

## 2012 Economic Forecast Remains Bright

This month, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber published its annual economic forecast, providing a comprehensive analysis of the regional economy, including historic trend analysis, a snapshot of the current situation, and a forecast for the upcoming year.

Several key developments during 2012 will have a significant effect on the economic landscape:

- The completion of Devon Energy Corporation's 50-story, \$750-million world headquarters and the economic impact it will generate.
- The relocation of Continental Resources' headquarters from Enid to downtown Oklahoma City which will bring 255 employees to the new location, with more than 450 new jobs expected in the next several years.
- The continued expansion and redevelopment of the

SandRidge Energy campus in downtown Oklahoma City and the aggressive expansion of the Chesapeake Energy Corporation campus.

- The opening of the relocated I-40 Crosstown.
- The completion of the \$700-million MAPS for Kids program which built new or renovated 73 school sites throughout the Oklahoma City public school district.

Over the past three years, Greater Oklahoma City has benefitted from consistently low monthly unemployment rates. In 2011, the city continued to hold the top rank in having the lowest unemployment with an average of approximately 5.5 percent. Low unemployment rates and consistently good press may lead to an influx in the labor force as people are driven to the market to look for work. This influx may cause the region to lose its top rank

*Continued on Page 5*

## New VisitOKC.com Benefits Visitors, Partners

The Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) recently launched a new version of its website, VisitOKC.com. The site includes a new design, revamped content and advanced features – making the site a more useful tool for planning a visit to Oklahoma City. The previous site was developed in 2007.

“VisitOKC.com is often the first way people experience Oklahoma City before they visit,” said Mike Carrier, president, Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau. “It is essential that it be a useful tool for those planning to visit our region. The new site benefits

*Continued on Page 10*



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# Leadership Notes

## Make Your Voice Heard

This month marks the start of the legislative session at the state capitol. For the next four months, our representatives and senators will work on hundreds of bills – many of which will have a significant impact on the business community.

Last month, we hosted our annual Legislative Breakfast. The crowd of more than 500 people – a combination of elected officials and members of the business community – prove that the Chamber's work as an advocate for the business community is important.

During the breakfast, one elected official commented that last year he only received calls from his constituents on 10 bills. That's just a fraction of the hundreds they work on. He finished his comment by stating that the calls he did receive from his constituents had a much larger impact than the hundreds of calls he received from lobbyists throughout the session. This is a poignant reminder of the incredible value of personal contact with our elected officials.

The Chamber is your advocate at the capitol and we will be there each and every day during the session, meeting with legislators and fighting for the business community and Greater Oklahoma City. But we cannot succeed alone. We are all constituents, and we must all ensure that our voice is heard. During the session, I encourage you to do the following:

- **Read the Legislative Guide** and find the issues that are important to you and your business. It is available online at [www.okcchamber.com/legislativeguide](http://www.okcchamber.com/legislativeguide) and will arrive in your mailbox later this month.
- **Call, e-mail or visit your elected officials.** They are in office to represent you, but they cannot do their jobs effectively if you do not contact them.
- **Sign up to receive the Chamber's legislative updates.** These e-mails will provide you with key information on issues being discussed at the capitol.

Last year we had one of the most productive legislative sessions in our state's history. I'm confident that if we work together to make our voice heard, we can see the same results this year.

Sincerely,



Roy H. Williams  
Chamber CEO & President



Roy H. Williams  
President & CEO

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# 2012 Economic Forecast Remains Bright

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for having the lowest unemployment rate. However, an increase in the workforce also gives local businesses a larger labor pool from which to draw. Even with these changes, Oklahoma City is expected to remain in the top five large metros with the lowest unemployment.

Last month, during his State of the City address, Mayor Cornett said, “As good as our local economy is, our economy would be doing even better if the national economy was doing better.” National and global uncertainties continue to be a drag on the local economy. Overall, a jobless recovery persists at the national level. While Greater Oklahoma City was less affected by the national downturn and has also rebounded more quickly, projected job gains for 2012 are modest, with growth under two percent. Slow, steady growth continues to be a positive alternative to recent national trends.

Overall, optimism exists for 2012. However, there are a few areas of caution as they relate to potential risks for the regional economy. Potential federal budget cuts could negatively impact Tinker and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. In addition, weak natural gas prices continue to be of concern to local firms in the Energy sector.

