

A person wearing a white cleanroom suit, hairnet, and face mask is working on a rocket component. They are using a tool to work on a small, intricate part of the rocket. The background is a cleanroom environment with various equipment and components.

THE CHAMBER REPORT

TULSA REGIONAL CHAMBER

Q2 2025

ROCKET SCIENCE

Tulsa, state of Oklahoma emerging as major players in space sector



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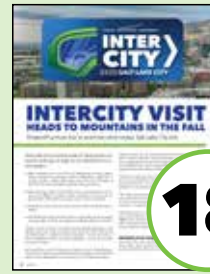
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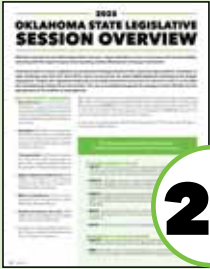
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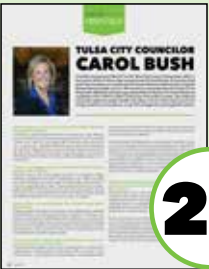
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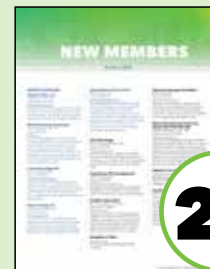
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ON THE COVER:

The space industry in Oklahoma is taking off, and Tulsa is well-positioned to capitalize on the momentum within the sector.

See story on page 6.

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TULSA REGIONAL NEWS

SECOND

QUARTER
RECAP

Tulsa Regional News keeps you informed on the latest business and community happenings from across the city and around the region.



CHAMBER HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL STATE OF THE TRIBAL NATIONS

At the Chamber's second annual State of the Tribal Nations, more than 800 attendees gathered to hear from representatives of the Cherokee, Muscogee and Osage nations on topics ranging from economic development to arts and culture. Presented by Aristocrat Gaming, Tinker Federal Credit Union and Thompson Construction, the event underscored the critical role that tribal nations play in driving Oklahoma's prosperity. Panel discussions highlighted the power of collaboration and community investment across the region by discussing strategic investments, healthcare and education initiatives, cultural preservation and cutting-edge innovations such as drone technology.

BULL'S-EYE FOR TULSA-AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MidAmerica Industrial Park recently welcomed Brazil-based CBC Global Ammunition to northeastern Oklahoma, marking a significant win for regional economic development. CBC plans to invest \$300 million into a new facility at MAIP, creating 350 jobs with an average salary of \$55,635. The future 550-acre campus is set to break ground in late 2025 and will include four factories, which will play a key role in national defense, law enforcement and commercial ammunition supply. The announcement highlights the strength of the Chamber-led Tulsa's Future partnership, showcasing the power of regional collaboration to secure global investment and job growth.





TYPROS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

TYPROS Day at the Capitol offered young professionals from the Tulsa region a dynamic opportunity to engage directly with state government. The day included Capitol office visits, committee meeting observations and two informative panel discussions with legislators and policy experts. A highlight for the group was being formally introduced in the Senate chamber.



CHAMBER INITIATIVE SUPPORTS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WITH COLLEGE SUPPLIES

The Chamber's College Essentials Initiative was one of two 2025 education-focused priorities led by Chamber Chair Bill Knight. In partnership with local employers, the Chamber delivered personalized care packages filled with dorm-room basics such as towels, bedding and other basics designed to prepare these college-bound students for their first year of campus life. Modeled after the Christmas Angel Tree concept, the initiative aims to remove barriers for first-generation and underserved students transitioning to college. More than 30 employers supported more than 65 students from all nine TPS high schools, achieving a 100 percent match. Coordinated by the Chamber's Workforce and Talent Strategies team, the effort is part of a broader commitment to help Tulsa's young people thrive beyond high school.



FROM CLASSROOMS TO CAREER EXPLORATION AT SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL

Tulsa high school students got a firsthand look at future career paths during the Chamber's first Career Exploration visit of 2025 at Saint Francis Hospital. During their visit, students met with members of the hospital's radiology leadership team, toured the department and learned how CT and MRI technology are used to diagnose various ailments. It marked the first of many discovery experiences that the Chamber will coordinate throughout the year, connecting Tulsa Public School students with real-world career paths while helping local employers engage early with future talent. ■



**WANT MORE
TULSA REGIONAL
NEWS?**

ROCKET SCIENCE

Tulsa, state of Oklahoma emerging as major players in space sector

by Rhett Morgan, Director of Communications for the Tulsa Regional Chamber

People as accomplished as Jim Bridenstine, a former Navy pilot, U.S. Congressman and NASA administrator, are typically hard to impress.

But when talking about Tulsa's potential in the space sector, even he can't contain his enthusiasm.

Fueling that zeal is the proliferation of satellites - and the city's path to capitalizing on that.

As of the summer of 2024, active satellites numbered more than 10,000, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office. One estimate predicts the launch of an additional 58,000 satellites by 2030.

"By the way, those satellites aren't going up in a geostationary orbit where they never come home," Bridenstine said. "Those satellites are going into low-Earth orbit where they capture the upper atmosphere, and they degrade. And every five years, you have to reconstitute the entire constellation."

"What does that mean? You have a strong pipeline for the future. The bottom line is that there's a pipeline for space-based capabilities that I think we, Tulsa in particular, are really capable of serving."

Bridenstine is managing partner of Tulsa-based The Artemis Group, which provides critical government affairs, business development and strategic advisory services to space and defense companies.

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This spring at a meeting of the Chamber's Board of Directors, he spoke about Tulsa's being a major player in the emerging space industry.

Agile Space Industries, an in-space propulsion company based in Colorado, said late last year that it plans to build a hot-fire testing center for external customers in Tulsa.

Scheduled to be located on 20 acres adjacent to Tulsa International Airport, it will support NASA, commercial space companies and the U.S. Department of Defense with testing for in-space propulsion technology.

"When it comes to building propulsion for these satellites, historically, we would put a satellite in orbit and leave it there without any propulsion," Bridenstine said. "Now what we're doing is we have satellites that have high-energy maneuvering ability to get out of the way of debris, to get out of the way of a threat.

