

THE CHAMBER REPORT

Q3 2022



PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY

TRIBAL NATIONS HAVE A CRITICAL IMPACT ON
NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA'S ECONOMY



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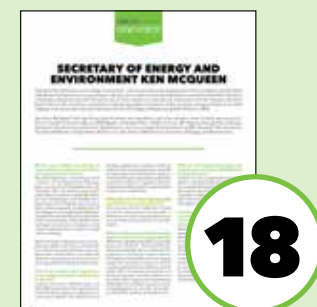
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HEAD TABLE

RECAPPING OUR RECENT ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, PROJECTS AND MORE

TULSA COALITION AWARDED \$38.2 MILLION GRANT

A Tulsa coalition was one of 21 winners of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge at an online event with President Joe Biden and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. The \$38.2 million grant will go towards establishing the Tulsa Regional Advanced Mobility (TRAM) Corridor, which will cultivate a diverse hub for research, development, and production in the advanced mobility industry. The regional effort, led by INCOG, included Tulsa Innovation Labs, Tulsa Ports, the City of Tulsa, PartnerTulsa, Oklahoma State University, Osage LLC, and the Tulsa Regional Chamber.

"The site development and other infrastructure improvements funded by this EDA grant will help our Tulsa's Future regional economic development partnership land even more of the large-scale business attraction projects we are working on," said Arthur Jackson, senior vice president of economic development for the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "This grant funding will also expand workforce training opportunities, spur technology growth and position our region as a leader in advanced mobility. On behalf of all of the Tulsa's Future regional and tribal partners, we applaud and thank everyone involved in securing this grant."



TULSA TO ADD IRONMAN 70.3 TRIATHLON IN 2023

IRONMAN announced a new IRONMAN® 70.3® triathlon will be added in Tulsa next year. The inaugural IRONMAN 70.3 Tulsa half-distance race will take place Sunday, May 21, in conjunction with the full-distance Certified Piedmontese Beef IRONMAN Tulsa triathlon. Tulsa was first selected as an IRONMAN host city in 2019, with the first IRONMAN Tulsa triathlon taking place in 2021.

"The addition of the IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon option in 2023 will make our event even more enticing to both locals and out-of-towners who want to experience the Tulsa course," said Renee McKenney, senior vice president of tourism for the Tulsa Regional Chamber and president of Tulsa Regional Tourism. "With the route showcasing Green Country from the serene Osage Hills to the bustling finish line in the heart of Tulsa, we are confident that athletes and spectators will have an experience they won't forget."

CONGRESSIONAL FORUMS FEATURE FEDERAL LEGISLATORS

The Tulsa Regional Chamber hosted U.S. Sen. James Lankford on Aug. 31 as part of its Congressional Forum series. The Congressional Forum is set up in such a way to provide opportunities for the business community to hear directly from members of the state's federal delegation. Senator Lankford shared an overview of national events, and his work on the Senate Finance, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Energy and Natural Resources, and Indian Affairs committees. The next installment of the Congressional Forum series will take place on Oct. 26 and will feature U.S. Rep. Stephanie Bice.



MEALS ON WHEELS OPENS NEW FACILITY

Meals on Wheels, a local non-profit, celebrated the opening of its brand-new Hardesty Service Center on Sept. 22. This new 25,000-square-foot facility with a state-of-the-art kitchen and volunteer training center will allow it to reach more people in need, such as the elderly and the homebound. With this new building, Meals on Wheels aims to deliver one million meals a year. That is three times the number of meals provided from the previous facility.

"This fabulous new facility will enable president and CEO Katie Oatsvall and the entire Meals on Wheels team to provide even more meals and services to those who need them most in our community," said Chamber President and CEO Mike Neal at the ribbon cutting event.



"TULSA KING" TRAILER DROPS

The Tulsa region continues to gain more visibility in the television and film industry with major productions such as "Reservation Dogs," "Killers of the Flower Moon," and now "Tulsa King" starring Sylvester Stallone. The trailer for "Tulsa King" shows Stallone playing a New York mafia capo released from prison and then sent to Tulsa to attempt to set up a criminal organization. Filming spots for the upcoming show included the Tulsa International Airport and the Center of the Universe. With familiar scenes of Tulsa and a thrilling American crime story, one might be keen to tune in for the show's Nov. 13 debut on Paramount+.





PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY

TRIBAL NATIONS HAVE A CRITICAL IMPACT ON NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA'S ECONOMY

by Taylor Lippitt, Senior Director of Communications for the Tulsa Regional Chamber

Native American tribes are central to Oklahoma's history, culture and economy. Tribal nations are responsible for generating new jobs, providing essential health care services, supporting education, bringing in tourism revenue and more for the state each year. Earlier this year, the Oklahoma Native Impact study was released to show the statewide economic contribution of the tribes, which totaled \$15.6 billion in 2019.

Of the 38 federally recognized tribes in the state, northeast Oklahoma is home to three of the largest and most influential tribal nations in the country—the Cherokee Nation, the Muscogee Nation and the Osage Nation. These tribal nations have long been integral partners to the Tulsa Regional Chamber and have made significant contributions to economic prosperity across the region.

