



THE FIRST WORD

June, 2014

Legislative Session Ends One Week Early Transportation Funding Protected

In what is becoming a common practice during election years, the Oklahoma Legislature put the wraps on the 2014 session, adjourning Friday, May 23rd, one week before the Constitutionally mandated adjournment date.

With the 2014 primary elections coming in late June, the early adjournment gives those running for re-election or for another elected position an additional week of campaigning. Plus, with the Budget agreement coming together a week earlier, there were only a handful of major issues still facing the House and Senate.

Two of those issues were proposals by Governor Fallin to repair the State Capitol Building and to allow school districts to seek voter approval of special bonds to fund "safe rooms" in local schools. The bonds would have been exempted from the usual limitations on bonded indebtedness.

On the last day of the session, the Senate voted down the Resolution for the "safe rooms" proposal by a vote of 16-25. However, the Senate did pass and send to the Governor a bill authorizing \$120 million in bonds for the repair of the Capitol.

As for bills of interest to ACEC OKLAHOMA, the move to divert \$30 million in funds from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to schools was headed-off in early May. As you will remember, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to shift \$30 million per year from the Transportation Fund to the School Fund, impacting ODOT by over \$400 million over the next 8 years.

Reaction to the proposal from ACEC OKLAHOMA members and the entire transportation community was strong and swift, with calls and letters flooding the Senate offices, along with person visits by transportation advocates.

Within days of the Committee action, the Senate began to develop a new plan for education while leaving ODOT un-

touched. The bill, HB 2642, was amended on the Senate floor and the language stripping the ODOT funds was removed.

This was a great victory for ODOT, ACEC OKLAHOMA, and our transportation partners. THANKS to all of our members to contacted their Senators & Representatives, and helped defeat this crippling proposal.

The other issue on which our lobbying team spent a great amount of time would have shielded from tort claims engineers and architects who "voluntarily" provided risk assessments to schools to determine safe locations or "safe rooms" to be used for shelter in the event of severe weather.

The original bill would have required engineers and architects to attend training programs by either FEMA or the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) to be eligible for the exemption. As ACEC OKLAHOMA did not believe that the FEMA/OEM training was necessary for design professionals who were already licensed and had specialized expertise in these type of assessments, we worked with the bill sponsors to remove the training requirements for licensed professionals.

However, before the end of the session, the bill had become almost a "Christmas Tree" of related and unrelated proposals, and the FEMA/OEM language had reappeared. While we never could quite determine who was behind the FEMA/OEM language, ACEC OKLAHOMA made it clear to the bill sponsors that the language was unacceptable.

With that, along with a couple of other issues concerning the bill, at ACEC OKLAHOMA's request and offer to work with the sponsors on a bill for next session, the Senate did not act on the bill.

That's the wrap on the 2014 Session. Thanks to everyone for their help!



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2014-14 Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee (Chairman Alan Soltani, Stacy Loeffler, and Jim Benson) has completed its work and respectfully submits the following individuals to serve on the ACEC OKLAHOMA Board of Directors for the 2014-15 year.

Chairman-Elect

Brent Schniers
Garver
Tulsa

Vice Chairman - Membership

Marty Hepp
CEC
Oklahoma City

Treasurer

Brandon Claborn
Meshek & Associates
Tulsa

Vice Chairman - Business Practice

Keith Angier
MacArthur Associated Consultants
Oklahoma City

Vice Chairman - Education/P.R.

Jim Hemphill
Poe & Associates
Tulsa

By virtue of being elected to the position of Chairman-Elect last year, Joe Davis will automatically assume the position of Chairman of the Board. Steve Ford will continue as ACEC National Director (3rd year of 3 year term), and Chuck Mitchell will remain on the Board for one year as Immediate Past Chairman.

The Slate of Officers will be voted upon at the Annual Meeting of the Council, Friday, June 6th. If you are unable to attend and would like to vote, you may do so by written instrument (letter, fax, or e-mail) delivered to ACEC OKLAHOMA no later than Wednesday, June 4th.

Oklahoma Primary Elections

**Tuesday, June 24th
Remember to Vote!!!!**

Notice of ACEC OKLAHOMA Annual Meeting

As required by the ACEC OKLAHOMA By-Laws, this shall serve as official notice of the Annual Meeting of the Council, scheduled for, Friday, June 6, 2014 at the Chateau on the Lake, Branson, MO

The 2014-15 ACEC OKLAHOMA Annual Budget will be presented for consideration and approval, annual reports will be presented, and election of officers for the 2014-15 year will be conducted.

All ACEC OKLAHOMA members are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the ACEC Midwest States Convention, a joint meeting of Oklahoma, Missouri, and Kansas.

ACEC Fall Conference October 22-25, 2014 Hilton Waikoloa Village

We know that summer is just getting started and October seems like a long way off, but this October will be very special as ACEC's Fall Conference is headed to HAWAII!!!!

The Fall Conference will be held at the fantastic Hilton Waikoloa Village on the Big Island of Hawaii. This was the host location some 15 years ago, and we can attest to the fact that it is a GREAT hotel and location.

It's not too early to begin making your plans. For complete registration and hotel information, visit the ACEC Fall Conference website at <http://conf.acec.org/>

It's going to be a great Conference! See you there!!!!



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