

THE

TULSA REGIONAL CHAMBER

CHAMBER REPORT

Q1 2023



LIGHTS, CAMERA... ACTION!

2023 CHAMBER CHAIR TOM BIOLCHINI SAYS TULSA IS READY FOR ITS CLOSE-UP



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HEAD TABLE

RECAPPING OUR RECENT ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, PROJECTS AND MORE



Photo Courtesy - Austin Chamber

INTERCITY VISIT HEADED TO AUSTIN

Each year, the Tulsa Regional Chamber hosts an Intercity Visit to a peer city to hear best practices. This year's Intercity Visit – taking place October 2-4 – will be in Austin, the state capital of Texas. Austin is known for its vibrant music, food, and arts scenes. Home to several universities and technology companies, Austin is sometimes referred to as the “Silicon Hills” due to its growing tech industry. This year's Intercity Visit will offer many great learning opportunities in economic development, community building, education, workforce, visionary leadership, and more. Be sure to save the dates now, and more information will be available soon.



TULSA NOW SEEN AS MAJOR SPORTS DESTINATION

2022 was a record-breaking year for Tulsa, and 2023 may be even bigger thanks to multiple major sporting events – including the NCAA Wrestling Championships, BMX Racing National Championships, U.S. Club Soccer National Cup Regionals, the USA Gymnastics Championships, and the IRONMAN triathlon. All of these sporting events are expected to bring major economic impact with them according to Joel Koester, director of sports sales for the Tulsa Sports Commission. “We’ve really kind of developed Tulsa into a major destination,” he says. “I was just at a conference and people were saying Tulsa is a top 40 sports destination now.”

BAUSCH NAMED OKLAHOMA SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mike Bausch, owner of Tulsa-based Andolini's Pizzeria, on being named the Oklahoma Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Since its founding in 2004, Andolini's has grown to five pizzerias, two gelaterias, two food hall concepts, a food truck, and a fine dining restaurant, Prossimo. “No matter how you slice it, Mike Bausch is a supreme small businessman,” said Oklahoma SBA acting District Director Fernanda Pedraza-Schmitt. “This company really delivers when it comes to topping our small business menu.” Bausch was previously named the Tulsa Small Business Person of the Year during the Chamber's Tulsa Small Business Summit and Awards last September. Three other Summit honorees were also recognized at the state level: Kris Reynolds of Arrowhead Consulting earned the Entrepreneurial Success Award; Stacey Schmidt of OGI Process Equipment was named Manufacturer of the Year; and Mark Tedford's Tedford Insurance was honored as the Family-Owned Business of the Year.



TECH COMPANY ANNOUNCES HQ MOVE TO TULSA



Laundris, a B2B Enterprise Industrial Automation software platform, recently announced its headquarters relocation from Austin to Tulsa. Laundris provides physical to digital transformation of inventory lifecycle for properties (hospitality, health care, short term rentals), production facilities, and supply chain vendors. The company plans to invest \$3 million in operations in conjunction with its move to Tulsa. Laundris will be located at 36 Degrees North, a popular base camp for entrepreneurs, innovators, and startups. “The geographic location of Tulsa and the resources provided give Laundris a strategic advantage as we scale throughout the United States and globally,” says Laundris CEO Don Ward. “We look forward to participating in – and growing – the city's tech ecosystem and community.”

TULSA RANKED ON LIST OF BEST PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK AS A MOVIEMAKER

Tulsa is ranked number 19 on Moviemaker Magazine's “2023 Best Places to Live and Work as a Moviemaker” list. This ranking comes at a time of significant growth in the number of television and film productions in northeastern Oklahoma. Tulsa ranked 5th in the magazine's “top small cities and towns” list last year, but qualified for the big cities list for the first time in 2023. “We are thrilled to see Tulsa now not only move up to the big cities list, but also beat out much larger metro areas like Dallas and Orlando that have typically been positioned higher on this list,” says Meg Gould, executive director of the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts, and Culture (Tulsa FMAC).





LIGHTS, CAMERA...ACTION!
2023 CHAMBER CHAIR TOM BIOLCHINI SAYS TULSA IS READY FOR ITS CLOSE-UP



Tom Biolchini may be a banker, but he has the soul of an artist.

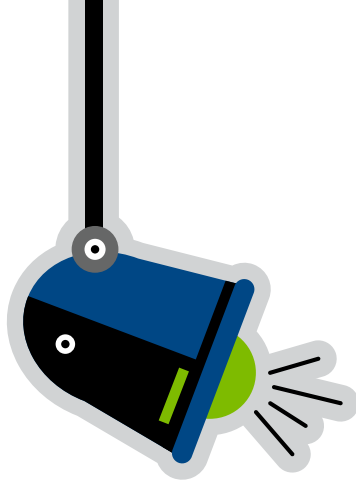
"When I was a chunky fourth grader, I had a dream to become a special effects artist for horror movies," confesses Biolchini, the chairman of Vast Bank and 2023 chair of the Tulsa Regional Chamber, before a crowd of 1,100 at the Chamber's 2023 Annual Meeting in January.

"I did not want to be in the movies," Biolchini says. "I wanted to create the props used in the movies. So, I had a large collection of horror props, such as masks, parts of mannequins, gruesome heads, severed limbs. I actually used to create these horror artifacts using latex, fake blood, clay and spray paint....all in my bedroom."

Fast forward to today. Biolchini has channeled his love of filmmaking into a new passion: collecting screen-used movie props, including a whip wielded by Indiana Jones, the almanac from "Back to the Future," and Ivan Drago's boots from "Rocky IV." And those props finally led him to make his own film.

