

THE POINT

June 2021



okcchamber.com

2021 legislative session deemed a success from Chamber perspective

Heading into the 2021 legislative session, one of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's top priorities was ensuring all critical economic development programs used by the Chamber to recruit new businesses and help existing companies expand were protected.

"We felt going into session there were concerns with several programs and the Legislature would look at making some modifications," said Mark VanLandingham, the Chamber's senior vice president of government relations and policy. "The Chamber agrees if an incentive program is not accomplishing its intended purpose and the state is not receiving a positive return on its investment, it should be scaled back or eliminated."

State lawmakers examined several state incentive programs this session to ensure they were indeed accomplishing what was intended. No program is as important in helping the Chamber achieve its economic development mission than the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Act.

VanLandingham said an amendment to legislation was introduced late in session that would have increased by \$20,000 the average wage requirement for new or expanding companies in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties to qualify for the Quality Jobs Act. If passed, the amended bill would have disqualified more than 50% of the projects in the Chamber's recruiting pipeline from qualifying for the Quality Jobs Act, he said.

"I believe there may be a concern among some legislators that projects/expansions in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties are perhaps getting too many

benefits under the Quality Jobs Act. And that as a result, economic development is occurring more in those counties than rural parts of the state," said VanLandingham.

However, Oklahoma City competes with peer cities such as Denver, Fort Worth, Nashville and Albuquerque for projects. The proposed amendment to the Quality Jobs Act likely would have resulted in those projects locating in one of those cities rather than rural communities in Oklahoma.

The bill containing the amendment – Senate Bill 936 – was passed by the House but did not make it out of conference committee when conferees from the Senate were unable to agree to the

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'POINT!' newsletter to become 'VeloCity' in July

VeloCityOKC.com was launched in July 2018 as a new Chamber digital news and advocacy vehicle, which features fresh stories and content for our members, as well as OKC residents in general, every business day. Now the brand will come full circle and bring together the Chamber's main print and digital communications vehicles.

In an effort to simplify and better align our communications offerings, The POINT! will become VeloCity in July of this year. Look for a new fresh design and visual style that connects these platforms.

“Dr. Burkhart is really smart, because he went to a lot of schools.”



Our doctors taught the class and wrote the book on children's healthcare

At only 6-years-old, Liam is very well versed in matters of the heart. Born with a congenital heart defect, Liam has had three open heart surgeries under the expert care of Harold Burkhart, M.D., Oklahoma Children's Hospital's nationally-renown chief of pediatric cardiothoracic surgery. With expert pediatric surgeons like Dr. Burkhart, kids like Liam can receive world-class care close to home, surrounded by the people who love them.

Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health is the leader in pediatric care for Oklahoma and the region. Make an appointment with a pediatric specialist today by calling (405) 271-2222 or visit us online at OklahomaChildrens.org.

Oklahoma
Children's Hospital

OU Health

Where Kids Soar & Hope is Real

Leadership Notes

Entrepreneurship key to growth

To grow our economy and set the stage for long-term growth, it is absolutely vital that we keep filling the pipeline with new ideas, innovation and new companies with growth potential.

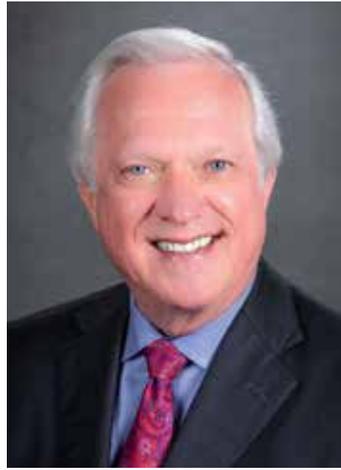
Entrepreneurship is the most complicated and delicate practice in economic development because new companies and new ideas require a support system that nurtures their success. And Oklahoma City's support system continues to grow.

The announcement that gener8tor, a nationally ranked startup business accelerator, is coming to our market is significant. Their national network of support will give companies in their program here access we have not been able to provide before.

Each time we add to our entrepreneurial ecosystem, it grows stronger, and it takes all the pieces – the co-working spaces, the pre-accelerators, the training programs, the venture capital, the networking activities and more – to create the dynamic environment that catalyzes company creation and job growth.

When you look at our largest and our fastest-growing companies in Oklahoma City, you will see that the list is dominated by companies who got their start right here in central Oklahoma. These companies started with a great idea and an entrepreneur dedicated to making it happen. Enhancing our ecosystem is how we show them our dedication. I congratulate the partners on this accomplishment, and I want to thank everyone that is involved in this work in our city. You are each playing an important role in securing our city's economic future for years to come.

Roy H. Williams, CCE
Chamber President & CEO



Roy H. Williams, CCE
President & CEO

VELOCITY

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"APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AN EFFECTIVE 'OLD AND NEW' OPTION FOR MANY TYPES OF BUSINESSES WITH WORKFORCE CONCERNS"

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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.)

