



SEPTEMBER 2023 • OKCCHAMBER.COM

GREATER  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
CHAMBER

## OKLAHOMA CITY'S FILM SCENE TAKES CENTER STAGE WITH LUCRATIVE REBATES

Oklahoma City's film industry is booming, thanks in large part to a film incentive program the city created last year to help lure filmmakers to Oklahoma City.

The program is the result of a partnership between the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, the City of Oklahoma City and the Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City. It provides filmmakers rebates between 5% and 10% of qualified expenses for production and post-production activities.

Feature films that spend between \$500,000 and \$5 million in qualified expenses in Oklahoma City can

receive up to 5% in rebates. Projects that spend more than \$5 million can earn up to 10% back in rebates. Television series, TV pilots and reality TV shows can earn up to 5% in rebates if they spend between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in qualified expenses; up to 10% if spending is more than \$500,000.

The rebate program also stipulates that production companies must spend at least 50% of filming days within OKC's city limits, among other requirements, to be eligible for the incentives. In return for the rebate, production companies must display a logo provided by the Oklahoma City Film & Creative Industries Office at the end of the film's credits. The logo acknowledges the project was shot in Oklahoma City in conjunction with the city's film office.

Jill Simpson, who runs the city's film office at the

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## DIVERSE SPORTS GENERATE \$92 MILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT

According to a recent study by Tourism Economics, Oklahoma City experienced a staggering \$4.3 billion economic impact from tourism in 2022.

The study revealed more than 23 million visitors directly spent \$2.6 billion on food, retail, entertainment, lodging, transportation and more. Those figures included expenditures made by visitors attending various sporting events around the city.

Sports tourism is big for Oklahoma City. That's what Adam Wisniewski, Visit Oklahoma City's vice president of sports, wants everyone to understand, especially as



A gymnast competes on the high bar during the USA Gymnastics Development Program National Championships held last May in Oklahoma City. The event drew about 20,000 out-of-town visitors to OKC.

the city continues to grow and hosts even more sporting events well into the future.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



## 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

## CHILD CARE CHALLENGES IMPACTING OKC WORKFORCE, SEPTEMBER FORUM SEEKS SOLUTIONS

Happy September everyone! It's hard to believe the summer break is over. With all the activities and time spent with friends, it seems like summer just flew by. Now that the kids are back in school, parents can get back to the normal routine.

I've been a working mom for a long time now, and I wouldn't have it any other way. My family and work are my biggest passions. My husband and I are blessed to have the best of both worlds because we have child care. For more and more parents, child care is either not readily available or

it's too expensive. They have no choice but for one parent to leave the workforce and care for their child.

The child care issue is a serious hurdle throughout our country and in Oklahoma City right now. It's keeping a significant number of people out of the workforce. Getting over that hurdle is essential to meeting the needs of employers and maintaining our current momentum of impressive growth.

This is a challenge we will explore in detail at this month's Chamber Forum. We'll share the results of our child care survey, take a deep dive into the issue and possible solutions. I hope you can join us at the event for this important discussion.

Meeting the needs of working parents is a win-win for your business and Oklahoma City. A family-friendly workplace contributes to employee retention, productivity and overall company culture. By working together, we can find solutions for businesses, families and our communities.

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

Chef Andrew Black unveils a new jewel in Oklahoma City's culinary crown

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



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## VELOCITY

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Editorial staff

Harve Allen, Kelly Dexter and Cynthia Reid

Designer

Billy Callan

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facebook.com/okcchamber

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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 20

**Chamber Forum**  
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
The Petroleum Club  
100 N. Broadway, 34th Floor  
[okcchamber.com/septemberforum](http://okcchamber.com/septemberforum)

### SEPTEMBER 26

**Chamber Connection**  
3-4:30 p.m.  
Credit Union House of Oklahoma  
631 E. Hill St.

### SEPTEMBER 28

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

### 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)



CHAMBER  
FORUM

## *Addressing the child care crisis: Key findings, action plan revealed at September Chamber forum*

Oklahoma City, like many cities across the country, is facing a child care crisis. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, through funding from the City of Oklahoma City, partnered with the Coalign Group and the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to establish a comprehensive data repository and strategy to address child care needs as it impacts the workforce of Oklahoma City.

