

STATE SUES KIOWA COUNTY OVER MEETING

PATRICK HENRY ONCE SAID THAT LIBERTY IS NEVER SECURE AS LONG AS GOVERNMENT DOES BUSINESS IN SECRET.

Liberty Sentinel (April 25, 2007)

(The Associated Press) The state is suing the Kiowa County Commission, alleging that two members held an illegal meeting to discuss an insurance matter.

At the request of the state, Kiowa County Attorney Candace Lattin asked the Kiowa District Court to assess a \$500 penalty against Commissioners Earl Liggett, Gene West and Don Richards.

County Clerk Evelyn Grimm said only Richards and West were involved in the Feb. 26 meeting and no minutes were recorded.

Richards, who is chairman of the commission, said he, Grimm and the assistant clerk were talking to an insurance representative over a speakerphone when West arrived and stayed.

Richards said the discussion was informational. But the Kansas Open Meetings Act requires proper public notification of a meeting when a quorum of commissioners discusses county matters.

Richards said M.T. Liggett, a government watchdog and creator of roadside art near Mullinville, filed a complaint about the meeting.

Liggett, whose brother is the county commissioner not present at the insurance discussion, has his name on the official list of people who want to be notified of commission meetings, Richards said.

Richards said he thought Lattin had to file the lawsuit to show that the county was taking M.T. Liggett's complaint seriously.

Unfortunately, events do occur in Kansas that our Founding Fathers would deem unacceptable. So, from time to time, you will be receiving "The Liberty Sentinel," an article about open government that may be of interest to you. If you have questions regarding the following information, please contact the contributing newspaper or Kansas Press Association at rgannon@kspress.com.