June 4 Enlighten

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.
okcchamber.com/enlighten

June 16 Chamber Forum

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.
okcchamber.com/juneforum

June 29 Creating a Culture of Inclusion

3:30 to 5 p.m.
okcchamber.com/diversity

July 21 Chamber Forum

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.
okcchamber.com/julyforum

July 27 Chamber Connection

1 to 2:30 p.m.
okcchamber.com/connection

August 6 Enlighten

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.
okcchamber.com/enlighten2

August 11 State of Schools

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Location: National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 NE 63rd St.
okcchamber.com/schools

August 18 Chamber Forum

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Location: Vast, 333 W. Sheridan Ave.
okcchamber.com/augustforum

Second-chance hiring topic for June Chamber Forum

Hiring individuals who have past criminal records, have been incarcerated or have gone through rehab was once considered taboo for many businesses. Today, however, more companies are discovering those same individuals can be exemplary employees, often displaying high productivity, great loyalty and high morale – traits and characteristics valued by employers.

During the next online Chamber Forum, June 16 from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., attendees will be provided with concrete guidance on how to become a second-chance employer and how to navigate any potential challenges during the hiring process, as well as learn how second-chance hiring can benefit businesses and the larger community.

Participating on the panel will be several businesses leaders who will provide their thoughts, ideas and insights regarding this unique opportunity for employers:

- Michael Bowling, J.D., SPHR, Attorney at Law, Crowe & Dunlevy
- Joe Ely, Ph.D., Director, Business & Industry Services, Moore Norman Technology Center
- Jenna Morey, Executive Director, ReMerge of Oklahoma County
- Doug Shaffer, Director of Operations, Scissortail Waste Solutions, LLC

Before the official program kicks off at noon, attendees will be randomly placed into small networking groups beginning at 11:45 a.m., where they will have opportunities to meet other attendees. So, cameras are highly encouraged.

Registration for the June Chamber Forum is \$15 for Chamber members, \$25 for nonmembers. To register visit okcchamber.com/juneforum.

Thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Business and Corporate Sponsor ADG.

Enlighten to feature Metro Tech's book review program for business leaders

Metro Technology Center instructor Randy Mayeux, co-founder of the Dallas First Friday Book Synopsis, will be the featured speaker during the Chamber's June Enlighten event from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. June 4. He will lead a conversation on Metro Tech's Metro B-Brief program, a monthly review of books for business leaders.

Mayeux's discussion will draw from several books dealing with future technological trends and the post-COVID-19 world, including warnings and lessons from the books, "The Black Swan" and "Antifragile" by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, and "Upstream: The

Quest to Solve Problems Before They Happen" by Dan Heath.

Enlighten is a free virtual event and is available to both Chamber members and nonmembers.

Special thanks to Series Presenting Sponsor Cox Business.

For more information or to register, visit okcchamber.com/enlighten.



Randy Mayeux

Chamber returning to in-person events in August

State of Schools and Chamber Forum first events on schedule

As COVID-19 restrictions ease and life gradually returns to a pre-pandemic environment, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber will return to in-person events and meetings in August.

“We know how important events are to our members,” said Chamber Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications Cynthia Reid. “The networking and engagement that takes place is so valuable and we know our members are as anxious to be back in person as we are.”

The first signature event scheduled to be in person is the 2021 State of Schools luncheon, an annual event by the Chamber that brings together various stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss the current state of Oklahoma City’s public education system, including its many successes and what initiatives are needed to help prepare Oklahoma City’s students to be future innovators and leaders.

Held as a virtual event last August, the State of Schools luncheon this year will be held at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 11.

Steps to build a diverse talent pipeline topic of June Creating a Culture of Inclusion event

Hiring people from different backgrounds, genders, ages, experiences and nationalities offers an organization the opportunity to be more innovative and profitable.

In contrast to that, companies without a diverse pipeline tend to continue hiring the same group of people – hampering their growth and progression.

The final event in the Creating a Culture of Inclusion series, presented by the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City and the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, will focus on diverse talent pipelines on June 29 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. via Zoom.

During this event, participants will hear how businesses can take meaningful steps to building a pipeline of diverse employment talent. Discussion will also focus on how college career offices and staffing firms are partnering with businesses in Oklahoma to help expand diversity in their search processes. Speakers for

Throughout the pandemic, the Chamber has hosted its popular monthly Chamber Forum event online; however, that event is now set for an in-person restart on Aug. 18 at Vast. Vast is located on the top two floors of the 50-story Devon Tower in downtown Oklahoma City and served as the regular meeting spot for the forums prior to the pandemic. The topic for the August forum is the First Americans Museum and will feature James Pepper Henry, director and CEO.

One Chamber event that will remain virtual is Enlighten, a free monthly event that provides networking and practical resources to help boost your business performance.

This summer will be the perfect time to get back to engaging in the news and development of Oklahoma City.