The research encompasses insights into the requirements of large and small diverse businesses across a variety of industries within Oklahoma City while also considering national trends about the child care industry.

The Chamber Forum will be held at 11:30 a.m., Sept. 20, at the Petroleum Club of Oklahoma City, located on the 34th floor of the BancFirst Tower, 100 N. Broadway Ave.

Attendees at the September event will hear the results of the study and learn about the recommendations to address the needs in our community. Participating in a panel discussion will be:

- Carri Hicks, Senator, Oklahoma State Senate
- Kelly Kay, CEO, YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City
- Cathy O'Connor, Founder, Coalign Group
- Carrie Williams, Executive Director, Oklahoma Partnership of School Readiness

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

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

## FUTURE-FOCUSED STRATEGIC INITIATIVES THE FOCUS OF CHAMBER'S STATE OF THE REGION EVENT



The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber will host a new event, State of the Region, on Thursday, Sept. 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. The event will highlight the progress and development happening across central Oklahoma.

Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt will moderate a panel discussion with the mayors of our region's largest cities. They'll discuss the strategic initiatives building central Oklahoma and the opportunities that can continue our growth. Joining Mayor Holt is:

- Darrell Davis, Mayor of Edmond
- Matt Dukes, Mayor of Midwest City
- Larry Heikkila, Mayor of Norman
- Shelli Selby, Mayor of Yukon

A second panel will discuss the impact of working together on workforce and infrastructure to ensure we are forward-thinking with our economic development. The panel includes:

- Chris Browning, utilities director for the City of Oklahoma City and general manager of Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust
- Jason Ferbrache, assistant city manager of Oklahoma City and director of EMBARK
- Brian Ruttman, superintendent of Moore Norman Technology Center

Individual tickets are \$60 for Chamber members and \$75 for nonmembers. To register or learn more, visit [okcchamber.com/region](http://okcchamber.com/region). Sponsor tables of eight with additional recognition are available for \$1,600. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at [sellison@okcchamber.com](mailto:sellison@okcchamber.com) for table sponsor inquiries.

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Simmons Bank.

## THE 2023 OKLAHOMA CITY WELCOME GUIDE: YOUR ULTIMATE RECRUITMENT RESOURCE

The secret is out - Oklahoma City is a fantastic place to call home. We are one of the fastest-growing big cities in the nation because people can't help falling in love with this land of opportunity. By offering an abundance of career options, a remarkably low cost of living and an exceptional quality of life, dreams become reality in Oklahoma City.

Within the pages of the 2023 Oklahoma City Official Welcome Guide, you'll find a snapshot of the allure that's captivated people across the country. While the guide serves as an indispensable starting point for new residents, it's impossible to encapsulate it all within those pages. That's where [ABetterLifeOKC.com](http://ABetterLifeOKC.com) steps in. Our comprehensive relocation website serves as your up-to-date source for information on housing, education, employment, utilities and more. You'll also find a digital

version of the new welcome guide.

Looking for exciting weekend activities or ways to get involved in the community? A Better Life can assist you in those endeavors as well. Our Better Life blog and weekly newsletter are your gateways to insider information about Oklahoma City's finest attractions, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and much more. Join us at [ABetterLifeOKC.com/blog](http://ABetterLifeOKC.com/blog) to sign up for weekly email alerts, ensuring you're always in the know about the latest and greatest ways to connect with your community.



# UNLOCK YOUR STARTUP'S POTENTIAL WITH THE GBETA ACCELERATOR



Early-stage startups based in Oklahoma City have an opportunity to skyrocket their business. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber has teamed up with venture capital firm gener8tor to offer the gBETA accelerator program. It's a free, seven-week pre-accelerator program specifically designed for startups aiming for rapid growth and seeking venture capital funding. The program helps entrepreneurs refine their business strategies, develop an entrepreneurial mindset and become investor ready.

“One of my passions is teaching businesses that every business has the ability to be scalable, and that's not something, especially in minority communities, that we oftentimes dream of or even know how to dream of. Everybody who thinks they can apply should definitely apply,” said gBETA Oklahoma City Program Manager Elizabeth Larios. “For businesses that maybe aren't considering [applying], they probably should consider it because I would love to still work with them.”

