



GREATER  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
CHAMBER

OCTOBER 2023 - OKCCHAMBER.COM

## COMMUNITY COALITION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN FOR NEW OKLAHOMA CITY ARENA

A community coalition led by Mayor David Holt and Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Chairman Sean Trauschke has launched the Keep OKC Big League campaign to support extending Oklahoma City’s temporary one-cent sales tax to build a new arena in downtown Oklahoma City.

During a rally in Scissortail Park, Mayor Holt said a yes vote is crucial to continuing our incredible momentum.

“Our community has a very clear choice on Dec. 12,” said Holt. “We have the opportunity to secure the



presence of the Oklahoma City Thunder and the NBA for another generation, and to make Oklahoma City a stronger destination for the best touring concerts, shows and other events. And we can do it without raising taxes. To that question, I say yes.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## SURGES IN JOBS AND R&D SPENDING PROPEL OKC TO BIOSCIENCE POWERHOUSE

The Greater Oklahoma City’s biosciences cluster has made significant progress over the last two decades to become one of the region’s growth sectors, employing about 31,000 people and spending \$316 million annually on research and development.

Those are just a few of the key findings in a recent study for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber by TEconomy Partner LLC, a global leader in research, analysis and strategy for innovation-driven economic development.

Since 2001, the biosciences cluster, which includes nonclinical biosciences industries and academic medical

and other hospitals, has grown 28%. They also point out that since 2015, the industry has grown by 10.3%, keeping pace with national metrics.

The thousands of jobs created in the biosciences sector and the millions of dollars spent in R&D, rivals other emerging bioscience clusters across the country, including places such as Louisville, Ky.; Phoenix; Portland, Ore.; and Salt Lake City.

“The emergence of the region’s bioscience sector has been phenomenal, and we are to be included with other emerging hubs across the country,” said Chamber President and CEO Christy Gillenwater. “It is exciting to witness all of the investments and resources being directed toward the biosciences, which bodes well for our city’s long-term future and growth in this far-reaching and, for many people, life-changing industry.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



## A New Noninvasive Treatment for Essential Tremor

OU Health is the first and only health system in Oklahoma to offer an incisionless treatment for patients with medical refractory essential tremor that can result in improvement in hand, head and body shaking as well as increased mobility through a same-day treatment. Called “Focused Ultrasound,” the new technology is for essential tremor patients who have not responded to medication, or who cannot take it.

Focused ultrasound for essential tremor is an FDA-approved, non-invasive procedure that’s transforming patient care. The procedure uses ultrasound waves to target the specific areas of the brain responsible for tremors. Guided by MRI, the soundwaves pass safely through the skull and soft tissues to focus heat on only the targeted area, providing relief from symptoms. With no surgical cuts or permanent implants necessary, there is minimal to no risk of infection, and the treatment is often performed on an outpatient basis. Many patients can expect to resume normal activities within days.

**OU Health is proud to be the first in Oklahoma to offer this revolutionary treatment.**

To make an appointment or for more information, visit us at [OUHealth.com/EssentialTremor](https://OUHealth.com/EssentialTremor)

OU Health Physicians — Neurosurgery Clinic  
1000 N Lincoln Blvd, Suite 4000  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104  
(405) 271-4912



# LEADERSHIP NOTES



**CHRISTY GILLENWATER**  
President & CEO

## FROM ENCAMPMENTS TO APARTMENTS: OKC'S KEY TO HOME INITIATIVE TRANSFORMS LIVES

We have several exciting projects happening right now in our community, but this month I want to focus on one project that is changing lives and the community. Key to Home, Oklahoma City's ambitious plan to reduce unsheltered homelessness by 75%, just completed its yearlong pilot. The result is inspiring, to say the least. Of the 30 people case managers engaged with at homeless encampments in the last year, 24 are now in stable housing. That's an acceptance rate of 80%. Because of that, four encampments have been completely closed.

The success of the rehousing program can be attributed to several factors: direct outreach, consistent engagement and comprehensive support services. Case managers were able to build trust, address barriers and offer ongoing support by ensuring access to essential services. This holistic approach addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness.

Still, the success of this program is not possible without the vital partnerships the city has forged with other organizations. These collaborations extend beyond just housing; they include negotiating with landlords, providing move-in kits and even accessing financial benefits, like pensions. These partnerships expand the range of services available to people experiencing homelessness.

Of course, there is more work to do, but the early success of the Key to Home initiative is exciting. This program is breaking down barriers, transforming lives and strengthening our community for the better. Thank you to the organizations and people, led by the city's team, collaborating to implement this initiative.

### »» READ CHRISTY'S VELOCITYOKC ONLINE STORY OF THE MONTH

World class storytelling the goal of  
Prairie Surf's new creative division

[VELOCITYOKC.COM/CHRISTYSPICK](http://VELOCITYOKC.COM/CHRISTYSPICK)



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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.)