While each of these nations support the region's vitality in a multitude of ways, the Cherokee, Muscogee and Osage Nations have been especially critical partners to the Chamber in three areas: economic development, pandemic relief and support, and tourism.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tulsa's Future is the Chamber-led regional economic development partnership, and these three tribal nations have been key participants in growing jobs, attracting new companies to the region and supporting a highly skilled workforce.

The Tulsa Regional Chamber works with the City of Tulsa, Tulsa County, more than 200 private investors, and regional and tribal partners to further economic prosperity in Tulsa and northeast Oklahoma. Tribal participation, from initial proposal to site selection to post-groundbreaking talent recruitment, has given the Tulsa region a competitive advantage among peer communities across the country.

Since the inception of Tulsa's Future in 2006, all three tribes have been instrumental in some of the region's most transformative economic development projects.

In 2013, Macy's announced it would build a \$180 million fulfillment center in north Tulsa County with 5,800 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees. A few years later, Greenheck Group, a Wisconsin-based manufacturer of air control equipment, broke ground on a manufacturing campus that includes two 100,000-square-foot-facilities.

The Muscogee and Cherokee Nations were two of 23 partners that worked to bring Sofidel's \$360 million, 1.8 million square foot production facility to Inola in 2018 – one of the largest-ever capital investments in northeast Oklahoma. That project was the most collaborative in Tulsa's Future history, and wouldn't have been possible without the support of the tribal nations.

Just one year later, Amazon announced a 2.5-million-square-foot fulfillment center in Tulsa near the Tulsa International Airport. Amazon has hired for 1,500 jobs, accounting for one of the largest single new-employer announcements in Tulsa's history.

In 2020, Tulsa was selected as a finalist for the Tesla Gigafactory—a project that involved a large number of partners across northeast Oklahoma, including all three of the tribal nations.

That project came at a critical time in our region's economic recovery from the pandemic and put the Tulsa region on the map in the electric vehicle (EV) space. Because of the increased publicity, entities saw the competitive edge the Tulsa region had due to tribal involvement in economic development.

"From workforce training to incentives, the support of our tribal nations sets northeast Oklahoma apart from other states and cities when competing for major economic development projects," says Arthur Jackson, senior vice president of economic development for the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "Tribal participa-

tion is essential to the success of Tulsa's Future, and because of their partnership, we've brought record-breaking investment to northeast Oklahoma over the last two decades."

New industry growth is critical to northeast Oklahoma's longevity, and tribal nations have been central partners in that effort. Cherokee Nation's support was vital in attracting electric vehicle manufacturer Canoo to MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor. Tony Aquila, CEO of Canoo, cited the Cherokee Nation's involvement as a key factor in Canoo's decision to locate in northeast Oklahoma.

Another opportunity for industry growth is in the advanced aerial mobility sector. Recently, a Tulsa coalition, including the Osage Nation, was selected as one of 21 winners of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge. The \$38.2 million grant will go toward establishing the Tulsa Regional Advanced Mobility (TRAM) Corridor, which will cultivate a diverse hub for research, development and production in the advanced mobility industry.

As a result of the tribal nations working with the Chamber to bring new companies and investment to the region, both tribal and nontribal citizens have benefited from enhanced economic opportunities and increased capital investment across northeast Oklahoma.

PANDEMIC RELIEF AND SUPPORT

The Cherokee, Osage and Muscogee Nations also played a critical role in supporting pandemic recovery for not only their citizens but for all of northeast Oklahoma.

The tribal nations were integral in the vaccine rollout across the state, quickly offering vaccines to all residents, regardless of tribal citizenship. They also held vaccination clinics across the region, helping fight the pandemic.



Throughout the pandemic, Oklahoma's tribal nations worked tirelessly to support their nations by providing access to health care, recovery funding, food, personal protective equipment and other supplies. Because of tribal efforts and leadership, residents were able to be vaccinated, stay healthy and get back to work safely and efficiently.

"The Cherokee, Muscogee and Osage Nations were central in getting northeast Oklahoma on a path toward post-pandemic recovery," says Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "Their efforts accelerated the region's recovery and allowed us to safely retain as many jobs and workers as possible."

Thanks to tribal support, the Chamber was able to utilize CARES Act funding to promote Tulsa as a safe place to visit and do business in an effort to support the struggling tourism industry and local businesses.

The Muscogee Nation also utilized CARES Act funding from Tulsa County to support its monoclonal antibody infusion center in Tulsa. This center helped treat COVID-19 patients and keep them hospitalized, further assisting local health systems and providers in the fight against COVID-19.

TOURISM

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the state, bringing in billions of dollars each year—and much of that investment is due to Native American tribes. According to the Native Impact Study, in 2019, 34% of all visits to Oklahoma gaming properties came from outside the state.

The Cherokee, Muscogee and Osage Nations are longstanding partners to Tulsa Regional Tourism, the accredited destination marketing organization housed at the Tulsa Regional Chamber. The tribes work with the Tulsa Regional Tourism team to showcase Tulsa as a world-class destination for arts, music and culture, and to bring events to the region.

Attracting conventions, sporting events and other groups to the region generates hotel room nights and significant tourism revenue. Last year, the Muscogee Nation recruited the Miss USA and Miss Teen USA pageants to take place at River Spirit Casino & Resorts, bringing in thousands of visitors to the Tulsa region.