“All these events provide valuable information and opportunities to meet with other members,” Reid added.

To register or to view upcoming Chamber events, please visit the Chamber’s Events page on its website at okcchamber.com/events.

this event will be Michael Hartfield, director of human resources at Love’s Travel Stop & Country Stores, Inc.; Shaun Suttle, human resources manager at Express Employment Professionals; and Leonelle Thompson, director of career and professional development at Langston University.

Individual tickets 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.

NOTE: This event is the rescheduled session from March 23; however, please note that the topic and speakers have changed. If you registered for the March 23 event, your registration has been moved to this event. If you need a refund, please email register@okcchamber.com.

Legislative Update (cont'd from page 1)

House amendments, resulting in no substantive changes to the Quality Jobs Act this year. VanLandingham expects the program will be further evaluated even during the interim period between sessions and stated the Chamber would be happy to assist in efforts to bring more economic development to rural parts of the state.

Five-year ad valorem exemption for new and expanding manufacturing facilities

Another bill important to the Chamber during the 2021 legislative session was SB 609. That bill increased the qualifying investment amount for construction, acquisition, or expansion for new or expanding companies from \$250,000 to \$500,000 during calendar year 2022 and then indexed to inflation in subsequent years.

Although the qualifying investment threshold doubled under SB 609, VanLandingham said the threshold change was acceptable because it applied to projects in all counties in the state, not just those in Oklahoma County and Tulsa County.



Regional transit legislation

Another priority item for the Chamber in 2021 was to enact regional transit legislation. SB 967 will grant limited tort liability protection under the Governmental Tort Claims Act to the railroad (BNSF), which ultimately could “step into the shoes of government” and operate a commuter rail system on its right of way in central Oklahoma.

“We were asked by the Regional Transit Authority of Central Oklahoma to take the lead in getting this legislation passed and we were able to accomplish that,” said VanLandingham, expressing confidence the legislation likely would have passed in 2020 if not for the shortened session due to the pandemic.

In related legislative action, the \$8.8 billion FY 2022 budget approved this session by state lawmakers and signed by Gov. Stitt includes full funding for

AMTRAK’s Heartland Flyer, a move the Chamber supported wholeheartedly throughout the session. The Heartland Flyer, which runs between Downtown OKC and Fort Worth, operates under a cost-sharing agreement between the Oklahoma and Texas departments of transportation.

The president has identified the OKC-to-Newton, Kan., route as a priority for federal funding under his transportation funding plan for AMTRAK.

Other critical economic development legislative priorities

- Extension of the Oklahoma Quality Events Act – The Chamber led an effort in 2010 to create the Quality Events Act, which allows communities to capture a portion of the incremental sales tax revenues generated by high-economic impact events, such as horse shows and sporting events. House Bill 1121 was recently signed by Gov. Stitt to extend the QEA program through 2026. It was set to expire this year.
- Aerospace Engineer Tax Credit – The Aerospace Industry Engineer Workforce Tax Credit program has been a tremendous success since its creation in 2008, helping attract engineers for Oklahoma’s burgeoning aerospace industry from both inside and outside the state. However, some past recipients of the tax credit may not have received the proper accreditation from their respective college or university. To address those concerns, state lawmakers passed Senate Bill 893 this session that allows undergraduate and graduate programs of the same discipline of engineering at an educational institution to qualify for the tax credit if either program is ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accredited. SB 893 was recently signed into law by Gov. Stitt.

Additional successes in the 2021 session occurred in other areas, including gun rights, data privacy, broadband expansion, criminal justice reform, Medicaid expansion and charter school funding.

Signing of film incentive bill bodes well for future of industry in state

If you live in Oklahoma, the chances of spotting a Hollywood star in your city or town just got a lot better following passage of legislation aimed at attracting more film productions to the Sooner State.

On May 24, Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt signed Senate Bill 608 into law. The Filmed in Oklahoma Act of 2021 is aimed at increasing the number of films and television series filmed or produced in the state by providing rebates to filmmakers who meet certain requirements. The bill raises the cap on the current state film rebate program from \$8 million to \$30 million and creates a new tiered structure for filmmakers to qualify for the incentive. Since it was designated an emergency measure, the bill goes into effect on July 1, 2021.

“We feel enormously grateful that the state allowed us to be so collaborative with them this year. They allowed us into the Capitol to share our story and to share the economics of [the film industry] as a viable business for Oklahoma,” said Rachel Cannon, co-founder of Prairie Surf Media. Cannon, alongside partner Matt Payne, operates Prairie Surf Studios, a 1.3-million-square-foot production facility located in downtown Oklahoma City and formerly the Cox Convention Center.

Cannon said state lawmakers were more willing to listen to their pleas about increasing state incentives after Prairie Surf commissioned an economic study by long-time economist Dr. Mark Snead. Part of the results from that study, which included a “deep dive” into the industry and examining what incentives worked and which did not, showed that in order to grow an industry, you must have what Cannon referred to as the “three-legged stool”: workforce, incentives and infrastructure.