### OCTOBER 18

#### Chamber Forum

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

The Petroleum Club

100 N. Broadway, 34th Floor

[okcchamber.com/octoberforum](http://okcchamber.com/octoberforum)

### NOVEMBER 8

#### State of the Economy

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

National Cowboy & Western

Heritage Museum

1700 NE 63rd St.

[okcchamber.com/econ](http://okcchamber.com/econ)

### NOVEMBER 15

#### Chamber Forum

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

The Petroleum Club

100 N. Broadway, 34th Floor

[okcchamber.com/novemberforum](http://okcchamber.com/novemberforum)

### DECEMBER 14

#### Annual Meeting

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

National Cowboy & Western

Heritage Museum

1700 NE 63rd St.

[okcchamber.com/annual](http://okcchamber.com/annual)



CHAMBER  
FORUM

## *October Chamber Forum to explore career readiness programs at Oklahoma City Schools*

Last November, voters in the Oklahoma City Public Schools District (OKCPS) approved a historic \$955 million bond initiative that is impacting every one of OKCPS's 66 schools and all its students by providing much-needed resources to improve buildings, technology, transportation and more.

Now, during the next Chamber Forum, district leaders will highlight the progress of the bond projects nearly a year later and shed light on how these investments will positively impact education in our city by preparing students for future success in the job market.

The Chamber Forum will be held at 11:30 a.m., Oct. 18, at the Petroleum Club of Oklahoma City, located on the 34th floor of the BancFirst Tower, 100 N. Broadway Ave.

Forum attendees will learn more about the innovative strategies for workforce development within the district. Participating in the discussion will be:

- Toby Blair, Executive Director of College and Career Planning, Oklahoma City Public Schools
- Dr. Sean McDaniel, Superintendent, Oklahoma City Public Schools
- Scot McAdoo, Director of Workforce Development, Oklahoma City Public Schools

The cost to attend the October Chamber Forum is \$45 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers. To register, visit [okcchamber.com/octoberforum](http://okcchamber.com/octoberforum).

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Communications and Corporate Sponsor ADG | Blatt.

## CHAMBER STUDY REVEALS \$1.2 BILLION ANNUAL COST OF OKLAHOMA'S CHILDCARE CRISIS



Results from a study released by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber shed new light on Oklahoma City's childcare crisis. The issue, which many cities across the country are facing, is negatively affecting businesses, families and the local economy.

The Chamber partnered with the City of Oklahoma City, Coalign Group and the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to complete the study. Its purpose is to gather data, better understand how the issue is affecting our local workforce and create a strategy to better address it.

"Many Oklahomans struggle everyday with childcare issues. Whether it's families trying to find affordable, high-quality daycare or businesses trying to figure out what they can do to recruit and retain workers, it is a critical issue that is impacting our entire state in so many ways. These and other challenges surrounding childcare must be addressed soon if our state and city is to continue moving forward. This study is a good start in helping us all move in the right direction," said Chamber President and CEO Christy Gillenwater.

It is estimated that the childcare crisis costs the state of Oklahoma \$1.2 billion in lost earnings, productivity and revenue annually. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue, impacting parents' ability to work and businesses' ability to recruit and retain a strong workforce.

About 2.3 million women across the United States have left the workforce since the start of the pandemic, a good portion of whom have chosen to return home to

care for their children. In Oklahoma alone, if the women's labor force participation rate increased to equal that of the men's, there would be an additional 99,000 workers in the state's workforce. That translates into \$3.7 billion earned in wages.

There are various reasons why parents choose to stay home to take care of their kids rather than work. Some revolve around the cost and availability of childcare, while others revolve around which childcare benefits their employers offer. Results from surveys and focus groups targeting the Oklahoma City workforce showed that 27% of respondents said they couldn't find childcare they could afford. Another 22% said they couldn't get childcare because daycares were full.

Respondents also shared some of the ways childcare has impacted their employment over the 12-month period. A majority indicated they had to use unplanned vacation time for childcare or unplanned sick leave to care for their sick child. Eighty-six percent of workers said their current employer did not provide childcare benefits, while 95% responded that having childcare benefits through their employer would make their job position more attractive. They cited flexible working hours, remote work or working from home, paid maternity leave and other family-centric benefits as being the most appealing to them.

One of the key takeaways from the study is that no one group can solve the childcare crisis; it is going to take a group effort to make a difference. State and city leaders, philanthropic organizations, educational institutions, early childcare, and education providers, as well as parents and guardians, play a critical role in working toward solutions and improvements.

To view a copy of the 2023 Child Care Study Summary & Community Action Plan, visit [www.okcchamber.com/childcare](http://www.okcchamber.com/childcare).



# CHAMBER RELEASES RESULTS OF 2023 LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

To keep its members informed on relevant issues at the state Capitol, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber prepares a Legislative Scorecard every year. The scorecard includes information provided by the statewide Research Institute for Economic Development (RIED) to identify elected officials' votes on issues important to the business community.

Alongside the state's RIED scores, the Chamber also assigns a score to legislators based on the Chamber's priority issues. The following charts represent voting records for state Senate and House members during the 2023 legislative session.

