

INTERIM STUDY REPORT

**General Government Committee
Rep. Dennis Johnson, Chairman
Oklahoma House of Representatives
Interim Study 11-034, Rep. Randy Grau
October 17, 2011**

Local government mandatory publication notices and related costs

Representative Randy Grau
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- Made opening remarks stating that the study was a continuation of efforts from last session. The goal was to bring press and publication industries together with the local government to find out how to properly notify the public about what is going on in government in the most efficient way.

Mark Thomas, Executive Vice President
Oklahoma Press Association
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- Provided an overview of the fundamentals of public notice and how other states provide public notices.
- There are two kinds of public notice rates in the United States.
 - Free market rates are based on the newspaper's classified rate. Most states pay for publication of public notices based on a free market rate.
 - Other states have a fixed rate to pay for public notices. Oklahoma has a fixed rate. Currently, the fixed rate in statute is 40 percent less than the average classified rate.
- There is a trend of states switching to a market rate rather than using a fixed rate system.
- Explained the variation of fixed rates and what factors determine the fixed rate in other states. The state of the economy can be a contributing factor when establishing a rate.
- Mr. Thomas brought the legal notice section of a few local newspapers to show the amount of notices and the space on the page used. Also illustrated the readability variation of the notices. Some are easy to read, while other notices are in small font and more difficult to read.
- Provided a brief overview of the Oklahoma Meeting Act and Oklahoma Records Act and the purposes of each.

See presentation a

Ray Vaughn, Oklahoma County Commissioner
District Three
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- Listed the governmental entities that are required to publish notices and the number of times they are required to publish notices in a year.
- Noted that counties in Oklahoma are required to publish notices significantly more times a year than the state government.
- There are two types of publications.
 - Ultimately reimbursed publications are repaid to the county when the bill is paid or property is sold. Commissioner Vaughn described the collection cycle process