“For the last 20 plus years, Oklahoma has not had any infrastructure. By us turning the convention center into Prairie Surf Studios and bringing in these five massive soundstages, we immediately stepped into a space where we can be competitive in the industry because we have the infrastructure,” Cannon said.

Snead’s study also showed that based on a \$50 million cap – the amount industry advocates originally requested when they first approached state officials about raising the cap – the film industry would generate \$100



Workers install outside signage for Prairie Surf Studios, formerly the Cox Convention Center.

million in wages, \$100 million in goods and services and an additional \$605 million in economic output. It would also create 4,310 direct jobs in the state as well as thousands of indirect jobs supporting the industry.

“Think about dry cleaners and restaurants and hotels. Those are all indirect jobs that are going to be beneficiaries of this industry coming here and spending lots and lots of money. At the end of the day, it’s about jobs,” Cannon said.

Now that SB 608 has been signed by Stitt, public and private officials can confidently approach industry executives about the opportunities – and state incentives – now available for companies looking to shoot films or produce TV series in Oklahoma.

Cannon said she and Payne have been in constant contact with industry and studio executives after the bill’s final passage to share with them the good news that Oklahoma City is open for business.

“Soundstages are so hard to come by, and the fact that we have five and they are massive, is something that is very exciting when you talk to filmmakers,” she said.

Cannon noted that the state of Georgia, which currently has a vibrant film industry, passed a competitive incentive in 2008 but had to wait between 2008 and 2010 to get soundstages built before seeing the industry truly take off. With five soundstages already in place, OKC is far ahead of the curve.

New startup accelerator announced for OKC

Nationally ranked startup accelerator gener8tor, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, Inasmuch Foundation, Square Deal Capital, American Fidelity Assurance Company, Oklahoma State University, the University of Oklahoma and Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc., have formally announced a new partnership to help accelerate the growth of startup companies in Oklahoma City. Starting in the Fall of 2021, they will offer two annual gBETA "pre-accelerator" programs for entrepreneurs through this collaboration.

gBETA accelerates the growth of early-stage companies through its network-driven program. gBETA supports five teams per cohort and requires no fees and no equity. Since launching in 2015, gBETA program alumni have raised more than \$188 million in capital and created 2,000+ jobs across the U.S. and Canada. gBETA is designed to help startups gain early customer traction on their product or idea, and establish and execute on metrics that make them competitive applicants for full-time, equity-based accelerators or seed investment. Participants receive intensive and individualized coaching and access to gener8tor's national network of mentors, customers, corporate partners and investors.

"We are extremely excited to welcome gener8tor to Oklahoma City," said Greater Oklahoma City Chamber President and CEO Roy H. Williams. "We have been working for a long time to bring the gBETA pre-accelerator program here because we know it will bring even more positive momentum to our local startup ecosystem. gener8tor places emphasis on providing programs that bridge the funding and mentorship gaps for diverse founders, and we are proud to partner with them to democratize access to resources for entrepreneurs."

"Together with these excellent community partners, we're thrilled to bring gener8tor to Oklahoma City,"

said Robert J. Ross, chairman and CEO of Inasmuch Foundation. "gener8tor and their gBETA program is an excellent addition to our existing entrepreneurial ecosystem and fills a complimentary gap to our existing resources."

"We're delighted to partner with the Chamber and other great organizations to bring a top-rated accelerator program to the state," said Aaron Webster, vice

president of American Fidelity Corporation. "gener8tor will be another strong platform to showcase the entrepreneurial talent that Oklahoma has to offer."

"Square Deal Capital is proud to partner with the Greater OKC Chamber in bringing gener8tor to our city as another important piece of the economic development puzzle," said Rob McLaughlin, managing partner at Square

Deal Capital. "The hope is to launch amazing new businesses that will create precious jobs while diversifying our economy."

"At OSU, we provide opportunities for students to apply academic learning to real world business ideas. These students' ideas have resulted in several startup companies, often based on properties owned or controlled by OSU," said Marc Tower, executive director of the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship at Oklahoma State University. "This collaboration with gener8tor expands the scope of education, networking and growth opportunities available to small businesses, helping them succeed."

"The University of Oklahoma is proud to support the development of this innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem," said OU Vice President for Research and Partnerships Tomás Díaz de la Rubia. "In alignment with our Lead On strategic plan, gBETA advances our ability to cultivate community-engaged research collaborations to solve critical challenges facing the state of Oklahoma, tribal nations, the United States and the world."



Accelerator (cont'd from previous page)

“Love’s is proud to partner with the Chamber and other businesses to bring gener8tor to Oklahoma City,” said Shane Wharton, president of Love’s. “We’re excited to see the successful businesses, entrepreneurship and diversity that will spring from gBETA, as we know firsthand how many talented and creative people live in Oklahoma City.”

