

State of the State
Governor Henry Bellmon
January 5, 1965

Mr. Lieutenant Governor, Mr. President of the Senate, Mr. Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Members of the Joint Session:

Article 6, Section 9 of the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma, provides that “At every session of the Legislature, and immediately upon its organization, the Governor shall communicate by message delivered to a Joint Session of the Two Houses, upon the condition of the State, and shall recommend such matters to the Legislature as he shall judge expedient.”

Therefore, as Chief Executive of Oklahoma, I come before you today to report with deep feelings of pride, gratitude and humility that the condition of the State is excellent – it has never been better.

I am certain each of you who has been honored by election to your position of leadership by the progressive citizens of our thriving State during this challenging time in our history, shares these feelings.

As a former member of the Oklahoma Legislature, I believe I understand fully the pride which swells in the hearts of each of you as you savor those privileges and discharge the responsibilities which belong exclusively to legislators.

With you, I rejoice in the opportunity we share to give new direction, new vitality, and new vigor to our great state. To those members returning to the Legislature after previous service, I offer my congratulations for the progress you helped bring to Oklahoma, and assure you of the determination of this Administration to work closely with the Legislature in laying the groundwork for even greater achievements during the next two years.

One of the greatest strengths of our Nation lies in our representative form of government. We do not depend upon any “privileged order” or upon any “ruling class.” Rather, we draw our leadership from the latent political genius which appears to be present throughout the human race. Leadership in our government has always come from active, energetic, self-reliant individuals whose instincts are noble and who have been drawn to public service by a desire to give more to the world than they take from it. I consider myself honored by the privilege of close association with members of the Oklahoma Legislature, both collectively and individually.

Due largely to the effect of reapportionment, this, the 30th Session of the Oklahoma Legislature, has drawn more new talent than has been the case for many years. Those of you who are serving in your first elective position will soon discover that there is great grandeur about government. You will, from this day forth, be held in awe by many. You are in position, depending upon your personal ability and your dedication, to influence the destiny of our Great State and, to some degree, the destiny of our Nation.

I pray that none of you will forget the dignity of the positions you hold, during the tumult to come, in the days ahead. To govern well is the world’s greatest art. May each of you prove wise enough for any emergency, cool enough for any crisis, and strong enough for any trial.

I recommend that you heed the advice of veteran Legislators during these early days, for the legislative process is far from simple. I also recommend that this legislature move with deliberate speed, for the decisions which must be made will have long-term effect upon our State.

By its actions the 29th Legislature did much to restore confidence in Oklahoma's government. By its decorum, by working hard, by early adjournment and by the program approved, a condition of high political solvency has been produced in Oklahoma. On this basis, it is possible for the 30th Session to take actions which would have been impossible two years earlier.

As would be expected, I have learned much about State government and about the job of Chief Executive during the past two years. I have developed an even greater respect and a deeper admiration for the fine men and women who serve in responsible governmental positions.

Everything I have learned causes me to strongly disagree with the sometimes expressed opinion that Oklahoma's Governor becomes a "lame duck" as he begins his last two years in office. I do not believe that I am a "lame duck" any more than you members of the House and Senate who are serving two-year terms. I have no intention of lying down on the job of Governor. I expect to go on learning in order to better discharge my responsibilities, and it is my desire to cooperate fully with you as you undertake to discharge your responsibilities in writing a legislative program.

The farmers of our Constitution, following the pattern set nationally, created separate and distinct branches of government. To the Legislature is entrusted the power of legislation, and neither the Executive nor the Judicial can pass any law no matter how necessary for the public good, nor repeal any law no matter how troublesome it may have become.

To the members of this body is entrusted the responsibility for setting the course our State will follow during the next two years. As Governor, I come before you, as directed by the Constitution, to give a report of the Administration's stewardship and to offer suggestions on a program, fully realizing that the final decisions are yours.

Government is an eternal contest between problems and ideas. When solutions appear faster than problems, progress results. Solutions which are possible today would have been unacceptable yesterday, and will be inadequate for tomorrow's needs.

CONDITION OF THE STATE

Let us quickly examine some indicators of conditions inside our Great State.

Compared to 1962, personal income in Oklahoma is up 17.2% in 1964.

Industrial production is up 11.2% this year over 1962.

Total construction is up 18.5%.

Agricultural income, despite one of history's sharpest breaks in cattle prices, shows an increase of 2.8%.

The gross volume of business in Oklahoma is up 16.8% over the level of two years ago.

Sales tax receipts are up 10.8%.

Our population has exceeded the all-time high set in 1931 and continues to grow steadily.