"Indigenous peoples are an essential part of our nation's history and future, and Tulsa is a focal point in that story," says Renee McKenney, senior vice president of tourism for the Tulsa Regional Chamber and president of Tulsa Regional Tourism. "From a tourism perspective, strong partnerships with the tribal nations are absolutely critical, as they are a significant part of what makes our region a vibrant and diverse destination."

During the last several years, Tulsa's film industry has rapidly grown. Additionally, projects like Sterlin Harjo's "Reservation Dogs" and Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flowers Moon" have helped increase Native American representation in film. The Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture (Tulsa FMAC), housed at the Chamber, has been a driving force in promoting Tulsa as a cultural destination and growing the industry.

Cherokee Nation has also been instrumental in growing the film industry, and established the Cherokee Nation Film Office in 2019. The office was created to market the Cherokee Nation as a film destination and promote Native American filmmaking, and the office has regularly worked with Tulsa FMAC to leverage resources and talent.

The Cherokee, Muscogee and Osage Nations are an essential part of Oklahoma's past and future. The Tulsa Regional Chamber is grateful for their positive impacts on our economy—including their investments in economic development, pandemic relief and support, and tourism—and for ongoing tribal partnership in growing northeast Oklahoma's prosperity. ■



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MILE HIGH EXPECTATIONS

INTERCITY VISIT TO DENVER EXPLORES WORKFORCE, MENTAL HEALTH, REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND MORE

The Tulsa Regional Chamber recently completed its 2022 Intercity Visit, the thirteenth in an annual series of visits to peer cities to learn best practices and hear success stories. This year's destination was Denver, Colorado.

More than 100 attendees from across northeast Oklahoma – including Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum as well as other city and county elected officials, business leaders, regional partners, education administrators and young professionals – participated in the three-day event, which ran Oct. 3-5.

Previous Intercity Visits to cities such as Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Nashville and Fort Worth have featured in-depth looks at topics ranging from river development and tourism to health living initiatives and the arts. This year's trip to Denver covered a variety of topics, including visionary leadership, community investments, the changing nature of downtowns, college-educated workforce and business attraction, community building, mental health and homelessness, and regional collaboration.

"Through its renovation of the 16th Street Mall – as well many other projects – Denver demonstrates the power of collaborative effort," says Tom Biolchini, chair-elect of the Tulsa Regional Chamber and chairman of Vast Bank. Biolchini led the task force that selected Denver as this year's destination and served as host for the trip.

"Denver is clearly a city that is not afraid to think big and reimagine itself," Biolchini says. "From its airport to its sports stadiums to its public art, Denver invests in big-ticket projects that have the power to transform."

This year's trip featured dialogues with Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, Councilman Chris Hinds and Kourtny Garrett, president and CEO of the Downtown Denver Partnership, among many others. Attendees visited a number of marquee venues, including Empower Field at Mile High Stadium and the Colorado Convention Center.



Chamber Chair Kevin Gross, Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum, Councilman Chris Hinds and Kourtny Garrett, president and CEO of the Downtown Denver Partnership, Chamber President and CEO Mike Neal, and Chamber Chair-elect Tom Biolchini at Empower Field at Mile High Stadium during the opening night reception for the 2022 Intercity Visit to Denver.

In addition to hearing from business leaders and subject matter experts, Intercity Visits also afford attendees invaluable opportunities to build relationships with others from around northeast Oklahoma, and to have conversations that otherwise might not happen.

"These trips provide great opportunities to gather ideas and insights from cities overcoming challenges similar to our own," says Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "In many cases, these trips have inspired conversations that ultimately led to real change in Tulsa. Packages like Vision Tulsa and Improve Our Tulsa made actionable the possibilities identified on these trips." ■



Denver's iconic "Big Blue Bear" – a terrific example of public art – looks on as Intercity Visit attendees gather inside the Colorado Convention Center.



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BIG SUCCESSES

CHAMBER RECOGNIZES LOCAL BUSINESSES AT TULSA SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT & AWARDS

This September, hundreds gathered to celebrate the significant contributions of northeast Oklahoma's small business community during the Chamber's Tulsa Small Business Summit & Awards.

The annual event is hosted by the Tulsa Small Business Connection, a program of the Tulsa Regional Chamber that works to support the Chamber's small business offerings and advocate for small businesses across northeast Oklahoma.

As the Chamber's signature small business event, the summit convenes area businesses to build connections, learn key takeaways to grow their business and celebrate the local impact of small business.

"The Tulsa Small Business Connection works to elevate the voice of small business in northeast Oklahoma," said Frauke Petersen, CEO of LUXA Enterprises and chair of the Tulsa Small Business Connection. "It's an honor to bring together organizations large and small to spotlight the remarkable contributions of northeast Oklahoma's small businesses."

During the event, the Chamber handed out its Small Business Awards, which recognize Tulsa-area companies for their resilience, innovation and dedication to the local community. More than 75 local businesses were nominated this year. The nominees then went through an application process judged by chamber of commerce professionals from outside the region.

ANDOLINI'S WORLDWIDE

SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR: Mike Bausch, Andolini's Worldwide

Since opening the first Andolini's location in 2005, Mike Bausch, owner of Andolini's Worldwide, has grown the business to encompass eight brands across 13 locations in the Tulsa region. Today, Andolini's is one of the most well-known restaurant groups in the region.