Nationally, 2011 provided slightly fewer economic development leads when compared to prior years, but it was not a dramatic decline. Despite challenges with economic conditions, the Greater Oklahoma City region enjoyed strong employment gains from new-to-market firms and the expansion of existing businesses.



The number of jobs created from Chamber-assisted new-to-market firms was relatively consistent with the previous year. However, the wages for those jobs were 108 percent higher than the Oklahoma City metro average. The number of jobs resulting from Chamber-assisted business expansions grew by more than 80 percent for the second consecutive year. During 2012, Greater Oklahoma City should expect to see increases in capital investment continue as firms choose to invest more in equipment and efficiencies.

Across the U.S., there is a continual shift in economic development strategies toward the expansion of existing companies and entrepreneurship activities. According to YourEconomy.org, of the more than 77,000 stand-alone or headquartered businesses in the Oklahoma City metro, approximately 92 percent have fewer than 10 employees. This emphasizes the importance of fostering innovation and entrepreneurship as part of the Greater Oklahoma City region’s economic development strategic plan. It will be critical that economic development strategies remain flexible in order to respond to potential job growth from both larger businesses and smaller start-ups.

The full economic forecast is available on the Chamber’s website at [www.greateroklahomacity.com/forecast](http://www.greateroklahomacity.com/forecast).

## 2011 Results of Chamber-Assisted Projects

Jobs .....	5,626
Average Salary .....	\$74,718
	(89% higher than MSA avg. wage)
Capital Investment .....	\$426,596,530

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Breaking Through: March 7

The Oklahoma River and its corresponding

development are having an incredible impact worldwide on both rowing and canoe/kayak, and are fast becoming a crown jewel in the community. Hear from Joe Jacobi, CEO at USA Canoe/Kayak; Mike Knopp, executive director of the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation; Kelley McGuire, director of youth outreach for the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation; and Brian Volpenhein, head coach for the Oklahoma City National High Performance Center, at the Breaking Through luncheon, Wednesday, March 7, at the Cox Convention Center, 1 Myriad Gardens, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The panelists will discuss the programs available at the river as well as future plans to further develop the district. Special thanks to Series Signature Sponsor, Cox Business, and Host Sponsor, Renaissance Oklahoma City Convention Center Hotel & Spa.

## Rise & Shine: Feb. 16

Rise & Shine is a semi-annual breakfast where Chamber members learn about the many ways to maximize their membership and get involved. The spring Rise & Shine will take place, Thursday, Feb. 16, at Crowne Plaza Oklahoma City, 2945 NW Expressway, from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Admission for this event is free. For more information, contact Christine Soileau at [csoileau@okcchamber.com](mailto:csoileau@okcchamber.com) or 297-8691. Special thanks to Host Sponsor, Crowne Plaza Oklahoma City.

## Chamber Web Seminar: Feb. 21

The new OKCChamber.com offers members and their companies a variety of tools to help promote their business. These quarterly seminars will demonstrate how to utilize the Chamber's website to market your company to the business community and to walk away with a personalized plan to increase exposure to the Chamber's more than 5,000 member companies.

The first seminar is Tuesday, Feb. 21, from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Dulaney-Browne Library Computer Lab on the Oklahoma City University Campus, 2501 N. Blackwelder Ave. These seminars are free to attend, but RSVP is required. To register, visit [www.okcchamber.com/web](http://www.okcchamber.com/web).

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## February 14

### Member Orientation

**Time:** 8:30 - 10 a.m.

**Location:** Chamber offices, 123 Park Ave.

**Cost:** This event is free to attend. Register by contacting Christine Soileau at 297-8961 or [csoileau@okcchamber.com](mailto:csoileau@okcchamber.com).