"That capability requires what we call hypergolic propulsion, which basically means it doesn't require any kind of combustion. You don't have to light it on fire. It (hyperbolic propulsion) is highly reliable, but we need to test it. Increasing access to testing to keep up with demand is something the industry hasn't solved."

Tulsa soon will be part of that solution.

To construct the Space Test Center, Agile is using a \$20 million incentive from the City of Tulsa through the state's Economic Development Pooled Finance Product Development Program.

Founded in 2009, the company employs close to 100 people and has watched its

revenues triple in the past four years, said Agile CEO Chris Pearson, who has more than 25 years of experience in the space industry.

LEVERAGING A CITY'S ASSETS

"I was blown away when I came over," Pearson said of Tulsa. "The cost of living and the quality of living is pretty phenomenal.

"The level of support we had in Tulsa, when I compare that to other states we looked at...it's just been a massive difference. That kind of culture, that business friendliness, that was what made it obvious that was the place we were going to be able to scale."

Agile acquired an additive manufacturing facility in Pennsylvania that allows the company to design engines and 3D-print most products before testing them in-house, Pearson said.

"A typical Heritage rocket engine would have maybe 300 to 400 piece parts," he said. "We've got them down to about 20 piece parts because basically we 3D print all the complexity into these assemblies. That means we can assemble in an afternoon. That used to be weeks to months with Heritage hardware.

"We can deliver flight hardware in six to nine months compared to the two to three years with the legacy suppliers. It's that speed that differentiates us."

What differentiates Tulsa, Pearson said, is its wealth of aerospace and oil and gas workers, who possess the kind of skills Agile is seeking.

"Traditionally on the test side within Agile, we actually employ a lot of people from the oil and gas community," he said. "Their familiarity and experience with handling more of the hazardous fluids and working in a very tight operational environment make it a good match.

"On the other side of things, we see the MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) base on the aircraft side. Those same technicians have a mindset that transfers well into space."

Daniel Regan is director of real estate and development at Tulsa Airports Improvement Trust (TAIT), which manages and operates Tulsa International Airport and Tulsa Riverside Airport.

"There is so much growth in the space economy right now," he said. "So, having somebody like Agile, which anchors a very critical facility bottleneck in propulsion testing, is such an opportunity in leveraging the components manufacturers, the actual rocket manufacturers, the engineers and other rocket testing.

"With one project like this, you can hopefully unlock dozens or maybe hundreds of projects over the coming years. A good-paying employer becomes a catalyst for many, many good-paying employers and leans in on what we already have inherently, which is a good talent and workforce base and a great place to live and raise a family."



SCIENTIFIC SYNERGY

Much of the globe's cosmic energy was centered recently in Colorado Springs, Colo., site of the Space Symposium in April.

More than 10,000 people from every facet of the space ecosystem attended the event, which convened leaders from the commercial, government and military space sectors to discuss and plan for the future of space.

Representing the Tulsa Regional Chamber at the gathering was Stacy Smith, the organization's senior director of economic development.

"There is so much innovation and investment in the space industry right now," she said. "Companies are looking for the right place to expand, and the Tulsa region checks all those boxes."

"We're seeing increased interest from space and defense companies that recognize Tulsa's skilled aerospace workforce, central location, the city's strong legacy in advanced manufacturing and the state's Space Port as key advantages for growth."

The ripple-down effect from recruiting Agile to Tulsa has been monumental, Smith said.

"Landing Agile's chemical propulsion test center has been a catalyst for building our regional space economy," she said. "It's the first major domino to fall, and we're already seeing the impact. Several space companies have since engaged with us to explore opportunities here. Momentum is clearly building."

LARGER IMPACT OF SPACE

Agile, however, is just one example of Oklahoma's burgeoning space industry.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Aerospace Commerce Economic Services (ACES) announced this spring that the aerospace/defense sector experienced massive growth in 2024 after securing \$146.6 million in new capital investment. That figure represents 25 new or expanding businesses in the state, resulting in 1,007 new jobs.

Not included in those numbers is Dawn Aerospace, an international company that this spring announced it will establish a U.S. headquarters at the Oklahoma Air & Space Port in Burns Flat, about 200 miles southwest of Tulsa.



Known for its work in reusable spaceplane technology, Dawn Aerospace has a flagship spaceplane capable of horizontal takeoff and landing using traditional airport runways, dramatically reducing the cost and complexity of spaceflight operations.

Within a couple of years, Dawn wants to be launching 200 times a year, Bridenstine said.

"With this reusable vehicle, it will make us the busiest spaceport in America, which is pretty exciting," he said.

So, too, are the breakthroughs that can emerge from suborbital flight, which provide valuable two- to five-minute windows of microgravity.

Microgravity, or low gravity, offers a unique environment for medical research and technology development, impacting areas such as drug discovery, tissue engineering and disease modeling. By removing or reducing the effects of Earth's gravity, microgravity allows for studies that would be otherwise impossible or difficult on Earth.

"They are doing things in space that are stunning," Bridenstine said. "They can take skin cells from the hand, reverse them into stem cells, and we go to space and create heart tissue in three dimensions. What I'm saying is regenerative medicine is a huge opportunity."

As is the space sector for Oklahoma. ■



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ANNIVERSARY

NOV 13, 2025 || 5:30-7:00 PM

Vista at 21 || 21 N Greenwood Ave.

Join us as **TYPROS** celebrates 20 years of connecting people, engaging in the community and developing Tulsa's next generation of leaders. This special anniversary reception will bring together young professionals, alumni and business and community leaders to reflect on TYPROS' lasting impact and energize its future. The evening will feature networking, inspiring stories and a look at the vision for the next 20 years of TYPROS.



TICKETS \$20

For sponsorship opportunities please contact Britian Walker || britianwalker@tulsachamber.com

A *Visit* WITH REGIONAL TOURISM

QUARTERLY INSIGHTS FROM THE FOUR PILLARS



Frequently referred to as the "front door" to economic development, tourism has a significant impact in our region and throughout Oklahoma. This brief quarterly "visit" with Tulsa Regional Tourism, an initiative of the Tulsa Regional Chamber, aims to spotlight some of our community's unique, successful and upcoming activities in this exciting industry – and how it supports your business and quality of life.

