

THE POINT

January 2021

okcchamber.com

GREATER
OKLAHOMA CITY
CHAMBER



North Star Scientific establishes Oklahoma City operation

North Star Scientific (NSS) Corporation, a Hawaii-based company, has announced plans to expand to Oklahoma City. The company will launch operations immediately and will ramp up to 40 jobs once its manufacturing site is fully operational.

“NSS chose the state of Oklahoma and Oklahoma City as the site of our expansion because of the favorable business environment and the availability of personnel and other resources that benefit aerospace companies, especially those focused on radar and electronics,” said Dr. James Stamm, CEO of NSS Corporation. “We are

excited about the opportunities we see for our business in this environment and look forward to being a part of the community in Oklahoma City.”

NSS designs, develops, and qualifies state-of-the-art electronic systems for Department of Defense applications and delivers reliable high-performance products and services. They specialize in radar frequency systems designs and rapid research and development/custom solutions.

“We are thrilled to welcome North Star Scientific to Oklahoma City,” said Roy H. Williams, president & CEO of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. “North

Continued on page 19

Chamber announces public policy agenda for 2021

The Chamber recently released its public policy priorities for 2021. Below is an excerpt of key issues at the state, local and federal level. Read the full list at okcchamber.com/legislative.

County Government Reform

The Chamber supports empowering Oklahoma counties to alter their form of government to meet their unique needs.

Workers' Comp Reform

The Chamber supports defending and improving the comprehensive workers' compensation reform legislation enacted during the 2013 session.

Economic Development Programs

The Chamber supports retaining and strengthening the state's premier economic/community development programs which are critical in attracting new businesses to the state, assisting existing companies expand and encouraging investment in communities across the state.

Continued on page 6



We believe in bucket lists.



*Susan Laurence, Uterine Cancer Survivor
OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center*

Stephenson Cancer Center – a place for transformational care.

When Susan Laurence learned she had an aggressive form of uterine cancer, her fear turned to hope after she arrived at OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center. A multidisciplinary team of doctors partnered with her during treatment, including a Phase 1 clinical trial that allows her to live life to its fullest.

As Oklahoma's only National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center, Stephenson Cancer Center provides each patient the most advanced options, while conducting research that will revolutionize the treatments of tomorrow.

The future of health is here.

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 **OU Health** | Stephenson Cancer Center

Leadership Notes

Convention Center and Omni Hotel opening result of Chamber vision and planning

The opening of the new Oklahoma City Convention Center and the accompanying Omni Hotel is a landmark moment for our community, and one that would not have happened without the Chamber's efforts.

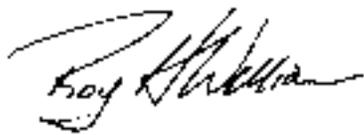
More than 15 years ago, this organization began the work to assess our community's competitive position in the meetings industry and began laying out a roadmap for how we bring more business to Oklahoma City. The Chamber funded a study that gave us the information we needed to build the right size and type of facility, and identified other assets we would need to be a success.

With a successful Chamber-led campaign to pass MAPS 3 in 2009, we were on our way, and now 11 years later, we see this vision become a full reality for our city.

I want to congratulate the city staff, the architects and the contractors of the convention center; and the entire Omni team on a job well done. We have created a dynamic environment that is going to be incredibly attractive to meeting planners and attendees alike.

Why is this so important? This industry is a critical part of our future. It brings billions of dollars to our community each year, providing jobs, diversifying our economy and supporting our quality-of-life infrastructure. It also exposes visitors to this amazing place we call home, giving them a chance to go back and tell the story of Oklahoma City, spurring greater growth in the future.

The work continues as we work to bring meetings in 2021 and beyond. I look forward to sharing stories of our success.



Roy H. Williams, CCE
Chamber President & CEO



Roy H. Williams, CCE
President & CEO

VELOCITY
»» READ ROY'S VELOCITYOKC STORY OF THE MONTH
"First National Center Development"
VELOCITYOKC.COM/ROYSPICK

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THE POINT!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CALENDAR

(Events are subject to change. Consult okcchamber.com/events for the most recent updates.)

Jan. 12

Member Orientation

8:30 to 10 a.m.

okcchamber.com/orientation

Jan. 20

Chamber Forum

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

okcchamber.com/januaryforum

Jan. 26

Creating a Culture of Inclusion

3:30 to 5 p.m.

okcchamber.com/diversity

Jan. 28

Legislative Kickoff

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

okcchamber.com/legislativekickoff

Feb. 5

Enlighten

Noon to 1 p.m.

okcchamber.com/enlighten

Feb. 17

Chamber Forum

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

okcchamber.com/februaryforum

Feb. 23

Creating a Culture of Inclusion

3:30 to 5 p.m.

okcchamber.com/diversity

Feb. 24

Megalunch

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

okcchamber.com/megalunch

Legislative Kickoff event set for Jan. 28

Get prepared for how the upcoming legislative session might impact the success of your business by registering for the virtual Legislative Kickoff (formerly the Legislative Breakfast). On Thursday, Jan. 28 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., a panel of Republican and Democratic leadership will give their input on the biggest issues facing our state and how our elected officials plan to address those issues.

Panelists for Legislative Kickoff include Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, Senate Democratic Leader Kay Floyd, House Majority Floor Leader Jon Echols and House Democratic Minority Leader Emily Virgin. In addition to the panel discussion, the event agenda includes an overview of the Chamber's legislative priorities from Chamber Chair Sean Trauschke, OGE Energy Corp., and an opportunity for an audience Q&A with the panel.

Tickets for the event are \$20 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. Sponsor ticket packages are also available for purchase online. Visit okcchamber.com/legislativekickoff for more information or to register. Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor The Boeing Company; Government Relations Benefactors Cox Communications, Devon Energy Corporation, OG&E, and The Chickasaw Nation; and Government Relations Sponsors Enable Midstream Partners and Google, Inc.

