

# VELOCITY

AUGUST 2021 • OKCCHAMBER.COM

GREATER  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
CHAMBER

## TINKER EXPANSION PLAN TO ENHANCE SAFETY, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE MISSION GROWTH

Officials of the Oklahoma Industries Authority and Greater Oklahoma City Chamber recently announced a plan to facilitate Tinker's ability to enhance security and safety, while also creating an opportunity for future mission growth.

"Since 1941, Tinker has been a cornerstone of our city's economic base," explained Clay Bennett, chairman of the Oklahoma Industries Authority (OIA). "This base is arguably our most important economic asset, and it is vital that we do everything necessary to secure its safety and plan for its needs." OIA has acquired 220 acres east of Douglas Boulevard to provide for additional Department of Defense missions and to attract additional private sector jobs.

The expansion would be on the base's southeast side, stretching across Douglas Boulevard from 44th to 74th. The new perimeter would protect existing Department of Defense assets on the east side of Douglas, placing them securely inside the perimeter fence.

"We have been in conversation with Tinker officials about the issues of security for some time," said Sean Trauschke, chair of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. "We always want to think ahead and plan for any concerns that might jeopardize operations. At the same time, we want to look for any opportunities that make the base attractive for new missions. We did that with the former GM plant and then the BNSF rail yard. That work has been instrumental to base expansion, and we believe this work will do the same."



Tinker AFB is the center of the aviation industry in Oklahoma City, and the industry is a primary driver of diversification beyond oil and gas. There are more than 26,000 people employed on the base, and the annual economic impact on the region is approximately \$4.83 billion. Job growth in the last 10 years has been responsible for growing population and average incomes in the region, according to a study recently released by the Chamber.

The realigned perimeter also presents an opportunity for the base to redesign its current gates, making them more efficient and safer in managing the daily load of vehicles. The new gates would prevent the long backups that currently extend onto the interstates during commute times.

Mayor David Holt applauded the move. "As we continue to facilitate the growth of Tinker, this is a necessary and important next step. We cannot overlook

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



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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.

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# LEADERSHIP NOTES

## PROTECTING OUR MOST IMPORTANT ASSET

Since 1941, the Oklahoma City community has understood the importance of Tinker AFB to our region's economy. Protecting its assets and putting the base in an ideal position to attract additional work has consistently been a top goal of the Chamber.

Now we have another opportunity to do just that. Enclosing assets on the east side of Douglas into the base perimeter will enhance security and allow for greater efficiency of operation. The expanded perimeter will also allow for changes in the gates and their operation that will improve traffic flow into and around the base.

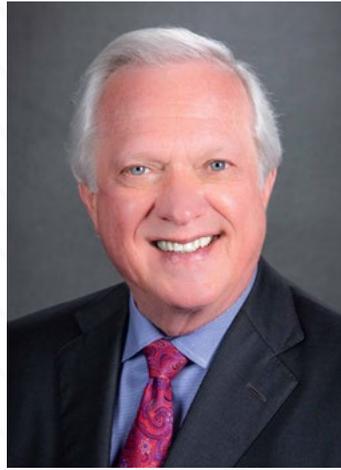
We know there will be some growing pains with these changes, but the potential for additional work and the knowledge that our nation's assets are secure is strong motivation for these improvements.

Our aerospace sector produces more than \$4.83 billion in economic impact each year, and Tinker is at the heart of this industry. The wages and impact of these jobs are felt across the region, with salaries far above the average.

This project, like so many successful efforts in our city, is a great example of partnership. We have worked closely with officials at Tinker to understand their needs, and then with the Oklahoma Industries Authority to develop and execute a plan that will make these changes possible. Elected leaders and staff from the City of Oklahoma City, City of Midwest City, Oklahoma County and our federal delegation have all provided their support, coming together to take the next step for the protection and growth of Tinker.



Roy H. Williams, CCE  
Chamber President & CEO



Roy H. Williams, CCE  
President & CEO



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"NEW WELCOME GUIDE FULL OF USEFUL TIDBITS ABOUT LIVING IN OKC"

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## CALENDAR

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

### AUGUST 6

**Enlighten**  
11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/enlighten](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten)

### AUGUST 11

**State of the Schools**  
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Location: National Cowboy &  
Western Heritage Museum,  
1700 NE 63rd St.  
[okcchamber.com/schools](http://okcchamber.com/schools)

### AUGUST 18

**Chamber Forum**  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Location: Vast,  
333 W. Sheridan Ave.  
[okcchamber.com/augustforum](http://okcchamber.com/augustforum)

### AUGUST 25

**Chairman's Breakfast**  
8 to 9:30 a.m.  
Location: Embassy Suites by  
Hilton Oklahoma City NW,  
3233 Northwest Expressway  
[okcchamber.com/chairmansevent](http://okcchamber.com/chairmansevent)