Recognized in recent years as one of the best cities in which to start a business and a leader in future tech growth, Oklahoma City is ripe with resources, innovation and talent. gBETA aims to take those innovations and talent to a national level, and draw in other resources across the country to amplify the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and the outcomes it is able to achieve. Oklahoma City will be the 27th market where gBETA is offered; the other 26 markets’ mentors, investors and corporate partners will be available to local Oklahoma City entrepreneurs through this partnership.

“We’ve been excited at the prospect of offering the gBETA program to Oklahoma startups for over a year now and have met so many great community advocates along the way,” said Abby Kursel, partner at gener8tor.

“I have no doubt that with the talent, partners and resources available in the Oklahoma City startup ecosystem, combined with gBETA’s programming, alumni opportunities and international network, we’ll have great outcomes to show for this work in the coming years.”

gener8tor is currently hiring a director to operate the gBETA program and is accepting applications from startups to take part in the inaugural gBETA Oklahoma City program. Office hours are available to entrepreneurs in the Oklahoma City area to get support with their businesses and learn more about applying for the gBETA Fall 2021 program. More information on the application, signing up for office hours and additional ways to get involved is available at gbetastartups.com/oklahoma-city.

The gBETA program is offered in Oklahoma City thanks to the support of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, Inasmuch Foundation, American Fidelity Assurance Company, Square Deal Capital, Oklahoma State University, University of Oklahoma and Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc.

Speaker lineup announced for Chamber’s InternOKC event this summer



InternOKC, a program created by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber to recruit and retain young talent in Oklahoma City, is less than

two weeks away, so there is still time for employers to sign up their interns for this dynamic, annual event. The program provides soft skills enhancement and professional development opportunities to the region’s young professionals.

During each session, interns will enjoy programming from leading industry trainers and discover why Oklahoma City is a great place to live, work and play.

Two topics will be featured during each of the six sessions scheduled throughout the summer:

Session 1, June 16

“Make the Decision to be Extraordinary” – Presented by Tammy Overholt, senior training analyst for American Fidelity Assurance Company. Set yourself up for future success by learning to be intentional about the decisions you make, to be mindful of where you devote your attention and to discover your “extraordinary.”

“Career Jazz” – Presented by Dr. Fred Hammond III, professor of educational sciences at the University of Central Oklahoma. Lessons learned from the career and travels of a jazz musician and how choosing an open mindset can help produce career success and a prosperous life.

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Activity, flights taking off again at OKC's Will Rogers World Airport

Oklahoma City Airports Director Mark Kranenburg is careful when talking about the travel industry and the pandemic. After all, he has seen the best of times and the worst of times, all within a span of a month of each other. You can't blame him for being cautiously optimistic on whether things are truly returning to pre-pandemic levels at Will Rogers World Airport.

"As I have walked around the building the last couple of weeks, it almost feels like we are almost back to normal. Gates are full, concession areas are full and baggage claim is full. But let's not start doing cartwheels and handstands just yet. We are still in a pandemic," he warned.

Kranenburg has every right to be careful with his words. In January and February 2020, Will Rogers was seeing record numbers of passengers, even more than what had come through during the first two months of 2019. In fact, 2019 ended up as the best year ever at Will Rogers for the number of passengers flying in and out of the airport. But then in mid-March of last year, the bottom fell out as COVID-19 started its stranglehold on the world, delivering a devastating blow to the travel and hospitality industry, essentially shutting down airports across the U.S., including at Will Rogers.

"Airport activity went down to pretty much zero on the commercial side. In about a three-week time period in 2020, we went from a high of maybe 7,000 passengers going through the security checkpoint all the way to the lowest point of 239 passengers in April," Kranenburg said.

A key factor in the huge drop in passengers was the airlines' decision to suspend or discontinue air service all around the country, he said. Throughout the rest of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the number of

passengers at Will Rogers was still significantly lower than the record numbers the airport enjoyed in 2019. Today, however, the things are finally looking up for the travel and hospitality industry as infections and hospitalizations are dramatically lower, more businesses are re-opening and more people are getting vaccinated, something Kranenburg calls a game changer.

"[The vaccine] really helped build some confidence in the system and I think our economy as well," he said.

An indication of this renewed confidence can be seen in last month's passenger numbers at Will Rogers.

More than 5,000 passengers passed through the TSA security checkpoint for several days in May, even reaching approximately 6,000 passengers on a couple of occasions, Kranenburg said. In addition, some of the surfaced parking lots that were closed during the pandemic are now beginning to reopen. These are all positive signs that things are

indeed improving at the airport, so much so that several airlines are increasing the number of flights or bringing in larger aircraft to satisfy demand. Others are even introducing new nonstop flights.

The most recent carrier to announce new nonstop flights from Oklahoma City is Breeze Airways, which will begin nonstop service to Tampa beginning July 1, followed by nonstop service to New Orleans and San Antonio on July 15.