Learn how to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion during the hiring process

Diversity, equity and inclusion conversations are important to implement among your current staff, but are they happening during the hiring process? The newest event of the Creating a Culture of Inclusion Series will explore that topic on Jan. 26 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Attendees will hear Angie Christopher discuss how companies can ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion exist not only in the day to day, but in the hiring process as well.

Christopher currently services as the global HR Business Leader for the US Home Services Group, a subsidiary of ConvaTec Companies. In this capacity, she is engaged in strategic and talent leadership for the organization. She also serves as the global chair for the Black Employee Network, ERG. Angie's time in HR leadership has spanned nearly 20 years with various companies.

Tickets to the virtual event, which is produced in partnership between the Chamber and the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, are \$25 for Chamber and Urban League members or \$40 for nonmembers. Register online at okcchamber.com/diversity. Special thanks to Presenting Sponsors AT&T Oklahoma, American Fidelity Assurance Company, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, The Chickasaw Nation and Devon Energy Corporation.

First 2021 Chamber Forum to highlight outlook for OKC's major industries

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's popular monthly forum series is back this month with new programming to keep you informed about the most important things happening in the Oklahoma City community. At the January Chamber Forum on Wednesday, Jan. 20 from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., attendees will hear an in-depth discussion on the outlook for Oklahoma City's most impactful industries, including energy, aerospace, bioscience and health care.

Confirmed panelists include Bob Funk, Jr., VP of sales and corporate development of Express Employment Professionals; Dave Hager, president and CEO of Devon Energy; Dr. Jason Sanders, senior vice president and provost of The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center; and Greg Smith, director and Oklahoma City site leader of Northrop Grumman. The online Chamber Forum will also include the opportunity to network and make new connections.

Registration for the event is \$15 for Chamber members and \$25 for nonmembers. Register online at okcchamber.com/januaryforum.

Ticket packages for 2021 are now available.

Oklahoma City is a city on the rise, and the Chamber Forum series helps you stay informed about its major

Start the new year making connections at MegaLunch



Miss networking? Looking for ways to build your book in the new year? Make plans now to fulfill your resolution in a fun and unique way by participating in the Chamber's quarterly networking program, MegaLunch. The program returns in a 100% virtual format Feb. 24 at 11:30 a.m. The online speed networking event is where you get 90 seconds to pitch your products or services to other professionals from the comfort of your home or office.

Using Zoom breakout rooms and a computerized rotation schedule, participants will meet new prospects



*Dave Hager,
president and CEO of
Devon Energy*



*Dr. Jason Sanders,
senior vice president and
provost of The University
of Oklahoma Health
Sciences Center*



*Greg Smith, director
and Oklahoma City
site leader of Northrop
Grumman*

successes, challenges and ways that the business community can stay involved.

Each event brings thought leaders together to discuss major initiatives, programs and current issues that impact Oklahoma City's business climate, economy and community. The best way to stay informed is by purchasing a full-season ticket package for all 10 Chamber Forums scheduled for 2021 for \$150. To purchase, email register@okcchamber.com or call 405-297-8921.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Business.

and promote their company during five rotations. Access to both video and audio are required for this experience.

The event's unique format allows only one person for each company. MegaLunch cost is \$15 and exclusive to Chamber members only.

MegaLunch Schedule

11:30 a.m. - Welcome comments

11:45 a.m. - Breakout rotations begin

The online event link will be emailed to the email address associated with each registration before the event. Please ensure events@okcchamber.com is on your approved sender list.

To register or to learn more, go to www.okcchamber.com/megalunch or email register@okcchamber.com.

Public policy agenda (cont'd from page 1)

Following are the key programs the Chamber will seek to protect:

- Quality Jobs Act, 21st Century QJA, Small Employer QJA and the Prime Contractor QJA
- Aerospace Engineer Tax Credit
- Investment/New Jobs Tax Credit
- Historical Building Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- Cyber-security/Software Engineer Tax Credit
- Five-year ad valorem abatement and sales tax exemption for manufacturing facilities
- Regional Home Office Insurance Premium Tax Credit

The Chamber supports adapting Oklahoma's film incentive program to encourage production companies and studios to bring multiple films/projects to the state.

The Chamber will support efforts to reinstate the Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes and to protect the Affordable Housing Tax Credit.

Broadband/Data Privacy

The Chamber:

- Supports protecting Oklahoma's pro-investment environment to facilitate the development of telecommunication infrastructure
- Supports efforts to remove barriers to broadband access in Oklahoma such as ensuring providers are reasonably charged for use of the public rights of way and facilities within the rights of way
- Supports common sense protections against the unauthorized collection or sale of personal data and opposes state-level efforts that conflict with federal laws and regulations regarding data privacy

Legal Reform

The Chamber supports the following legal reforms:

- Amending public and private nuisance laws to avoid misuse
- Placing a reasonable limit on non-economic damages

Incentive Evaluation Commission

The Chamber supports the Oklahoma Incentive Evaluation Commission, which was established to make recommendations to the Legislature and Governor on which incentive programs are serving their intended

purpose and creating economic/community development. If an incentive program cannot show a positive return to the state, it should be scaled-back or repealed.

Wind Subsidies

The Chamber supports ending the Manufacturer's Sales Tax Exemption for new wind facilities and requiring the Zero-Emissions Tax Credit to be claimed only as a credit and not as a refund.

Gun Legislation

The Chamber supports the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the responsible expansion of gun-owner's rights in Oklahoma. However, the Chamber will oppose legislation that would allow open/concealed carry of guns into high-economic impact events (many of which are required by contract to prohibit weapons), including Horse Shows, the Oklahoma State Fair, Olympic Qualifying on the Oklahoma River, High School Basketball and Wrestling Tournaments at the State Fairgrounds and NCAA and Big XII sporting events.

The Chamber will oppose legislation to allow guns to be carried on college campuses.

The Chamber will lead the efforts of the "Oklahomans for Business and Property Owners' Rights" coalition to defend against harmful gun legislation and work with the National Rifle Association, the Oklahoma Second Amendment Association and other stakeholders to improve and clarify existing gun laws while, at the same time, ensuring the protection of property rights and public safety.

