

GREATER MUSKOGEE AREA
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE
& TOURISM

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

SERVING • FOSTERING • CULTIVATING

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Wow, it has been a year!! First of all, I've had a blast and have been so honored to be the Chair this past year. It was an opportunity to learn and I got to know some of you better, and I always like that!

There's not enough space to even highlight everything that occurred in 2019; but, there are some things that are very memorable to me:

- We had a change in the way the City wants us to manage the Tourism contract.
- We held the inaugural Chamber recognition event and got to honor community members for being "Awesome Okies."
- We were able to welcome the APT tour back to Muskogee!!! And despite the monumental rainfall, it was another GRAND success!!!
- Oh my, our community suffered the flood of the century and, even though we continue to re-build, as always our community came together to help one another!
- D.J. was on the team that laid the foundation for creating the Muskogee Disaster Recovery Committee! This group will live on and be available to assist those affected by disasters. Unfortunately we tend to see a LOT of them.
- Our entire community celebrated the 50th Anniversary of "Okie from Muskogee" and we gleefully sang along with the Haggard family as they performed.
- Muskogee gained 17 new leaders through our Leadership Muskogee class!
- We had a change in leadership and personnel. D.J. set an example of professionalism and competence and left a great footprint for Angela to step into and then create her own footprint!! We are fortunate to have competent, capable, and involved staff.



As I leave the Chair position, my thanks and appreciation goes to the Board of Directors and various committee members for your commitment to creating an upward mobility ladder for our business community and tourism efforts. Thank you to the members who continue to seek positive growth in our community and trust in the Chamber and Tourism that we are doing our best to serve you. Hopefully, each of you will see through the annual report how impactful we have been and will continue to be!!!

Remember this always:

"Even on your worst day, you can be somebody's best hope." Manny Scott

Joy Sloan, LCSW
Green Country Behavioral Health Service, LLC
2019 Board Chair

LOOKING FORWARD



As the 2020 Board Chair, I am honored and quite excited to be a part of such a successful and strong organization in Muskogee. I look forward to a very productive year as we kick off the next decade. I find the goal of the Muskogee Chamber has remained constant with a strong commitment to retain existing businesses and attract new ones, while representing the interests and well-being of our businesses, residents, and visitors alike. Together we all strive to strengthen our community.

I encourage you to get involved in the Chamber on one of our several committees. The more our members get involved, the more effective we can be. If you have any thoughts or ideas, about how we can better serve our business community, please don't hesitate to contact me personally, or one of our staff members. We would like to hear from you.

Greg Eby
Arvest Bank
2020 Board Chair

2019
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Directors

ERIC ANDERSON
H.E. ANDERSON

JULIE BRUMMETT
ACME ENGINEERING

CHRIS CONDLEY
FIRSTAR BANK

CHAD FARMER
MUSKOGEE POLICE
DEPARTMENT

J. TYLER HAMMONS
HAMMONS & PRICE
LAW OFFICE

ANDY HAYES
HAYES LAW OFFICE

TAMMYE HOWELL
PREMIER USA, INC.

JASON HUGHES
BANK OF
OKLAHOMA

TONY PIVEC
ICTC

JON STOGSDILL
OG&E

TOM STROTHER
GEORGIA-PACIFIC

DR. RON RAMMING
CONNORS STATE
COLLEGE

Associate Directors

JOSEPH FULLER
DAL-TILE

MICHELLE KEELING
SAINT FRANCIS
HOSPITAL, MUSKOGEE

ALMA PICKLE
ADVANCED WORKZONE
SERVICES

Ex-Officio Members

JANEY BOYDSTON
MAYOR
CITY OF MUSKOGEE

MIKE MILLER
CITY OF MUSKOGEE

SCOTT ROBINSON
MUSKOGEE PORT AUTHORITY

MARIE SYNAR
PORT OF MUSKOGEE -
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

ANGELA WILSON
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER MUSKOGEE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

FROM THE CEO



We are so excited to share the enclosed information with you! As you read through it, you will see that 2019 was an exceptional year for the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. We continued to increase the quality and focus of the services we provide to the business community and visitors to our city. By following core values of teamwork and collaboration, transparency and accountability, and commitment to innovation, your Chamber continues to position itself to be a significant agent for positive recognition of what Muskogee has to offer.

