

Where Tourist Information Is Available

OUR COMMENTS a couple of weeks ago to the effect that Oklahoma is not ready for tourists proved to be rather controversial.

First telephone and letter reaction was in agreement, as individuals related difficulties in finding where to go and what to do. They simply had not found information they wanted readily available in convenient places.

Then Kent Ruth of Geary, the state's premier travel writer, sent a copy of his excellent "Oklahoma Travel Book." He said "You're just the one this was written for."

This book, published in 1977 by the University of Oklahoma Press, very likely is the most complete description of Oklahoma points of interest, cities, towns and history ever compiled.

It might be available in book stores and certainly may be obtained from the University of Oklahoma Press at Norman, but the majority of tourists may never get one into their hands.

Then Kathleen Marks, executive director of the Convention and Tour-

ism Bureau of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, forwarded a large assortment of brochures and maps and a copy of a letter insisting that tourist information is abundant.

A number of the brochures obviously are expensive printed pieces and might not be available for wide distribution to visitors.

Some of the materials are purely promotional and others contain useful information about where to stay, where to eat and special events. As a tourist at one time or another in all 50 states, my experience has been that the more elaborate a tourist brochure is the less likely it is to be helpful in finding what you are looking for. Local citizens may not be much help, either.

The selection from Director Marks contains some inexpensive one page maps that should be very helpful to strangers or home folks, if they can get their hands on them. She has an answer for that, too.

"The state operates eight infor-

mation centers, including one at the State Capitol, and the city has one at the airport and one at the Chamber of Commerce," she writes. "In addition, there are brochure racks at most hotels and motels in town."

Then she adds that the Chamber's tourist division is preparing to go on-line with "Infovision" at all large shopping malls, airports, hotels and motels. "A computerized information system on the entire city will be at your fingertips," she says.

Furthermore, anyone wanting to know what is going on in Oklahoma City may call 236-ARTS, or the Chamber's information number, 232-2211, a 24-hour service. So it is a pleasure to inform those who have had trouble locating places of interest, just dial those numbers and ask your questions. Apparently, the literature is free.

Before long maybe Oklahomans will know our state better and be able to tell visitors about it. Then we may be ready to greet tourists and help them enjoy their visit more.