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FEBRUARY 23, 2011

The Ardmoreite

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▼ MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

Remains those of boy missing 16 years

By MARSHA MILLER
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More than 16 years after portions of a skull were found in a Durwood Road yard, the remains have been identified as an 11-year-old child reported missing from Madill.

Cherokee Ballard, public information officer for the state Medical Examiner's Office, said Tuesday DNA confirmed the remains to be Thomas Billy Lee

Tillery.

The child was reported missing by his mother, Reba, on Sept. 19, 1994, when he failed to return home from a trip to a local grocery store. At the time, Madill police entered the missing child into the National Center For Missing and Endangered Children. Fliers were distributed and police said several possible sightings were reported. None of them led to finding the child.

Three months later, portions of a skull were discovered at the rural Dickson residence, but efforts to identify the remains at the time were unsuccessful. A year later, an anthropologist determined the skull belong to a young Caucasian, possibly 13 to 14 years old with short brown hair. However, Ballard said at the time it was impossible to determine if the remains were those of a boy or a girl.

The case remained unsolved

until April 2010, when Carter County Deputy Rick Batt said he was contacted by Medical Examiner Investigator Leroy Johnson and asked to reopen the case. Batt, who is assigned to work cold cases by Sheriff Ken Grace, agreed. His first priority was researching the original case.

"I found out that then-Deputy Bryan Burton worked the



Thomas Billy Lee Tillery, 11, went to the store on Sept. 19, 1994, and never returned.

See TILLERY, 7A

Taking The Initiative

Volunteer officers give of themselves for towns

By MICHAEL PINEDA
MICHAEL.PINEDA@ARDMOREITE.COM

They may not be on the varsity team, but volunteer policemen have something in common with their full-time comrades. They all put themselves in harm's way each time they go to work.

Because many cities in the area are small with proportional budgets, volunteer law enforcement has become a necessary facet of keeping the peace. The number of volunteers may vary, but one thing is clear. They are essential.



MICHAEL PINEDA/THE ARDMOREITE

See OFFICERS, 3A Capt. Shawn Barron is one of nine reserve police officers in Lone Grove.

▼ STATE

Oklahoma income tax rate cut for 2012

By SEAN MURPHY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahomans will see a slight reduction in their state income tax beginning in 2012 after a board of elected officials determined Tuesday that growth in state revenues was significant enough over the past year to trigger the cut.

The State Board of Equalization found revenue collections grew by more than 4 percent last year, which triggered a reduction in the state's top income tax rate from 5.5 percent to 5.25 percent.

The board also formally approved the amount of revenue that the Legislature will have to spend on the budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1, and determined that lawmakers will have an additional \$106 million more to spend than was initially projected in December.

See TAX, 7A

Ready To Ride



DON ALQUIST/THE ARDMOREITE

Susan Marvin of Barnsdall, Okla., is ready to compete Tuesday with a horse named Blue Dox Com in the Arbuckle Mountain Cutting Futurity at Hardy Murphy Coliseum. The event started Tuesday and runs through March 2 in the arena.

▼ ARBUCKLES TO ARDMORE

Gatorade and water: always with a smile



Editor's Note: The Ardmoreite will be featuring the volunteers who will make the Arbuckles to Ardmore Race for Mercy happen in the weeks leading up to the March 20 event.

Amy Wisian

Q. Why are you volunteering?

A. The next best thing to running a marathon (I'm guessing) is cheering on and passing out water to the runners. I am in awe of their personal dedication to their own health and their willingness to run in the spirit of saving lives.

Q. What are you going to do?

A. Water station — I can serve a drink with the best of them. Really, the cheerlead-



Amy Wisian says she is in awe of the dedication of the runners in the A2A race.

ers of Ardmore Young Professionals pitch a tent, make clever signs, make a great playlist and hand off Gatorade and water to the runners with a smile on our face. We look them in the eye and give them words of encouragement.

See A2A, 3A

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▼ HOUSE BILL 2135

Business leaders support local decision-making for tobacco laws

By STEVE BIEHN
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OKLAHOMA CITY — Wes Stucky, President and CEO of the Ardmore Chamber of Commerce, was among those who joined House Speaker Kris Steele at a press conference at the State Capitol Tuesday in support of House Bill 2135.

