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## August 2019

Randy Beutler

Southwestern Oklahoma State University, [randy.beutler@swosu.edu](mailto:randy.beutler@swosu.edu)

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**Faculty, Staff, & Administrators,**

**Another school year has begun! Fall semester classes start August 19<sup>th</sup> for the 2019-20 academic year.**

**Here is a SWOSU update:**

#### **Weatherford City Sales Tax Proposal**

It is hard to believe, but it has been nearly 10 years since the citizens of the City of Weatherford approved an extension of a one-penny sales tax to benefit the community. As you may recall, a portion of that revenue (\$7 million) went to assist in the construction of the Pioneer Cellular Event Center.

Currently, the City is considering a renewal of that sales tax for future community projects. SWOSU has asked to be included in the upcoming proposal. We are currently entertaining and contemplating suggestions for an institutional project. Keep in mind that the project should benefit the campus community as widely as possible, and, most importantly, must be an initiative that will garner significant community support. Please feel free to contact me on any thoughts or ideas that you might have.

#### **Concurrent Enrollment**

The Oklahoma Legislature provided monies this year to fully fund concurrent enrollment for high school seniors. At one time, we were reimbursed as little as 27% of the program's cost. In addition, this year monies have been made available for junior concurrent enrollment. Last month, SWOSU announced that qualified high school juniors could enroll tuition-free in concurrent courses for up to three credit hours per semester, starting with the Fall semester.

#### **SWOSU Budget**

For the first time in many years, SWOSU has experienced an increase in revenues from the state. As required by the State Regents, all of that increase has been used for a faculty pay increase. We are appreciative of the State Legislature and the Regents for recognizing the need for pay adjustments for our faculty.

In addition, tuition was increased starting with the fall semester by 2.9% or \$7 per undergraduate credit hour. These monies will be used to help pay the benefits related to the faculty pay adjustment, inflationary costs associated with utility costs, travel, health insurance increases, etc.

## **Campus Construction Update**

VP Brenda Burgess has provided the following information regarding campus construction projects:

The Al Harris Library, originally constructed in 1968, is currently undergoing a complete second floor renovation. This project includes removal of approximately 20,000 square feet of crumbling floor tile and construction of an environmentally-controlled archival, processing and reading room. This will serve to house SWOSU's historical documents, the Gen. Thomas P. Stafford Collection, and other historical documents. This addition to the Library would make our facility one of the only document archives outside of a metro area in Oklahoma. A completion date of July 2020 is expected with an estimated cost of \$1,630,000. Funding comes from Section 13 and New College funds.

Architectural design is underway to add approximately 3,350 square feet of specialized music therapy instruction and office space to the Ed & Winnie Ola Berrong Music Hall. The Music Therapy Program was established at SWOSU in 1980 to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of groups or individuals through the use of music. This addition will also make room for needed expansion of The Language Company in the Belle Barker Building for our growing international language assistance programs. Estimated cost of this project is \$1,350,000 and will come from Section 13 and New College funds.

The Timothy Day Business Enterprise Center is undergoing interior renovations that include the addition of fire system upgrades, new kitchen equipment, and other alterations. This project is expected to be completed this fall at an estimated cost of \$350,000. This project and the recently completed exterior upgrades were made possible through a generous donation from Mr. Tim Day, former CEO of Bar S Foods.

In 2018, the Foss Lake facility, which was formerly used as a juvenile adventure program, was extensively damaged by fire. Contracts to repair this building will be awarded this month and completion is expected by April 2020 at an estimated cost of \$500,000. The building would be renovated to be used in conjunction with our law enforcement programs and other state agencies. Funds for this renovation comes from insurance proceeds, must be used for this specific facility, and have to be expended within the year.

## **What Are Section 13 & New College Funds?**

In 1906, Congress passed the Enabling Act, which would join Oklahoma and Indian Territories together for the eventual formation of the State of Oklahoma. This federal legislation also provided for permanent funding for some public institutions, including higher education.