## February 16

### Rise & Shine

**Time:** 8 - 9:30 a.m.

**Location:** Crowne Plaza Oklahoma City, 2945 NW Expressway

**Cost:** Admission is free. Registration/Networking begin at 8 a.m. Program begins at 8:15 a.m.

## February 17

### Chairman's Breakfast with the Governor

**Time:** 7:30 - 9 a.m.

**Location:** Oklahoma Christian University, 2501 E Memorial Road

**Cost:** \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members.

## February 21

### Maximize Your Membership Web Seminar

**Time:** 4 - 5 p.m.

**Location:** Oklahoma City University, Dulaney-Browne Library Computer Lab, 2501 N Blackwelder Ave.

**Cost:** Admission is free, but RSVP is required.

## February 28

### Sunset Reception

**Time:** 4 - 6 p.m.

**Location:** Oklahoma Blood Institute, 901 N Lincoln Blvd.

**Cost:** Admission is free. No need to RSVP.

## February 29

### MegaLunch

**Time:** 11 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

**Location:** Holiday Inn North - Quail Springs, 13800 Quail Springs Parkway

**Cost:** \$35 for members. Reservations must be made 72 hours before the event.

## March 2

### Greater Grads Career Fair

**Time:** Noon - 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** Cox Convention Center, 1 Myriad Gardens

**Cost:** Single booths are \$400, and double booths are \$750. Government and non-profit rates are available.

Register securely online for Chamber events at [www.okcchamber.com/events](http://www.okcchamber.com/events) or e-mail [register@okcchamber.com](mailto:register@okcchamber.com) with questions.



## Chairman's Breakfast: Feb. 17

Governor Mary Fallin will discuss her plans for 2012 and present key issues facing Oklahoma on Friday, Feb. 17 at Oklahoma Christian University, 2501 E. Memorial Rd. from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Chamber chair Carl Edwards, Price Edwards & Company, will also provide an overview of current Chamber initiatives.

Tickets for the breakfast are \$30 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. Corporate tables seating eight are available for \$500 each. Special thanks to Signature Sponsor, Cox Communications and Host Sponsor, Oklahoma Christian University.

## TRDC Volunteer Info Session: Feb. 28

Come to the TRDC Prospective Volunteer Information Session on Tuesday, Feb. 28, from noon to 1 p.m. at the INTEGRIS Cancer Institute of Oklahoma, 5911 W. Memorial Road, and discover why more than 100 volunteers sign up for the annual Total Resource Development Campaign (TRDC), the Chamber's most popular volunteer activity. During TRDC, Volunteers meet local business leaders by selling sponsorships to Chamber events, advertisements in Chamber publications and new memberships. Another Prospective Volunteer Info Session will take place Wednesday, March 7 from 4 to 5 p.m. at the INTEGRIS Cancer Institute of Oklahoma, 5911 W. Memorial Road.

TRDC is a fun way to connect with Oklahoma City's decision makers and improve your sales and networking skills. For questions, contact Debra Roper, member development manager, at droper@okcchamber.com or 297-8808.

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# Advocating for OKC in Nation's Capital



The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber is the voice of business and the visionary organization in Oklahoma City. However, that does not mean the Chamber's advocacy efforts stop at the boundaries of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County or even the state. Each year the Chamber works with a number of partner agencies to advocate for a variety of issues in Washington.

"The legislation enacted in Washington, D.C. has an incredible impact on the business we do here in Oklahoma," said Brad Krieger, Arvest Bank, Chamber vice chair government relations. "D.C. may be more than a thousand miles away, but the policies developed there resonate in our business community. It is imperative that the Chamber do everything in its power to ensure the business community's voice is heard on Capitol Hill."

## Federal Jobs

One of the key areas the Chamber advocates on is striving to maintain and grow the federal employment base in Greater Oklahoma City. Not only do Tinker Air Force Base and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contribute to the Greater Oklahoma City economy through their combined employment of approximately 32,000 and an annual payroll of \$1.95 billion, but these jobs and the people who hold them also contribute greatly to the community. It is essential that we protect these jobs for the region's citizens and for the continued strength of the economy.

## Infrastructure & Transportation

Three of the nation's most important highways – Interstates 35, 40 and 44 – meet in the heart of Oklahoma City. This, combined with the city's central location, positions Oklahoma City at a critical point in the U.S. transportation system. Federal funding has been crucial to the realignment of the I-40 Crosstown and will continue to play a role in the region's efforts to strengthen its infrastructure.

As Greater Oklahoma City looks to incorporate a modern surface transportation system into the metro – including the planning and execution of the MAPS 3 modern streetcar in downtown Oklahoma City – federal support in planning and execution as well as federal funding will be critical to the success of these projects.

