



# Bartlesville EXAMINER-ENTERPRISE

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One Dollar

## Official: Sales tax increase needed

### MAJOR BUDGET ITEMS DISCUSSED AT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

By Kelcey King  
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A sales tax increase may be needed to adjust for an anticipated zero budget growth in fiscal year 2015-16, city officials said Monday night.

The Bartlesville City Council met Monday night to dis-

cuss major budget items, including sales tax estimates and personnel. According to Mike Bailey, city administrator/CFO, although the city is expected to finish the year approximately 2.32 percent up from last fiscal year, the future is full of uncertainty.

"(Sales tax) is the most important revenue source

for the general operations of the City of Bartlesville," Bailey said Monday. "In fiscal year 2014, there was a rather unexpected decline in sales tax. That, thankfully, didn't reverse in 2015 ... We expect to finish this year about 2.32 percent up from where we were last year — that represents about \$377,000. However, over the next several months, we're really not certain what's going to happen."

Bailey said city staff has elected to go with a zero-

growth projection for sales tax for the upcoming fiscal year.

"We think that conservative estimate is necessary, due to the uncertainty of the price of oil and the local energy economy," he said.

That uncertainty could be combated with a 1/2 percent sales tax increase, which Bailey said would generate approximately \$2.5 million per year.

The city's sales tax currently sits at 8.5 percent.

The proposed increase would bring the tax to 9 percent.

"A sales tax increase is needed to fund current operations and to return service levels back to a more optimum level," Bailey said, noting that "it wouldn't be perfect; we could never do everything that everyone wants us to do."

The city's last operational sales tax increase was in 1987, according to Bailey.

See **TAX** on A2



### Outstanding citizen

M'Liss Jenkins, left, hugs Bartlesville Regional Chamber of Commerce President Sherri Wilt after being named the 2015 Jim Gillie Outstanding Citizen at the BRCC's 11th Annual Awards and Gala. See Sunday's Business section for full coverage on the event, as well as a list of award winners.

Kelcey King/Examiner-Enterprise

## State budget agreement evokes mixed reactions

By Randy Ellis  
The Oklahoman  
(TNS)

Reaction was mixed Tuesday after state lawmakers announced they had reached a tentative budget agreement that calls for a few agencies to receive increases while most would either remain flat or receive small cuts.

Stand for Children Oklahoma, a school advocacy group, expressed gratitude that lawmakers didn't cut common education appropriations in a year of decreased revenues, but said schools will still have less to spend per student because of increased enrollments and the implementation of required reforms.

"Parents must be aware of this and should expect a continuation of larger class sizes and more difficulty retaining and recruiting teachers which ultimately means even more elimination of classes like art, speech, music, and foreign

See **STATE** on A5

## Second mistrial declared in O'Dell case

By Tim Hudson  
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A mistrial has been declared for the second time in the lewd molestation case against a local man.

Associate District Judge Russell Vaclaw ruled the case against 39-year-old Billy Ray O'Dell a mistrial on Tuesday after several witnesses had testified in the case.

The reason was reportedly that a juror announced that he had knowledge of portions of the case that could have affected the outcome of the trial.

The mistrial was the sec-

ond in the case against O'Dell — the first of which happened on Jan. 27. According to court records, the reason given for the initial mistrial was that a juror disclosed that they knew more about the case than what was originally disclosed during jury selection, court records show.

O'Dell is accused of molesting an 8-year-old girl in June 2013.

According to the case's probable cause affidavit, the girl's parents became aware of the issue in September 2013. At that time, the alleged victim in the case told them that

O'Dell had touched her and threatened her with a handgun.

A forensic interview was later conducted at Ray of Hope Advocacy Center in regards to the case.

When police interviewed O'Dell, he denied touching the girl, but later admitted to "maybe touching (the girl) when he brushed a roach off of her lap." He also said he blacked out at times and "could not recall what he may have done during those times."

The case has been rescheduled for Aug. 31.

## Injuries reported in wreck

By Tim Hudson  
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A Tulsa woman is in stable condition after a single vehicle accident near Skiatook on Tuesday.

According to reports from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, the accident happened around 3:40 p.m. about 10 miles south of Skiatook on 52nd West Avenue, 1/10 of a mile north of 43rd Street North.