During the last two years a total of 326 industries are known to have built or expanded their operations in our State, providing a total of more than 20,000 new jobs.

Unemployment in Oklahoma is down from the level of 4.8% in 1962 and 4.3% of the labor force in 1964, well below the present national level of 5.3%.

The rate of industrial growth in Oklahoma reached record highs in 1963, and during the first ten months of 1964 the rate was up another 5% to new record levels.

Per capita income is now at a record high of \$2,244 per year compared to \$1,990 in 1962, an increase of 12.2%.

Average weekly wages in Oklahoma are also at the all-time high of \$97.90 compared to \$90.30 in 1962, an increase of 8.4%. To sum up, more Oklahomans are working at better jobs and living better than ever before in our history.

The healthy growth which is apparent in every area, has resulted in a considerable increase in funds for State services. Total funds available to the State government from all sources amounted to \$589 Million in fiscal 1964 up 18.5% from the \$497 Million level in 1962. It is virtually certain that Oklahoma State government will have available over \$600 Million in the current fiscal year.

Oklahoma government is plainly operating on a "pay-as-you-grow" basis, and it is the sincere intention of this Administration to continue on this sound path of progress. The program of this Administration has set progress for all Oklahoma as its principal goal. I am certain that you members of the Legislature share this determination.

As evidence that local governments are also sharing in the State's prosperity, taxes collected by the State and returned to County and Municipal governments are up and the increase in property evaluations in Oklahoma since 1962 amounts to almost \$230 Million – an increase of over 7 _%.

While no responsible person would claim that actions of State government alone have brought about the prosperous conditions presently existing in our State, certainly those of you who served in the 29th Session of the Legislature, deserve major credit for the progressive program which you authorized and financed, and for holding the line against a tax increase which would certainly have slowed down our growth. Our National Administration has also recognized this principle.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS

Individual enterprise and industry are that only true sources of wealth and contentment. Citizens who enjoy plenty and who live in an era of domestic tranquility can contribute to the support of government without feeling oppression. A government need never be poor when its citizens are prosperous, for then they will willingly support the necessary governmental services.

Therefore, while we have the responsibility as public officials to be wise and honest in the discharge of our duties to the end that we may merit public confidence, we also have an equal responsibility to further the well being of every citizen of our state by providing conditions suitable for full prosperity.

Within the next five years, a commercial barge is expected to make its maiden journey to the Port of Catoosa on the Verdigris River. This will truly be a major milestone in the development of transportation in our state. Every effort must be made by the State of Oklahoma to inform the industrial world of the tremendous advantages which water transportation will make available in Oklahoma. I RECOMMEND THAT:

THE LEGISLATURE GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ESTABLISHING LEGAL METHODS FOR COORDINATING PORT ACTIVITIES AND FOR ESTABLISHING RULES AND REGULATIONS SO THAT ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF WATER TRANSPORTATION WILL PROMPTLY OCCUR.

I RECOMMEND AN INCREASED APPROPRIATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF OKLAHOMA.

The Central Oklahoma Project will likely be authorized within a short time, and development of navigation along the Red River is apparently on the horizon.

Oklahoma appears to be in a perpetual water development program and steps need to be taken by state government now, before it is too late, to make certain that orderly development and maximum benefits to the state accrue from the tremendous opportunities which are ours. I RECOMMEND THAT:

THE LEGISLATURE ESTABLISH A SPECIAL COMMISSION AUTHORIZED TO EXAMINE THE NEEDS FOR LEGISLATION IN THIS FIELD SO THAT NECESSARY GOVERNMENTAL ACTION CAN BE TAKEN AT THE PROPER TIME.

I AM ALSO RECOMMENDING FUNDS FOR THE CREATION OF A LONG RANGE PLAN FOR DEVELOPING AND UTILIZING OKLAHOMA'S WATER RESOURCES.

As has been noted, Oklahoma is rapidly developing her abundant water resources. Eufaula Reservoir was dedicated on September 25, and now one of the largest man-made

lakes in the world stretches over Pittsburg and McIntosh Counties. On September 11, the gates of Keystone Dam were closed, making possible flood control and the generation of hydroelectric power as well as recreation, water quality control, and water for maintaining stream flow along the Arkansas.

Oologah Dam is completed, and work is progressing on schedule along the Arkansas Channel.

The Grand River Dam Authority placed the Markham-Ferry Project into service on July 1, 1964. Construction was completed with funds available, and power generating capacity is 10% larger than anticipated.

