun and educational for your kids to do this summer? The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture recently released a summer reading list for students in Pre-K through 5th grade that encourages agricultural learning in addition to other fun family summer activities. Find the list at fb.org/viewpoints/.

Wheat harvest featured on Instagram

Check out our latest photos featuring this year’s wheat harvest on the OKFB Instagram page at instagram.com/okfarmbureau. We traveled to Kiowa County near Hobart to catch the combines in action. Want more photos? Make sure to follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook for the latest photos of Oklahoma agriculture.



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YF&R members to visit Ardmore area for annual conference

Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee has released a preliminary schedule of events for the group's leadership conference July 13-15 in Ardmore.

The conference will include sessions and workshops at the Holiday Inn as well as on-site tours in the Ardmore area, including Oklahoma Steel and Wire Company, the

Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery and the Sam Noble Research Institute in Ardmore.

The latest conference schedule is below, and updated schedules will be available on the OKFB website as more details become finalized.

To register or for more information, contact Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2406 or Zac.Swartz@okfb.com.

YF&R Leadership Conference Schedule

Thursday, July 13

- 5:30 p.m. Check-in at Holiday Inn
- 7 p.m. Meet and Greet Cookout

Friday, July 14

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast vouchers available at Holiday Inn
- 7:45 a.m. Leave on chartered bus tour of south central Oklahoma agriculture and industry. Box lunches will be provided.
- 5 p.m. Return to hotel
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner reception with band

Saturday, July 15

- 6 a.m. Breakfast vouchers available at Holiday Inn
- 8 a.m. Main Session: Involvement, Guest Speaker
- 9 a.m. Breakout sessions begin
The three one-hour breakout sessions will include Goal Setting and Time Management; Estate Planning; and Farm Programs.
The last session will end at 11:50 a.m.

Clark recognized as Significant Woman in Oklahoma Agriculture

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers state committee member Mindi Clark of Byron, Okla., was recently recognized as a Significant Woman in Oklahoma agriculture by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry and Oklahoma State University.

The award was designed to recognize and honor the impact of countless women across all 77 counties of the state, from all aspects and areas of the agricultural industry. The honorees were nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of 14 industry professionals.

Clark's summers and time after work are spent on the farm with her husband, Steve. Clark is also an assistant professor of agriculture at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva.

"I see how important it is to create agriculture awareness," said Clark. "I'm a part of production agriculture, but I'm so blessed to have the opportunity to share that message through my job as a teacher. If I can effectively educate my students on the postsecondary level, then they have the opportunity to educate theirs for generations to come. I feel so, so fortunate to be involved in production agriculture and agriculture education."

Read Clark's full story on the OKFB website at okfarmbureau.org.

Member Benefits

Great Wolf Lodge

Looking for a place to cool off this summer? Try America's largest family of indoor water park resorts: Great Wolf Lodge! With locations across the nation, including Kansas, Texas and Colorado, Great Wolf Lodge offers fun activities and adventures for the entire family. Plus, as an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member, you can receive 20 percent off! Use the code OKFB105A when making reservations.

www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits

Calendar

On the Road with Ag in the Classroom

June 13-15 • State of Oklahoma
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture Conference

June 14-16 • Oklahoma City
Contact: Zac Swartz (405) 523-2406

OKFB YF&R State Leadership Conference

July 13-15 • Ardmore
Contact: Zac Swartz (405) 523-2406

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CELEBRATING OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU'S 75 YEARS



Take a trip back in Oklahoma Farm Bureau's history to some of the key moments of the formation of state's largest agricultural organization.

Grant County Farm Bureau's flying agent

Did you know Grant County Farm Bureau once had an agent who sold insurance by air?

Stanley Smrcka was a farmer well-known for his unique, high-flying insurance sales. Smrcka and his family lived northwest of Medford, growing wheat, oats and alfalfa, as well as raising Hereford cattle. He was a member of the Grant County Farm Bureau since 1946 and served on the county's legislative committee.

Smrcka's love for flying dated back to 1928 when he first started tinkering with airplanes. In fact, he built an airplane even before he had flying lessons. His homemade monoplane got off the ground, but only soared a few hundred feet. A few years later in 1945, Smrcka bought his first airplane.

It was only natural that Smrcka used his passion for flying to help his farming

practices. In 1947, he made a spray rig for his old Stearman biplane to use on his own fields, which led to a custom spraying business for his neighbors.

In 1950, Smrcka made quite an appearance at an OKFB annual meeting. Large snowdrifts halted bus services and air traffic was grounded by fog. But these circumstances couldn't keep Smrcka away. He flew his light plane from his home in Grant County to the Tulsa airport, following highways and hopping trees and telephone lines all the way.

Smrcka also used his talents to help out the community when the need arose. In 1948, a prolonged snowstorm prevented mail delivery across the state. However, Stanley and his neighbors received their mail right on time. Smrcka, turned flying mailman, landed on the snow-covered fields



As a Grant County Farm Bureau insurance agent, farmer and pilot, Stanley Smrcka is shown here as he finishes filling out the application for insurance on Frank Krejsek's new automobile.

to pick up mail and deliver incoming letters and parcels to his community.

Stories like this one paint the picture of the remarkable individuals who became a part of OKFB's unique and inspiring history. Stay tuned for more history from the OKFB archives in the next issue of *Perspective!*