

Childress Solar Farm progressing



Building of the Miase Solar Farm, located between County Road 16 and 17 south of Hwy 287 in Childress County, is in full swing, with close to 200 people currently working on the project. In June, a projected 350 people are expected to be working with a scheduled completion date of December.

Stitt releases statement on passing of Bill W. Burgess, Jr.

Special to the Sun

OKLAHOMA CITY — Governor Kevin Stitt released the following statement on the passing of Bill W. Burgess, Jr., a prominent Oklahoma businessman, Lawton community leader, and member of the University of Oklahoma’s Board of Regents:

“As the son of a Sergeant Major in the Army, Bill Burgess had a special place in his heart for our nation’s soldiers stationed at Fort

Sill, and he will be remembered as a selfless servant to this community. While the people in Lawton were his first priority, Burgess was a generous giver of his time and resources to move our entire state forward. Burgess’ legacy will live on through the vital projects he supported and advocated for to advance Oklahoma’s military installations, to mentor young Oklahoma entrepreneurs, and to promote higher education. Our thoughts and prayers

are with the Burgess family during this difficult time.”

Bill W. Burgess, Jr., was appointed by Governor Mary Fallin to a seven-year term on the Board of Regents in 2014. He served as the Civilian Aide to the Secretary for the Army, was the chairman of the board of Vortex, the former owner/publisher of the Lawton Constitution, and the Senior Partner of Burgess and Hightower Law Firm. Mr. Burgess is the son of Sgt. Bill W. Burgess, Sr. and Betty Burgess. He graduated from Cameron University with a B.A. degree and received his juris doctorate from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

Lower Energy Prices Impact Gross Receipts

Special to The Sun

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma monthly Gross Receipts to the Treasury, while continuing to grow, are beginning to reflect the economic impact of lower energy prices, State Treasurer Randy McDaniel announced today.

Gross production taxes on crude oil and natural gas remitted in January are from oil field production during November, when crude oil prices fell throughout the month. Those receipts, at just over \$100 million, are the lowest monthly total since the production incentive tax rate was raised from 2 percent to 5 percent last year.

Even so, all major revenue streams show increases in gross receipts. January collections are up by almost 9 percent over last year and combined receipts for the past 12 months are up by almost 13 percent.

“The sustained expansion of the state’s economy is noteworthy, but the recent volatility of energy prices illuminates the importance of proceeding with caution,” Treasurer McDaniel said. “We have started to see the impact of lower prices on oil and gas tax collections. However, at least at this point,

any substantial spillover effect on other major revenue sources has not materialized.”

Monthly income, sales, and motor vehicle tax collections all show growth in January of between 2.1 percent and 3.2 percent compared to January 2018. In comparison, combined receipts over the past 12 months show a higher growth rate in those revenue sources ranging from 3.4 percent to 8.4 percent.

New Tax Revenue

Revenue generated by increased tax rates approved in House Bill 1010 during special session last year added \$50.3 million to monthly collections, 4 percent of January gross receipts.

The largest share, \$32 million, came from the increase in the incentive tax rate on oil and natural gas gross production. Higher tax rates on gasoline and diesel fuel generated \$9.9 million, and the \$1 per pack hike in cigarette taxes added \$8.4 million to January’s total.

Other indicators

The Oklahoma Business Conditions Index has topped growth neutral for 18 consecutive months. The January index was set at 57.1, up from 56.4 in November. Numbers above 50 indicate anticipated economic growth during the next three to six months.

Oklahoma’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.2 percent in December is down by one-tenth of a percentage point from November. The U.S. jobless rate of 3.9 percent is unchanged from the prior month, according to figures released by the Oklahoma Employment Security

Commission.

January collections

January gross collections total \$1.2 billion, up \$101.1 million, or 8.9 percent, from January 2018.

Gross income tax collections, a combination of individual and corporate income taxes, generated \$459.4 million, an increase of \$9.4 million, or 2.1 percent, from the previous January.

Individual income tax collections for the month are \$412.9 million, up by \$4.6 million, or 1.1 percent, from the prior year. Corporate collections are \$46.5 million, an increase of \$4.8 million, or 11.5 percent.

Sales tax collections, including remittances on behalf of cities and counties, total \$419.9 million in January. That is \$13 million, or 3.2 percent, more than January 2018.

Gross production taxes on oil and natural gas generated \$100.1 million in January, an increase of \$39.3 million, or 64.7 percent, from last January. Compared to December reports, gross production collections are down by \$18.3 million, or 15.4 percent.

Motor vehicle taxes produced \$68.1 million, up by \$1.4 million, or 2.1 percent, from the same month of 2018.

Other collections, consisting of about 60 different sources including use taxes, along with taxes on fuel, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages, produced \$194.1 million during the month. That is \$38.1 million, or 24.4 percent, more than last January.

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