

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 1503

By: Adair, Wilson, Ferguson and
Bonny of the House

and

Rozell of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; creating the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development Act; recognizing certain needs in rural Oklahoma; stating legislative intent; creating the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development; providing for location of the Center; providing for a partnership; authorizing Northeastern State University to expend funds; stating mission of the Center; providing for governance by a Board of Advisors; providing for membership of the Board; providing for meetings; stating duties and responsibilities of the Board; authorizing the Center to employ a Coordinator; providing for status of the Coordinator; stating duties of the Coordinator; providing for powers and duties of the Center; directing the Center to establish certain institutes; authorizing the Center to receive funding from certain sources; providing for management of funds; creating the Center for Rural Development Revolving Fund; stating character and source of fund; providing for the deposit of certain funds; providing for expenditures from the fund; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4801 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Center for Rural Development Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4802 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Legislature recognizes that rural Oklahoma must have expert assistance if the communities, organizations, and citizens of this state are to effectively compete for resources to grow, retain, and attract value-added jobs in the twenty-first century. The citizens of rural Oklahoma seek a coordinated and collaborative system that is readily accessible and responsive to the needs of cities, counties, schools, trust authorities, and other development

organizations to plan, develop, and implement programs and related services that allow for growth in the economy. It is the intent of the Legislature to create the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development which shall directly assist rural constituencies to meet the challenges necessary to improve the standard of living in rural Oklahoma. The Center shall also ensure compliance with the mandate issued by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education that institutions contribute to workforce development, business-needs research, and technology transfer in their region.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4803 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. There is hereby created the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development. The Center shall be located at Northeastern State University. The Center shall be a strategic partnership between Northeastern State University and the State of Oklahoma.

B. Northeastern State University shall have the authority to expend funds to administer and operate the programs of the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development.

SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4804 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The mission of the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development at Northeastern State University shall be to improve the effectiveness of citizens, enterprises, and communities in rural Oklahoma to better meet the quality of life challenges in the new century.

SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4805 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma Center for Rural Development shall be governed by a Board of Advisors. The Board of Advisors shall consist of nine (9) members appointed by the President of Northeastern State University. Members of the Board of Advisors shall represent the State of Oklahoma, Northeastern State University, the Cherokee Nation, and appropriate rural communities.

B. The Board of Advisors shall meet at least once each calendar year and at such other times as is necessary.

C. The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Advisors shall include but not be limited to:

1. Providing a strategic direction to ensure the mission of the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development is implemented; and

2. Serving as a liaison between the Center and Northeastern State University, and tribal and rural communities.

SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4806 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma Center for Rural Development may employ as staff a Coordinator for the Center. The Coordinator shall be an employee of Northeastern State University.

B. The Coordinator for the Center shall:

1. Coordinate the establishment of the Center office;
2. Develop an agenda in consultation with the Board of Advisors and the leadership of the Center institutes;
3. Coordinate activities as required in order to meet the agenda of the Center;
4. Secure resources for the Center; and
5. Pursue formal relationships with other rural advisory and advocacy groups as is appropriate.

SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4807 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Oklahoma Center for Rural Development shall have the power and duty to:

1. Mobilize and enhance the appropriate resources of the colleges of Northeastern State University and focus the resources toward a single entity that shall be readily accessible to assist communities, organizations, and people to effectively address health, education, economic development, applied technology, community infrastructure, and entrepreneurial issues that challenge the improvement of the standard of living in rural Oklahoma;
2. Afford grant writing capabilities and other direct assistance to political subdivisions of Oklahoma, tribal governments, and public, private, educational, and faith-based organizations in the procurement of resources, to plan, develop and implement programs and services that improve the general well-being of persons residing in rural areas;
3. Develop a mechanism for transferring technology from Northeastern State University and other universities to support economic and community development throughout rural Oklahoma;
4. Develop a coordinated mechanism for collection and analysis of needs for workforce development that is consistent with the plans of local communities to develop economic and community bases for the future;
5. Develop an alliance among development organizations for the purpose of addressing the needs of community leaders from a common perspective, which shall be designed to serve as an engine of growth by utilizing targeted resources and capabilities existing within the northeastern portion of Oklahoma;
6. Develop and support long-term partnerships with rural communities, enterprises, families, citizens, institutions, and local, regional and tribal governments with the goal of strengthening commitment and collaboration to a community-based

approach for expanding economic, social, and cultural opportunities in rural Oklahoma;

7. Evolve and implement a rural research and education agenda that enhances the use of state-of-the-art information to support policy decisions and program delivery to rural Oklahoma;

8. Create and support an enhanced rural policy analysis consortium to integrate, coordinate, and evaluate relevant programs and program delivery opportunities within a collaborative commitment to locally determined, sustainable development;

9. Coordinate and support a shared education and professional development program to address the needs of rural Oklahoma;

10. Create a shared system for resource acquisition, needs assessment, and problem resolution designed to meet individual community needs as well as common needs of other communities;

11. Develop and support methodologies for evaluating the social and economic impact and economy of scales of alternative public investments upon the quality of life in rural Oklahoma; and

12. Establish and implement an integrated program and performance evaluation system that will enable the partners to determine whether the Center mission is being fulfilled.

SECTION 8. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4808 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The duties of the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development shall be conducted by institutes organized to address specific needs. The Center shall establish, at a minimum, the following institutes:

1. The Rural Health Institute;
2. The Rural Education Institute;
3. The Economic Development Institute;
4. The Applied Technology Institute;
5. The Community Development Institute; and
6. The Entrepreneurial Institute.

SECTION 9. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4809 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma Center for Rural Development is authorized to receive funding for support of the Center from state, local, federal and other governmental entities, tribal, and private sources.

B. Management of funding received by the Center shall be pursuant to guidelines established by Northeastern State University and shall adhere to appropriate state and federal regulations.

SECTION 10. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4810 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund for the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development to be designated the "Center for Rural Development Revolving Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received by the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development from state appropriations or governmental, tribal, or private sources. Notwithstanding other provisions of law, any interest income or investment return on monies credited to the Center for Rural Development Revolving Fund shall accrue to the fund for use by the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development. All monies accruing to the credit of said fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development for the purpose of fulfilling the mission of the Center. Expenditures from said fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law.

SECTION 11. This act shall become effective July 1, 2002.

SECTION 12. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the House of Representatives the 25th day of April, 2002.

Presiding Officer of the House of
Representatives

Passed the Senate the 30th day of April, 2002.

Presiding Officer of the Senate