

METRO®ION

Executions likely to resume

State now has reliable access to drugs for lethal injections

RANDY KREHBIEL
Tulsa World

Oklahoma is ready to resume death-row executions with the same three-drug protocol in use when lethal injections were suspended in 2015, officials said Wednesday.

It's a big circle for the state, which all but gave up on lethal injection as a form of capital punishment five years ago. It considered

alternatives that included firing squads and bringing the state's old electric chair out of retirement before deciding to go back to sedating and paralyzing inmates before stopping their hearts with potassium chloride.

Executions probably won't begin until next year because of legal proceedings, a state House of Representatives panel was told, but operationally the Department of Corrections is ready to carry them out at any time.

"Today we are actually ready to resume executions in accordance with our policy and state statute," said Department of Corrections

Director Scott Crow.

"Director Crow and his team have updated and refined and, as far as I'm concerned, perfected their protocol to administer the drugs required to carry out executions in the state," said Attorney General Mike Hunter.

Oklahoma, which remains among the nation's leaders in carrying out capital punishment, suspended executions in 2015 after one inmate died a slow, grotesque death because the lethal drugs were not injected properly and another was executed with a drug not included in the protocol.

The execution of a third con-

demned man, Richard Glossip, was postponed in October 2015 when the state asked for an indefinite stay while it figured out how to proceed.

Much of Wednesday's hearing by the House Public Safety Committee revolved around Glossip — who most likely would be the first to die once executions resume — and whether he should be on death row at all.

Glossip was twice convicted and sentenced to death for the 1997 murder of Barry Van Treese at an Oklahoma City motel. Glossip did not kill Van Treese, but the person who did, Justin Sneed, testified

that Glossip arranged the murder.

In return for his testimony, Sneed accepted a life sentence.

Glossip maintains that he played no part in Van Treese's death. His current attorney, Don Knight, said prosecutors and police have not been cooperative in turning over records and evidence from the case.

State Rep. Kevin McDugle, R-Morrison, who requested Wednesday's hearing, said he wants to make sure innocent people are not executed when the state resumes lethal injection.

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'ONCE IN A BLUE MOON'

Steve Dotson sorts gourds and moves pumpkins at Dotson's Produce, 13001 S. Memorial Drive in Bixby. Area residents are decorating now for the harvest season — including Halloween. The holiday will fall on a "blue moon" — the second full moon of the month — this year. Blue moons happen about once every 2½ years, according to NASA. This irregularity is how the phrase "once in a blue moon" came to be.

MATT BARNARD PHOTOS, TULSA WORLD

Shade structure wanted for new bridge

KEVIN CANFIELD
Tulsa World

Several city councilors on Wednesday encouraged a Gathering Place official to include a shade structure on the deck of the new pedestrian bridge across the Arkansas River.

"Even in Gathering Place there are multiple places to sit and enjoy the shade, whether it be watching your children play or having lunch or reading or whatever you're doing," said Councilor Connie Dodson.

The issue came up during an update on the project presented to councilors by Jeff Stava, director and trustee of Tulsa's Gathering Place LLC.

Three years ago, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, on behalf of the Gathering Place, won a city-sponsored design competition to build the bridge. The winning design, called the Gateway Bridge, will replace the previous pedestrian bridge over the Arkansas River at approximately 29th Street.

Stava told councilors there was not enough money in the city's budget to include a shade structure.

"The very cheapest shade structure that would be safe and everything was about \$5 (million) or \$6 million," Stava said.

Some councilors seemed surprised by the news in part because the rendering of the Gateway Bridge displayed when it was named the winner of the design competition included a shade structure, wooden benches, vegetation and other amenities.

But that image was of a \$35 million version of the bridge — not the bridge that can be built with the \$27.4 million the city has budgeted for the project.

Mayor G.T. Bynum asked MVVA and the other finalist in the competition, KKT Architects, to present designs for a bridge that could be built for \$24.4 million — and a \$3 million contingency — and one that could be built for \$35 million.

Bynum said at the time that he was hopeful that private dollars could be raised to build the more expensive version of the bridge, but those funds have yet to be raised.

"Now that bids are being evaluated, it gives us a chance to discuss opportunities for enhancements to the bridge with interested donors,"

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Special session requested

City councilors want to extend the time period for virtual meetings

KEVIN CANFIELD
Tulsa World

Tulsa city councilors want Gov. Kevin Stitt to call a special session of the state Legislature to vote on extending the time period during which government entities can hold meetings virtually.

