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MARCH 2022 • OKCCHAMBER.COM

GREATER
OKLAHOMA CITY
CHAMBER

KROGER FULFILLMENT NETWORK EXPANDS TO OKLAHOMA CITY

Oklahoma City's grocery shoppers will have more options for their grocery delivery choices after the Kroger Co., America's largest grocery retailer, announced recently it will be expanding its fulfillment network by opening a 50,000-foot spoke facility in northeast Oklahoma City. The facility, which will be located at 8801 North I-35 Service Rd. and powered by the Ocado Group, will provide nearly 200 jobs.

As a continuation of Kroger's successful entry into Florida in 2021, Oklahoma will serve as another new geography for the company, bringing innovation and modern e-commerce to the area, extending the grocer's

reach and ability to provide its customers anything, anytime, anywhere.

"We're excited to extend the Kroger fulfillment network to Oklahoma City, a new geography for our operation and an integral part of our strategy to achieve the doubling of our digital sales and profitability rate by the end of 2023," said Gabriel Arreaga, Kroger's senior vice president and chief supply chain officer. "This grocery delivery service is an innovative addition to the expanding digital shopping experience available to our customers. The spoke facility will provide unmatched, impeccable customer service and improve direct access to fresh food in areas eager for the variety and value offered by Kroger."

"We are excited to welcome the country's largest supermarket to Oklahoma that will further showcase our state's impressive distribution infrastructure," said

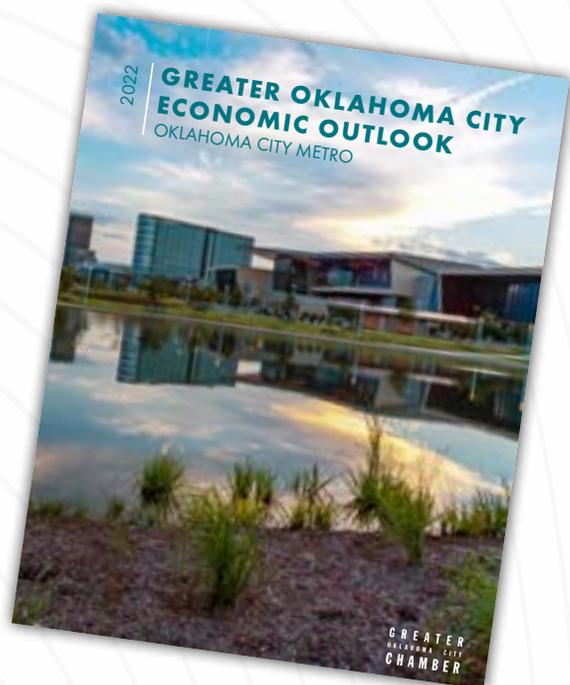
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STRONG JOB GROWTH PROJECTED FOR OKC METRO IN 2022

In 2022, the Oklahoma City metro should continue to show strong growth through the first half of the year. Anticipated job growth for Oklahoma City reflects an expectation of a strong start to the year and continued demand for labor that should result in job counts exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

These findings were released recently as part of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's annual Greater Oklahoma City Economic Outlook. The Outlook

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10





**Nursing at
OU Health
means I pick a
schedule that
works for me.**

Safia Franks, RN
Cardiology



We Make a Difference for Our Patients.

Nursing at OU Health means you have flexibility in your schedule through innovative programs – created by nurses and made for nurses. We are dedicated to creating and fostering a strong culture of collaboration and patients-first mentality in our hospitals and clinics. We know that when you put the patients first, everything else falls into place.

We've recently launched new nursing positions and programs with competitive pay rates, including:

- OU Health Weekend Position (*Work 2 shifts, get paid for 3*)
- OU Health Travel at Home Position
- OU Health Education Accelerator Program

Apply today by visiting OUHealth.com/Nursing. Job opportunities are available in all areas of adult and pediatric care, oncology and more, in hospital and clinical care settings, including OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center, Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, OU Health Edmond Medical Center and OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center.

As an integrated academic health system, interested nurses can practice at OU Health and seek a faculty appointment at the OU Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing.



LEADERSHIP NOTES

THE ROAD QUITE TRAVELED

By now, you may have heard or read that I will be winding down my role with the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. It has been a fun and exhilarating ride for me over these nearly two decades serving the business community in this critical position and leading this highly respected and actively engaged organization.

