



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: December 14, 2004

## **OESC APPROVES SALARY INCREASE FOR AGENCY STAFF** *State Agency Aiming to Keep and Attract Quality People for Today and Tomorrow*

OKLAHOMA CITY – At today's monthly meeting of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, Commission members approved salary increases for agency employees retroactive to December 1, 2004. In a 4-0 decision, the Commission approved the agency-wide raises, calling them "necessary for the continued success of the agency." The pay increases are in addition to those granted to state workers by the Oklahoma state legislature which become effective in 2005. Executive Director Jon Brock requested the added pay adjustments in a letter he delivered to the Commission.

"All public service requires a measure of sacrifice," said Mr. Brock, "but in terms of compensation, we have been asking too much from our employees for too long. If we expect to keep the valuable human resources we have while attracting people of the same caliber, we have to stay competitive. This is a first step in bringing our salaries in line with other agencies as well as private business." Attracting and keeping quality people will be especially important to state agencies as baby boomers retire, taking valuable knowledge and experience with them.

A salary study for the OESC strategic plan in early 2004 showed how out of line OESC salaries were compared to other state agencies. For some jobs, compensation was more than 30 percent lower than the average for other state entities. Almost all positions within the agency lagged behind the average state salary for that particular position.

Tom Patt, Director of Compensation for the state Office of Personnel Management, also spoke to the Commission during Mr. Brock's presentation. OPM provided guidance throughout the adjustment process and was impressed with how OESC accomplished their goals. He called the effort "a model for how OPM and agencies should work together in the future" to address salary issues.

Funding for the salary increases for the first two years will come from penalty and interest monies associated with the state's Unemployment Insurance trust fund. Because the agency is federally

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## **OESC NEWS RELEASE** (continued)

funded, and many of these federal grants cover operating costs, most of the salary adjustments will be absorbed in these grants by 2006.

While these raises will help the agency and its employees, they will by no means solve the problem. Some jobs within the OESC will still be 20 percent below the state average. This is simply a first step towards being competitive. This will be an ongoing process addressed by the OESC strategic plan, and the agency plans to continue towards building a workforce worthy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both inside the agency and throughout the state.

For more information on this subject, please contact John Carpenter at (405) 557-5469 or [john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us](mailto:john.carpenter@oesc.state.ok.us).

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