Councilors voted unanimously Wednesday to send a letter to Stitt asking for a special session to consider amending the special video and teleconferencing provisions of the state Open Meeting Act to extend the deadline from

Nov. 15 to March 14.

The Legislature approved a measure in March granting government entities wider leeway in holding virtual meetings. That measure is scheduled to expire when Stitt's state of emergency ends, or Nov. 15, whichever occurs first.

"The urgency of this action stems from the continuing and growing COVID-19 pandemic and our concern for the life, health, safety and continuity of our local government bodies and the public who has a right to access, hear and speak to these governing bodies per compliance requirements of the Open Meeting Act," a draft copy of the letter states.

As of Wednesday, 19,657 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Tulsa County, with 182 Tulsa County residents dying from it, according to the Tulsa Health Department.

Stitt spokesman Charlie Hannema said the Governor's Office had reviewed a draft copy of the council's letter but that Stitt had not received the final version.

"We will give thoughtful consideration to the Tulsa City Council's request, as we do all requests from local officials," Hannema said.

The council's letter notes that the public as well as the 435 members of the city's nearly 50 entities that are subject to the Open Meeting Act would be

put at risk if meetings must be conducted in person during the pandemic.

"Medical, public health, and government leaders advise that, for the public to protect themselves from infection, we all should maintain our distance from each other and avoid remaining in close proximity with non-family members for an extended period of time," the letter states.

"This kind of safe separation in time and space, while allowing government to continue to openly meet, is exactly what the current legislation and executive order provides."

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WWII casualty comes home

Sailor killed at Pearl Harbor identified, returned for burial

JORDAN GREEN
The Blackwell Journal-Tribune

BRAMAN — On what would have been his 100th birthday, an Oklahoma-born sailor who was killed in the Pearl Harbor attack was laid to rest Wednesday near his former home.

Rex E. Wise was buried beside his parents and siblings at the Braman Cemetery, north of

Blackwell in Kay County, during a military funeral. Sailors from the Wichita Navy Reserve gave him a three-volley rifle salute and presented the American flag used to cover his coffin to one of his family members.

"It's just beyond terrific," said Helen Weller, the oldest of Wise's nieces and nephews.

Gov. Kevin Stitt ordered flags on state property to fly at half staff on Wednesday to honor Wise.

Wise was born in Braman on Oct. 14, 1920. He later moved to South Haven, Kansas.

A Navy fireman 1st class, Wise

was stationed aboard the USS Oklahoma at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu on Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese aerial forces bombed the harbor, the impetus for the United States to enter World War II. Wise was one of 429 men on the Oklahoma who died in the attack.

Wise, who was 21 at the time, was one of hundreds of sailors at the base whose bodies couldn't be immediately identified.

Personnel with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

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JORDAN GREEN, THE BLACKWELL JOURNAL-TRIBUNE

U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Robert Nowakowski hands a folded American flag to Helen Weller on Wednesday during the funeral of her uncle, Rex E. Wise, a sailor who was killed during the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

OBITUARIES

Rosalio Villalon Martinez

On October 9, 2020, Rosalio Villalon Martinez went to be with the Lord. He is survived by his wife, Linda Martinez; sons, Jose Angel and Rosalio; grandchildren Linda, Miguel, Javier, Jackson, Jacqueline, Anthony, Maria and Henry; great grandchildren, Xavier, Brynlee, Lavinia and Xander; and siblings Lupe, Enrique, Irma, David, Carmen and Ricardo.

Rosalio lived a life dedicated to his family and friends. With a smile always on his face, he offered help to all. He enjoyed working for American Airlines for thirty years. He valued hard work, loyalty and integrity. He never settled for giving anything less