Thus, Oklahoma enjoys an enviable and particularly fortunate position from the standpoint of water development. Also, several of the nation's busiest highways pass through our state. Tourists are beginning to discover the tremendous recreational opportunities which are found in our state, and our volume of tourist business has shown marked improvement during past years. The Ozark Frontier Trail has been designated, and private enterprise is cooperating wholeheartedly in joint ventures to promote Oklahoma's vacation advantages through advertising in national publications and through distributing promotional literature about Oklahoma. Paid advertising has been placed in national publications for the first time by the Planning and Resources Board, and the results have been gratifying.

A Governor's Council on Tourist Development has been successful in generating community and industrial support for Oklahoma's tourist industry. Qualified and experienced personnel are operating our state lodges for the first time, and employees have been properly classified and job descriptions made current. Much needed and long over-due renovation programs have been completed at Lake Murray and Western Hills Lodges at a cost of almost \$300,000. Numerous cabins, long neglected, are being restored to an attractive, usable condition through the use of income funds. During the past two years, over \$1,465,000.00 in State Lodge Bonds have been retired. Current reserves and contingency funds amount to over \$1,400,000.00 with bonds outstanding in the amount of 3 _ million, or barely 2 million more than the balance available for repayment. Retirement of this debt will continue to be made on schedule with income from our park and lodge system.

Delinquent rentals from 1961 and 1962 have been collected, and at the present time rentals are current throughout the lodge system. Room rates have been lowered and more services are being offered at the State Lodges for the benefit of those who vacation in our state.

The construction of Fountainhead and Arrowhead Lodges at Lake Eufaula are 84% complete. These lodges are scheduled to open on April 15, and will provide another major attraction for tourists in our state. The contracts under which these lodges are being built provide that only the net income which the new lodges produce will be used in retiring the indebtedness.

I RECOMMEND THE APPROPRIATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE IMPORTANT TOURIST INDUSTRY IN OKLAHOMA.

The 29th Legislature appropriated \$100,000.00 in support of an Oklahoma Exhibit at the New York World's Fair. An additional \$600,000.00 was made available by interested Oklahoma citizens to this project, and as a result, our state during 1964, operated on one of the most successful exhibits at the Fair. An estimated 1.8 million persons from all parts of the world, including many potential investors in Oklahoma industry, now have a greatly improved impression of our state. Unlike many states which have been forced to close their exhibits, the Oklahoma World's Fair Commission has on hand sufficient funds to insure successful operation of the exhibit during 1965. I commend the members of the Oklahoma World's Fair Commission, the Legislative Watchdog Committee, the Sooner Guides, the staff of the exhibit, and all other persons who participated in developing and supporting this display.

The State Department of Agriculture has succeeded in offering expanded services while reducing expenditures of appropriated funds, and reducing the number of employees. The Brucellosis Control Program now includes 65 state counties, thus better protecting the health of our citizens and adding stability to Oklahoma's cattle industry. A concerted drive has been underway by specialists in the department to expand production and improve marketing of specialized crops.

However, agriculture, long the backbone of Oklahoma's development, and still one of our principal industries, is not keeping pace with other industries nor with agricultural development nationally.

I RECOMMEND INCREASES IN FUNDS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION, THE EXTENSION SERVICE, AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

I ALSO RECOMMEND THAT AGRICULTURE BE GIVEN THE SAME TAX TREATMENT ACCORDED TO OTHER INDUSTRIES. I FURTHER RECOMMEND FUNDS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PESTICIDE LABORATORY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF OUR CITIZENS AND TO HELP PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED MARKETING OF OKLAHOMA FORAGES AND DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Oklahoma continues to occupy a position of leadership nationally in the conservation of our soil and water.

I RECOMMEND THE CONTINUATION OF ADEQUATE STATE SUPPORT FOR SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION.

The 29th Legislative session wisely authorized "long-range needs studies" for highways, and through cooperation with the federal government, for Mental Health. An Educational Advisory Committee of Oklahoma citizens, assisted by a team of nationally

recognized authorities has recently completed a study of the long-range needs of the common schools of Oklahoma. The needs study for higher education was authorized in 1961, and is now virtually complete.

With the information with these and other studies have produced, the 30th Session has much factual information about Oklahoma's needs upon which to base a program. I urge each of you to carefully review the information and recommendations which these authorities have made.

Oklahoma's government faces a dilemma. At the very time our state is enjoying the greatest period of growth in our history, we are faced with the absolute necessity to vastly improve state services. This must be done while keeping Oklahoma on a "pay-as-you-grow" basis. To raise taxes at this crucial time would result in destroying Oklahoma's advantageous position, and rob us of our great opportunity to make up for lost time in providing more jobs and better lives for our citizens. Our need is to find a means of providing funds for necessary state services and at the same time boost Oklahoma's economic growth. Fortunately, a method is available to accomplish these ends.