VISIT TULSA - LEISURE TRAVEL

Tulsa Tourism trending upward

The results of the latest Tourism Economics study show Tulsa tourism is reaching historic highs.

In 2023, Tulsa's total visitor volume surpassed 10 million for the first time, and the 300,000 increase in visitors year-over-year also eclipsed pre-pandemic levels for the first time. Visitor spending grew by nearly 4% to \$1.43 billion in 2023, an average of \$3.9 million spent by visitors to Tulsa every day.

The benefits extend to the workforce, as well. Direct visitor-supported employment expanded 2.1%, adding 263 jobs to Tulsa's visitor economy. All told, Tulsa's visitor economy supported 16,053 jobs in 2023: 12,881 direct jobs, 2,058 indirect and 1,114 induced. With one in 16 jobs tied to tourism, that's enough people to line both sides of Route 66 from Tulsa to Catoosa.

ALL SHIPS RISE: TOURISM SECTOR INCREASES IN 2023

- **Food & Beverage:** \$442M (+31%)
- **Retail:** \$306M (+21%)
- **Lodging:** \$285M (+20%)
- **Transport:** \$234M (+16%)
- **Recreation/Entertainment:** \$172M (+12%)



"We do this study to show the importance of tourism, to track our progress in recovery from the pandemic," Patti Krausert, Tulsa Regional Tourism senior director of research and data strategy, told the News on 6. "One of the interesting things we learned that one in 16 jobs in Tulsa is supported by tourism."

MORE →



★ **SEPT. 9, 2025**

**Arvest Convention Center
Tulsa Ballroom**

Tulsa Regional Tourism's Annual Meeting
FY's Hottest Stars, Stories and Wins in Tourism

So late it's early... Tulsa Regional Tourism announces Annual Meeting

Live and (barely) awake, it's the Tulsa Regional Tourism Annual Meeting!

Celebrate the curtain falling for fiscal year 2024-25 with the Tulsa Regional Tourism team on Sept. 9. The late-night-inspired breakfast show will celebrate big wins, tourism stars and Tulsa's momentum. The theme is "late-night TV show"; think a live audience, house band, guest segments, hot takes and applause signs.

Sponsorships are available and going fast. Want to be a part of the show? Contact **Britain Walker** at britainwalker@tulsachamber.com for opportunities. General inquiries? Send those to **Rachel Nogalski** at rachelnogalski@visittulsa.com.

First SavvyTulsans celebrated; give your employees the gift of SavvyTulsa

Since the February launch of the SavvyTulsa Tourism Ambassador Program, a free, on-line learning module, more than 600 users have signed up for the course. With a 50% conversion rate, that represents 300-plus completions, which are growing every day.

More than 100 of the first SavvyTulsans took part in the first "Savvy Celebration" at Philbrook Museum of Art in May, picking up swag that included SavvyTulsa t-shirts, lapel pins and decals.

"It's so rewarding to see the first users complete the learning module and become SavvyTulsans," said Sarah Inboden, vice president of experience and events for the Tulsa Regional Chamber. "SavvyTulsa is one more thing that makes Tulsa unique, not just in the country but around the world, and to see it come to life and thrive is thrilling."

SavvyTulsa educates users on Tulsa's tourism offerings, as well as its history and culture, allowing them to tell Tulsa's story with warmth, confidence and authenticity. It is divided into five sections: (1) Understanding the Positive Impact of Tourism, (2) Understanding Tulsa History and Culture, (3) Discovering Major Venues & Events in



Tulsa, (4) Exploring Tulsa Creativity and Expression and (5) Experiencing Tulsa Flair and Flavor. Those sections contain 19 video lessons from prominent community and community leaders, Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols and the principal chiefs of the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek) and Osage Nations.

Could your team benefit from a deeper knowledge of our city? Visit **savvytulsa.com** to sign up today.

Renee McKenney, senior vice president of tourism and president of Tulsa Regional Tourism spotlights Tulsa on global stage

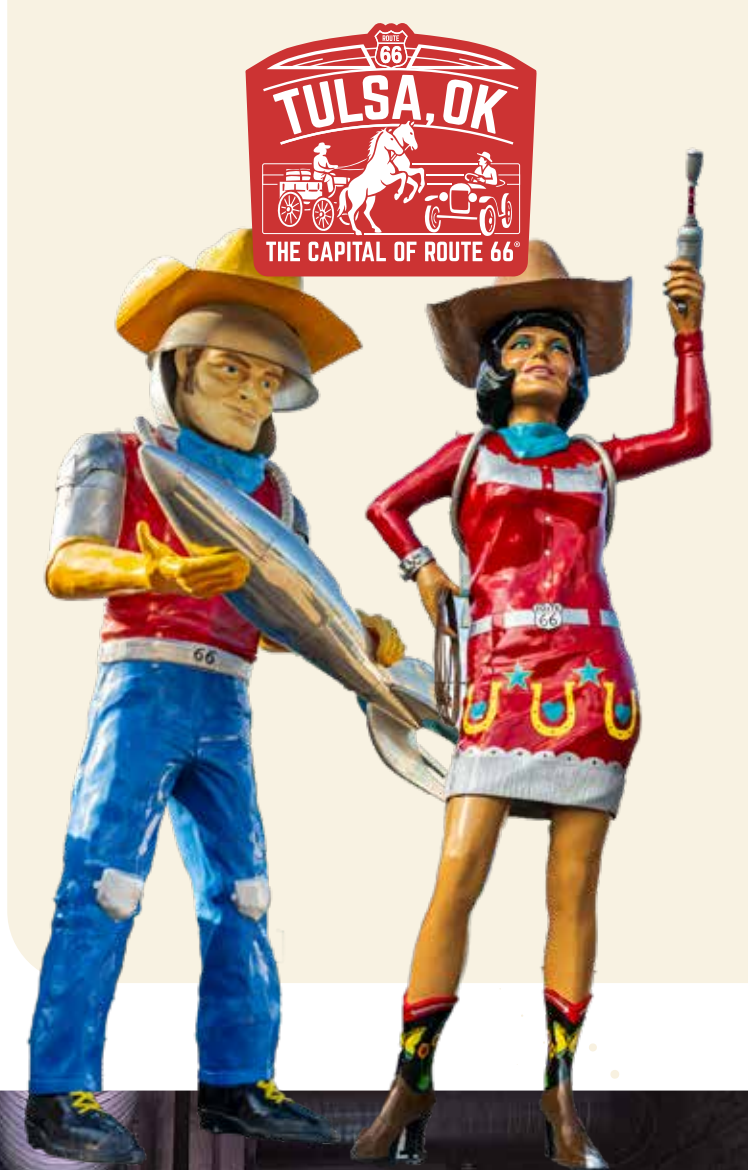
She spent portions of March and April sharing Tulsa's story across Europe as part of the Brand USA Great Road Trip Europe.

