

TULSA WORLD

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Bill Haisten: TU conquers Memphis for biggest victory of Eric Konkol's tenure **SPORTS, PAGE B1**

Tulsa poised to become a leader in autonomous tech, officials say **NEWS, PAGE A8**

Trump rolls out his Board of Peace at the Davos forum **NEWS, PAGE A4**

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

OSDE wants to banish Walters' rules

ANDREA EGER
Tulsa World

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma State Board of Education took another step Thursday in disentangling state policy from former State Superintendent Ryan Walters' legacy.

In its annual review process of administrative rules, the board voted 6-0 to

approve the removal of a rule Walters introduced one year ago that requires new applicants to pass a U.S. Naturalization Test as proof of their "patriotism" in the process of becoming certified to teach in Oklahoma.

Board member Michael Tinney was absent from Thursday's meeting.

The removal of that testing requirement and other proposed changes to the

Oklahoma State Department of Education's administrative rules will be considered next by the state Legislature when its session begins in February.

"The Oklahoma State Department of Education is committed to ensuring that our teacher certification requirements are fair, relevant and focused on preparing educators to best serve our students," a spokeswoman

for the education department told the Tulsa World after the board meeting. "Removing this requirement allows us to streamline the certification process and reduce barriers for qualified candidates while maintaining rigorous standards for educator preparation and performance."

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STATE QUESTION 836

PETITION DRIVE CONTINUES FOR SINGLE-BALLOT PRIMARY



MIKE SIMONS, TULSA WORLD

Beth Husen gets a signature from James White on an initiative petition for State Question 836 at LaFortune Park on Thursday. Nearly 175,000 valid signatures will be required to bring the state question proposing single-ballot primaries to a statewide vote.

Nearly 175,000 signatures must be collected by Monday

RANDY KREHBIEL
Tulsa World

Getting the nearly 175,000 valid signatures required to bring State Question 836, which proposes single-ballot primaries, to a statewide vote was always going to be an uphill fight.

And that was without the cold and snow predicted for the final days of the initiative petition's signature-gathering campaign.

With sub-freezing temperatures and snow forecast for the weekend and signed petitions due in Oklahoma City on Monday, a half-dozen Vote Yes 836 volunteers waved signs to attract motorists along Yale Avenue in front of the LaFortune Park baseball fields parking lot Thursday afternoon and evening.

They found a few takers.

But it wasn't simple. Tulsa County Parks Director Matt Hancock learned of Vote Yes's intentions Wednesday night and notified organizers they could not use the LaFortune parking lot because their activity were not an "authorized event."

Vote Yes maintained a 1st Amendment right to use the parking lot. The city of Tulsa, for instance, generally allows unscheduled signature-gathering in its parks as long as "existing and posted park



MIKE SIMONS, TULSA WORLD

Glen Ellington is dressed as a bald eagle as volunteers collect signatures Thursday at LaFortune Park to get State Question 836 on a statewide ballot. Petitions are due in Oklahoma City on Monday.

rules are followed."

In any event, after some discussion it was agreed the volunteers could gather signatures on the sidewalk. So, motorists who wanted to sign the petition had to pull in, get out of their cars, and go to the

volunteers.

In early afternoon, the event generally consisted of four to six volunteers and no more than two petition-signers.

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State will soon issue redesigned ID cards

Administrator says new driver's license will be 'most secure in the world'

RANDY KREHBIEL
Tulsa World

Oklahoma will soon begin issuing driver's licenses that are among the most secure in the world, Service Oklahoma Executive Director Jay Doyle told a legislative panel on Thursday.

"The physical driver's license is going to be redesigned and have the top security features truly in the world," Doyle told the House of Representative's appropriations subcommittee on general government. "It will be one of the most secure physical credentials in the world."

The new driver's licenses are part of a new data system expected to go online in less than 30 days. Among other features, the system will eventually combine access to driver and motor vehicle information — thus doing away with

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PSO: Data centers not source of rate increase proposal

STEVE METZER
Tulsa World

OKLAHOMA CITY — A proposed 15% increase in bills to be paid by residential customers of Public Service Co. of Oklahoma isn't the result of anticipated future impacts of data centers or other "large load" consumers of electricity.

Rather, it's a reflection of the impacts of inflation identified from the recent past, according to Amy Brown, the director of regulatory services at PSO.

On Jan. 2, PSO requested a rate review by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. If approved as filed, the Tulsa-based company said its average residential customer using 1,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month would experience a monthly bill increase of about \$25.

It may seem logical to conclude that the rate review was requested based on the company's expectations of costs it will incur in the future producing and delivering electricity to customers. But it's actually based on expenses already incurred, Brown said.

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Lottery

For the latest lottery numbers, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link.

Weather

A little snow
High 29 • Low 8
Forecast • A2

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