Issues identified by the Chamber and/or RIED for this year's scores included, but were not limited to, votes on the following bills:

- Tourism Development Act (SB 14X)
- SQ 781 Funding Formula (SB 844)
- Film Workforce (HB 2459)
- Targeted Workforce Funding (SB 28X)
- Franchise Tax (HB 1039X)

REPRESENTATIVE	PARTY	DIST.	2023 RIED	2023 OKC
Alonso, Arturo	D	89	74%	80%
Archer, Nick	R	55	100%	90%
Baker, Rhonda	R	60	84%	76%
Banning, Chris	R	24	53%	46%
Bashore, Steve	R	7	78%	80%
Bennett, Forrest	D	92	74%	83%
Blancett, Meloyde	D	78	79%	80%
Boatman, Jeff	R	67	100%	90%
Boles, Brad	R	51	100%	80%
Burns, Ty	R	35	69%	90%
Caldwell, Chad	R	40	71%	73%
Caldwell, Trey	R	63	100%	73%
Cantrell, Josh	R	49	69%	80%
Conley, Sherrie	R	20	66%	60%

Cornwell, Rusty	R	6	95%	90%
Crosswhite Hader, D.	R	41	71%	60%
Culver, Bob	R	4	95%	90%
Davis, Dean	R	98	50%	69%
Deck, Jared	D	44	74%	65%
Dempsey, Eddy	R	1	93%	76%
Dobrinski, Mike	R	59	100%	90%
Dollens, Mickey	D	93	48%	66%
Duel, Collin	R	31	85%	63%
Echols, Jon	R	90	100%	90%
Fetgatter, Scott	R	16	67%	70%
Ford, Ross	R	76	63%	83%
Fugate, Andy	D	94	48%	73%
Gann, Tom	R	8	23%	30%
George, John	R	36	57%	70%
Goodwin, Regina	D	73	45%	56%
Grego, Jim	R	17	71%	60%
Hardin, David	R	86	95%	90%
Hasenbeck, Toni	R	65	100%	83%
Hays, Neil	R	13	85%	59%
Hefner, Ellyn	D	87	69%	90%
Hilbert, Kyle	R	29	100%	80%
Hill, Brian	R	47	88%	49%
Humphrey, Justin	R	19	53%	56%
Johns, Ronny	R	25	69%	90%
Kane, John	R	11	88%	80%
Kannady, Chris	R	91	94%	66%
Kendrix, Gerrid	R	52	71%	50%
Kerbs, Dell	R	26	100%	90%
Lawson, Mark	R	30	100%	83%
Lepak, Mark	R	9	88%	80%
Lowe, Dick	R	56	69%	90%
Lowe, Jason	D	97	48%	73%
Luttrell, Ken	R	37	100%	90%
Manger, Robert	R	101	94%	90%
Marti, T.J.	R	75	69%	73%
Martinez, Ryan	R	39	100%	80%
May, Stan	R	80	94%	73%
Maynard, Cody	R	21	53%	50%
McBride, Mark	R	53	100%	70%
McCall, Charles	R	22	88%	70%
McDugle, Kevin	R	12	94%	86%
McEntire, Marcus	R	50	69%	90%
Menz, Annie	D	45	74%	80%
Miller, Nicole	R	82	95%	90%
Moore, Anthony	R	57	95%	90%

Munson, Cyndi	D	85	48%	80%
Newton, Carl	R	58	49%	66%
Nichols, Monroe	D	72	58%	73%
O'Donnell, Terry	R	23	75%	45%
Olsen, Jim	R	2	83%	30%
Osburn, Mike	R	81	100%	90%
Pae, Daniel	R	62	94%	90%
Patzkowsky, Kenton	R	61	83%	70%
Pfeiffer, John	R	38	100%	66%
Pittman, Ajay	D	99	76%	66%
Provenzano, Melissa	D	79	61%	66%
Randleman, Randy	R	15	90%	90%
Ranson, Trish	D	34	48%	80%
Roberts, Eric	R	83	88%	70%
Roe, Cynthia	R	42	63%	83%
Rosecrants, Jacob	D	46	74%	80%
Schreiber, Suzanne	D	70	79%	100%
Sims, Lonnie	R	68	72%	63%
Smith, David	R	18	83%	43%
Sneed, Chris	R	14	46%	53%
Staires, Clay	R	66	88%	63%
Stark, Marilyn	R	100	88%	60%
Steagall, Jay	R	43	40%	40%
Sterling, Danny	R	27	69%	90%
Stinson, Preston	R	96	100%	80%
Strom, Judd	R	10	57%	83%
Swope, Amanda	D	71	48%	100%
Talley, John	R	33	65%	90%
Tedford, Mark	R	69	100%	83%
Townley, Tammy	R	48	100%	90%
Turner, Mauree	D	88	38%	66%
Vancuren, Mark	R	74	69%	90%
Waldron, John	D	77	48%	73%
Wallace, Kevin	R	32	84%	90%
West, Josh	R	5	100%	83%
West, Kevin	R	54	50%	40%
West, Rick	R	3	23%	30%
West, Tammy	R	84	100%	83%
Williams, Danny	R	28	66%	70%
Wolfley, Max	R	95	100%	90%
Worthen, Rande	R	64	63%	63%