## Industry Support & Funding

In order to ensure Greater Oklahoma City has a strong and diverse economy, it is important that the Chamber advocate on the federal level for key industries experiencing tremendous growth in the region including bioscience, aerospace and energy. The Chamber actively communicates with Oklahoma's congressional delegation on legislation that facilitates growth in these industries. We also seek opportunities for special funding available through federal grants and other programs.

## Education

Oklahoma City is a key player in the national movement to make all-day Pre-K education an option for all students. As the Chamber works to strengthen education in our state, we will continue to support and assist with Oklahoma's applications for federal competitive grants that will make new programs possible while taking some of the financial burden off local districts.

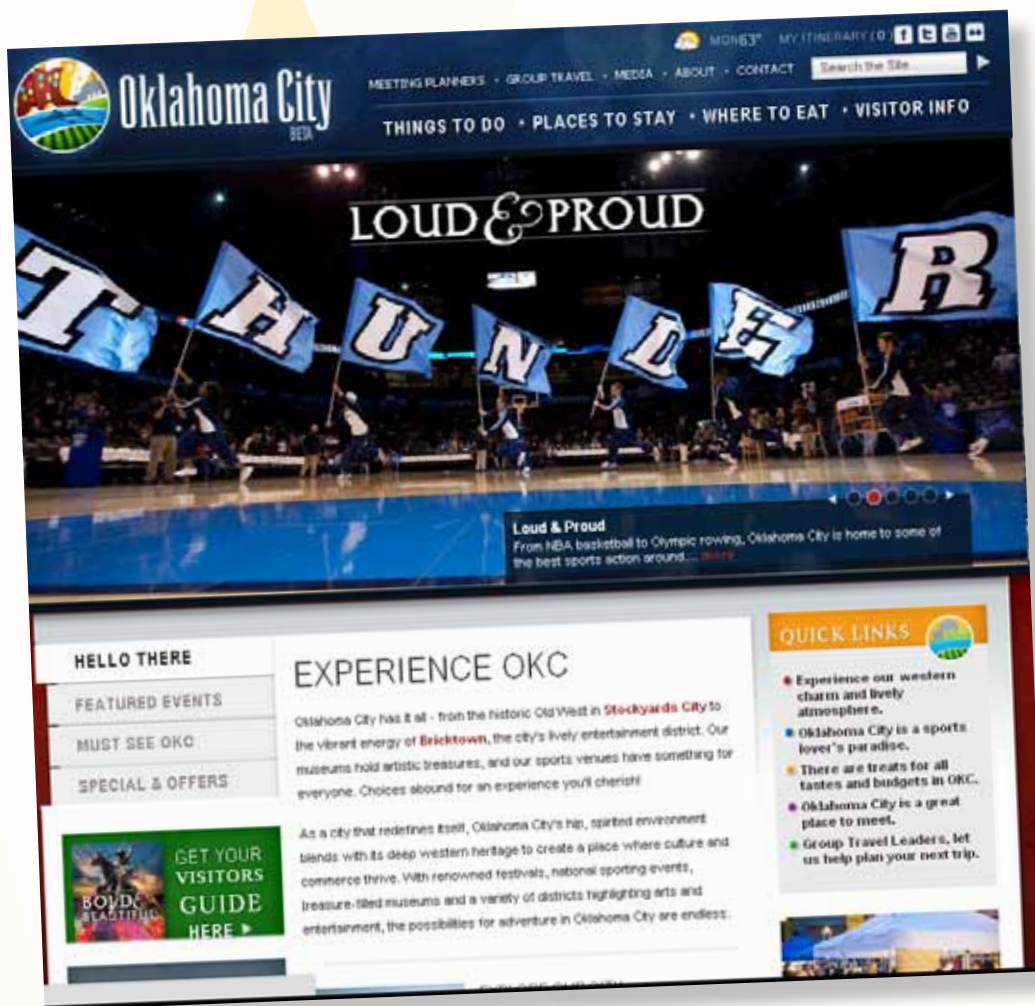


Join fellow community leaders for the Chamber's annual D.C. Visit on June 27-28. This annual event includes personal briefings

with Oklahoma's Congressional delegation and a reception on Capitol Hill with federal officials. Attendees will learn more about legislation that impacts local business and have an opportunity to personally speak with Oklahoma's Senators and Congressmen. The cost to attend is \$750 per person and includes one night's lodging at The Liaison Capitol Hill and all affiliated events. Air travel is not included, giving attendees the option to extend their stay for additional business in the area. The room block is limited. Secure your place and view the agenda at [www.okcchamber.com/DC](http://www.okcchamber.com/DC).