At that time, a 2001 Chevrolet Suburban, driven by Maria Fonseca, 44, was northbound on 52nd West Avenue when it departed the roadway to the right. At that point, Fonseca reportedly over-corrected, re-entering

the roadway in a broad slide before going off the road to the left and impacting a ditch. The vehicle then rolled, impacting a fence before coming to rest on the passenger side. During the accident, Fonseca was ejected about 60 feet to the east of the vehicle.

Fonseca was then transported by ambulance to St. John's hospital in Tulsa, where she was admitted in stable condition with head and trunk internal injuries.

Troopers say seatbelts were not in use at the time of the accident and listed Fonseca's condition as "odor of alcohol."

The cause of the collision was listed as "unsafe speed."

### IN THE NEWS

#### North Korea claims ability to mount nuclear warhead on missile

North Korea said it has developed the technology to mount a nuclear warhead on a missile, signaling the country may now have the ability to launch a nuclear attack against the United States.

FULL STORY, A6

#### 2 families leave lasting legacy

Dozens of friends, relatives and work associates attended a formal event to honor two families ...

FULL STORY, C1



### Theater facelift

Laborers work on the outside of Theater Bartlesville in downtown recently. A reception will be held at noon Thursday for the theater's Memorial Day exhibition, which will include mannequins dressed in military uniforms. A ribbon cutting will follow at 1 p.m.

Becky Burch/Examiner-Enterprise

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# 2 local business recognized

## SUTTERFIELD FINANCIAL GROUP, ADVANCED HEARING HONORED FOR DEDICATION TO COMMUNITY

By Kelcey King  
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Two local businesses dedicated to above-and-beyond customer service and client relationships were honored Tuesday night at the Bartlesville Regional Chamber of Commerce's 111th Annual Awards and Gala, held at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Longtime financial firm Sutterfield Financial Group Inc. was named the 2015 Business of the Year. Founded in 1995 by Trevor Sutterfield, the firm strives to provide quality financial planning and assistance to its clients through strong client-advisor relationships.

"Our company is all about our people, and our people are our clients, our community and our employees," Sutterfield told the crowd Tuesday night. "This is a community we're committed to."

Sutterfield said the company is first and foremost dedicated to serving people.

"The work we do with clients is always a humbling experience to me — the things we get involved in," he said. "We really view our clients as our family and our friends. The level of things we do isn't always about the bottom line, it's about serving people."

In addition to providing quality service to its clients, the company is also heavily involved in the community, according to Sutterfield.

"We recognize the community that we're a part of, that we live in. We don't just take what is; we want to make what we can out of it," he said. "We highly encourage everybody to get deeply involved and make an impact. Get involved in families, get involved in social activities, get involved in business activities. That's how we're going to make an impact."

Advanced Hearing Care was also recognized Tuesday night as the 2015 Small Business of the Year.

The business was founded in 2006 by Dr. Stephanie Moore and provides audiology services to the community through quality patient-doctor relationships and exceptional customer service.

Moore, who suffered twice from a rare inner-ear virus at a young age that caused her to lose nearly all hearing in her right ear, said she is thankful for her patients and the community in which she lives and works.

"I love Bartlesville, I love my patients and I love what I do," she said. "We've all seen the YouTube videos of the babies turning on their hearing aids for the first time and we just bawl. That's what I get to do every day. I love my job, it's amazing."

Other awards presented included the Rising Star Award, to Troy Zellers, revenue analyst at ConocoPhillips; the Jake Bartles Award, to Diane Hawkins, project manager at International Data Solutions Inc.; the Ernie McAnaw Female Business Leader Award, to Bertha Lanckriet, retired trust department head at Arvest Bank; the Tom Shoemaker Leadership Award, to Jane Phillips Medical Center President/COO Mike Moore; and the Jim Gillie Outstanding Citizen Award, to community advocate and volunteer M'Liss Jenkins. Rancher and Bartlesville City Council Ward 2 Representative John J. Kane was also named as the 2015-16 Young Professionals president.

In other business, Leadership Bartlesville XXIV Class graduates were presented at the gala. The class is currently working to raise funds



ABOVE: Trevor Sutterfield, president and owner of Sutterfield Financial Group Inc., accepts the award for 2015 Business of the Year.



LEFT: Dr. Stephanie Moore, founder of Advanced Hearing Care, thanks guests after being presented the 2015 Small Business of the Year Award.