RISING STAR AWARD: Rose Tax Solutions

Rose Tax Solutions is a full-service tax and accounting firm founded in 2017. Since opening in the historic Greenwood District, Rose Tax Solutions has grown its clientele base, revenue and services.



ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS AWARD: Arrowhead Consulting

Arrowhead Consulting offers consulting services in the areas of project management, leadership development, diversity, equity and inclusion, and more. The Arrowhead team has grown from one person to a team of 12 since opening in 2016 and continues to grow.



FAMILY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: Tedford Insurance

Tedford Insurance is a second-generation insurance company based in Jenks, with locations across northeast Oklahoma. Today, its team of 60 employees provide insurance-based solutions for clients that result in peace of mind and a measure of freedom.



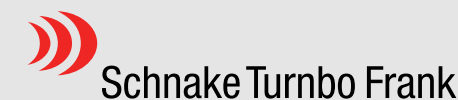
MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR: OGI Process Equipment

OGI Process Equipment designs, engineers and manufactures energy-efficient process heaters, and its products can be found across the world. OGI's company culture allows its team to efficiently and safely produce high-quality products.



DIVERSE SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION: NextGen Tax Services

NextGen Tax Services' mission is to create and educate the next generation of ultra-successful entrepreneurs. NextGen has an intentional focus on serving clients who may be under-estimated due to their gender, race, accessibility or economic upbringing.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Steve Turnbo, Schnake Turnbo Frank

Steve Turnbo, chairman emeritus at Schnake Turnbo Frank, has been leading professional in the public relations industry for decades. During his career, he has worked with a long list of corporations, government agencies, non-profit groups and executives across northeast Oklahoma, including serving as chair of the Tulsa Regional Chamber in 2006.

CRITICAL SUPPORT

"Small businesses account for the majority of jobs in our region, so supporting them is critical to our long-term success," said Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "From Black Wall Street to Route 66, small businesses are integral to northeast Oklahoma's economy, and we are proud to recognize the local businesses that are driving new ideas, job growth and regional prosperity."

In addition to the Small Business Awards presentation, the event included professional development and educational opportunities focused on the theme of leadership. Jeff Wilkie, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, principal at HoganTaylor, led a leadership development and relationship building session, and Jenn Donahue, Ph.D., owner of JL Donahue Engineering and retired U.S. Navy captain, delivered a keynote on being the leader employees need in today's market.

During her keynote, Jenn shared what characteristics employees look for in a leader, how to remain true to yourself and utilize your strengths, and when to take a step back and let employees lead. ■



TULSA SMALL BUSINESS CONNECTION

A recording of the Small Business Summit keynote and awards presentation is available on the Tulsa Regional Chamber's YouTube page.



TULSA WELCOMES NEW TOURISM LEADER RENEE MCKENNEY COMBINES INDUSTRY EXPERTISE WITH A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Following months of intense searching and candidate scrutiny, Tulsa finally has a new tourism leader.

But while Renee McKenney, CMP, may be new to her dual roles as senior vice president of tourism for the Tulsa Regional Chamber and president of Tulsa Regional Tourism, she is anything but a newcomer to the tourism game.

Quite the opposite, actually. McKenney is an industry veteran with more than three decades of experience in all aspects of tourism and destination marketing. In her new roles since August 8, she oversees all operations for Visit Tulsa, the Tulsa Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Tulsa Sports Commission, and the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture (FMAC).

"Tulsa clearly has a strong history of both vision and leadership," McKenney says,

"which has built a palpable sense of community and momentum for change and growth. I'm honored to engage my passion, my competitive spirit and my expertise across so many aspects of tourism to build upon this community's shared values and further push Tulsa's evolution as a destination for years to come."

HIGH STAKES HIRING

With tourism firmly positioned as our state's third largest industry, McKenney's hiring was no small matter.

According to a study conducted by the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department, tourism in Oklahoma has a \$7.1 billion direct impact on the state's economy and was responsible for bringing in 17 million visitors in 2020 alone.

The need to hire just the right person to lead Tulsa tourism was evident to all

concerned. A strategic hiring committee made up of local stakeholders entrusted the effort to SearchWide Global, an executive talent search firm that specializes in finding candidates to lead national and international tourism and travel efforts.

SearchWide did not disappoint, and nearly two dozen exceptionally strong candidates were identified and interviewed. In the end, however, McKenney distinguished herself from the rest of the field.

"Our search led us to Renee, who brings a wealth of industry knowledge, extensive experience and a fresh perspective to the region and business community," says Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber.

As Neal sees it, the numerous partnerships the Chamber already has in place

across our region will benefit from McKenney's arrival.

"We look forward to further collaborative efforts with - and increased economic prosperity for - the City of Tulsa, Tulsa County, our valued tribal partners and all of our northeast Oklahoma regional strategic partners across tourism, including attractions, hoteliers, venues and restaurateurs," Neal says.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Beyond a doubt, tourism is big business. As one of the Tulsa Regional Chamber's strategic initiatives, tourism is a major contributor to the long-term economic success of our region.

You need look no further than this past May for proof. Tulsa enjoyed its largest tourism month in history thanks to a diverse series of events that included the 2022 PGA Championship, the second edition of the IRONMAN Tulsa triathlon, the much-anticipated opening of the new Bob Dylan Center, the Breeder's Invitational and the state FFA convention.