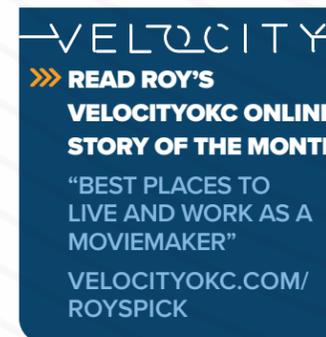
I am extremely proud of the work the Chamber has accomplished during my tenure, and I am confident those achievements will continue unabated and even more will be realized because of the partnerships the Chamber has forged over the last 20 years. Those relationships are critical to our city's continued vibrancy and prosperity. I can honestly say those relationships have meant the world to me both professionally and personally. But the real opportunity is being given the chance to meet and engage with the "doers" – the people who do not just talk the talk but walk the walk. These are the people who begin, work on and end up making transformational changes. In fact, I am proud to say that many of those individuals have become my lifelong friends.

My role has afforded me a unique opportunity to see and engage in a variety of activities that have profound impacts on the community. I think back on the companies that either started or relocated here, along with the jobs they provided. Boeing, Amazon, Dell and Costco certainly come to mind. And there are many more examples. And the gains we have made and continue to make in criminal justice reform and diversity within the business community -- achievements that will have long-lasting impacts. But nothing has pleased me more or has been more fulfilling than getting the privilege to lead a staff of high-quality, hardworking, and dedicated individuals who genuinely love their city and want to see its continued transformation.

I do not know what is in store for Oklahoma City for the next 20 years, but I am confident that through the important work of the Chamber, city, and state leadership, as well as community and business visionaries, the future of Oklahoma City as a vibrant, growing, big-league city looks brighter than ever.



Roy H. Williams, CCE
President & CEO



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Greater Oklahoma City Chamber
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CONTENTS

5 Chamber's annual
Washington, D.C., trip
scheduled for April 27-28

6 Annual professional
development conference,
Elevate, draws closer

8 Roy Williams retiring from
Chamber, national search for
successor to begin soon

12 Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine
construction progresses,
November dedication set

UPCOMING EVENTS

CALENDAR

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

MARCH 23

Chamber Forum
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Vast
333 W Sheridan Ave.
okcchamber.com/marchforum

APRIL 5

Chamber Connection
8:30 to 10 a.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton OKC NW
3233 Northwest Expressway
okcchamber.com/connection

APRIL 14

Elevate
8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City Convention Center
100 Mick Cornett Dr.
okcelebrate.com

APRIL 20

Chamber Forum
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Vast
333 W Sheridan Ave.
okcchamber.com/aprilforum

MAY 13

State of Health
10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Oklahoma City Convention Center
100 Mick Cornett Dr.
okcchamber.com/statehealth

MAY 18

Chamber Forum
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Vast
333 W Sheridan Ave.
okcchamber.com/mayforum

State's growing film industry focus of March Chamber Forum

On Wednesday, March 23, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Vast, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber will continue its Chamber Forum series with a focus on Oklahoma's growing film industry and its impact and potential for our region's economy. During the Chamber Forum, you will hear from a panel comprised of OKC film-industry leaders and leading economists, including:

- Rachel Cannon, Co-CEO, Prairie Surf Media
- Tanya Ruby, EVP, Head of Finance, Prairie Surf Media
- Mark Snead, Ph.D., President & Economist, Region Track, Inc.

The cost to attend the March Chamber Forum is \$40 for Chamber members and \$50 for nonmembers. Chamber Forum half-season ticket packages are also still available. You can purchase a half-season package good for five Chamber forums at a discounted rate of \$175.

To register for the forum, visit okcchamber.com/marchforum. If you prefer to purchase a half-season ticket package, you can do so by emailing register@okcchamber.com or calling 405-297-8921.

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

Chamber's State of Health returns as in-person event May 13

Individuals who want to learn more about the region's health care landscape are encouraged to attend the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's State of Health event May 13 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the downtown Oklahoma City Convention Center. This annual event will feature public, private and nonprofit leaders discussing wellness initiatives and health industry trends.

State of Health will also feature Chamber-member exhibitors aligned with the health care industry. Attendees will also have the opportunity to connect with Chamber-member exhibitors before and after the scheduled luncheon. More information will be announced soon regarding the program lineup.

Individual tickets are \$60 for members and \$85 for nonmembers. Sponsor tables of eight with additional recognition are available for \$1,500.

Exhibitor tables are available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$300 for members and \$600 for non-members. Each table includes one skirted table and two chairs.

For more information or to inquire about an exhibition table, call 405-297-8921 or visit okcchamber.com/statehealth.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor MidFirst Bank and Host Sponsor OU Health.

Connect with OK delegation, other officials during Chamber's annual D.C. trip

After a two-year break due to the pandemic, the Chamber will resume its annual DC Fly-in this year on April 27-28, to provide Chamber members with an opportunity to interact one-on-one with members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation and defense leaders.

