

# VELOCITY

SEPTEMBER 2021 • OKCCHAMBER.COM

GREATER  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
CHAMBER

## CVB LOOKING FOR SOME 'HOMETOWN HEROES' TO HELP BRING CONVENTIONS TO OKC

If you are a local business leader who will be attending a regional or national convention or conference sometime soon, officials with Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau would love to speak with you.

Mike Burns, who serves as the CVB's vice president for sales and services, is looking for what he refers to as "hometown heroes" to help the CVB recruit conferences to Oklahoma City now that the city's new convention center has been built.

Burns said every time one of Oklahoma City's hometown heroes travels to another city for a business conference, he would ask them to think about who they can find that would want to talk with them about their



*Since the Oklahoma City Convention Center opened last January, the 500,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility has already welcomed several conferences this year.*

industry's particular event and the chance to host it in Oklahoma City.

"If you are sitting in a board meeting or committee meeting and you know the organizers, just raise your hand and say, 'Hey, I know our community would love

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 8*

## MAYOR TO REFLECT ON PAST YEAR AND WHAT IS AHEAD FOR OKC DURING STATE OF THE CITY

Join Mayor Holt and about 1,500 business leaders for a unique opportunity to hear the mayor reflect on the past year and where the city is headed during the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's State of the City event Nov. 1 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Oklahoma City Convention Center.

Tickets for this annual event are \$60 for Chamber members and \$100 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/soc](http://okcchamber.com/soc).

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.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor The Professional Basketball Club, LLC - Oklahoma City Thunder.



*Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt will give the annual State of the City address Nov. 1.*

“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](http://OklahomaChildrens.org).



Where Kids Soar & Hope is Real

**LEADERSHIP NOTES**

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE SIGN OF ECONOMIC STRENGTH**

Everywhere you go right now the inability of companies to find the employees they need is a hot topic of conversation. Like many trends, I believe the COVID pandemic has merely accelerated an issue already occurring issue in our community.

The good news for our citizens? Our unemployment rate in July dipped below 3% in Oklahoma City again to only 2.9%. One of the lowest in the US, and one that many experts indicates full employment in the area.

For companies looking to hire, this presents a challenge. There are a couple myths I have been hearing about unemployment and workforce availability that I want to dispel – or at least shed a little light.

Many incorrectly believe that the unemployment rate is directly tied to the number of people receiving assistance, when it is actually based on a survey the Bureau of Labor Statistics has been implementing since 1940. This survey helps determine the number of people in the workforce, how many are employed, and how many are unemployed and looking for work.

Oklahoma County’s available workforce number is actually growing. Many think that the number of people without a job who are not looking for a job has increased but the numbers say otherwise. In July of 2019, the number of people in the workforce was 694,074. In July of 2020, that number dropped slightly to 693,162. In July of 2021, there was a healthy increase to 705,360.

Oklahoma City is a growing market with growing demand and a growing workforce. We must all take a hard look at how we recruit and retain our talent and how we can help our existing workforce meet the needs of tomorrow. I know here at the Chamber, we are constantly looking for ways to help in those efforts.

Roy H. Williams, CCE  
Chamber President & CEO



Roy H. Williams, CCE  
President & CEO

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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.)

#### SEPTEMBER 7

Chamber Connection  
1 to 2:30 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/connection](http://okcchamber.com/connection)

#### SEPTEMBER 10

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

#### SEPTEMBER 15

Chamber Forum  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
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/enlighten2](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten2)

#### OCTOBER 20

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

#### OCTOBER 22

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

#### OCTOBER 26

Chamber Connection  
8:30 to 10 a.m.  
[okcchamber.com/connection2](http://okcchamber.com/connection2)

#### NOVEMBER 1

State of the City  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Oklahoma City Convention Center  
100 Mick Cornett Dr  
[okcchamber.com/soc](http://okcchamber.com/soc)

#### NOVEMBER 5

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



## Attracting more online leads and improving customer service topics of upcoming Enlighten events

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's next two Enlighten events for September and October will feature speakers from the digital marketing industry and the professional sports arena. These free events will be offered via Zoom from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

On Sept. 10, the Chamber will welcome marketing expert Gunnar Hood, who will discuss the seven steps to attracting more qualified leads online. He has worked for WSI ("We Simplify the Internet") Digital Marketing for more than nine years, helping business-to-business companies simplify the Internet to attract and acquire their ideal clients.