### SEPTEMBER 10

**Enlighten**  
11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/enlighten2](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten2)

### SEPTEMBER 15

**Chamber Forum**  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Location: Vast,  
333 W. Sheridan Ave.  
[okcchamber.com/septemberforum](http://okcchamber.com/septemberforum)

### OCTOBER 1

**Enlighten**  
11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/enlighten3](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten3)

### OCTOBER 20

**Chamber Forum**  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Location: Vast,  
333 W. Sheridan Ave.  
[okcchamber.com/octoberforum](http://okcchamber.com/octoberforum)

### OCTOBER 22

**Navy Birthday Ball**  
6 to 9 p.m.  
Location: Omni Oklahoma City,  
100 W Oklahoma City Blvd  
[okcchamber.com/nbb](http://okcchamber.com/nbb)



## *First Americans Museum topic of August Forum; Pepper Henry to provide preview*

Individuals planning to attend the Chamber Forum this month will get a preview of the First Americans Museum from the museum's director and CEO, James Pepper Henry.

The Chamber Forum will be held Aug. 18 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Vast.

The grand opening for the museum, formerly the American Indian Cultural Center, is set for Sept. 18-19, 2021. The \$175 million, 175,000-square-foot museum will tell the stories, histories and cultures of Oklahoma's 39 federally recognized tribes through various galleries and artifacts.

Pepper Henry was named the museum's executive director in 2017 after leading other museums across the state and nation, including Tulsa's Gilcrease Museum and museums in Phoenix, Ariz., and Anchorage, Alaska, among others.

Designed to Smithsonian Institute standards, the museum complex consists of the main museum, where guests can visit several galleries, such as the Tribal Nations Gallery that tells the stories of each of the 39 tribes, and Hall of The People, the museum's largest special events venue that welcomes visitors into the museum, as

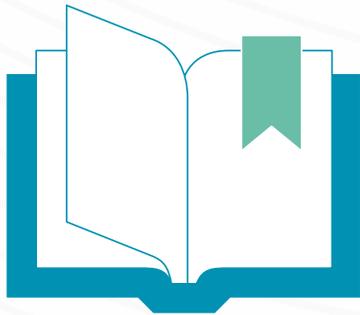
well as other spaces, including a theatre and museum store. Outside is the 40-foot-high Remembrance Gate, the Festival Plaza and the iconic earthen mound, a tribute to the mound-builder civilization.

Registration for the August Chamber Forum is \$35 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/augustforum](http://okcchamber.com/augustforum).

The Chamber's successful Forum series, which is held on the third Wednesday of the month, brings thought leaders together to discuss major initiatives, programs and current issues that impact OKC's business climate, economy and community.

Following the August event, the next forum is scheduled for Sept. 15 and will feature speakers Dan Straughan of the Homeless Alliance and Aubrey McDermid from the City of Oklahoma City, with additional speakers to be announced, as they share Oklahoma City's approach to homelessness and how businesses can help.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Business and Corporate Sponsor ADG.



# STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

## *Hofmeister, Shrum headline State of the Schools speaker lineup*

Education leaders from various levels of instruction in Oklahoma will be sharing their thoughts and insights about the status of the state's education system during the annual State of the Schools event scheduled for Aug. 11 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Aimed at learning about efforts and ideas to improve education in Oklahoma, this year's State of the Schools will be headlined by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister and Oklahoma State University President Dr. Kayse Shrum.

Hofmeister is in her final term as Oklahoma's state superintendent, a role she has held since January 2015. She has championed a host of education reforms during her tenure designed to improve public education in Oklahoma, including a repeal of the federal education law known as No Child Left Behind, the strengthening of the A-F school accountability system and more.

Dr. Shrum was named OSU's 19th president last April and officially took office on July 1, making her the first female president to lead a public research institution in the state of Oklahoma. A native Oklahoman, Dr. Shrum previously served eight years as president of OSU's Center for Health Sciences and two years as the medical school's provost and dean, becoming the youngest and first female president and dean of a medical school in the state. OSU-CHS experienced unprecedented growth during her tenure at the school.

State of the Schools will also include a panel discussion about workforce development programs that are preparing students to have successful college and professional careers. Serving on this panel will be several Oklahoma City-area education leaders:

- Chris Brewster, Superintendent, Santa Fe South Public Schools
- Chip Carter, President & CEO, Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School



Joy Hofmeister



Dr. Kayse Shrum

State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister and new OSU President Dr. Kayse Shrum will speak during the State of the Schools event Aug. 11 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

- Michelle Keyton, Ed.D, Superintendent/CEO, Francis Tuttle Technology Center
- Dr. Jeanie Webb, President, Rose State College

Individual tickets are \$50 for Chamber members and \$75 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/schools](http://okcchamber.com/schools). Sponsor tables of eight with additional recognition are available for \$1,500. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

Doors will open at 11 a.m. for registration and networking. The wearing of masks is optional for all attendees but is encouraged, especially during networking time.