# New VisitOKC.com Benefits Visitors, Partners

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The new VisitOKC.com offers a variety of planning tools for meeting planners, families, group tours or individuals.

everyone . . . families, meeting planners, individuals, group tours and more.”

The site’s updated design adds increased flexibility and takes advantage of current layout trends. The overall design was created to reflect the CVB’s current advertising campaign.

“We wanted to create a site that would really show-off all that Oklahoma City has to offer as a tourism and convention/meetings destination,” said Seth Spillman, director of marketing and communications for the CVB. “We also wanted the look of our site to more closely reflect our current ad campaign, creating a more cohesive image for all of our marketing efforts. We think this new site accomplishes both.”

An important new element of the site is the use of

advanced hotel, restaurants and attraction listings. The new listings integrate an interactive map, making it possible for users to search based on a variety of criteria – location, property types and amenities. This feature goes hand-in-hand with the trip builder and makes it easy for visitors to plan everything about their stay in Oklahoma City. Users can search for hotels, restaurants, attractions and even upcoming events. While making their choices, they can build a custom itinerary for their trip.

The new event calendar includes an interactive map and can be searched by day, week or month.

By dividing the site’s menu bars into key phrases – Things to Do; Places to Stay; Where to Eat and others – the CVB made it easy for visitors to find exactly what they are looking for. A new section on Oklahoma City districts can be found in the Visitor Info section. By

Taking a stay-cation? Plan your activities through the Trip Builder.



Detailed listings now feature an interactive map and the ability to search for what's nearby



highlighting the different districts in Oklahoma City, the CVB can help visitors discover what the unique and vibrant areas around the city have to offer.

“Oklahoma City’s offerings are vast, and we have something for everyone,” said Rhonda Hooper, Jordan Advertising, Chamber vice chair convention & visitors bureau. “By showcasing our districts, we can help visitors get a better picture of our city – the sites, the restaurants, the hotels, the events – further developing our image and reaching a wide range of individuals and groups.”

The new site also includes key partner features to help local hotels, attractions, restaurants and more market their business to potential visitors. Through the site, CVB partners can manage their web listings directly, making it easier for them to keep their information accurate and better serve visitors.

A second phase of features will launch later this year. Some of these features include:

- Venue listings with interactive map integration that will allow meeting planners to search for meeting venues based on a number of criteria, such as meeting room space, number of hotel rooms, etc.
- A mobile site with advanced listings and itinerary builder integration.
- Advertising and sponsorship opportunities for CVB partners and area hotels, restaurants and attractions.

For more information or questions about VisitOKC.com, contact Seth Spillman, director, marketing and communications, at 297-8905 or [sspillman@visitokc.com](mailto:sspillman@visitokc.com).

# Get Your Company Noticed

The main representative listed for your company can now post coupons and discounts alongside your company listing on OKCChamber.com. Coupons are available to anyone visiting OKCChamber.com. Member to member discounts are available only to other Chamber members who are logged-in to OKCChamber.com.

- Log in and click “Add/Edit a Web Coupon” or “Add/Edit a Member to Member Discount”
- Type or copy and paste your text into the text field
- If your deal is an image, click the insert image button
  - Click “Upload File” and navigate to where you have the image saved on your computer
- Give your deal an expiration date
- Click Submit

If you have questions or problems while using this new feature, contact Christine Soileau at 297-8961 or [csoileau@okcchamber.com](mailto:csoileau@okcchamber.com).

# Resources Headed Your Way

Chamber resources will arrive in your mailbox later this month. The Business Resource Guide & Membership Directory includes information about the Chamber and a complete listing of more than 5,000 member companies. The Legislative Guide features information on voting; photos and contact information for elected officials at the congressional, state, county and local levels; and an explanation of the Chamber’s legislative agenda. And the 2011 Annual Report details the work of the Chamber throughout the calendar year, spotlighting top stories and successes.