SENATOR	PARTY	DIST.	2023 RIED	2023 OKC
Alvord, Jerry	R	14	100%	100%
Bergstrom, Micheal	R	1	NS	48%

Boren, Mary	D	16	58%	90%
Brooks, Michael	D	44	58%	73%
Bullard, David	R	6	100%	90%
Burns, George	R	5	83%	90%
Coleman, Bill	R	10	100%	100%
Dahm, Nathan	R	33	NS	48%
Daniels, Julie	R	29	100%	100%
Dossett, Jo Anna	D	35	58%	90%
Dugger, Tom	R	21	100%	100%
Floyd, Kay	D	46	58%	80%
Garvin, Jessica	R	43	100%	100%
Gollihare, Todd	R	12	100%	100%
Green, Grant	R	28	100%	100%
Hall, Chuck	R	20	79%	100%
Hamilton, Warren	R	7	81%	63%
Haste, John	R	36	100%	100%
Hicks, Carri	D	40	52%	80%
Howard, Brent	R	38	67%	83%
Jech, Darcy	R	26	100%	100%
Jett, Shane	R	17	71%	53%
Kidd, Chris	R	31	100%	100%
Kirt, Julia	D	30	52%	73%
Matthews, Kevin	D	11	58%	66%
McCortney, Greg	R	13	56%	90%
Montgomery, John	R	32	100%	100%
Murdock, Casey	R	27	100%	73%
Newhouse, Joe	R	25	81%	66%
Paxton, Lonnie	R	23	88%	90%
Pederson, Roland	R	19	88%	90%
Pemberton, Dewayne	R	9	100%	100%
Prieto, Dana	R	34	100%	90%
Pugh, Adam	R	41	100%	100%
Rader, Dave	R	39	83%	100%
Rogers, Cody	R	37	100%	73%
Rosino, Paul	R	45	79%	100%
Seifried, Ally	R	2	100%	100%
Standridge, Rob	R	15	80%	73%
Stanley, Brenda	R	42	42%	100%
Stephens, Blake	R	3	100%	100%
Stewart, Jack	R	18	88%	90%
Thompson, Kristen	R	22	100%	100%
Thompson, Roger	R	8	100%	100%
Treat, Greg	R	47	100%	100%
Weaver, Darrell	R	24	100%	100%
Woods, Tom	R	4	100%	100%
Young, George	D	48	58%	80%

One of the study's many highlights is the growth of several subsectors in the region since 2015. Drug and pharmaceutical manufacturing jobs jumped 52%, fueled by a growing regional third-party manufacturing cluster. Medical device and equipment manufacturers have increased regional employment by 25% while the bioscience-related distribution sector has grown by 16% and now produces more than 1,500 jobs.

The study stressed that industry and business leaders should take advantage of the current momentum in the regional biosciences industry to continue to invest in public and private sector infrastructure to support cluster growth. In 2021, the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded the Oklahoma Biotech Innovation Cluster a \$35 million grant through its Build Back Better Regional Challenge to help expand Oklahoma City's role as a national hub for drug development, testing and manufacturing. Two years earlier, OKC voters approved, as part of the MAPS 4 initiative, \$10 million for the construction of an innovation hall in the city's Innovation District.

The innovation hall will serve as a central place where activities to grow Oklahoma City's innovation economy can be facilitated. It will house the Biomanufacturing Development Training Center, which will help meet the growing demand for skilled labor in the state's bioscience cluster. The innovation hall will be part of a \$177 million development known as Convergence: a 2.7-acre mixed-use development site.

"As was expressly stated during the successful Build Back Better grant process and repeatedly echoed by our Biotech Innovation Cluster, we must leverage the power that collaboration has created amongst all the biotech industry players in the region," said John Hanak, chief innovation and corporate officer at the University of Oklahoma.

Stephanie Wickham, Ph.D., senior director of research and development at OKC pharmaceutical manufacturer Cytovance Biologics, said the growth of the bioscience cluster and its importance to the region is nothing short of inspirational.

"Harnessing the talent and ingenuity of the universities by providing resources and cultivating that



*The month Wheeler Bio celebrated the grand opening of its 35,000 square-foot state-of-the-art biomanufacturing facility in downtown Oklahoma City.*

into startup companies right here, we can attract even more to the state. We will also be able to tap into the hardworking backbone of the Oklahoma workforce, creating perfect synergy for the bioscience cluster and ultimately the state," Dr. Wickham said.

Christian Kanady, founding partner and CEO of Echo Global, a financial technology company based in Oklahoma City, echoed those thoughts, stating Oklahoma City's emerging bioscience sector continues to make important strides.

"This progress is thanks to the alignment of numerous strategic partners committed to moving our region forward. Echo is proud to be part of these efforts to not only identify and leverage our strengths but further collaborate on areas to unlock innovation, develop our workforce, and ultimately, position our city to become the next biotech hub," he said.

Jeff Seymour, executive vice president for economic development for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber said that "while the region has continued to make great strides in building out a bioscience cluster, now is the time to lean further into the sector. Oklahoma City has a clear opportunity to play a larger role in the nation's bioscience strategy and we are anxious to use this study to guide how we update the tools and partnerships we use to maximize growth."