The event includes full briefings from each member of the Oklahoma congressional delegation. Another highlight is a reception on Capitol Hill with Air Force leadership and other Oklahomans in Washington, D.C.

On the second day, sessions will cover specific areas of interest on issues critical to our community. Trey McKenzie, executive director of government affairs with the U.S. Chamber, will discuss infrastructure and transportation. Other speakers will focus on defense issues, the Federal Aviation Administration and cybersecurity. Attendees will learn more about legislation that impacts local business and hear directly from our Oklahoma congressional delegation.

If you would like to join some of your fellow Chamber members for this excellent opportunity to connect with



Chamber officials, Chamber members and other guests pose for a group photo in front of the U.S. Capitol during their 2019 trip to Washington, D.C. The Chamber is organizing a similar trip to our nation's Capital in April.

various federal and elected officials and each other, registrations are being accepted now through April 1 for \$900, which includes a one-night hotel stay, official events, most meals and some transportation to and from programmed events. Air travel to and from Washington, D.C., is not included.

To register for the annual D.C. trip or to learn more details, including the latest itinerary and travel recommendations, visit okcchamber.com/dc.

Thanks to Presenting Sponsor American Fidelity Assurance Company.

CareerTech partnership aimed to streamline access to business training topic of April Forum

Oklahoma City-area business owners who find it difficult knowing exactly how their local CareerTech system can help them with their business training needs, or which of the local technology centers they should contact, will want to attend April's Chamber Forum, April 20, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Vast.

Officials representing CareerTech as well as business and industry centers will serve on a panel to discuss Onward OKC, a new compact comprised of Oklahoma City's largest and most diverse technology centers. Onward OKC streamlines access to training for business owners, HR managers and job seekers. Participating in the panel will be:

- Gayla Lutts, Superintendent, Canadian Valley Technology Center
- Rick Mendenhall, Superintendent, Mid-Del

Technology Center

- Brian Ruttman, Superintendent, Moore Norman Technology Center
- Tanner Smith, Training Specialist, ATC Drivetrain

The cost to attend the April Chamber Forum is \$40 for Chamber members and \$50 for nonmembers. Chamber Forum half-season ticket packages are also still available. Half-season ticket packages are good for five Chamber forums at a discounted rate of \$175.

To register, visit okcchamber.com/aprilforum. If you prefer to purchase a half-season ticket package, you can still do so by emailing register@okcchamber.com or calling 405-297-8921.

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

ELEVATE

ELEVATE YOUR WORKFORCE WITH THE CHAMBER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Invest in the future of your company by sending your company's employees to Elevate, a professional development conference and networking event that's all about strengthening Oklahoma City's workforce.

Designed to help your company provide professional development options to its employees—without having to send people out of the market to experience an excellent conference—Elevate will take place on Thursday, April 14, at the Oklahoma City Convention Center, with registration and a continental breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. Morning and afternoon breakout sessions will include education tracks for new managers, new employees, small business owners, entrepreneurs and general sessions that will apply to everyone, no matter the career stage.

Keynote speakers include lunch session speaker Linda Clark, a nationally recognized human resources consultant who will inspire audiences with keynote address entitled, "Elevating the Ask: The Art of Transforming Perspective Through Inquiry," and Dr. Elizabeth Lombardo, who will provide the closing keynote session on creating success in the new normal.

SESSIONS AND SPEAKERS

EXPANDING YOUR INFLUENCE

Everything Communicates

Speaker: Susan Dell'Osso, Accenture

BOOSTING YOUR SALES

It's All in Your Head: How to Keep Your Head Game on Point in Sales

Speaker: Sunny Cearley, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber



Ask & Ye Shall Receive (Well, Most Times Anyway)

Speaker: Teresa "Tee" Hicks, Gannett & The Oklahoman

Why People Lie to You...and What To Do About It

Speaker: Mike Crandall, Sandler Training

DEVELOPING YOUR CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Championing Equitable Advancement

Speaker: Shalynne Jackson, City of Oklahoma City

Building Inclusive Leaders in This Complex, Employee-Driven Society

Speaker: Sandra Quince, Bank of America

Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Speaker: Adam Soltani, CAIR Oklahoma

Moving Beyond Politeness

Speaker: Suzette V. Chang, Thick Descriptions

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

Elevate Your LinkedIn Brand

Speaker: Gunnar Hood, WSI Summit

Leading at Scale: How to Master your Business Cash Flow to Grow

Speaker: Stacy Eads, Scaling Up with Stacy Eads, LLC

INVESTING IN YOUR RESILIENCE

Improving Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution through the Arts

Speaker: Jennifer Maynard, M.S., Artio Services

Better Together

Speaker: Emma Wassilak, Sunbeam Family Services

Keeping Balance: Mind Brain Skills and Resilience Strategies for Today's Fast-paced Life

Speaker: Dr. R. Murali Krishna, INTEGRIS Health's James L. Hall Center for Mind, Body and Spirit

MANAGING YOUR TEAM

Help Wanted: Why is Everyone Quitting?