"My interest in movie props prompted me to start a Tulsa-based film company named "Mad Props," explains Biolchini. "With the help of a native Tulsa director - Juan Reinoso - I have been working on a documentary about screen-used movie props since last June. The idea, the original script and the producers of the film originated right here in Tulsa. We have now filmed in six states and four countries."

All of this creative activity - and especially Biolchini's work on his own documentary - has had him thinking about the work of the Chamber in movie terms. As a result, he shares his thoughts on the year ahead in terms of "lights, camera...and action!"



LIGHTS...

"Lights enable you to focus attention on the most important parts of a scene," says Biolchini. "In the same way, we as a region must illuminate both our challenges and our opportunities in order to understand and address them."

From Biolchini's perspective, challenges and opportunities exist side-by-side in the areas of education and workforce.

"Our challenges here primarily relate to access and readiness," he says. "Put simply, students can't be what they can't see. And if they can't see an opportunity, how can they be expected to successfully pursue it? If we hope to provide the skilled and qualified talent our regional employers need, we have to ensure our students understand what's possible and are adequately supported in their journeys."

Biolchini also points to the often-overlapping issues of homelessness, mental illness and lack of affordable housing as areas in need of additional illumination. Though much is already being done, he acknowledges that more is needed.

"Organizations like the Downtown Tulsa Partnership, Housing Solutions, the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless, and A Way Home for Tulsa are doing great work," he says. "The \$500 million initiative recently announced by Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum at the Chamber's State of the City event will be a game changer."

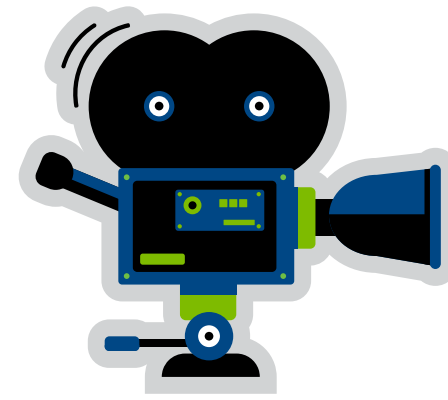
As part of the mayor's initiative, the City of Tulsa has formed a Housing, Homelessness and Mental Health Task Force, and Biolchini was recently appointed as a member. At Annual Meeting, Biolchini also calls attention to another area for additional illumination: diversity, equity and inclusion.

"Thanks to the work of many across our region - including my Chamber chair predecessors - we have made great strides in making this a priority for our city," Biolchini says. "A lot of Tulsans are working together to address issues of equity, inclusion and belonging. For example, ACT Tulsa is a joint venture between i2E and ACT House. This six-month, cohort-driven accelerator program is aimed at cultivating and driving innovation of Black and Latino technology startups in Tulsa."



Biolchini also believes we must continue to leverage incentives to retain and attract businesses to our region.

"There are many reasons why it is good to do business in northeast Oklahoma," he emphasizes. "But we, as a region, need more tools to recruit businesses. These can include tax incentives, a more robust and competitive Quick Action Closing Fund, and other creative ways to quickly incentivize businesses to come to Tulsa. With the help of our state legislature, we have made progress. But we can't stop looking for unique, creative ways to strengthen our position."



CAMERA...

"When the camera rolls, we want the world to see northeast Oklahoma as a thriving region with incredible assets," Biolchini says. "We have much to tout. The number one reason businesses outside of our state are interested in northeast Oklahoma is because they perceive us as a region that is investing in itself in the form of visionary projects. When the camera rolls, let's show that we are community that invests in itself and will continue to do so in the future."

Biolchini sees attractions such as Gathering Place, the BOK Center, Guthrie Green and The Woody Guthrie Center as examples of how our region has invested in itself - and is still doing so.

"In 2022 we added the Bob Dylan Center, and the USA BMX headquarters," he says. "We again hosted IRONMAN and the PGA Championship - which, by the way - generated 1.2 billion dollars' worth of national and international media coverage for our city during last May alone. We have lots of coming attractions as well. The new Arkansas River pedestrian bridge will be amazing. And soon we will have water in the river."

Biolchini cites other "coming attractions" as well, including the new and improved Gilcrease Museum, which boasts the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of art of the American West. The Turkey Mountain Master Plan trail renovations will create even more outdoor recreation opportunities. All this in a region with three ice-free inland river ports and the participation of three tribal nations in economic development.

"Tulsa is also very business-friendly," says Biolchini. "The cost of living is low, the cost to run a business - especially the cost of electricity - is low, the local and state government is 'pro-growth,' and the commute and traffic is minimal compared to other cities. We have substantially lower lease rates than most of the United States. We also have some of the nicest and most welcoming and down to earth people in the country - and this matters and is something we should be proud of. In movie terms, 'Tulsa is ready for its close-up.'"

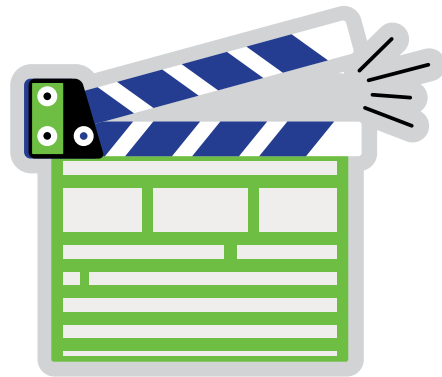
There's no denying that the Tulsa region has an innovative, diverse and tech-forward economy with real talent. In 2022, a Tulsa coalition secured one of 21

grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge. The \$38.2 million grant will go toward establishing a diverse hub for research, development and production in the advanced mobility industry.