Kelcey King/Examiner-Enterprise

for the construction of an entryway sign with electronic message board for a previously approved events pavilion at Johnstone Park. The entryway sign will sit at the corner of Cherokee Avenue

and Hensley Boulevard. Fundraising for the project will consist of the Leadership Bartlesville class producing a Bartlesville-based Monopoly board game. Spaces, cards and other board real estate

will be available for sponsorship. These sponsorships will fund production of the game, while sales of the game itself will go towards the construction of the entryway sign project.

### TAX FAX

## Contributing items to charities

Every year during tax season, I get questions regarding how much a taxpayer can deduct for items contributed to charities. These questions come after the fact, when it's too late to really substantiate the donation.



**Debbie Mueggenborg**  
 E-E COLUMNIST

With spring comes house cleaning. Here's an example of how important it is to properly document the property donated to charity.

A taxpayer claimed a charitable contribution deduction of \$37,315 for donations of household goods to four charities. Items given to Goodwill were taken in batches at various times and placed in large bins for after-hours drop-offs or outside the warehouse door. Other items were scheduled for pickup and left outside his house, with a receipt from the charities thanking him for his contribution. However, he did not provide evidence to show the condition of the donated items or obtain an appraisal (for property contributions valued

at more than \$5,000) to support their value. Although the Tax Court believed the taxpayer donated property to the charities, it disallowed the deduction because the substantiation requirements were not satisfied. In addition, the taxpayer was subject to a Section 6662 accuracy-related penalty of \$2,468.

I recommend taking a picture of the donated items before taking them to the charity or leaving them outside for pickup. A picture says a thousand words.

Debbie Mueggenborg is a CPA and partner with Stotts, Archambo, Mueggenborg & Barclay in Bartlesville. She can be reached at debbie@archambofinancial.com or by phone at 918-336-0008.

## BCVB named top Oklahoma tourism organization during annual OTIA gala

The Bartlesville Convention & Visitors Bureau was recently named the Tourism Organization of the Year at the Oklahoma Travel Industry Association's annual RedBud Awards gala.

Emceed by Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb and "Discover Oklahoma" host Jennifer Reynolds, 32 awards were given in 17 categories. The awards recognize the state's top tourism attractions, events, programs and organizations for outstanding efforts to serve and promote Oklahoma's tourism industry.

"Winning the RedBud Award for Outstanding Tourism Organization of the Year means a lot for the BCVB," said BCVB Executive Director Maria Gus. "There are some incredible organizations in Oklahoma that have won this award in the past and we're honored to be counted among them. A RedBud Award like this means that we're on the right track and we've been acknowledged for the direction we've been going for the past few years."

In 2014, Gus said the BCVB expanded its digital marketing, developed a more targeted social media strategy and took steps to ensure that the marketing budget was being maximized.

"I think we won because we were able to demonstrate our ability to incorporate new

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— Maria Gus

Executive Director, Bartlesville Convention & Visitors Bureau

strategy in our marketing while still utilizing some of the tried and true methods," she said. "We continued to develop a strong social media and digital presence while trying some new ideas in print media and outreach to potential group travelers. We also won because of our many tourism partners outside of Bartlesville. Communities like Miami, Claremore, Stillwater and Broken Arrow have been fantastic colleagues, and we work very hard to partner when we can."

"The communities of Green Country and beyond are always eager to work together and do as much as we can for the visitor. I know that we have often worked together in order to save cost and share ideas. Partnerships have made the difference in our success many times."

Gus said this recognition has energized the BCVB about the future, and that she looks forward to finding new ways to

support events that bring in out-of-town visitors.

Nowata was also recognized with a Merit award for the Nowata Chamber of Commerce's new website.

In addition to the RedBud Awards, Jackie Stewart of Green Country Marketing Association was presented with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is presented annually by AAA Oklahoma and is designed to recognize a tourism professional who has spent decades working in and improving Oklahoma's travel industry.

"Jackie's passion to serve and make the community and state better has been evidenced since the mid 70s," said OTIA President/CEO Debra Bailey. "Northeastern Oklahoma has been greatly benefited by her 40 plus years of service, and we are proud to name her as recipient of the 2015 AAA Oklahoma Lifetime Achievement Award."