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Welcome to 'Land of Contentment'

THIS month Oklahoma has been described as a pretty good place to live, according to a survey by a national accounting firm and also in a study reported by a Michigan psychologist.

The accountants based their conclusions on statistics relating to 22 items that manufacturers consider when looking for new plant sites. Oklahoma was ranked 16th by this classification.

The psychologists evaluated 3,000 individuals' responses to 200 questions concerning their satisfaction with their country, cities, neighborhoods, homes, families, friendships and living standards.

Oklahoma was found to be in the "land of contentment" that runs up the middle of the United States. It should be, adjoining the "Land of Enchantment" on the west and "Land of Opportunity" on the east.

Probably few people would disagree. However, it is obvious that a considerable number of factors that make our state a desirable place to live were not evaluated in either analysis.

Take our weather. The highest

recorded temperature was 120 degrees at Tishomingo and lowest was 27 degrees below zero at Watts. That averages out somewhere in the 70s. The number of days that are too wet or too snowy are offset by days that are too dry. Subtracting these extremes leaves some 250 days a year that are about right.

In most states, rains and melting snow run down out of the mountains to water the plains below. Most of Oklahoma's rivers run out of the west side plains into the east side mountains. Highest point is Black Mesa in the Panhandle and lowest is along Red River south of the Kiamichi Mountains in McCurtain County.

Our western prairies receive only about one-third as much average annual rainfall as the hilly eastern counties receive. But it averages out and keeps the rivers flowing most of the time.

When Texans started bragging about their six flags somebody pointed out that what is now Oklahoma has been under 14 different flags, not including the banners of 66 Indian tribes within her boundaries.

Most state capitols have domes. Most domed roofs leak. Oklahoma is known as the state with the domeless capitol. That is not quite correct. It is just not on top of the building. Walk into the lobby and look up. You will see a very ornate capitol dome.

Most legislatures don't produce anything but laws. Oil has been pumped from beneath Oklahoma's capitol for 50 years. Officials spend the income just like it was tax money, so we don't notice it.

Agriculture is one of Oklahoma's principal industries, producing enough cattle to provide every man, woman and child in the United States with 66 quarter-pound hamburgers, plus wheat to make buns for them, with enough left over for peanut butter sandwiches.

Landowners and oilmen both are eagerly hoping to strike oil on farms, but for different reasons. Farmers want oil so they can move to town and oilmen so they can buy ranches. Both groups know that a rotation of crops, livestock and oil wells brings prosperity.