Biolchini goes on to point out that the site development and other infrastructure improvements funded by this grant will help the Tulsa's Future regional economic development partnership land even more of large-scale business attraction projects. The funding will also expand workforce training opportunities, spur technology growth and position our region as a leader in advanced mobility.

"Collaboration was key in securing the EDA grant, and that is so typical of our philanthropic community," Biolchini observes. "In the movie business, typecasting means a performer gets closely identified with a particular type of role - like a doctor, or a grouchy uncle - because they play it so often and so well. Thanks to the generosity of entities such as the Zarrow Family Foundations, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, and the George Kaiser Family Foundation, in many minds Tulsa is being typecast as one of the most philanthropic communities in the nation. This typecasting makes me so very proud to be a part of Tulsa. Being typecast as generous and collaborative can only be a good thing for our region."





...ACTION!

As Biolchini sees it, the worst mistake we can make - as individuals or as a region - is to become complacent.

"Classic films are well remembered," he says, "but there's always an emphasis on the coming attractions. We will never be finished improving Tulsa and northeast Oklahoma. We must keep investing, every chance we get. We must also think about what types of investments will yield the biggest returns. I'm going to follow Mayor Bynum's lead and suggest that we invest in fewer but larger projects. Rather than spread our resources across dozens of projects, we should focus on a small handful of projects with true 'blockbuster' potential."

Biolchini firmly believes that the key is to think big, and he is a big proponent of a convention center hotel of a scale that will allow Tulsa to attract conferences and events that currently go to other cities.

"At one point, our family owned a media company headquartered in Tulsa that held conferences all over the world and proudly called Tulsa its home for 82 years," Biolchini recalls. "As a director of the company, I advocated for holding conferences in Tulsa, only to find out that Tulsa did not have the size of hotels or conference areas that we required. A local Tulsa company unable to do business in its own backyard because Tulsa was not ready. Let's work together to fix that."

Biolchini also believes the Tulsa region must continue to act on the interconnected issues of education and workforce.

"This year, the Chamber must work with area employers more closely on finding solutions for growing the talent pipeline, especially for the hardest-to-fill roles," he says. "As the Chamber convenes stakeholders and partners throughout the year, the workforce team will provide a quarterly overview of the training discussions, key takeaways and emerging trends in this area."

Biolchini also encourages the community to act quickly on the issue of homelessness and affordable housing.

"Let's gather our resources, address this problem head on and let the rest of the nation use us as a



2023 Chamber Chair Tom Biolchini (left) accepts the chair's gavel from 2022 Chair Kevin Gross during Annual Meeting.

'screenplay' going forward," he says. "Thank you again to the City of Tulsa for its leadership on this issue. We must also continue to bolster tourism. We can and should advocate for state legislation to increase the cap on the Oklahoma Tourism Promotion Revolving Fund, which is a state marketing fund to attract visitors. Let's eliminate any reason why a producer of any film would choose another location over our region. We should explore building an official, nationally recognized sound stage that houses its own grip, electric, and camera rental houses - something grand - and complementary to the Cherokee Film Studios."

Biolchini is quick to point out that, even as our region seeks to diversify its economy through ventures such as film and television production, support for foundational, legacy industries will never falter.

"Even as we seek ways to diversify our economy, we will continue to support those industries that have been the backbone of our community, including oil and gas, aerospace, health care, manufacturing and other long-standing local businesses in and around our region," he says. "We are proud and grateful that these industries use northeast Oklahoma as a home to support jobs and economic activity."

DIRECTING THE FUTURE

As Biolchini concludes his Annual Meeting address, he stresses again his belief that the combination of "lights, camera and action" on the part of all Tulsans will continue to make our region a star attraction for business and tourism.

"The true leader of every film is the director," he says. "Directors create the vision and path to a successful film. A director inspires and directs hundreds of people, from the film crew to the actors to the designers to the editors - all in hopes of creating an enduring masterpiece. No matter your actual title, you are a leader. You influence by meeting the needs of those you lead, educating, inspiring and ultimately serving our community."

Biolchini hopes that, by serving and sacrificing, every Tulsan can make not only the business, political and socio-economic environment thrive, but we can all, together, make Tulsa an incredible place to live.

"We can create an environment our children will want to come back to, not just to be with us or because it is familiar - but because there is true opportunity in Tulsa compared to every other community in the United States," he says. "We create the experience that is Tulsa - by dreaming, by innovating, by building, by taking chances, by refusing to settle for second place, by treating each other with respect, by working hard, by supporting each other, by caring for each other, and by loving one another. Others will see what we have created and will be moved by it. In some cases, they will simply be impressed. In other cases, they will decide to relocate their business, conference, sporting event or home to our region. Together, let us build this community of energy, talent, inclusion, love and respect, and welcome those who are lucky enough to want to join us." ■

PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Also at Annual Meeting, awards were presented to the Chamber's most outstanding partners during 2022:

- **Economic Development Partner of the Year:** David Stewart & MidAmerica Industrial Park
- **Regional Tourism Partner of the Year:** Commissioner Karen Keith & Tulsa County Commission
- **Government Affairs Partner of the Year:** House Pro Tempore Kyle Hilbert
- **Community Development Partner of the Year:** Adam Doverspike
- **Resource Development Partner of the Year:** Frauke Petersen
- **Regional Partner of the Year:** Rich Brierre, Indian Nations Council of Governments
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Steve Turnbo



(Left to right) Kevin Gross, Steve Turnbo, Frauke Petersen, Adam Doverspike, County Commissioner Karen Keith, Rep. Kyle Hilbert, David Stewart, Rich Brierre and Mike Neal

"In addition to recognizing and thanking the Chamber's many members and partners who work tirelessly each and every day to move our region forward, Annual Meeting also helps preview the year ahead," says Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "And we have much to look forward to in 2023! From job creation and capital investment to tourism growth and community development, the outlook for our region is exceedingly bright."