## WHO CAN APPLY?

To be eligible for gBETA, you must be based in Oklahoma City, able to commit five hours a week to the program and ready to grow. gBETA is open to startups at various stages, from those with just an idea to those with significant revenue.

## WHAT'S THE GBETA PROGRAM LIKE?

The gBETA program is structured to provide you with the knowledge, mentorship and resources needed to succeed. Here's a glimpse of what you can expect:

- **Team Meetings:** These sessions offer personalized coaching and mentorship from the gBETA team, helping you tailor your growth strategy.
- **Weekly Lunch & Learns:** Dive into relevant startup topics like market analysis, revenue models and financing goals.
- **Mentor Swarms:** Imagine speed-dating but with mentors! You'll have the opportunity to meet with five different mentors each week, including serial entrepreneurs, experts and investors.
- **Investor Swarm:** Get ready to pitch your startup to a diverse group of investors, including angel investors, venture capitalists and accelerators, both locally and nationally.
- **Program Wrap-Up:** Celebrate your journey with fellow cohort members and program partners while showcasing your startup.



## CONTINUED SUPPORT

Once you've completed the seven-week program, you become a gBETA alumni. But the support doesn't end there. Program directors stay in touch and continue to provide support, and you remain part of the gener8tor network for the life of your business. This means you'll be considered for future opportunities like gener8tor's investment accelerators or introductions to new mentors and investors.

If you're an aspiring entrepreneur, this could be the launchpad your startup needs to reach new heights. Apply now for the fall cohort. The deadline is Sept. 18.

## STATE OF THE SCHOOLS EVENT SPARKS CALL FOR COLLABORATION



*Dr. Bryan Johnson was the keynote speaker at the Chamber's State of the Schools event last month. He urged Oklahoma City businesses to invest both time and money in helping prepare a skilled workforce.*

Education leaders say innovation is the key to addressing our state's workforce challenges. Officials from higher education institutions and CareerTech met to share their insights at the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's annual State of the Schools. The event was held last month at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Throughout the nearly 30-minute dialogue, a clear message emerged: Colleges, universities and career technology centers across the OKC metropolitan area must continue to seek new avenues for collaboration, fostering partnerships not only with each other but also with local businesses. This collaborative effort is essential for nurturing a skilled and qualified workforce.

Since 2000, OSU-Oklahoma City has enjoyed a partnership with OG&E, which has provided valuable resources and expertise to OSU-OKC's Power Transmission and Distribution Technology program. In exchange, the college builds a ready workforce of linemen for the utility company.

"They've donated trucks and trailers and poles, and they've allowed employees to step away from their positions and adjunct for us. Those are some of the very visible contributions," said Dr. Paula Stinson, OSU-OKC's provost and vice president of academic affairs. OG&E also contributes in other, not-so-visible ways such as offering internships to OSU-OKC students as well as providing them with scholarships and serving on important advisory boards within the college.

Aerospace is the second largest industry in the state and requires a steady pipeline of workers. Oklahoma City is home to major aerospace employers such as Boeing, Northrop Grumman and Tinker Air Force Base, the state's largest single-site employer. The importance of having a well-skilled workforce for the aerospace industry is critical. That's why Rose State College in Midwest City has gone to great lengths to establish aerospace as a major emphasis on its campus.

RSC President Dr. Jeannie Webb shared how her institution partnered with Metro Technology Center pre-COVID to create an aerospace pathway that would

allow students to further their education and careers in aerospace. Students who earn an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) Certificate from MetroTech would be able to attend Rose State and earn an associate degree.

Since the pathway's inception, many other post-secondary institutions have joined the partnership, including OKC-area technology centers and several universities around the state, including OU, OSU, UCO, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

"We try to work with all of our local partners. But when we think aerospace, here is what's really important: It's not just engineering. It's data analytics. It's coding. It's cyber. It's aviation, and it's 3D printing and metal fabrication," Webb said. The competition is not between any of the partners but to meet the workforce demands, she said, emphasizing the need to work together to accomplish that goal.

Keynote speaker Dr. Bryan Johnson then took the stage and echoed what was a common theme heard throughout the panel discussion – that education and businesses need to work together more to meet workforce needs.