Let us consider the various areas of state government to see what must be done, and to develop a program for continued progress.

EDUCATION

Perhaps the greatest responsibility of State Government as well as its greatest opportunity lies in the field of education. In Oklahoma, notable progress has been made in education, but definite needs remain. At present, Oklahoma's schools are good schools, among the best in the nation. Oklahoma teachers are excellent teachers, having the highest qualifications of any teachers in the country. The fact remains that our teachers deserve better salaries, and our class sizes are larger, in many cases, than is ideal. At the same time, Oklahoma supports a paradox in our educational system, in that while we have many over-crowded classrooms, we also have a sizable number of schools where classrooms are half-empty, educational opportunities are limited and per capita costs of education are high.

The large number of children born after World War II are now graduating from high school. A great flood of college students has descended upon the campuses of our institutions of higher learning. Fortunately, considerable preparation has been made, but the size of college enrollment is exceeding even the most optimistic estimates of a decade ago. New funds must be provided for additional faculty members, to increase salaries of present faculty members, to hold down class size, and to make needed additions to the physical plants.

The 29th Session made the largest appropriation to common schools in history. Funds were increased by 10%, and in addition, more money was provided for the free textbook program. A 20% increase was granted in teachers' retirement benefits.

During the past two years local districts in Oklahoma have constructed more than 1000 new classrooms.

A 12% increase was provided in appropriations for higher education. With these funds, average salaries for faculty members were increased by over \$400, and class sizes were reduced slightly. For the first time in Oklahoma history, all eighteen colleges and universities making up the state system of higher education are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. This is a significant accomplishment, and congratulations are due to the chancellor, the members of the various Board of Regents and to the administrators of the colleges concerned. It is plain that education in Oklahoma has not been neglected. However, more needs to be done since Oklahoma's public school teachers are being paid about \$800 annually less than the national average. Salaries of faculty members in our institutions of higher learning are \$600 below the average of the 10-state area which is generally used for comparison.

Brain power is a basic ingredient for progress in these dynamic days. Intellectual brilliance is never in over supply. In education we need to find and develop the best teaching talent available, and to keep it in Oklahoma.

I propose a program for excellence in education in Oklahoma, including these necessary steps;

1. THE MODERNIZATION OF OKLAHOMA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS, ESTABLISHING THE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION AREA AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT.

2. A CHANGE IN OUR STATE EQUALIZATION AID LAW MAKING 50% OF P. L. 874 FUNDS CHARGEABLE IN THE MINIMUM PROGRAM, WITH PROVISIONS THAT NO DISTRICT WILL RECEIVE LESS STATE AID FUNDS DURING THE NEXT BIENNIUM THAN IT IS CURRENTLY RECEIVING.

3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EQUITABLE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IN AND BETWEEN COUNTIES.

4. ELIMINATION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICE OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.

5. I RECOMMEND LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING A FOUR YEAR COURSE OF INSTRUCTION AT CAMERON COLLEGE IN LAWTON.

6. I RECOMMEND THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS TO INCREASE TEACHERS' SALARIES \$800 DURING THE NEXT BIENNIUM.

7. I RECOMMEND A 15% INCREASE IN THE APPROPRIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

8. I RECOMMEND PASSAGE OF AN UNCLAIMED PROPERTY LAW PROVIDING THAT THESE ABANDONED PROPERTIES BE HELD IN TRUST BY THE STATE FOR THE RIGHTFUL OWNERS, THROUGH A SPECIAL COMMISSION AUTHORIZED TO INVEST THESE ASSETS IN STATE INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING BONDS. FUNDS ARE PROVIDED IN THE BUDGET FOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS.

Oklahoma has long been a leader in the field of vocational-technical training. Oklahoma State Tech at Okmulgee has facilities and staff which even now are not being fully utilized. Standards at Oklahoma State Tech are high and must be maintained. Legislation recently passed by the National Congress will make sizable sums of money available to Oklahoma for the establishment of area vocational-technical training centers. The pattern set in the establishment of these additional educational centers will be with us for many years. I urge extreme caution in developing this new program.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

During the past two years, the State's health and welfare services to our citizens have been markedly improved. Effective steps have been taken to assure that Welfare funds are not expended upon ineligible persons. This action was taken in order that a reasonable standard of living can be provided for our truly needy citizens. Sales tax income has been sufficient to support the transfers which the 29th Session authorized, while average monthly payments have been increased by 8.1%.