Criminal Justice/Sentencing Reform

The Chamber supports legislation and funding for sentencing reforms and rehabilitation programs to ease the financial drain on Oklahoma's criminal justice system, lessen the burden on jails and prisons throughout the state and allow non-violent offenders to enter the workforce more quickly.

The Chamber supports the efforts of the Criminal Justice Reclassification Council created pursuant to HB 1098 (2018).

The Chamber also supports: 1) continuing smart sentencing reform; 2) improving bail and jail practices; 3) making reentry and supervision improvements to

reduce fines and fees, enhance workforce opportunities and increase public safety; and 4) securing additional treatment funding.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Chamber understands the importance of a diverse and inclusive community. We recognize the power of diversity is released when we respect and value differences. The business community will strive to be an effective partner in creating dialogue and finding solutions to issues around inclusive economic development, equitable business practices and criminal justice reform. The Chamber supports:

- Growing minority businesses
- Practices that enable inclusive hiring and retention
- Providing education, learning and training opportunities for everyone
- Building a diverse and culturally sensitive workforce

Pension Reform

The Chamber supports protecting the pension reforms which have improved the long-term fiscal condition of the state.

Paid Family Leave Mandates

The Chamber opposes state legislation to create a paid family leave program mandating participation by private sector employers that goes beyond federal level requirements.

Medical Marijuana

The chamber supports additional legislation to protect an employer's right to maintain a drug-free workplace, enforce policies to prohibit employee impairment during work hours and other business friendly reforms.

Water

The Chamber will work with the Governor, State Legislature, City of OKC and other stakeholders to ensure the availability of a long-term water supply for central Oklahoma.

Oil & Gas Tax

The Chamber supports a stable oil and gas tax structure which promotes the investment of drilling capital in Oklahoma.

i2E/OCAST

The Chamber supports continued funding for i2E programs, including the Seed Capital Fund.

The Chamber encourages the State of Oklahoma to invest in OCAST's support of small and medium size companies. By funding advanced research & development through Industry Innovation, OCAST can stimulate public-private collaboration and financial resources resulting in the greatest potential for commercialization aiding a company's ability to economically recover and compete in the global marketplace.

Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET)

The Chamber supports the constitutional provisions of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) to support the public health of Oklahomans.

Immigration Reform - Federal

The Chamber supports federal immigration reform to secure the borders and establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures to attract essential workers to the United States.

STATE TRANSPORTATION

Major Projects

The Chamber will advocate for full funding and timely completion of work on the following major interchanges/projects:

- I-44/I-235 Interchange
- I-240/I-35 (Crossroads Interchange)
- I-35/I-44 (Remington Park)
- I-44/I-40 (K Interchange/Near State Fairgrounds) West to MacArthur on I-40
- Necessary improvements to I-40 corridor east of I-35 (Tinker Air Force Base) including expansion of I-40 facility to six lanes from Douglas Boulevard to Shawnee
- I-35/I-40 Dallas Junction and I-35 (including Oklahoma River Bridges)
- Future development of I-44 corridor from I-40 to SH-62, including SH 152/Airport Road, (southwest OKC to Newcastle) to better provide for future mobility needs due to ongoing commercial expansion

Regional Study

The Chamber supports the ODOT/OTA regional transportation study being undertaken with municipal partners with the objective of identifying, maximizing, preserving and protecting existing transportation assets. The Chamber further supports this study's ultimate strategic goal to create additional transportation capacity as a means to protect and maximize the integrity of the entire regional transportation system.

State Turnpike Plan

The Chamber supports ongoing robust efforts to develop a highly effective and viable state turnpike system.

The Chamber further supports turnpike planning consideration to include widening the Turner Turnpike, as an innovation corridor, to six lanes from the current construction at mile post 203 extending west to Oklahoma City.

ODOT Eight-Year Plan

The Chamber supports providing adequate annual dedicated funding necessary to preserve and implement the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's (ODOT) eight-year construction work plan. Furthermore, the Chamber will strongly oppose any effort to divert dedicated transportation funding to other areas of government.

State Bridges

The Chamber supports providing adequate annual dedicated funding for ODOT to maintain continued investment toward addressing Oklahoma's structurally deficient bridges on the state's highway system, and further ensure that ODOT is able to maintain a nationally leading bridge improvement program.

Sustainable Funding

To address the declining transportation revenues associated with fuel tax the Chamber supports the research and development of sustainable and equitable funding alternatives in support of transportation infrastructure.

Ports of Entry

The Chamber supports providing adequate annual dedicated funding and staffing levels for the timely completion and effective use of weigh stations at Oklahoma's ports of entry to ensure the protection of

Oklahoma's roads and bridges from unnecessary damage caused by overweight freight loads.

State Transit Funding

The Chamber supports protecting state revenues allocated into the State of Oklahoma's Public Transit Revolving Fund to meet citizen demand for public transit.

The Chamber supports the development and implementation of ODOT's Long Range Transit Plan through the Office of Mobility and Public Transit.

Heartland Flyer

Passenger rail service is a key component of the continued viability of the Oklahoma City intermodal hub and the future development of commuter rail throughout the central Oklahoma region. The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma congressional delegation, the Oklahoma State Legislature, ODOT, the City of Oklahoma City, the Class 1 railroads and the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) to oppose efforts to reduce or eliminate state or federal funding received by Oklahoma to operate the Heartland Flyer Amtrak service to Fort Worth, Texas. Moreover, the Chamber supports ongoing efforts by ODOT to negotiate with the State of Texas and Amtrak to ensure Amtrak can be maintained as the passenger rail carrier.

The Chamber supports continued dialogue on extending the Heartland Flyer Amtrak service to Newton, Kansas, which would connect Oklahoma City to Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and other locations on the Amtrak system.

Interstate Commerce

The Chamber opposes legislation to limit the ability of Class 1 and short line railroads to conduct interstate commerce.