A *Visit* WITH REGIONAL TOURISM

QUARTERLY INSIGHTS FROM THE FOUR PILLARS

Each day, the community consciously (and subconsciously) serves as host to a vast and wide array of guests, some experiencing Tulsa for the very first time. These important patrons are of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities; some travel in from an hour out and others trek from across the globe. And while they are each here for distinct reasons and referred to by various monikers including; convention attendees, sports fans, film scouts, producers, vacationers, tourists, travelers, and of course, visitors, all of them share some key common denominators.

- Their opinions of experiences here matter and are lasting.
- Their direct contribution to our economy is massive.
- The active pursuit of them alone indirectly creates value and opportunity enjoyed by our community.

This is tourism, Oklahoma's third largest industry. We hope this brief quarterly "visit" with Tulsa Regional Tourism, an initiative of the Tulsa Regional Chamber, will spotlight some of our unique, successful, and upcoming activities in motion in this sometimes hidden-in-plain-sight industry – and how it all affects your business and quality of life.



FUN FACT: Tulsa's tourism industry generated \$92 million in state and local taxes in 2021 with over \$1.2 billion in direct visitor spending. This extended an annual tax savings of \$550 to each Tulsa household and supported close to 14,700 local jobs.

VISIT TULSA - LEISURE TRAVEL

Starting with the most accessible and straightforward pillar, Visit Tulsa is the voice of travel recommendation for the region. It solicits the value proposition of spending time (and money) in Tulsa to potential travelers deciding where to secure their vacation, booked travelers as they are curating an itinerary for an upcoming trip, and current travelers simply seeking ideas for how to spend free time in the evenings in the region. Whether the catalyst for travel was a business trip, a convention, a concert, an art exhibit, a film or television production, or a sporting event, visittulsa.com serves as a powerful resource for information and inspiration to make the most of a stay. While all four of the Tulsa Regional Tourism pillars attract audiences to the region, it is Visit Tulsa that swoops in to maximize an individual's spending and stay.

So, how does Visit Tulsa "sell" to audiences? As imagined, it is through a creative mix of

advertising in key regional, state, and national travel publications, digital marketing campaigns to key drive-in and select fly-in markets, and support destination collateral. Each piece of the mix aims to funnel audiences to a robust visittulsa.com, which features hundreds of attractions, restaurants, bars, parks, events and more. The destination collateral mentioned includes citywide and downtown maps, dining guides, attraction guides and the timely seasonal official visitor guide. The 40+ page visitor guide is designed to front load the reader with immediate actionable ideas and events while in town followed by strong evergreen offerings that make Tulsa unique. It is accessible statewide at all nine of TravelOK's travel stops, the Tulsa International Airport, high-traffic hotels, attractions, and the all-new Visit Tulsa Visitor Center located within Gambill's in the Shops at Mother Road Market. Online, the highly visited travelok.com also has the seasonal guide available for mailing upon request.




SHOULD YOUR COMPANY BE ON VISITTULSA.COM?

The answer to that can be found if any of the following are also 'yes' ...

- Does your company provide a good or service someone on vacation or in town on business for just a few days would most likely use?
- Is your company a restaurant, bar, attraction, or hotel?
- Is your company a retail store that does not sell only large purchases like appliances, furniture, automobiles, etc.?
- Is your company a service that can assist with exhibiting at trade shows and conventions?

If yes, but you are not sure if your company already has a free, update-at-anytime business listing?

- 1) Go to visittulsa.com and do a search for your company name.
- 2) Check with your internal team.
- 3) Email Patti Krausert at pattikrausert@visittulsa.com.

If yes, but you need to create a listing? Go to visittulsa.com/partnership.





COMING UP FOR THE TULSA CVB

Tulsa is a premier equine destination hosting 14+ of the largest horse events in the nation. Equine season just kicked off in early March with the Oklahoma Reining Horse Association's 2023 Oklahoma Ride & Slide Show and Derby. What follows is a one-after-another procession of massive equine events in and out of Tulsa, give or take a few days until Thanksgiving. That is quite a stable of world-class activations and economic impact for eight solid months from team at Expo Square and the Tulsa CVB.

TULSA CVB - MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

"Tourism is the front door to economic development" says Oklahoma Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell.

Think about this statement for a minute and then apply it to the following scenario. An event organizer of a large national industry convention or association meeting brings thousands of working professionals including CEOs and top leadership to Tulsa to learn, network and do business each day of the event. As each day of their programming ends, these individuals experience our city through dining, bars, breweries, museums, baseball games, soccer matches, local live music and more. Although here for business reasons, each of those individuals is being sold on our region's quality of life. And for those mentioned CEOs and top leadership, the quality of life their employees would receive if they chose to move operations in northeast Oklahoma.

Tourism is the front door, and the next pillar, the CVB, is the welcome mat—an incredibly large welcome mat. Your CVB actively sells the region to similar event organizers every single day by spotlighting venue spaces, hotel rates and availability, flight paths, attractions, and dining options. They aggressively compete with other destinations during each bid process to ensure this impactful event traffic flows into the community as evenly and consistently as possible.

To learn more about the Tulsa Convention & Visitor Bureau go to visittulsa.com/cvb.