Johnson, who serves as executive vice chancellor and chief strategy officer at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, encouraged the audience to stop pointing fingers and blaming others for an ill-prepared workforce. We should instead mobilize and work together to solve this issue rather than working in silos, he said. He also stressed the need for the business community to put some skin in the game by investing both time and money in the effort.

## SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM OPENS DOORS FOR MINORITY- OWNED BUSINESSES

The Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City recently launched its Supplier Diversity Program, which is designed to help minority entrepreneurs and minority-owned businesses secure corporate and government contracts.

The free program is an important step in helping create a diverse business ecosystem in Oklahoma City, said Alliance President Kenton Tsoodle. It will go a long way in eliminating some of the barriers and inequities minority suppliers face daily.



“Historically, minority-owned businesses have often been overlooked and discouraged from contracting opportunities. Barriers continue to exist today that prevent minority-owned businesses from accessing capital, bonding and collateral required by many larger contracts,” Tsoodle said in an Alliance news release announcing the program.

The Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber, REI Oklahoma and the Urban League of Greater OKC are partnering with the Alliance to administer the program. Each partner will provide minority suppliers with an array of services based on their unique focus and expertise, including facilitating business certifications, providing mentorship, and providing accounting assistance and access to bonding/loan products, among others.

To qualify for the Supplier Diversity Program, a business must be in OKC and at least 51% minority

owned. It must also be designated as a small business (less than 500 full-time equivalent employees) and must have been founded prior to March 31, 2021.

Jabar Shumate, vice president of community convening and social justice for the Urban League of OKC, said you do not find many opportunities for community collaborations at this level.

“This partnership between REI, Urban League and the Hispanic Chamber is something that I think can be a model for other work that can be done which really helps some of our communities that face some similar disadvantages,” Shumate said.

“One of the things we’re trying to do with this partnership is open people up in spaces they haven’t quite been in. Our services are going to be uniquely given in a way that is helpful to have a client who has some unique challenges. But because there’s consistency [among the partners], you will get the same thing everywhere. And I think that’s what makes us so innovative,” he said.

Although the Supplier Diversity Program is being funded through the City of Oklahoma City’s allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act, REI Oklahoma has also created a funding pool of its own that will be used specifically for minority businesses coming through the program.

“All of the partners have the same goal in mind. And that’s what we’re going to do is help these folks get access [to funding]. So, for us, with our lending pool, we’re able to be more flexible,” said Melanie Anthony, REI Oklahoma’s senior director of marketing and development.

In a 2022 report by the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc., minority-owned businesses produced more than \$316 billion in revenue and supported almost two million jobs across the U.S.





## OPPORTUNITIES FOR OKLAHOMA CITY UNCOVERED IN BENCHMARKING TRIP TO TAMPA

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, along with 64 members and community leaders, visited Tampa August 24-25 for its 16th InterCity Visit. This annual benchmarking trip, a tradition since 2005, serves as a crucial fact-finding mission to uncover best practices that can be implemented here in Oklahoma City.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tampa and Oklahoma City were following similar growth trajectories. However, the rise of remote work during the pandemic led to a significant population increase in Tampa, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the region.

“The opportunity to dive into another community and glean lessons from their successes and setbacks is invaluable,” said Christy Gillenwater, president and CEO of the Chamber. “We appreciate the engagement of our leaders and partners as we evaluate the progress of Oklahoma City and strategically identify actions to advance our trajectory.”

One key highlight of the trip was the transformation of downtown Tampa. Attendees were impressed with the developments revitalizing the area and the city's efforts to enhance the riverwalk and provide amenities such as grocery stores for downtown residents. Tampa's innovative homeless outreach initiatives left a lasting impression, offering potential strategies for Oklahoma City to better serve its vulnerable population.

During discussions with former mayors of Tampa and St. Petersburg, participants explored ways to position Oklahoma City for even greater success. They emphasized the unique qualities that make each community special and stressed the importance of

strategic growth to maintain quality of life. While Oklahoma City is becoming an increasingly dynamic and attractive destination, attendees agreed on the need for careful planning.

The second day of the trip featured a packed schedule focused on Tampa's startup ecosystem, entrepreneurship programs, upskilling initiatives, the Chamber's minority business accelerator and the innovation and life science sector. The collaboration within Tampa's health care sector and reinvestment in research particularly stood out, providing inspiration and potential ideas for Oklahoma City's future development.