Joining other representatives from key Route 66 cities such as Oklahoma City, Chicago, Flagstaff, Ariz., and Santa Monica, Calif., McKenney trekked across the continent presenting Tulsa as The Capital of Route 66® to more than 400 journalists, tour operators and travel agents.

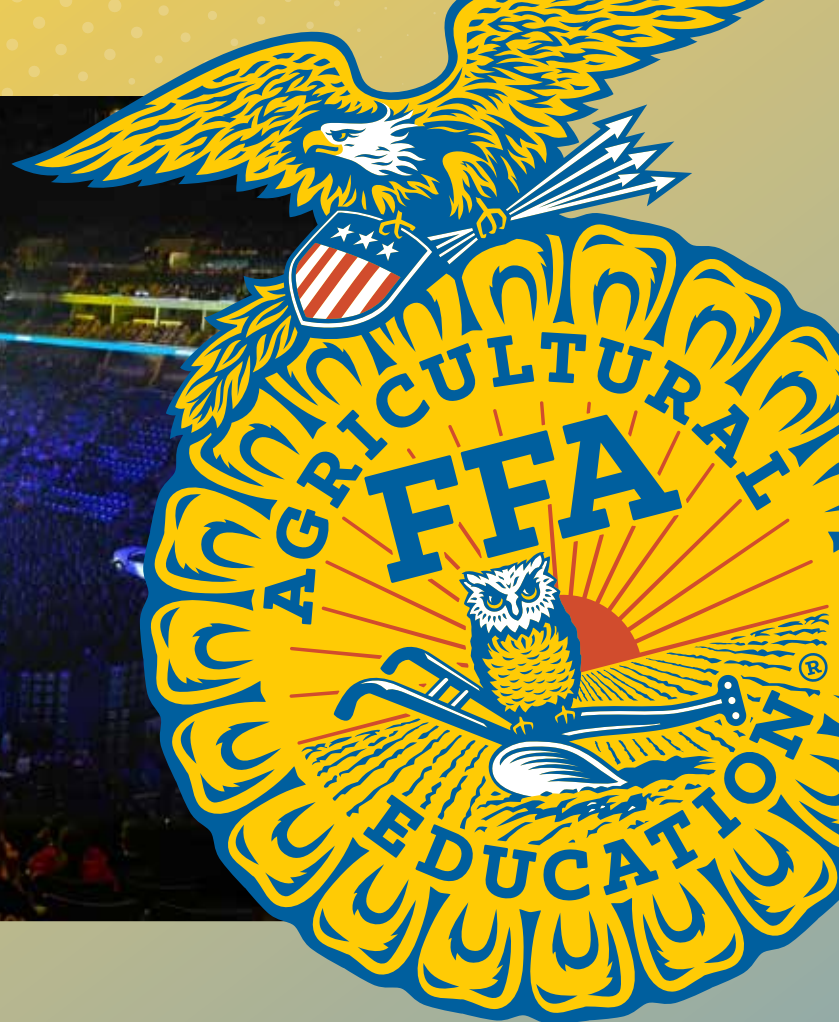
In all, the tour made stops in Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. Officials highlighted how Tulsa is uniquely positioned as an international destination in 2026, with the Route 66 Centennial, FIFA Men's World Cup matches in Kansas City, Mo., and Dallas, and America's 250th birthday all taking place during the year. The trip generated headlines in Italian publications Askanews, Travel Quotidiano Turismo, and TTGItalia, as well as TourMaG from France.

Once back stateside, McKenney headed to Capitol Hill with the U.S. Travel Association, joining more than 400 travel leaders from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. to showcase the importance of travel and tourism to our nation's leaders. They met with 90 Senate offices and more than half of the House of Representatives during the trip to Washington, D.C.

"It was an honor to be able to tell Tulsa's story around the world and to our lawmakers here at home," McKenney said. "The amount of interest in Route 66 validates Tulsa's standing as a true international destination, one that will continue to grow in the months and years to come."



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TULSA CVB - MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

State's fourth FFA Convention in Tulsa is biggest to date

For the fourth consecutive year, Tulsa was the home of the Oklahoma Future Farmers of America State Convention in May. Dressed in the organization's iconic blue jackets, thousands of FFA members from 369 chapters in the state flooded downtown, bringing with them an estimated \$9.1 million in total economic impact. Educational opportunities, workshops, individual and chapter awards, talent shows and keynote speakers occupied attendees, who, along with accompanying family, counted for nearly 8,900 hotel room nights.

This marked the 99th Oklahoma State FFA Convention, and with the event in Tulsa through at least 2026, Oklahoma FFA will join Route 66 in celebrating centennials in Tulsa next year.

TULSA SPORTS - PRO & AMATEUR

Tulsa makes mark hosting Sports ETA Annual Symposium

Tulsa put its best foot forward for the 2025 Sports Events and Tourism Association Annual Symposium.