Speaker: Doug Hacking, Relationship Resonance, Inc.

I Need a Leadership Instruction Manual: Leading with Clarity

Speaker: Kati Hanna, The Mettise Group

Leading People Unlike Yourself: How to Thrive as a First-Time People Leader

Speaker: Matthew Palmer, Heartland Payment Systems

The Seven Secrets of Effective Coaching

Speaker: Michael Shellabarger, Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores

STARTING YOUR CAREER

Choose to Be Extraordinary

Speaker: Tammy Overholt, American Fidelity Assurance Company

Show Me the Way: How Finding the Right Mentor Can Move Your Career Forward

Speaker: Rhonda Y. Thompson, OGE Energy Corp.

*See the most updated list of sessions and speakers at okcelebrate.com.



REGISTRATION OPTIONS

The Elevate experience is open to everyone, but Chamber members get a discounted conference registration for \$250 per person or \$200 per person for groups of three or more within the same company. An all-day conference registration includes breakfast, lunch, all keynote speakers, four breakout sessions, morning and afternoon refreshments, and a drink ticket to the Elevate closing reception. Chamber members that are nonprofit organizations will also receive a discounted rate of \$200 per person or \$160 per person for groups of three or more within the same organization. To purchase tickets to Elevate, view the schedule or access additional information about the event, visit okcelebrate.com.

Businesses can also elevate their workforce with several ticket package options, including the Boost Package for \$2,500 (10 tickets and sponsorship recognition), Uplift10 Sponsor package for \$3,000 (10 tickets plus additional sponsorship recognition) or the Uplift20 Sponsor package for \$4,000 (20 tickets and even more sponsorship recognition). Learn more by visiting okcchamber.com/elevate2022 or email register@okcchamber.com to secure your organization's ticket package.

Special thanks to Aspiration Sponsor OG&E.

WILLIAMS TO RETIRE FROM GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY CHAMBER

After 17 years leading the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, President and CEO Roy Williams recently announced that he will retire later this year. The organization plans to conduct a national search to identify a new leader to be in place prior to his departure.

“The impact Roy has left on this city is significant,” said Sean Trauschke, OGE Energy Corp., chair of the Chamber. “His vision as an economic development leader has helped this organization drive an aggressive agenda for growth and development. He leaves an incredible legacy for our community.”

Williams joined the Chamber as executive vice president of economic development in 2002 before becoming president on Jan. 1, 2004. He has been at the helm of the organization through two successful MAPS elections, the transition of Oklahoma City to the major league with the Thunder’s arrival in Oklahoma City, and two expansions at Tinker AFB. He was also a driver behind the Chamber’s work in criminal justice reform, retail development and more. Since joining the Chamber, the organization worked with companies to announce 88,015 new jobs and nearly \$7 billion in capital investment. Those projects included Dell, Boeing, Amazon, Costco, Heartland and CACI. The population of the city grew by 340,000 and GDP by \$32 billion during the period.

Clay Bennett, chairman of the OKC Thunder and past chair of the Chamber, said Roy’s leadership has been pivotal for the organization.

“Roy has been so much more than a typical Chamber president,” he said. “I think back to so many situations – bringing the Hornets and then the Thunder, to our work with criminal justice reform, to campaigns like MAPS – where his wisdom, insight and understanding were absolutely crucial to our success. He has always been willing to take a risk and push Oklahoma City to where it needs to be, whether we were pursuing an opportunity or fixing something that was broken. This city is a better place because of Roy Williams, and we have a presence on the national stage that is due in no small part to his leadership.”



Other projects where Williams leadership role has been critically important include the development of OKBio (Oklahoma’s bioscience industry organization), the Innovation District, Boathouse District, the creation of the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council and the push to expand Oklahoma City’s visitor industry with the new convention center and Omni Hotel.

Williams’ background is as an economic developer. Prior to joining the Chamber, he held economic development or executive leadership positions at the Texas Governor’s Office, Texas Department of Commerce, Greater Phoenix Economic Council, Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

“There is no doubt in my mind that Roy’s leadership has been pivotal for the Chamber in the success of the last 20 years,” said Trauschke. “His leadership and ability to bring the right collaborators to the table made those projects happen.”

