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Oklahoma Prepares for Open Carrying of Firearms

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) - Oklahoman's who are licensed to carry concealed weapons will soon be able to carry their handguns openly in public under a much-debated new law.

Oklahoma's open-carry law approved by the Republican-controlled Legislature and signed into law earlier this year goes into effect Thursday. It allows the estimated 141,000 Oklahomans with a concealed-carry license to also carry their weapons openly.

While the state's increasingly conservative Legislature has been clamoring for open carry for years, the arrival of the new law is causing some consternation among Oklahoma's law enforcement and business communities as they prepare for an increase in the number of citizens openly carrying firearms.

State officials say there has been a 40 percent increase in the number of people applying for a weapons permit.

Associated Press