"In the last 18 months, buyers dramatically changed from buying in person to buying online. But many companies are still struggling to adapt their lead generation efforts to attract the right online buyers. At Enlighten I'll cover seven steps businesses can take to improve their process and attract better qualified leads online," Hood said.

For more information or to register for September's Enlighten, visit [okcchamber.com/enlighten](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten).

On Oct. 1, Oklahoma City Thunder Director of Guest Relations Joy Joslin will provide insight into improving the customer-employee relationship so that every customer walks away feeling appreciated and valued.

"People do not remember days, they remember moments. Moments do matter," remarked Joslin, who has worked for the NBA franchise for more than seven years, including two in her current position.

Enlighten events are available to both Chamber members and nonmembers, providing networking and practical resources to help boost your business performance.

For more information or to register for October's Enlighten, visit [okcchamber.com/enlighten2](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten2).

Special thanks to Series Presenting Sponsor Cox Business.



## Homelessness and rapid transit topics for upcoming forums

Homelessness is affecting more people in Oklahoma City than ever before, and the problem is seemingly getting worse. What to do about the homeless population and what steps are needed to help improve their situation has been debated for many years. Last year, the City of Oklahoma City conducted its annual Point-in-Time Count and discovered that 1,573 people were experiencing homelessness, a jump of about 300 people from the year before. Some estimates have Oklahoma City's unhoused population even higher.

On Sept. 15, during the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's monthly forum, officials from the City of Oklahoma City, along with representatives from local organizations whose mission it is to end long-term homelessness, will participate in a panel to discuss Oklahoma City's overall approach to homelessness and how businesses can help.

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

Scheduled to appear on the panel are Oklahoma City Police Chief Wade Gourley; Assistant City Manager Aubrey McDermid; Jerod Shadid, program planner – Homeless Services, City of Oklahoma City; and Dan Straughan, executive director of The Homeless Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Seeing the rapid growth of homelessness throughout the city, Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt in 2019 formed the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness. Representatives from the City, including the city council, local service providers and philanthropic agencies, make up the task force.

Registration for the September Chamber Forum is \$35 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers.

To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/septemberforum](http://okcchamber.com/septemberforum).

The October Chamber Forum is scheduled for Oct. 20 and will focus on the latest news surrounding the regional transit initiatives for the Oklahoma City metro. Serving on the panel will be former Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry, who chairs the Regional Transportation Authority; RTA Vice Chair Marion Hutchison; and Jason Ferbrache, director/administrator for the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority.

Earlier this year, the RTA approved the Transit System Plan that will serve as the guiding document for the next 10 to 25 years to eventually bring bus rapid transit, commuter rail and a light rail system to the OKC metro. Four regional corridors were identified in the plan that would quickly and efficiently connect people to various "regional activity centers" across the metro.

Tickets for the October Chamber Forum, which will also be held at Vast from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., are \$35 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/octoberforum](http://okcchamber.com/octoberforum).

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

# CHAMBER FORUM

## TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE FOR STATE OF THE ECONOMY, NOV. 18

Join keynote speaker Dr. Bill Conerly, a business-focused economist with more than 30 years of experience connecting the dots between the economy and business decisions, during the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's State of the Economy event, Nov. 18, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Conerly is an online contributor to *Forbes* and the author of "The Flexible Stance: Thriving in a Boom/Bust Economy." He also wrote "Businomics," a book about economics for business leaders. In his keynote presentation, Conerly will use insights on current economic conditions to help companies adapt in unpredictable times.

In addition to Conerly's remarks, the event will also include a panel discussion from regional economists on the issues that are particularly important to our state. Participating in the panel will be:

- Robert Dauffenbach, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean for Economic Development and Impact, and Director of Center for Economic and Management Research at the University of Oklahoma

- Russell Evans, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics, and Executive Director of the Steven C. Agee Economic Research & Policy Institute at Oklahoma City University's Meinders School of Business

- Mark Snead, Ph.D., Economist and President of RegionTrack

Tickets are \$50 for Chamber members and \$75 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/soe](http://okcchamber.com/soe). Sponsor tables of eight with additional recognition are available for \$1,500. Please 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.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Arvest Bank.