As authored by Steele, the bill would repeal special provisions in state tobacco laws that prohibit cities and towns from adopting local tobacco prevention ordinances that are stronger than state law. Supporters say it would return the power to locally elected officials to determine the most appropriate measures to address reducing tobacco use in their communities. Oklahoma is one of only two states in the nation that prohibits communities from adopting such ordinances.

"As we move to implement changes necessary to improve the health outcomes of Oklahomans, we strongly believe Oklahoma's communities should have the same right to reduce tobacco use as most other communities in America," State Health Com-

missioner Dr. Terry Cline said.

Matt Robison, Vice President of Small Business and Workforce Development from The State Chamber of Oklahoma, joined Steele, Cline and Stucky to affirm the passage of HB 2135 would be pro-business. All agreed that HB 2135 would give Oklahoma's cities and towns the opportunity to pass ordinances that would improve the health of their community's workforce and positively influence continued economic growth for the state.



Stucky

"Employers reap the benefits from reduced tobacco use among their workers through reduced health and life insurance costs, increased on-the-job productivity and reduced employee absenteeism," Cline said. "Simply put, improving the physical health of employees improves the fiscal health of employers."

Tobacco use has a tremendous impact on the health of Oklahoma's

workforce. The Ardmore Chamber of Commerce and a growing number of communities and local chambers of commerce recognize that supporting a healthy workforce positively influences economic growth. Stucky said tobacco use costs U.S. businesses and industries an estimated \$92 million per year in lost productivity.

He also said that communities with smoke-free ordinances have a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses and jobs.

"We are dedicated to improving the health of our citizens, and a smoke-free community is critical to that cause," Stucky said. "Our citizens have a right to breathe clean air, and our jobs and businesses may depend on it."

Other organizations attending the news conference in support of HB 2135 included the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, The Alliance for Tobacco or Health, and the Oklahoma Turning Point Council.

HB 2135 passed the House Public Health and Safety Committee last week.

There are several opportunities for volunteers to participate in the March 20 A2A event. Individuals can volunteer "in memory" or "in honor" of someone. A list of volunteer jobs follows.

- Pre-race Opportunities:**
- Sponsorship — To contact area businesses and individuals regarding sponsorship opportunities.
 - Packet assembly and pickup — To assemble and distribute packets for runners at expo.
 - Registration — To assist during race registration at the Ardmore Convention Center.
 - Pasta Dinner — To assist with planning, set-up, serving and cleanup.
 - Cleanup — To assist with trash pickup along the race course.

- Race-day Opportunities:**
- Starting and Finish Lines — To assist with staging, teardown and cleanup of race sites.
 - Registration — To assist during race registration at Noble Stadium.
 - Water/Aid Stations — To assist with serving water and/or sport drinks to runners along the course.
 - Medical Support — For trained medical professionals to provide assistance, if necessary.
 - Gear Check — To collect and transport bags of runners' clothing, etc., from start lines to stadium.
 - Spirit Groups — For bands, drill teams, civic clubs, etc., to provide spirit and cheering along the course.
 - Communications — For licensed ham radio operators to provide communication along the course.
 - Safety Patrol — For cyclists to patrol race route to provide assistance, if necessary.
 - Traffic/Parking — To direct runners along the race course or vehicles to parking.
 - Awards — To assist with presentation of medals, etc., at finish line.
 - After-race Refreshments — To stage and serve refreshments to runners at the finish line.
 - Most Valuable Volunteer — I am not picky. I will help wherever you need me the most.

All volunteers must register for their favorite committee online at <http://www.a2amarathon.com>

OFFICERS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

"They are priceless," Healdton Police Chief Gus Handke said. "They help so much, people really don't understand."

"They don't get a lot out of it and they are underappreciated a lot of the time. Everybody wants to sit around and run their mouth about how bad things are. But these guys do something about it."

It is a sacrifice of time that varies between individual police forces and sheriff's departments. In Healdton and Lone Grove, a minimum of 10 hours per month is required to remain a volunteer police officer. In Love County, the Sheriff's Department requires 16 hours per month.

"Our requirement is 16 hours," Love County Undersheriff Jason Bone said. "The volunteers have a committee and they passed the rule of 16 hours that they have to work."