Our current staff team believes strongly in our mission and passionately display this in our daily work. As a staff we work hard to create a culture of integrity and transparency in all that we do, both inside the Chamber office as well as with our members, partners, and the community at large. The outstanding leadership of our board of directors enables and encourages our strong work ethic and dedication to service of our membership. I am honored to serve as a part of such an extraordinary team.

As Muskogee continues to evolve and become established as a regional City of festivals and events, great restaurants and shopping, and sound economic conditions and quality of life, the Chamber will be working with businesses, the City of Muskogee, and many others to be a partner in that positive momentum. We are looking forward to a prosperous and successful 2020 for Muskogee businesses and hope you will call on us if we can help you.

Angela Wilson
President & CEO
Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Meet Your Staff



AMBER CRALL
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



CORYNNE JEWSON
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS &
COMMUNICATIONS



JUSTIN O'NEAL
TOURISM DIRECTOR



MEMBERSHIP MANAGER



SHERRY PILANT
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
COORDINATOR**

GETTING INVOLVED

Our committees help organize and execute the work of the Chamber. The Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism relies on strong committee leadership and participation to achieve our mission. All members are encouraged to join a committee.

2019 COMMITTEES

AGRI-BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Chair - Cheryl Leatherman, Tonto Construction

APT Golf Tournament

Chair - Chris Condley, Firststar Bank

AMBASSADORS COMMITTEE

Chair - Sheryl McCoy, Pinnacle Telecom

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair - Joy Sloan, Green Country Behavioral Health Services

FINANCE & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Chair - TyJuan Walker, Advantage Controls

MRA TOURISM BOARD

Chair - Avery Frix

PAUL REVERE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chair - Jerry McPeak

VISION COMMITTEE

Chair - Jim Eaton

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair - Tammye Howell, Premier USA

LEGACY MEMBERS

PARTNERS that make a commitment to the Chamber at a level of \$3,000 or more on an annual basis, are considered Legacy Members. Their investment allows the Chamber to increase our level of service and commitment to the Muskogee community by furthering our mission and program of work.

Thank You to our 2019 Legacy Members!

Advantage Controls
American Bank of Oklahoma
Armstrong Bank
Arvest Bank
Bank of Oklahoma
Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson
Chick-Fil-A
Connors State College
Edward Jones Investments
Firststar Bank
Georgia-Pacific
Green Country Behavioral Health Services
Indian Capital Technology Center
Love Bottling
Muskogee Creek Nation Casino
Northeastern State University
OG&E
Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee
ServPro
TTCU Federal Credit Union

2019 HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES

Business and Economic Development

The Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism (GMACCT) worked in various capacities this year to strengthen business and economic development for Muskogee. It is our goal to help businesses prosper by bringing recognition to Muskogee, providing networking opportunities for members, supporting and stimulating growth of tourism, supporting education and helping increase our workforce, as well as collaborating with other economic development organizations working to make Muskogee stronger through businesses and industry.

Recognizing the individuals and companies who work in the industries that are the core of Muskogee is one way GMACCT has a positive impact on business and economic development. As a Chamber we are able to represent the community as a whole in showing appreciation to groups of employees and individuals who work every day to improve the quality of life of each and every Muskogee citizen. Appreciation events and celebrations for local teachers, veterans, public service employees such as police, fire, utility, and maintenance departments, the agricultural community, and small business are one way we help bring attention to the importance and value of these sections of the workforce.

Encouraging residents and others from surrounding communities to shop Muskogee to put those tax dollars to use in your city is an important and on-going initiative for GMACCT. We worked with the City of Muskogee and local business owners to promote shopping local and to encourage shopping Muskogee year round.

