March 2015

Tinker AFB Acquires Land for KC-46A Maintenance

Tinker Air Force Base officials recently announced the acquisition of 158 acres of land on the west side of the base to create a depot maintenance facility for the Air Force’s next-generation aerial refueling aircraft, the KC-46A Pegasus.

The land purchase was made possible through a joint effort of the U.S. Air Force ($8 million), the City of Oklahoma City ($23.5 million) and Oklahoma County ($12.5 million). The land was formerly owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., where it operated a rail yard that primarily served the former General Motors manufacturing facility. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber led a coalition of local and state government to support the acquisition.

Continued on page 4

Memorial Museum Commemorates Bombing Anniversary with Reopening, Oklahoma Standard Campaign

On April 19, 2015, Oklahoma City will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, the largest domestic terrorist attack on American soil that killed 168 people. In order to honor the victims of the attack and educate others about the impacts of violence, the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum recently reopened its facilities with 35 new interactive exhibits, hundreds of never-before-seen artifacts and thousands of video and oral histories.

The museum’s remodel and exhibit additions were the result of a $15 million capital campaign. New additions include the 15-foot Dreamland Motel sign, which came from the hotel Timothy McVeigh stayed in while planning the attack. The museum also focused on adding interactive exhibits in order to engage a new generation learning about the bombing for the first time.

“We are using new technologies that allow our visitors to learn and become engaged in our story like never before,” said Susan Winchester,
A great day to fly in Oklahoma

It isn't often that you get to witness a circumstance that will undoubtedly impact a community for multiple generations. Last month’s event revealing that Tinker Air Force Base will be able to acquire the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad adjacent to the base was one such occasion.

After years of negotiations, all of which were the result of a joint effort between many dedicated individuals from the United States Air Force, the Oklahoma congressional delegation, the State of Oklahoma, Oklahoma County, the City of Oklahoma City, the Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City and the Chamber, Tinker was able to purchase 158 acres of land that will increase base security and further develop the capabilities of the base.

It’s hard to believe that just 20 years ago, the Chamber was working to see Tinker removed from the Defense Department’s Base Closure and Realignment list. Since that time, the community has rallied around Tinker time and time again, realizing its importance not only to our city but also to the safety of our nation’s troops across the globe.

Tinker is now one of the most efficient bases in the nation, and this land acquisition will bring more than 1,300 new jobs with the maintenance of the KC-46A Pegasus aircraft. The effort to acquire the land also serves to strengthen the robust relationship that Tinker AFB has with Oklahoma City. As Lt. Gen. Bruce Litchfield is known for saying, “it is a great day to fly in Oklahoma.” And thanks to the cooperative effort to support Tinker through this land acquisition, it will be for a long time.

Sincerely,

Roy H. Williams, CCE
President & CEO
Tinker Acquisition Will Lead to 1,300 More Jobs

(cont'd)

for its KC-46A depot operations, the Air Force evaluated a number of potential sites both on and near Tinker AFB. After extensive review, the service determined that this property would be the best value for the taxpayer and would also increase the base’s security by incorporating land between disconnected portions of the base, connecting all of the base’s property.

“The property adjacent to Tinker Air Force Base is not only the best value for our taxpayers, but it also places KC-46A operations in one centralized location on the base, making it easier for them to provide the airpower our nation relies on,” said Kathleen Ferguson, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy. “Our air refueling fleet is critical to our ability to reach any corner of the globe quickly, and Tinker plays a vital role in that mission.”

Lt. Gen. Bruce Litchfield, Air Force Sustainment Center Commander, also lauded news of the agreement. “Our Air Force’s global mission is underpinned by our ability to air refuel when and where needed,” said Gen. Litchfield. “For more than 50 years the KC-135 Stratotanker has supported our Air Force mission across the world. Since this Eisenhower-era aircraft was introduced into the fleet, Tinker has been home to KC-135 sustainment and maintenance. The modernized KC-46 replacement tanker will support Global Reach, Power and Vigilance for generations to come.”

The general added, “For Tinker, it’s safe to say that supporting the KC-46 represents the bedrock for the next 50 years. Acquisition of the current rail yard property allows the development of a highly effective and efficient maintenance and repair operation that will realize substantial taxpayers savings over the life of the system.”