The region's bioscience, biotechnology and health sector has grown into a nearly \$7 billion industry. With established bioscience players such as the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation; the OU Health Sciences Center; several pharmaceutical manufacturers; and the proximity of two major research universities in OU and OSU, Oklahoma City is poised for continued growth in the bioscience sector.

## OKC RAMPS UP KEY TO HOME REHOUSING INITIATIVE

One year after embarking on an ambitious plan to significantly reduce Oklahoma City's chronically unsheltered homeless population, a new rehousing initiative is forging ahead at breakneck speed. The official Key to Home rollout began last month following a yearlong pilot program. Now that case managers and other partners have completed training, the goal is to close two to three of the city's 50 homeless encampments a month and rehouse 250 people a year for the next two years.

"Typically, it takes several months to get someone rehoused. We've decreased that time exponentially, down to just three to six weeks," said Lindsay Cates, strategy implementation manager for the city's Homeless Services department.

The Key to Home rehousing initiative involves outreach, apartment placement and weekly visits from case managers providing stabilization services. Under this plan, the city hopes to reduce the number of unsheltered homeless people by 75% in just two years.

Cates said she was excited to see an 80% acceptance rate during the yearlong pilot. During visits to the encampments, case managers spoke to people living there and asked if they wanted help moving into an apartment.

Cates said some people were skeptical. One woman said she wasn't interested right up until the day before move-ins. But when she saw others in the encampment packing up their stuff and moving out, she changed her mind.

"She said, 'Is there any way I can still do this?' We were able – with private dollars – to hold that unit and say, 'Yes, we can get you in tomorrow.' So, she moved in and is still stably housed. I think that shows that consistent engagement of our providers is crucial to build trust."

Cates said many of the people have struggled to use support services because they require visits to multiple offices in different locations. For someone without transportation, food and a safe place to live, the task can feel overwhelming.

"By going to the encampments, we start breaking down those barriers. Because the case manager is coming to them and finding out what services are needed, they're able to access those services more quickly."

One man, a veteran, was able to access his Veterans Administration benefits for the first time. His case manager also helped him understand and begin receiving his pension from General Motors.

"The fact that he is still engaged with services a year later, to me, shows that he wants to be part of a community and can be a neighbor and tenant," said Cates.

The city has nearly three dozen community partners providing case management and other services, including the Homeless Alliance, Mental Health Association, City Rescue Mission, Catholic Charities, Northcare, Legal Aid and Urban League.

"One of our goals is to continue to build partnerships. As we continue to grow, we're going to need more resources," said Cates.

Fostering a collaborative relationship with local landlords is also part of the strategy. To accomplish that, a partner agency engages with landlords and handles negotiations.

"That is starting to make a significant difference. We're still looking for more landlords and more units. With those partnerships, we feel like we're going to continue to build the pipeline of housing. We need more affordable housing now and we need it in the future," said Cates.

MAPS 4 included \$55 million for affordable housing. The Oklahoma City Housing Authority will use those funds to redevelop about 1,500 public housing units and build 600 new ones.

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***"Typically, it takes several months to get someone rehoused. We've decreased that time exponentially, down to just three to six weeks"***

*- Lindsay Cates, Homeless Strategy Implementation Manager*



## EQUINE PRODUCT LEADER ANNOUNCES RELOCATION TO OKC

Professional's Choice, a leader in equine sports medicine products, has announced the relocation of its corporate headquarters from Southern California to Oklahoma City. The relocation is part of Professional's Choice's ongoing commitment to fostering innovative growth and enhancing operational efficiencies.



"We are excited to welcome Professional's Choice to Oklahoma City. We realize how rare it is for a family-run business to move its headquarters, and we are thrilled they chose our community to continue their growth" said Christy Gillenwater, president and CEO of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. "Both Oklahoma City and Professional's Choice are leaders in the equine industry, and we look forward to a long partnership together."

"The relocation of our headquarters to Oklahoma City

marks a pivotal moment for our company's history," said Michele Scott, executive vice president of Professional's Choice. "We are excited this move to Oklahoma City will allow us to expand the vision of my family's dreams in providing premier products for horses and their owners, which has always been the primary focus and intention in which our founders, Dal and Nina Scott, set forth when starting Professional's Choice in 1976."

Oklahoma's deep roots and rich history within the equine industry played a key role in the decision to relocate, said company CEO Monty Crist.

"The state offers a number of advantages for our business, including a much larger warehouse, proximity to our customers and a highly skilled workforce. We believe that this move will allow us to continue growing our business and offer new products to our loyal customers."

Professional's Choice currently has over 50 employees, several of whom plan to relocate. The company is also planning to hire an additional 20 to 30 employees in Oklahoma over the next several years. The relocation is expected to be completed by April 2024.

Oklahoma City proudly holds the unofficial title of the "Horse Show Capital of the World." The Jim Norick Arena at the OKC Fairgrounds has hosted numerous national and international equine championship events over the years. Equine events continue to draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to Oklahoma City, injecting millions of dollars into the local economy. Construction is underway on a 216,000-square-foot, \$126 million coliseum to replace the Jim Norick Arena in 2025.