A record-setting month like that generates lots of attention, but it also sets the bar that much higher for the future.

"As the second largest city in the state and an absolute powerhouse in tourism, Tulsa is poised to continue to grow its already sizable economic impact," says Oklahoma Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell.

The state's biggest tourism proponent, Pinnell sees McKenney's hiring as the next step forward for Tulsa.

"This is such a fantastic announcement for a city and a community with an already unrivaled momentum," Pinnell says. "I'm personally excited to see what Renee - and Tulsa - do next for one of the state's strongest economic drivers."

HISTORY OF SUCCESS

McKenney has tremendous experience to draw upon as she helps chart the future of tourism in our region. She arrives in the Tulsa market as an accomplished industry leader with 33 years of experience spread across an impressive array of verticals in hospitality, including meeting planning, sports events, hotels, resorts, airlines, cruises, even theme parks.

"We're thrilled to see such a vital role for our community filled by a truly seasoned industry professional with a track record of success," says Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum. "This is a win for Tulsa Regional Tourism,

"Tulsa clearly has a strong history of both vision and leadership," McKenney says, "which has built a palpable sense of community and momentum for change and growth."

for our Chamber, for the City of Tulsa - and most importantly, for our community."

According to Bynum, the impact of the Tulsa Regional Tourism team can be felt by everyone in the region.

"This is a team that positively impacts the economy of every Tulsan," he says, "and through Renee's leadership, this team can continue to build upon our existing Tulsa momentum."

Serving as president for Tulsa Regional Tourism means McKenney will inherit the existing event relationships and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded programming that fuels Tulsa County efforts and goals as well.

"Renee's addition to Tulsa Regional Tourism is warmly welcomed," says Tulsa

County Commission Chair Karen Keith. "We're excited to see what that excellent team does under her leadership, building upon our current efforts and wins."

Keith anticipates a future defined by growing collaboration.

"From even more world-class events hosted at Expo Square to continued successes through Tulsa County ARPA-funded programs in marketing, film and music, we're looking forward to a remarkable future of collaboration," Keith says.

SMART INVESTMENT

In addition to her industry knowledge, McKenney has extensive experience with highly regarded global organizations, empowering her to compare what Tulsa is doing operationally to what Tulsa should be doing.



McKenney's passion for innovation is only matched by her desire for service, which led to her pioneering the creation of the entire experience department at VisitDallas and ultimately becoming the first CXO (Chief Experience Officer) in the nation for the hotel and destination space.

"If you haven't taken notice of tourism before, you should really take notice now," says Kirk Hays, board chair for Tulsa Regional Tourism and president and CEO of Arvest Bank in Tulsa. "Our Tulsa Regional Tourism team, which already collaborates heavily across the community and contributes to our economy, just got a powerhouse at the helm."

Hays is confident McKenney is a great fit for her new role, and for Tulsa.

"Renee's profound experience and appetite for innovation fits Tulsa's ambition and focus on the future perfectly," Hays says.

McKenney will be asked to chart the future of Tulsa tourism by drawing upon an array of past experiences, including roles with Sunseeker Resorts-Allegiant Airlines, Disney Destinations of The Walt Disney World Company, HelmsBriscoe, and Southwest Airlines, as well as multiple 1,200-plus room hotels and resorts.

Tulsa Regional Chamber Chair Kevin Gross has seen firsthand how involved the work of tourism truly is.

"I've had a chance to work directly with the Tulsa Regional Tourism team and witness how they live and breathe professional events, sports, film, music, and leisure travel for Tulsa," says Gross, president and CEO of Hillcrest HealthCare System.

"Equipping them with a strong, tenured and strategic leader in Renee," Gross adds, "I'm confident the Chamber has made a very smart investment for the region's prosperity." ■



"Our Tulsa Regional Tourism team, which already collaborates heavily across the community and contributes to our economy, just got a powerhouse at the helm," says Kirk Hays, board chair for Tulsa Regional Tourism and president and CEO of Arvest Bank in Tulsa.

