



JANUARY 2024 • OKCCHAMBER.COM

GREATER
OKLAHOMA CITY
CHAMBER

OKC VOTERS APPROVE NEW DOWNTOWN ARENA

Oklahoma City voters have given their approval to continue a one-cent sales tax to pay for the construction of a new downtown arena. This decision ensures that OKC will continue to host the Oklahoma City Thunder beyond the year 2050. It also opens doors to major concerts and other events at the new arena.

In a statement, Mayor David Holt declared, "Tonight, we conveyed to the nation and the world that Oklahoma City is, and will remain, a Big League City."

The new arena will be funded by a 72-month sales tax which goes into effect after the conclusion of the current MAPS 4 tax. The project will also receive \$70 million in



MAPS 4 funds and an additional \$50 million from the ownership group of the Oklahoma City Thunder.

"With this project we will be doing more than just building a world-class sports and entertainment

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

OKC CHAMBER ANNOUNCES NEW OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber recently announced its 2024 board of directors and officers.

Teresa Rose, JD, Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, will serve as chair of the board of directors. John Hart, Continental Resources, will serve as treasurer, and Michael F. Ross, INSURICA/American Fidelity Assurance Company, corporate secretary. Also serving on the executive committee will be Immediate Past Chair Sean Trauschke, OGE Energy Corp., and Chamber President and CEO Christy Gillenwater.

Serving on the executive committee as program vice chairs in 2024 are Clayton I. Bennett, Dorchester Capital, strategic planning; Bob Funk, Jr., Prodigal, education and talent; Judy J. Hatfield, CCIM, Equity Commercial Realty Advisors, LLC, membership; Rhonda Hooper, Jordan Advertising, business and economic inclusion; Bill Lance, The Chickasaw Nation, convention & visitors development; Tom J. McDaniel, American Fidelity Foundation, MAPS development; Jenny Love Meyer, Love's Travel Stops, marketing and communications; Rick Muncrief, Devon Energy Corporation, innovation and bioscience; J. Larry Nichols, Devon Energy Corporation, economic development/Forward Oklahoma City; David E. Rainbolt, BancFirst Corporation, government relations; and W. Kent Shortridge, Oklahoma Natural Gas Company, military and aerospace.

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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

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



LEADERSHIP NOTES



CHRISTY GILLENWATER
President & CEO

CHAMBER SETS AMBITIOUS GOALS FOR 2024, FOCUSING ON PARTNERSHIPS, FEDERAL ADVOCACY AND OKC'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Happy New Year! I am so excited about what this new year has in store for our community. The passage of the arena vote confirmed that OKC residents are ready to invest in a bright future for generations to come. That work has already begun. Here at the Chamber we are focusing on five key areas to take our growth to the next level.

First, we will complete our strategic plan and also identify funding mechanisms for its implementation. That means finishing Forward Oklahoma City VI a year early so we can start strong in 2025. Secondly, we will take a hard look at the issues keeping our community from achieving its loftiest goals. We must identify our deficiencies and work together to strengthen them.

Another area of focus is strategic partnerships, both inside and outside our state. These alliances are crucial to growing our industry clusters, particularly in bioscience, aerospace and energy. This year we will also expand our advocacy efforts at the federal level to ensure OKC can compete for grants and funding that support our strategic efforts. We'll also continue to fight for a stronger business climate in our state.

Finally, tourism has also become a major economic driver for OKC. It also improves how people outside Oklahoma perceive us. Stepping foot in OKC is all it takes for someone to fall in love with this phenomenal city. I know I did after my first trip. This year, we will expand our marketing efforts to tell our story to as many people as possible.

I believe 2024 will be a watershed year, where we launch onto a new trajectory of growth and development. Thank you for your engagement and support as we work together to achieve these ambitious goals.

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

Oklahoma soars to the ninth spot in the 2023 best states for manufacturing

[VELOCITYOKC.COM/CHRISTYSPICK](https://velocityokc.com/christyspick)



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2024 OFFICERS

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Immediate Past Chair

JOHN HART
Continental Resources
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Oklahoma Natural Gas Company
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CHRISTY GILLENWATER
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber
President & CEO



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UPCOMING EVENTS

CALENDAR

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

JANUARY 17

Chamber Forum

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

The Petroleum Club

100 N Broadway, 34th Floor

okcchamber.com/januaryforum

JANUARY 18

Meet & Mingle

8:30 to 10 a.m.

Bar K

901 SE 5th St.

okcchamber.com/meetandmingle

JANUARY 25

Legislative Kickoff

Thursday, Jan. 25

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

Champion Convention Center

737 S Meridian Ave.

FEBRUARY 15

Chamber Forum

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

The Petroleum Club

100 N Broadway, 34th Floor

okcchamber.com/februaryforum

FEBRUARY 27

Chamber Connection

8:30 to 10 a.m.

