

SCORECARD

HOW THEY VOTED

JEFF RAYMOND
OKWATCHDOG

Following is a scorecard of how Edmond-area legislators voted on key issues as identified by OKWatchdog for *Edmond Sun* readers.

 OKWatchdog is a nonprofit consumer and patient advocacy group. Its mission is to inform the public and encourage grassroots efforts to improve patient safety. The opinions expressed about the legislation are formulated by OKWatchdog's board of directors. More information may be found at www.ok-watchdog.org.

HB 1570

Summary: This bill requires an affidavit from an expert before a lawsuit involving professional negligence may be filed.

Vote: Governor vetoed
Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye

Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye
Our take: This bill places a costly impediment before injured Oklahomans may even file a lawsuit.

 **Jolley**

HB 1009

Summary: This bill, called the "Oklahoma Lemon Law," requires carmakers to accept return vehicles and refund the full purchase price or replace it with a comparable vehicle.

Vote: Passed House, died in Senate
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye

Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: Senators should have protected consumers instead of those who sell faulty cars.

HB 1595

Summary: This bill makes gender-based abortions illegal.

Vote: Passed House and Senate, now in conference committee.
Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye

Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: Opponents argued there is no evidence that gender-based abortions have occurred in Oklahoma, and the bill humiliates women. Supporters said the bill showed that Oklahomans value life.

SB 315

Summary: This bill reduces the top individual income tax rate from 5.5 percent to 4 percent beginning in 2010. It also removed a revenue growth requirement before cutting taxes. An amendment to the bill restricts embryonic stem cell research.

Vote: Passed the House and Senate, now in conference committee.

Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: If taxes are to be cut this year, and House Speaker Chris

 Benge has said it's unlikely they will be cut given the budget shortfall, the grocery tax should be eliminated first. It's unclear whether the stem cell amendment will survive.

HB 2026

Summary: This bill attempts to increase enrollment in the Insure Oklahoma premium assistance program and allows health insurance companies to offer barebones, mandate-free policies to Oklahomans under 40.

Vote: Passed Senate and House, awaits governor's action.

Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: The Legislature needs to address the number of uninsured with more than a patch-the-tire approach. Removing mandates will have little effect on the cost of insurance for healthy Oklahomans and will make insurance more expensive for those left in the shallower risk pool.

 **Miller**

SB 318

Summary: This bill would eliminate the grocery tax by 2013. It also increases the grocery tax credit from \$40 to \$60 a year.

Vote: Passed House and Senate, now in conference committee.

Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Excused
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: Elimination of the grocery tax is a worthwhile goal but is unlikely this session. Increasing the grocery

tax credit is more responsible and more manageable. Regardless, legislators need to examine changing this highly regressive tax.

HB 1602

Summary: This bill puts to a vote of the people whether to cap attorney fees on a sliding scale.

Vote: Passed House, failed in Senate.

Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye

 **Murphey**

Our take: This bill violates free-market principles and removes accountability from makers of dangerous drugs and unsafe products. It doesn't put a penny in injured Oklahomans' pockets. Only the insurance companies behind the corporate immunity agenda, who face no similar restrictions on what they can pay their attorneys to cover up their wrongdoing and fight injured Oklahomans' claims, benefit from capping attorney fees.

HB 1603

Summary: This 233-page bill caps noneconomic damages at \$300,000, requires potential plaintiffs in class-action lawsuits to "opt in" instead of opt out and enacts a host of other changes to the state's civil justice system.

Vote: Passed Senate and House, now in conference committee.

Sen. Todd Lamb: Aye
Sen. Clark Jolley: Aye
Rep. Marian Cooksey: Aye
Rep. Ken Miller: Aye
Rep. Lewis Moore: Aye
Rep. Jason Murphey: Aye

Our take: This mammoth, anti-consumer bill is a gift to polluters, Big Tobacco and stonewalling insurance companies at the expense of injured Oklahomans. It is predicated on a lawsuit "crisis" that doesn't exist and will do absolutely nothing to improve health care access or affordability, bring businesses to the state or reduce doctors' medical malpractice insurance premiums. An accurate title of this legislation would be the "Insurance Company Bailout and Dangerous Doctor Protection Act." This one-sided bill makes it impossible for Oklahomans to receive justice through the courts.

JEFF RAYMOND is executive director of OKWatchdog. He may be reached at jraymond@okwatchdog.org.



Intelligent Choices.

With the multitude of insurance choices today, **Universal Insurance Agency** is your most intelligent choice.

Fifty years of experience in personal and business risk—spanning start-up to multi-faceted firms

More choices, more competitive pricing through depth of resources and close industry connections

Confident outcomes supported by a culture of integrity and excellence and driven by loyal, proactive service

UNIVERSAL INSURANCE AGENCY
Strategies. Solutions. Stability.