According to the federal legislation, Section 13 of most townships in Oklahoma Territory were set aside for the benefit of the following institutions of higher education: OU and Northern Oklahoma College (1/3<sup>rd</sup>), OSU and Langston University (1/3<sup>rd</sup>), and the "normal schools" (UCO, NWOSU, SWOSU, NSU, ECU, SEOSU, USAO, and Cameron (1/3<sup>rd</sup>)). Thus the term "Section 13" funds.

New College funds are those monies that come from the earnings related to about one million acres of surplus lands that were set aside specifically by command of Section 12 of the Enabling Act.

Funds designated for these institutions come from interest from the trust fund as a direct result of sales, leases, mineral rights, etc. associated with these school lands. Each year, SWOSU receives these proceeds from the steward of these funds: the Commissioners of the Land Office. These funds are to be used for capital projects.

From the 2016 Annual Report of the Commissioners of the Land Office:

## HISTORY OF THE TRUST

**THOMAS JEFFERSON HAD THE IDEA.** Theodore Roosevelt made it a reality. To both Jefferson and Roosevelt, education for all the children of the United States was the key to creating a strong democracy. Jefferson's idea was to look for a way to fund education by using the land to generate funding. Roosevelt took it a step further by mandating a program that required the new territories, the places wanting to be granted statehood, to receive land to help fund education. Oklahoma was a little different from many others looking to be granted statehood. The eastern half of what would become Oklahoma was Indian Territory; the U.S. Government did not have title to the land. In lieu of grants of land in the Indian Territory, Congress placed \$5 million into what would become the Permanent Trust controlled by the Land Office.

By approving The Enabling Act in 1906, Congress granted Oklahoma Territory the ability to become a state. The Commissioners of the Land Office is part of that act, making it an agency that predates statehood. The Enabling Act, the Oklahoma Constitution, and statutes passed over the 105 years Oklahoma has been a state define the role of the agency and its beneficiaries.

The Enabling Acts states that Sections 16 and 36 in each township were set aside for common education (K-12). Section 13 was set aside for specific colleges and universities. All common schools and 13 colleges and universities are Land Office beneficiaries.

Of the three million acres of land granted at statehood, the Commissioners of the Land Office still own and manage 750,000 surface acres and 1.1 million mineral acres. Money from the land leases are distributed monthly to common



schools, colleges and universities.

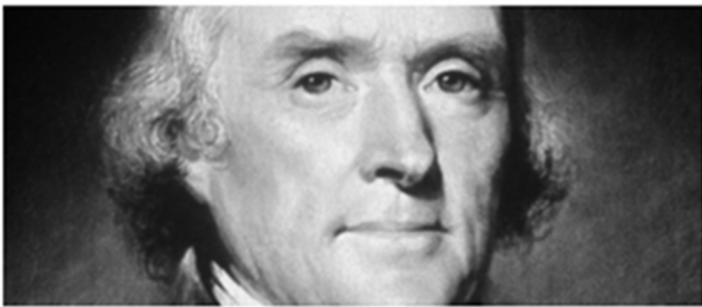
In 2010, the Land Office began distributing lease bonus money from the leasing of land for oil and gas exploration. As Oklahoma and its cities grew, so did the possibilities of commercial development on school land. Today there are pharmacies, restaurants, shopping centers and distribution facilities on school land. Revenues from those developments are distributed on a monthly basis. Revenue from the sale of land or royalties from oil or gas are placed in the Permanent Trust.

Congress, the Oklahoma Legislature and the Oklahoma Supreme Court have made one thing clear over the years: the land, the minerals and the Permanent Trust are to be treated as "a sacred trust fund .... held by the state and shall ever remain inviolate. It may be increased, but shall never be diminished."

**"THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA IS ENSHRINED IN THE MISSION OF THE LAND OFFICE. TO THAT POINT, ONE OF THE FIRST ACTIONS CONGRESS UNDERTOOK IN THE CREATION OF OUR STATE WAS TO SET ASIDE ASSETS AND LAND, MANAGED BY THIS OFFICE TO PERPETUALLY SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS LIKE SWOSU."**

**- RANDY L. BEUTLER**

**PRESIDENT, SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**



I hope that you enjoy this periodic newsletter,

Randy L. Beutler  
President  
Southwestern Oklahoma State University