TULSA SPORTS - PRO & AMATEUR

Recent host to the World Breaking Classic, USA Taekwondo's first-ever co-located US Team Trial and US Pan American Games Qualifier Team Trials, and the Major League Fishing REDCREST. The current host to the 2023 NCAA Division I and BIG 12 Wrestling Championships, the Black Wall Street Diamond Classic HBCU doubleheader, the IRONMAN triathlon, and the 2023 USA Gymnastics Championship. Upcoming host to the 2024 Bassmaster Classic.

Home to the only golf course to ever host five PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) Championships, Southern Hills Country Club. Home to the all-new USA BMX headquarters.

With that kind of roster, Tulsa is no doubt a diverse sports destination, and it is making some of the biggest plays in its history.

The city boasts incredible venue space with the BOK Center, Cox Business Convention Center, ONEOK Field, Hardesty National BMX Stadium,



COMING UP FOR TULSA SPORTS

As if the sports momentum for Tulsa couldn't ramp up to a higher degree, the Tulsa Oilers and WeStreet Credit Union jointly announced in early March 2023 that the all-new WeStreet Ice Center will open in late 2023. The mammoth two-story, 140,000 square-foot facility will be a true state-of-the-art ice center will serve as the practice facility and offices for the Tulsa Oilers ice hockey team and will be open to the public for skating, youth sports tournaments and exhibitions. The addition of this massive ice center will provide opportunities previously unavailable at this scale in Tulsa, including figure skating, youth ice hockey, broomball, and curling. Adding ice seems to only heat things up more for Tulsa sports.



Mohawk Sports Complex, and coming in late 2023, the WeStreet Ice Center. Year-round, it serves as base of operations for the Tulsa Drillers, FC Tulsa, the Tulsa Oilers (hockey), Tulsa Oilers Football (arena football) and some highly revered college sports teams, including basketball and football.

Similar to the Tulsa CVB, the next pillar, Tulsa Sports Commission team takes this uniquely-Tulsa sports destination narrative and delivers it to hundreds of sporting event organizers, athletics programs, and governing bodies through direct and indirect marketing tactics throughout the year. The large events listed in the first paragraph of this section wouldn't be present without the Tulsa Sports Commission.

To learn more about the Tulsa Sports Commission, go to visittulsa.com/sports.

TULSA FMAC - FILM & MUSIC

The Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture (FMAC) exists to highlight and sell Tulsa as a

film and television destination, support the region's creative industries enabling skill refinement and job creation, and broadcast the value and quality of life as a working creative in Tulsa externally.

The dedicated FMAC supports selling Tulsa as a film and television destination by maintaining full film commission accreditation with the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), showcasing the region's film locations, local production talent and funding when/where applicable, and providing assistance with permitting, lodging and scouting. Last fiscal, Tulsa FMAC assisted 28 film and television productions from July 2021 through June 2022. In 2023, Tulsa has now laid claim to big city status on MovieMaker magazine's "Best Places to Live and Work," coming in at number 19. The destination had already moved up to being number five on the "Small Towns and Cities" in 2022 from the number seven spot the previous year.

Skill refinement and job creation are both crucial to fostering and keeping talent in town. In 2022, Tulsa FMAC teamed with the Oklahoma Film & TV Academy (OFTA) put Tulsa County American Rescue Plan Act funding to use off-setting the cost for 100 students to attend "Set Ready" courses. This four-day course, spread across two weekends, is geared toward aspiring filmmakers to allow them to step onto a film set with confidence, feeling fully prepared and ready to work as a production assistant in any department. In the same year, Tulsa FMAC re-launched the Tulsa County American Rescue Plan Act funded Play Tulsa Music program which fueled more than 1,600 live music events across 40+ local venues and for the first time ever, enabled 30 local artists to pursue non-live creative projects utilizing 26 different Tulsa-based vendors. Projects included two live recordings involving concert footage and in-studio recording footage; one short documentary; three professional photography sessions; six branding projects; 11 albums; 6 EPs; and 14 music videos.

To learn more about Tulsa Film, Music, Arts & Culture go to tulsafmac.com. ■



TULSA FMAC ON THE ROAD

As Tulsa FMAC continues to invest and showcase talent and locations in town, they are diligently partnering with adjacent partners to celebrate wins outside of Tulsa, including support of "Fancy Dance" alongside the Cherokee Nation Film Office as they were honored as an official screening in the dramatic competition at Sundance Film Festival in January 2023. Just two months later at SXSW 2023, the Tulsa FMAC team fully curated the entire Tulsa-based live music program for the Tulsa House overseen by Tulsa For You & Me, an engine for cultural, social, and economic progress which includes Tulsa Remote, Holberton Tulsa, InTulsa and more. With more than 10,000 RSVPs and making it onto Forbes' "The Ultimate SXSW 2023 Guide: Hottest Panels, Parties and Popups" the week of the event, the perception shift for Tulsa's unique mentality on creativity and workforce importance received a massive play.

We've Moved...