Credit Union House

613 E Hill St.

MARCH 20

Chamber Forum

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

The Petroleum Club

100 N Broadway, 34th Floor

okcchamber.com/marchforum



Progress of justice reform efforts to be discussed during January Forum

Oklahoma County has taken significant steps to improve its criminal justice system. By implementing many of the 2016 recommendations from the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force, the jail population has decreased by more than 40%. Yet, challenges remain.

During the January Chamber Forum, attendees will hear from experts with the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) which recently evaluated Oklahoma County's justice reform efforts. They'll share key findings from their analysis.

The forum, one of 10 planned for 2024, will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Jan. 17, at the Petroleum Club Downtown Oklahoma City, 100 N. Broadway, 35th floor.

The CJI experts will participate in a panel discussion with Oklahoma County leaders to address the next steps. Participants include:

- Vicki Behenna, District Attorney, Oklahoma County
- Leonard W. Engel, Esq. Director of Policy & Campaigns, Crime and Justice Institute
- Molly Robustelli, Manager, Crime and Justice Institute
- Timothy Tardibono, Executive Director, Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Advisory Council

The cost to attend the January Chamber Forum is \$45 for Chamber members and \$55 for nonmembers. To register, visit okcchamber.com/januaryforum. A discounted full-season package of 10 tickets can also be purchased for \$400 by emailing register@okcchamber.com.

The Chamber Forum series brings thought leaders together to discuss major initiatives, programs and current issues that impact Oklahoma City's business climate, economy and community. Visit the events page on the Chamber website for up-to-date information on this and other events the Chamber hosts throughout the year.

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

LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ADDRESS PRIORITIES CRITICAL TO BUSINESSES DURING LEGISLATIVE KICKOFF



Chamber members will get an opportunity to hear from several key legislative leaders and make their voices known on issues impacting Oklahoma City’s business community during the Chamber’s annual Legislative Kickoff scheduled for Jan. 25.

A panel of leadership from both the House and Senate will share their thoughts and insights into what they see as some of the more critical issues state lawmakers will face throughout the next legislative session.

Participating on the panel will be:

- Greg Treat, Senate President Pro Tempore
- Kay Floyd, Senate Democratic Leader
- Charles McCall, Speaker of the House

- Cyndi Munson, House Minority Leader

The Legislative Kickoff will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Champion Convention Center, 737 S Meridian Avenue. Registration and networking begin at 11 a.m.

Tickets are \$50 for Chamber members and \$75 for nonmembers. To register, visit okcchamber.com/legislativekickoff. Sponsor tables of eight with additional recognition are available for \$1,500. Contact Suzette Ellison Jordan at sellison@okcchamber.com for sponsor inquiries.

Special thanks to Government Relations Benefactor Devon Energy Corporation.

NEW VISITORS GUIDE SHOWCASES THE DIVERSITY OF ‘THE MODERN FRONTIER’

The 2024 Oklahoma City Visitors Guide showcases the attractions, adventures, activities and opportunities that make OKC a fantastic place to call home. And it’s not just for tourists. It’s the perfect resource for businesses looking to recruit out-of-state talent.

Each year Visit OKC, a division of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber and formerly the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, distributes thousands of these guides nationally and internationally. The publication allows readers to experience the vibrant and diverse perspectives and activities that can only be found in Oklahoma City.

“We hope that this new guide inspires more visitors – and locals – to get out and explore the varied and unique experiences available to them here in Oklahoma City, the Modern Frontier,” said Visit OKC President Zac Craig.

The Visitors Guide includes insights into OKC’s unique districts. These areas provide a taste of local life

with their eclectic architecture and a wide array of dining and entertainment options, each reflecting the distinct personality and history of its district.

The guide also highlights Oklahoma City’s renowned museums, top-tier restaurants, vibrant artwork and festive events, spread across its 80 vivid pages. Additionally, it offers a useful directory of nearly 160 hotels in the city, complete with details on amenities and services crucial for travelers.

You can view and share the digital version online at visitokc.com, as well as order printed copies at visitokc.com/visitors-guide.



JACKSON NAMED NEW CHAMBER SENIOR VP, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND POLICY



Mike Jackson, a former legislator and experienced government professional, has been named the Chamber's new Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Policy. Jackson replaces Mark VanLandingham, who retired at the end of 2023.

"Mike will be an incredible addition to our team," said

Christy Gillenwater, Chamber president and CEO. "He has nearly twenty-five years of experience working with Oklahoma's business leaders, elected officials and other decision-makers to improve state policy and grow the economy. His background as a legislator, his experience with the State Chamber, and his deep understanding of our state's legislative policy and process made him the ideal candidate for the position."

