

Quick results expected

The first three weeks of the upcoming legislative session will tell whether an evenly divided state Senate can function, Lt. Gov. Jari Askins says in Tulsa.

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An artist's rendering depicts a monument proposed by the Brady Heights Neighborhood Association for a median at Fairview Street and Denver Avenue.

No nude statue is naked truth

► A city councilor is misinformed about the artistic plans for a traffic circle.

By P.J. LASSEK
World Staff Writer

City Councilor Jack Henderson grabbed attention Tuesday when he raised concerns over what he thought was a "naked statue" proposed for the middle of a traffic circle on north Denver Avenue.

"The traffic circle is already a distraction, and for a naked statue to be inside of it is ridiculous," Henderson said at a council committee meeting.

The councilor, however, was misinformed about the neighborhood beautification plans.

The Brady Heights Neighborhood Association is proposing a four-sided monument at an entrance to the neighborhood, said Michelle Barnett, the association's president.

Its location is not in the traffic circle at Marshall Street and Denver Avenue but in a median at Fairview Street and Denver Avenue.

Barnett said the obelisk, called the Tulsa Spirit Monument, would display four pieces of artwork from Emerson Elementary School students that would be re-created in tile by commissioned mosaic artist Caryn Brown.

The monument would be about 14 feet tall with a 5-foot-wide base and a 4-foot top. The four panels displaying art would be about 3 feet by 5 feet.

The monument is part of a \$25,000 Vision 2025 neighborhood project that includes landscaping and lighting at the the monument site and at the traffic circle. The project is expected to be completed this year.

Longtime area resident BJ Bullock opposes the project and doesn't trust the neighborhood association's motives. The group, she said, has been slowly trying to turn Brady Heights into a gated community with the installation of traffic-calming devices.

"Oh, they definitely want naked art. They told me that," said Bullock, who has been speaking with Henderson about the situation.

Barnett said no naked art is proposed.

"I don't care what it is," Bullock

SEE STATUE A-11

Bid to toss porn case is denied

► A federal magistrate rules in the case of a former Broken Arrow skating rink operator.

By DAVID HARPER
World Staff Writer

A federal magistrate on Tuesday refused to grant a former Broken Arrow skating rink operator's request to have the child pornography charges against him dismissed.

U.S. Magistrate Paul Cleary also wrote that David A. Abston's attempt

to throw out evidence found during the execution of a search warrant at Abston's house should be denied.

Cleary's report and recommendation will now be reviewed by U.S. District Judge James Payne, who is scheduled to preside over Abston's jury trial beginning Jan. 22.

Abston, 55, was charged in November with distributing three images of child pornography via computer on Sept. 8. But Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Morgan claimed during a hearing Thursday that Abston had a "veritable kiddie porn grocery store" on his computer in early September.

A Florida FBI agent conducting an

undercover operation happened upon five images that Abston was offering online, Morgan told the court.

Three of those images form the basis of the federal case against Abston.

Last week's hearing was scheduled for Cleary to hear motions that Abston's attorney, Keith Ward, had filed.

Ward claimed that the search warrant and the affidavit used to get it were illegal.

He said the affidavit didn't contain sufficient facts to show probable cause to search the home and was too general to pass muster under the Fourth Amendment.

A Tulsa police document states that

detectives were notified Nov. 8 that FBI agents who searched the house for child pornography discovered "sexual devices, lubricants and condoms in a bedroom occupied by a 10-year-old male, along with child pornography."

Ward claimed at last week's hearing that the images Abston is accused of distributing do not depict graphic sexual activity, even though they contain nudity.

At most, he said, the images may amount to a "lascivious" exhibition of genitals, which is one of the catego-

SEE PORN A-11

Chili Bowl fuels economy



JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

A midget car waits to enter the racetrack for qualifying races Tuesday while attendees look around the pit area at the Chili Bowl Nationals at the Expo Center.

Fans pouring in from all over for Expo Square event

By TOM DROEGE
World Staff Writer

Hear that earth-rattling roar?

That's the sound of an estimated \$12 million pushing the throttle on Tulsa's economy, thanks to the Chili Bowl.

The nationally famous midget-car racing championship at Expo Square this week is generating noise, speed and cash, officials say.

"It equates to a lot of people coming in from out of town," said Mike Dodson, executive director of the Tul-

sa Sports Commission. "That means they're staying in hotel rooms, eating out and renting cars."

Take spectator Bob Couch, for example. The Blue Spring, Mo., resident arrived in Tulsa with a friend Tuesday. They are staying through Saturday night.

"I'm probably spending \$1,000," Couch said, listing on his fingers the cost of a motel room, tickets, food and extras.

Multiply \$1,000 by about 12,000 — the approximate number of out-of-

town fans — and you're already up to \$12 million. Of course, some people spend less than Couch. Others spend much more.

In terms of traveling fans, Dodson ranks the Chili Bowl championship alongside a major PGA, LPGA or college basketball tournament.

"It's a top-five event as far as economic impact," he said. "You can just walk around the parking lot and see license plates from everywhere."

SEE BOWL A-11

For more

Illinois driver wins opener. B-1

Bowl biggest ever

This year's Chili Bowl Midget Nationals is the biggest ever, with 279 race entries from 28 states plus Australia. That beats last year's record of 260 competitors. Tim McCreddie of Watertown, N.Y., won last year's contest.

OEA STUDY: BETTER CONDITIONS WILL RESULT IN BETTER TEACHERS

Union urges more top teachers for high-need schools

By ANGEL RIGGS
World Capital Bureau

OKLAHOMA CITY — Teachers in Oklahoma's high-needs schools need diversity training, better communication with colleagues and pay incentives, education leaders said Tuesday at the Capitol.

Those ideas and others were included in a study, led by the Oklahoma Education Association, aimed at increasing the number of top teachers in Oklahoma's neediest schools.

The report included dozens of recommendations from the state's national board-certified teachers.

Officials "need to support these recommendations, because they represent voices of our classroom

teachers," said Roy Bishop, the OEA's president.

Nationally certified teachers go through a rigorous assessment process and are more likely to produce bigger student-achievement gains than noncertified teachers, the report says.

However, only about 9 percent of the state's 1,289 certified teachers were working in low-performing schools when the study was being completed.

High-needs schools typically have higher poverty rates and more teacher turnover.

Oklahoma taxpayers annually provide 400 national certification candidates with scholarships to pay for application fees, training and univer-

sity mentors.

The report comes as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, based in Arlington, Va., announced that an additional 282 Oklahoma teachers were certified

Nationally certified teachers

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards said Tuesday that 282 Oklahoma teachers achieved National Board Certification in 2006. The board also found that:

► Oklahoma ranks seventh nationwide for the number of newly certified

teachers.

► The number of Oklahoma's certified teachers has nearly quadrupled in five years.

► Four percent of Oklahoma's teachers are nationally certified, compared with 2 percent nationwide.

last year.

That's a 32 percent increase from 2005, according to the board.

However, officials hadn't tallied exactly where those teachers are employed.

The study also calls for:

► Training on poverty, regional cultures and tolerance for teachers in high-needs schools.

► An additional five days of professional development opportunities.

► Time to foster connections within the community.

► A 20 percent salary increase for each certified teacher who teaches for five years in a high-needs school.

The study also suggests nonsalary incentives — such as early retirement packages, tuition reimbursement and mortgage interest-reduction plans — for teachers at high-needs schools.

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