

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 1995

Top FBI Agent Considered For Head of Public Safety



Bob Ricks

er, learned Keating met Monday with state Sen. Mark Snyder, R-Edmond, who must agree to the appointment since Ricks lives in his district.

The governor wants to name Ricks as public
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By Robby Trammell
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Staff Writers

Gov. Frank Keating wants to name Oklahoma City's top FBI agent, Bob Ricks, to head the state Department of Public Safety in the midst of a criminal probe of its highway patrol operations, *The Oklahoman* has learned.

Ricks, 50, became nationally known in 1993

during the FBI's standoff with a religious cult near Waco, Texas.

The governor's decision comes as the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation is concluding its investigation of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, which has been hit by allegations of wrongdoing by supervisors, including reports of fixing tickets for some legislators.

"There is a good chance

there is going to be some changes occurring at the department of public safety," said Dan Mahoney, the governor's director of communications. "The governor is still evaluating it. There have been some discussions with some people."

The spokesman would not confirm or deny Ricks has been asked to consider taking the position. Ricks, reached at

his Edmond home, also declined to discuss the governor's plans.

"I don't have any information that that's the case. That's all I can say about it," Ricks said.

"Am I interested in the job? I'd have to speak to somebody about it and find out what the job is about first. I'm still with the FBI. ... You might be making a mistake."

The Oklahoman, howev-

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safety commissioner and as his Cabinet secretary of safety and security. Both would require Senate confirmation.

Ricks gained national attention as the FBI spokesman during the agency's standoff with the Branch Davidians. That standoff ended when FBI agents raided the compound and a fire broke out, killing some 80 people inside the compound, including cult leader David Koresh. The FBI claimed cult members set the deadly fire.

A joint hearing of two U.S. House subcommittees began on the tragedy last week. Ricks has said he was not subpoenaed to testify.

Snyder would not discuss his meeting with the governor.

"I'm sure that Mr. Ricks, from what I can gather, has had a very distinguished career with the FBI and is a very good investigator," Snyder said. "My understanding is there are others being considered."

Asked if he would agree to move Ricks' nomination, if asked by the governor, Snyder said: "I don't know the man. When it comes to any kind of law enforcement or major appointment, I do my own little background check of them."

"My general philosophy is the governor is the chief executive officer of the state and is entitled to have whatever Cabinet and the people he wants to direct departments unless I find something that is really disagreeable, and I have found that in the past."

Keating — a former FBI agent — has been reviewing 2,500 pages of investigative reports from the OSBI and expects an additional report this week. The appointment could be announced as early as Thursday.

Last week, Keating called the current public safety commissioner, Kenneth Van Hoy, "a fine professional" but questioned whether he was providing "the kind of visionary, aggressive leadership that I think that department needs."

"That is a decision that I will have to make after I finally review these reports, and I will do so," the Republican governor said.

Troopers could be reluctant to accept a commissioner from outside the public safety department.

Roy Rogers, president of the Oklahoma State Troopers Association, said, "I've been doing this for 27 years, and I would think that I would like to see somebody from within our agency. If that's not possible, then I hope that whoever sits there will work with us and sit down and be able to negotiate and visit about different prob-

lems that we have."

At least one state senator, however, feels new leadership is vital.

"I think it is a good idea to bring in somebody from the outside who is also respected in law enforcement and can have a chance to look at things that have happened in the past objectively and rectify some problems," Sen. Brooks Douglass, R-Oklahoma City, said.

"I think it will go a long way to kind of clear up the image of what may or may not have happened in the past."

Ricks, a Republican, was appointed as special agent in charge of the Oklahoma City FBI office in September 1989. He has been with the FBI since July 1969.

He has a law degree from Baylor Law School.

Van Hoy said he has not heard anything about a replacement and does not plan to resign. He has been commissioner since June 17, 1994, and said he wants to continue. "If I were given the opportunity," he said. "I've never been given an assignment yet that I couldn't handle."

Staff writer Diane Baldwin contributed to this report.

1.50 SUPER SAVER CINEMA

SHIELD PLAZA	LAKEHORE MALL
MAN OF THE HOUSE (PG) 1:15 3:15 5:15	FORGET PARIS (PG13) 1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10
FRENCH KISS (PG13) 7:15 9:35	TOMMY BOY (R) 1:30 3:30 5:25
FORGET PARIS (PG13) 1:20 3:20 5:20 7:20 9:20	FRENCH KISS (PG13) 7:20 9:45
DUMBS & DUMBER (PG13) 3:45 5:45 7:45	GOOPY (G) 7:20 9:45
PULP FICTION (R) 1:00 3:45	1:25 3:10 5:15 7:15 9:00
MAJ BOYS (R) 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:45	MAJON PAYNE (PG13) 1:35 3:35 5:35 7:30 9:30
JOHNNY MNEMONIC (R) 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30	JOHNNY MNEMONIC (R) 1:20 3:20 5:20 7:20 9:20
ONE HAND WITH A VENGEANCE (R) 1:10 3:40 7:00 9:30	MAN OF THE HOUSE (PG13) 1:40 3:40
A GOOPY MOVIE (G) 1:00 2:35 4:10 5:45 7:20 9:00	PULP FICTION (R) 7:00 9:50
MAJON PAYNE (PG13) 1:40 3:40 5:40 7:40 9:40	MAJ BOYS (R) 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
	ONE HAND WITH A VENGEANCE (R) 1:00 3:30 7:00 9:45