

## **Sen. Brogdon stands out among gubernatorial hopefuls**

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=3903#more-3903>

I just returned from the American Institute of Architect's annual Legislative Conference, held at the capitol building in Oklahoma City. Every year, architects from all over Oklahoma converge on the capitol to visit with legislators and to express our opinions about bills that could affect our profession.

This year, we invited the gubernatorial candidates to meet with us to share their thoughts about their candidacies, and what they would like to accomplish if they were elected.

Four candidates were invited - Democrats Drew Edmondson and Jari Askins plus Republicans Mary Fallin and Randy Brogdon. All four committed to make an appearance, and all attended except Mary Fallin, who sent her regrets because she was busy in western Oklahoma.

Due to a tight schedule, each candidate was given only ten minutes to state their case, and each did so in a different way.

Drew Edmondson, who has been our Attorney General since 1994, spoke about his accomplishments during his tenure.

He cited the \$2 billion Tobacco Trust, from which the interest and earnings are used for health care in Oklahoma.

He cited the lawsuit with Southwestern Bell that also resulted in a trust, which uses its earnings to increase the use of computers in our schools, as well as training of teachers. According to Edmondson, this has brought Oklahoma from fiftieth in the country for use of computers in the classroom to twelfth.

Edmondson also cited his lawsuit with the poultry producers that will prevent poultry waste from being used as fertilizer on fields, and to prevent the watershed from polluting the environment.

Finally, he stated his desire to attract newcomers from Michigan and California to Oklahoma.

Edmondson served three terms as Muskogee County District Attorney prior to becoming Attorney General.

Jari Askins clearly wanted us to know that she had great admiration for us architects, and that she was aware of our role in the construction industry. She expressed a desire to see that the construction industry would expand and thrive in Oklahoma, and that architects should play a role in affecting the economy and the safety of the buildings in our state.

Askins also discussed the fact that Oklahoma is one of few states that constitutionally requires a balanced budget, and that since the state can't borrow money, it is forced to balance its budget within its income.

Askins, an attorney, was elected Lieutenant Governor in 2007. Prior to her election, she served on the Pardon and Parole Board, and was a Special District Judge in Stevens County.

Randy Brogdon spoke last, relating his own upbringing that included a hard work ethic and being taught to be responsible with money. He commented on Askins' statement regarding the balanced budget to say that the State of Oklahoma does indeed balance its budget, does it by spending all that it takes in.

Brogdon said that our current budget crisis has occurred primarily because of "overspending without prioritizing," and that the State is about to pick up the current shortfall by dipping into the Rainy Day Fund.

According to Brogdon, the Rainy Day Fund should only be used for true emergencies, citing ice storms, the Midwest City tornado, and the I-40 bridge collapse as examples of what that fund was actually set aside to do. He said that the current thinking of the legislature is that, because of the recession, we should use the fund to continue to fund current programs, and that it would deplete the fund.

Randy Brogdon was elected State Senator in 2002. He was responsible for the "Taxpayer Bill of Rights," or TABOR, and the "Taxpayer Transparency Act." He led the movement for the State of Oklahoma to opt out of the Real ID Act of 2005, and he authored Senate Joint Resolution 10, the 10th Amendment Resolution, which was designed to protect states rights. He also achieved a 100 percent score on the Conservative Vote Index.

Oklahoma is facing severe challenges over the coming months and years. One is from the onslaught of federal laws, such as the health care bill, that will hurt all of our states. Another challenge will be to convince our own state legislators that they need to be fiscally conservative. Without a strong conservative in the governor's office, Oklahoma will not be able to prevent an economic disaster.

That is just one reason why I am asking my readers to get behind Senator Brogdon, and help him win this election. I'll be discussing more reasons to elect him in coming articles.

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