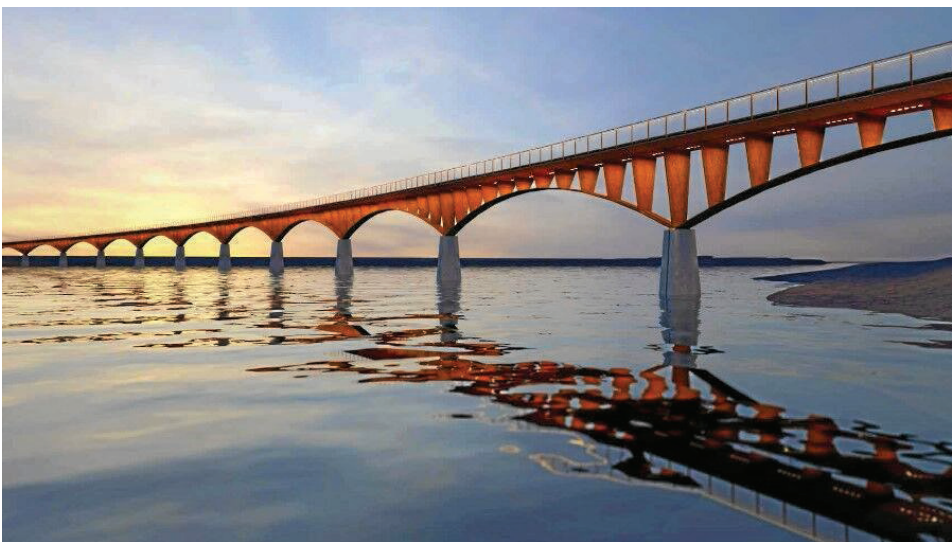


than all of his heart and soul. He loved his wife and children immensely, dedicating his time and efforts to their well-being.

Rosalio joins our Heavenly Father to be alongside his parents, Enrique and Engracia; his brother, Raul; and his daughter, Janie. Together, they rejoice in the glory of our Lord.

Visitation Thursday, 5-7 PM and Rosary 7 PM, both at Fitzgerald Southwood Colonial Chapel. Mass of Christian Burial Friday, 11 AM, St. Francis Xavier Church.

Fitzgerald Southwood Colonial Chapel, 918-291-3500.
www.fitzgeraldfuneralservice.com



COURTESY MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES

This rendering shows the planned new pedestrian bridge across the Arkansas River. The images originally released, which showed a canopy, benches and other amenities, were of a \$35 million version of the bridge – not the bridge that can be built with the \$27.4 million the city has budgeted for the project.

Bridge

From A9

Bynum said Wednesday. “There are some great opportunities for donors in this project, and I am looking forward to those discussions. No additional city funds will be expended on this bridge.”

City Councilor Crista Patrick was one of the councilors who urged Stava to explore adding a shade structure to the pedestrian bridge.

“Nobody wants to sit on a bench that doesn’t have any shade,” Patrick said after the meeting. “So although it looks really beautiful in their nighttime pictures, it doesn’t look like it will be terribly useful during the daylight hours in the middle of Oklahoma summers, especially when you consider its metal railings.

“That metal will heat up and could have some potential for some serious burns for small children or elderly people who might

not be paying attention and grab hold of the railing.”

Patrick suggested that Stava consider placing a parasail-type structure on the bridge deck that could be put up and taken down as needed, an option Stava said he would be glad to look into.

“I just would have to go back and ask the design folks how we would attach it to the structure and put those parasails up,” he said. “I think that is something that could be done intermittently across the bridge.”

Councilors also discussed whether to include bike lanes on the pedestrian bridge. As currently designed, the deck of the bridge would have separate areas for pedestrians and cyclists similar to the River Parks trails that will connect to the bridge.

An alternate design discussed Wednesday would remove all markings on the 18-foot-wide bridge deck to encourage cyclists and pedestrians to pay attention to their surroundings

and to encourage slower bike traffic.

When the city agreed to have the Gathering Place build the bridge on behalf of the River Parks Authority, the parties agreed that the cost of any enhancements beyond what the city’s \$27.4 million could pay for would be split between the city and private donors.

The existing pedestrian bridge is scheduled to be demolished in late December or January. The new pedestrian bridge is expected to be completed in late 2022 along with the city’s overhaul of Zink Dam.

The Tulsa World first reported last year that it was likely that not all of the amenities shown in the rendering of the proposed \$35 million bridge would be built, and last month the World reported that there would not be sufficient funding for a shade structure.

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DEATH NOTICES

TULSA

Fears, Ronnie, 74, automotive parts manager, died Tuesday, Oct. 13. Visitation 5-8 p.m. Thursday, Dil-lon Funeral Service, Sand Springs. Private family services.