VanLandingham served in the role for 15 years. Gillenwater recognized the significant role he played for the organization.

"Mark 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 also created and grew the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber PAC into one of the top PACs in the state, contributing nearly \$700,000 to state and local candidates since its inception."

Jackson comes to the Chamber after serving as Executive Director of the Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency and the Legislative Service Bureau, two new state agencies he formed beginning in 2020. Prior to that role, he served six years as Executive Vice President of Government and Political Affairs for the State Chamber of Oklahoma and was a state representative from 2004 to 2014. He also previously worked as a field representative for U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe.

ARENA VOTE (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

complex, we will be propelling Oklahoma City toward the next generation," said Thunder Chairman Clay Bennett. "This new home for the Thunder will serve as an iconic centerpiece of our vibrant and modern downtown and continue to represent the values of our city and its people."

A recent study commissioned by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber estimated the arena's annual economic impact at \$590 million while also supporting more than 3,000 jobs. The study estimated that construction of the new arena would generate more than \$1.3 billion during the construction period and support more than 10,000 jobs.

"This study, using real inputs from arena activity, makes it clear that the impact on our economy is significant," said Christy Gillenwater, president and

CEO of the Chamber. "There is an important impact to the families dependent on the arena activity – those that work in the building, along with restaurants, hotels and companies that provide goods and services to the arena."

The study also detailed the annual tax revenue impact of arena activity. Annual impact to the city of Oklahoma City is estimated at \$9 million, Oklahoma County and school districts are \$4 million, and to the state of Oklahoma, \$17 million.

"The numbers are an important consideration," explained Eric Long, the Chamber's research economist. "These are dollars that support basic services for residents. Attracting visitors for these events supports local jobs and important government functions like improving our streets, our public safety and taking care of human needs."

The Oklahoma City Thunder will continue to play at the Paycom Center until the new arena is complete, no later than the beginning of the 2029-2030 NBA season.

CHAMBER WELCOMES TERESA ROSE AS NEW CHAIR DURING ANNUAL MEETING



Moments after being installed as the new board chair for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, Teresa Rose revealed the roadmap for Oklahoma City's future. The vision was shared during the 2023 Annual Meeting, held last month at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

"2024 is not just another year; it's the beginning of a new era for Oklahoma City," said Rose. "We are no longer the underdog, no longer the best-kept secret. We are ready to take our rightful place on the national stage."

During her first address as chair, Rose said the planning and preparation the Chamber does in 2024 will set the stage for decades of growth. She specifically pointed to five key areas that the Chamber will focus on in 2024: Completing the organization's strategic plan, addressing the key challenges stalling progress, building powerful partnerships, enhancing advocacy efforts and creating new opportunities for education and workforce development.

Rose succeeds Sean Trauschke who served as board chair for the past three years. In his final address, Trauschke lauded Oklahoma City's many accomplishments during that time, including the Dec. 12 vote for a new downtown arena that gained an overwhelming approval.

"We have each been shaped by the experiences over the last few years and have come through stronger and more determined to accomplish great change in our community," said Trauschke.

He noted three critical initiatives that needed to be tackled when he first became chair in 2021, all of which were accomplished. One was expanding OKC's – and the state's – largest single-site employer, Tinker Air Force Base, which included the closure of Douglas Boulevard for security reasons. The others were the passage of two



New Chamber Chair Teresa Rose, left, accepts the passing of the gavel from Sean Trauschke during the Chamber's Annual Meeting at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in December.

separate, transformational bond issues, one to build a new county jail and the other to support workforce development needs within the Oklahoma City Public School District.

Trauschke said the hiring of current Chamber president and CEO Christy Gillenwater last January was an additional accomplishment for the Chamber in 2023.

The Annual Meeting also included a panel discussion with Chickasaw Nation Gov. Bill Anoatubby, as well as the Chickasaw Nation's Secretary of State Bill Lance and Secretary of Commerce Dan Boren. As part of the discussion, the Chickasaw leaders provided a history of the Chickasaw Nation and their involvement with the First Americans Museum and other Chickasaw Nation-owned business enterprises, including Remington Park, the OKANA Resort and Waterpark, which is set to open in 2025, and a planned state-of-art hospital in Newcastle.



Leaders of The Chickasaw Nation participated in a panel discussion as part of the Chamber's Annual Meeting last month. From left to right are Governor Bill Anoatubby, Secretary of Commerce Dan Boren and Secretary of State Bill Lance.



CHAMBER SETS PRIORITIES FOR 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Chamber's board of directors recently adopted a comprehensive set of public policy priorities heading into the 2024 legislative session, which are crucial to creating a strong future for Oklahoma businesses.

