



## Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission

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### **PEOPLE, NOT MACHINES, ANSWER THE PHONES AT THIS STATE AGENCY NOW**

(Oklahoma City, March 5, 2018) Workers' Compensation Commission: The Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) has replaced their automated answering service with a live operator during normal hours of operations. Commenting on the reason behind the change, Commissioner Mark Liotta said, "I just find it extremely frustrating to call my government and be met with a recording and computerized options to direct my call, and eventually being put on hold, sent to a voice mailbox, or my call being dropped."

Liotta continued, "I want to talk my issue over with a live human being whenever possible. I want to know they understand why I'm calling, and I want the most efficient response to my issue. I think most people prefer this as well."

For the past three years, the WCC had used an automated service provided through the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES). Chairman Liotta stated, "I was disappointed when I first arrived and found this system had been adopted, but I lived with it until it became clear it was not efficiently serving the needs of our stakeholders, and I immediately investigated the practicality of returning to live reception."

WCC Receptionist Becky Bradley described the response so far, “People are very surprised when I answer, and are sometimes so startled they have to take a minute to remember why they called. The response has been very positive.”

Eric Russell, Director of Legal Operations at the WCC sees an increase in efficiency with the new policy. He said, “In my experience the calls we receive have been directed more appropriately with fewer steps. The overall result has been significantly improved response to public inquiries, with less caller frustration.”

Liotta summarized, “Yes, I recognize this might be an old-fashioned idea, but to be honest, I really don’t care. We are here to provide a service to our citizens, and if it doesn’t cost more money, then we would rather provide efficient personal service instead of an automated, computerized, recorded response.

The WCC will continue to use the automated response as a backup for high call volume, holidays, emergency weather, and after hours. For normal operations, a receptionist will answer calls, provide information when possible, or direct the call to the appropriate individual within the agency.

The WCC began full operations in February of 2014 as a legislative replacement for the former Workers’ Compensation Court. Liotta was named Chairman of the WCC in 2017 by Governor Mary Fallin.

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