Hahn, Rosalie Catherine (Moran), 87, died Monday, Oct. 12. Rosary 7 p.m. Thursday and funeral Mass 10 a.m. Friday, both at Church of St. Mary. Fitzgerald Southwood Colonial.

Martinez, Rosalio V., 72, American Airlines airframe mechanic, died Friday, Oct. 9. Visitation 5-7 p.m. Thursday and rosary 7 p.m. Thursday, both at Fitzgerald Southwood Colonial Funeral Home, and funeral Mass 11 a.m. Friday, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church.

Mason, William C., 93, retired minister and Army veteran, died Tuesday, Oct. 13. Celebration of life 2 p.m. Saturday, Asbury United Methodist Church. Moore’s Southlawn. ★

Wilson, Robert Eugene, 82, veteran, died Monday, Oct. 12. Viewing 4-6 p.m. Thursday, Floral Haven Funeral Home, Broken Arrow, and graveside service 10 a.m. Friday, Floral Haven Memorial Gardens, Broken Arrow. ★

STATE/AREA

Funeral home, church and cemetery locations are

Death notices policy

Death notices include basic information about the deceased: the person’s name, age, occupation, date of death, place of death, visitation and service information. They are available only to funeral homes. Fees are waived when a full obituary is published or in cases in which funeral homes have waived fees due to hardship. Funeral homes can submit death notices with an online submission form. If there are questions about the online form, call 918-581-8503 for assistance between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Funeral homes also can call 918-581-8347 for assistance between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. seven days a week. Death notices must be received by 8 p.m. to appear in the following day’s paper.

in the city under which the death notice is listed unless otherwise noted.

Bixby

Oliver, Lee, 99, retired service station owner, died Wednesday, Oct. 14. Service 11 a.m. Monday, RiverCrest Chapel & Event Center. Bixby Funeral Service.

Broken Arrow

Donnelly, Timothy, 36, Hilti divisional project manager, died Thursday, Sept. 10. Memorial Mass 11 a.m. Friday, St. Benedict Catholic Church. Hayhurst.

Metcalf, Victor, 94, retired American Airlines crew chief and Marine Corps veteran, died Friday, Sept. 18. Memorial service

2 p.m. Sunday, Hayhurst Funeral Home Chapel. ★

Claremore

Whisman, Johnnie, 82, concrete contractor, died Monday, Oct. 12. Private family services. MMS-Payne.

Collinsville

Henderson, Isabella Gracelynn, 10, Collinsville Upper Elementary School student, died Monday, Oct. 12. Services pending. Mowery, Owasso.

Owasso

Reeve, Audrey Young, 70, teacher, died Monday, Oct. 12. Visitation 4-8 p.m. Friday, Mowery Funeral Service.

Executions

From A9

“I know some believe a person can’t make it all the way (through the court system) and be innocent,” McDugle said. “Having looked at one case and getting ready to look at another, it is my personal opinion that it can happen.

“Is it possible for someone to be on death row and be innocent? It’s my personal opinion that it is possible,” he said. “We’ve got to get it right. If we’re going to put somebody in the chair and end their life, as Oklahomans we have to get it right.”

Committee Chairman Justin Humphrey, R-Lane, said he supports capital punishment but also has reservations.

A one-time Corrections Department employee, Humphrey said he’s played a small role in a few executions and that it is “a sobering experience. If you say you

support the death penalty, go in and participate. See them take a life.”

Crow and Hunter said the state now has reliable access to the three execution drugs — midazolam, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride — which it did not have in 2014 and 2015, when suppliers were refusing to sell the substances for executions.

In 2015, it was learned that Oklahoma had executed Charles Warner with potassium acetate instead of potassium chloride. The two are similar but not identical, with potassium acetate used primarily in chemical de-icers.

Crow said steps have been taken to assure that the correct drugs are used whenever Oklahoma’s next execution occurs. He said \$130,000 has been spent to upgrade the execution chamber — known internally as the special operations room — at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester.

In 2015, when it was believed that Oklahoma would no longer be able to obtain the drugs for lethal injections, the Legislature authorized nitrogen hypoxia — essentially suffocation — for executions, but no practical way of carrying it out has been developed, Crow said.

In 2016, Oklahomans approved a constitutional amendment allowing electrocution and shooting in capital cases.