Below is an excerpt of key priorities. View the full list at okcchamber.com/legislative.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Chamber supports retaining and strengthening the state's premier economic/community development programs which are critical in attracting new businesses to the state, assisting existing companies expand and encouraging investment in communities across the state. Following are the key programs the Chamber will seek to protect and improve:

- Quality Jobs Act, 21st Century QJA, Small Employer QJA and the Prime Contractor QJA
- Aerospace Engineer Tax Credit
- Investment/New Jobs Tax Credit
- Historical Building Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- Cybersecurity/Software Engineer Tax Credit
- Five-year Ad Valorem Abatement and Sales Tax Exemption for Manufacturing Facilities
- Regional Home Office Insurance Premium Tax Credit
- Tourism Development Act
- Filmed in Oklahoma Act

COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM

The Chamber supports empowering Oklahoma counties to alter their form of government to meet their unique needs.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence technologies hold immense potential to revolutionize various industries by implementing advancements that can improve business efficiencies and our quality of life. Embracing this transformative technology requires a balanced approach. Oklahoma should foster a supportive environment that both safeguards our fundamental rights and catalyzes the innovation, development and adoption of AI while encouraging a federal solution.

GUN LEGISLATION

The Chamber supports the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the responsible expansion of gun-owner's rights in Oklahoma. However, the Chamber will oppose legislation that would allow open/concealed carry of guns into local athletic and high-economic impact events (many of which are required by contract to prohibit weapons), including horse shows, the Oklahoma State Fair, Olympic Qualifiers on the Oklahoma River, high school and collegiate sporting events.

The Chamber will oppose legislation to allow guns to be carried on college campuses, as well as legislation to prohibit state and local governments from contracting with companies based upon the company's position on firearms.

The Chamber will lead the efforts of the "Oklahomans for Business and Property Owners' Rights" coalition to defend against harmful gun legislation and work with

the National Rifle Association, the Oklahoma Second Amendment Association and other stakeholders to improve and clarify existing gun laws while, at the same time, ensuring the protection of property rights and public safety.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE/SENTENCING REFORM

The Chamber supports legislation and funding for sentencing reforms and rehabilitation programs to ease the financial drain on Oklahoma’s criminal justice system, lessen the burden on jails and prisons throughout the state and allow nonviolent offenders to enter the workforce more quickly.

The Chamber supports full funding for the County Community Safety Investment Fund, managed by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services pursuant to the terms of SB 844 (2023) and State Questions 780 and 781 (2016).

The Chamber also supports: 1) continuing smart sentencing reform; 2) improving bail and jail practices; 3) making reentry and supervision improvements to reduce fines and fees, enhance workforce opportunities and increase public safety; and 4) securing additional treatment funding.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING REQUESTS/APPROPRIATIONS/FEDERAL GRANTS

The Chamber will collaborate with our Congressional delegation to aggressively pursue Congressionally Directed Spending Requests, federal appropriations and federal grants related to the Chamber’s (and its member/partner organizations) economic development, transportation/infrastructure, aerospace/defense, education, healthcare, criminal justice and other priorities.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Chamber supports federal immigration reform to secure the borders and establish reasonable and effective visa policies/procedures to attract essential workers to the United States.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Having access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs encourages parental/guardian employment, which creates more economic security and better opportunities for families. The Chamber

recognizes that finding solutions to ongoing childcare needs will require collaboration with federal, state and local governments, business and industry, philanthropic and nonprofit community and education providers. The Chamber steadfastly supports early childhood education, birth to eight years old, and full funding of pre-K and kindergarten programs. Targeted spending on our youngest children is simply a smart investment.



TEACHER PREPARATION, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Oklahoma has a teacher shortage. Oklahoma needs to improve our teacher preparation pipeline systems to train, attract and retain more high-quality teachers. We support legislation to:

- Reward teacher performance and experience.
- Support specialized “grow-your-own” training initiatives such as the OKCPS Foundation Bilingual & Diversity Teacher Pipeline program (supported by UCO, OCCO, Rose State and OSU-OKC) and UCO’s Urban Teacher Preparation Academy.
- Implement teacher retention and mentor teacher programs.
- Support continued investment in the “Inspired to Teach” scholarship and incentive program.
- Increase access to STEM education and training opportunities.
- Support adjustments to the teacher retirement system and other strategies that help encourage retention and re-entry of experienced teachers and educators.

- Encourage development of programs that encourage students to pursue teaching as a profession. This should include increased public relations and advertising campaigns to recruit teachers. It may also include various programs that offer students tutoring experience, such as Oklahoma’s Math Tutoring Corps, Educators Rising and Teach for America’s Ignite Fellowship.

of existing technology platforms, such as telemedicine and telehealth, and data platforms to enhance access to health care for Oklahomans.