Tinker officials stressed that the acquisition would not be possible without the continued support of the installation’s community partners. The City of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County provided a combined $36 million to enable the acquisition. The 1,321 new jobs created through this project will be enrolled in the Oklahoma Quality Jobs program. Legislation passed last year will allow those incentive payments to go back to the City and County on a pro-rated basis to reimburse their investment in this job-producing infrastructure.

Gov. Mary Fallin heralded the project as a prime example of how Oklahoma works together for economic development and for the support of our nation. “Tinker has such a critical role in supporting our military,” said Gov. Fallin. “Oklahomans recognize the importance of the base and the workforce at Tinker to our economy. I applaud everyone involved for their perseverance in bringing this complicated project to fruition.”

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett agreed. “This work exemplifies how our community’s support of this base is unequalled in our nation. Time and again over the past 60 years we have shown unwavering support of the missions – and the men and women who perform them – on this base. Each time we make these investments in Tinker, the base and the community are stronger.”

Construction on the property is scheduled to begin later this year, with the first KC-46A arriving at Tinker in 2018. During construction, an estimated workforce of 350 people will be required for the construction of the maintenance facilities.

The KC-46A campus will eventually support an estimated workforce of 1,321 maintenance personnel.
Network with Nation’s Leaders in Washington, D.C.

Join business and community leaders from Oklahoma City as they travel to Washington, D.C. on April 15-16 to meet with members of Oklahoma’s Congressional delegation and Pentagon officials. Sen. Jim Inhofe will host the group as they learn more about legislation that will impact Oklahoma City.

Attendees will have personal briefings with U.S. Senators Inhofe and James Lankford and U.S. Representatives Tom Cole, Frank Lucas, Steve Russell, Markwayne Mullin and Jim Bridenstine. The Oklahoma group will attend meetings on military defense, the impact of federal tax and regulatory policy on economic development and will receive more information on the opportunities and challenges for cities creating regional transit systems.

Confirmed speakers include Kathleen Ferguson, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy; Michael P. Melaniphy, president & CEO, American Public Transportation Association; and Dino Falaschetti, senior research fellow and director of outreach for the Mercatus Center.

The $750 fee includes lodging at the historic Henley Park Hotel, 926 Massachusetts Ave. Airfare is not included, giving attendees the option to extend their stay in the district. The room block at the hotel is limited, so email bmanley@okcchamber.com or call 297-8964 as soon as possible to reserve your space.

“The Chamber's D.C. Visit gives business leaders "behind the headlines" insight into the issues and considerations our senators and congressmen face. Anyone looking to strengthen their relationships with the Oklahoma delegation and Oklahoma City business leaders would benefit from this trip.”

-Natalie Shirley, president and CEO of Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City, business leaders would benefit from this trip.

“We all know how important Tinker is to Central Oklahoma. Our time in Washington with both our Congressional delegation and Pentagon representatives is vital to understanding the issues and needs surrounding the base.”

-David E. Rainbolt, Chairman & CEO of BancFirst Corporation, chairman of the Chamber and trip attendee

“Your employees’ retirement starts with you.”

Learn about the revitalization of Oklahoma City’s commercial districts and how you can be involved in the next wave of redevelopment at the upcoming Chamber Forum on March 25.

Register for Chamber events online at www.okchamber.com/events.

March 9
Chairman's Event
Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Location: Cox Convention Center, 1 Myriad Gardens

March 10
Member Orientation
Time: 8:30-10 a.m.
Location: Chamber offices, 123 Park Ave.

March 25
Chamber Forum
Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Location: Sheridan Oklahoma City Downtown Hotel, 1 N Broadway Ave.

March 31
Sunset Reception
Time: 4-6 p.m.
Location: The Oklahoman, 100 W Main St.

April 7
SchmoozaPalooza Trade Show
Time: 4-7 p.m.
Location: State Fair Park Oklahoma Expo Center, 3200 Stagecoach

April 14
Member Orientation
Time: 4-5:30 p.m.
Location: Chamber offices, 123 Park Ave.

April 15
MegaLunch
Time: 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Location: The Greens Country Club, 13100 Green Valley Dr.

April 15-16
D.C. Visit
Location: Washington, D.C.
Maximizing opportunities in Oklahoma City’s aerospace industry has been a primary focus of the Forward Oklahoma City efforts since Chamber leaders started developing the program’s inception in 1993. Forward Oklahoma City programs targeted aerospace growth through economic development programs and through legislative support, especially focusing on the success of Tinker Air Force Base.