Breeze Airways isn't the only airline that is adding a new nonstop destination for Oklahoma City. American Airlines also recently announced that it will begin nonstop service from OKC to New York City's LaGuardia Airport beginning Nov. 2. The new service was originally scheduled to begin in 2020 but was delayed because of the pandemic.



Passengers traverse the concourse at Oklahoma City's Will Rogers World Airport

InternOKC (cont'd from page 9)

Session 2, June 23

“You Got This! – A Story About Independence”

– Presented by Michael Shellabarger, learning and development lead at Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc. A real story involving three habits that can boost your overall effectiveness in the workplace and ultimately change your life.

“Let’s Network!” – Interns will be placed in video rooms and have the opportunity to network with each other.

Session 3, June 30

“The Legit and Realz in the Workplace”

Presented by Lance Haffner, president of payroll & HCM solutions at Heartland. Learning the social dynamics in the workplace can be tricky. Is it appropriate to be you – your whole and true self – in the professional environment? We’ll take a fun and candid dive into being authentic and building real workplace relationships while avoiding the pitfalls of being your true self.

“On the Shoulders of Giants” – Presented by Jason Brown, deputy superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools. The power and value of relationships to gather wisdom for personal and professional growth.

Session 4, July 14

“Making a Difference Without a Title” – Presented by Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt. Understanding the value of relationships to cultivate influence, even without authority.

“Show Me the Way” – Presented by Rhonda Thompson, senior technical training specialist for OG&E. Transform your professional and personal life with the right mentor.

Session 5, July 21

“Moments Matter: Investing in Your Career One CLICK! at a Time” – Presented by Joy Joslin, director of guest relations for the Oklahoma City Thunder. People do not remember days, they remember moments – Moments Matter! Utilizing the five service values of CLICK!, Joy will provide insight into improving the customer-employee relationship so that every customer walks away feeling appreciated and valued.



“Let’s Network!” – Interns will be placed in video rooms and have the opportunity to network with each other.

Session 6, July 28

“Doing More Than Just Laying Bricks” – Presented by Dr. Mautra Staley-Jones, vice president for institutional advancement & external affairs at Langston University. How to make the shift to big-picture thinking and finding meaning and purpose in our work, which gives value to our organizations and makes a positive difference.

“Why Failure Isn’t Fatal...But Fear Can Be” – Presented by Linda Clark, principal and owner of Linda Clark Consulting and founder of DisruptHR OKC. Overcoming fear to be able to risk greatness and developing a mindset that allows us to grow and learn, even if we fail.

The Chamber is partnering this year with the University of Central Oklahoma, who will issue a micro-credential in professional development to each participating intern who completes the program requirements.

Employers interested in enrolling their interns for this summer’s InternOKC program can do so by visiting abetterlifeokc.com/summerintern. The registration fee per intern is \$125 for Chamber member companies or \$200 for nonmembers. Employers are encouraged to post their available internships on the Chamber’s abetterlifeokc.com website as well.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Love’s Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc.

Bioscience ‘rock stars’ moving to OKC indicates city’s rise in sector

If you ask most people outside the state what industry sector comes to mind when the name Oklahoma is mentioned, they might say something like oil and gas because of its long and rich history in the Sooner State. Other people might even blurt out aviation and aerospace.

Although it has not had a long-standing or deeply rooted history in Oklahoma like oil and gas or aviation, the bioscience sector is already writing its own history and quickly establishing itself as an economic powerhouse. In Oklahoma City, where public and private partnerships and collaborations have transformed an area east of downtown into a life sciences mecca, medical research abounds that is giving hope to people around the world who suffer from various life-changing, and sometimes deadly, diseases and physical disorders. And the nation is starting to take notice.

Just within the last few months, several industry-leading researchers and professionals from various bioscience hubs in the U.S. have pulled up stakes and have made the move to OKC. Others are not far behind.

Leading the recruitment of these “rock stars” from the bio world to Oklahoma City is Christian Kanady, founding partner and chief executive officer of Echo Investment Capital. He has directed investments in startups such as Prairie Surf Studios as well as investing in and co-founding Wheeler Labs and Zeno Technologies. In standing up a new bioscience vertical, Kanady and Echo are shifting their focus to biotechnology and health care next.

“These are the kinds of people you can build teams around. They are sophisticated leaders and managers that not only can scale organizations, but scale personnel,” Kanady said.

Yi-Yen Chen has already made the move to Oklahoma City from San Francisco where she was responsible for U.S. health care investment and portfolio management



at WI Harper, a venture capital firm, evaluating investment opportunities in the biotech and medical technology sectors. She now serves as managing director for Echo Investment Capital.

“Yi-Yen is going to help us make educated investment decisions in being able to stand up not only companies that have a chance at success, but also bio-pharma companies that have a chance to call Oklahoma City home,” Kanady said.