HALL ESTILL

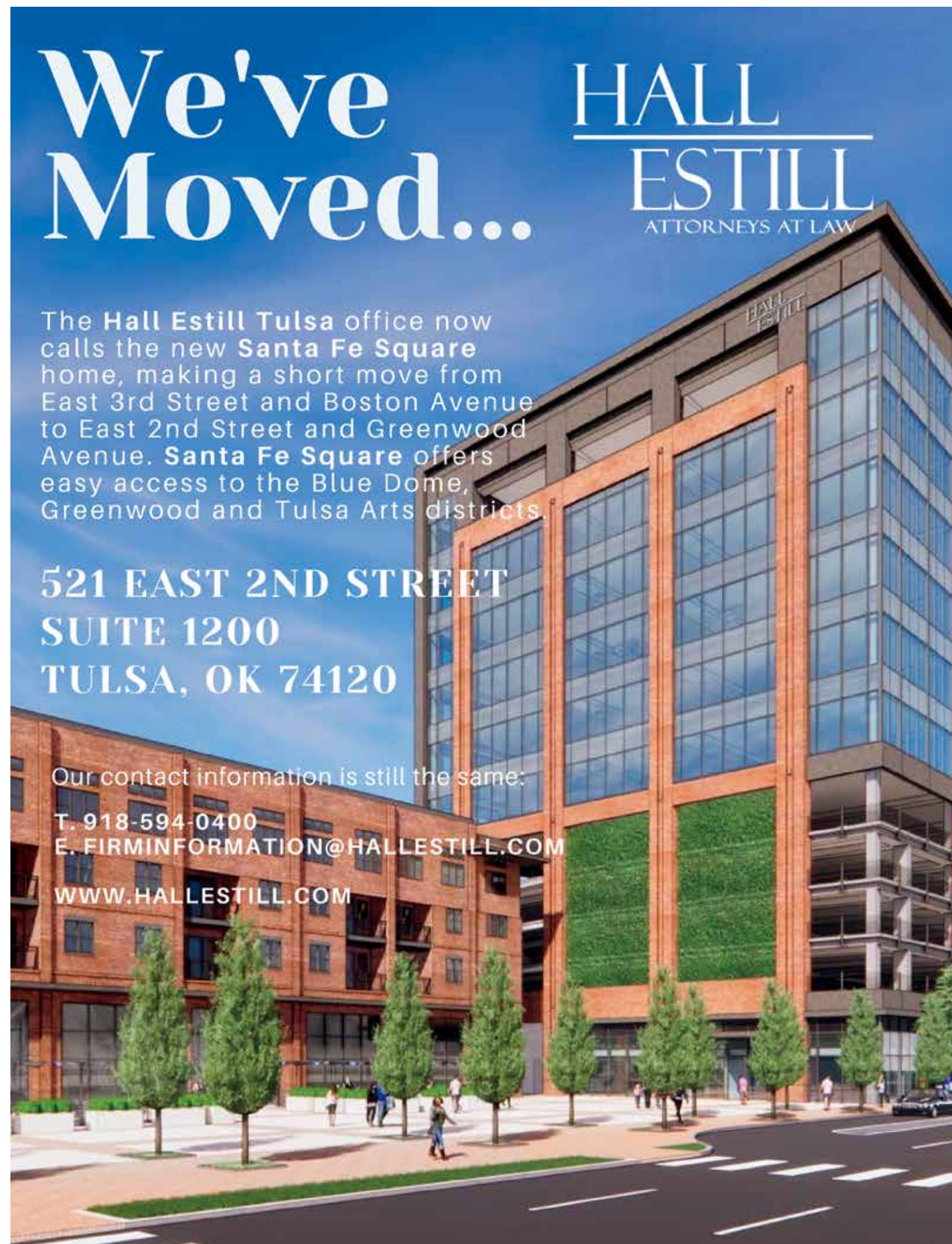
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

The Hall Estill Tulsa office now calls the new **Santa Fe Square** home, making a short move from East 3rd Street and Boston Avenue to East 2nd Street and Greenwood Avenue. **Santa Fe Square** offers easy access to the Blue Dome, Greenwood and Tulsa Arts districts.

**521 EAST 2ND STREET
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TULSA, OK 74120**

Our contact information is still the same:

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AEROSPACE COUNCIL TAKES FLIGHT

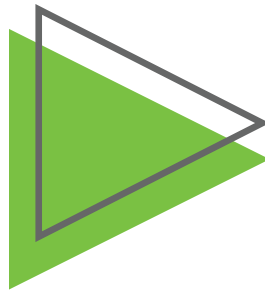
Industry leaders gather for networking, sharing of best practices

The aviation and aerospace industry has long been foundational to the northeast Oklahoma economy. As part of its ongoing support for the industry, the Tulsa Regional Chamber launched its Aerospace Council in 2020.

Aerospace Council meetings are open to aerospace employers in the Tulsa region. Council meetings provide a forum to share best practices within the aerospace and defense industry, and to provide networking opportunities for industry professionals.

"The Council meets quarterly at aerospace companies and educational facilities in the Tulsa region," says Brien Thorstenberg, vice president of economic development for the Tulsa Regional Chamber.





East Central's aerospace program offers students the opportunity to build career-ready skills and even earn industry certifications.

Bailey J. Siegfried is a vice president at the Tulsa-headquartered global aerospace company NORDAM, and chair of the Aerospace Council.

"The East Central aerospace program has the potential to change students' lives as it introduces aerospace technology as an attainable and lucrative career path," Siegfried says. "That's great for our students and for our community, and it benefits local aerospace companies by creating a diverse pipeline of interested and qualified future candidates, right here in Tulsa."

The four-course elective program at East Central covers the general knowledge and skill required for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mechanic certification. Students are required to take one elective career tech class each year of high school to complete the program.

To develop the program, Tulsa Public Schools partnered with Choose Aerospace, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) partnership of aerospace stakeholders - including the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission (OAC) - seeking to increase the availability of a diverse, qualified technical workforce.

The Chamber's Aerospace Council began hosting tours at local aerospace companies for East Central High School students in March, and these tours will continue through the remainder of the school year. Participating companies include Lufthansa Technik Component Services, BizJet International, American Airlines, Spirit AeroSystems and the NORDAM Group. Representatives from various aerospace companies are also scheduled to visit East Central to talk to students about opportunities in the industry. ■

"The major focus of the council in 2023 is to implement a workforce initiative to expand the labor pool and to educate the region on the opportunities for careers in the highly skilled, well-paying aerospace industry," Thorstenberg says.

