

# THE POINT

February 2021

okcchamber.com

GREATER  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
CHAMBER



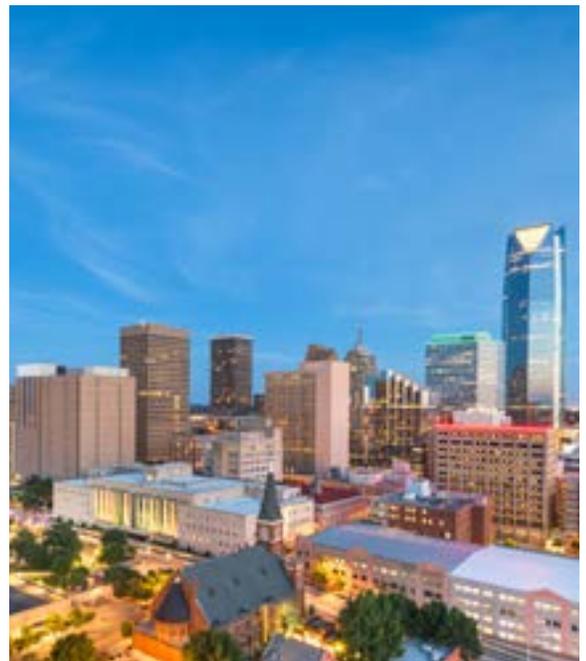
## OKC metro forecast for job growth in 2021

In 2021, the Oklahoma City metro should benefit from improved economic conditions as the nation gradually exits the pandemic economic reality and the bottom to the current energy cycle. Combined, these factors set the stage for a return to more traditional growth in 2022 as the Oklahoma City region builds upon pre-pandemic levels of economic activity.

These findings are part of the Chamber's annual Greater Oklahoma City Economic Forecast which provides a comprehensive analysis of the national, state and metro economies. It details historic trends, a snapshot of the current situation, as well as a forecast for the coming year.

Overall in 2020, year-over-year nonfarm annual job growth declined by 3% (19,700 jobs) in the Oklahoma City MSA. The largest percentage year-over-year job gains were found in transport/warehouse/utilities (+3.2%), retail trade (+2.9%), health services

*Continued on page 6*



## City council, school board seats to be decided Feb. 9th

Residents throughout the Oklahoma City metro will have the opportunity to vote in important municipal and school board elections on Tuesday, Feb. 9. In Oklahoma City, registered voters in Wards 1, 3 and 4 will be able to vote for their City Council representative, while individuals within the Oklahoma City Public School District will be able to vote for board chairperson and the representatives for Districts 1 and 2. This nonpartisan election will decide who represents those Wards and Districts for the next four years. Turn to page 7 to learn more about these candidates.

Other municipal elections in the Oklahoma City metro include those in Bethany, Del City, Edmond, Moore,

Nicoma Park, Norman, Purcell and Warr Acres. In addition, the school districts of Crutcho, Edmond, Grove, Putnam City and Riverside.

Residents in the Oklahoma Senate District 22 will also be able to vote in the primary election to fill former State Sen. Stephanie Bice's unexpired term. Bice was elected to represent Oklahoma's District 5 in the U.S. House of Representatives in November.

Early voting is 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 4-5 at your local county election board:

- Oklahoma County Election Board, 4201 N Lincoln Blvd., (405) 713-1515

*Continued on page 7*



# We believe in bucket lists.



*Susan Laurence, Uterine Cancer Survivor  
OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center*

## Stephenson Cancer Center – a place for transformational care.

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# Leadership Notes

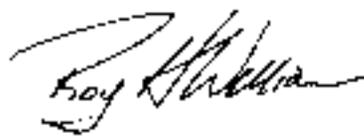
While it might be tempting in this volatile environment to try and avoid all things political, the state legislature is gearing up for the 2021 session and it is vital that the business community stay informed and ready to act.

Like last year, we anticipate the legislature to focus first on the budget, with other bills considered. But also like last year, there were some surprises that surfaced, and not all of them were in the best interest of growing our economy.

Throughout the session, we send special updates to our Business Advocates. To sign up for this newsletter, visit the Chamber's online tool at [www.okcbusinessadvocate.com](http://www.okcbusinessadvocate.com). You can also learn more about our legislative agenda and find other useful information to help you get ready to be an advocate for business at the legislature.

You can also rest assured knowing that your Chamber is working hard on your behalf. Our team is monitoring bills, attending hearings and working every day with the legislature to make certain Oklahoma's business climate stays strong, and that legislators understand the impact of the decisions they make.