The first symposium hosted in the city was the biggest in the organization's history, drawing more than 1,100 attendees to Arvest Convention Center over four days. The Tulsa Regional Tourism Experience and Events team worked tirelessly to make the entire week unforgettable for everyone in attendance.

"We are incredibly grateful to the team in Tulsa for their outstanding hospitality and partnership in hosting this year's Symposium," said John David, president and CEO of the Sports Events & Tourism Association. "The energy and engagement throughout the week underscored the strength and growth of our industry. From meaningful conversations on emerging trends to impactful education and networking, it was a fantastic week in a truly great American city."





Teeing up excellence: PGA Championship Returning to Tulsa

Three years after Southern Hills Country Club hosted one of the most successful and thrilling PGA Championships in history, the PGA of America announced that it is bringing “the strongest field in golf” back to Tulsa.

Southern Hills will host the 2032 PGA Championship, which will be a record sixth time for the city and club. No other venue has hosted more than four.

“The 2022 PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club was an incredible showcase of our city, people and capabilities, and we will be bigger and better in 2032,” Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols said. “This is a result of collaboration and hard work between the City of Tulsa, the Tulsa Sports Commission and Southern Hills, and when hard work and collaboration pay off, they pay off well.”

In 2022, the Championship made an estimated \$157.7 million impact on the local economy over the Monday-Sunday tournament week.

The 2032 PGA Championship will set two records. It will be the ninth major golf tournament hosted in Tulsa. Other than Augusta National Golf Club, home of the Masters since 1934, no other American club has hosted as many majors as Southern Hills.

TULSA FMAC - CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

FILM - Latest Sterlin Harjo gets new name, release date

The latest television project from Tulsa filmmaker Sterlin Harjo now has a premiere date and a new name.

“The Lowdown,” previously known as “The Sensitive Kind,” will debut at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23 on FX with two episodes. The rest of the eight-episode series will air every Tuesday and be available to stream on Hulu the following day.



Majors at Southern Hills

- 1958 - U.S. Open
- 1970- PGA Championship
- 1977- U.S. Open
- 1982 - PGA Championship
- 1994 - PGA Championship
- 2001- U.S. Open
- 2007- PGA Championship
- 2022 - PGA Championship
- 2032 - PGA Championship

Southern Hills PGA Championships & Winners

- 1970 - Dave Stockton
- 1982 - Raymond Floyd
- 1994 - Nick Price
- 2007- Tiger Woods
- 2022 - Justin Thomas



MORE →



In the series, Ethan Hawke stars as Lee Raybon, a self-proclaimed Tulsa “truthstorian” who lives and works in a small bookstore in the heart of downtown Tulsa.

After the pilot was filmed in Tulsa in May of 2024, the project was ordered to series in February. It continued production of all eight episodes in the city through May.

“The Last Rodeo” screens at Circle Cinema ahead of premiere

The Angel Studios film “The Last Rodeo” was screened at Circle Cinema in late May, the day before it debuted to more than 2,200 theaters nationwide.

Director Jon Avnet (“Fried Green Tomatoes”), co-star Mykelti Williamson (“Forrest Gump”) and producer Kip Konwiser attended the screening.

“This movie was made in Tulsa by Oklahomans, by Tulsans,” said Williamson, who plays Wainwright’s longtime rodeo buddy Charlie Williams. “We shot a little bit in other places, but Tulsa, Owasso, we just kind of moved around, and Tulsa was amazing to us. We’ll be back to do something else.”

The film follows Neal McDonough’s (“Tulsa King,” “Yellowstone”) character, Joe Wainwright, as a retired bullriding champion forced back into action to help his family. It was shot almost entirely in the Tulsa area, with scenes in Owasso, Collinsville, Skiatook and Okmulgee. All the bullriding scenes were filmed at Tulsa’s Expo Square.





MUSIC - 'Make Music Tulsa' debuts as part of a global celebration

"Make Music Day" is a worldwide celebration that takes place on the summer solstice every year, and this year, Tulsa took part for the first time.

"Make Music Tulsa" featured performances of all musical genres from artists young and old, amateur and professional, and the majority of those performances were free to attend.

"Tulsa is a hotbed of musical talent, both rich in history and on the cutting edge of the future," said Meg Gould, executive director of the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts and Culture. "The mission of our office is to help musicians and creatives in Tulsa and the surrounding region grow and thrive, and the inaugural 'Make Music Tulsa' is a perfect time to showcase how much talent calls our city home."

DID YOU KNOW?

Make Music Day began in France in 1982 as the Fête de la Musique and has spread to more than 2,000 cities across the globe. This year, more than 150 U.S. cities hosted thousands of Make Music performances across the country.

ARTS - Tulsa Ballet delights global audiences

The Tulsa Ballet recently returned from its sixth international tour, gracing stages in Italy and Germany with "Made in America," a program that showcased "the evolution and diversity of American dance" through classical European tradition and contemporary American ballet.

After opening in Modena, Italy at the Teatro Luciano Pavarotti, the tour continued with stops in Vicenza, Rovigo and Treviso before closing with performances May 20-21 at the iconic Theater Bonn in Bonn, Germany. The tour earned rave reviews all across Europe, including a four-minute standing ovation for their performance in Bonn. ■



TULSA

REGIONAL TOURISM



Interested in more information on Tulsa Regional Tourism?

Please visit **visittulsa.com**, or contact:

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Director of Communications,
Tulsa Regional Tourism
jonathanhuskey@visittulsa.com



INTERCITY VISIT HEADS TO MOUNTAINS IN THE FALL

Sixteenth annual trip to examine what makes Salt Lake City tick

Salt Lake City and the state of Utah boast national rankings as high as its plentiful mountain peaks.

- After adjusting for cost-of-living differences among states, Utah's median household income of \$98,336 is rated No. 1 in the country, nearly 27% higher than the U.S. average of \$77,719, according to SLC's Gardner Policy Institute.
- Salt Lake City is third-best performing city nationally, according to the Milken Institute, which considers factors such as job growth, affordable housing and economic equality.
- State Farm rates Salt Lake City as the most fiscally fit municipality.
- And Salt Lake City's median age is roughly 33, about six years younger than the U.S. average, according to Data Commons.