Williams looks forward to tackling several big projects as the transition plan develops. “The transformation of Oklahoma City continues,” he said. “We have significant work to do this year, and I know our team is working every day to continue moving the needle for our city. I truly love the work I do here, and plan to remain in Oklahoma City and continue to support the city’s continued growth.”

KROGER
(CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Governor Kevin Stitt. “Kroger’s new e-commerce model is innovative, creates new fresh grocery opportunities for the Greater Oklahoma City region and paves the way for improving health and quality of life for Oklahomans.”

The spoke facility in Oklahoma City will collaborate with the hub in Dallas, Texas, serving as a last-mile cross-dock location that efficiently expands Kroger’s grocery delivery services and extends its reach to customers up to 200 miles from the hub. The facility is expected to become operational later this year.

“We are thrilled to welcome Kroger to the Oklahoma City market,” said Mayor of Oklahoma City David Holt. “This is a true win-win that will provide more grocery options for our citizens and good jobs for our community. We look forward to working with Kroger to ensure their success in Oklahoma City.”

KROGER DELIVERY EXPLAINED

The expansion in Oklahoma City represents an extension of a partnership between Kroger and Ocado, a world leader in technology for grocery e-commerce. In 2018, the companies announced a collaboration to establish a delivery network that combines artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, and automation in a bold new way, bringing first-of-its-kind technology to America. Kroger Chairman and CEO Rodney McMullen said Kroger Delivery “underpins the permanent shift in grocery consumer behavior and elevates our position as one of America’s leading e-commerce companies.” Through the delivery network, the company now serves customers in Florida, as an example, without traditional brick-and-mortar stores.

“We continue to be pleased with the rollout of our customer fulfillment centers in Groveland, Florida, and Monroe, Ohio, which are both exceeding internal expectations, and our most recent facility opening in Forest Park, Georgia,” continued Arreaga. “We’ve experienced incredible Net Promoter Scores, and our customers tell us they love our friendly, professionally trained drivers and their refrigerated delivery vans that bring the freshest food directly to their doorsteps. We’re eager to continue expanding our fulfillment network and entering into both existing and new geographies through



Kroger delivery trucks like the one above will be a normal sight in OKC soon. (Photo courtesy Kroger)

hub and spoke facilities.”

The delivery network relies on highly automated fulfillment centers. At the hub sites, more than 1,000 bots whizz around giant 3D grids, orchestrated by proprietary air-traffic control systems in the unlicensed spectrum. The grid, known as The Hive, contains totes with products and ready-to-deliver customer orders.

As customers’ orders near their delivery times, the bots retrieve products from The Hive and are presented at pick stations for items to be sorted for delivery, a process governed by algorithms that ensures items are intelligently packed. For example, fragile items are placed on top, bags are evenly weighted, and each order is optimized to fit into the lowest number of bags, reducing plastic use.

After being packed, groceries are loaded into a temperature-controlled delivery van, which can store up to 20 orders. Powerful machine learning algorithms optimize delivery routes, considering factors such as road conditions and optimal fuel efficiency. Vans may travel up to 90 miles with orders from the hub and spoke facilities respectively to make deliveries. Associates at the spoke facility will deliver orders within their service area, adding ZIP codes as demand grows.

Kroger unveiled its Monroe, Ohio, customer fulfillment center in April 2021, its first, followed by centers in Groveland, Fla., and Forest Park, Ga. (Atlanta). The Dallas fulfillment center is slated to open this spring with additional customer fulfillment centers slated for California; Frederick, Md.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Pleasant Prairie, Wis.; and Romulus, Mich. (Detroit), as well as South Florida and the Northeast and West.

ECONOMIC FORECAST

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

provides a comprehensive analysis of the national, state and metro economies. It details historic trends, a snapshot of the current situation, as well as a forecast for 2022.

Looking back at 2021, year-over-year nonfarm annual job growth increased 1.7% or gained 10,825 jobs in the Oklahoma City MSA. The largest percentage year-over-year job gains were found in the leisure services (+7.7%), administrative support (+5.6%), transport/ warehouse/ utilities (+5.1%), health services (+4.3%), retail trade (+4.0%), manufacturing (+3.7%), accommodation & food services (+2.8%), financial services (+1.7%), and professional & business services (+1.5%) sectors.

The largest declines were found in mining or oil & gas (-23.4%), information (-9.6%), management (-7.5%), government (-1.9%), and wholesale trade (-1.8%).

Positive Oklahoma City metro nonfarm job growth in 2022 is expected, with the baseline job forecast scenario growing by 4.1% or adding approximately 25,900 jobs by the end of 2022.