The Chamber and American Fidelity Assurance Company invite attendees to bring school supplies to the event, which will benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of Oklahoma County. Supplies can also be dropped off at the Chamber office prior to the event.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, School Supply/Centerpiece Sponsor American Fidelity Assurance Company and Host Sponsor Cox Communications.

## COOLER TEMPS, HOT CHAMBER EVENTS COMING IN THE FALL

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber is gearing up for a slew of signature events during the fall, all designed to highlight key areas of importance to Oklahoma City, the surrounding region, Chamber membership and the Chamber itself. And it's not too early to reserve your spot!

Three of the largest Chamber events held annually, and which are returning to in-person formats, are the State of the City, Nov. 1; State of the Economy, Nov. 18; and the Chamber's Annual Meeting, Dec. 3.

The State of the City and the Chamber's Annual Meeting will both be held inside the new Oklahoma City Convention Center, while the State of the Economy will be at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Individual tickets to these annual events range anywhere from \$50 to \$125, depending on the event and whether you or your company is a Chamber member.

If you are a business owner and want to participate in a more meaningful way at any of these annual events, consider sponsoring a table of eight for \$1,500. The table sponsorship also includes additional recognition for your company. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

In addition to its annual events, the Chamber is continuing its highly successful monthly Chamber forums Sept. 15, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17. The forums are held at Vast and bring together thought leaders to discuss major initiatives, programs and current issues that impact Oklahoma City's business climate, economy and community.

September's forum will feature Dan Straughan, executive director of the Homeless Alliance, and Oklahoma City's assistant city manager Aubrey McDermid, with additional speakers to be announced, who will share OKC's approach to homelessness and how businesses can help. In October, attendees will get an update on regional transit initiatives from Regional Transit Authority Chairman and former Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry, RTA Vice Chairman Marion Hutchinson and Jason Ferbrache, director of the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority. November's forum will examine the state of OKC's retail industry ahead of the holiday shopping season.

Tickets for each forum can be purchased for \$35 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers. Please visit the Chamber's website at [okcchamber.com/events](http://okcchamber.com/events) for a list of these and other upcoming events.

## UPCOMING CHAIRMAN'S BREAKFAST WELCOMES SEN. LANFORD AS GUEST SPEAKER

U.S. Sen. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma, will be the featured speaker for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Chairman's Breakfast, scheduled from 8 to 9:30 a.m., Aug. 25, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Oklahoma City Northwest, 3233 NW Expressway. Sen. Lankford will provide a legislative update on federal issues facing Congress that particularly impact Oklahoma.

"We're honored to have Senator Lankford as our guest speaker for the breakfast," said Chamber Chair Sean Trauschke, who also serves as chair, president and CEO of OGE Energy Corp. "He has served our state and nation well during his time in Washington D.C. and

always puts the interests of Oklahomans first. We look forward to hearing his perspective on a variety of issues impacting our state."

Individual tickets for the Chairman's Breakfast are \$40 for Chamber members and \$60 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/chairmansevent](http://okcchamber.com/chairmansevent). If you or your company would like to sponsor a table of eight, which includes additional recognition, they are available for \$1,000. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

The Chairman's Breakfast is held twice annually, once in the spring and once in the fall. The last event was held earlier this year and featured Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Communications and Host Sponsor The Chickasaw Nation.



## OKC BIOSCIENCE COMPANIES DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES TO SAVE LIVES, GROW BUSINESS

photo credit: Progentec

Two Oklahoma City startups are working to improve the lives of people who suffer from various health conditions through technologies they are developing in their Oklahoma City labs.

Progentec is a leader in the development of diagnostic and digital technologies that support the proactive management of autoimmune diseases. Founded by Dr. Mohan Purushothaman and located at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, company researchers have developed a novel blood test called aiSLE DX Flare Risk Index that can identify a patient's future risk of experiencing what is called a lupus flare.

Flares are periods of high disease activity that can lead to organ damage and hospitalizations for patients. Early detection of flares enables clinicians to take proactive steps to better manage that patient's care, said Brett Adelman, Progentec's chief marketing officer.

"Progentec has launched a platform that helps generate the data and insights doctors and patients need to battle autoimmune diseases," said Adelman, who added that a suite of mobile apps has also been developed to complement the laboratory component to help patients better track and manage their condition.

"Across the country, more and more people are living with autoimmune diseases. Treating them requires understanding the underlying immunological changes and the impact of lifestyle factors. That is why we think our aiSLE MGMT solution, which combines both laboratory and digital technologies to support patients and clinicians, is the key to improving health outcomes," Adelman said.