## COLLABORATION AND PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTED AT CHAMBER'S STATE OF THE REGION

Collaboration was the underlying theme reinforced by each speaker at the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's State of the Region held last month at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. The new event was inspired by the opportunities lying within the region and gathered leaders from around it to discuss where we are and what's next.

Christy Gillenwater, president and CEO of the Chamber, educated the more than 500 attendees on the health and growth of the Greater OKC metro and the 10-county partnership area. The Greater Oklahoma City (GOKC) Regional Partnership was born more than 20 years ago as a way of bringing all the communities together to improve economic development opportunities.

Gillenwater discussed the region's demographics, including its population, which grew by 180,000 between 2010 to 2020. The age breakdown showed Greater OKC has a higher proportion of people between the ages of 10 and 39 compared to the nation. Gillenwater also discussed the future workforce, the 300,000 K-12 students located in the Greater OKC region.

"You should all be very proud of this region that you have tended to tirelessly," Gillenwater emphasized. "Some of you for decades, others of you newer to the scene, but together we are all rowing in the same direction — driving this region, driving the diversity of our regional economy — and making an impact."

The focus then turned to the region's workforce and infrastructure opportunities. Leroy Alsup, interim administrator for the Town of Jones with a career in city planning, stressed the need for collaboration on readying large-scale, shovel-ready land for industrial use to maintain our region's competitiveness.

High-capacity transit was also a significant topic of conversation among panelists, particularly as the region continues to grow. Bus Rapid Transit is coming soon to northwest Oklahoma City with additional routes in the works. A partnership with the Regional Transit Authority will connect Edmond, Oklahoma City and Norman



*Mayors from the cities of Edmond, Midwest City, Norman and Yukon discuss some of the issues and challenges they are facing with Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt, right, during a panel discussion as part of the Chamber's inaugural State of the Region event last month.*

using the BNSF railroad system with a commuter rail.

Expanding transportation services takes long-term planning. Jason Ferbrache, assistant city manager of OKC and administrator of the city's transportation and parking department, shared that conversations are taking place with BNSF on what is needed to implement passenger rail service alongside the commercial rail. A plan could potentially be developed within the next two years that outlines the work to be done, and he was hopeful that results could be seen over the next 10 years.

Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt moderated a panel discussion among mayors of the region's largest communities. The mayors acknowledged the uniqueness of how close, and sometimes overlapping, our region's cities are and the collaboration that is required, especially in addressing issues like homelessness, crime and economic development.

Norman Mayor Larry Heikkila summed up the goal of each mayor in addressing the human needs in their community when he said they are "trying to find a civilized and humane way to take of that but help business along."

The mayors also discussed the challenges of Oklahoma municipalities relying exclusively on sales tax to fund their operations. While the mayors agreed they would like to see their cities be less reliant on sales tax and less competitive with each other, it is a state issue and progress has been slow.

Finally, with Edmond, Oklahoma City and Norman collaborating with the Regional Transit Authority, the mayors expressed excitement about the possibility of reducing traffic and shortening the daily commute.

***“This is an investment we need to make. Our city has been forever changed by the presence of the NBA.”***

*- Campaign co-chair Sean Trauschke*

## **ARENA CAMPAIGN** (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

The campaign kickoff comes on the heels of Oklahoma City Council approving a letter of intent with the Thunder that potentially retains the team in OKC beyond 2050. It also called a citywide election for Dec. 12.

Holt's campaign co-chair, Sean Trauschke, said Oklahoma City has always succeeded when we invest in ourselves.

“It is the best way to keep Oklahoma City growing and thriving,” he said. “And this is an investment we need to make. The importance of the arena, and of the Thunder to the city's economic growth is evident. Our city has been forever changed by the presence of the NBA.”



The campaign includes individuals and organizations from across the city.

“The enthusiasm we have received for our effort has reinforced for me how much our city values this important asset,” said Holt. “We will win this vote on December 12th because our people believe in our future. We understand the stakes. Our lease with the Thunder expired earlier this year. They agreed to give us three more years to develop and fund a plan for a new arena. Beyond this brief extension, we have no viable path forward with professional sports.”

Holt pointed out that Oklahoma City is the third smallest market in the NBA and the 42nd largest metro in the United States. There are 18 markets larger than OKC without an NBA team. Several of them have a better arena than Oklahoma City right now.

Paycom Center is the smallest in the NBA by square footage, it has the second-smallest capital investment of all NBA arenas, and at 21 years old, it is increasingly within range of the oldest arena in the entire NBA.

“This is what we're up against, guys,” said Holt. “The truth of this matter is, no one thinks we should have this team, except for the people in this city and the people who own this team. It is Oklahoma City versus the American sports world; 700,000 versus 330 million. And we are going to win.”



*Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt takes a selfie with an Oklahoma City Thunder fan during the kickoff rally for the Keep OKC Big League campaign held last month at downtown's Scissortail Park.*

The Thunder's presence provides a direct economic benefit to Oklahoma City of \$600 million a year.

