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# Capitol Doesn't Dominate City

**O**KLAHOMA CITY is the state capital of Oklahoma. Everybody knows that, but not everybody regards the state capital alike.

Only seven other state capitals are larger in population than Oklahoma City and none is larger in area. More populous capitals are Atlanta, Boston, Columbus, Denver, Indianapolis, Nashville and Phoenix.

In every one of these places a visitor is likely to become immediately conscious that he is in a capital city, because of location of state buildings and the attitudes of the people living there.

This may be even more likely when you go to places like Austin, Topeka, Bismarck, Olympia, Carson City or Baton Rouge, where the state may be the biggest business in town. Juneau is the smallest state capital, with a 1970 population of only 6,000.

Perhaps because Oklahoma City is built over such a large area, or because we have so many other things going, it doesn't come through so strongly as a capital city. Of course, you will find it out by reading the newspaper, or if you drive out to see the oil derricks on the capitol grounds, or if you get lost.

Except for political news, Oklahoma City residents may give the buildings around NE 23 and Lincoln little thought. It would be interesting to know how many have never seen the major structures put up since 1970.

Folks out over the state regard the capital in a different light. When they say "We are going to The City tomorrow", they know that their listeners understand they plan a trip to the state capital. They recognize it as such, and probably know a member or more in the legislature and

have other friends around the capitol.

Oklahoma City is almost exactly in the geographical center of the state, and Oklahoma county has a resemblance to the state as a whole. For example, blackjack and other native trees cover the eastern half of the county, just as trees are common in the eastern half of the state. The western half of both county and state are prairie land, with trees mostly limited to waterways. A north-south division exists, but it is less noticeable.

What is evident is Oklahoma City's continually growing importance as the state's principal wholesale and retail distribution center, manufacturing locality, transportation interchange, and financial, cultural and social center.

Some years ago, it was found that Tinker Air Force Base employed people who lived in 65 counties, some commuting as far as 200 miles round trip daily. If Tinker does not now draw that wide a representation, other new industries make up for it.

Parking lots at shopping centers any day will reveal auto tags from dozens of counties, and folks come to The City for many purposes besides shopping. They attend art shows and theaters, fairs and circuses, conventions and concerts, rodeos and social events, often in addition to looking after business and politics.

No matter how we view it, Oklahoma City is a big capital city in a thriving state that is balancing its agriculture and oil industries with manufacturing payrolls in nearly every city and town.