This package will also include your 2012 Chamber member plaque sticker, as well as passes to local events and attractions. Special thanks to our sponsors: American Banjo Museum; GT Clean, Inc.; Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum; MTM Recognition / Midwest Trophy; Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum; Oklahoma River Cruises; Oklahoma State Fair, Inc.; The Oklahoman Direct; and YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City.



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# Be a Voice for the Business Community

With the start of a new legislative session comes the increased opportunity for Chamber members to have a voice in the work taking place at the capitol. The Chamber provides a variety of tools to help members stay up-to-date on the issues being discussed during the session.

## Legislative Action Center

The Legislative Action Center ([legislativeactioncenter.net](http://legislativeactioncenter.net)) is a grassroots advocacy tool that connects you with elected officials and legislative issues at the click of a button.

## Legislative Updates

These updates are sent weekly throughout the legislative session to provide Chamber members with information on the issues being discussed at the Capitol. These timely alerts help you know when to contact your legislator on issues of importance.



## Greater OKC Chamber PAC

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Political Action Committee (Greater OKC Chamber PAC) is the only fund that aggressively pursues the election and re-election of candidates who take a stand for Oklahoma City's key business issues.

"The Chamber is the single most important and influential advocate for economic development and business improvement in central Oklahoma," said Mark Funke, Bank of Oklahoma. "The Chamber's work with important legislation, advocacy for business issues and support of the business community is vital to our region's growth. We are members of the Chamber so we can support their activities and take advantage of the opportunities they provide."



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# Greater Grads Career Fair: March 2

Oklahoma's brightest graduates will soon be entering the workforce. The Chamber's annual Greater Grads Career Fair is your only opportunity to participate in a career fair exclusively for Oklahoma companies. This year's event will take place from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 2 at the Cox Convention Center, 1 Myriad Gardens.

By exhibiting at this event, your company will have the opportunity to recruit talented Oklahoma students and future graduates for internships and jobs. Single booths are \$400 and double booths are \$750. Non-profit and government booth pricing is available.

Special thanks to Greater Grads Benefactors Chesapeake Energy Corporation, Continental Resources, Devon Energy Corporation, Enogex Inc., OGE Energy Corp. and SandRidge Energy, Inc.



## Members Show Support for Chamber

The following member companies increased their investment between October and December, demonstrating strong support of the Chamber's efforts to drive the city's economy to make this the best place to live, work, play and visit.

### Board of Advisors / Bronze Lead Investors (\$3,000 - \$4,999)

**Oklahoma Historical Society**  
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Dr. Bob Blackburn..... 521-2491  
Oklahoma History Center  
800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive  
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www.okhistory.org

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Mr. Scott Fikes..... 815-4843  
226 Dean McGee Ave., Suite 200  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-3459  
www.plico-ok.com

**Swanda Brothers, Inc.**  
Contractors - Sheet Metal  
Mr. Chuck Cooley..... 682-1463  
4301 S.W. 29th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73119-1001  
www.swanda.com

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P.O. Box 18109  
Oklahoma City, OK 73154-0109  
www.tbsfactoring.com

**Whole Foods Market**  
Grocers - Retail  
Ms. Sarah Innerarity ..... 879-3500  
6001 N. Western Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
www.wholefoodsmarket.com

For more information on increasing your investment and helping the Chamber move Oklahoma City forward, contact the Membership Division at 297-8949.

**American Collection Services, Inc.**

Collection Agencies  
Ms. Louise Littlejohn ..... 682-8088  
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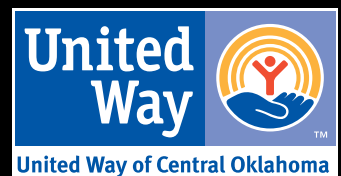
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# GRAND OPENINGS

Congratulations to the following Chamber members on their recent Grand Openings & Groundbreakings!

All Chamber members are welcome to attend Grand Openings.

To view more photos, see the schedule of upcoming Grand Openings or subscribe to the Grand Openings calendar, visit [www.okcchamber.com/grandopenings](http://www.okcchamber.com/grandopenings).