As the pandemic continues to impact the lives of Oklahomans and the business community, it is more important than ever that we put our collaborative spirit to work to find the best solutions for moving our city forward. By working together with our elected leaders, we can address our challenges and create opportunity. I call on every member to be part of that success this year. Reach out and meet your legislator. Let them know you can be a resource and a support as they look for ways to grow our state.



Roy H. Williams, CCE  
Chamber President & CEO



Roy H. Williams, CCE  
President & CEO

**VELOCITY**  
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"What conventions and groups are coming to OKC soon?"  
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## THE POINT!

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### Editorial staff

Nate Fisherr, Kaylee McDaniel  
and Cynthia Reid

### Designer

Josh Vaughn

297-8900

[thepoint@okcchamber.com](mailto:thepoint@okcchamber.com)

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

[twitter.com/okcchamber](https://twitter.com/okcchamber)

[facebook.com/okcchamber](https://facebook.com/okcchamber)

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## CALENDAR

*(Events are subject to change. Consult [okcchamber.com/events](http://okcchamber.com/events) for the most recent updates.)*

**Feb. 5**

### **Enlighten**

Noon to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/enlighten](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten)

**Feb. 9**

### **Member Orientation**

8:30 to 10 a.m.  
[okcchamber.com/orientation](http://okcchamber.com/orientation)

**Feb. 17**

### **Chamber Forum**

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/februaryforum](http://okcchamber.com/februaryforum)

**Feb. 23**

### **Creating a Culture of Inclusion**

3:30 to 5 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/diversity](http://okcchamber.com/diversity)

**Feb. 24**

### **MegaLunch**

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/megalunch](http://okcchamber.com/megalunch)

**Feb. 25**

### **Chairman's Event**

Noon to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/stitt](http://okcchamber.com/stitt)

**March 5**

### **Enlighten**

11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/enlighten2](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten2)

**March 23**

### **Creating a Culture of Inclusion**

3:30 to 5 p.m.  
[okcchamber.com/diversity](http://okcchamber.com/diversity)

## Hear from Gov. Kevin Stitt at upcoming Chairman's Event

Join Governor Kevin Stitt as he discusses his priorities for Oklahoma at the Chamber's online Chairman's Event on Thursday, Feb. 25, from noon to 1 p.m. Gov. Stitt will discuss the state's response to COVID-19, his priorities for education, his goals for economic development and more.

Gov. Stitt will also be joined by Chamber Chair Sean Trauschke, OGE Energy Corp., for a Q&A session covering the governor's opinion on some of the Chamber's biggest public policy priorities for the coming year. Individual tickets are \$20 for Chamber members and \$40 for nonmembers. Sponsor ticket packages are available for purchase online. Register online at [okcchamber.com/stitt](http://okcchamber.com/stitt).

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Communications.



## Learn how to implement a DEI program on Feb. 23

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber and the Urban League of Oklahoma City Inc. are continuing their newly created series to provide practical resources for companies looking to boost their diversity, equity and inclusion. The February Creating a Culture of Inclusion virtual event series will feature Charlene Thomas, chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer for UPS. Thomas will discuss implementing a DEI program at your company or organization at the event on Tuesday, Feb. 23, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Charlene leads UPS's global diversity, equity and inclusion efforts both internally and externally with employees, suppliers and customers around the world. Prior to being named chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer, Charlene served as the chief human resources officer. In this role she guided UPS's transformation and HR initiatives to optimize the talent, leadership and culture for the company's more than 528,000 employees worldwide. Individual tickets are \$25 for Chamber and Urban League members or \$40 for nonmembers to each session. To register or for more information, visit [okcchamber.com/diversity](http://okcchamber.com/diversity).

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsors AT&T Oklahoma, American Fidelity Assurance Company, Bank of America, The Boeing Company, The Chickasaw Nation and Devon Energy Corporation.

# February Chamber Forum to highlight Oklahoma City's entrepreneurial ecosystem

The state of Oklahoma City's entrepreneurial ecosystem is the focus for February's Chamber Forum, which will be held online on Wednesday, Feb. 17, from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will feature a panel discussion on how Oklahoma City is encouraging entrepreneurship, the growth of the community in the past few years, and what Oklahoma City needs to add within its existing communities in order to be more successful.