The total maximum benefits now available for a retired couple under Oklahoma's Old Age Assistance plan is \$231.92 a month. This level compares favorably with Social Security benefits. The total number of recipients of Old Age Assistance in Oklahoma has declined from 84,691 in October of 1962, to 82,498 in October of 1964.

During this period, large numbers of patients were transferred from the schools for the retarded and from our mental hospitals to nursing homes for care under the Welfare program. Had these transfers not been made, Oklahoma's Old Age Assistance rolls would have shown an even greater decline. Moreover, the cooperative arrangements which made these transfers possible have resulted in considerably improved services. Congratulations are due to the state officials of the agencies involved.

In past years, much of the wealth of our state has been used in treating the symptoms of our problems, while basic causes have remained. Under legislation passed by the 29th Legislature, State Government has begun to travel the higher road of preventative welfare by finding and treating the causes of many of our citizen's problems.

Ultimately the population of our mental hospitals, our schools for retarded, our prisons, our state training schools, and our welfare rolls will be more sharply reduced. The added investment needed now for research, increased staff, rehabilitation, education, and community services will be returned many fold in years ahead by making useful and productive citizens of many who would otherwise have become ward of the State.

In addition, untold human suffering and heartbreak will be averted. While we have come far, we have much to accomplish in our efforts to identify and eliminate causes for our social ills.

I RECOMMEND THE ACCELERATION OF THE PROGRAMS UNDER WAY TO TREAT CAUSES OF PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED HEAVILY TO OUR WASTE OF HUMAN RESOURCES.

Perhaps the most dramatic improvement made during the past two years is in the treatment for the mentally retarded. The 29th Legislature wisely recognized the difference between mental illness and mental retardation by transferring schools for the mentally retarded to the Department of Public Welfare. At the time the transfer was made, 1,600 retarded children had been awaiting admission, some for as long as three years. Overcrowding in our schools for mentally retarded was serious and limited treatment was available. During the past eighteen months the waiting list has been virtually eliminated, prompt admission is now possible, and far better treatment is provided.

Under the careful administration of the Department of Public Welfare, Hissom Memorial Center at Sand Springs has been opened and is in service. By judicious selection of personnel, Hissom now has the best-qualified staff of any similar institution to be found anywhere in these United States. A program of intensive training and research is under way, which has already brought great benefits to students in Oklahoma's other schools for the mentally retarded. Already, conditions at the Enid and Pauls Valley schools have been improved to a level equal to that available at Hissom and additional improvements are being made as staff and facilities permit.

Many administrative improvements in the operation of the schools for mentally retarded have been made, and all schools are operating on a 40-hour week, with a minimum starting salary of \$200 per month. Full support from communities is apparent, and cooperative educational classes have been arranged with local public school officials. Oklahoma's schools for the mentally retarded are truly schools, and a tremendous waste of human resources is now being alleviated.

A comprehensive state-wide study is under way to determine a course of action aimed at reducing the incidence of mental retardation in the State. Truly, the record of progress in treating mental retardation during these past eighteen months is little short of miraculous.

I RECOMMEND THAT TRANSFER OF SALES TAX FUNDS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT BE ENDED THIS BIENNIUM AND THE PRESENT PROGRAM SUPPORT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE BE CONTINUED.

The most notable achievement in the field of Public Health under the Public Health Code passed by the 29th Session has been the emphasis placed on Community Health Centers. The number of Community Health Centers in Oklahoma has almost doubled since January of 1963, and, in addition, five Psychiatric Clinics are in operation. Success is already evident in bringing treatment to individuals in the communities where they reside without causing the social dislocations which accompany institutionalization.

I RECOMMEND THAT THIS EFFORT BE ENCOURAGED AND ACCELERATED. I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT A STUDY BE MADE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF OUR TWO STATE HOSPITALS FOR THE TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS AND THE GENERAL HOSPITAL AT CLINTON TO DETERMINE IF THESE FACILITIES CAN BE MORE FULLY UTILIZED.

As directed by the 29th Session, Oklahoma's mental hospitals are now operating on a 40-hour week, through the addition of 390 employees. These shorter hours and the larger staff are making improved treatment possible. Rehabilitation and training programs have been greatly strengthened and results are beginning to appear.

The average patient population of our mental hospitals has decreased 10% from 6,422 in 1962 to 5,717 in 1964. Community aftercare has been initiated, and results indicate that readmission can be reduced as much as 50% through this aftercare service.

The Mental Health Department is cooperating with the State Prison Psychiatric service to reduce recidivism through the operation of a Neuro-Psychiatric Ward.