"We have about 10 to 15 reserves. We have quite a few and we are a big supporter of the reserve. They volunteer to do this on their own time and are willing to do it free of charge."

Monetarily, the reserves not only perform the regular functions of full-time law enforcement for free, they also are responsible financially for their training and equipment. How much depends on the city or department.

"It usually costs a volunteer \$300 to \$400," Lone Grove Police Chief Robert Oldham said. "They have to buy a duty belt and holster. We furnish a gun if they don't have one."

Volunteers for the Love County Sheriff's Department are responsible for providing their own gun and uniform, but costs are offset through various fundraisers.

"The reserves have their own vehicles and they raise a lot of money," Bone said. "There is a golf tournament, bull riding, a soft-

ball tournament. We do all kinds of stuff."

In Healdton, the financial responsibility put on reserves has improved, but still lags behind other communities.

"What you will find is that the reserves don't get a lot of money," Handke said. "They end up spending a lot of money out of their own pocket. We have improved tremendously; our new city council has done wonders. But we are still behind the curve."

In terms of finding the right candidate for a reserve policeman, one thing stands out in the criteria; a sense of community.

"We check their background and we like for them to live in the community," Oldham said. "We also look for good morals. It's the same process as hiring a full-time officer. Nearly all of our reserves are doing it because they feel like it is a civic duty."

"I look at motivation," Handke added. "What they stand to benefit or lose. What you find with these guys is a sense of community and they want to contribute. Some just want to be in the loop. But you can usually weed through them pretty quickly. Others want to be informed and want to contribute. It's a lot easier to deal with someone that is vested in the community."

For some, it is an opportunity to fulfill the ambition of being in law enforcement while holding down another job. At least that is the case for Brandon Gossvener.

"It was something that I wanted to do as a career choice out of high school," Gossvener said. "Like any other volunteer job, it takes a lot of time. I have worked anywhere from 20 to 50 hours in a month. I fill in when someone is sick and when we had the severe weather. Asked about why he volunteered well above the minimum requirement, Gossvener's answer was simple.

"Not everybody can work around the clock," he said. Gossvener, along with 17



MICHAEL PINEDA/THE ARDMOREITE

Lone Grove Police reserve Capt. Shawn Barron.

other reserve officers, are currently going through a reserve academy in Lone Grove. The academy began in November and will run through April. During the time, reserve officers attend class Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6 to 10 p.m. and also spend three weekends in training. And of course, they are not paid for their time.

"We have six months to get them in a reserve academy," Oldham said. "The academies are few and far between and they cost between \$150 to \$300. In addition, our reserve officers usually do other training and they all do additional firearms training each year."

A reserve officer can patrol during training, but if the officer does not enroll in training within six months, they can't remain a reserve officer unless

they receive an extension.

Each officer who goes through training receives instruction on procedure and the legal issues that come with the job. But some things have to be learned on the job.

"Some of the stuff you don't learn in the academy that you learn on the streets in dealing with domestic situations and the public relations side of it," Lone Grove Reserve Capt. Shawn Barron said. "The most rewarding part is helping the public, letting them know that you are here to serve them."

"I believe that if you want to make a change, you have to make change happen."

A2A

CONTINUED FROM 1A

Q. Are you a new volunteer or did you volunteer last year. If you volunteered last year why did you decide to do it again?

A. Well, honestly my husband and I saw the man pushing his quadriplegic son in the stroller and told each other (we might have been crying) that if he could do that for his son, we should at least run for ours. But again, somebody's got to serve the Gatorade.

Q. What other causes or projects have you played a role as a volunteer?

A. I am relentlessly fundraising and promoting the organizations that are near

and dear to me. Locally, I serve as a board member for the Grace Center of Southern Oklahoma, serve on the board of Ardmore Young Professionals, and like most moms, I'm a fundraiser and lover of my kids' school. Over Christmas, I became fascinated and captivated by charity: water, a worldwide organization that brings clean water to developing nations. We just started a campaign last week to raise \$5,000 to get water to a village.

Q. What would you tell someone who is considering volunteering for the A2A?

A. I'd tell them something similar to what my husband tells my kids every morning. "Pick someone special and be nice to them all day!" Keep it simple. Just open your heart and share it with others.

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