If you or your company would like to sponsor a table of eight, which includes additional recognition, they are available for \$1,500. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

The Navy Birthday Ball is sponsored by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, Oklahoma City Navy League and the Navy's Strategic Communications Wing One at Tinker AFB. Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor The Boeing Company.



The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber will help the U.S. Navy celebrate its 246th birthday on Friday, Oct. 22, with the annual Navy Birthday Ball at the Omni Hotel Oklahoma City, 100 W Oklahoma City Blvd.

Marked by special Navy traditions, including the annual cake-cutting ceremony, this black-tie event honors the men and women of the U.S. Navy. Festivities get kicked off with a 6 p.m. reception, followed by dinner at 7 p.m.

The U.S. Navy has been an integral part of the city's military presence for many years, most notably for its "Take Charge and Move Out" (TACAMO) mission at Tinker Air Force Base. Currently, more than 1,400 active-duty Navy personnel are stationed at the base.

Individual tickets for the Navy Birthday Ball are \$80. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/nbb](http://okcchamber.com/nbb).



HALL CAPITAL  
CENTENNIAL  
1920 | 2020



## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

### HALL CAPITAL: A FAMILY-OWNED, PRIVATE INVESTMENT COMPANY

In 1916, Fred Jones stepped off a train in downtown Oklahoma City. He soon became the first man to punch the clock at the brand-new Ford Model T Assembly Plant in west downtown. On May 1, 1920, he embarked upon his first entrepreneurial enterprise, joining the ownership of the Blackwell, OK Ford dealership. He added a second in Tonkawa, sold both in 1922, and opened his first dealership in Oklahoma City that same year.

In the decades that followed, Fred Jones became one of the most successful Ford dealers in the world, selling hundreds of thousands of cars. He also became a pioneer in the remanufacturing of auto parts and an early supporter of the aerospace industry.

Fred and his wife Mary Eddy emerged as leading citizens of Oklahoma City, supporting every civic endeavor as their own. Fred would serve as chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and play a key role securing Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City. Mary Eddy supported countless causes, most notably in the arts. Fred would be inducted into the nation's Automotive Hall of Fame and both were inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

Beginning in the 1980s, Mary Eddy and daughter Marylin guided the passing of the torch to a new generation. Fred, Boots and

Kirk Hall followed the business and civic trails blazed by their grandparents. Under their leadership, and with Fred as CEO, the company increased overall sales from \$200 million to \$1 billion and their employee count to over 2,000.

Between 1998 and 2000, the company sold the auto dealerships and remanufacturing interests, opening the door to new entrepreneurial opportunities. Over the next twenty years, the company – now known as Hall Capital – would establish itself as a national player in real estate and automotive investment.

Meanwhile, the Hall brothers would continue a family legacy of service, supporting the community in countless ways, through civic leadership roles (including Fred's chairmanship of the Chamber of Commerce), and philanthropy (led by the work of the Fred Jones Family Foundation).

Today, this venerable, family-owned company – headquartered at East Wharf in Oklahoma City and boasting offices in Nashville, Chicago, Dallas and Tulsa – commemorates its centennial. For a moment, it pauses to celebrate, but quickly remembers the words of founder Fred Jones:

**"Keep in mind all our work is for the future. Let us spare not, nor look back, but go forward unlimited with all our powers."**



[hall-capital.com](http://hall-capital.com)

to look at your meeting or your convention. What do we need to do to at least have a conversation?’ Just open the door an inch, and we can take it from there,” Burns said.

Since the Oklahoma City Convention Center officially opened last January after more than two years of construction, the 500,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility has already welcomed several conventions to Oklahoma City this year and more are on the way.

CVB President Zac Craig echoed Burns’ earlier sentiments regarding the impact Oklahoma City businesspeople can have on helping attract conventions, conferences and meetings to Oklahoma City.