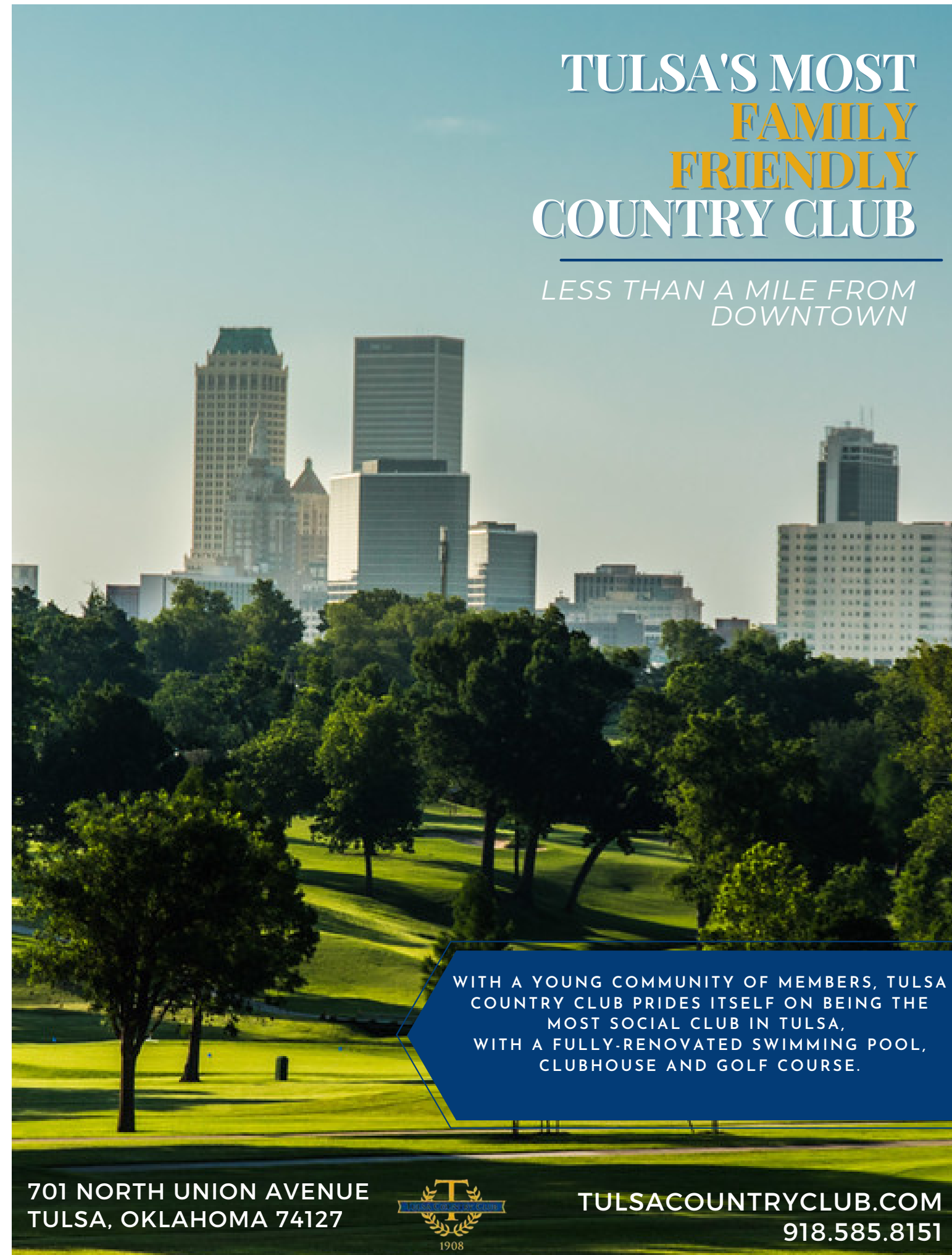


Chamber Chair-elect Tom Biolchini, Chamber President and CEO Mike Neal, Tulsa Regional Tourism President Renee McKenney, Chamber Chair Kevin Gross, and Tulsa Regional Tourism Chair Kirk Hays gather during a welcome reception for Renee at Philbrook Museum of Art.



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SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT KEN MCQUEEN

Secretary Ken McQueen is an energy, environment, and natural resources professional in the southwest United States with 40 years of experience in government, industry, and academia. Secretary McQueen received his Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Tulsa, where he continues his involvement on their Industry Advisory Board. He has also served as a petroleum engineering adjunct professor at the university and guest lecturer at other colleges and universities. He was inducted into the TU College of Engineering Hall of Fame in 2018.

Secretary McQueen held significant governmental and regulatory roles post-industry; most recently serving as U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 Administrator in Dallas and U.S. EPA National Energy Policy Advisor, being the first and only native-born Oklahoman to serve as a regional administrator at EPA. Governor Stitt appointed Secretary McQueen in September 2022 to serve the State of Oklahoma as Secretary of Energy and Environment.

What is your number one priority in your first year as Oklahoma's Secretary of Energy and Environment?

My immediate focus is working to land a portion of the Department of Energy grant money for the development of a hydrogen hub. The recently passed federal infrastructure bill provides \$8 million for hub development, and Oklahoma is teaming up with Arkansas and Louisiana with a robust proposal. A related part of this strategy is securing federal delegation from EPA for the UIC Class VI program for carbon sequestration. Some of the current hydrogen production strategies need carbon sequestration to reduce overall carbon intensity.

Beyond energy, making sure we can supply clean water to all of our communities is an important goal. We have some underserved communities in our state that deserve our guidance and resources in securing safe and reliable drinking water.

How do you expect your experience as an energy executive will help you in this role?

Industry works at a different pace and with different priorities than government. I have worked to apply my experience in economic viability, risk tolerance, and

decision agility from industry to both my previous and current government roles. My industry interaction with federal, state and local permitting and regulatory authorities provided insight into opportunities for productivity enhancement in government operations and practices.

What measures of success will you grade yourself on as you enter this role?

Our success will be reflected in both economic development and growth in Oklahoma as well as improvement of our environment and protections of public health.

What is Oklahoma's greatest strength when it comes to our energy economy?