For a sizable number of our citizens, alcohol is proving to be a serious problem and the incidence of alcoholism is rising. At present, no provision is made for the treatment of those who become alcoholics, and changes in our law are needed.

I RECOMMEND A REVISION OF STATE LAWS TO MAKE LAWFUL THE ADMISSION OF ALCOHOLICS TO OUR STATE INSTITUTIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM.

The health as well as the moral and spiritual strength of its citizens ultimately determine the destiny of any state or nation.

I COMMEND THE MEMBERS OF THE 29TH LEGISLATURE AND THE STATE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE MADE THE ABOVE-NOTED PROGRESS POSSIBLE, AND RECOMMEND CONTINUATION IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

I FURTHER RECOMMEND THE ENACTMENT OF A LIEN LAW TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT OUR WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE STRONG ENOUGH TO PROVIDE INCREASING ASSISTANCE FOR THE NEEDY CITIZENS OF OUR STATE.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Following the guidelines laid down by the 1963 Legislative program, and through the use of State and Federal funds, Oklahoma has supported the greatest highway construction program in our history during the past two years. Construction projects awarded and completed during the past two fiscal years amount to over \$244 million compared to \$201 million during the two previous fiscal years. This is an increase of 21.5%. A total of 512 miles of two lane and four lane highways has been constructed, and 468 miles of our Interstate highways are now open to traffic. This amounts to 59% of the 793 miles authorized for the Interstate system in Oklahoma.

Several notable improvements have been made in highway department procedures. Long range construction programs are now planned and made public. This practice makes orderly scheduling of department work and regular highway contract lettings possible at considerable savings.

Slip-form paving has been authorized in Oklahoma resulting in a sharp reduction in the cost of highway surfacing. Calendar days rather than working days are now used in highway contract letting. Annual contracts to low bidders on aggregate and not mix materials are being awarded. Through these and other methods, the Highway Department is making Oklahoma's road building dollars go further.

Since January, 1963, great progress has also been made in Oklahoma's Turnpike system. Construction on the H. E. Bailey Turnpike was completed ahead of schedule, and virtually all contracts on Section A of the Southeastern Turnpike have been awarded well within the estimates. Construction of Section A and connecting roads is proceeding as planned.

By February 1, more than \$5,585,000 will have been paid on turnpike bonds, since January 1, 1962. Of this amount, \$3,885,000 was not due until 1990. In the last two years, revenues from the Turner and the Will Rogers Turnpikes have increased by 10%. The resurfacing of the Turner Turnpike has been completed and the highway is in excellent condition.

The safety record of Oklahoma's turnpikes is excellent. According to figures recently released by the National Safety Council, Oklahoma's four turnpikes will save over 500 lives during the next ten years.

Turnpikes are, in effect, truly free roads. Those who use them, use them voluntarily. Drivers choose the turnpikes because of savings of time, lower cost of travel, driving safety, ease and convenience which more than offset the nominal toll.

In spite of the major improvements which have been made in Oklahoma's highway and turnpike system, our State Highway Department continues to operate with insufficient funds to provide Oklahoma with a road system adequate to the needs of our growing State. The long range needs study shows desperate needs for immediate

infusion of large sums of additional money into Oklahoma's highway construction program.

The same is true regarding city streets and county roads. In addition, the many outmoded highway facilities in the State are contributing to the sadly growing toll of deaths on Oklahoma's roads.

I RECOMMEND EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS TO MAKE AVAILABLE NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR STREET CONSTRUCTION.

I FURTHER RECOMMEND THE AUTHORIZATION OF THREE ADDITIONAL TURNPIKES AND THE FUNDING OF PRESENT AND PROPOSED TURNPIKES WITH LOW INTEREST GENERAL OBLIGATION STATE BONDS.

The resulting savings will provide \$40 million of bond funds for use by our State Highway Department during the next biennium.

The \$40 million bond funds used on the state highway system during the next two years will reduce highway department appropriation needs from the general fund. The General Revenue funds thus made available will help finance a program of excellence for education in Oklahoma.

Many rural counties are failing to develop as rapidly as the balance of the State due in part to the lack of an adequate county primary road system.

I RECOMMEND THE PASSAGE OF PERMISSIVE LEGISLATION TO ACCELERATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HARD-TOP COUNTY PRIMARY ROAD SYSTEM.

The Aeronautics Commission, created by the 29th Legislature, has assisted 23 Oklahoma communities with construction or improvement of landing strips. At the present time, 24 additional applications for state assistance are pending. The entire \$100,000 which was appropriated for airport development has been used to match local and Federal funds, and Oklahoma ranks fourth nationally in the percentage of new airports developed during 1964.