“It goes without saying that being the stewards of this new infrastructure, the ability to extend our reach to brand-new customers for Oklahoma City is really a great opportunity now as we work internally with the CVB sales team and externally with the community and our stakeholders. There are people from various business sectors who live right here in Oklahoma City that we have never been able to attract exposure for by hosting one of their national conventions in the past. And now we have the opportunity to do so,” Craig said.

Craig noted the various meeting sites that Oklahoma City can offer associations and industry groups that may be looking for future convention destinations, specifically mentioning the Bennett Event Center at the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds; USA Hall of Fame Stadium, where the NCAA Women’s College Softball World Series is played; Champion Convention Center on the Meridian Avenue corridor; and the new Oklahoma City Convention Center.

“We have a lot of new assets now that we have never had, and so when a planner or somebody comes to us, we can strategically place people where they need to be,” Craig said.

Not only does Oklahoma City have several spaces to hold just about any large conference or meeting, but it also boasts many high-quality attractions that can help woo meeting planners to Oklahoma City. One attraction that has not officially opened but will in a few weeks, the First Americans Museum near downtown, has already played a major role in getting a national tribal youth



*The Bennett Event Center at the OKC Fairgrounds is one of several meeting-space options available to groups.*

association to make a verbal commitment to hold a future conference in Oklahoma City.

“When you think of memorable experiences, whether it’s personal travel or convention related, you can either do a reception in the four walls of a standard ballroom or you can go to this incredible Hall of the People at the brand-new First Americans Museum. It’s a night-and-day experience and elevates the total experience and perception of Oklahoma City,” Craig said.

Another asset the CVB is selling to convention planners about Oklahoma City is its accessibility, in particular the availability of the new streetcar for conference attendees and the proximity to the various entertainment districts in and around the downtown area.

“If you think about our destination – the convenience, the uniqueness of our districts – that’s a huge selling point. And the fact that we can say, ‘By the way, we can provide free transportation to your people, whether they use the streetcar or not. But it’s there and becomes very attractive to planners,” Burns said.

“The big thing that we can sell to any group is that there are more restaurants you can walk to or get to by streetcar in this community than almost any city I have been to. It is so convenient, and there is such a variety. And that appeals to a lot of different groups,” he said.

If you are somebody who would be willing to make contact with the meeting planner or an official with your respective national organization, there are various resources you can access or pass along by going to the Meet in OKC page at [visitokc.com](http://visitokc.com).

“From city leadership and business owners to our local residents, we have already received an outpouring of assistance and proactive support. We are grateful and appreciative for the referrals they have already made or will make in the future,” Craig said.

## gBETA OKLAHOMA CITY PREPARING FOR SEPT. 30 LAUNCH

The launch of a new pre-accelerator program in Oklahoma City is just under a month away and already the program has made steady progress toward helping early-stage startup companies become successful.

gBETA Oklahoma City, a free program by nationally ranked startup accelerator gener8tor, is set to launch on Sept. 30. The program is designed to take five early-stage startups from various industries and for seven weeks surround them with mentors, followed by targeted programming focused on fund raising, customer acquisition, e-commerce and ways to deliver the product or services.

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, along with several other local partners, including American Fidelity Assurance Company, Inasmuch Foundation, Love’s Travel Stops and Country Stores, Oklahoma State University, Square Deal Capital and the University of Oklahoma, were instrumental in bringing gBETA to Oklahoma City.

Recently, Selena Skorman was hired as gBETA’s new director, which has allowed the program to truly take off. Prior to her new role, Skorman served as Director of Strategic Partnerships with the Oklahoma City Innovation District.

“With gBETA, I am now working with new startups, investors and long-time founders, who are going to be our mentors for these new startups. In addition, I am working with our community partners, like the Chamber, OU, OSU and Love’s, and making sure we are also meeting their needs.”

Over the last month, Skorman has been busy learning her new job by shadowing different program directors and learning their programs and processes, albeit online. Skorman has not had a great deal of time to learn all of the intricacies and nuances that come with the role; however, she has certainly hit the ground running.