*Attendees of the recent Tampa InterCity Visit look on as OKC Mayor David Holt and Tampa Mayor Jane Castor discuss how the two cities align and the challenges each are working to improve.*

One crucial takeaway was the appreciation for the collaborative spirit in Oklahoma City, as attendees reflected on the challenges faced by the Tampa region in advancing transportation initiatives. This spurred discussions on how to maintain progress and avoid complacency in our own community.

With a whirlwind of 13 sessions in less than 36 hours, participants returned home brimming with ideas, hope and encouragement for the present and future of Oklahoma City. The InterCity Visit to Tampa provided valuable insights and inspiration that will undoubtedly shape the city's path forward.

“Our job is to utilize sports to create an economic impact and tourism,” Wisniewski said. “We want to bring sporting events here that will make people outside of Oklahoma City visit our destination and take their outside dollars and spend them here with our local restaurants, hotels and attractions.”

According to figures provided by Visit OKC, during their last fiscal year (August 2022 through July 2023), sporting events they supported generated an estimated economic impact of \$92 million.

The popularity and economic impact that the Oklahoma City Thunder and other professional and collegiate teams such as OU and OSU bring to the table cannot be understated. But what many people may not realize is that other not-so-well-known professional and amateur sports have also been good for Oklahoma City’s economy.

Wisniewski said many people have some misconceptions in terms of sports in Oklahoma City. Topping the list is that the city is not a championship destination. He quickly rebuffed that notion, pointing out Oklahoma City’s long history of hosting NCAA championships, Big 12 championships and other popular sporting events. The NCAA Women’s College World Series is a great example. More than 110,000 people

attended the event this past June at USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium. About 70% of those in attendance were from cities outside the OKC market.

The Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon is another major sporting event that, like the Women’s College World Series, attracts thousands of people from across the state, nation and world.

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**“Our job is to utilize sports to create an economic impact and tourism” - Adam Wisniewski**

“[The Memorial Marathon] is more than just a local event that we care about. There is a significant tourism component associated with it,” Wisniewski said.

Other significant and widely publicized sporting events Wisniewski said had a big economic impact on Oklahoma City last fiscal year included the World Paddlesport Festival on the Oklahoma River. That event brought international acclaim to the city.

Oklahoma City also hosted for the first time ever the USA Gymnastics Development Program National Championships. Approximately 1,800 athletes from across the U.S. participated in that event, held at the Oklahoma City Convention Center. Those athletes also brought along their families, which meant total



More than 110,000 people attended the NCAA Women's College World Series this past June at USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium. About 70% of those in attendance were from cities outside the OKC market.



attendance was well over 20,000. The youth and amateur market is a lot stronger than people may realize, Wisniewski said.

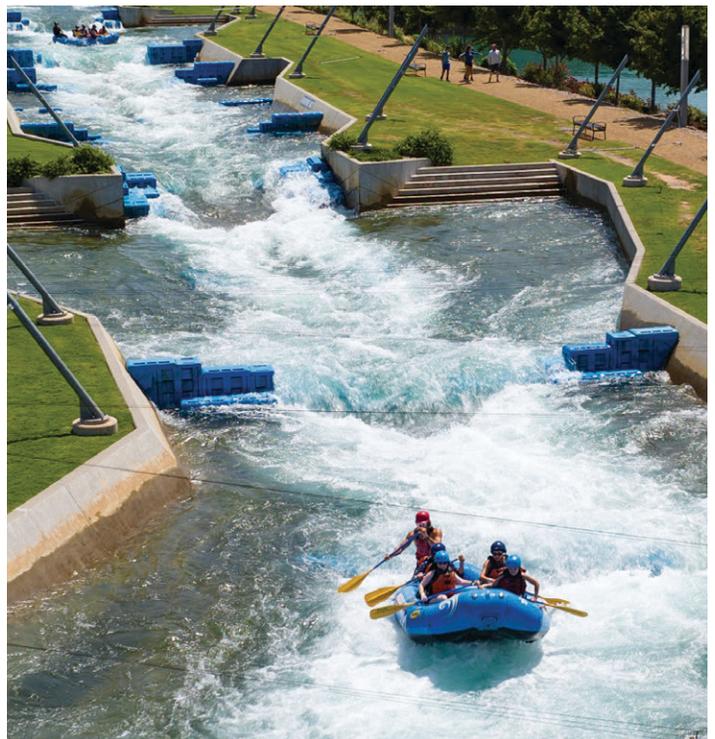
“When you host a tournament, for example, that brings in say 100 to 200 teams, and let’s say each team has 15 to 20 kids on it, that means there could be more people attending that particular tournament than there would be if you filled a small stadium,” he said, which includes a number of family members who also come to those events in support of the athletes.