Panelists include Evan Fay, manager of innovation and entrepreneurship for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber; Nathaniel Harding, managing partner of Cortado Ventures; Jennifer McGrail, director of Launch Pad FT at Francis Tuttle Technology Center; and Tom

Wavering, executive director of Tom Love Innovation Hub at the University of Oklahoma.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in small group networking, so come prepared to meet new faces or reconnect with familiar ones. Tickets are \$15 for Chamber members and \$25 for nonmembers. Chamber Forum half-season ticket packages are still available! Purchase a half-season package of five Chamber Forums of your choice for \$75. Register online at [okcchamber.com/februaryforum](http://okcchamber.com/februaryforum).

Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor Cox Business and Corporate Sponsor ADG.

## Need to network? The Chamber can help

Are you missing networking with your fellow Chamber members and business leaders? While the Chamber's events are still in a virtual format, the Chamber has many digital networking alternatives to help fill those gaps. Hit your networking goals in 2021 by attending one of the following events:

### **Member Orientation: Feb. 9**

Whether you are a new member, new to your company or just need a refresher, Member Orientation is the perfect place to learn about the Chamber's key initiatives and programs while meeting other members. Register online for this free virtual event at [okcchamber.com/orientation](http://okcchamber.com/orientation).

### **MegaLunch: Feb. 24**

MegaLunch is an online speed networking event where you get 90 seconds to pitch your products or services to other professionals from the comfort of your home or office.

Using Zoom breakout rooms and a computerized rotation schedule, you will meet many new prospects AND be an expert at promoting your company during five rotations. This members-only event is \$15 to attend. Register online at [okcchamber.com/megalunch](http://okcchamber.com/megalunch).

### **Enlighten: March 5**

The Chamber's Enlighten event series offers practical and free resources to help boost your business, and

beginning on March 5, it will also include free networking opportunities to help you connect with new people. The event will now use Zoom breakout rooms for an optional, 15 minute networking break at the beginning of the event. Think of it as your virtual "table!" Register online for the March Enlighten at [okcchamber.com/enlighten2](http://okcchamber.com/enlighten2).

### **Tips to make the most of your online networking experience**

While meeting people over Zoom can't replace the in-person networking experience, the following tips can improve your experience:

- Turn on your camera to make better connections.
- Rename yourself in Zoom to include your full name and company for better exposure.
- Use your company logo as your profile photo so that it will be your main image if you ever turn off your camera during the meeting.
- When you can't exchange business cards, use a LinkedIn invite to continue the connection.

To make sure you are taking advantage of all networking opportunities included with your membership, or for more ideas on how to connect, contact your membership manager or Sunny Cearley, vice president of membership, at 405-297-8948 or [scearley@okcchamber.com](mailto:scearley@okcchamber.com).

# Economic Forecast (cont'd from page 1)

(+2.4%), financial services (+0.7%), and scientific services (+0.5%) sectors.

The largest declines were found in oil & gas (-30.7%), wholesale trade (-9.9%), information (-9.0%), leisure services (-8.5%), food services & administration (-6.2%), administrative support (-6.1%) and manufacturing (-6.0%).

Positive Oklahoma City metro job growth in 2021 is expected, with the more optimistic job forecast scenario growing by 3.2% percent or approximately 20,500 jobs by the end of 2021. This growth parallels expectations for the nation. An alternative scenario that models a more pessimistic start to 2021 demonstrates Oklahoma City MSA job growth at 1.5% or just under 10,000 jobs added by the end of the fourth quarter – and overall job totals still below 2019 levels. The local economy remains vulnerable to national and global uncertainties surrounding Covid-19 that may cause a delay in improved economic conditions.

## Unemployment rates remain low after significant fluctuation

The Oklahoma City metro completed 2020 with an annual average unemployment rate of 6.5%, with monthly unemployment rates ranging as low as 2.7% in March and as high as 14.8% in April. Heading into the pandemic, the Oklahoma City MSA had the lowest unemployment rate among all large metros in the nation; and the lowest again in September. Unemployment rates in the final five months of the year closely paralleled what the metro saw coming out of the 2009 recession.

## Value of construction projects

According to Dodge, in 2020 the total construction value of tracked contract projects (residential, non-residential, and non-building infrastructure) in the Oklahoma City MSA was \$3.5 billion, 6 percent less than the prior year. The largest positive gains were found in hotels and motels, hospitals & health, and religious buildings. The largest declines were in office & banks, government service, and miscellaneous nonresidential buildings. For 2021, total construction value of contract projects is forecasted by Dodge to be relatively flat and decline by 3%, with small positive gains in both non-residential and residential. A large 21% decline is expected in non-building (bridges, water supply systems and other), bringing total construction value into negative territory compared to 2020.