“Selena has done everything from securing office space for herself and started holding office hours,” said Evan Fay, the Chamber’s program manager of innovation

and entrepreneurship. “Right now, she is just trying to fill her calendar meeting different people, including people who provide early-stage funding for startup companies, the founders themselves and entrepreneurial-support organizations. She is also being visible within the community by attending various community events.”



*Selena Skorman was recently selected as director for gBETA Oklahoma City. (Photo courtesy)*

The gBETA program has so far received nearly 20 applications from early-stage startups hoping to be one of the five companies selected to participate in the program, Skorman said. She expects to see even more applications roll in by the Sept. 6 deadline. Both Skorman and Fay encourage startups that have not applied for the gBETA program to do so by visiting [gbetastartups.com/apply](http://gbetastartups.com/apply).

“We can really take a concierge-driven approach and focus solely on these companies, getting them successful and where they need to be. And then we will have more successful businesses in Oklahoma City, and we will create more jobs and generate more money for the economy,” Skorman said.

### CHAMBER CONNECTION

**Tuesday, Sept. 7  
1 to 2:30 p.m. on Zoom  
No cost to attend!**

Want to find out more about your company’s investment in the Chamber? Attend the Chamber Connection Sept. 7 and learn more about the Chamber’s key initiatives while also meeting other members. You will walk away with a better understanding of the Chamber’s role in Oklahoma City’s business community, including:

- Economic development efforts
- Government relations activities
- Community involvement programs
- Involvement opportunities

Register at [okcchamber.com/connection](http://okcchamber.com/connection)

## HALL CAPITAL CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL

### JONES / HALL FAMILY HAS BROUGHT 100 YEARS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, CIVIC LEADERSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY TO OKLAHOMA CITY

Hall Capital is celebrating its 100th anniversary as a family-owned company headquartered in Oklahoma City. Beginning with founder Fred Jones and now continued through his grandsons – Fred, Boots and Kirk Hall – the company has been an economic force in Oklahoma City for a century, as well as a civic beacon and philanthropic benefactor.

“Our centennial is a momentous milestone for Hall Capital,” said Fred Jones Hall, chairman & CEO of Hall Capital. “My grandparents – Fred and Mary Eddy Jones – started something we are honored to continue. Our family is grateful for the opportunity to have created jobs in this community, but we were also taught to serve. My brothers and I truly want to leave this city better than we found it, and we continue to also be grateful for the opportunities we have to give back.”

In 1916, Fred Jones stepped off a train in downtown Oklahoma City. He soon became the first man to punch the clock at the brand-new Ford Model T Assembly Plant in west downtown. On May 1, 1920, he embarked upon his first entrepreneurial enterprise, joining the ownership of the Blackwell, Okla., Ford dealership. He added a second dealership in Tonkawa, sold both in 1922 and opened his first dealership in Oklahoma City that same year.

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Hall of Fame, and both were inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

Beginning in the 1980s, Mary Eddy and daughter Marilyn guided the passing of the torch to a new generation. Fred, Boots and Kirk Hall followed the business and civic trails blazed by their grandparents. Under their leadership, and with Fred as CEO, the company increased overall sales from \$200 million to \$1 billion and their employee count to more than 2,000.

Between 1998 and 2000, the company sold the auto dealerships and remanufacturing interests, opening the door to new entrepreneurial opportunities. Over the next 20 years, the company – now known as Hall Capital – would establish itself as a national player in real estate and automotive investment.

Meanwhile, the Hall brothers would continue a family legacy of service, supporting the community in countless ways, through civic leadership roles (including Fred's chairmanship of the Chamber), and philanthropy (led by the work of the Fred Jones Family Foundation).

Due to the pandemic, the company's centennial celebration has stretched into 2021. Commemorations include the placing of a statue of Fred Jones near the former Model T Assembly Plant (now 21c Museum Hotel), a book about the company and family by Dr. Bob Blackburn and David Holt called “Here We Go!” and the commissioning of a painting by Greg Burns of the Lake Hefner view from Hall Capital's East Wharf headquarters.