HIGHER EDUCATION – REFORM AND INVESTMENT

The Chamber recognizes a high-quality higher education system is critical to economic growth. Oklahoma City continues to struggle with meeting the workforce needs of its employers, particularly in Critical Occupations (as defined by www.oklahomaworks.gov/criticaloccupations). The business community, governments and higher education continue to face financial challenges. We all must be innovative and flexible to meet the needs of customers and achieve our mission. This includes the development of partnerships that produce tech transfer and research partnerships to generate private, federal and foundation revenue.

We urge the higher education system to pursue significant reform to better meet employer needs.

MEDICAID REFORM

As the state continues to improve health outcomes and modernize payment models to incentivize value within the state’s Medicaid system, the Chamber supports the implementation of the state’s Medicaid Managed Care Model. We further believe this model is the most effective means to address the state’s total health care needs on a systemwide basis.

NETWORK PROTECTION

The Chamber opposes legislation, restrictions, regulations and taxes which would eliminate the incentive for medical providers to contract with managed care networks and, as a result, potentially frustrate efforts at cost and quality control and ultimately deny consumers the benefits of cost-reducing arrangements with providers.

The Chamber further opposes legislation that would interfere with an employer’s ability to offer affordable health benefits due to a reduced ability to control benefit plans relating to prescription drugs.

The Chamber also supports the appropriate expansion

CHILD CARE

The Chamber supports targeted policies designed to increase the availability of non-mandated, high-quality childcare options to help generate increased workforce development.

MAJOR STATE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Chamber supports a continued focus on improvements, mobility and traffic management on the urban Oklahoma City interstate system (I-35, I-44, I-40, I-235) to promote economic development and, therefore, will advocate for full funding and timely completion of work on the following major interchanges/projects:

- I-240/I-35 (Crossroads Interchange).
- Major I-35 corridor improvements from 63rd Street NE/I-44 Interchange north to Waterloo Road, to include the Turner Turnpike Interchange.
- I-44/I-40 (K Interchange/Near State Fairgrounds) West to MacArthur on I-40.
- In support of U.S. Air Force mission-critical growth and expansion objectives at Tinker Air Force Base, necessary improvements including increased access at Douglas Boulevard, and expansion of I-40 facility to six lanes from Douglas Boulevard to Shawnee.
- I-35/I-40 Dallas Junction and I-35 (including Oklahoma River bridges).
- Future development of I-44 corridor from I-40 to SH-62, including SH 152/Airport Road, (southwest OKC to Newcastle) to better provide for future mobility needs due to ongoing commercial expansion.
- I-35 corridor assessment to address growth on I-35 from the Red River north to the Oklahoma River.

ODOT EIGHT-YEAR PLAN

The Chamber supports providing adequate annual dedicated funding necessary to preserve and implement the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's eight-year construction work plan. Furthermore, the Chamber will strongly oppose any effort to divert dedicated transportation funding to other areas of government.

HEARTLAND FLYER

The Chamber supports protecting and expanding passenger rail service as an important transportation option for both rural and urban Oklahomans. The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma congressional delegation, the Oklahoma state Legislature, ODOT, Amtrak, the City of Oklahoma City, Class 1 Railroads and the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) to oppose efforts to reduce or eliminate state or federal funding received by Oklahoma to operate the Heartland Flyer Amtrak service to Fort Worth, Texas. Moreover, the Chamber supports ongoing efforts by ODOT to negotiate with the State of Texas and Amtrak to ensure Amtrak can be maintained as the passenger rail carrier.

The Chamber is taking active steps with our partners to pursue the objective of extending the Heartland Flyer Amtrak service to Newton, Kansas, which would connect Oklahoma City to Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and other locations on the national Amtrak system. Furthermore, the Chamber supports the designation of the entire Heartland Flyer line (Fort Worth – Oklahoma City – Newton – National Network) as a national Amtrak route within the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Rail Administration's specific "Corridor Identification Program." This designation would serve to assist with the federal/state burden/cost-sharing and would strategically address a significant gap in the national Amtrak system.

OKLAHOMA RIVER BRIDGES

The Chamber supports construction of iconic bridges on Interstate 35 across the Oklahoma River. Replacing existing river bridges with landmark bridges would showcase Oklahoma City at the confluence of two major U.S. interstate highways (Interstates 35/40) and facilitate increased sporting events and tourism in the Horizons District, Boathouse District, the Chickasaw Nation's First Americans Museum/OKANA resort, as well as enhance connectivity across the river.

MASS TRANSIT/COMMUTER RAIL

The Chamber further supports efforts by the RTA, consisting of core central Oklahoma cities/population centers, to launch future regional transit services. The Chamber will work with the RTA, Oklahoma State Legislature, COTPA, municipal governments, ODOT and Class 1 railroads to conduct early-stage planning for introducing commuter rail service into downtown Oklahoma City from Norman and Edmond with potential alternative transportation options to Tinker AFB. Further planning consideration should be given to the potential future expansion of rail service to Will Rogers World Airport, with benefits for downtown access/convention center opportunities, and Yukon.