Many additional communities now are able to benefit from the economic and humanitarian advantages of general aviation and others will quickly follow. The officials who serve with the commission are to be congratulated for their success.

I RECOMMEND INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE AERONAUTICS COMMISSION AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR MORE AIR FIELDS IN ALL SECTIONS OF OKLAHOMA.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Oklahoma's Department of Public Safety received a 20% increase in appropriations from the last Legislature. With these funds, the department, now headed by a career officer having a lifetime of experience in traffic law enforcement, has instituted many reforms which are improving safety on Oklahoma's roads and highways. Thirty-five new Patrolmen have been trained and added to the Patrol. Oklahoma's 1964 deaths per miles traveled will be the lowest in the state's history when figures are complete. Nationally the mileage death rate went up 8.5% during the last two years, while the rate in Oklahoma went down 4%. The actual number of deaths is up 2% in Oklahoma compared to a 10% increase nationally. The department has greatly improved its communication system as well as other equipment used in safety enforcement work. In spite of these improvements, much remains to be done.

I RECOMMEND THE APPROPRIATION OF SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO PROVIDE ONE HUNDRED ADDITIONAL PATROLMEN DURING THE NEW TWO YEARS AND TO PROVIDE SALARY INCREASES FOR OKLAHOMA'S HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICERS.

The State Bureau of Investigation has actively participated with local officers in the improvement of law enforcement across the state. Cooperation between Federal, State and Local officers has been excellent and policies put into practice by the Crime Bureau will bring about continued improvement in Oklahoma's law enforcement during the months ahead.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The 29th Session created Oklahoma's first Human Rights Commission. Under the direction of this group of dedicated Oklahomans, the last vestiges of racial discrimination in our State have begun to disappear.

Employment in Oklahoma's State Government is now available to the most qualified applicants regardless of race, creed, or color. Racial segregation in state-operated institutions has been practically eliminated. Many potential dangerous racial situations have been resolved and racial harmony generally prevails across our state.

Two state-wide conferences with municipal and county officials have been held. Many communities have initiated local action to assure equal treatment for all citizens. Notable progress has already been made in assuring equal opportunity for all Oklahomans, but additional legislation is required.

I RECOMMEND THE PASSAGE OF A STATE CIVIL RIGHTS LAW TO PROVIDE AVENUES FOR ACTION BY LOCAL AND STATE AUTHORITIES IN CASE OF DISCRIMINATION AND THE REPEAL OF ALL REMAINING STATE DISCRIMINATORY STATUTES.

In spite of a high general level of prosperity in Oklahoma, there are many citizens whose income is too low to provide a reasonable standard of living. Thousands of these are full-time employees of the State of Oklahoma and many others are engaged in occupations where employers cannot increase wages without placing themselves at a serious competitive disadvantage.

I RECOMMEND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINIMUM SALARY OF \$200 PER MONTH FOR ALL FULL-TIME STATE EMPLOYEES. I FURTHER RECOMMEND THE ENACTMENT OF A STATE MINIMUM WAGE LAW.

The increasing number of women who are entering the professions and the work forces of our state has created certain problems which have become serious.

I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THE PASSAGE OF A STATE LAW REQUIRING EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Oklahoma's government has been able to accomplish the progress discussed in this report while spending less than our income. The surplus in our State Treasury at the end of the 1964 fiscal year amounted to \$7,400,000.00 – the largest surplus in ten (10) years.

Many economies have been put into effect to help make this record possible. Maximum use has been made of central purchasing, and additional state tax supported institutions are using this service. State insurance needs are being filled through competitive bids at a savings sometimes amounting to a hundred per cent or more.

A continuing war on waste has been, and will be waged by the Executive Department to make certain the maximum services are obtained with every dollar of tax money spent.

However, areas for additional economies are certain to exist. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION, MADE UP OF THREE (3) MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER, THREE (3) SENATORS, APPOINT BY THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE, AND SIX (6) CITIZENS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR TO EXAMINE THE OPERATION AND EFFICIENCY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT.

Among subjects to be considered are: (1) establishment of central printing for all state agencies; (2) the establishment of a central switchboard; (3) the establishment of a central data processing center; (4) the establishment of a general services agency; (5) the establishment of a state motor pool; (6) an examination of office space utilization by state

agencies; (7) the establishment of a capitol area improvement plan; (8) the routing of traffic in the capitol complex; (9) personnel utilization; (10) departmental consolidation; (11) salary adjustments between state agencies and (12) a legislative salary increase to fairly compensate Oklahoma lawmakers for their services in line with salaries being paid in other states.