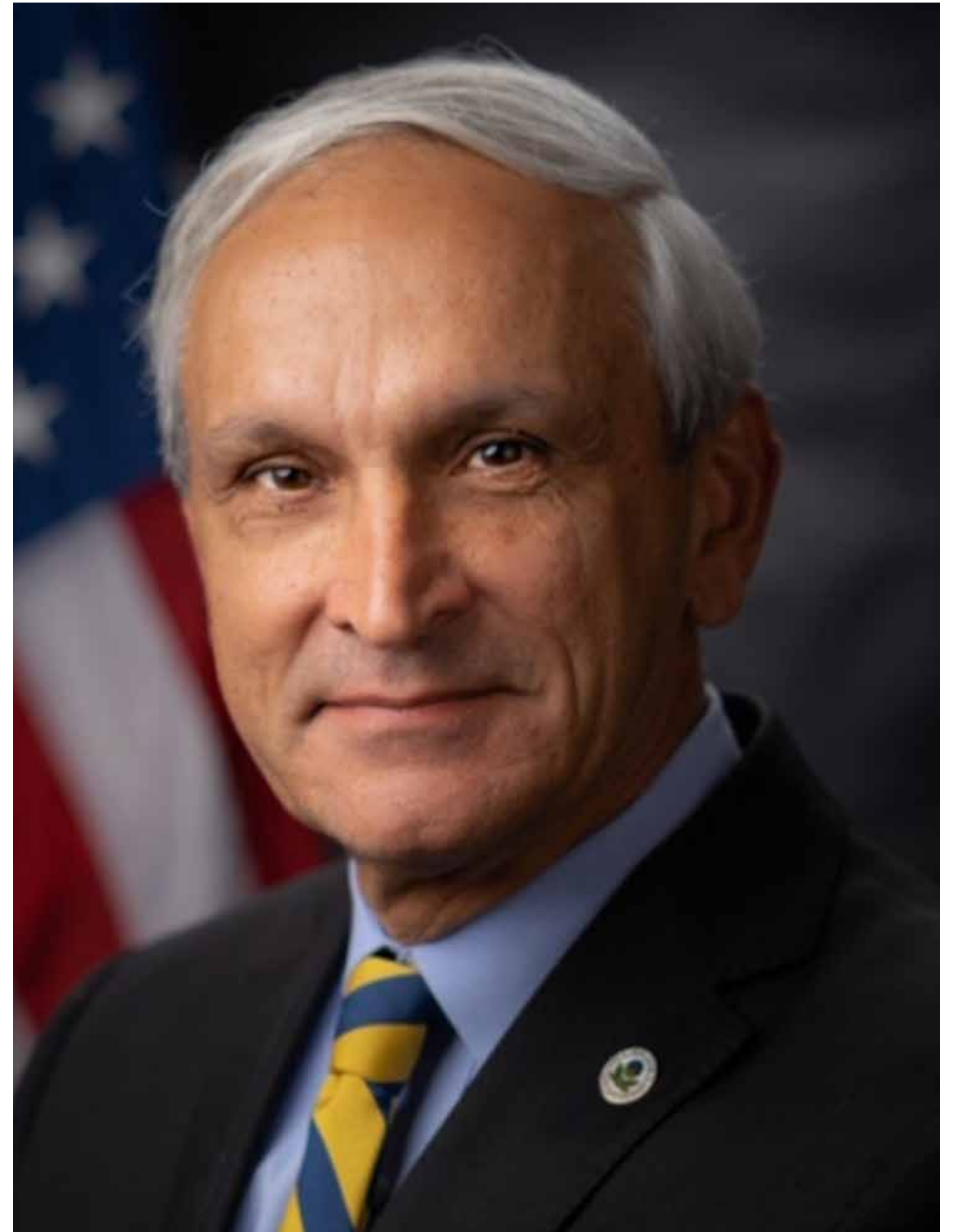
Oklahoma's greatest strength is our energy economy's diversity. The recent Russia-Ukraine hostilities have underlined the importance of energy independence. We need to completely meet our energy needs from domestic sources as well as provide assistance to our allies across the globe. With increasing population and economic growth, we must embrace an all-of-the-above approach to developing affordable and reliable energy sources, including hydro, oil and gas, wind, photovoltaic (PV), nuclear, and geothermal.

What are the long-term changes you expect to see coming to the Oklahoma energy economy?

I expect to see a significant growth of electric vehicle (EV) deployment. This will drive associated grid improvements and generation capacity. I also expect to see a greater market penetration of renewable electricity along with the need to strengthen our grid resiliency.

How do you balance the need to develop our natural resources efficiently while adhering to reasonable sustainability concerns?

There has been and will continue to be an evolution of fuel sources used by humans. We are in the midst of a significant change in our energy portfolio as efforts to decarbonize gain increased public acceptance. Oil and natural gas have been a cornerstone of our energy security for the last century, but these are finite resources and sooner or later will be depleted. It's time to be proactive in exploring all avenues for energy security as we move forward, balancing the need for affordability and environmental responsibility. ■





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WHO WE ARE

Actionable steps to make diverse, equitable and inclusive integral to who we are

In advance of Hispanic Heritage month, which began on September 15, representatives from the Tulsa Regional Chamber met with several Hispanic / Latino business ecosystem leaders to discuss collaboration and partnership. Recognizing the massive changes our community has seen post-pandemic, the two entities came together to discuss jobs, collaborative partnerships and how to build trust with one another.

"This was very needed," said Jessica Lozano - Alvarez, board chair of the Tulsa Latin America Chamber. "We appreciate (the Tulsa Regional Chamber) bringing us all together to have this dialogue."

Among the many community needs discussed, jobs and job training were the most heavily emphasized. Tulsa is seeing an unprecedented number of companies relocating here and expanding locally. However, a number of individuals worry that those in the Hispanic / Latino community will be unable to take advantage of this growth.