Started by University of Oklahoma engineering alums Steve Lindo and Rick Pendergraft, Simergent is

developing a more affordable in-home kidney dialysis device that is more mobile and quieter than other leading home dialysis devices. In addition, Simergent's device is intended to dramatically lower the risk of infections among patients.

"Rick and I decided to start Simergent and build a peritoneal dialysis device that is meant to address some of the issues that the existing devices on the market were not," Lindo said. Their device, which they call the Archimedes system, is not yet on the market; however, Lindo said the initial launch is close, but first they must finish testing and then file an application with the Food and Drug Administration, which will happen in 2022.

Patients going through kidney dialysis essentially have two treatment options available to them. One is traveling to a dialysis center and having their blood removed and cleansed there – called hemodialysis – which can be costly and time consuming. Another option is to get treatment at home from devices that clean blood inside the body and therefore requires no needles – and no road trips. This treatment is known as peritoneal dialysis and is what the Archimedes system does.

The Archimedes system is designed to reduce the chances of dialysis patients developing peritonitis, an infection of the peritoneum caused by what is commonly referred to as "touch contamination," Lindo said.

"When the patient opens up a new disposable tubing set and tries to connect it themselves, sometimes the patients will accidentally touch the end of the connector before they connect it to the port coming out of their abdomen. This can sometime cause an infection," he said.

The answer to this potential problem was to design a disposable tubing set that Lindo's team believes will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## KIVA USA BUILDING BRIDGES FOR MANY OKC SMALL BUSINESSES



### Loans that change lives

Several locally owned small businesses are singing the praises of a national lending program established in Oklahoma City recently that is designed to help underrepresented small business owners gain access to capital they typically might have difficulty obtaining.

Launched in Oklahoma City last January by Progress OKC, a nonprofit focused on strengthening Oklahoma City's underserved communities, Kiva Oklahoma City provides those small businesses with micro-loans ranging from \$1 to \$15,000. For any small business that is approved for a Kiva loan, they are responsible for raising half of the requested funds through crowdfunding. What makes these loans so unique, however, is that borrowers are charged 0% interest and can have up to three years to pay back the loans.

"About 50% to 60% of their borrowers are either women, minorities, have bad credit or no credit at all," said Evan Fay, program manager of innovation and entrepreneurship at the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, one of several entities, including the City of Oklahoma City and the Inasmuch Foundation, that brought the Kiva program to Oklahoma City.

Fay said anyone can be a lender through Kiva. They can fund the entire loan match or as little as \$25. And once a borrower qualifies for the loan, they have between 45-60 days to raise the money. If the borrower is unable to raise the whole amount, then each committed lender will get his or her money back. If they do raise the initial funds, then Kiva provides the matching funds, which are then deposited into the business owner's account.

As the business owner repays the loan, that money goes back into the Kiva account and is paid back to the lender at the end of the loan period. Once receiving the loan funds, business owners can use the money for

various business expenses, such as equipment purchases, advertising and payroll. That is exactly what the owner of 66 Auto Care & Tires, a Hispanic-owned business in southwest Oklahoma City, did with his loan funds. He is one of 13 loans fully funded this year through the Kiva program.

"When people ask me about the program, I say you need to take the opportunity. The program helped me buy equipment and pay two workers," said Tobias Cesar,

who also received help from Progress OKC staff with marketing, including developing his own website and creating a social media presence.

Cesar said program officials also granted him three additional months to begin repaying his loan, which he first received in May 2020.

"I started repaying my loans in September, which was great because it gave me time for my business to recover [from the pandemic]. I am grateful for this program from the city," Cesar said.

About \$250,000 was raised by the Arnall Family Foundation, City of Oklahoma City and the Inasmuch Foundation for the local loan fund, which means nearly \$500,000 is available to use for various Kiva loans. Once a borrower raises their half of the requested loan amount through crowdfunding, Progress OKC then provides the matching funds to the borrower from that local loan fund.

Fay said the money raised to build the initial loan fund was accomplished within a matter of months, and between 60 to 70 business applied for loans, which speaks of the need for such a program in Oklahoma City.

***"Kiva's goal is to build a bridge up the capital ladder so that a business that is successful in repaying their loan can then go and obtain an SBA loan or a traditional bank loan."***

*- Evan Fay, Program Manager of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber*

“There was demand for this program from the get-go. It’s not like we had to convince a ton of people, ‘You should get a Kiva loan,’” Fay said. “Kiva’s goal is to build a bridge up the capital ladder so that a business that is successful in repaying their loan can then go and obtain an SBA loan or a traditional bank loan.”

Many factors have played into the initial success of the Kiva program, Fay said. He especially pointed to the work of Daisy Munoz, Progress OKC’s capital access manager, for helping spread the good news about the Kiva program as well as building relationships with business owners and helping them through the underwriting process.

