

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Brownlee at 8:30 a.m. on January 16, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: April Holman, Legislative Research Department  
Sherman Parks, Revisor of Statues

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary Kansas Dept. of Human Resources  
William Sanders, Director Employment Security  
Phil Harness, Director of Workman's Compensation  
Martha Gabehart, Executive Director Kansas Commission on  
Disability Concerns

Others attending: See attached list.

The joint meeting of the Senate Commerce Committee and the House Business, Commerce and Labor Committee was called to order by Senator Karin Brownlee. Representative Al Lane thanked everyone for being there and gave a few brief comments regarding the agenda for today's meeting.

Chairperson Brownlee recognized Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary Kansas Department of Human Resources. The meeting was turned over to Mr. Aeschliman who briefed the committees on recent unemployment numbers and the impact it has had on the State of Kansas. Mr. Aeschliman then introduced the Human Resources staff and the meeting was turned over to William Sanders, Director Employment Security.

William Sanders provided a spreadsheet to the committee members showing a comparison for the last several years of claims taken (Attachment 1). Mr. Sanders explained that the following methods can be used by employees to file for unemployment benefits: Call Centers, Internet Access, Interactive Voice Response and Employer Filing. The new procedures have reduced their minutes per unit processing time to approximately 12 minutes opposed to the 47 minutes processing time two years ago.

Roger Aeschliman introduced Philip Harness, Director of Workers Compensation. Phil Harness briefed the Committee on Workers Compensation Fraud and Abuse, Information Technology and a Kansas State Plan. The State Plan would elect to develop and operate their own safety and health programs in contrast with Federal States which submit to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) under the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) (Attachment 2).

Roger Aeschliman introduced Martha Gabehart, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns. Ms. Gabehart explained that the KCDC is an advocacy entity within the Kansas Department of Human Resources (KDHR) and that they recommend changes to states laws, programs and regulations to help Kansans with disabilities live in their communities (Attachment 3).

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2002 at 8:30 a.m.