"Training programs are important, and I don't believe we have enough people participating in the programs at TCC (Tulsa Community College) or Tulsa Tech," said Francisco Trevino of Vega and Trevino consultants.

The group also stressed the need for companies to have a consistent presence in their community. The business leaders shared that companies will often come in and participate in or fund an event, but once the event is over, there won't be any other touch points. Building those relationships, the group agreed, is the natural first step if

there is to be sustainable progress in growing a thriving Hispanic / Latino community. The Tulsa Regional Chamber hopes to be a catalyst in supporting this effort.

"We needed to hear from these leaders to better understand our role in supporting growth in this area," said Jonathan Long, vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion for the Chamber. "We hope this conversation is the first of many opportunities for us to support community growth and leadership development in this ecosystem." ■





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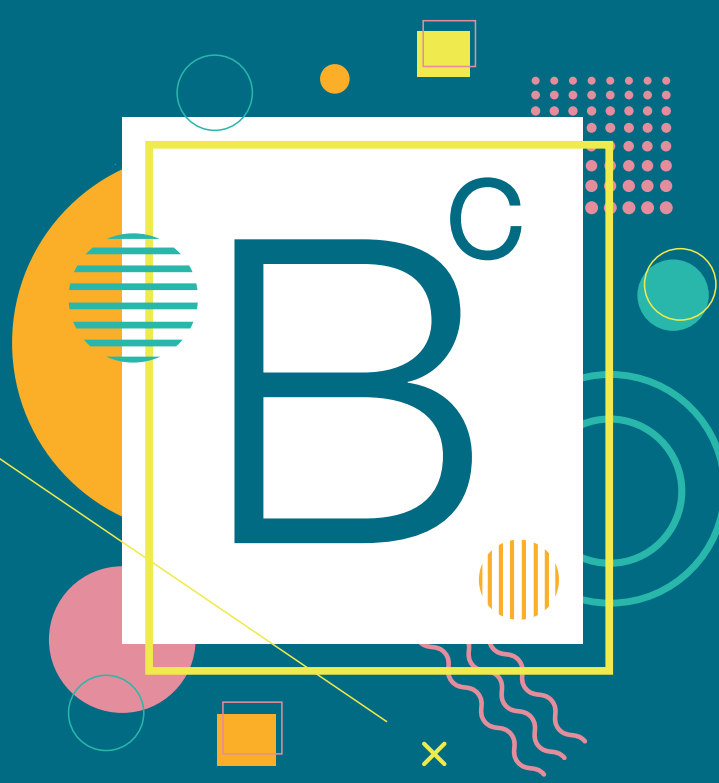
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SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



ANDOLINI'S WORLDWIDE

Andolini's Worldwide is a local restaurant group founded 17 years ago that has grown to encompass eight concepts across 13 locations and a food truck. Mike Bausch, owner of Andolini's Worldwide, was recently named the Tulsa Small Business Person of the Year during the Chamber's Tulsa Small Business Summit and Awards. We spoke with Mike to learn more about him and his business.

What is the biggest lesson you've learned about owning a business?

Cutting corners causes more problems than it solves. Making sure things are impressive and unique is the only way for a new small business to survive and thrive.

How has your business evolved over the last two decades?

We have seen a lot of change. We've created new sites, concepts, and streamlined processes to make all locations run as smoothly as possible. I think with any growth, there are growing pains. Still, we have had enough practice at it to understand the nuances of any new concept or location. Our goal is to employ as many people as possible while enhancing the Tulsa metro.

What makes northeast Oklahoma a special place to operate a business?

Northeast Oklahoma is incredibly supportive of entrepreneurs and small business owners. I am from a military family, so we grew up living all over the country. I've called Tulsa home longer than I have anywhere else. The community, the support, the resources the City of Tulsa and Chamber offer, and the hunger for a quality food scene have all created this perfect soil to establish our roots and grow.

You've invested in regional neighborhoods such as Cherry Street, Broken Arrow's Rose District, Jenks Riverwalk, and more. How does it feel to be part of those areas' growth and resurgence during the last ten years?

Seeing these suburbs take on new life and decide which direction they want to go is fantastic. Each of these communities is unique, filled with incredible people and lovers of good food. It has taught me that we are all more alike than we think. It has been great to be a part of bringing people together for food, drink, and conversation for 17 years now, and to watch these communities thrive again.

The food and hospitality industry has had a difficult few years. How do you maintain morale among your staff?

Our employees are Andolini's. Each location is a team, and the Andolini's Worldwide umbrella is a result of multiple leaders executing on a high level. We have incredible staff who are loyal and who want to see Andolini's Worldwide continue to grow and thrive as much as my brother and I do. Great morale is the product of people who care. Also, it's infectious when people are excited about where they work. Never losing that is always at the front of our minds.

What does it mean to be named the 2022 Small Business Person of the Year?

It is a tremendous honor and privilege. We have failed and won at many things since we started this whole restaurant thing. Using those failures as lessons and never having an ego about something not working has been the key to our growth. I recognize the Small Business Person of the Year award was not just for me. The community support, staff and customers who show up daily have allowed this to occur. Thank you again to the Chamber for this award. I am genuinely grateful for all they do. ■

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