While leaders were fundraising for the Chamber’s first Forward Oklahoma City program, they banded together to remove from the Department of Defense’s Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) list in 1993 and 1995. Tinker was the largest single-site employer in the state and played a critical role in Oklahoma City’s economy. The Chamber knew that bolstering the aerospace sector in Oklahoma City would be a critical step in protecting Tinker from a base closure in the future.

The Chamber targeted aerospace companies to locate operations in Oklahoma City, knowing that private companies working on Department of Defense contracts in Oklahoma City would boost the productivity and efficiency of the work at the base. In 1999, the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center partnered with Lockheed Martin to manage and repair all of the aircraft engines in the U.S. Air Force. The partnership was the first of its kind for the Air Force. In 2005, the partnerships developed at the OC-ALC set Tinker apart from other bases and allowed it to avoid being placed on the BRAC list.

In addition to encouraging public-private partnerships, funds raised by the Forward Oklahoma City program have been used to pass bond issues that have benefited the base. In 2002, the Chamber campaigned for a bond issue valued at $50 million to increase base security by clearing houses from encroachment. The Chamber also led the charge to pass the 2008 bond issue that allowed Oklahoma County to acquire the former GM manufacturing facility and lease it to Tinker. Tinker used the facility to create the Tinker Aerospace Complex, which hosted the 76th Maintenance Wing operations and other DOD workloads.

In more recent years, the Chamber has led efforts to market Oklahoma’s aerospace industry on a global level by attending the Farnborough and Paris international airshows. The aggressive work done through Forward Oklahoma City’s economic development and legislative action laid the foundation that allowed Oklahoma City’s aerospace industry and Tinker Air Force Base to flourish.

Major companies that have increased their investment in the Oklahoma aerospace industry due to the Forward Oklahoma City economic development efforts include Boeing, ARINC, AAR Oklahoma, Pro-Fab, Northrop Grumman, Southwest Airlines, I-3, DynPar, Pratt & Whitney and General Dynamics. Since 1996, the aerospace industry in Oklahoma City has added 13,362 jobs and more than $875 million in capital investment to Oklahoma City’s economy.
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Internship Programs Offer Benefits for Companies, Workforce

The Oklahoma City region is home to more than 18 colleges and universities with students who are eager to start their professional careers. An ideal way to connect with this important segment of Oklahoma City’s workforce – and keep that workforce in Oklahoma City – is by developing an internship program at your company.

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber offers its members resources on creating an internship program through its Greater Grads program, which was founded in 2006 as a part of the Forward Oklahoma City initiative. According to Elisa Milbourn, manager of education and outreach programs, internship programs are beneficial to both the interns and the employees.

“While internships are mostly known as an opportunity for college students to gain real-world, hands-on experience, companies of any size benefit greatly from employing students through an internship program,” Milbourn said. “Interns are a great source of manpower to work on special projects that lack attention from full-time employees, and they can also look at projects or challenges with a fresh set of eyes and a new perspective.”

Interns are also helpful in building a company’s workforce. Companies that decide to hire an intern for a full-time position will already be familiar with the intern’s work and performance. Interns who are hired by a company also require less initial training since they already know the policies, procedures and culture of the company.

Recent research indicates that internship programs help increase an entry-level employee’s likelihood of staying at their job for more than a year. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers’ 2014 Internship and Co-op Survey, employers retain around 75 percent of their new college hires who have internship experience.

Internship programs can be developed by companies of all sizes, and the Greater Grads program offers a handbook that can help businesses start that process. The handbook covers steps to developing an internship program, including assistance with identifying your business needs, developing an intern job description, recruiting and selecting interns, management tips and intern evaluations.

In addition to benefiting area businesses, internship programs also benefit Oklahoma City’s workforce as a whole by producing a career-ready workforce and retaining that workforce in Oklahoma City.

“College graduates are more likely to live and work in an environment in which they are already comfortable,” Milbourn said. “By introducing interns to community involvement opportunities, social aspects of being a young professional and workplace culture, they begin to establish themselves early on in their college career.”

The Chamber offers summer programming for interns that introduces them to the community and offers professional development information. The InternOKC program, which is in its ninth year, will take place in June and July of this year. Companies can enroll their interns at www.GreaterGrads.com by May 31.

For more information about Greater Grads or for assistance in launching an internship program, contact Elisa Milbourn at emilbourn@okcchamber.com or 297-8951.