## Job growth and announcements from Chamber-assisted companies

2020 brought about the fifth year of a five-year economic development program called Forward Oklahoma City V. This is the fifth iteration of the Forward campaign that has provided longer term strategic planning to the region's economic development initiatives over the past twenty-five years.

Since 2016, 23,914 jobs with payroll in excess of \$1.2 billion, and \$2.2 billion in capital investment has been announced by Chamber-assisted companies.

In 2020, 49 Chamber-assisted companies announced plans for the creation of 3,866 jobs with an annual average salary of \$54,983. In addition, those same companies announced more than \$307 million in capital investment and \$212 million in payroll. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber ended 2020 with 58 active projects in its economic development pipeline. The pipeline tracks companies or projects that are potentially looking to relocate or expand in the Greater Oklahoma City region. The largest number of projects by facility type included manufacturing, office, distribution, aviation, and shared-services/call center.

The Greater Oklahoma City region was the beneficiary of several new-to-market announcements and significant expansions in 2020. A select group of those announcements are described below.

May 2020 brought news of Costco considering Oklahoma City for a back-office / financial services operation that would employ more than 1,000. That ultimately culminated in expanded projections of 1,503 new jobs for the Costco Member Services Center over the next five years and the purchase of the former 234,000 square foot Hertz call center location at 14501 Hertz Quail Springs Parkway in Oklahoma City. Jobs include agents, clerks, administrators, computer and other technical experts, trainers, quality technicians, supervisors and managers. Part-time and seasonal employment opportunities will also be available.

Hawaii's North Star Scientific Corporation (NSS) announced an expansion to Oklahoma City, starting with five employees and plans for 40 jobs at the facility once operations ramp up. NSS designs, develops, and qualifies state of the art electronic systems for

Department of Defense applications and delivers reliable high-performance products and services. They specialize in radar frequency systems designs and rapid research & development/custom solutions. Their offices are located in the Valliance Bank Tower on Northwest Expressway.

Amazon also announced plans in December to open a new fulfillment center in 2021, creating more than 500 new full-time OKC jobs in the process. The new facility on S Portland Ave. will have the capacity to serve as a “last-mile” location and handle larger items. Amazon now employs approximately 5,000 people in Oklahoma City.

In June, Skydweller Aero Inc. selected OKC for its U.S. corporate headquarters, with plans for 120 engineering and field tech jobs in OKC, along with testing facilities in Ardmore. The company is involved in producing solar powered perpetual endurance unmanned aircraft. Other aerospace news in 2020 included expansion plans from Kratos, which produces unmanned aircraft for the U.S. military. In July, the company announced the award of a five-year indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract valued at up to \$400 million for the development, integration and prototype air vehicle delivery in support of the U.S. Air Force’s Skyborg program, with much of the work to be done in Kratos’ OKC facility. Malarkey Roofing Products announced that it will be adding 105 jobs and additional capital investment to its existing facility to address growing business demand. Malarkey is a manufacturer of high-performance residential and commercial roofing products. Heartland Payment Systems, Paycom and Boeing are a few additional existing companies in Oklahoma City to have added jobs in 2020 or to have announced plans to add jobs.

## Retail successes

For the seven-county Oklahoma City metropolitan area, 2020 total taxable retail sales decreased by 5.5% from 2019 totals. This follows three consecutive years of positive year-over-year percent increases. At

approximately \$22.6 billion, the Oklahoma City metro accounts for more than 43% of the taxable retail sales for the entire state of Oklahoma and 36% of the state’s population. This continues to make the Oklahoma City metro a driving force for retail trade in the state.

Destination retail strategies and shop local campaigns continue to be important to produce increased sales tax revenue for the Oklahoma City region. For FY 2020 (July 2019 to June 2020 remittance), sales tax collections for the City of Oklahoma City were relatively flat, down slightly at 1.1% percent over prior year. For the last half of CY 2020 (July 2020 to December 2020), sales tax collections remained below prior year for the City of Oklahoma City, but use tax collections increased considerably primarily driven by online retail sales.

Sales tax collections by surrounding cities in the metro increased in the second half of 2020 as a result of more people shopping closer to their homes. Cities seeing increases include Norman, Edmond, Moore, Midwest City and Yukon. This follows national trends of suburban communities temporarily benefiting from changes in commuting patterns related to work-from-home policies and fewer opportunities to visit destination retail establishments offered by core cities.

According to the Price Edwards 2020 OKC Year End Retail Market Summary, retail vacancy in the Oklahoma City market increased to 9.7% at year end, up slightly from 8.7% a year ago and 9.2% at mid-year 2020.