“The local model is always built on national, state and local trends of what we are seeing, and so to anticipate that we are going to potentially have 4% year-over-year growth and add more than 25,000 jobs this year is very encouraging,” said Chamber Research Economist Eric Long.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REMAIN AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE NATION

The Oklahoma City metro completed 2021 with an annual average unemployment rate for the entire year at approximately 3%. Monthly unemployment rates ranged as high as 4.9% (Feb. 2021) and as low as 1.6% (Dec. 2021). Oklahoma City finished out the year ranked among the lowest unemployment rates for large metros with more than 1 million in population. Unemployment rates in the final few months of the year for OKC were among the lowest ever experienced in the metro in more than 30 years.

POPULATION CONTINUES TO BE AN IMPORTANT STORY

Every ten years, through the U.S. Census, we can tangibly see how businesses and talent view a

community. Nearly 20% of all metros and more than half of all the counties in the nation lost population from 2010 to 2020.

Population growth or decline ultimately determines the overall health of a local economy and points to a city's ability to attract talent. For OKC, population growth continues to be a positive story.

Since 2010, the Oklahoma City metro has grown by 14%, adding approximately 170,000 people. That is the largest decade-over-decade raw population gain in the past 50 years. Five of the seven counties in the Oklahoma City metro experienced double-digit growth over that period. Canadian County continued to be the fastest-growing county in the state, growing 33% since 2010.



“What a lot of people don't realize is that the city limits of Oklahoma City cover a good part of Canadian County,” Long said. “If you were to look at the city limits of Oklahoma City as a stand-alone city, it would be the largest city in Canadian County. That is where we have seen a lot of growth in OKC's city limits.”

Jeff Seymour, the Chamber's executive vice president of economic development, said, “[Canadian County] is one of the few places in Oklahoma City where you have the ability to have in-fill opportunities and raw land with large parcels for retail, commercial and housing.”

VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

According to Dodge, in 2021 the total construction value of tracked contract projects (residential, non-residential, and non-building infrastructure) in the Oklahoma City MSA was \$3.9 billion. That was 12% more than the prior year. The largest positive year-over-year percentage gains were found in the hospitals & health treatment, warehouses, amusement, office & bank buildings, and garages/service station categories. The

largest year-over-year construction value declines were in schools & colleges, religious, and hotels and motels, and streets & highways categories.

For 2022, the total construction value of contract projects in Oklahoma City is forecasted by Dodge to be relatively flat and decline by 3%.

RETAIL SUCCESSES

For the seven-county Oklahoma City metropolitan area, 2021 calendar year total taxable retail sales increased by 12.7% from 2020 totals. That is the largest year-over-year increase in at least 30 years. At approximately \$25.5 billion, the Oklahoma City metro accounts for more than 41% of the taxable retail sales for the entire state of Oklahoma and 36% of the state's population. This continues to make the Oklahoma City metro a driving force for retail trade in the state.

For FY 2021 (July 2020 to June 2021 remittance), sales tax collections for the City of Oklahoma City finished strong, up 2.4% percent over the prior year. Use tax

collections also finished 14% over the prior year, driven by online retail sales. Sales tax collections by surrounding cities in the metro also increased overall in FY 2021. Cities seeing increases include Norman, Edmond, Moore, Midwest City and Yukon.

Per the Price Edwards 2021 OKC Year End Retail Market Summary, retail vacancy in the Oklahoma City market increased to 10.1% at year end, up slightly from 9.7% a year ago but improved from 11.6% at mid-year 2021.

A few select retailers that announced or opened in the Oklahoma City metro in 2021 include Capitol Co-Op, Bob's Steakhouse, Banded's BBQ, MetroMerch, The Old Spaghetti Factory, The Truck Yard, City & State, Summer Moon Coffee, Homeland, Black Rifle Coffee Company, Crumbl Cookies, Sam's Southern Eatery, Costco, and Mathis Brothers Furniture.

To read the full 2022 Greater Oklahoma City Economic Outlook publication, please visit greateroklahomacity.com/economicoutlook.

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BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER SHRINE WILL DRAW PEOPLE TO OKC FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

In the middle of the night on July 28, 1981, Father Stanley Rother was shot and killed in his rectory at Saint James the Apostle Catholic Church in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala, by a group of four men during a violent civil war. A farm kid raised in Okarche, Okla., Father Rother (pronounced ROW-ther) became a priest in 1963 and was serving as a missionary in that Guatemalan village at the time of his murder.