The Chamber supports development of technology and effective transportation strategies to increase the safety and efficiency of interstate commerce. For example, the Chamber supports existing state law allowing for the platooning of semi-trucks.

ODOT Rail Plans

The Chamber supports implementation of the Oklahoma State Rail Plan and Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan developed by ODOT.

Seat Belt Law to Protect Childhood Safety

The Chamber supports passage of a new state law to require 8-17 year olds to wear seat belts while being transported in the back seat.

Oklahoma River Bridges

The Chamber supports construction of clear span bridges on Interstate 35 across the Oklahoma River. Replacing existing river bridges with iconic bridges would showcase Oklahoma City at the confluence of two major U.S. interstate highways (Interstates 35/40) and facilitate increased sporting events and tourism in the boathouse district.

MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION

Mass Transit/Commuter Rail

The Chamber supports implementation of transit programs that will best serve central Oklahoma including the Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority (COTPA) 2005 Fixed Guideway Transit Study and its following component: Commuter Corridors Study update being conducted on behalf of the RTA.

The Chamber further supports efforts by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), consisting of six core central Oklahoma cities, to launch future regional transit services. The Chamber will work with the RTA, COTPA, municipal governments, ODOT and Class 1 railroads to conduct early-stage planning for introducing commuter rail service into downtown Oklahoma City from Norman and Edmond with alternative transportation options to Del City and Midwest City. Further planning consideration should be given to potential future expansion of rail service to the Shawnee and Yukon areas.

Intermodal Hub

The Chamber will work with the City of Oklahoma City (COTPA), the Class 1 railroads, ODOT, the Oklahoma State Legislature and ACOG to ensure the continued viability of the intermodal hub at the Santa Fe station that will effectively integrate various modes of transportation (including OKC Streetcar, Amtrak, bus, inter-city bus, future bus rapid transit and future commuter rail) and enhance economic development opportunities.

The Chamber supports efforts to work with stakeholders to maximize alignment and development of future locally preferred alternatives for mass transportation.

Street Improvements

The Chamber supports consideration and pursuit of all available funds for ongoing and future street improvements.

OKC Streetcar

The Chamber supports efforts to ensure the continued viability of the Oklahoma City Streetcar system.

Bus Service

The Chamber supports greater frequency, expanded routes and expanded service hours for bus routes. The Chamber further encourages regional dialogue on providing enhanced bus service.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The Chamber supports implementing bus rapid transit on key routes in Oklahoma City tied to the 2005 Fixed Guideway Transit Study and updates to that study, and the implementation of future MAPS 4 route updates.

Parking

The Chamber supports continued construction of additional parking and viable park and ride locations, as appropriate on a case-by-case basis, to allow continued economic development downtown.

Alternative Transportation

The Chamber supports increased construction of sidewalks, trails and bike lanes. In addition, the Chamber supports proper implementation and consideration of bike shares, car shares, scooter shares and future technologies on a case-by-case basis.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Funding

The Chamber ultimately supports adequate funding for a multi-year reauthorization of the federal surface transportation bill. In the interim, the Chamber fully supports the FAST Act through 2021 and full funding for the FAST Act through Dec. 11, 2021.

The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma Congressional delegation and ODOT to secure a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund (including mass transit programs).

The Chamber supports adequate funding levels to properly maintain the national transportation system.

Federal Capital Improvement Grants

The Chamber supports continued funding for SMALL STARTS, NEW STARTS, INFRA, BUILD, bus and bus facilities grants.

FAA Air Traffic Control Privatization

The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma congressional delegation to oppose any attempt by Congress or the executive branch to privatize the nation's air traffic control system.

Clean Air Nonattainment

The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma congressional delegation, ODOT, ACOG, the City of Oklahoma City, the private sector, and additional partners to take necessary proactive steps to ensure the Greater Oklahoma City region is not designated as being in nonattainment of federal air quality standards.

Freight Rail Regulation

The Chamber opposes any effort by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to impose additional economic or operational regulation on freight rail operators.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Education

The Chamber steadfastly supports early childhood education and full funding of pre-K and kindergarten programs. Targeted spending on our youngest children is simply a smart investment. The Chamber supports legislative initiatives to maintain early childhood education programs and initiatives.

Long-Term, Strategic Education Funding

The Chamber supports development of a long-term, strategic plan that will enable improvement in classroom teaching and academic performance. This should include increasing the minimum number of instructional hours, currently 1,080 hours, required for a complete school year.

Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Retention

Oklahoma has a teacher shortage. Oklahoma's teacher preparation system needs to be improved in order to train, attract and retain high-quality teachers. We support legislation to:

- Reward teacher performance and experience
- Incentivize teachers to work in high priority areas and receive training to help them prepare for

challenges facing students such as being English Language Learners, living in high poverty and from urban areas

- Grow alternative pathways, such as Teach for America and the Foundation for OKCPS Bilingual & Diversity Teacher Pipeline program, that enhance the diversity of the teaching profession
- Provide additional pre- and post-school year training for alternatively certified teachers

Funding Transparency to Highlight Classroom Spending

Business leaders want education funding to focus on improving quality of instruction in the classroom. We support increasing funding transparency that makes it easier to understand per-pupil spending and ensure that as much funding as possible goes directly to classroom activity.

Longitudinal Data System

The business community encourages development and implementation of a new pre-K to 20 longitudinal data system that will measure performance and progress. A working system would measure the progress, challenges and success of our education systems from early childhood through higher education and into employment. Accurate data would enhance critical programmatic and funding decisions.

Public Charter Schools

The Chamber supports charter schools and education choices. Charter schools are public schools and are required to adhere to Oklahoma statutes and performance standards. We support creating high-quality charter schools and enabling successful charter schools to grow. This includes online charter schools, schools designed to meet the needs of targeted underserved populations or schools that provide specific curriculum.

We support creating a solution to ensure all public schools are funded equitably, and we support creating a solution to address the facility needs of Oklahoma charter schools.

Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics

The Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM) has consistently ranked among the nation's top public high schools. More than half of OSSM graduates stay in Oklahoma, and 85 percent are choosing STEM careers. The Chamber supports full funding of the OSSM FY 2021 budget request.

Specialty Schools

We support state funding for schools that target the specific needs of students experiencing homelessness. We support schools like Positive Tomorrows, a private non-profit school in Oklahoma City exclusively serving homeless students with services that help stabilize their families, bring the students up to grade level and prepare them for success in public school.

School and Campus Safety

The Chamber will oppose legislation to permit carrying of firearms at early childhood, pre-K-12, colleges and career tech facilities. We will oppose efforts to remove or replace the ability of career tech and higher education institutions to regulate firearms on campus.

Teacher Wellness and Health

We believe our schools should provide a safe and healthy work and learning environment. This includes enabling schools to prevent spread of illness and minimize teacher absences by encouraging all school personnel to take precautionary steps including getting vaccinated.

Mental Health Needs

Oklahoma students face a high level of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). We support additional focus and support of initiatives to address the mental and behavioral health of students. This includes new innovation and services from the State Dept. of Education and Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Concurrent Enrollment & Work-based Learning

The Chamber recognizes the excellent learning opportunities offered at our four year universities, community colleges and career techs. Students should be allowed and encouraged to begin pursuit of a degree or other certification while still in high school. They reduce the amount of time it takes to complete a degree or certificate at a post-secondary institution, which reduces costs and speeds entry into the workforce. We support fully funding access for seniors and expanding access to concurrent enrollment for high school juniors as funding is available. We also support efforts to increase work-based learning opportunities that prepare young people for careers.

Higher Education – Reform and Investment

The Chamber recognizes a high-quality higher education system is critical to economic growth. Oklahoma City

continues to struggle with meeting the workforce needs of its employers, particularly in Critical Occupations (as defined by www.oklahomaworks.gov/criticaloccupations) that require a higher education degree. The business community, governments and higher education will continue to face financial challenges and we all must be innovative and flexible to meet the needs of our customers and achieve our mission. This should include development of partnerships that produce tech transfer and research partnerships that can help generate private, federal and foundation revenue.

We urge the higher education system to pursue significant reform in order to better meet the needs of employers. The business community supports the following reforms.

- Higher education funding specifically directed to produce graduates with degrees in high demand jobs such as engineering, computer/software/IT fields, and key medical/nursing areas
- Funding will require that institutions receiving funding be required to submit a plan to increase its graduates in critical occupation degrees by 20% within four years
- All plans must include annual measurable action steps that will produce a 20% increase in graduates with Critical Occupation degrees
- We support funding coming from the consolidation of higher education institutions and the reduction of non-critical occupation degree program

Oklahoma's Promise

Oklahoma's Promise is one of the most successful college access programs in the nation. We oppose legislation that would diminish the program's focus on college access. We support efforts to increase the number of college graduates and to maintain the direct allocation of state funds, which ensures full funding of the scholarships earned by Oklahoma students.

Career Tech – Business and Industry Training

The Oklahoma CareerTech system is acknowledged as one of the top systems in the nation. CareerTech is a key ingredient in attracting industry to Oklahoma through its Training for Industry Program (TIP). The Chamber supports funding to assure training needs for new and existing industry. The business community urges the

system to focus on producing a workforce that can meet the needs of high-demand occupations.

Career Readiness and Certification

The Chamber believes Oklahoma needs more of our workforce to have the opportunities to earn more post-secondary education, including certifications, degrees and other training targeting skills that are in demand and meet industry needs.

- We support key scholarship programs: Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grants (OTEG) and Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grants (OTAG)
- We support concurrent enrollment. These will help achieve the Complete College America goals by enabling more students enter college and obtain a college degree
- We support development of more work-based learning opportunities such as internships and apprenticeship programs

HEALTH CARE

Medicaid Reform

As the state seeks to improve health outcomes and to modernize payment models to incentivize value within the state's Medicaid system, the Chamber supports protecting current revenue streams and dialogue/efforts to most effectively address the state's total health care needs on a system-wide basis.

The Chamber supports protecting the current Medicaid supplemental payments or equivalent programs to our state's medical schools and their hospital partners to ensure uninterrupted funding for medical education and the other unique services each provide.

Expanded Health Insurance Coverage for Oklahomans

The Chamber supports efforts by the state to efficiently enroll all newly-eligible Medicaid individuals to the state's Medicaid program pursuant to the passage of SQ 802.

Insure Oklahoma

The Chamber supports continued efforts to protect, preserve and further improve Employer Sponsored Insurance (ESI) offered under Insure Oklahoma.

Research and Development

The Chamber supports efforts to foster an environment that is conducive to further research and will oppose

efforts to unreasonably restrict the continued development of the state's bioscience and research programs.

Mandates

The Chamber opposes new health insurance mandates and liabilities that will undermine an employer's ability to provide quality health insurance at reasonable cost to employees.

The Chamber further opposes new mandates being placed on physicians, hospitals and providers that will increase the cost of providing quality health care in Oklahoma.

Network Protection

The Chamber opposes legislation which would eliminate the incentive for medical providers to contract with managed care networks and, as a result, potentially frustrate efforts at cost and quality control and ultimately deny consumers the benefits of cost-reducing arrangements with providers.

The Chamber further opposes legislation that would interfere with an employers' ability to offer affordable health benefits due to a reduced ability to control benefit plans relating to prescription drugs.

Medical Education Funding

The Chamber supports maintaining physician training funding for the state's two largest medical schools in the base budgets of the University Hospitals Authority and Oklahoma State University Medical Authority.

Physician Shortage/Rural Access

The Chamber supports the following initiatives to address health care disparities: 1) incentivizing the recruitment and retention of primary care physicians, specialty physicians and allied health professionals in rural, underserved and other areas and 2) expanding residency programs for the state's medical schools. The Chamber supports efforts to identify new funding streams dedicated to these initiatives.

The Chamber also supports the appropriate expansion of technology platforms (such as telemedicine and telehealth) and data platforms to enhance access to health care for Oklahomans.

Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET)

The Chamber supports the constitutional provisions of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) to

support the public health of Oklahomans.

Appropriations Support of Community Health Centers

The Chamber supports adequate state funding for community health centers to provide quality health care to underserved Oklahomans, prevent cost shifting to other entities and maintain a healthy workforce for Oklahoma employers.

Health Care Funding

The Chamber supports protecting health care revenue, including revenue in health care revolving funds, from being diverted to fund other areas of government.

The Chamber opposes cuts to the state Medicaid budget that would increase the burden of uncompensated care and shift costs to employers and health care providers.

Wellness and Prevention

The Chamber supports the following initiatives including wellness, disease prevention and care programs that serve to improve the physical, behavioral and mental health of Oklahoma citizens: tobacco prevention programs; efforts to mitigate the harmful health effects of e-cigarettes/vaping; public outreach initiatives; efforts to address health disparities; and, workplace and school-based wellness, health education and healthy eating programs.

Prevention of Disease

The Chamber recognizes the detrimental impact of chronic and communicable diseases (including substance use disorder) on the quality of life for Oklahoma's residents and the severe economic costs they impose on health care providers and employers. Therefore, the Chamber will support efforts by the state's elected officials and medical and research communities to develop avenues to successfully prevent and combat congenital, chronic, pandemic and communicable diseases.

Clean Indoor Air

The Chamber supports legislation to make all indoor areas smoke free; as well as legislation to remove smokers as a protected class in state employment law.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Single-Payer Health Care

The Chamber supports improving health care quality, access and affordability without imposing new mandates and/or taxes on business. Therefore, the Chamber

opposes a single-payer government-run/public option or health care system with excessive government mandates.

Employer-Driven Market Reforms

The Chamber believes that employers drive innovation in health benefits and, therefore, we support market-driven health reforms are the best approach to reducing costs while promoting market stability, efficiency, wellness and quality of care.

Medicaid Cuts

The Chamber opposes Medicaid cuts that would place increased pressure on reimbursement rates, negatively impact the adequate delivery of critical services to the most vulnerable, exacerbate an already high administrative burden for health care businesses and increase the burden of uncompensated care shifted to employers and health care providers.

Research and Development

The Chamber supports efforts to foster a federal policy environment that is conducive to further research and will oppose efforts to unreasonably restrict the continued development of national bioscience and research programs.



She's One Loss Away From Depression.

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Oklahoma City Convention Center complete, Omni set to open

Construction of the \$288 million Oklahoma City Convention Center is complete after more than a decade of planning on the largest single construction project in the City of Oklahoma City's history. The state-of-the-art facility will open debt-free and elevates the City's capacity for hosting meetings and conventions.

The convention center's sleek and modern design features sweeping downtown views, and materials intended for energy efficiency and resiliency against the weather. The massive 500,000-square-foot interior includes a 200,730-square-foot exhibit hall on the first floor, which is divisible into four halls. About 45,000 square feet of meeting spaces are on all levels of the building, and many have operable walls to make the spaces flexible. The rooms can be configured to provide up to 27 individual meeting spaces.

The center includes two ballrooms, a 9,700 square foot junior ballroom is located on the third floor and boasts sweeping views of Scissortail Park; and the building's fourth floor features a 30,000-square-foot ballroom along with pre-function space and a large balcony overlooking Scissortail Park.

Landscaping outside the convention center uses native plants and trees well-suited to the local climate, with a focus on sustainability, comfort and beauty. A central plaza and other inviting spaces will help the convention center's exterior come alive with activity.

Directly adjacent to the new convention center, the 605-room convention center headquarter hotel from Omni Hotels & Resorts will open in January. The hotel features 78,000 square feet of meeting and event space, seven dining outlets, a full-service spa, fitness center and a roof-top pool.



Networking and convening spaces like this one can be found throughout the center. They give attendees a place to work, charge their electronics and have a quick meeting.

"This venue is a vision realized for the Chamber, as we have been championing its construction for nearly 15 years. This is undoubtedly a game-changer for Oklahoma City as we emerge as a strong convention destination," said Roy Williams, president & CEO of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. "We're already seeing great interest and convention bookings from meeting planners who are excited that OKC provides the full attendee experience their groups expect."

The building is located east of Scissortail Park along Robinson Boulevard between SW 4th and SW 7th Streets. Like the park and many other important landmarks downtown, it is served by the OKC Streetcar.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime project for the MAPS office, Citizens Advisory Board, subcommittee and consultants," added David Todd, MAPS program manager, City of Oklahoma City. "It's an architectural gem from the floor to the ceiling, and we are proud to complete the project on time and on budget."

Nearby amenities

A skywalk connects the convention center to a multi-story parking garage. The convention center is managed by ASM Global, the same company that manages the Chesapeake Arena. The center will begin hosting events in January, with the first large convention scheduled for March.

Directly west of the convention center is Scissortail Park, a 70-acre, fully programmed park that will connect downtown OKC to the shores of the Oklahoma River. The upper 40-acre section across from the new convention center opened in September, with the lower 30-acre portion set to open in Spring 2022. The park provides a variety of recreation activities, including concerts, walking/biking/running trails, picnic sites, youth sports fields, play areas, interactive water features, a seasonal roller rink and outdoor education opportunities.



The convention center is adjacent to Scissortail Park, creating a unique location for attendees and providing amenities not found in other markets.

Virtual Sky

The convention center's atriums are home to a monumental public art experience called Virtual Sky. The sculptural artwork is an array of anodized titanium rods suspended on aircraft cable alternating with strands of LED lights.

Each individual light is programmed for color, intensity, and duration, emitting light that is then reflected and enhanced by the titanium. The result is a matrix that can display three-dimensional forms moving through space much like clouds.

The artwork was created by Los Angeles-based Narduli Studio led by artist and architect Susan Narduli.



The prefunction spaces in the convention center overlook Scissortail Park and provide prime locations for receptions and other events.

