



**SCOTT MEACHAM  
OKLAHOMA STATE TREASURER**

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**\$17.8 Million Still Available for Appropriation**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – After enacting tax cuts totaling more than \$61.1 million, the Legislature has \$17.8 million remaining available for appropriation for the coming fiscal year, State Treasurer Scott Meacham announced today.

Meacham, who also serves as Governor Henry's Secretary of Revenue and Finance, cited data compiled by the Office of State Finance for the State Board of Equalization, which met Monday to certify changes to the revenue estimate for Fiscal Year 2006.

The Office of State Finance report shows a net gain in revenue of \$41.9 million due to legislative changes. Meacham said legislation allowing a recalculation of the gross production tax on natural gas added \$115 million to the revenue picture for FY-2006.

"Increases in energy prices have allowed the state to enact significant tax reductions without endangering funding for vital state services," he said. "In addition, the state's economy shows every sign of continued growth."

Meacham also noted that, for the first time in state history, the Rainy Day Fund will be fully funded at the end of the current fiscal year.

"Due to fiscal restraint by the governor and Legislature, we will enter the new budget year with a balance of \$461.3 million in the Rainy Day Fund," he said. "Never before has the fund reached its constitutional cap."

Deposits to the Constitutional Reserve or Rainy Day Fund occur at the end of the fiscal year when collections exceed the estimate. The state constitution mandates revenue in excess of the estimate be deposited into the Rainy Day Fund until the balance of the fund is 10 percent of the prior year certified General Revenue Fund collections.

**(more)**

Meacham also noted that the state's expenditure authority, the maximum amount allowed to be spend by state government, increased by almost three-quarters of a billion dollars in the past year.

Expenditure authority for the 2005 legislative session was \$6.1 billion, compared with \$5.4 billion for the 2004 session. That is an increase of \$734 million, or 13.6 percent.

In addition to tax cuts, the majority of the additional funds were used for budget increases for common education, higher education, transportation, health care, mental health, public safety and human services.

Common education received an increase in appropriations of \$93.6 million. Higher education received an increase of \$83.3 million. The Department of Transportation received an increase of \$74.3 million to address bridge and road maintenance needs.

The Health Care Authority, which administers the state's Medicaid program, received an increase in appropriations of \$152.5 million to address cuts in federal funding and increased rates for providers. The Department of Mental health received an increase of \$16.4 million for drug courts and other mental health needs.

The Department of Public Safety received an increase of \$13.8 million to fund trooper academies and replace funds from an expiring license tag fee. The Department of Human Services received an increase of \$53.7 million to fund child care, provider increases and other needs.

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