A great example of a program seeking to expand the aerospace talent pool can be found at Tulsa's East Central High School, which offers students its own aerospace program.

"The need for more qualified aerospace workers is one of the biggest threats to continued growth of the industry," says Thorstenberg. "The Chamber's Aerospace Council keenly understands this threat and sees 'gateway' programs like the one at East Central as a means to address it by increasing the number of prospective future aerospace workers."

At a gathering in early February, the Tulsa Regional Chamber's Aerospace Council showcased the aerospace program at East Central and the work of more than two dozen ninth grade aerospace students.

East Central's aerospace program launched in the fall of 2022 as a partnership between Tulsa Public Schools and Choose Aerospace.

"The major focus of the council in 2023 is to implement a workforce initiative to expand the labor pool and to educate the region on the opportunities for careers in the highly skilled, well-paying aerospace industry," says Brien Thorstenberg, vice president of economic development for the Tulsa Regional Chamber.



For more information about the Aerospace Council, contact Brien Thorstenberg at 918.560.0231 or brienthorstenberg@tulsachamber.com.

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U.S. REP. JOSH BRECHEEN

U.S. Rep. Josh Brecheen represents Oklahoma's 2nd congressional district. Prior to his time in Congress, he owned and operated a small excavation and trucking business. From 2004 to 2010, Rep. Brecheen worked for U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn as a field representative, working directly with Oklahoma constituents and evaluating federal programs for waste and inefficiencies. He served as an Oklahoma state senator from 2010 to 2018 before being elected to Congress in 2022.

Rep. Brecheen is a graduate of Oklahoma State University, where he earned a dual degree in agriculture. He served the Oklahoma Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association as state president in 1999 and later worked seasonally for the national FFA organization as an Advanced Leadership Development (ALD) Conference presenter.

Rep. Brecheen grew up in the professional cutting horse industry and in his youth was a two-time national qualifier for the National Cutting Horse Association Eastern Championship show. After college, Rep. Brecheen started training cutting horse futurity prospects as a "non pro" and has been raising quality cow horses for more than 20 years.

As a member of Congress, Rep. Brecheen is focused on reining in debt and deficit spending, which he is convinced is undermining our national security.

What is your number one goal for your first term in office?

To be part of turning our nation away from a fiscal cliff, knowing economic security is national security. We are \$31.5 trillion in debt. Every man, woman, and newborn child in America now owes \$94,000 as their share of that national debt. Runaway spending has led to crippling inflation that took \$7,000 on average out of the pocket of every Oklahoma family in 2022, due to devaluation of the dollar. Our level of spending is unsustainable. In just seven years what the federal government will spend on annual debt service (interest payments on our national debt only) will match what we spend to defend our nation (entire defense budget) with both categories reaching one trillion per year. To inform Oklahomans about the size of our financial problem, we are hosting in-person town halls throughout Oklahoma's 2nd District and gathering input on where to prioritize to change our trajectory.

Workforce shortages have become a growing problem for Oklahoma businesses. What can be done on the federal level to help solve this issue?

We must restore the value of work ethic in America, knowing the best program for an escape from poverty is a good job. We need to reform social programs to include modifying eligibility and work requirements (work requirements have been undermined during this current administration). Welfare reform in the mid 90's to include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was widely successful, and we need to apply those successes to the able-bodied populations within the Medicaid, food stamp (SNAP), and other means tested programs.

You serve on the House Budget Committee. What is that committee working on that most impacts Oklahomans?

Reining in our spending. A lot of the inflation crisis can be attributed to the explosion in government spending we have seen over the last few years. In 1983, our national debt was 1.4 trillion dollars. Only forty years later, that is the exact amount we will overspend in just one year for 2024 (\$1.4 trillion deficit), according to the Congressional Budget Office. The House Budget Committee will be working hard to help get our spending in check so we can try and get American back on a path to prosperity.

You recently visited the southern border of the United States as part of your work on the House Committee on Homeland Security. Tell us about how that trip will influence your work on that committee.

It is a humanitarian crisis. More illegals have come into the U.S. in the last two years than the entire population of the state of Oklahoma (4 million). I saw approximately 30 pregnant women held in limbo at a processing facility (each waiting to give birth) encouraged to come to our country in greater numbers than

ever before. We witnessed illegals crossing hundreds of yards just past where the border wall construction was stopped. We saw a drug bust at the border and laid eyes on the perimeter of a school on the border that remains on daily lockdown. And this is all costing American taxpayers more than just the staffing at the border. Just the contract manager processing facility we visited in El Paso (housing less than 1,000 people) cost the American people \$68 million for just the first four months of this fiscal year and there are nine such facilities along the border. The El Paso facility alone costs \$17 million a month or \$204 million per year.

One issue you have been very vocal about is the national debt. What makes this issue so important to you?

My wife and I have (in addition to our other kiddos) an 18-month-old at home who came to us later in life. Knowing her standard of living will be reduced significantly because we are robbing her generation of prosperity is a key motivator. What I and others who had the privilege of working for Tom Coburn learned about this subject many years ago, I know I am accountable for. His warning of a debt bomb so many years ago is quickly upon us, and we can either confront and cut spending on lesser priorities or our children will pay the price for our selfishness.

Congress is split, with neither Republicans nor Democrats in complete control. What issues do you expect a bipartisan consensus to be able to form on?