“There have been a variety of business that have been funded. Kiva sets the goal of 10 a year, and so we surpassed that goal in less than half the time. That is a huge testament to Daisy and the rest of the Progress OKC staff,” Fay said.



*Tobias Cesar, founder and owner of 66 Auto Care & Tires, stands in front of his business in southwest Oklahoma City. Cesar was one of several local business owners who received a Kiva loan.*

## TINKER EXPANSION

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

the security enhancements and the need to encompass all operations inside the security perimeter, nor can we miss the opportunity to position the base for more workload. This is simply the right thing to do.”

Brian Maughan, chairman of the Oklahoma County Commissioners agreed. “Time and again our community has stepped up to support Tinker and this another one of those times for us to make a small sacrifice for long term gains. These changes are important to the Air Force, and they are important to Oklahoma County.”

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) also voiced his support for the project. “As a longtime advocate of Tinker Air Force Base, I am incredibly proud of the announcement that OIA will acquire 220 acres to continue Tinker’s mission of defending our nation,” Inhofe said. “Tinker is vital to the Oklahoma City community and our state as a whole—creating billions of dollars in economic impact and thousands of jobs. It should come as no surprise that Oklahoma is continuing to invest in this vital military installation so it can acquire and support new missions. I look forward to continuing

to fight for Tinker here in Congress as they thrive and expand. Congratulations to Oklahoma City—this is yet another example demonstrating how Oklahoma is the most military friendly state in the country.”

**“Since 1941, Tinker has been a cornerstone of our city’s economic base...This base is arguably our most important economic asset, and it is vital that we do everything necessary to secure its safety and plan for its needs.”**

*- Clay Bennett, chairman of the Oklahoma Industries Authority*

## INTERNOKC MAKES SUCCESSFUL RETURN IN 2021

InternOKC, which provides soft skills enhancement and professional development opportunities to the region's young professionals, was held virtually this summer over a six-week period beginning June 16 and ending July 28. Ten leading trainers from the business community and academia gave lively, pertinent presentations to more than 170 interns enrolled in the program, while also providing keen insight and advice.

Lee Copeland, who serves as the Chamber's director of talent and business growth, felt this year's content was right on the mark and was what the business community wanted their interns to hear.

"Both the work we did on the front end to correlate that with what industry was needing, as well as the content that was delivered, we feel really good about that," Copeland said. "Overall, I thought we represented not only corporate Oklahoma City well, but also thought leadership in terms of educators. It was a great mix among educators, trainers and keynote speakers."

The six weekly sessions the interns attended as part of the InternOKC program ran the gamut insofar as topics that were already or would soon be relevant to the interns as they continued their journey into their professional careers.

The first two sessions focused on how personal behavior, habits and practices can impact career development, and featured speakers from American Fidelity Assurance Company, the University of Central Oklahoma and Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores. For the next two sessions, interns learned how to build, maintain and navigate relationships as a way to build networks and teams, and heard presentations from representatives of Heartland Payment Systems, Oklahoma City Public Schools and OG&E. Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt also spoke to the group. The last

two sessions centered on building a mindset that fosters problem solving and big-picture thinking, and featured speakers from the Oklahoma City Thunder, Langston University and Linda Clark Consulting.

"One of the upsides of being virtual this year was that the interns had the opportunity to watch and interact with the content at their own convenience. It also provided some interesting challenges for the presenters to be really on point. And, because the event was online this year, the interns were exposed to more content and more speakers than they would have had it remained an in-person event," Copeland said.

A new twist on this year's InternOKC event was the awarding of a micro-credential to every participating intern who completed the program, which the intern could use to make themselves more marketable to potential employers.

"You have some young people who have had an opportunity on top of whatever they are learning in their internships to come in here and wrestle with questions that are more about their personal development. And that impacts their professional development rather than just their on-the-job training. To me, that has been a real positive thing, even during a year where we were having to figure out a different way to do it," Copeland said.

Now that InternOKC is in the books for 2021, event organizers have immediately begun turning their attention to its return in 2022. They are evaluating many elements of this summer's program to determine if those things will continue to be a part of InternOKC going forward, including using online options for various activities such as speaker presentations and networking time for participating interns.

"An overwhelming majority of feedback we have received from our interns and speakers has been positive, and I think that is a testament to the commitment, dedication and hard work of everyone involved. It was truly a team effort," Copeland said.

***"Overall, I thought we represented not only corporate Oklahoma City well but also thought leadership in terms of educators. It was a great mix among educators, trainers and keynote speakers."***

*- Lee Copeland, Director of Talent and Business Growth, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber.*

## PAYCOM CENTER NEW NAME FOR DOWNTOWN ARENA, RENOVATIONS COULD START SOON



*In this artist's rendering, Oklahoma City's downtown arena bears its new name – Paycom Center. The Oklahoma City Thunder and Paycom recently announced the naming rights agreement. (Photo courtesy Oklahoma City Thunder)*

Downtown Oklahoma City will be even greener in the near future as the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder and Paycom recently announced a 15-year partnership agreement that will give the Oklahoma City company exclusive naming rights to the downtown arena. The arena will now be known as Paycom Center.