Call today for a personal consultation.
800.842.4889
universalinsurance.com

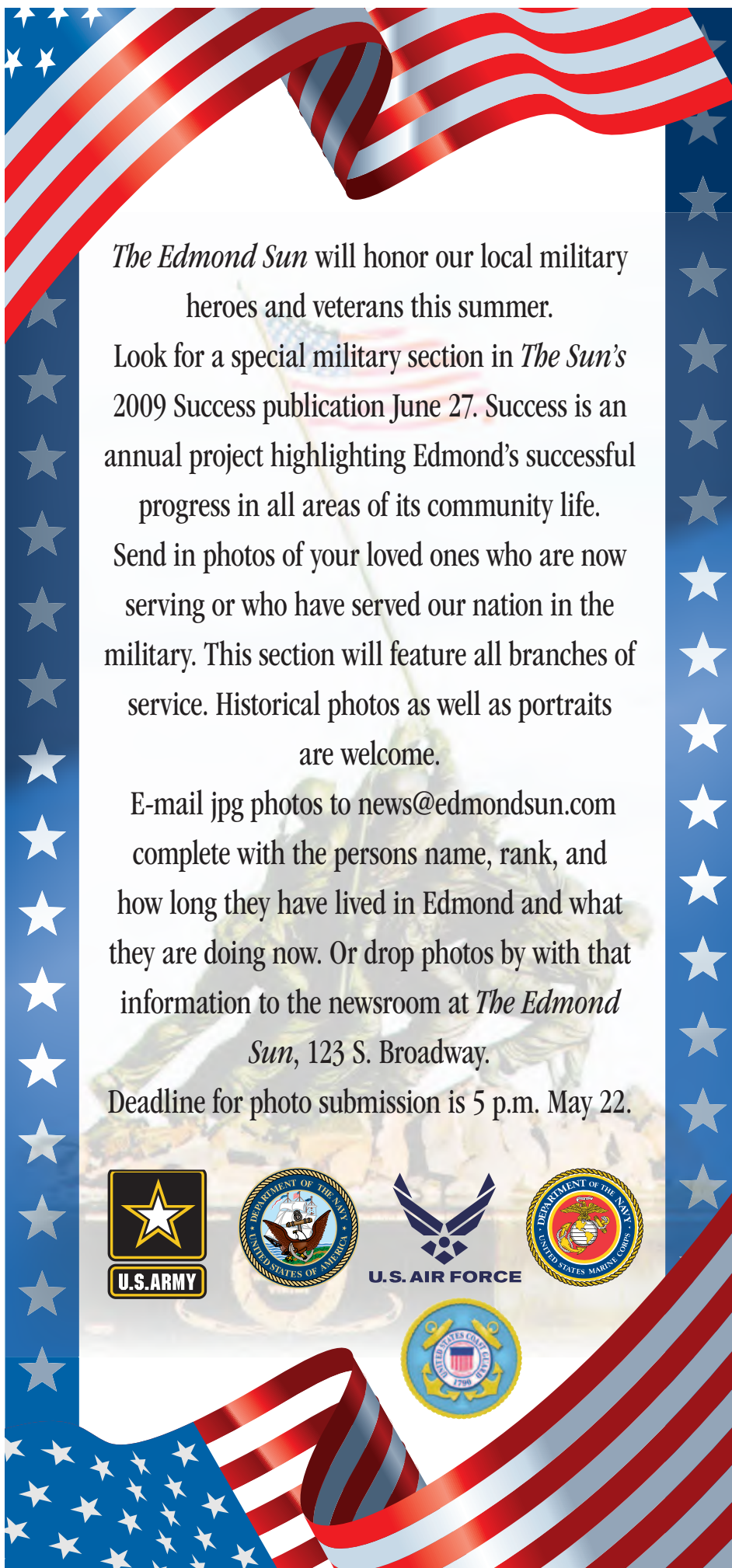
MEETINGS
ON THE AGENDA

Guthrie-Edmond Regional Airport Board

- The Guthrie-Edmond Regional Airport Board will meet at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday Airport Terminal Building, 520 Airport Road in Guthrie. The following items are on the agenda:
1. Call to order.
 2. Public comments.
 3. Consider approval of minutes from April 14 meeting.
 4. Consider approval of 2010 airport budget.
 5. Announcements from staff and board:
 - A. Discussion and update of fencing/gate.
 - B. Discussion and update of T-hangar construction.
 - C. Discussion and update of B-1 designation.
 - D. Discussion of erosion problems.
 6. Comments and requests from board members.
 7. Adjournment.

Central Edmond Urban Development Board

- The Central Edmond Urban Development Board and Edmond City Council workshop will meet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in Room 104 of the Planning and Public Works Building, 10 S. Littler. The following items are on the agenda:
1. Call to order.
 2. Approval of April 14 meeting minutes.
 3. Conceptual/pre-application for the Wesley Foundation site at Ayers and University
 4. Presentation by Turning Point Ministries of new residential project south of Thatcher, west of Broadway – Legacy Station.
 5. Discussion of CEUDB Energy Policy.
 6. Discussion of update to the 1998 Downtown Master Plan and consideration of creation of sub-committee
 7. Staff updates.
 8. New business.
 9. Adjournment.



The Edmond Sun will honor our local military heroes and veterans this summer. Look for a special military section in *The Sun's* 2009 Success publication June 27. Success is an annual project highlighting Edmond's successful progress in all areas of its community life. Send in photos of your loved ones who are now serving or who have served our nation in the military. This section will feature all branches of service. Historical photos as well as portraits are welcome. E-mail jpg photos to news@edmondsun.com complete with the persons name, rank, and how long they have lived in Edmond and what they are doing now. Or drop photos by with that information to the newsroom at *The Edmond Sun*, 123 S. Broadway. Deadline for photo submission is 5 p.m. May 22.