"When you're young, it means you're rapidly growing," said Natalie Gochner, associate dean and director of the University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. "You're tech-savvy. You're healthier, which is great. Arguably, it's one of our best economic assets."

Salt Lake City is site of this year's Intercity Visit, a Tulsa Regional Chamber Community Development strategic initiative that takes a local delegation to a peer city to hear best practices.

Intercity Visits are an opportunity for Chamber members and staff, elected officials, business leaders, education administrators, young professionals and regional partners to gather ideas and insights from cities overcoming challenges and leveraging opportunities like those in Tulsa.

This year's Intercity Visit is Oct. 6-8. Jonathan Long, the Chamber's vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion, oversees programming for the event, and he led a five-member Tulsa group on a scouting trip to Salt Lake City in early June.

"We take great pains every year to talk to the principals of each city and learn about how they make advancements in the areas such as housing, tourism and downtown and economic development," Long said.

"Salt Lake City is a unique municipality, framed by mountains and characterized by a pioneering spirit that was born and 1850s and remains vibrant today. The Beehive State and Salt Lake City have fascinating stories to tell, and we can't wait for our attendees to hear them."

BRINGING IDEAS HOME

Louisville, Ky., was the Chamber's first Intercity Visit in 2010. Since then, the initiative has traveled to cities such as Pittsburgh, Charlotte, Denver and - last year - Detroit.



PAST INTERCITY VISIT DESTINATIONS

Louisville, KY (2010)
Indianapolis, IN (2011)
Charlotte, NC (2012)
Pittsburgh, PA (2013)
Portland, OR (2014)
Nashville, TN (2015)
Cincinnati, OH (2016)
Fort Worth, TX (2017)
Columbus, OH (2018)
Minneapolis - Saint Paul, MN (2019)
Multiple cities virtually (2020)
Northwest Arkansas (2021)
Denver, CO (2022)
Austin, TX (2023)
Detroit, MI (2024)

These excursions have featured panel discussions and presentations on topics ranging from river development to transit to regional branding.

In many cases, Intercity Visits have sparked conversations that ultimately led to transformational change back in Oklahoma. Packages such as Vision Tulsa and Improve Our Tulsa have resulted from the exchange of ideas at past Intercity Visits.

NEXT STOP: SALT LAKE CITY

One of the most progressive cities in the country, Salt Lake City has a thriving economy led by residents with a strong work ethic and a government that is exceedingly practical.

"We're probably the gold standard for fiscal responsibility," Gochner said.

That thriftiness was demonstrated in 2002, when the Salt Lake City-hosted Winter Olympics generated a profit of \$100 million, Gochner said. That windfall is laying a solid foundation for the city's preparation for 2034, when Salt Lake City will again host the Winter Olympics.

"The Olympics is such a catalyst," Gochner said. "It gets you on the same page and gives you a deadline."

The city's vibrant downtown features two major sports franchises: the NBA's Utah Jazz and the NHL's Utah Mammoth, both of which play in the Delta Center.

A planned \$4 billion investment downtown will include new hotels, convention facilities and arts organizations.

And while Tulsa is gearing up to break ground on a convention center hotel, Intercity Visit attendees will get to hear about the impact such a hotel has made in Salt Lake City, which finished its 25-story, 700-room Hyatt Regency in 2022.

Another SLC success story is the Downtown Farmers Market, which recently announced plans to go year-round with its event, which provides \$11 million in annual direct-to-consumer sales.

Attendees also will hear about the statewide impact of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is headquartered in Salt Lake City.

A renovation of the LDS Temple is scheduled to be completed at the end of this year. From April to October in 2027, the church is holding an open house expected to draw a total of about 5 million visitors.

The event is estimated to produced \$320 million in additional spending in downtown, according to the city's Downtown Alliance.

"It is on par with the Olympics," Dee Brewer, executive director of the Downtown Alliance, told a Salt Lake City television station in the spring. "It's a longer period of time. And I think it actually will have a greater financial impact for merchants and restaurants downtown." ■



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OKLAHOMA STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION OVERVIEW

With the looming fiscal year 2026 budget deficit, this year's regular legislative session was focused on fiscal responsibility, examining both the impact of government spending and the effectiveness of taxpayer investments.

In the final weeks of session, legislators presented their funding priorities to their respective appropriations committees. A major challenge came from Gov. Kevin Stitt's call for an income tax cut, which added significant complexity to the budget negotiations. Despite this, legislative leadership successfully reduced the top income tax rate from 4.75% to 4.5% while also eliminating the bottom three tax brackets. This was accomplished alongside the passage of nearly 500 bills and the appropriation of \$12.6 billion to state agencies.

KEY FY26 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Infrastructure:** Increased per-mile funding for county road construction and approved \$312 million to purchase a prison from the GEO Group in Lawton, directly addressing regional infrastructure needs.
- **Education:** \$25 million in new education formula funding tied to an additional instructional day requirement and the expansion of the teacher salary schedule from 25 to 40 years.
- **Transportation:** \$25 million allocated for structurally deficient bridge repairs and an additional \$20 million for Department of Transportation projects.
- **Higher Education & Workforce:** \$250 million committed to a new College of Veterinary Medicine complex at Oklahoma State University.
- **Military Readiness:** \$41.6 million dedicated to the modernization of the Oklahoma National Guard.
- **Health and Human Services:** \$200 million for a new pediatric heart hospital at the University of Oklahoma.
- Leaders are requesting \$50 million from the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust to support this project.

One of the most prominent controversies of the session involved a state audit revealing \$30 million in mismanaged funds within the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), a revelation that drew widespread media attention. The controversy culminated with the legislators terminating the ODMHSAS executive director during marathon votes the last day of session.

In summary, the state passed a \$12.59 billion budget for FY'26 along with 616 bills to round out the 2025 session.

The following is a shortened list of bills related to OneVoice priorities and/or issues discussed in task forces.