A few select retailers that announced or opened new locations in the Oklahoma City metro in 2020 include Chicken N Pickle, Homeland, Scooter’s Coffee, Blue Zoo, Round1 Bowling & Amusement, Chicken Foot, HTeaO, Phat Tire Bike Shop, Costco, Edmond Railyard, Park 17, Old Navy, Aldi Grocery, Nashbird, Pinkitzel, Shell Belle’s Bakery, Tavola Restaurant, Commonsplace Game Café, and Oklahoma Axe Factory.

## Upcoming elections (cont'd from page 1)

- Cleveland County Election Board, 641 E Robinson Street (Suite 200) in Norman, (405) 366-0210
- Canadian County Election Board, 200 S Bickford Ave. in El Reno, (405) 422-2422
- Pottawatomie County Election Board, 14101 Acme Road in Shawnee, (405) 273-8376.

Regular voting is 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 9 at your usual polling location. Find your polling location on your voter ID card, or using the voter portal at [oklahoma.gov/elections/ovp](http://oklahoma.gov/elections/ovp).

EMBARK bus and OKC Streetcar service will be free on Election Day to help get voters to the polls. Visit [embarkok.com](http://embarkok.com) or [okcstreetcar.com](http://okcstreetcar.com) to plan your trip.



*Development proposed by Gardner Tanenbaum and Robinson Park Investments.*

## Q&A with Mark Beffort about 2.7-acre innovation district development



**Mark Beffort,**  
*Robinson Park*

Just before the end of December, two of the region's biggest developers announced the biggest project of the year. Gardner Tanenbaum and Robinson Park Investments are teaming up to build a 2.7 acre development at the Innovation District.

Designed by FSB Architects, the 400,000 sq. ft., pedestrian-centric layout features research labs and office space, a hotel, retail space, and a public realm providing an open-air community environment. A key feature of the project is the proposed MAPS 4 funded Innovation Hall, a central place where activities to grow Oklahoma City's innovation economy can be facilitated.

The Greater OKC Chamber sat down with Mark Beffort, Robinson Park, to learn more about the plan.

**Q. This plan is bold - really taking the components in the master plan designed by Perkins and Will to another level. What motivated the partnership to go down this path?**

A. This originally started when Baker Hughes offered a small portion of their site to Dick Tanenbaum. He and I began looking at the project and thinking about how we could make something work with a single 200,000 square foot building and it just wasn't enough. When we kept going south and looked at the full project, we realized we could really make something dynamic happen.

We are both really excited about the potential the innovation district brings to our market. We didn't want to just talk about it, we wanted to really executed on the vision for our community. If someone doesn't take the ball and run with it, it just won't happen. We believe this needs to happen - so we picked up the ball and we are running as hard and as fast as we can.

**Q. Why do you think the innovation district, and this project are important?**

A. We believe this project will change the fabric of Oklahoma City, in much the same way the Devon Tower accomplished that in downtown. Projects like these bring high quality amenities and spaces. When people interact in collaborative and clustered environments it elevates how they relate to their community and to each other.

**Q. What influenced the components of your plan and where did you get your inspiration for the development?**

A. We studied what makes a project like this successful, and one of the key element is having multiple universities working together to foster innovation. Having the presence of Oklahoma State, along with the incredible assets the University of Oklahoma has here, sow those seeds for success.

The design of the site is shaped in a V, with OSU at one end of the V and OU at the other, with Innovation Hall very intentionally located at the center.

**Q. This is a big project with a somewhat specialized tenant base. Many might have expected a national developer to take this on.**

A. Both Gardner Tanenbaum and Robinson Park Investments have national reach and the experience to make this a success. The first key to any development is that it is a marketable project and this definitely meets those qualifications. Then you need capital and expertise. We will bring a local flavor to this that I think is so important, differentiating this from other innovation districts around the country. On the capital side, we have made large commitments to get this done, but we know there are others in the market who want to be involved and be a part of this and we are happy to include them as well. Add to that the community investment that is part of the MAPS 4 program and I think this will be something we are all proud of when it is finished.

**Q. What do you anticipate the tenant mix will be for these spaces?**

A. We are really targeting advanced manufacturing, aerospace and bio-related businesses. We do know that Wheeler Labs will be our first tenant and we are moving ahead with others. The development will have a hotel, a mix of retail and of course the public spaces, including Innovation Hall.

We also are hopeful to attract an incubator. We really think the combination of this development and the environment Oklahoma City offers to residents and businesses, we can be a place where companies can attract the best employees and produce high quality products at a lower cost.