The naming rights agreement will take effect immediately with exterior signage featuring Paycom's green logo to be completed by the time the Thunder takes the court for its first home game of the 2021-22 NBA season.

In a joint news release announcing the partnership, Oklahoma City Thunder Chairman Clay Bennett, who also serves on the board of directors for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, said the Thunder organization is proud to enhance their relationship with Paycom.

"The Thunder shares Paycom's always-onward vision, grit and relentless pursuit of excellence, combined with a passion for impacting our community. Together, we are committed to working hand in hand to create the best for our fans and city. On behalf of our ownership group and the entire Thunder organization, we look forward to presenting our new arena partner, Paycom, to the NBA global audience," Bennett said.

Paycom, a long-time Chamber member, is a leader in payroll and human resources technology, and employs more than 4,000 people locally.

Paycom founder and CEO Chad Richison stated, "Oklahoma City is home to thousands of our employees, and I am happy that Paycom Center will be the home of the Thunder. We are committed to our community and remain focused on the future as we support the home team."

Brian Byrnes, the Thunder's senior vice president for sales and marketing, said the fact that Paycom is a local company with similar values was important for the Thunder organization as they looked for a new naming partner.

"Paycom has a great vision for the future and wants to continue impacting Oklahoma City and be an influence on how the city grows. And we think the same way,"

Byrnes said. "To bring these two brands together is exciting, and it has been thrilling to work through this process knowing that when we reopen Paycom Center in the fall for the NBA and the Thunder, we can bring our fans back, fill our building and get back to the energy and excitement that brings us all together. We are excited we can do all of that with Paycom as a partner."

Byrnes said the 15-year partnership agreement speaks volumes to the confidence that Paycom has in the Thunder to deliver value over a long period of time. On the flip side, it also gives the Thunder confidence that they have a partner that will be with them throughout the next chapter of the team's history.

"I know there is a high degree of trust and confidence between the two partners to continue to elevate Oklahoma City and to have it be a place where people are proud to live, work and play. I think that longevity is at the heart of what makes this such a great partnership for us," Byrnes said.

That longevity will no doubt involve future renovations to improve the fan experience, which were approved by Oklahoma City voters in 2019 as part of MAPS 4. Working with a budget of \$115 million, the city will make improvements to various areas throughout the facility over the next several years, including a new food court; an expanded south entrance; upgrades throughout Loud City; locker room and technology upgrades, including a new scoreboard; and replacing seats on all levels within the bowl area. Some renovations could begin soon once the City Council approves the implementation plan.

## TINKER'S KIRKLAND SEES LOCAL SUPPORT CONTINUING TO FUEL BASE'S MISSION



Retirement is just weeks away for Tinker's current commander of the Air Force Sustainment Center, Lt. Gen. Gene Kirkland, but that does not necessarily mean he is taking it easy or resting on his laurels. Despite the soon-to-be exit from a 34-year career in the military, Kirkland is still actively engaged in leading the sustainment center, something he has enjoyed doing since he first became its commander in August 2018.

"We enjoy outstanding support from all of our communities, and I always say the best communities make the best bases. And that is true here [in Oklahoma City]. You are all in and consistently voted with bond issues, your check book and with major land acquisitions," Kirkland said.

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber helped facilitate a deal in 2008 between Oklahoma County and the Air Force to lease the old General Motors plant to Tinker, saving American taxpayers \$400 million in planned construction costs. The Air Force later transformed that facility into an aerospace complex, now called Building 9001, where workers repair and overhaul various aircraft engines and parts.

The Chamber also helped Tinker acquire 158 acres of the BNSF rail yard, paving the way for a planned maintenance operation for the Boeing KC-46, the Air Force's new refueling tanker. In addition, the Chamber recently announced that 220 acres owned by the Oklahoma Industries Authority and located just to the east of Tinker will be made available to Tinker to expand the base's footprint in Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County.

Leading approximately 40,000 airmen across three air logistics complexes, three air base wings and two supply chain wings, Kirkland expects the sustainment center to

play even a more integral role in our national security, especially as the Air Force welcomes the Boeing KC-46 to its aircraft arsenal, as well as Air Force's newest bomber, the Northrop Grumman B21 Raider. Both aircraft will be maintained at Tinker Air Force Base.

Kirkland said two buildings on the KC-46 campus have already been completed. By the time the entire campus is built out – which should happen by the end of this decade – there will be 14 docked spaces available for repair and maintenance work on the new refueling tanker.