TOURISM & QUALITY OF LIFE

- **HB1571** - Removes the expiration date for the Oklahoma Route 66 Commission and allows funds to be budgeted or expended from the revolving fund, with rules adopted by the commission.
- **HB2374** - Modifies provisions related to the Filmed in Oklahoma Act to expand eligible production types, establish standards for loan-out companies and direct certain economic impact reviews for the program.
- **HB2673** - Adjusts provisions governing the Oklahoma Museum of Popular Culture Supplemental Fund to exempt funds collected prior to May 25, 2021, from certain limitations and to include enforceable donation pledge language.
- **SB249** - Extends the sunset date for inducement claims related to the Tourism Development Act. This bill became law without the governor's signature.
- **SB578** - Extends the duration of the Quality Events Incentive Program.

WORKFORCE & TALENT STRATEGIES

- **HB2778** - Creates a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program under the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness within DHS.
- **SB95** - Exempts interns and other temporary, unpaid workers from the definition of "employee" within the Workers' Compensation Act.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- **HB1847** - Directs DHS and the Fire Marshal to develop guidelines that allow family childcare homes to operate under the fire protection requirements of the IRC.
- **SB251** - Creates a minimum floor of funding provided to county governments by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs managed at the county level.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **SB586** - Declares that the leasing or contracting of employees by an establishment shall constitute an employer-employee relationship as it relates to the Quality Jobs Program Incentive Act.
- **SB987** - Creates a Department of Commerce Board to manage and conduct various functions and duties of the Department of Commerce.

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

- **HB1422** - Increases the maximum bond capacity the Grand River Dam Authority can authorize.
- **SB269** - Relates to carbon sequestration by adjusting and expanding provisions governing carbon dioxide, carbon capture and storage.
- **SB335** - Prohibits utilities from promoting or incentivizing customers to switch from natural gas fuel sources to electric ones.



*See more of the bills
that passed in 2025*

TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & AEROSPACE

- **HB2758** - Creates the Preserving and Advancing County Transportation Fund which allocates funds to construction and maintenance of county highways, roads and bridges.
- **SB287** - Extends the duration of certain aerospace industry employer tax credits and broadens the definition of a qualified employer to include institutions of higher education dedicated to relevant research.
- **SB335** - Prohibits utilities from promoting or incentivizing customers to switch from natural gas fuel sources to electric ones.
- **SB687** - Creates an agency special account within the Tax Commission for payment of rebates for certain broadband infrastructure incentives.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT & LEGAL REFORM

- **HB2728** - Expands the duties of the Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency (LOFT) to include impact analysis of proposed permanent agency rules and adjusts the process for legislative review of such rules.
- **HB2729** - Requires courts to interpret the meaning of statute de novo in a way that favors limiting agency power and prohibits administrative agencies from awarding civil penalties that would also be subject to common law.
- **SB995** - Adjusts various provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, requiring the Legislature to affirmatively approve agency rules, rejecting them by default otherwise.



TULSA CITY COUNCILOR CAROL BUSH

Carol Bush represents District 9 on the Tulsa City Council, having taken office in December 2024. A Tulsa native and graduate of Oral Roberts University, Bush spent two decades as a small business owner before transitioning to nonprofit leadership and public service. She served as executive director of the Crime Prevention Network and later represented House District 70 in the Oklahoma Legislature from 2016 to 2022. During her time at the Capitol, she authored many bills related to public health and safety. On the Tulsa City Council, she brings experience in business, nonprofit management and legislative policy.

What motivated you to run for city council? What makes you well suited for this job?

I served as a state representative for six years, but I felt called to focus more directly on the issues facing my home city. I'm a native Tulsan, and I love this city deeply. But I also see areas where we can – and should – do better. My experience at the state level gave me valuable insight into how policy is shaped and how resources are allocated. I believe those tools uniquely position me to serve effectively at the city level and help make a tangible impact in our community.

What are the biggest needs in your district that you hope to address while in office?

Infrastructure is the most urgent concern in my district. Many midtown neighborhoods were developed in the 1940s and '50s, and unfortunately, the water, sewer and drainage systems haven't seen the upgrades they need. These aging systems are increasingly vulnerable to failure, and if we don't act proactively, we risk facing far more costly repairs down the road. Reinvesting in these foundational elements is not just necessary, it's urgent.

What is Tulsa's greatest strength? Our greatest opportunity for growth?

Tulsa's greatest strength is its people. I see hardworking, resilient individuals who care deeply about their neighbors and their city. There's a real spirit of collaboration here that we can continue to build on. Our greatest opportunity for growth lies in harnessing that community spirit to create inclusive, sustainable economic development, ensuring that as Tulsa grows, everyone has a seat at the table and access to opportunity.

What can be done at the city government level to ensure continued economic growth in Tulsa?

City government plays a vital role in creating the conditions for sustainable economic growth. That starts with investing in core infrastructure – roads, utilities and broadband – that supports both

residents and businesses. We also need to prioritize support for small businesses and entrepreneurs by making city processes more accessible and efficient.

Improving public transportation is another key component, helping connect people to jobs and reducing barriers to opportunity. And we must focus on workforce development, partnering with local schools, training programs and employers to ensure our residents are prepared for the jobs of the future. Finally, we need to foster a regulatory environment that encourages innovation while protecting our community's long-term interests. With thoughtful, strategic action, city government can be a true partner in Tulsa's continued growth.

Imagine the best version of Tulsa 10 years from now. How does that version of Tulsa look different than the city we live in today?

Ten years from now, I see a Tulsa where every neighborhood is thriving. Our roads are well-maintained, our infrastructure is reliable and residents no longer worry about water main breaks, drainage issues or outdated systems. Communities are more walkable and connected, filled with vibrant public spaces, safe streets and a sense of pride.