**Q. What is in the first phase?**

A. We would begin with the first building, which includes underground parking for the full development, the hotel and the public realm, hopefully including Innovation Hall.

**Q. When are we going to see this vision become a reality?**

A. We are actively working with potential tenants and believe we will be 60% leased on the first building by the end of May. We are then looking at breaking ground in December. To reach that goal, we have a lot of work going on right now with design and pre-development underway so we can be ready for that launch. We would then be ready in 24 months.



*A view of the proposed development from I-235 and Harrison Ave.*

# City Council elections draw multiple candidates in Wards 1, 3 and 4

Members of the Oklahoma City Council have a significant impact on the growth of Oklahoma City, making the upcoming municipal election critical to our future. While the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber does not endorse candidates for any city office, the Chamber asked all City Council candidates to complete a survey that would ascertain their stance on criminal justice reform, regional transit initiatives, the MAPS program, economic development programs and more.

## Ward 1 candidates

Ward 1 candidates who responded to the Chamber’s survey include Jay Sherrill, Susan Kay Parisi, Shay Varnell, Bradley Carter, Megan Scott, Joshua W. Debolt, Nana Abram Dankwa and Bill Fleming. Richard

Thomas Buchanan did not respond. Read a summary of their responses below, and view a full transcript at [okcchamber.com/ward1](http://okcchamber.com/ward1).

## Ward 3 candidates

Ward 3 candidates who responded to the Chamber’s survey include Kelli Payne, Barbara Young, Trey Bishop, Jessica Martinez-Brooks and Allen Swanda. Tim Long did not respond. Read a full transcript of their responses at [okcchamber.com/ward3](http://okcchamber.com/ward3).

## Ward 4 candidates

Incumbent Todd Stone will face Sam Wargin Grimaldo and Larry Hopper at the polls on Feb. 9. All three candidates completed the Chamber survey, and

Topic	Ward 1					
	Chamber	Scott	Debolt	Buchanan	Dankwa	Fleming
<b>Do you support allowing voters to decide whether to tax themselves to build a regional transit/commuter rail system in central Oklahoma (to connect, for example, Norman, Edmond, OKC and Tinker AFB)?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the continued use of the City’s Economic Development Trust to recruit companies to locate in OKC?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the MAPS programs in OKC, a public infrastructure initiative used since 1993 to fund quality-of-life projects and other programs with temporary one-cent sales taxes?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts to support economic development in OKC?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you support the use of eminent domain to acquire private property to facilitate the implementation of future MAPS projects?</b>	Yes	Don't know	No	No response	Yes	No
<b>Do you support the state’s Historical Building Tax credit which has been used by the City to renovate buildings such as the Skirvin Hotel?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes
<b>Do you favor a 1 cent increase in the City’s Hotel/Motel tax to promote tourism in OKC?</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No response	Yes	No

their responses are summarized below. A full transcript of their responses can be found at [okcchamber.com/ward4](http://okcchamber.com/ward4).

## Election information

All registered voters in Wards 1, 3 and 4 are eligible to vote in the Feb. 9 primary election. If a candidate earns more than half of the votes on Feb. 9, he or she is elected to office. No runoff is necessary.

If no candidate earns more than half of the votes on Feb. 9, the two candidates with the most votes advance to the April 6 runoff. The runoff winner is elected to office. In addition to the candidates mentioned, incumbent Councilwoman Nikki Nice was the only candidate who filed to run in Ward 7 and will be automatically reelected for a four-year term.



Ward 1				Ward 3						Ward 4		
Sherrill	Parisi	Varnell	Carter	Payne	Young	Long	Bishop	Martinez-Brooks	Swanda	Grimaldo	Stone (i)	Hopper
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Don't know	No response	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	No	Yes	Yes	Don't know	Yes	Yes
Don't know	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	Don't know	No response	No	Yes	No	Don't know	Don't know	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	Don't know	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Don't know	Don't know	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response	No	Don't know	No	Yes	Yes	Don't know

# Residents in OKCPS district can vote for board chair, District 1, 2 and 7 on Feb. 9

Oklahoma City residents have an opportunity to impact the success of Oklahoma City’s students on Feb. 9 when they vote in Oklahoma City School Board elections. The nonpartisan election will decide the board chair and representatives of Districts 1, 2 and 7 for the next four-year term, which begins in April 2021. While the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber does not endorse candidates for any school board seat, the Chamber asked all candidates to complete a survey that would ascertain their stance on charter schools, the use of TIF funds and more. Read a summary of the responses in the chart below.