Prompt approval of this recommendation will make possible immediate formation of the committee, so that studies can be concluded and recommendations made before legislative adjournment.

A long-needed Retirement System for state employees was established by the 29th Legislature. To avoid causing unnecessary hardship on state employees because of the change in policy and to stay within the funds appropriated, a cautious approach has been used in placing the retirement system into effect. A total of 369 employees has retired as of January 1, 1965 and the number is expected to increase steadily.

I RECOMMEND A CHANGE IN OUR RETIREMENT SYSTEM LAW, TO MAKE POSSIBLE ONE LUMP SUM APPROPRIATION FOR THE STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM.

Differences exist between state agencies in practices used in providing hospitalization insurance for employees. These differences frequently result in misunderstanding.

I, THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THE ADOPTION OF A UNIFORM STATE EMPLOYMENT HOSPITALIZATION POLICY FOR ALL STATE AGENCIES.

Action at the Federal level regarding legislative reapportionment and congressional redistricting makes imperative the redistricting of the Oklahoma Congressional Districts.

I RECOMMEND THAT THE LEGISLATURE GIVE THIS MATTER PROMPT CONSIDERATION SO THAT THE FEDERAL COURTS WILL NOT HAVE CAUSE TO INTERVENE IN A STATE LEGISLATIVE MATTER.

Time has brought changes in the services performed by certain departments of state government. This is particularly true with the Planning and Resources Board which now is primarily concerned with the operation of parks and lodges. The same is true with the Department of Commerce and Industry which offers many planning and research services.

I PROPOSE CHANGES IN OUR LAW TO MORE CLEARLY DEFINE THE DUTIES AND IMPROVE THE SERVICES OF THESE TWO AGENCIES.

BUDGET

The Budget requests of various state agencies far exceed funds available. Therefore, it has been necessary to examine carefully the budget requests and the recommendations herein contained are, I believe, in the best interests of the State of Oklahoma. Each of you has been furnished a copy of the budget for study and reference.

I RECOMMEND THAT EACH MEMBER BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THIS DOCUMENT, FOR IT CONTAINS MUCH VALUABLE INFORMATION REGARDING OPERATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT.

CONCLUSION

Legislation has been prepared to vitalize the program which I have today recommended. After you have had an opportunity to study these proposals, I believe you will agree that this program is fair, that it is just, that it shows no favoritism, that it is based on the premise that all citizens of the state and all functions of state government deserve support according to the service rendered.

It is written in the Scriptures that "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to harvest, a time to break down, a time to build up, a time to keep silent and a time to speak."

Nineteen sixty-five is the time for Oklahoma State Government to move ahead confidently with a program which will bring us to a place of leadership among the great states of our nation.

This is not the time for procrastination. Oklahoma is ready for greatness. Nineteen sixty-five is a time for bold leadership. I am certain that in this the 30th Oklahoma Legislature, there are many giants ready to meet our challenges and take advantages of our opportunities by enacting a program that is good for all of Oklahoma. Nineteen sixty-five is a time for bold action, it's a time for Oklahoma to take a giant stride ahead.

About Digitizing the Governors' State of the State Addresses

Section 9, Article 6 of the Constitution of Oklahoma provides as follows:

“At every session of the Legislature, and immediately upon its organization, the Governor shall communicate by message, delivered to joint session of the two houses, upon the condition of the State; and shall recommend such matters to the Legislature as he shall judge expedient.”

From statehood in 1907 to present, the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors have been recorded in pamphlets, booklets, and Senate Journals. One could not foresee the toll that time would take on the earliest of these documents. When these items first arrived at the Oklahoma State Archives, the leather bindings had dried considerably, cracking the spines significantly. Due to the acidity in the paper, many pages have darkened with age. Some of the more brittle pamphlets crumble at the slightest touch.

Thus when we decided to digitize these materials, we faced two challenges: the safety of the original documents and ease of viewing/reading for patrons. Our primary objective was that the unique and historic qualities of the documents should be reflected in the website. However, older fonts would not digitize clearly when scanned and even using a flatbed scanner could cause the bindings to worsen. An image of each page would increase download time considerably and any hand-written remarks or crooked pages could be lost. We decided to retype each document with every period, comma, and misspelled word to maintain the integrity of the document while placing some unique images of the documents online. Patrons can download the addresses quicker and view them clearer as well as save, print, and zoom with the Adobe Acrobat Reader. We have learned much from our efforts and we hope that our patrons are better served in their research on the state of the state addresses of Oklahoma's Governors.