

Property taxes: Tulsa County Auditor John Wright reported that economic mayhem created by COVID-19 seems to have had little affect on the county's ad valorem trends. The county's total net assessed value grew by about \$229 million last year, to \$6.75 billion.

That's an increase of 3.5%, which is comparable to recent years. The valuation includes new construction, improvements to existing structures and gains in fair market value. Fifty-six percent of the valuation is for residential property. Commercial is 26.5%, personal is 13%, public service is 5% and agricultural is less than 0.1%. Dissenter: Fourth District Congressman Tom

Cole became one of the few Republicans to publicly pan the state's new law

preventing school districts from mandating face masks because of COVID-19. "I think the best decisions for localities are usually made by the people that actually live in that

locality and are there," Cole told Oklahoma City television station KOKH. "The best decisions for individual schools are probably made by school boards and school administrators and school

teachers. So that would be my inclination." Campaigns and elections: Republican U.S. Senate Candidate

Jackson Laymeyer's campaign said he's been endorsed by MyPillow founder Mike Lindell. Lindell's claims of a vast conspiracy to rig the 2020 presidential election have made him the

subject a \$1.3 billion libel suit by Dominion Voting Systems. Under the dome: State

Sen. Dave Rader, R-Tulsa, was named to an advisory group for the Oklahoma Water

Institute at East Central University. Oklahoma, which is run by former state Sen. Susan

Paddock, received a \$20 million federal grant to find "socially sustainable solutions for water,

carbon and infrastructure resilience." As COVID-related hospitalizations again mount, state Sen. Michael Bergstrom

filed legislation to add religious leaders to the list of people who cannot be

denied access to isolated patients. Bergstrom co-authored last session's No Patient Left Behind Act,

which requires patients be allowed at least one person with unrestricted visitation rights. That

bill goes into effect Nov. 1. Bergstrom's more recent filing cannot be taken up

until the 2022 session begins on Feb. 7, unless the issue is included in

this fall's expected special session to finalize legislative and congressional redistricting. State Rep. Melissa

Provenzano filed legislation for next session to return public health decisions like mask mandates to local school boards. A half-dozen other Democrats also signed into the bill, including Representatives Monroe Nichols and John Waldron of Tulsa. Rep. Tom Gann, R-Inola, who tried during the last legislative session to outlaw eviction moratoriums, spoke out against the most recent one. Joined by Rep. Jay Steagall, R-Yukon, said the Center for Disease Control's order amounts to "an usurpation of undelegated power" and an unlawful infringement on property owners' rights. Gov. Kevin Stitt appointed Kaitlyn Allen to fill a vacancy on the Oklahoma County District Court bench. Allen has been in private practice. Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell and state Rep. Toni Hasenbeck, R-Elgin, attended the non-partisan Hunt-Kean education conference in New Mexico. Bottom lines: Sixty pastors who identified themselves as evangelicals asked U.S. Sens. James Lankford and Jim Inhofe to "address the situation" of persons brought to the U.S. illegally as children. ... First District Congressman Kevin Hern visited Tulsa Rig & Iron in Kiefer. ... Lankford reportedly blocked plans to house immigrants from the southern border at the recently closed Great Plains Correctional Facility in Hinton. ... Former legislator Clay Pope, chairman of a rural and small town Oklahoma advocacy group that seems to be Democrat-oriented, took Lankford and Inhofe to task for not backing the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill passed by the U.S. Senate last week. ... Stitt and his cabinet will meet at 11 a.m. Tuesday at City Central, 400 E. Central Ave., Ponca City. Featured video: "Randy Krehbiel, Tulsa World Get Government & Politics updates in your inbox! Stay up-to-date on the latest in local and national government and political topics with our newsletter. Sign up! \* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.