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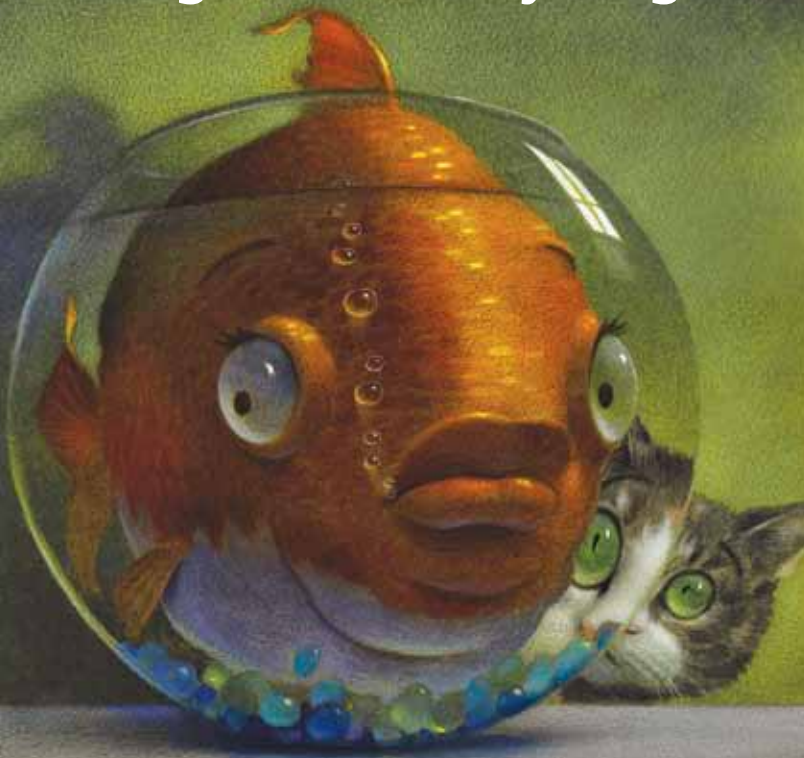


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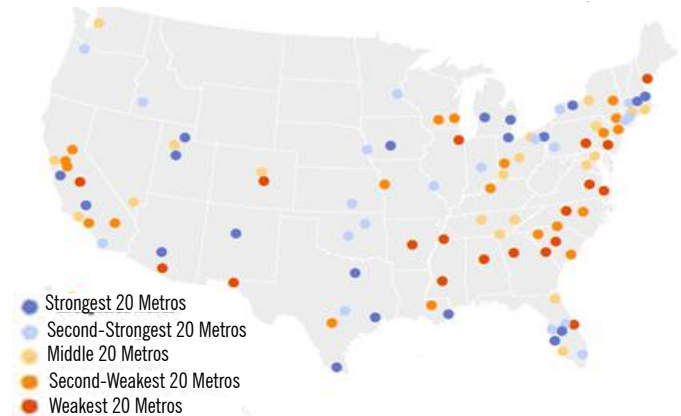
# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## OKC CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE STRONG ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

- OKC is one of only 26 large metros that gained jobs in each of the last four quarters.
- OKC is one of only 22 metros to gain back more than half the jobs they lost between their employment peak and their post-recession employment low point. Only 6 have made a complete jobs recovery.
- OKC is one of only 13 large metros to have manufacturing employment grow over 5% from Q1 2010 to Q3 2011.

Source: MetroMonitor, Brookings Institution, 3rd Qtr 2011

## Metro Overall Performance & Strength



### Select City Comparison – Top 100 Metro Ranking

Measure	Oklahoma City		Austin		Kansas City		Omaha		San Antonio	
	Change	Rank	Change	Rank	Change	Rank	Change	Rank	Change	Rank
One quarter change in employment (Q2 2011 to Q3 2011)	0.3%	35	0.3%	34	0.03%	63	0.21%	46	0.06%	60
Unemployment Rate (Sep 2011)	5.5%	3	7.5%	26	8.2%	44	4.5%	1	8.0%	44
One quarter change in Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP)	1.1%	8	1.3%	6	0.1%	96	0.3%	83	0.8%	21
Change in housing prices from peak (Q1 2009)	-11.3%	10	-11.2%	8	-20.3%	41	-15.3%	27	-11.6%	12

For comprehensive Economic Indicator and Regional Data, please visit your Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Economic Development Division [www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators](http://www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators) or contact Eric Long, Research Economist – (405)297-8976; [elong@okcchamber.com](mailto:elong@okcchamber.com)

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