*During Fred Jones' early years, he opened several Ford dealerships in Oklahoma City. In the decades that followed, he became one of the most successful Ford dealers in the world and an auto parts manufacturing pioneer.*

## PARTNERSHIPS VITAL FOR GROWING SKILLED WORKFORCE, OFFICIALS SAY

Oklahoma City's continued growth and prosperity is a reflection of its community leaders and organizations, such as the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, and the partnerships and collaborations it has forged or shared to transform Oklahoma City into a place that many cities now envy.

For years, the metro's colleges and universities, public school systems, private schools and career technology centers have worked together to help provide Oklahoma City with a workforce that meets the needs of business and industry. For instance, Rose State College, a two-year college located in Midwest City has many articulation and partnership agreements in place. Its president, Dr. Jeanie Webb, understands just how vital these and other kinds of initiatives, such as concurrent enrollment, can be for their students and the companies they eventually work for.

“Let's get these kids in and give them a jump start. With concurrent enrollment, they can get their bachelor's degree in three years and be out to work. I think that is really what the workforce wants to do,” Webb said.

Francis Tuttle Technology Center is also honed in to providing graduates with the necessary skills and tools required by the business community today. They have created four college prep academies for students as early as 10th grade that pair high-level math and science skills with technical skills. The newest academy – an entrepreneurship academy – opens this fall.

“Since 2003, when we opened our engineering academy, we have had 755 students graduate. About 90% of those students will go on to major in engineering. And just kind of a side success, since about 2015, 15 student teams have applied for and gotten U.S. utility patents because of the work they are doing on their senior projects,” said Francis Tuttle Superintendent Dr. Michelle Keylon.

Even local high schools are becoming more involved in workforce development. At Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School, students are not only exposed to rigorous coursework but are also required to work five

days a month for a local business as part of the school's Corporate Work Study Program.

“We are pretty much a first-generation college-bound school,” School President Chip Carter said. “Over their four years at Cristo Rey, our students will typically be at two or three different companies, maybe even four, so they are going to get exposed to a lot of different career opportunities. When they go to college, our kids are already having a much deeper idea of what they want to major in than what I had when I was their age,” he said.

Santa Fe South Public Schools Superintendent Chris Brewster said if he had a magic wand and unlimited resources, he would, “have every business employ high school seniors as paid interns into a profession so we can draw a great workforce in and value these students and their expertise from day one.”

When it comes to specific areas in which students need more training, two reoccurring themes that many educators point to today are teaching students how to learn and training in interpersonal or soft skills.

“Students have to know how to learn, how to seek new information and how to apply that back to what they are doing,” Keylon said.

Webb believes students are coming in much more technology oriented, which is vital as they begin their college coursework. Nonetheless, she believes common education, higher education and Career Tech will all need to work together to help students succeed in school and in the workplace.

“Partnerships are our answers to the future,” she said. “If we all come together, regardless of what college or career tech you are at, I think Oklahoma can be a top-10 state.”



## CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY ON FINAL MAPS 3 SENIOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER

Earlier this summer, Oklahoma City officials broke ground on the fourth and final Senior Health and Wellness Center as part of MAPS 3.

Located just south of SW 134th and Western, the center will provide health and fitness programs and opportunities for people 50 and over. It will be operated by the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City.

MAPS Project Manager David Todd said this year's wet summer has played havoc with construction crews and timelines but expects the fourth Senior Health and Wellness Center to be completed by the end of next summer.

"They have already cleared the site and demoed the existing structures out there. We just can't get a break from the rain," Todd said.

When completed, the 40,000-square-foot center will feature several amenities such as a saltwater pool and lap pool, fitness studio, gym with pickleball court and basketball court, an elevated walking/jogging track and a small clinic for health screenings operated by Integrus Health. There will be a kitchen that can also be used for cooking classes. The building will also set directly next to a large, picturesque pond that will provide ample fishing opportunities for members.

Oklahoma City Councilman David Greenwell, who represents Ward 5 where the fourth Senior Health and Wellness Center is being built, said it was important to locate this particular center on the far southside of Oklahoma City

"There are many people who live in the east part of Ward 5 around Western and Santa Fe avenues, and the population continues to grow in that area south toward Norman. Unfortunately, we don't have too many municipal facilities over in that part of Ward 5. So, I was extremely pleased that we were able to locate this property there. I think it will be the most beautiful of the senior wellness centers to date," Greenwell said.

