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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

Perspective

March 1, 2019

Legislative update: Rural healthcare, taxes and private property rights

In the first month of the legislative session, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has seen movement on a number of issues important to members including legislation on rural healthcare, the agriculture sales tax exemption and ad valorem taxes.

Rural Healthcare

To help increase health care access for Oklahomans who live outside the major metro areas, OKFB has voiced its support for legislation that would remove the physician supervision requirements for certified registered nurse anesthetists and nurse practitioners.

As Farm Bureau members know, the state is facing a healthcare crisis that is impacting rural areas. The legislation is a priority for OKFB members, and public policy staff are hopeful it will become law.

Taxes

Maintaining the agriculture sales tax exemption is a priority for Farm Bureau members. The exemption is vital to ensuring Oklahoma farmers and ranchers can compete with producers in surrounding states who also receive a sales tax exemption on agriculture inputs.

OKFB is following legislation that would modify the state sales tax exemption on agriculture production inputs. Rather than renewing every three years, the bill would require producers to renew annually. Producers also would have to verify they have reported income from farming to receive an agriculture sales tax exemption permit. Otherwise, producers would have to file for a sales tax refund annually with the Oklahoma Tax Commission.

A House committee last week advanced legislation that would allow municipalities to create public safety districts funded by ad valorem taxes. OKFB policy strongly opposes any increases in ad valorem taxes, as they disproportionately affect farmers

and ranchers whose livelihoods rely on owning large pieces of land and equipment. While agricultural land is exempted in the bill, we oppose the legislation because of the precedent it sets.

Though public policy staff are closely watching legislation on the ag sales tax exemption and ad valorem taxes, OKFB members should be prepared to contact legislators to urge a no vote on both bills.

Private Property Rights

Hand-in-hand with other agriculture organizations including American Farmers & Ranchers and Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, OKFB is working to protect private property rights by ensuring oil and gas companies receive landowner consent and provide compensation when running permanent or temporary pipelines in the right-of-way along highways and roads.

Oil and gas companies place a burden on landowners when transporting oil, gas

or produced water in pipelines along the right-of-way. Farm Bureau members believe property owners should receive notice and compensation from companies when eminent domain is used to run pipelines.

As always, the success of OKFB at the state Capitol is dependent on the involvement of our members. We appreciate the members who worked to develop and strengthen relationships with state lawmakers during the recent OKFB Leadership Conference and the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Farm City Festival. County Farm Bureau members also are encouraged to schedule a visit to the state Capitol to further build relationships with state legislators.

Interested in being notified when state lawmakers need to hear from you? Sign up for OKFB's legislative action alerts by texting "OKFB77" to 52886. Contact the OKFB communications division at (405) 523-2346 for more information on signing up.

YF&R members visit state Capitol for annual legislative day



Above: More than 40 young farmers and ranchers from across the state visited with their local legislators during the YF&R Legislative Day Feb. 18.

Thompson and Matthews join OKFB public policy division

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has added two new members to the public policy division, Steve Thompson and Robyn Matthews. The two will serve as assistant directors of public policy where they will help advocate for Farm Bureau members at the state and national level.

Steve Thompson was raised on the Lincoln County farm his family settled in the land run of 1891. After studying agricultural education and agricultural economics at Oklahoma State University, he worked for nine years at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, first as legislative liaison, then as associate commissioner. During his time with ODAFF, their team at the state Capitol helped secure historic funding for rural fire departments and a new \$12 million agriculture laboratory.

"I've worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Farm Bureau staff advocating for agriculture and rural Oklahoma my entire career," Thompson said. "I am honored to take this opportunity to work with the OKFB public policy division and join the fight on behalf of members across the state."

Thompson owned and operated an agribusiness policy consulting firm for one year before taking on the role of director of government relations and ag programs for American Farmers & Ranchers in 2011. At AFR, he focused on state and federal legislative advocacy, youth leadership programs and grassroots policy development.

A native of Oklahoma City, Matthews attended Oklahoma State University where she majored in public relations. With an interest in politics, Matthews became involved with several local campaigns soon after graduation. After gaining more hands-on experience, Matthews joined the Oklahoma Credit Union Association where she served as a legislative assistant and political action committee coordinator.

"I look forward to working at the Capitol

helping promote what the Farm Bureau members want and believe in," Matthews said. "I hope to educate legislators on how certain policy might affect agricultural producers and to be a source of information as to why these topics are important to Farm Bureau members."

Before joining OKFB, Matthews worked as campaign manager for Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter's campaign

for office. Prior to that, she served as a legislative liaison while Hunter served as Secretary of State.