“These are the kinds of people you can build teams around.”

Christian Kanady, founding partner and chief executive officer of Echo Investment Capital

After spending nearly four years with WI Harper, Chen said she was recently contacted by a recruiter who was looking for someone to run a biotech investment vertical for a firm in Oklahoma City who was very community minded and was

attempting to build a biotech ecosystem in OKC. That firm ended up being Echo Investment Capital.

Chen, who grew up in Taiwan and received her doctorate in developmental biology at Max-Planck Institute in Germany, was amazed by the dedication the whole Echo team showed to transform Oklahoma City into a biotech hub.

“There is a great deal of potential in Oklahoma City, and we have a very good biotech infrastructure here. People on the coasts just do not know about it,” Chen said.

Another one of those “rock stars” who Kanady says will be instrumental in building up the biosciences sector in Oklahoma City is David Broecker. Although he

Bioscience (cont'd from previous page)

is not officially moving to OKC, Broecker still intends to commute one week per month as he continues his work as chief innovation and collaboration officer at Purdue University's Purdue Research Foundation. He will serve as a venture partner for Echo Investment Capital.

Broecker has spent the last 10 years in Indiana building a life science ecosystem and said he is excited about having the opportunity to do the same thing in Oklahoma.

"Oklahoma City has a terrific set of life science capabilities and assets that provide portfolio investments to Echo's bioscience platform. Every place is unique, and I think that is one of the key things,

is how do you tap into what makes each one of these areas unique? The more time I spend in Oklahoma, the more interesting it becomes in terms of those unique aspects. And again, combined with what Christian wants to do, I just think there is tremendous upside potential to do a lot of things down there in Oklahoma."

Kanady said there is another key person making the move to Oklahoma City who should play a big role in shaping Oklahoma's bioscience sector. Like Yi-Yen Chen, this individual will also be coming from the West Coast; however, she has not yet announced her departure from her current employer but expects to officially tender her resignation later in June.



David Broecker



Yi-Yen Chen

In memoriam: OMRF and Chamber leader Stephen Prescott



Dr. Stephen M. Prescott

Oklahoma's bioscience community lost a true legend and advocate when physician and researcher Dr. Stephen M. Prescott, M.D., passed away on May 28, 2021, due to complications from his battle with cancer. He was 73.

Prescott led the nonprofit Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation as its president for the last 15 years before announcing his retirement in April. He also served on the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Executive Committee, which helps oversee Chamber activities.

"The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber family is saddened by the news of Steve's passing. He was such an integral part of our organization. In fact, he was still heavily involved in the Chamber's activities up to about a month ago when he gladly volunteered to serve as moderator for our annual State of Health event. His work and leadership at OMRF and the Chamber was a

testament to his many talents, his energy and his servant-leadership mentality. Our prayers and condolences go out to his family and friends. He will be truly missed," said Chamber President Roy Williams.

As OMRF President, Dr. Prescott led the organization to its largest-ever campus expansion, attracting additional research scientists to the OMRF facilities and enabling OMRF to become an even stronger world leader in the study of various diseases and disorders that impact people worldwide. Those discoveries have yielded hundreds of patents and several life-saving drugs that are now used in medical facilities around the world. Through his leadership and perseverance, Dr. Prescott was instrumental in helping create the Oklahoma City Innovation District, described as an epicenter for collaboration, innovation, opportunity and economic growth.

Dr. Prescott, who was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2020, is survived by his wife of more than 50 years, Susan, his daughter Allison and son-in-law Jeremiah, and his son John and daughter-in-law Sheila, as well as three granddaughters.

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.

PARTNER+

University of Oklahoma Foundation

Nonprofit / Service Agencies
Mr. Guy L. Patton (405) 321-1174
100 Timberdell Road
Norman, OK 73072-6511
www.oufoundation.org

ADVISOR

Amazon

Retail
Ms. Caroline Joiner
410 Terry Ave. North
Seattle, WA 98109-5210
www.amazon.com

ADVISOR

Mustang Chiropractic

Chiropractors - D.C.
Dr. Eric Crane (405) 376-5700
201 S. Castlerock Lane
Mustang, OK 73064-4583
www.mustangchiro.com

ASSOCIATE

Album Quail Springs

Real Estate - Leasing
Ms. Jacki Miller (405) 605-6900
14201 N. Kentucky Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73134-3427
www.albumlife.com/albumquailsprings

CORE

CHC: Creating Healthier Communities

Nonprofit / Service Agencies
Ms. Shelly Douglas (405) 314-7123
1240 Lone Oak St.
Guthrie, OK 73044-5037
www.chcimpact.org

CORE

March of Dimes Foundation

Nonprofit / Service Agencies
Ms. Laurie Applekamp (405) 415-1262
5100 N. Brookline Ave., Suite 850
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-3627
www.marchofdimes.org