Todd said each of the four senior health and wellness centers that have either been built or are in the process of



Artist rendering of the fourth and final Senior Health and Wellness Center as part of MAPS 3 that is currently being built in far south Oklahoma City. (Photo courtesy)

being built are all different to some degree in both scope and design.

"One of the ideas was that we didn't create a senior wellness center and then go drop it in the neighborhoods, but that it needed to respond to the neighborhood and the general area it was serving as far as an operator perspective and also the programs that were being offered. And we took it even further that the buildings would kind of interact with the area they were in," he said.

According to city officials, this newest Senior Health and Wellness Center will feature large windows providing natural light throughout the two-story structure, along with panoramic views of the pond and grounds, which will include gardens, patios and space for various activities. There will also be a large, covered entry into the building.

Greenwell hopes all of the MAPS 3 Senior Health and Wellness Centers, as well as a future facility planned as part of MAPS 4, will help city officials obtain feedback from the members in terms of their overall physical and psychological health before joining the facilities and then several months afterward.

"It would be great if we could get certain data, such as blood pressure and cholesterol levels, for instance, from those members who would be willing to share that information with us, to demonstrate to the general public that these investments by the city do have a positive impact.

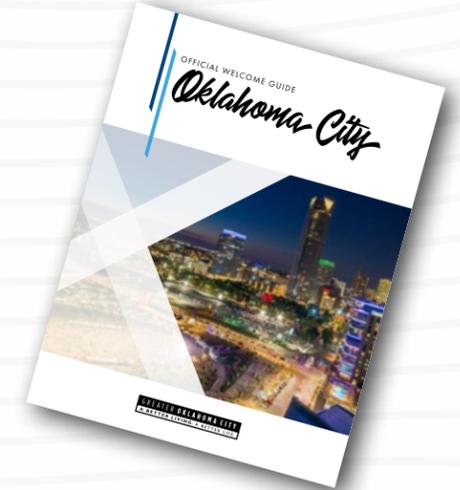
"I believe the more active we are, the more we are extending our life. Hopefully, this facility will help accomplish that," Greenwell said.

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

Making a move to a new city is a big decision and potential new residents need good information to make their decision. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber makes that material easy to find every year in its annual Welcome Guide.

The 2021 Welcome Guide is now available and is packed with information for Oklahoma City's newest residents. There are sections loaded with detail about the city's history, neighborhoods, schools, climate and weather, the economy and, of course, what to do and where to go for fun.

The guide is an informative tool for companies and businesses to use when recruiting new talent to the city. It includes information about how Oklahoma City residents continue to invest in themselves by passing major bond issues and funding initiatives such as MAPS



4 to continue the renaissance the city has witnessed over the last two decades. There are also details about the city's growing industries, such as aerospace, logistics and distribution, and biomedical. Potential residents can read about new attractions such as the Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center and learn more about one of the city's original biomedical institutions, the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

Check out the 2021 Welcome Guide and see what makes Oklahoma City such a great place to live and work by visiting [ABetterLifeOKC.com](http://ABetterLifeOKC.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).

### Marian University Accelerated Nursing Programs

3817 NW Expressway  
Suite 450  
OKC OK 73112-1489

### Goodwill Job Connection Center and Store

2016 NW 39th St.  
OKC OK 73118

### Chicken N Pickle

8400 N. Oklahoma Ave  
OKC, OK 73114

### Ignite Medical Resort OKC

6312 N. Portland Ave.  
OKC, OK 73112

# 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

**Onsite Construction Group, LLC**  
Construction Companies  
Mr. Jacob Baucom.....(405) 848-3568  
2610 NW Expressway, Suite A  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
www.onsite-cg.com

## ASSOCIATE

**Pepetools, Inc.**  
Manufacturing & Distribution  
Ms. Irina Aizenman.....(405) 745-4054  
7601 SW 34th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179-4404  
www.pepetools.com

## ASSOCIATE

**UScellular - Premier Wireless**  
Telecommunications Services  
Ms. Christina Lattanzio.....(405) 728-2377  
7000 NW Expressway, Suite A  
1409 S. Main St.  
Tulsa, OK 74107  
stores.uscellular.com/premier-wireless