“The presence of the NBA gives us a leg up when competing for jobs and talent,” Trauschke continued. “Their value is also proven out in the growth in the region's gross metropolitan product since the team's arrival, with growth dramatically outpacing other metros that do not have a team.”

## TOP ECONOMISTS SHARE INSIGHTS AT STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber welcomes Dana M. Peterson, chief economist for The Conference Board, as the featured keynote during its annual State of the Economy event. The event will be Nov. 8 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

State of the Economy is an opportunity for Chamber members and the community to stay informed on Oklahoma City's economy. Attendees hear directly from expert economists on trends in the local and national economy, as well as on issues impacting the global economy.

Peterson has established herself as a visionary and the go-to expert providing insightful analysis and predictions to corporations, associations and government

organizations looking for foresight into how economic drivers might impact their businesses.

Peterson also leads the Conference Board organization's U.S. Economy, Strategy & Finance Center. With over two decades of experience in the field, she serves as the globally recognized think tank's public face and primary spokesperson on all things related to the economy.

State of the Economy will also include a panel discussion from several regional economists on issues that are particularly important to our state.

Tickets are \$60 for Chamber members and \$85 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 \$1,600. Please contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Arvest Bank and Host Sponsor Post Oak Toyota.

## CHAMBER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS SVP MARK VANLANDINGHAM

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber has announced the retirement of Mark VanLandingham, the organization's senior vice president of government relations.

"Mark has been a tremendous asset to our organization," said Christy Gillenwater, President and CEO. "During his 15 years here, he has led significant efforts to improve our state's economic development incentives and create new incentive programs, expand Tinker Air Force Base through legislation facilitating the local acquisition of the BNSF rail spur, obtain ARPA funding for local economic development projects and protect the rights of business owners and event hosts with respect to firearms. He is a trusted adviser for many of our member businesses and his expertise, guidance and contributions to our team will be missed."

VanLandingham reflected on the success of his work. "We started the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Political Action Committee (PAC) in 2010," he said. "And we have grown it into one of the top PACs in the state, contributing nearly \$700,000 to state and local

candidates since its inception. We have been able to build relationships and expand our influence to ensure a strong voice for the central Oklahoma business community and for our city's future."

Brad Krieger, Arvest Bank, vice chair, Government Relations of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, said VanLandingham's contributions have been significant. "He has elevated the advocacy work of the organization," he said. "We have worked closely together throughout his tenure, and I have admired his pragmatism, honesty, perseverance, diplomacy and creativity. He cares deeply about our community and leaves big shoes to fill."

VanLandingham joined the Chamber as vice president in 2009 and was named senior vice president in 2019. His career spans nearly 40 years, including 20 years with Kerr-McGee Corporation as a litigation attorney and director of state and federal government relations, as well as two years with Tronox as vice-president of government relations. He is a graduate of Northwestern Oklahoma State University and received his juris doctorate from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

The organization has initiated a search for his replacement. VanLandingham will work through the end of the year and in an advisory role through next year's legislative session.

# 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.

## EMERGING LEADER

### Bar K

*Bars / Taverns  
Parks*

*Restaurants*

Mr. Timothy Hallcroft.....(405) 252-1993  
901 SE 5th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73129-8000  
barkdogbar.com

### Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham

*Hotels & Motels*  
Ms. Maeghan Alves.....(405) 768-4991  
417 S. Meridian Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73108-1013  
www.wyndhamhotels.com/hawthorn

## ADVISOR

### Huitt-Zollars, Inc.

*Engineers - Civil  
Landscape - Architects / Contractors / Services  
Surveyors*  
Mr. Steve Harris .....(405) 842-0363  
701 N. Broadway Ave., Suite 530  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-6040  
www.huitt-zollars.com

### Protech Professionals

*Pest / Animal Control Services*  
Mr. Derek Sing.....(877) 255-2515  
P.O. Box 21358  
Oklahoma City, OK 73156-1358  
www.protechpros.com

## ASSOCIATE

### JK Restaurants by Chef King

*Restaurants*  
Mr. Josh Balan.....(405) 724-8992  
612 N. Robinson Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-6214  
jkrestaurants.com

### Slalom Consulting

*Consultants*  
Mrs. Angela Hall.....(972) 419-2800  
5430 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1200  
Dallas, TX 75240-2639  
www.slalom.com

### Mercer Company CRE

*Real Estate - Commercial*  
Mr. Tucker Cason.....(405) 768-2948  
726 W. Sheridan Ave., Suite 190  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-2412  
mercerc-company.com/oklahoma-city/

### Verge Entrepreneurship HUB Foundation dba The Verge OKC

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Ms. Kristin Garcia.....(405) 362-0756  
12 E. California Ave., Suite 200  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104-2459  
www.vergeokc.com

### Of Ash and Fire Software Services, LLC

*Computers - Software & Services*  
Mr. Daniel Ashcraft.....(405) 446-1822  
4220 NW 145th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73134-1707  
www.ofashandfire.com

