

'Earth Day' Needs No Celebration

TODAY is the 91st anniversary of the Run of 1889, when thousands raced into Oklahoma to claim homes and freedom. That calls for a celebration.

Today also is the 10th anniversary of "Earth Day," an event used by ecological extremists as a springboard to persuade Congress to enact or authorize excessive regulations and create more agencies to enforce them.

That calls for a non-celebration. Even though President Carter has proclaimed "Earth Day — Ten," he may need a loud amplifier and a hearing aid to hear Oklahomans singing hosannas to OSHA and EPA.

A study of what has happened in the regulatory wonderland we call Washington in the past decade is provided by Ken McFall, executive secretary of Oklahoma Farm Bureau. It was made by Rick Main of the American Farm Bureau Federation Washington staff.

Twenty regulatory agencies have been created, bringing to 80 the number that regulate virtually every phase of commercial activity.

With growth in agency numbers has come a growth in employment of regulators, increasing from 27,690 in 1970 to more than 100,000.

Cost of the regulators has increased from \$800 million in 1970 to more than \$6 billion in 1980.

More regulators and more money means more regulations and more interpretations of regulations, as indicated by a jump in number of pages in The Federal Register from 20,000 in 1970 to 77,450 in 1979.

Cost to taxpayers of these regulations is estimated to total between \$100 billion and \$150 billion a year.

These regulations also cost the average family of four more than \$2,000 a year, more than 10 percent of average income. A new home costs \$2,500 more due to federal, state and local regulations. A new car costs \$667 more.

Federal agencies not only are spending huge sums and requiring large amounts to be spent by businesses and industries to comply with their regulations. They also are handing out sizable amounts to friends who run a variety of organ-

izations.

For example, a grant of \$28,000 was given to the Citizens Environmental Coalition Education Fund in Houston. The Sierra Club was given \$95,223 to provide training and educational materials. The League of Women Voters of Louisiana got \$19,774 to educate the public.

Main notes that not all regulatory acts are necessarily bad. But if a system set up to create law and order goes wild, a condition of excessive restraint and loss of freedom may result.

"The power in this country has moved from the farms, from the business community, from the board rooms, to a cancerous complex of regulatory agencies in Washington D.C., and in state capitals," Main said.

Who demanded these regulations? "Since the mid-1960s more than 5,000 environmental and public interest groups have sprung up in this country, totaling over five million voluntary members, or about two percent of our entire population," Main reports.