## Chairperson seat candidates

Chairperson candidates who responded to the Chamber’s survey include Paula Lewis (incumbent), Charles Henry and Wilfredo Santos Rivera. Read their full responses at [okcchamber.com/chairperson](http://okcchamber.com/chairperson).

## District 1 candidates

District 1 candidate Carole Thompson and Brett Hayes responded to the Chamber’s survey. Read full responses at [okcchamber.com/district1](http://okcchamber.com/district1).

## District 2 candidates

Lori Bowman and James McHenry will face each other at the polls on April 6. Both candidates completed the Chamber survey, and their responses are summarized below. Read a full transcript at [okcchamber.com/district2](http://okcchamber.com/district2).

## Election information

In addition to the candidates for board chair, District 1, and District 2, incumbent Meg McElhaney was the only person who filed for the District 7 seat. She will be automatically reelected for her next term. All other candidates in a race with more than two people will face each other at the polls on Feb. 9. If no candidate earns more than half of the votes, a runoff election will take place on April 6.

Topic	Chairperson			District 1		District 2		District 7	
	Chamber	Wilfredo Santos Rivera	Charles Henry	Paula Lewis	Carole Thompson	Brett Hayes	Lori Bowman	James McHenry	Meg McElhaney
Should OKC Public Schools make Pre-K and Kindergarten available for all children that want to attend?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response
Do you support continuation of existing charter schools within the OKC Public Schools service area?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response
Do you support development of new charter schools within the OKC Public Schools?	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response
Do you believe Oklahoma City Public schools should support creation and utilization of Tax Increment Financing to support economic development?	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	No response	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response

# Discover new marketing solutions for your company

Is your company looking for ways to connect with new people in 2021? Chamber members have the exclusive opportunity to take advantage of premier marketing solutions available through our events, publications, websites and programs.

## Market your business through newsletters, publications and websites

Chamber publications and websites are premium resources for business and individuals looking to learn more about Oklahoma City and get connected within the business community. Businesses that advertise in our publications and on our websites and can get their products and services in front of thousands each month. Current opportunities include Member Spotlights on OKCChamber.com, banner ads on VeloCityOKC.com and ads in The POINT! monthly newsletter and annual Welcome Guide.

## Get in front of decision makers at events

Each year, the Chamber hosts more than 70 events for the business community and the public. From our

monthly Chamber Forums to signature events like State of Health and State of the Schools, Chamber events are where business leaders come to get informed about the issues that have the biggest impact on Oklahoma City.

Companies that purchase event sponsorships get recognized on signage, invitations, the Chamber website and more – all while getting their name in front of government leaders, decision makers, the business community and the public throughout the year, maximizing their reach. Some event sponsorships include speaking opportunities, allowing you to present your message directly to our engaged audience.

## Personalized advice from a team of experts

The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's membership team is available to help you discover how to incorporate the Chamber's arsenal of tools into your marketing mix. Get access to the best marketing options for your company today by contacting your membership manager or Sunny Cearley, vice president of membership, at 405-297-8948 or [scearley@okcchamber.com](mailto:scearley@okcchamber.com).

# Chamber annual membership mailing goes digital

To better meet the needs of members working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chamber's annual membership mailing will arrive in your email inboxes later this month. These resources, which are exclusive to Chamber members, include the 2021 Public Policy Guide, the 2020 Annual Report and coupons and discounts from Chamber members.

The Public Policy Guide includes the Chamber's 2021 legislative agenda, information about the Greater OKC Chamber Political Action Committee, the 2020 RIED and OKC scores, and contact information for federal, state and local elected officials. Also included is the 2020 Annual Report, which recaps the Chamber's accomplishments in economic development, membership, marketing, convention and visitor development, talent development and more.

In a separate physical mailing, Chamber members will also receive their 2021 membership sticker or plaque. The coupons will allow Chamber members to enjoy valuable gifts from several Greater Oklahoma

City Chamber member companies in 2021, including the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, RIVERSPORT, State Fair of Oklahoma and the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City.



