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L & STATE

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New measures include diabetes center funding

By Michael McNutt, Capitol Bureau

Gov. Brad Henry on Tuesday signed 29 bills, including legislation authorizing the University of Oklahoma to build diabetes research and treatment centers in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

The measure does not include the \$15 million estimated to build the centers. The money should be provided in an appropriation bill once the House, Senate and governor reach a budget agreement and pass appropriations in a special session to fund government in the next fiscal year.

Senate Bill 1046 provides that the diabetes center should be a leader in treatment, prevention and research. It takes effect Nov. 1.

Other legislation

The governor, without ceremony, also signed:

- SB 1951, which strengthens a law approved this year prohibiting picketing at funerals to include any place where a portion of a funeral is held. It takes effect immediately. In March, the governor signed legislation, prompted by protests at the funerals of Oklahoma soldiers, banning demonstrations within 500 feet of a cemetery, mortuary or church during funeral services.

- SB 1495, which creates the Kyle Williams Boating Safety Education Act, named in honor of a 12-year-old Edmond boy who died in a jet-ski accident nearly two years ago. The law establishes new requirements for children younger than 16 to operate certain types of watercraft. It takes effect Jan. 1.

- SB 1463, which authorizes an existing state trust to administer a federally funded buyout of endangered homes and businesses in and around the towns of Picher and Cardin. The trust was established in 2004 to implement a relocation program proposed by the governor to assist families with children age 6 and younger.

- SB 1675, which authorizes the Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission to continue its goal of protecting the state's military bases from closure. The measure also appropriates \$1 million once a state budget is approved to the state Commerce Department and the commission to be used as matching grants to communities for infrastructure and other improvements at the bases.

- SB 1919, which clears the way for developing the African-American Centennial Plaza on the grounds of the state Capitol. A committee will oversee the design, funding and construction of the plaza, which will be built off Lincoln Boulevard south of the Capitol.

- House Bill 1672, which requires veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement authorities within 24 hours of discovery. The bill also provides immunity for the vets and allows animal shelters to recover from owners the costs of caring for seized animals. It takes effect immediately.

Budget

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don't see what could keep us from getting an agreement (today)."

Morgan contends an agreement on the tax cuts will not be reached until spending details are nailed down. Despite what he called a cordial meeting, he said there is no agreement on any parts of the budget framework.

"There is no new news to report," said Morgan, D-Stillwater. "We are focused on the investment side, and the House is focused on the tax-cut side."

Hiett and Morgan are to meet again this morning to continue negotiations over how to divide an almost \$7 billion budget, the largest in state history.

Lawmakers were unable to reach a budget agreement before adjourning last month, and have until June 30 to approve a budget to avoid a government shutdown.

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