



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OJA QUESTIONS THE NEED FOR THE SANTA CLAUS COMMISSION

OKLAHOMA CITY – Robert E. “Gene” Christian, the Executive Director of the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) is reviewing the possibility of asking the Oklahoma Legislature to discontinue the statutorily mandated Santa Claus Commission. In 1935, state budget officer R.R. Owens and his wife started the Santa Claus commission that oversees the solicitation, purchase and distribution of Christmas gifts to children in state custody who would not receive even one gift.

“The commission’s purpose is out of date and has become obsolete. We no longer have children of this age group in our institutions. A large portion of OJA residents are adults.” stated Christian. The items that are purchased for the residents must be carefully scrutinized based upon security issues. Therefore, OJA would like to concentrate our efforts in providing meaningful rehabilitative services and not selecting gifts. Monies that have been donated to support the commission should be channeled to more appropriate programs, such as providing educational support services such as the payment of fees and tuition for continuing educational classes for qualifying residents.

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