Wisniewski said parents are willing to spend money when it comes to their kids. That’s why when he and his Visit OKC team attempt to sell Oklahoma City to parents, they try to convince them the trip could be turned into a mini-vacation.

“We can tell them, ‘If you stay one more day and you get to do these attractions, you go and see these museums and do these other things, the kids won’t be any wiser. You kind of knocked out two goals with one trip,’” Wisniewski said.

In addition to having many top-notch, quality attractions and restaurants as a way to attract sports events to Oklahoma City, he pointed to OKC’s other strengths, including its centralized location and lower travel costs.

“If we can make the argument that coming [to Oklahoma City] is a lot friendlier to your wallet than other bigger cities, like say a Dallas, then that is going to be very, very beneficial for us.”



Oklahoma City’s RIVERSPORT Rapids hosts various festivals and racing events throughout the year, including the 2022 World Paddlesport Festival. That event brought international acclaim to the city.

Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, said the local industry is “going to the next level” because of the incentive program. Two film projects have already been pre-qualified for the rebates, and another is currently under consideration, she said. But due to nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements, she must refer to them by their code names: Project Dirt Road, Project Dino and Project Urban.

Produced by Universal Studios, Project Dirt Road is expected to be a summer 2024 blockbuster. It began shooting on May 8 all across the OKC metro; however, because of the recent Writers Guild and Screen Actors Guild strikes, the studio was forced to temporarily halt production Aug. 4.

“This film, because it’s such a big project, will have an opportunity for global marketing of Oklahoma City, much like we had with ‘Tulsa King.’ When something like that is out there and it gets picked up, you get all kinds of ancillary publicity you hadn’t even planned on,” Simpson said.

All told, the three projects are projected to generate a combined \$261 million in economic impact for Oklahoma City. Films shot in Oklahoma City could also qualify for up to an additional 30% rebate from the state’s own film incentive program.

“I’ll tell you, in the case of the Universal film, were it not for Oklahoma City sweetening the pot, they would not have come to Oklahoma at all. I look at the city program as a deal closer or a deal sweetener, and it really made the difference,” she said.

During its three-month-long shoot, Project Dirt Road used 10 Oklahoma City hotels for cast and crew lodging, hired 500 different local vendors, and 100% of their extras were from Oklahoma City.

Project Dino is a film by Oklahoma City-based Boiling Point Media. Its high-tech LED virtual production studio



is a game changer for moviemakers.

“They have clients from all over the world and are doing work for companies in Asia. They are on the map within the digital animation and visual effects sector,” Simpson said.

Project Urban is a small-budget, local independent film shot in June. The writer, producer and director all hail from Oklahoma City.

“It’s important to support these three filmmakers at the beginning of their careers. They are homegrown talent, so we hope they will stay here but then move on to bigger projects,” Simpson said.

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***“...in the case of the Universal film, were it not for Oklahoma City sweetening the pot, they would not have come to Oklahoma at all.” - Jill Simpson***

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTED AT ACCE CONFERENCE



In an exciting and informative four-day gathering, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber executives joined counterparts from across the country at the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) conference. The event was held last month in Salt Lake City. The conference marks the end of Greater Oklahoma City Chamber president & CEO Christy Gillenwater's appointment as chair of the ACCE Board of Directors. During the one-year term, Gillenwater oversaw the activities of a 65-member board that provides leadership and strategic direction to the ACCE staff.

Packed with illuminating sessions, keynote addresses and networking opportunities, the annual conference provided valuable insights and strategies for chambers to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of community and economic development.