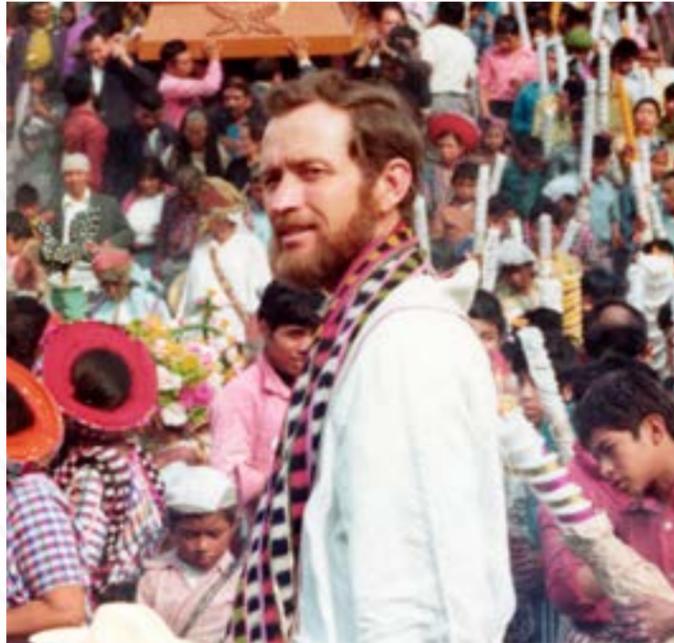
Prior to his death, Father Rother's family and friends had talked him into returning to his hometown for his own safety; however, he decided to return to Guatemala shortly thereafter stating that, "A shepherd cannot abandon his flock at the first sign of danger."

Twenty-five years after his death, Pope Francis declared Father Rother a martyr for the faith, the first recognized Catholic martyr from the U.S. Father Rother was subsequently beatified one year later in Oklahoma City in a ceremony attended by approximately 20,000 people. Officials were expecting 10,000.

Now, a shrine being built off S.E. 89th St. in Oklahoma City, just west of Interstate 35, to honor Blessed Stanley Rother will be dedicated on Nov. 4, 2022, during a public Mass. The shrine will serve as a place of pilgrimage, prayer and reflection for people all over the world, said Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, archbishop of Oklahoma City, in a February press release announcing the November dedication ceremony.

"The dedication of the shrine will be a significant moment in the life of the Catholic Church in Oklahoma and for the broader community. Built to honor Blessed Stanley Rother, the first U.S.-born priest and martyr ever beatified, the shrine will be his final resting place. It will be a place of welcome, serving all people," said Rev. Coakley.

The Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, a division of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, is already gearing up to help promote the shrine to people here and abroad. Sandy Price, the CVB's vice president for tourism, said shrine officials reached out to the CVB



In this undated photo, Blessed Stanley Rother celebrates Carnival with many of his parishioners while serving as a missionary in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. (Photo courtesy Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)

for help to promote the site as an attraction for people all over the world.

"The shrine is going to be a significant site for us from a tourism standpoint, but also from the convention side," Price said. "A wonderful museum will be part of the shrine, which will display various artifacts from each stage of Blessed Stanley's life, as well as a video and information about his beatification and his martyrdom. Currently, there's not another shrine like it in the U.S."

The OKC CVB is working with the shrine staff to promote the site to national and international visitors, including creating group tour itineraries of religious and spiritually significant sites across the Sooner State.

"We would incorporate other sites across Oklahoma, such as St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee, the cathedral in Pawhuska and certainly sacred sites in Oklahoma City like the Oklahoma City National Memorial," she said. "Motorcoach groups bring in thousands of visitors to OKC each year and we expect the significance of this shrine to be of great interest."

During the February meeting of the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Commission, the shrine's executive director, Leif Arvidson, told commissioners he anticipates tens of thousands of people will come to the shrine to pray and learn about Blessed Stanley.

"These people will stay in local hotels, will eat in local restaurants and also visit other local sites and attractions in our beautiful city," Arvidson said.

In addition to the shrine, a 2,000-seat church is also under construction on the site. Once completed, the church, which is being built in Spanish colonial-style architecture, will be the largest Catholic church in Oklahoma and will include a pipe organ with 3,600 pipes, ranging from extremely large to as small as an eraser on the end of a pencil. The church will hold religious services every day to accommodate the growing Hispanic population in Oklahoma City.

"In the southside of Oklahoma City and throughout the city are various churches, and they are operating a number of Masses every weekend and may have anywhere from seven to 10 masses. Often times, they are jam-packed and standing room only," Arvidson said. "One of the reasons the shrine is being built is to serve the Hispanic community since we can hold about 2,000 people at one time."

A pilgrimage center and museum, where visitors can learn about Blessed Stanley Rother's life, as well as Guatemalan culture and the church where Blessed



Construction continues on the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in southeast Oklahoma City. (Photo courtesy Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)

Stanley served in Santiago Atitlán, are being built at the site. Workers have even constructed a replica of Mexico City's Tepeyac Hill on the shrine grounds where tradition holds that the Virgin Mary, also known by Hispanics as "Our Lady of Guadalupe," appeared to Saint Juan Diego in 1531.