"The KC-46 campus enables the KC-46 mission, which is absolutely critical to our nation's ability to project forces forward rapidly and as part of what underpins our national defense strategy," Kirkland said.

Building 9001 continues to be a critical asset for the Air Force for repair and overhaul of aging aircraft. More than 2,500 people are currently employed there, which is about a third more than worked there when it was still the GM plant, Kirkland said.

Out of the 2,500 employees working in Building 9001 are 1,600 engineers who are part of Tinker's software engineering group.

"We have more software engineers and computer sciences in that building than we do in any other functional area," Kirkland said.

In 2020, the software engineering groups at Warner Robbins Air Force Base and Hill Air Force Base as well as Tinker combined to generate more than \$800 million in revenue. Of that total, Tinker alone generated \$240 million. Business continues to grow at a 6% clip annually, according to Kirkland.

"We work closely with commercial industry, delivering the same product at the same level of quality

and value at about 65 cents on the dollar,” Kirkland said. “This is important for us and makes our STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) challenge here in Oklahoma and across the nation even more of an imperative to make sure we have software engineers and other STEM graduates going forward.”

One factor that has greatly enhanced Tinker’s ability to attract and retain engineers to the base is the Aerospace Industry Engineer Workforce Tax Credit program that was passed by the state Legislature in 2008. Under this program, qualified engineer graduates can get up to a \$5,000 credit on their state income taxes. Over the last decade, however, various eligibility issues have sprung up causing some engineers to be denied the tax credit.

During the 2021 session, state lawmakers made a change to the tax credit program under Senate Bill 893. The measure, signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt, 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 accredited by ABET, a non-governmental organization that accredits post-secondary education programs in applied

and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology.

“While we often have difficulty competing with private industry recruiting engineers, this tax credit and expansion will encourage those in key career fields to take a second look at the Oklahoma aerospace sector, including the military. And candidly, it is a tool we use to recruit out of state to bring new talent to Oklahoma,” Kirkland said.

Another issue that impacted Tinker’s ability to attract and retain personnel was recently solved by legislators. Kirkland said many of Tinker’s military spouses faced significant hurdles becoming licensed in their own respective occupations after moving to Oklahoma City. A new law enacted by the state Legislature alleviated that burden by recognizing those spouses as residents of Oklahoma.

“Talking to folks about this for more than a decade, this is a huge retention tool for us for active duty. If your spouse cannot get employed, they are less likely to stay in our Air Force or Navy. It’s a win-win,” Kirkland said.

## BIOSCIENCES UPDATE

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 7)

drastically reduce the number of peritonitis cases. The Archimedes system is on wheels and can operate off a battery, making it more mobile, helping patients feel less trapped.

“If they want to start their therapy in their living room while watching TV or interacting with their family members, then they can wheel it into their bedroom and go to sleep, and the machine will continue to deliver the rest of their therapy while they are sleeping,” said Lindo, adding that the Archimedes system is less painful and easier to use for dialysis patients.

Oklahoma City’s reputation in the bioscience space has steadily grown in recent years with the addition of more companies and investment capital, resulting in more breakthrough discoveries and more jobs. The most recent estimates show that bioscience companies in Oklahoma City support 51,000 workers with total compensation of \$2.2 billion.

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# 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

### Friday Health Plans

*Insurance - Health*  
Ms. Denice Willison.....(918) 520-1493  
9126 E. 77th St.  
Tulsa, OK 74133-4922  
www.fridayhealthplans.com

## ADVISOR

### Red Rock Behavioral Health Services

*Mental Health Services*  
Ms. Verna Foust.....(405) 424-7711  
4400 N. Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-5104  
www.red-rock.com

## CORE

### A TO Z REMODELING LLC

*Contractors - General*  
Mr. Yossi Ben-Yehoshua.....(405) 443-5642  
15312 N. May Ave., Suite 205  
Edmond, OK 73013-8864  
www.a2z-remodeling.com

## CORE

### Alpha Community Foundation of Oklahoma

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Mr. Michael Emery.....(405) 761-1983  
3401 NE 16th St.  
P.O. Box 20295  
Oklahoma City, OK 73156-0295  
www.alphafoundationok.org

## CORE

### Archer Real Estate

*Real Estate - Commercial*  
Mr. MacKenzie Britt.....(405) 230-0975  
1117 NW 50th St.  
102 W. Eufaula St., Suite 200  
Norman, OK 73069-5656  
www.archerok.com

## CORE

### Champion Convention Center

*Convention & Conference Centers*  
Ms. Marla O'Neal.....(405) 768-4766  
803 S. Meridian Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73108  
www.championconventioncenter.com

