



Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission

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Court and Commission Consolidate Tulsa Space

(Oklahoma City Sept. 5, 2019) Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC)- In a move toward greater efficiency, cost reduction, and improved customer service in state government, the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) and the Court of Existing Claims (CEC) are consolidating their Tulsa courtroom and office space.

The two agencies have inked an agreement which will provide for combined operations in the Houston Avenue state office building in downtown Tulsa.

"This agreement is an opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale, and introduce some common sense into a governmental operation." said Commissioner Mark Liotta, Chairman of the WCC. "The WCC is the follow-on agency to the CEC as it winds down, we manage very similar operations, just with different jurisdictional dates. There is no continuing reason for us to maintain separate spaces in Tulsa."

The Presiding Judge of the CEC, L. Brad Taylor, commented, "While the CEC and the WCC are separate branches of government, both strive through a continuing relationship of cooperation to serve the great State of Oklahoma and further support Governor Stitt's vision of Oklahoma being a top 10 state."

The savings will be seen in an overall reduction of office space being leased by the Commission. The WCC is giving up the majority of its office space, and moving into available offices within the CEC. Injured workers and employers who have cases before either agency will share waiting areas, attorney conference areas, and other common areas. The newly abandoned office space, about half of the WCC's current lease, will become available for the state Office of Management Enterprise Services to lease to other agencies

needing room as of September 1 2019. Further, the WCC and CEC will share reception staff, which will reduce labor costs.

“I applaud the CEC and WCC for prioritizing efficiency and cost savings for the taxpayer as they consolidate their Tulsa operations,” said Governor Stitt.

With legislation passed in Oklahoma’s most recent session, the CEC will continue to wind down operations, reducing from four full-time judges on July 1, 2020, to one appointed by the Governor. The CEC will use retired active judges to staff their three judge panel for appeals, and continue to operate a courtroom in Tulsa as well.

Oklahoma’s workers’ compensation system was reformed in 2013, establishing the WCC, which became fully operational February 1, 2014. The WCC provides a forum for workers’ compensation hearings and appeals, ensures workers' compensation insurance compliance by all employers, and regulates organizations who wish to self-fund their workers’ compensation obligations. Although an executive branch, administrative and regulatory agency, the WCC exercises the State’s judicial authority, making it a hybrid, quasi-judicial agency.

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