"In the Bible, it says, 'Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.' Following in Jesus' footsteps, that is exactly what Blessed Stanley did, this farm kid from rural Oklahoma, who all Oklahomans can be very proud of," said Arvidson.

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ECONOMIC INDICATORS

OKC RANKED NO. 2 LOWEST COST OF LIVING AMONG LARGE CITIES

FOCUS ON COST OF LIVING

Oklahoma City ranked No. 2 for Lowest Cost of Living among all reporting large cities over 500,000 population. The C2ER Annual Cost of Living Index for Oklahoma City in 2021 was 86.5.

Example: If you are earning \$70,000 after taxes in Seattle, the comparable income to achieve the same standard of living in Oklahoma City is \$39,699.

If you moved from Seattle to Oklahoma City:

- Groceries will cost **31% less**
- Housing will cost **64% less**
- Utilities will cost **11% less**
- Transportation will cost **30% less**
- Health care will cost **22% less**

Check out the Cost of Living Calculator at abetterlifeokc.com – Living

WHERE YOU LIVE MATTERS! C2ER 2021 ANNUAL AVERAGE PRICE REPORT COLI.ORG

CITY	COMPOSITE INDEX	COFFEE	APARTMENT RENT	GASOLINE	DOCTOR VISIT	MEN'S HAIRCUT	MOVIE TICKET
MEMPHIS TN	84.9	\$4.05	\$1,031	\$2.42	\$89.81	\$16.53	\$12.00
OKLAHOMA CITY OK	86.5	\$4.03	\$855	\$2.31	\$101.62	\$19.47	\$9.68
EL PASO TX	89.8	\$5.71	\$953	\$2.60	\$144.83	\$19.55	\$10.22
INDIANAPOLIS IN	90.9	\$4.04	\$1,141	\$2.65	\$91.73	\$17.40	\$11.34
COLUMBUS OH	91.5	\$7.43	\$1,212	\$2.72	\$124.42	\$17.64	\$10.66
SAN ANTONIO	91.5	\$3.83	\$1,369	\$2.27	\$110.51	\$26.67	\$10.85
RALEIGH NC	92.9	\$3.46	\$1,398	\$2.60	\$116.11	\$22.17	\$10.30
NATIONAL AVERAGE	100	\$4.31	\$1,218	\$2.71	\$117.28	\$20.43	\$11.07

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 at 405-297-8976 or email him at elong@okcchamber.com.

DID YOU KNOW?

Get regional demographic data, consumer expenditure information, labor force data for the Greater Oklahoma City Region and more at greateroklahomacity.com.

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LOOK INSIDE!

- 5** Chamber's annual D.C. trip scheduled for April 27-28
- 6** Elevate professional development event draws closer
- 8** Roy Williams retiring from Chamber, national search for successor to begin soon
- 12** Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine construction progresses, dedication set

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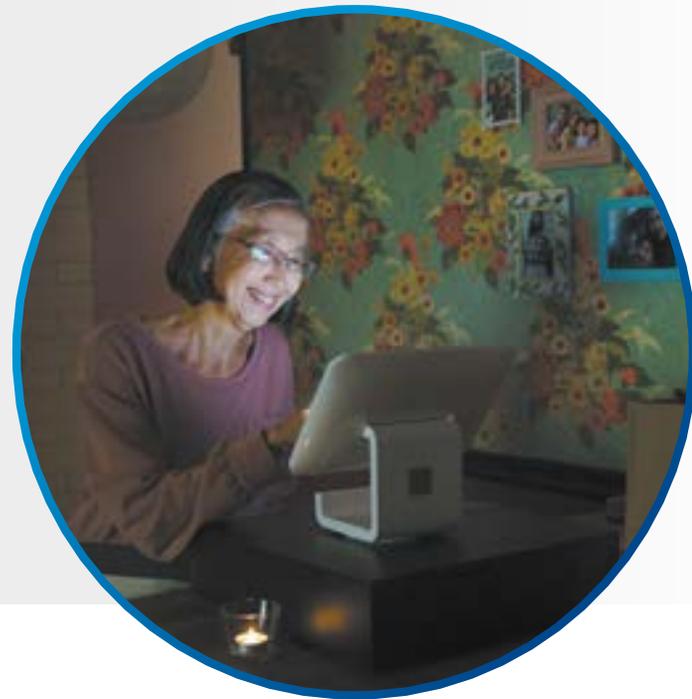


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