Standout session topics included effective business advocacy, data-driven accuracy, talent development and retention, and bolstering small business growth. Attendees also gained a blueprint for building successful leadership programs and discovered how partnerships with stakeholders are critical to achieving economic development goals.

In addition to the enriching sessions, ACCE also presented several awards, including Life Member Awards, which honor those who have made remarkable contributions to the chamber profession. The event culminated with the pinnacle award recognizing Greater OKC Chamber's former president & CEO Roy Williams, who retired in 2022 and was previously honored in 2008 with ACCE's Chairman's Award for his significant contributions.

The ACCE conference once again proved to be a vital platform for chamber executives to exchange ideas, gain insights and strengthen their commitment to enhancing communities and promoting economic growth. As chambers continue to adapt and innovate, the lessons and connections forged at this event will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the future of these vital organizations.



## 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).

**JK Restaurants by Chef King**  
612 N. Robinson Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102



# 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

### Nestle Purina Pet Care

*Pet Foods Wholesale & Manufacturers*  
Ms. Letha Sloan.....(405) 753-8640  
13900 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Edmond, OK 73013-3422  
www.purina.com

## ADVISOR

### Harness Digital Solutions, LLC

*Communications - Digital / Multimedia*  
Ms. Kristy K. Boone.....(405) 358-4211  
7701 N. Broadway Extension, Suite A4  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116-9056  
www.harness10.com

## CORE

### Greater OKC Asian Chamber

*Chambers of Commerce*  
Ms. Scarlet Le-Cao.....(405) 301-6674  
1720 N. Shartel, Suite C  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103-2100  
www.asianchamberokc.com

### The Crooked Wick Candle Company

*Gift & Specialty Shops*  
*Retail*  
Ms. Shannon Repka.....(361) 739-1066  
3633 NW 176th St.  
Edmond, OK 73012-8719  
www.thecrookedwick.com

### Mariner Wealth Advisors

*Financial Planning Consultants*  
Mr. Joe Hendrix.....(405) 353-1540  
1601 N.W. Expressway, Suite 1850  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-1467  
https://marinerwealthadvisors.com/

### Renaissance Architects, LLC

*Architects & Builders Services*  
Ms. Lori Packwood.....(405) 749-4642  
11100 Stratford Drive, Suite A-100  
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-7200  
www.renaissancearchitects.com

### Blue Kangaroo Packoutz of Greater OKC and Shawnee

*Furniture*  
Ms. Ailsa Henley.....(405) 277-8747  
9011 Polaris Drive  
Oklahoma City, OK 74139-4411  
https://www.bluekangaroopackoutz.com/  
greater-okc-shawnee/

### EmVenio Research

*Health Services*  
Ms. Erin Hartsburg.....(405) 643-4606  
1301 N. Portland Ave.  
2530 Meridian Parkway, Suite 300  
Durham, NC 27713-5273  
www.emvenio.com

### Prime Cleaning Solutions

*Window Cleaning Services*  
Mr. Christopher Spradlin.....(405) 252-0212  
7409 Whirlwind Way  
Edmond, OK 73034-2387  
https://www.primecleaning.solutions

### Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council (SMSDC)

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Ms. Karen Box.....(512) 796-5517  
7301 N. Broadway, Suite 224  
P.O. Box 151267  
Austin, TX 78715-1267  
www.smsdc.org

### Carpet Depot

*Floor Coverings*  
Ms. Sonya Rayl.....(405) 524-2183  
2547 NW 10th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107-5405  
www.carpetdepotokc.com

### Kirkpatrick Policy Group

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Mr. Brendan Hoover.....(405) 820-6408  
1001 W. Wilshire Blvd., 4th Floor  
Oklahoma City, OK 73116-7004  
kirkpatrickpolicygroup.com

### Reid Home Solutions

*Millwork*  
Mr. Steve Prentice.....(405) 606-7006  
212 N. Ann Arbor Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73127-6306  
www.reidhs.com

### SW 29th District Association / LA 29

*Nonprofit / Service Agencies*  
Ms. Amanda Sandoval.....(405) 408-6096  
2725 SW 29th St.  
1805 N. Alexander Lane  
Bethany, OK 73008-5644  
sw29okc.org

## MEMBER UPGRADES

The following member companies increased their investment in the Chamber, demonstrating strong support of the Chamber's efforts to drive the region's economy. To increase your investment, contact the Membership Division of the Chamber at 405-297-8949 or membership@okcchamber.com.