At \$1.5 million, Virtual Sky is one of the most valuable works in the City's public art collection and was funded as a part of the City's 1% for Art ordinance.

Opening in a pandemic

Oklahoma City is re-opening at a careful pace and taking the necessary precautions to ensure that meetings and conventions are not only safe, but also easy and enjoyable. The majority of Oklahoma City hotels, restaurants and major attractions are open and receiving increasing numbers of visitors—specifically in the leisure market, amateur sports and equine events.

“As we come out of this COVID and we start to go to doing our meetings, we have to get back our customer's confidence,” said Al Rojas, general manager of the Oklahoma City Convention Center. “We have to find a way to give people peace of mind and give them that confidence that they will be safe.”

To accomplish that mission, the center is employing state-of-the-art technology and equipment that adds additional layers of precautions to prevent the transmission of pathogens. The center is using Global Plasma Solutions' Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization (NPBI) technology to deliver purified indoor air through the center's air handling. The center is also using Xenex LightStrike Germ-Zapping Robots, which use a patented Pulsed Xenon UV light system to deactivate the pathogens at the wavelengths where they are most susceptible. The robots will be deployed to clean high touch surfaces. “This is the same technology used in hospitals,” Rojas said.



Q&A about OKC's new convention center

Mike Burns joined the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau as vice president of convention sales and services in September of 2019. He is currently serving as Interim President.

Set the scene for us by giving us an idea of where Oklahoma City's hospitality industry was before COVID hit, and what it looks like now.

When I look back to where we were in February, we were seeing a major increase in leads for Oklahoma City with new customers interested in all of the exciting things that were happening, including the new convention center and the Omni Hotel. Lead volume was up 20% year-over-year, and we actually expected that to increase to 40% year-over-year. And then March hit. We had to spend the next two months looking at new strategies and doing more with less. There was a lot of hard work and resiliency on display within the hospitality industry during that time, and a real spirit of "we are Oklahomans and we can get through this."

Things changed dramatically, but as we look at where we are today, we have seen a decent recovery and have every expectation that the industry will continue to rebound with the announcement of two successful COVID vaccines being distributed in 2021.

As you mentioned, Oklahoma City will soon see the opening of a new convention center and its headquarter hotel. What approach are you taking to marketing these new venues? What kind of interest are you seeing from meeting planners?

Our mission is really to put heads in beds, and promote tourism--primarily to people outside of 50 miles of Oklahoma City. A big part of accomplishing

that mission is through convention sales. We've been promoting these new venues since construction began, but it helps when people are able to see them in person. COVID has slowed that aspect of our promotion plan.

Once people see what we have to offer, it really resonates that we have a unique community culture and a lot of first-class assets that in many instances are better than big cities. And once we get customers here, we have a conversion rate about 75-80% of the business that we want to find and bring in.

Right now, we are working with the Oklahoma City Convention Center, the Omni Hotel and other partners to host members of the Professional Conference Management Association January 12-16, 2021. We'll be one of the few places to host as an in-person event where we hope to bring in up to 200 customers that have not previously experienced OKC. That will help accelerate the opportunity to get people to understand our destination and what we have to offer. While it intentionally isn't a large event, these are the people that are decision-makers for literally thousands of meetings and events throughout the year.

What kind of competitive advantages do you see for Oklahoma City in a post-COVID era?

I think we will have a competitive advantage in a couple of ways. First, the Oklahoma City Convention Center is state-of-the-art. You can't underestimate the draw of a new venue to people who host events year after year. It's also an advantage to have the connection between the convention center and the outdoor space offered at Scissortail Park, especially as many events are using outdoor programming to increase safety.

I think our biggest competitive advantage is that we are currently able to host events when many cities are not. We've been blessed with the fact that we've been able to execute horse shows and other events safely at the Oklahoma State Fair Park. We've had more than 500,000 attendees since May that have actually safely participated in the various events in Oklahoma City. We're well ahead of the curve as far as welcoming people back into the community.

Prior to MAPS 3, Oklahoma City was at the lower end of the second-tier cities based on our convention space and hotel rooms. Since that time, we've added tons of hotel rooms now with the Omni and all the benefits of the new convention center.

What cities are our competition now?

We're moving out of a regional destination set, into a completely different competitive set that includes as an example Houston, Louisville, Fort Worth, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Milwaukee. It's a much broader national scope.

What can Oklahoma City residents do to support the hospitality industry while we wait for the COVID vaccine to be distributed and event business to rebound?

I think the most basic thing we can all do is continue to do our part to slow the spread of COVID. Right now, our numbers make hosting events more challenging, and the sooner we can get this pandemic under control, the sooner we can see a return to larger indoor events.

I also think that residents can often be complacent in taking advantage of the attractions of their own city, so I would also encourage people to explore a new museum, park or district. These partners have been very innovative in how they've implemented safety protocols without impacting the overall experience.

In addition, you can also connect the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau to any organizations or companies that host annual events. A simple introduction from you to our sales team could be all it takes for us to land a new event.

Zac Craig picked to lead OKC Convention Bureau

Zac Craig has been named President of the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau (operated by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber).

"Zac Craig brings the right combination of skills to this position," explained Roy Williams, CCE, President and CEO of the Chamber. "First, he is an Oklahoma native and takes great pride in our city's growth and direction. Second, he has a track record for meeting sales and marketing goals, which is especially important as we launch a new convention center. He has an outstanding reputation among his peers and strong experience managing both people and budgets, along with facility management as well. Add to that his Omni credentials and he really is the perfect leader for this transition of growth in our visitor industry."

Craig comes to the position after more than 11 years with Omni Hotels & Resorts where he most recently served as Area Director of Sales & Marketing based in Atlanta. During his time with Omni he supported hotels in markets including New Orleans; Atlanta; Charlotte, NC; Jacksonville, FL and Las Colinas, TX. Prior to working with Omni, he worked for Interstate Hotels & Resorts/LXR Luxury Resorts at properties in

Naples, Sanibel and Captiva Islands, FL and Oklahoma City. He is a graduate of the University of Tulsa and Oklahoma State University.