*Watch your email inboxes this month for your digital Annual Membership Mailing, which includes digital copies of the 2021 Public Policy Guide and the 2020 Annual Report.*

# 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.

## PARTNER+

**Centene**  
*Insurance Agents, Brokers and Service*  
Mr. Zane Yates ..... (314) 519-2036  
7700 Forsyth Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
www.centene.com

## ADVISOR

**ASM Global-Oklahoma City Convention Center**  
*Meeting / Banquet Facilities*  
Mr. Al Rojas ..... 768-4037  
500 S Robinson Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73109  
www.okccconventioncenter.com

## ADVISOR

**Chaparral Energy**  
*Oil & Gas Exploration & Production*  
Mr. Chuck Duginski ..... 478-8770  
4700 Gaillardia Parkway, Suite 200  
Oklahoma City, OK 73142-1839  
www.chaparralenergy.com

## ASSOCIATE

**Crown Castle**  
*Telecommunications Services*  
Mr. Phillip K. Brown ..... (615) 771-1240  
370 Mallory Station Road, Suite 505  
Franklin, TN 37067-2862  
www.crownccastle.com

## CORE

**Comfort Homes (Midland Construction LLC)**  
*Home Builders*  
Mr. Massoud Torbati ..... 476-9997  
P.O. Box 31623  
Edmond, OK 73003-0028  
www.comforthomesok.com

## CORE

**Peopleready Skilled Trades Employment Resources**  
Mr. Isaiah Manzanares ..... 446-6385  
145 NE 23rd St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3003  
skilled.peopleready.com

## CORE

**TimberCraft Homes LLC**  
*Home Builders*  
Mr. Shawn Lawrence ..... 513-5710  
13909 Technology Drive, Suite B  
Oklahoma City, OK 73134-1057  
www.timbercraft.co



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[UnitedWayOKC.org](http://UnitedWayOKC.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 [okccchamber.com/grandopenings](http://okccchamber.com/grandopenings).



### Viability Inc

2000 N. Classen Blvd., N160  
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

### Oklahoma City Police Athletic League

3816 S. Robinson Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73109

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

## State of Oklahoma ranks top 10 for lowest tax burden

- Oklahoma ranks as the 7th-lowest tax burden state in the nation.
- Rankings are based upon total taxes as a percent of income. Total taxes is defined as and limited to Sales, Property and Income taxes.
- On average, Oklahomans pay 7.19% of their income on taxes or \$3,295 per person.
- State and local tax collections by state are from the recently released U.S. Census Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances.

### Lowest Tax Burden States

Rank	State	Total Taxes as % of Income	Taxes Per Person	Property Tax as % of Income	Income Tax as % of Income	Sales Tax as % of Income
1	AK	5.04%	\$3,030	3.64%	0.00%	1.40%
2	TN	5.70%	\$2,694	1.69%	0.08%	3.93%
3	WY	6.11%	\$3,709	3.32%	0.00%	2.80%
4	DE	6.17%	\$3,260	1.76%	3.23%	1.18%
5	NH	6.83%	\$4,192	5.47%	0.13%	1.24%
6	FL	6.86%	\$3,489	2.70%	0.00%	4.16%
<b>7</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>7.19%</b>	<b>\$3,295</b>	<b>1.68%</b>	<b>1.93%</b>	<b>3.58%</b>
8	SD	7.35%	\$3,853	3.01%	0.00%	4.34%
9	MT	7.36%	\$3,540	3.55%	2.54%	1.26%
10	AL	7.37%	\$3,147	1.40%	1.94%	4.03%

### Highest Tax Burden States

Rank	State	Total Taxes as % of Income	Taxes Per Person	Property Tax as % of Income	Income Tax as % of Income	Sales Tax as % of Income
41	CA	9.49%	\$6,029	2.64%	3.78%	3.06%
42	RI	9.75%	\$5,312	4.47%	2.31%	2.98%
43	MN	10.02%	\$5,746	2.87%	3.69%	3.46%
44	NJ	10.06%	\$6,809	4.98%	2.49%	5.59%
45	MA	10.52%	\$5,136	4.61%	2.46%	3.45%
46	CT	10.67%	\$7,985	4.15%	3.64%	2.88%
47	VT	10.92%	\$5,827	5.12%	2.45%	3.35%
48	DC	11.63%	\$9,435	4.60%	3.63%	3.40%
49	HI	12.23%	\$6,755	2.46%	3.10%	6.68%
50	NY	12.80%	\$8,781	4.41%	4.96%	3.43%

Sources: U.S. Census Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances (2018 Tables released Nov 2020); internal research by HireAHelper.com

For comprehensive Economic Indicators and Regional Data, [www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators](http://www.greateroklahomacity.com/economicindicators) or contact Eric Long, Research Economist – 405-297-8976; or email at [elong@okcchamber.com](mailto:elong@okcchamber.com)

- 4 Implementing a DEI program topic of next inclusion series event
- 5 Chamber Forum to highlight OKC entrepreneurial ecosystem
- 8 Q&A on 2.7-acre Innovation District development
- 10 City Council candidate Q&A

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