## ADVISOR

### P3 Cost Analysts

*Consultants*  
Mrs. Jennifer Yearous.....  
(405) 537-1565  
2021 Smoky Hollow Road  
Edmond, OK 73013-6811  
www.costanalysts.com

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## OKC RANKS NO. 2 FOR BEST METRO FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO LIVE

### Top Ten Metros for Young Professionals to Live (2023)

METRO	RANK	MEDIAN HOME PRICE	ESTIMATED MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	MEDIAN INCOME
DES MOINES-WEST DES MOINES, IA	1	\$265,300	\$1,509	2.4%	\$47,097
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK	2	\$227,300	\$1,293	2.7%	\$39,383
OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA	3	\$274,100	\$1,559	2.2%	\$42,448
COLUMBUS, OH	4	\$284,700	\$1,619	3.0%	\$45,023
CINCINNATI, OH-KY-IN	5	\$252,200	\$1,434	3.1%	\$40,379
MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL-BLOOMINGTON, MN-WI	6	\$361,500	\$2,056	2.9%	\$52,273
KANSAS CITY, KS-MO	7	\$291,000	\$1,655	2.8%	\$43,368
BALTIMORE-COLUMBIA-TOWSON, MD	8	\$357,800	\$2,035	2.2%	\$52,680
NASHVILLE-DAVIDSON-MURFREESBORO-FRANKLIN, TN	9	\$385,800	\$2,194	2.7%	\$46,421
LITTLE ROCK-NORTH LITTLE ROCK-CONWAY, AR	10	\$203,000	\$1,154	2.3%	\$34,785

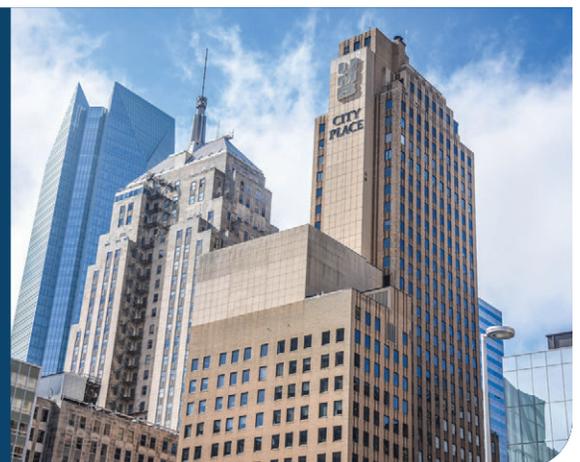
SOURCE: FORBES ADVISOR, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, ZILLOW, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR REALTORS, C2ER

- Forbes Advisor compared the 100 largest metro areas across 10 metrics spanning four key categories: employment and pay, housing affordability, lifestyle and cost of living.
- OKC is in the top 5 metros ranking favorable for its low median home price and low cost of living.
- The median home price in OKC is \$227,300, which is well below the national median price (\$416,300).
- A 10% down payment requires homeowners to save about 58% of the OKC area median individual income, the 14th-lowest figure in the study.

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



# → V E L O C I T Y ←

Periodicals  
**PAID**  
Oklahoma City, OK  
73102

## LOOK INSIDE!

- 1** Diverse sports generate \$92 million economic impact
- 7** State of the Schools event sparks call for collaboration
- 8** Supplier diversity program opens doors for minority-owned businesses
- 9** Opportunities for Oklahoma City uncovered in benchmarking trip to Tampa

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



[TWITTER.COM/OKCCCHAMBER](https://twitter.com/OKCCCHAMBER)



[FACEBOOK.COM/OKCCCHAMBER](https://facebook.com/OKCCCHAMBER)

## STATE <sup>OF</sup> THE REGION

Focusing on Central Oklahoma Development & Collaboration

**Sept. 28**

**NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN  
HERITAGE MUSEUM**

**11:30 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.**

This event will feature a panel discussion among regional mayors moderated by OKC Mayor David Holt and a panel on regional infrastructure as we plan for future growth.

## REGISTER TODAY

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