I would like to think that both Republicans and Democrats will have a true awakening about our national debt. The debt crisis was caused by both Republicans and Democrats, so it is up to both parties to save America from financial ruin. ■



TULSA SUPPLIER DIVERSITY ALLIANCE

The Tulsa Supplier Diversity Alliance - an initiative of the Tulsa Regional Chamber's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts - brings together supply chain and other purchasing professionals to collectively align around priorities and strategies that will increase diverse vendor networks and usage. The Alliance champions minority vendor competitiveness and equips companies with the knowledge and tools they need to be more successful in winning contracts.

Companies large and small can join the Alliance to gain access to collaborative networking and matchmaking opportunities, roundtable discussions with subject matter experts, and promotional endeavors for the region's ecosystem of diverse vendors. The Alliance also shares best practices and advocates for inclusive policies that support minority business growth and opportunities.

"To create a thriving, inclusive business community, we need supply chain strategies that align with our region's DEI goals," says Jonathan Long, vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion for the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "The Tulsa Supplier Diversity Alliance is the first step in creating the kind of competitive environment that will fuel Tulsa's growth."

In February, leadership from the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) visited Tulsa to learn more about what we are doing to help scale minority enterprises. Leadership from the NMSDC connected with representatives from the Tulsa Supplier Diversity Alliance to discuss best practices and growing trends in supplier diversity.

For more information or to join the Alliance, visit tulsachamber.com/supplierdiversityalliance. ■



mosaic

Mosaic is the Tulsa Regional Chamber's coalition of companies and nonprofit partners that celebrate diversity, champion equity and cultivate inclusion within the regional business community. The coalition helps educate, lead and influence businesses on creating diverse workforces and inclusive workplaces to enhance their competitive advantage.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- Mosaic Monthly Meeting - April 18, 2023
- Mosaic Monthly Meeting - May 16, 2023
- State of Inclusion - June 1, 2023



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SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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Choosing the right software for your business can make or break your capacity to succeed. By prioritizing people over profit, Software Selection Advisors delivers solutions that solve problems, empower people, and provide leadership with the insight and key metrics needed to assess the health of their business and make informed decisions. We spoke with SSA President Basil Malik to learn more about him and his business.

What is something unique about you or your business that your customers, clients or community may not know?

About me: I moved a lot as a kid. I went to 13 different schools before I graduated high school, and I've embedded the strengths developed from that of resilience, empathy, and adaptability into my strategic approach to helping customers.

About my business: We are more than a software selection firm. In fact, we prioritize people over software. Our motto of "people first" ensures that we put people at the center of each solution we create. Whether it's implementing a scalable system for sales, identifying seamless marketing, or solving many other challenges companies experience with growth - our people-centric model ensures each solution creates the most comprehensive, empowering, and enabling outcome for employees, employers, and our team. By collaborating with our customers to create systems and processes that align with

their culture, we're able to build sustainable solutions that scale over time with the organization.

What makes the Tulsa region a special place? What do you most enjoy about owning or operating a business here?

Hands down - the people. The diversity, the genuine sense of community, and overall pride in one's city. It's amazing to see how the community comes together to support one another, uplift local businesses, and overall finds ways of thriving collectively. It's truly something special. I love the fact that I have the ability to be a part of that community on more than one level as an individual and as a business owner.

What's your outlook for your business, as well as for the Tulsa region? What hopes do you have for the future?

I'm truly excited! Seeing the extensive economic growth of Tulsa over the last decade has been such a testament to the

effort and energy invested locally. Renovation projects are sticking, areas that were in shambles have been transformed into something special, and the general energy amongst Tulsans feels tangibly different in the best way possible. I've seen more than one attempt to breathe new life into the city, but the latest rally feels like a genuine revival. It's inspiring, and my only hope is to take a more direct way of contributing to the momentum created by so many. ■

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT SPONSOR



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT RETURNS APRIL 11

The Tulsa Regional Chamber is again partnering with Leadership Tulsa and Exceptional Leaders Lab for the Women's Leadership Summit, taking place on April 11 at the Cox Business Convention Center. The full-day summit is about inspiring, building and celebrating women leaders in the Tulsa region. Last year's summit - the third year of the event - drew 400 attendees and was the Chamber's first year to be a partner.

Keynote speakers at this event will include Erika Lucas, founder of StitchCrew, an organization connecting women and BIPOC entrepreneurs with the capital, resources and networks they need to launch and scale companies. Tracy Spears, founder of Exceptional Leaders Lab, which supports the development of leaders and their organizations, and Carlisha Williams Bradley, founder of Women Empowering Nations (WEN), a nonprofit devoted to the educational and leadership development of girls, will also headline the summit. ■

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To inquire about a sponsorship, please email membership@tulsachamber.com.

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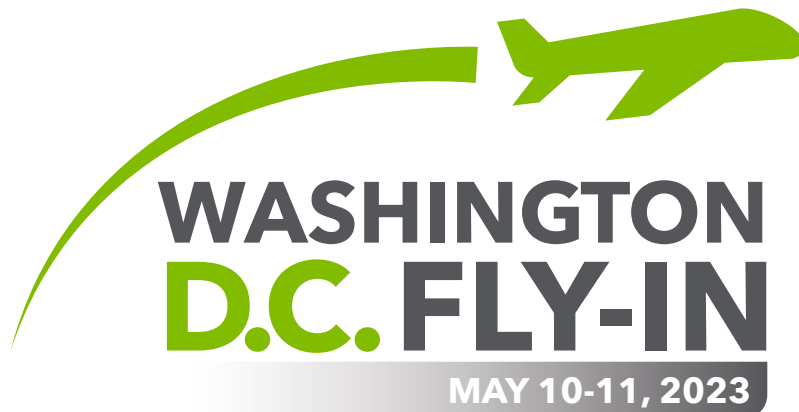
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