Tulsa's economy is more diverse and resilient, with new industries choosing to grow here and local businesses flourishing. Our young people see a future for themselves in Tulsa, with opportunities to build meaningful careers and strong families. And most importantly, growth is shared. Every Tulsan, regardless of zip code, has access to opportunity, resources and a high quality of life. That's the Tulsa we can build together. ■



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MAINTAINING THE DEI COURSE

Speakers at Chamber's State of Inclusion offer positive messages in light of policy setbacks

by Rhett Morgan, Director of Communications for the Tulsa Regional Chamber

The current climate of diversity, equity and inclusion in this country is less about labeling and more about mindset.

That was among the themes voiced May 29 by Silas S. Dulan III, who was keynote speaker at the Tulsa Regional Chamber's State of Inclusion.

"A lot of what we've been saying here up on the stage is 'why is this DEI?'" said Dulan, founder and CEO of Dulan Business Group. "And it's because it's doing the right thing for the right people at the right time.

"It's understanding that these aren't DEI principles or strategies. It's a human strategy of how we move forward."

About 330 people listened to Dulan's address at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel & Convention Center in Tulsa. State of Inclusion, one of the Chamber's signature events, is designed to elevate the Tulsa region's efforts to cultivate diverse, equitable and inclusive best practices.

Besides handling the keynote, Dulan also spoke on a panel that included moderator Jonathan Long, the Chamber's vice president of DEI, and fellow panelists Alison Anthony, president and CEO of the Tulsa Area United Way, and Bailey J. Siegfried, communication and human resources at NORDAM.

DEI has endured a tumultuous 2025, with President Trump issuing a series of executive orders targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in the public and private sectors

"We can't get caught up in the fact that a title's being changed, what's being printed in the media, what the executive orders are saying," Dulan said. "Again, executive orders are not law.

"Don't feel like you have to retreat because of an executive order. You don't have to redesign your strategy. As long as the work is still being done, that's what matters the most."

Siegfried said one thing executives can do to strengthen inclusion is to be curious.

"Curiosity, honestly, is one of the most important attributes to have as a leader," he said. "It doesn't matter who you are on the team."

"Take an interest in one another. At the end of the day, no one is going to look out for you except for the people close to you."

A local aerospace company based in Tulsa, NORDAM seeks to hire women and people of color because those percentages are so low in that industry, Siegfried said.

"We all know that a diverse team, like synergy, makes for better outcomes and a stronger working team," he said. "...It doesn't matter who you are, how you are, who you love, how you love, how you were born, how you identify, you will be loved here."

Anthony said tenets of DEI that communities should strive for include affordable housing, living wages, economic mobility and access to healthcare and healthy food.

"No one has ever been able to tell me that treating people with dignity and respect is bad for business," she said. "That's just not true. Showing up and making sure that we're lifting up talent and giving you opportunities, that's good for business.

"Making sure that people feel on Sunday night like they want to come to work on Monday morning, that's good for business. And that's what we're talking about here."

Dulan grew up in the Oklahoma City area before establishing his current business in greater Kansas City.

He applauded the Chamber's work in DEI.

"I am overjoyed to see this happening, that you're continuing this work," he said. "Watching my home state become a very brick-red state, I was not anticipating this happening. People who are sitting at these tables, these are your allies. These are the individuals that help us wade through the wilderness of this time of uncertainty.

"So, leaning into these conversations for me is really encouraging. We know that there are people still out there trying to do this good work. At the end of the day, we don't need anyone's permission to do the work if we know that people need you." ■

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Community HigherEd

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Tulsa, OK 74145

communityhighered.org

CHE is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation with the mission to advance the purpose of Community Care College, Clary Sage College and Oklahoma Technical College through active engagement, advocacy, fundraising and stewardship.

Home of Hope, Inc.

226 W. Dwain Willis Ave.
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homeofhope.com

Home of Hope is a nonprofit organization providing residential, vocational and quality-of-life activity services for more than 200 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in northeast Oklahoma counties.

Ignite Medical Resorts Tulsa

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Tulsa, OK 74133

ignitemedicalresorts.com

Ignite Medical Resorts couples advanced medical rehabilitation with the high-end hospitality of a five-star luxury resort. Intense clinical programming and on-site rehabilitation deliver unmatched quality care while private accommodations and boutique amenities such as on-site spas, private chefs and concierge services provide an unparalleled guest experience.

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5272 S. Lewis Ave., Ste. 100
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cs3technology.com

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DumpStor of Tulsa

dumpstor.com

Waste management/dumpster rental company.

Electronic Synergy Foundation

6522 E. King St.
Tulsa, OK 74115

electronicsynergy.org

At Electronic Synergy Foundation (ESF), the mission is to leverage the recycling of unwanted electronics for environmental protection – keeping e-waste out of landfills – and for supporting charitable works.

Ellison Development Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

2604 W. Kenosha St., Ste. 100
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

ellisonasdcenter.org

The Ellison Development Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder (EDC for ASD) is a mission-driven nonprofit committed to empowering people with autism and their families through advocacy, education and holistic support. Based in Tulsa County, EDC for ASD was founded to close the gap between diagnosis and access to high-quality individualized care.

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Housing Forward

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Tulsa, OK 74103

housingforwardok.org

Nonprofit housing policy.

Huntley Ridge Apartment Homes

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liveathuntleyridge.com

Huntley Ridge Apartment Homes is an apartment community that just finished undergoing a full renovation.

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400 S. Boston Ave.
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hyatt.com

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improvinglivescounseling.com

Improving Lives Counseling Services provides high-quality counseling services in a professional, non-judgmental, supportive and friendly environment at an affordable cost.

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koehnks.com

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lgibranding.com

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1307 S. Boulder Ave., Ste. 100
Tulsa, OK 74119

leadlinemarketing.com

Leadline Marketing defines performance marketing as an outcomes-driven approach focused on growing a client's business and generating a return on investment.

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shoptherefuge.com

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nationalbuscharter.com

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Nexus One Technologies

1770 Star Mountain Rd.
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nexusonetechnologies.com

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osagellc.com

Osage LLC is the business arm of the Osage Nation and holding company for six entities: ONES, OPDG, OGS, Osage Innovative Solutions, Osage Nation Ranch and SkyWay36.

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Tulsa, OK 74131

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5579 S. Lewis Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74105

roguemonkeymedia.com

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