Thompson and Matthews will work alongside Vice President of Public Policy Ron Justice, Director of Regulatory Affairs Marla Peek, Assistant Director of Public Policy Zac Swartz and Public Policy Coordinator Emmy Karns.



Woodward County Farm Bureau makes a difference for deserving students

Woodward County Farm Bureau was proud to be a sponsor at the Red Carpet Classic Special Needs Livestock Show at the Woodward Event Center and Fairgrounds.

Twenty-two special needs students were guided through the event with the help of 52 Woodward-area FFA students from various chapters.

In a previous issue of *Perspective*, it was announced that Oklahoma Farm Bureau was the sponsor.



Calendar

Oklahoma Youth Expo

March 13-22 • Oklahoma City

Congressional Action Tour

April 1-5 • Washington, D.C.

Contact: Emmy Karns 405-530-2681

Ag Day at the Capitol

April 2 • Oklahoma City

YF&R Scholarship Deadline

April 2 • Oklahoma City

Contact: Zac Swartz 405-523-2406

Oklahoma State FFA Convention

April 30-May 1 • Oklahoma City

Contact: Zac Swartz 405-523-2406

OKFB Commodity Tour

May 8-10 • Clinton, Woodward area

Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

OKFB state leadership conference draws large crowd with prominent list of speakers



Above: Gov. Kevin Stitt speaks to more than 220 members in attendance about his work in office. Being one of the first governors to visit nearly 20 state agencies, Stitt strongly emphasized his belief that Oklahoma can be a top ten state in many areas.



Above: Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell shares his optimism and ideas for Oklahoma agritourism and the hope that more students will be encouraged to attend vocational schools..



Above: Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur visits with OKFB member Bill Gibson. Arthur, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member, shared her optimism for the future of rural Oklahoma as she explained new ODAFF programs geared towards creating more opportunities for ag and rural youth. As a producer, she emphasized her understanding of how regulations impact farmers and ranchers.



Above: Rep. Kyle Hilbert (right) visits with OKFB members H. A. Cearley (center) and Kenneth Fisher.



Above: OKFB members Don and Cindy Schoenecke visit with Sen. Frank Simpson. Left: OKFB member Janice Stotts visits with Senate Minority Leader Kay Floyd following the legislative panel.

Published by Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Postmaster: Send address corrections to:
Perspective, P.O. B. 53332,
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3332

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Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

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OKFB presents state leaders, legislators with 2018 Champion Award

Fifteen of Oklahoma's top advocates for agriculture and rural Oklahoma were honored with the 2018 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Champion Award during the organization's leadership conference held Feb. 18-19 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City.

The award is presented to state leaders and lawmakers who went above and beyond to support farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans in 2018.

"By standing up for the best interests

of our state's family farmers and ranchers, these 15 Oklahomans have supported policy to better our great state," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "We're pleased to honor them for their service to agriculture and rural Oklahoma."

The 2018 Champion Award recipients included Attorney General Mike Hunter, Sen. Kim David, Sen. Darcy Jech, Sen. Chris Kidd, Sen. James Leewright, Sen. Ron Sharp, Sen. Frank Simpson, House Speaker Charles McCall, Rep. Rhonda Baker, Rep.

Jon Echols, Rep. Scott Fetgatter, Rep. Kyle Hilbert, Rep. Charles Ortega, Rep. Todd Russ and Rep. Josh West.

Award recipients received a plaque in recognition of their service to agriculture and rural Oklahoma. Champions are nominated by county Farm Bureaus and the OKFB board of directors.

For more photos from the leadership conference, including the Champion Award Winners, visit our flickr album at www.okfb.news/okfblead19.

Upcoming OKFB County Board training opportunities

District 2

Friday, March 1, 10 a.m.
Kiowa County Farm Bureau
801 S. Broadway
Hobart, OK 73651

District 8

Monday, March 4, 6:30 p.m.
Pontotoc Technology Center, Room 411
601 W. 33rd St.
Ada, OK 74820

District 9

Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 p.m.
Central Technology Center,
3 CT Circle
Drumright, OK 74030

District 5

Thursday, March 7, 6:30 p.m.
Kiamichi Technology Center
1301 W. Liberty Rd.
Atoka, OK 74525

District 6

Monday, March 11, 6:30 p.m.
Muskogee County Farm Bureau
28 E. Shawnee Rd.
Muskogee, OK 74403

District 3

Tuesday, March 12, 6 p.m.
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Home Office
2501 N. Stiles Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105