## CORE

**Bloom Cannabis Co.**  
Medical Cannabis  
Ms. Heather Gee.....(405) 410-7649  
3408 N. Classen Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-3255  
www.bloomok.com

## CORE

**Dickey's BBQ Pit**  
Restaurants  
Mr. John W. Brese.....(405) 242-4046  
7800 N. May Ave., Suite B  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116  
www.dickeys.com

## CORE

**Hampton Inn Oklahoma City NW**  
Hotels & Motels  
Ms. Connie Heimbach.....(405) 947-0953  
3022 N.W. Expressway  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112  
www.hampton-inn.com/hi/okc-northwest

## CORE

**Health Alliance for the Uninsured**  
Nonprofit / Service Agencies  
Ms. Jeanean Yanish Jones.....(405) 286-3343  
3000 United Founders Blvd., Suite 244  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-391  
www.hauonline.org

## CORE

**Lisa Pitsiri**  
Individual Members  
Ms. Lisa Pitsiri.....(405) 520-6431  
7011 NW 21st St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103-1811

## CORE

**Mollycoddled Hash Slinger**  
Candy  
Mrs. Melissa Wedman.....(405) 506-9207  
12100 N. Rockwell Ave., Suite 7  
10816 NW 32nd Terrace  
Yukon, OK 73099-4042  
www.mollycoddledhashslinger.net

## CORE

**Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Government Agencies & Services  
Ms. Krista Townsend.....(405) 523-4000  
2132 NE 36th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73111-5306  
www.oklahoma.gov/veterans

## CORE

**Solar Creations, LLC**  
Alternative Energy  
Mr. Dustin Mills.....(405) 420-0009  
4500 N. Classen Blvd., Suite 201  
P.O. Box 6006  
Edmond, OK 73083-6006  
www.solarcreations.net

## CORE

**UScellular - Premier Wireless**  
Telecommunications Services  
Ms. Christina Lattanzio.....(405) 691-3919  
1609 Penn Park Blvd., Suite 8  
1409 S. Main St.  
Tulsa, OK 74107  
stores.uscellular.com/premier-wireless

## CORE

**UScellular - Premier Wireless**  
Telecommunications Services  
Ms. Christina Lattanzio.....(405) 843-7073  
6406 N. May Ave.  
1409 S. Main St.  
Tulsa, OK 74107  
stores.uscellular.com/premier-wireless

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## OKLAHOMA RANKS NO. 2 BEST STATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

### TOP 10 STATES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Overall Rank	State	Relative Tax Burden	SSI Tax?	Monthly Home Ownership Costs
1	Florida	6.80%	No	\$1,021
<b>2</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>6.90%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>\$817</b>
3	Mississippi	9.10%	No	\$751
4	Delaware	5.50%	No	\$1,010
5	Massachusetts	8.80%	No	\$1,552
6	Maryland	9.30%	No	\$1,314
7	North Dakota	8.10%	No	\$960
8	California	9.30%	No	\$1,552
9	North Carolina	8.20%	No	\$858
10	South Carolina	7.50%	No	\$811

Source: SeniorLiving.org; U.S. Census

- Among the 50 states, Oklahoma was ranked as the second best for older adults.
- Senior Living determined the ranking by comparing the 15 factors considered crucial to living a long and happy life. The study included factors such as taxes, income cost of living, weather and number of nurses.
- According to the U.S. Census, less than 2% of people retire to a state other than the one in which they already live.

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)

## 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).

## EMERGING LEADER

**Ignite Medical Resorts**  
Health Services  
Rehabilitation Services  
Mr. Matthew Johnson..(405) 946-6932  
6312 N. Portland Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-1463  
[www.ignitemedicalresorts.com](http://www.ignitemedicalresorts.com)

**STOP RANSOMWARE BEFORE IT STARTS**

With ransomware attacks on the rise, the best way to protect your business is by preventing an attack in the first place. Train your employees with our free webinar at [DontClickSeminar.com](http://DontClickSeminar.com)

Assess your network for threats by contacting the experts at **Network Security Group** at 844.350.0384 or [NSGI.com](http://NSGI.com).

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