Hunter said he has no qualms about resuming executions with the drugs that were a central part of the previous controversy. “They’ve been used successfully in the past, not only in Oklahoma but in numerous other states,” Hunter said. “Issues with these drugs have always led back to human error.”

He said the DOC has “located a reliable source for the three-drug protocol.”

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Sailor

From A9

identified Wise’s remains a year ago after examining his dental records and obtaining saliva from his sister, Eunice Wittum, for DNA analysis.

His remains were delivered to his family and funeral home employees at the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport in Wichita, Kansas, during a ceremony Tuesday, the 245th birthday of the U.S. Navy.

‘He honorably served’

Dozens of family members, military veterans, firefighters and police officers attended the funeral

Wednesday to pay their respects to Wise.

Dressed in his bright white uniform, U.S. Navy Chaplain Daniel McGraw read Wise’s eulogy as the sun shone down on the flag-draped coffin behind him.

“It’s fitting that we’re here today because today would have been Fireman Wise’s 100th birthday, and yesterday was the 245th birthday of the United States Navy,” McGraw said. “It is our admiration and love for Fireman Wise — and our connection to the Navy that he honorably served — that unites us all here today.”

American flags planted in the cemetery by the Braman American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 259 waved in the wind as recordings of

“God Bless America” and other patriotic songs played through a speaker system.

“Fireman Wise gave his all, even to the last full measure, for the love and protection of his country,” McGraw said. “He stepped up to serve during tumultuous times, and he faithfully kept the watch. His life exemplifies the honor, courage and commitment that we hold so dear. And now he has finally come home to rest.”

Sailors then performed the traditional rifle salute. Following the salute, one played taps.

Sailors removed the flag from Wise’s coffin and tightly folded it into a triangle, a tradition at military funerals. A sailor presented the flag to Weller, 87, one of the few surviving fam-



JORDAN GREEN, THE BLACKWELL JOURNAL-TRIBUNE

The flag-draped casket of Rex E. Wise awaits burial at the Braman Cemetery on Wednesday during a military service for the Oklahoma native who was killed at Pearl Harbor.

ily members who had the chance to know Wise.

She laid her hand across the flag in her lap, her eyes drawn to the casket in front

of her.

Rear Admiral Robert Nowakowski, the acting deputy commander for the Navy Recruiting Command,

delivered a message to the family.

“It’s great to be able to remember such a hero that we unfortunately lost over 78 years ago in battle at Pearl Harbor,” he said. “But what I want to do is give you some optimism, as well. Last year, the Navy actually recruited about 40,000 new sailors to come in to be a part of the world’s greatest Navy, and I just want to assure you that the legacy of Petty Officer Wise is going to be taken on by thousands of additional sailors that are joining our strong force.”

As the ceremony ended, Weller stepped out from the green canopy at the burial site.

She smiled and said, “I’m thankful that he’s home.”

~ Directory of Community Funeral Homes ~

Gary Kelley's
Add'vantage Funeral Services
www.garykelleyfunerals.com
Bixby Funeral Service
www.bixbyfuneralservice.com

Floral Haven
Crematory | Funeral Home | Cemetery
www.floralhaven.com

Hayhurst Funeral Home & Crematory
www.hayhurstfuneralhome.com

Moore Funeral Homes & Crematory
www.moorefuneral.com

Mobley-Groesbeck Funeral Service
www.mogro.co

Mowery Funeral Service
www.moweryfs.com

Ninde Funeral & Cremation
www.ninde.com

Rose Hill Funeral Home & Memorial Park
www.rosehilltulsa.com

Schaudt Funeral Service
Glenpool, Okmulgee, Tulsa
www.schaudtfuneralservice.com

Stanleys Funeral & Cremation Services
www.stanleysfuneralhome.com

Fitzgerald Funeral Service
www.southwoodcolonialchapel.com

Dillon Funeral Service and
Woodland Memorial Park
www.dilloncares.com

Mark Griffith Memorial Funeral Homes
Tulsa, Sand Springs
www.markgriffithmemorialfuneralhomes.com

Dighton-Moore Funeral Service
www.dightonmoore.com

Garrett Funeral Home
www.garrettsfuneralhome.com

Parsons-Canoe-Beggs Funeral Home
www.pcbfuneralgroup.com