"This is an opportunity that I just could not pass up," said Craig. "I have watched Oklahoma City's progression as a visitor destination throughout my career and have been so impressed with what is happening here. To be able to join this organization and lead these efforts right now as the new convention center opens is really a dream come true. I know what a great hospitality community there is in Oklahoma City and I am anxious to get into the city and get to work."



Zac Craig joins the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau as its new President next month.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Businesses who join the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber are part of the largest coalition of businesses in the state and make the Chamber's work in the community possible. Each member level is identified on the listing below.

ADVISOR

Oklahoma State University - College of Engineering
Schools - Universities & Colleges
Dr. Paul J. Tikalsky, P.E., EACR, FASCE, FACI 744-1371
214 ATRC
Stillwater, OK 74078-6007
ceat.okstate.edu

EMERGING LEADER

Raymond Management Company
Hotel & Motel Management
Mr. Justin Smith 270-0588
328 E. Sheridan Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
www.raymondteam.com

ASSOCIATE

RTP Concrete Coatings
Concrete Contractors
Mr. Craig Quigley 286-2134
1111 NW 90th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73114-1738
www.rtpconcretecoatings.com

ASSOCIATE

SellingOKC
Real Estate
Ms. Linda Tracy-Ryburn 476-5319
913 W. Main St., Apt. 505
Oklahoma City, OK 73106
www.sellingokc.life

CORE

Crew Workspace
Office Space Leasing
Mrs. Bekah Hammontree 343-2673
619 W. Main St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-2221
www.crewworkspace.com

CORE

Lion, Aveda Salon & Spa
Beauty Salons / Barber Shops / Spas
Ms. Ashley Russell 340-8190
5740 N. Classen Blvd., Suite 1
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-1251
www.lionsalon.com

CORE

Meg Salyer
Individual Members
Ms. Meg Salyer 232-3100
811 N. Broadway Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

CORE

Oklahoma Humanities
Educational Services
Ms. Caroline Lowery 235-0280
424 Colcord Drive, Suite E
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-2500
www.okhumanities.org

CORE

Ray the Painter
Contractors - Painting
Ms. Monica Hoyt 605-3563
1111 NW 90th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73114-1738

CORE

Scooter's Coffee
Restaurants
Mr. Austen Drake
12300 N. May Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-1944
www.scooterscoffee.com

CORE

Sell My House In Oklahoma LLC
Real Estate Investment
Mr. Kristopher Timm 361-0637
894 County Road 1170
Minco, OK 73059-8020
www.sellmyhouseinoklahoma.com

CORE

The Dog House OKC
Pet Services
Ms. Sherry Blair 778-1214
415 NW 5th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-3010
www.thedoghouseokc.com

Members Upgrades

The following member companies increased their investment in the Chamber, demonstrating strong support of the Chamber's efforts to drive the region's economy. To increase your investment, contact the membership division of the Chamber at 405-297-8949 or membership@okcchamber.com.

EMERGING LEADER

Scooter's Coffee
Restaurants
Ms. Stephanie Klaus 367-0742
7040 NW 122nd St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73142-3923
www.scooterscoffee.com

GRAND OPENINGS

Congratulations to Chamber members on their recent Grand Openings! To see the schedule of upcoming Grand Openings or subscribe to the Grand Openings calendar, visit okcchamber.com/grandopenings.



HTeaO

P.O. Box 21080
Oklahoma City, OK 73156

Calm Waters Center for Families & Children

501 N. Walker Ave.,
Suite 140
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Camp Pixel

607 N.W. 28th St., Suite C
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

State of Oklahoma ranks high for doing business

Top 20 States for doing business

- The State of Oklahoma ranked as the 18th best state in which to do business.
- *Area Development Magazine* determined the ranking by the result of a recent survey they sent to leading consultants to give their top state picks in 13 categories that impact company location and facility plans.
- Categories included items such as cost of doing business, competitive labor force, speed of permitting, corporate tax structure and energy costs.

Overall Rank	State	Overall Rank	State
1	Georgia	11	Mississippi
2	Tennessee	12	Louisiana
3	South Carolina	13	Utah
4	Texas	14	Arizona
5	North Carolina	15	Kentucky
6	Alabama	16	Michigan
7	Indiana	17	Missouri
8	Virginia	18	Oklahoma
9	Ohio	19	New York
10	Florida	20	Illinois

Source: Area Development 2020

For comprehensive Economic Indicators and Regional Data, www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators or contact Eric Long, Research Economist – 405-297-8976; or email at elong@okcchamber.com

Chamber launches program to recognize OKC COVID Heroes

Thanking our region’s healthcare workers for their efforts during this surge of COVID patients is the goal of a new initiative launched by the Chamber. “We know the continued levels of patients at our hospitals is taking a toll on their workforce,” explained Roy Williams, president & CEO. “We need to find ways to let these frontline healthcare workers know we appreciate their dedication.”

The Chamber is asking individuals to record a brief one-minute video message and upload the message at www.okccovidheroes.com. The messages will be compiled into longer videos that will be displayed inside the hospital for workers to see the appreciation messages.

“We know this work is hard, and any encouragement and appreciation we can send is well-deserved,” said Williams. Partners from the Oklahoma City Ad Club have volunteered to help edit the longer videos. “We really appreciate the team that is rallying around this effort.”

NSS Company selects OKC (cont’d from page 1)

Star Scientific recognized the benefits of our engineering talent pipeline and being located close to Tinker Air Force Base presented to their company. We look forward to working with North Star Scientific and helping them prosper in Oklahoma City.”

“We are proud to have North Star Scientific join Oklahoma’s aerospace industry,” said Sean Kouplen, Oklahoma secretary of commerce and workforce development. “They recognized what our state has to offer – a positive business climate and skilled workforce – and decided to join the more than 1,100 aerospace entities operating here.”



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Let's Talk Reality
coxbusiness.com/cloud | 866-961-1075

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