## CORE

### eForensix, LLC.

*Computer Data Recovery  
Legal Technology*  
Mr. John Lucich.....(844) 820-4856  
1992 Morris Ave., Suite 183  
Union, NJ 07083-3507  
www.e4n6.com

## CORE

### ReMerge of Oklahoma County, Inc.

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Ms. Jenna Morey.....(405) 208-7200  
823 N. Villa Ave.  
P.O. Box 2845  
Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2845  
www.remergeok.org

## CORE

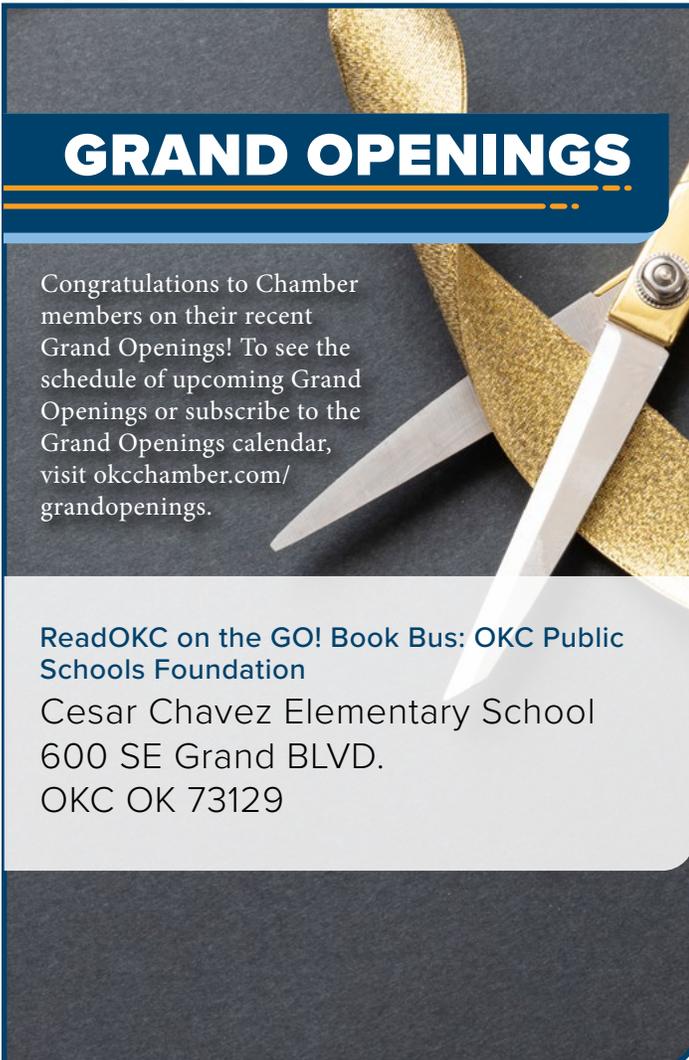
### Round One Entertainment, Inc.

*Amusement / Entertainment / Attractions*  
Ms. Destany King.....(714) 723-2144  
3070 Saturn St., Suite 200  
Brea, CA 92821-6297  
www.round1usa.com

## CORE

### Split-T, LLC

*Real Estate Developers*  
Ms. Savannah Shades.....(405) 513-1700  
5701 N. Western Ave.  
3825 NW 166th St., Suite B7  
Edmond, OK 73012-9231  
www.split-tokc.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](http://okcchamber.com/grandopenings).

**ReadOKC on the GO! Book Bus: OKC Public Schools Foundation**  
Cesar Chavez Elementary School  
600 SE Grand BLVD.  
OKC OK 73129

## 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](mailto:membership@okcchamber.com).

## PARTNER+

### RSM US LLP

*Accountants and Accounting Services*  
Mr. James H. Denny, CPA.....(405) 239-7961  
210 Park Ave., Suite 1725  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-5636  
www.rsmus.com

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## OKLAHOMA RANKS NO. 13 FOR BEST RUN CITY IN AMERICA CITIES RANKED BY OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

RANK	CITY
1	NAMPA, ID
2	BOISE, ID
3	FORT WAYNE, IN
...	...
<b>13</b>	<b>OKLAHOMA CITY, OK</b>
31	ALBUQUERQUE, NM
68	INDIANAPOLIS, IN
74	SALT LAKE CITY, UT
78	HOUSTON, TX
90	SAN ANTONIO, TX
95	DALLAS, TX
130	DENVER, CO
134	LOS ANGELES, CA
148	NEW YORK, NY

Source: WalletHub, June 2021.

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

- Among the 150 largest U.S. cities, Oklahoma City was ranked as the 13th best run city.
- WalletHub determined the operating efficiency of cities by comparing the quality of services residents receive against the city's per-capita budget.
- Quality of Services was determined through a score made up of 38 metrics grouped into six service categories, including financial stability, education, health, safety, economy, infrastructure and pollution.

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## LOOK INSIDE!

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