## CORE

### American Heart Association

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Ms. Alisa Northcutt.....(405) 415-3030  
3401 NW 63rd St., Suite 510  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116-3781  
https://www.heart.org/en/affiliates/oklahoma/  
oklahoma-city

### First Liberty Bank

*Banks*  
*Mortgages*  
Mr. Lyndell Williams.....(405) 561-0300  
3500 24th Avenue NW  
Norman, OK 73069-8262  
myfirstliberty.com

### Nextep, Inc.

*Employee Benefits Specialists*  
*Human Resource Services / Consulting*  
Ms. Michelle Boydston.....(888) 811-5150  
1800 N. Interstate Drive  
Norman, OK 73072-2993  
www.nextep.com

### Techlahoma Foundation

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Mr. Daniel Ashcraft.....  
12 E. California Ave., Suite 200  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104-2459  
techloahoma.org

### Arrived OKC

*Real Estate*  
Ms. Sabrina Adams.....(405) 772-3241  
1236 NW 49th St.  
2213 NW 43rd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-8832  
ArrivedOKC.com

### The Learning Experience Edmond

*Child Care Services*  
Maria Claudia Soruco.....(405) 285-1205  
1288 E. 15th St.  
Edmond, OK 73013-5025  
www.thelearningexperience.com/center/  
edmond

### StevenDouglas

*Consultants*  
*Employment Agencies*  
*Executive Search Consultants*  
Ms. Carol Stewart.....(714) 244-7949  
13450 Sunrise Blvd., Suite 200  
7903 Harvest Moon Road  
Oklahoma City, OK 73132-4157  
www.stevendouglas.com

### Wanner Works Remodel

*Construction Companies*  
Mr. Adam Wanner.....(405) 252-8731  
9625 N. Robinson Ave., Suite 100  
Oklahoma City, OK 73114-3600  
www.wannerworksremodel.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).

## ADVISOR

### Rose Rock Development Partners, LLC

*Real Estate Developers*  
Mr. Tim Strange .....(405) 413-8467  
3000 W. Memorial Road, Suite 123  
PMB 203  
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-6108  
www.rosrockdev.com

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## NEWCASTLE TOPS LIST OF FASTEST-GROWING CITIES IN THE OKC REGION

Newcastle also ranked as the 42nd fastest-growing city in the nation (of cities with a population of over 10,000).

CITY	2020 TOTAL POPULATION	2022 TOTAL POPULATION	DIFFERENCE	% CHANGE 2020-2022
NEWCASTLE	11,168	13,055	1,887	16.9%
GOLDSBY	2,714	3,065	351	12.9%
PIEDMONT	7,486	8,445	959	12.8%
MUSTANG	20,124	22,232	2,108	10.5%
TUTTLE	7,428	8,073	645	8.68%
EL RENO	17,132	18,560	1,428	8.34%
NOBLE	7,032	7,556	524	7.5%
YUKON	23,795	25,556	1,761	7.4%
UNION CITY	1,805	1,936	131	7.3%
BLANCHARD	8,937	9,481	544	6.1%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

For comprehensive Economic Indicator and Regional Data, please contact Eric Long, Research Economist, at 405-297-8976; [elong@okcchamber.com](mailto:elong@okcchamber.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).

### Crumbl Cookies North May OKC

6315 N. May Ave., Suite B  
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

### First National Bank & Trust of Ardmore

1763 W. 33rd St., Suite 120  
Oklahoma City, OK 73013

### MSI Surfaces

5325 SW 36th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179

### PGA Tour Superstore

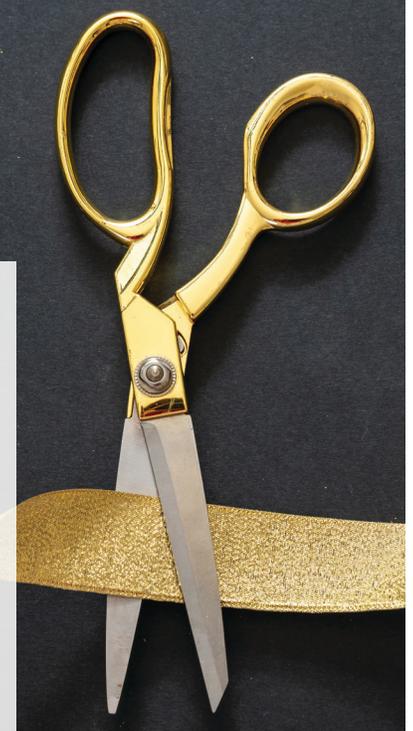
2727 W. Memorial Road  
Oklahoma City, OK 73134

### Sailor & the Dock

617 W. Sheridan Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

### Seeds & Snacks

3501 Melcat Drive, Suite A  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179



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- 1** Community coalition launches campaign for new Oklahoma City arena
- 5** Chamber study reveals \$1.2 billion annual cost of Oklahoma's childcare crisis
- 6** Chamber releases results of 2023 legislative scorecard
- 9** OKC ramps up Key to Home rehousing initiative

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O K L A H O M A C I T Y  
**C H A M B E R**

# STATE OF THE ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023  
NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM  
11:30 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.

**REGISTER NOW**