CORE

Marian University Accelerated Nursing Programs

Educational Services
Ms. Deb Downard (405) 666-0655
3817 NW Expressway, Suite 450
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-1489
www.marian.edu/gonurse

CORE

Oklahoma Aquarium

Nonprofit / Service Agencies
Dr. Ann Money (918) 296-3474
300 S. Aquarium Drive
Jenks, OK 74037-4148
www.okaquarium.org

CORE

The Restoration on Candlewood

Apartments
Ms. Alexis Davis (405) 829-0463
8557 Candlewood Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73132-4415
www.therestorationoncandlewood.com

CORE

Scooter's Coffee

Restaurants
Mr. Jason Metcalf (402) 980-6732
5000 N. Blackwelder Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-2026
www.scooterscoffee.com

CORE

Steven C. Dixon

Individual Members
Mr. Steven C. Dixon (405) 850-5151
15325 Fairview Farm Road
Edmond, OK 73013-1330

CORE

Thunderbird Challenge Program

Educational Services
Ms. Roxanne Cook (918) 824-4850
824 Park St., Building 313
Pryor, OK 74361-5600
www.thunderbird.org

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.

35 Degrees North

2800 NW 192nd St.
Edmond, OK 73012

Scooter's Coffee

5000 N. Blackwelder Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Guaranty Title

1319 Classen Drive
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

Mustang Chiropractic

201 S. Castlerock Lane
Mustang, OK 73064

Beyond Janitorial

3813 North Santa Fe Avenue, Suite 130
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Member 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.

ADVISOR

Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office

Government Agencies & Services
The Honorable Tommie Johnson, III (405) 713-1000
2101 NE 36th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
www.sheriff.oklahomacounty.org

EMERGING LEADER

OKC Entertainment and Events

Disc Jockeys
Mr. Steve Lunsford (405) 673-5524
12520 N.W. Expressway
Yukon, OK 73099
www.okcentertainmentinc.com

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Oklahoma Ranks No. 3 for Economic Outlook

Top 10 States by Economic Outlook

- 1) Utah
- 2) Florida
- 3) Oklahoma**
- 4) Wyoming
- 5) North Carolina
- 6) Indiana
- 7) Nevada
- 8) North Dakota
- 9) Texas
- 10) South Dakota

- Oklahoma ranked 3rd in the United States for its economic outlook and legislative policies in the 2021 ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index.
- This comprehensive report ranked states by 15 equally weighted policy variables, which are influenced by state lawmakers throughout the legislative process.
- The state moved up six places from last year's report.

For comprehensive Economic Indicators and Regional Data, please visit your Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Economic Development Division at greateroklahomacity.com or contact Eric Long, Research Economist – 405-297-8976; elong@okcchamber.com

Policy Variables

- Top Marginal Personal Income Tax (No. 16)
- Top Marginal Corporate Income Tax Rate (No. 17)
- Personal Income Tax Progressivity (No. 18)
- Property Tax Burden (No. 2)
- Sales Tax Burden (No. 36)
- Remaining Tax Burden (No. 15)
- Estate/Inheritance Tax Levied (No. 1)
- Recently Legislated Tax Changes (No. 12)
- Debt Services as a Share of Tax Revenue (No. 10)
- Public Employees Per 10,000 of Population (No. 26)
- State Liability System Survey (No. 14)
- State Minimum Wage (No. 1)
- Average Workers' Compensation Costs (No. 38)
- Right-to-Work State (No. 1)
- Tax Expenditure Limits (No. 15)

Source: American Legislative Exchange-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index, 2021

Win prizes for telling Oklahoma City's story!



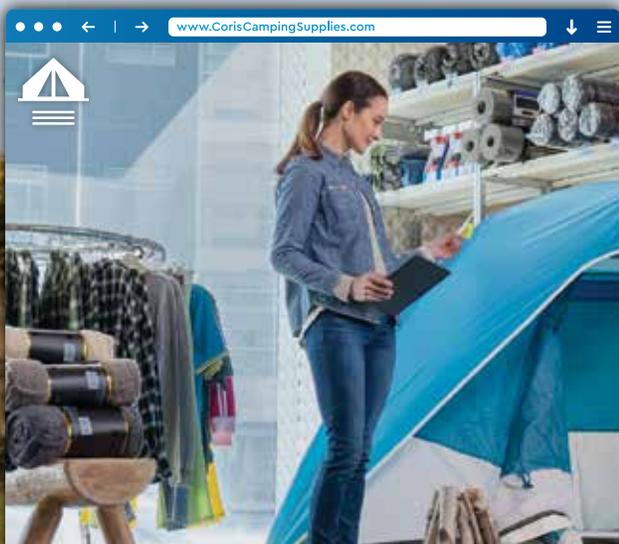
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- 7 Film incentive bill aims to further grow industry in state
- 8 OKC entrepreneurial ecosystem growing
- 12 OKC welcomes bioscience 'rock stars'

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