Steps to developing your internship program:

Step 1 – Identify your business needs.
Step 2 – Develop an intern job description.
Step 3 – Recruit intern candidates.
Step 4 – Select your intern.
Step 5 – Manage and mentor your intern.
Step 6 – Evaluate your intern at the end of their experience.

For more details on each of the above steps along with examples, visit www.greatergrads.com/employers.

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Park Avenue Grill
Museum Launches Oklahoma Standard Campaign (continued)

The Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum’s recent renovation added 35 new interactive exhibits and hundreds of new artifacts and oral histories.

Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation Chair. “We want to especially engage our younger people. Many are too young to remember in their own hearts and minds what happened on April 19, 1995.”

The museum, which was originally dedicated on April 19, 2000, reaches people from all 50 states and more than 80 countries annually. According to Kari Watkins, executive director of the museum, the renovations will help Oklahoma City reconnect to part of its history and will introduce an important part of Oklahoma City’s character to a new audience.

“We have a serious responsibility to make sure the story is told in a way that will last for the next decade or so,” Watkins said. “One of the things we feel strongly about is making it relevant to a new generation of people who were not born in 1995 and a new group of the citizenry who did not live in Oklahoma City in 1995. Half of our population has moved here since, and not everyone has lived through it.”

While the anniversary marks a somber day in the history of Oklahoma City, Watkins said that she hopes the day will also be a celebration of the unity that Oklahoma City displayed in the face of tragedy and the growth that has taken place since then.

“We are remembering the largest domestic terrorist attack on American soil, but what is remarkable about the event is what came from it: how people moved forward and figured out how to put their lives back together,” Watkins said. “Once we lived through the bombing, I think the people in Oklahoma City united and said, ‘there’s not anything we can’t do.’ We want people to celebrate how far we have come as a community and to be proud of that.”

In addition to the reopening, the museum is launching the Oklahoma Standard campaign to encourage everyone to commit acts of kindness, service and honor during the month of April. The campaign is designed to engage everyone in the community, including individuals, businesses and organizations.

“As we grow as a city and strive for bigger, better and brighter, it’s natural we also have to scale that growth with a preservation of the value system that’s important – acts of kindness, acts of service, acts of honor – things that Oklahomans have become known for,” said Sam Presti, chair of the Oklahoma Standard Campaign. “With the 20th anniversary of the bombing and the resiliency and optimism that it has provided in the recovery of the city, it’s an opportunity for us to recommit to those values. Today amid the rush for growth and expansion, we as a community must not forget that progress is unsustainable without awareness and preservation of history.”

The Oklahoma Standard was a phrase used by members of the media to describe the outpouring of sacrificial support from Oklahomans during the aftermath of the bombing, but as Watkins notes, the Oklahoma Standard is a way of life that has existed in Oklahoma long before the events of April 19, 1995, and it is a quality that the Oklahoma City community can share with other areas in the aftermath of disaster.

“The Oklahoma Standard is how we live our lives,” Watkins said. “We have figured out how to come together and work across barriers, and that really is a hallmark that few cities have.”

To participate in the Oklahoma Standard campaign, complete one act of kindness, one act of service and one act of honor in the month of April.

For more information, visit www.okstandard.org.

Chamber Welcomes New Hires

Wes Holmes,
Accounting Coordinator
Wes Holmes recently joined the Chamber as its accounting coordinator specializing in accounts payable. In his role, Holmes manages all vendor relations and their accounts and is responsible for the monthly and yearly closing of financial accounts. Prior to joining the Chamber, Holmes worked in financial services for a local music contractor.

Brittani Johnson,
Visitor Information Specialist
As visitor information specialist, Brittani Johnson assists Oklahoma City visitors with information regarding their stay in the area. Johnson also sends out visitor information for those who are planning a trip to Oklahoma City. Before joining the Chamber, Johnson worked for a law office in Edmond.

Donna Wilson,
Senior Convention Sales Manager
Donna Wilson works with the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, the conventions and visitor development arm of the Chamber, as a senior convention sales manager. In that role, Wilson markets Oklahoma City as a convention destination to religious markets and associations; agricultural commodities and food product groups; vocational hobby organizations and Native American organizations.

Wilson brings with her more than a decade of experience in the Oklahoma City hotel market. Before joining the Chamber staff, Wilson was the director of sales at the Waterford Marriott for two years and the director of sales at the Oklahoma City Marriott for nine years. Prior to entering the tourism industry, Wilson studied business at Oklahoma City Community College.

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