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The Chamber ultimately supports adequate funding for annual reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program, with the continuation of a responsible formula allocation to the states.

The Chamber will work with the Oklahoma congressional delegation and ODOT to secure a permanent funding solution for the Federal Highway Trust Fund (including mass transit programs).

The Chamber supports adequate funding levels to properly maintain the national transportation system.

FEDERAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Chamber supports continued funding for the following federal grant programs, including, but not limited to, BIP, MEGA, SMALL STARTS, NEW STARTS, INFRA, RAISE, bus, and bus facilities grants.

MIKE MONRONEY CENTER (FAA)/ASSOCIATED FEDERAL AGENCIES

The Chamber supports the continued viability of the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center as a strategically important national asset for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and further supports the continuation of its other essential federal government activities in the state.

NEW CHAMBER BOD (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Elected to new three-year terms on the board are Chris Fleming, Midtown Renaissance (A REHCO, LLC Company); Jim R. Gebhart, FACHE, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City; David R. Harlow, BancFirst Corporation; Christian Kanady, Echo Investment Capital, LLC; Ryan Kirk, JPMorganChase Bank, N.A.; Michael S. Laird, Crow & Dunlevy; Michael F. Lauderdale, McAfee & Taft; David J. Morgan, MidFirst Bank; Ford C. Price, Price Edwards & Company; Dr. Gary E. Raskob, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center; Tony J. Tyler, Tyler Media.

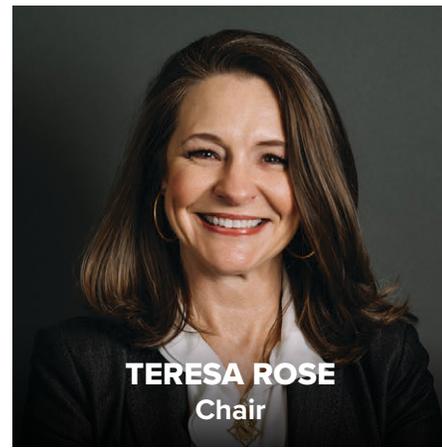
The following individuals were appointed to serve one-year terms on the board: Mark Beffort, Robinson Park; Dan Boren, The Chickasaw Nation; David Carpenter, American Fidelity Corporation; Jim Couch, JDC Consulting, LLC; Mohammad J. Farzaneh, Home Creations; Steve Hahn, AT&T Oklahoma; Nathaniel R. Harding, Cortado Ventures; Vincent Lombardo, Heartland; Rob McLaughlin, Square Deal Investments; and Tony N. Shinn, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

They will join returning members of the board: Sanford C. Coats, Esq., The Boeing Company; David F. Griffin, Griffin Media/NEWS 9; Mark A. Helm, Dolese Bros. Co.; Joe Hodges, SSM Health Oklahoma; Bradley W. Krieger, Arvest Bank; Richard Lofgren, MD, MPH, FACP, OU Health; Bonnie Lopez-Crowe, Cox Communications; Xavier Neira, Logatore, LLC; Harshil Patel, Champion Hotels & Development; Timothy T. Pehrson, INTEGRIS Health; Robert J. Ross, Inasmuch Foundation; William Schonacher, IBC Bank – Oklahoma; Richard Tanenbaum, Gardner Tanenbaum; Andrew S. Weyrich, Ph.D., Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation; and Gregory A. Wheeler, Bank of Oklahoma.

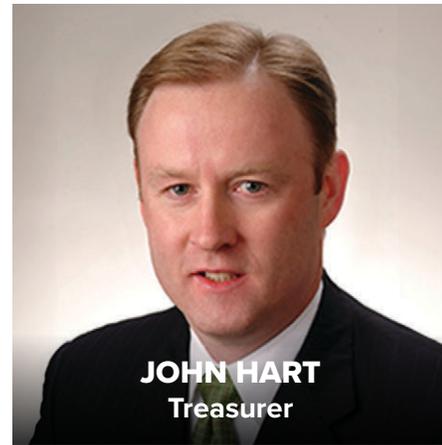
The past chairs and life members are Luke R. Corbett, Corbett Management; Peter Delaney, Tequesta Capital Partners; William E. Durrett, American Fidelity Assurance Company; Carl E. Edwards, Price Edwards & Company; Robert A. Funk, Express Employment Professionals; Gerald L. Gamble, Gerald L. Gamble Co.; Fred J. Hall, Hall Capital; V. Burns Hargis, Oklahoma State University/McAfee Taft Law; Dan Hogan, Dan Hogan Properties; Rhonda Hooper, Jordan Advertising; Stanley F. Hupfeld, FACHE, INTEGRIS Health; Percy

Kirk; Dave Lopez, DL Dynamics; Edmund O. Martin, Ackerman McQueen, Inc.; Frank A. McPherson; George Nigh; Lee Allan Smith, Oklahoma Events, LLC; and David L. Thompson, The Thompson Group, LLC.

Serving on the 2024 board as ex-officio members are Michelle Coppedge, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center – FAA; Secretary Tricia Everest, State of Oklahoma; Craig Freeman, City of Oklahoma City; Mayor David Holt, City of Oklahoma City; Commissioner Brian Maughan, Oklahoma County; and Superintendent Sean McDaniel, Oklahoma City Public Schools.



TERESA ROSE
Chair



JOHN HART
Treasurer



MICHAEL F. ROSS
Corporate Secretary

CHAMBER FORGES POWERFUL RETAIL PARTNERSHIPS AT ICSC NEW YORK

2024 is expected to be a big year for the retail industry. Robust brands want to expand brick-and-mortar stores, but space has been hard to find. That was the message of ICSC New York last month. More than 7,500 retail industry professionals attended the event including Tammy Fate, Greater OKC Chamber's director of retail development and recruitment.



The Chamber's Tammy Fate, center, poses with Monica Ann Wittrock of Oklahoma City's Pegasus Group during ICSC New York last month. On the right is Marcus Elwell, also from the Chamber. Photo courtesy of Monica Wittrock.

"ICSC is where a lot of connections start," said Fate. "It's an opportunity to reach out to developers and let them know about the assets available in the Oklahoma City market. We're also talking to potential tenants about Oklahoma City and why they need to be here."

Industry experts at the event seemed to agree on one thing: retail will remain robust for the foreseeable future.

"Retail is now the favorite asset class," Fate said. "COVID really showed that retail is part of the ecosystem, and retailers are investing more in the physical stores now versus online and doing everything possible to get consumers in the store. While we've seen some closings of big box stores here locally, we know similar retailers are absorbing that loss and that those storefronts won't be empty for long."

Retailers want to expand but suitable spaces are hard to find. According to the Retail Service Advisory, retail vacancies are at 4.8% - an all-time low. The tightening

market coupled with the high cost of new construction has some retailers rethinking their strategy. Some who typically build standalone stores are now considering second-generation space in existing properties. Fate wants to make sure developers know what Oklahoma City has to offer.

"Investors are looking for opportunities in growing markets like OKC," said Fate. "One of our key points in these discussions is the business-friendly climate that exists in OKC and our history of success."

Another hot topic at the event was the possibility of the U.S. Federal Reserve cutting interest rates three times this year. If that happens, retailers could be busy this summer.

"With lower interest rates and more capital available, more properties can be purchased," said Fate. "That allows retailers to find the space they need while also enabling retail landlords to redevelop their properties to make them more attractive to potential tenants."

Fate said she had several productive meetings during the event. She is also planning to attend ICSC Red River in Dallas Jan. 31 - Feb. 2. Fate is on the planning committee for that event and a past chair.



Traffic flows freely in this shot taken outside of the Javits Center in New York City in December 2023 where ICSC New York 2023 was held. More than 7,500 retail industry professionals attended the event, including some Chamber staff.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Businesses who join the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber are part of the largest coalition of businesses in the state and make the Chamber's work in the community possible. Each member level is identified on the listing below.

ADVISOR

Norman Public Schools

Schools - Public

Mr. Nicholas Migliorino.....(405) 366-5955
131 S. Flood Street
Norman, OK 73069-5463
www.normanpublicschools.org

VSC Fire and Security

Fire Protection Equipment / Supplies / Monitoring

Ms. Caroline Waldorf.....(804) 459-2230
4637 NW 3rd St.
P.O. Box 71207
Charlotte, NC 28272-1207
www.vscfire.com

CORE

DaBella LLC

Construction Companies

Mr. Eric Herndon.....(405) 212-4544
5909 NW Expressway, Suite G140
Oklahoma City, OK 73132-1318
www.dabella.us

Ramsay's Kitchen OKC

Restaurants

Ms. Katie Besozzi.....(860) 806-1078
1336 W. Memorial Road
6191 N. State Highway 161, Suite 300
Irving, TX 75038-2295
<https://www.gordonramsayrestaurants.com/en/us/ramseys-kitchen/locations/oklahoma-city>

SALY LLC

Real Estate

Ms. Carol Hefner.....(405) 348-9551
17927 N. Portland Ave.
Edmond, OK 73012-8960

T-Swirl Crepe

Restaurants

Mr. David Dang.....(405) 849-4807
13419 A. N. Pennsylvania Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73134-9002
<https://t-swirlcrepe.com/>

Deer Creek Crossings

Real Estate - Commercial

Ms. Carol Hefner.....(405) 348-9551
17927 N. Portland Ave.
Edmond, OK 73012-8960

Ranallo Cloud Group with Sage Sotheby's International Realty

Real Estate

Mrs. Stacia Ranallo.....(918) 671-6450
1047 NW 68th St.
8614 Glenwood Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73114-1223
ranallocloudgroup.com

Shelter Insurance Companies / Billy Doyal

Insurance

Mr. Billy Doyal.....(405) 721-3868
12101-B N. MacArthur Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73162-1800
www.shelterinsurance.com/billydoyal

Triple Threat Transit LLC

Transportation - Logistics

Mr. Ryan Dunning.....(620) 200-4573
9201 Shady Grove Road
Moore, OK 73160-9191

Mustang Creek Crossing

Real Estate - Commercial

Ms. Carol Hefner.....(405) 348-9551
17927 N. Portland Ave.
Edmond, OK 73012-8960

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

Neighborhood Services Organization, Inc.

Social Service Organizations

Ms. Stacey Ninness.....(405) 236-0452
431 SW 11th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73109-5613
www.nsookc.org

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.

ERO's Men's Health

13921 N. Meridian Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73134

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

OKLAHOMA RANKS NO. 5 FOR ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Oklahoma & Bordering State Economic Outlook Rank

OVERALL RANK	STATE	TOP MARGINAL CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE	TOP MARGINAL PERSONAL INCOME TAX RATE	PROPERTY TAX BURDEN (PER \$1,000 OF PERSONAL INCOME)	SALES TAX BURDEN (PER \$1,000 OF PERSONAL INCOME)	AVERAGE WORKERS' COMPENSATION COSTS (PER \$100 OF PAYROLL)
5	OKLAHOMA	4.00% RANK: 7	4.75% RANK: 15	\$17.73 RANK: 4	\$27.78 RANK: 39	\$1.41 RANK: 34
13	TEXAS	2.60% RANK: 5	0.00% RANK: 1	\$40.48 RANK: 43	\$26.90 RANK: 36	\$0.88 RANK: 9
25	COLORADO	4.55% RANK: 9	4.40% RANK: 14	\$30.64 RANK: 31	\$23.66 RANK: 29	\$0.93 RANK: 10
30	KANSAS	7.00% RANK: 28	5.70% RANK: 22	\$31.35 RANK: 33	\$27.63 RANK: 38	\$1.02 RANK: 16
31	MISSOURI	4.58% RANK: 10	5.95% RANK: 27	\$21.91 RANK: 11	\$22.88 RANK: 26	\$1.54 RANK: 38
38	NEW MEXICO	5.90% RANK: 19	5.90% RANK: 26	\$19.79 RANK: 8	\$47.25 RANK: 49	\$1.27 RANK: 24

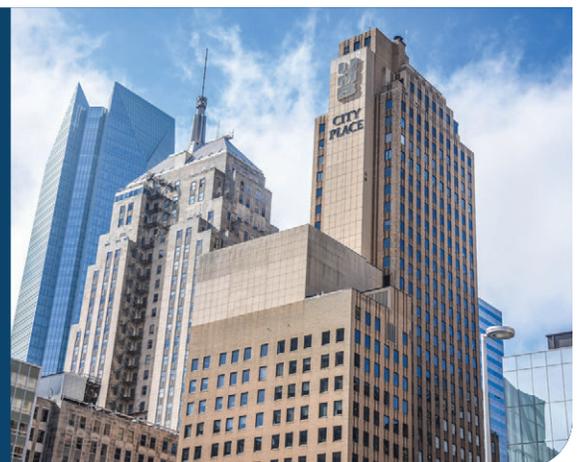
SOURCE: ALEC-LAFFER STATE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS INDEX, 2023. (1=BEST, 50=WORST).

- Oklahoma ranked No. 5 in the nation for best economic outlook.
- The Economic Outlook Ranking, analyzed by the American Legislative Exchange Council (Rich States, Poor States), is a forecast based on a states' current standing in 15 state policy variables.
- Each of these factors is influenced directly by state lawmakers through the legislative process.
- When ranked against bordering states (Texas, Colo., Kan., Mo., and N.M.) Oklahoma ranks favorably in several select categories.

For comprehensive Economic Indicator and Regional Data, please visit your Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Economic Development Division at www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators or contact Eric Long, Research Economist, at 405-297-8976; 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.



JANUARY 2024

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LOOK INSIDE!

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



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



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

2024 LEGISLATIVE KICKOFF

Thursday, Jan. 25 | 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Champion Convention Center
737 S. Meridian Ave.