- Hosted the **Veterans** Appreciation Dinner and honored our local Armed Forces with the Veteran & Military Banner project that displayed over 75 banners in downtown Muskogee.
- Delivered Thank You treats to all Muskogee Public School employees.
- Provided breakfast for over 360 **Public Service** employees of OG&E, District Attorney, Police, Fire and more.
- Hosted **My Muskogee Christmas** to encourage local shopping and community participation.
- Provided the **Member to Member Card** program to give incentives for shopping within the Chamber Membership.
- Hosted five **Small Business Development Opportunities**



Community and Professional Development

Assessing, cultivating and developing the leadership potential of our citizens is important to the long-term sustainability of the Muskogee workforce. The Chamber provides training and programs designed to provide affordable professional development and education on topics needed for the workplace and that are relevant to any size business. Our goals are to develop the capacity and commitment of the individual employee, to attract high level talent to business and community boards, and to help keep local talent and resources here in Muskogee.

Our Community and Professional Development programs are designed to enhance participant awareness of the community with the purpose of broadening our volunteer base in Muskogee, enhancing the knowledge of employees, and creating well-rounded and educated citizens.

- Graduated the 2018 **Leadership Muskogee** Class 25 and kicked off the 2019 class. Leadership Muskogee Class 25 had 17 graduates.
- Launched the **Intern Muskogee** program focused on promoting existing internship opportunities and creating new programs at Muskogee businesses.
- Hosted approximately 200 women at our one day **Women's Leadership Conference** held at ICTC on July 10, 2019. The day included keynote speaker Carrie Shapiro, VP of Dixie Manufacturing, Georgia-Pacific and three exceptional women represented the Women In Leadership Awards. Recipients were Lisa Wade-Berry, Holly Rosser-Miller and Phyllis Spriggs.
- Hosted nine **Muskogee Vision Committee** meetings to encourage and foster community prosperity.
- Patterned after our Adult Leadership program, the Chamber's **Youth Leadership** program fosters the qualities and skills necessary for success in the workplace and life. In 2019, 32 area youth were introduced to the world of business and aspects of their community in order to gain qualities to help them be informed and productive citizens. Youth Leadership participants included sophomores and juniors enrolled at Muskogee, Hilldale, and Fort Gibson High Schools.



Government Relations

The Chamber serves as the voice for business with our elected officials and their staff. To maintain consistent involvement and communication in strengthening the relationships with those individuals and affect legislative policy and statute changes as needed by our members, we worked proactively on the current issues focusing on the City of Muskogee and the surrounding areas.

- Hosted a non-partisan, legislative update session in partnership with the **Oklahoma Academy**.
- Our **Paul Revere Legislative Affairs Committee** hosted five meetings for our members to give them an opportunity to meet with their local, state and federal legislators.
- Provided **weekly updates** to our membership regarding current activity on legislation throughout the legislative session.
- Actively participated with other Chambers and advocacy groups at the **Oklahoma State Capitol**.
- Worked with local and state Representatives regarding the HWY 69 proposition



Marketing & Communications

Your Chamber strives to find strategic communication methods, keep members well-informed on Chamber-related information and other pertinent matters, as well as help advertise and market their business in the community.

Here are some of the services we provided in 2019:

- Advertisement of local events in a weekly **“Fun Things To Do”** email distributed to nearly 2,000 people.
- The Muskogee **Community Calendar** - the one-stop place for all community events.
- Priority placement for Chamber members in our **Muskogee Welcome Packets and Relocation Guides**.
- Premier advertising opportunities on **visitmuskogee.com**.
- Premier advertising opportunities in the Muskogee Chamber office.
- Public **Ribbon Cutting** events that included press and photos.
- Press releases and coordination with appropriate partners celebrating positive changes of Muskogee businesses.
- Introduced the **“Fun Things To Do” Radio Show** on Okie Country 101.7 highlighting events listed on the Muskogee Community Calendar each Friday.
- Used multiple **social media** platforms to keep the community connected to what is happening within the Chamber and the Muskogee Business Community.
- Recognized 10 businesses through a monthly **Member Spotlight** presentation. The 2019 businesses were:

C & L RV Center

Cowboys BBQ

First United Mortgage

Griffin Food Co.

JT Vecchio Co.

Mandy Lynn Lundy Photography

Pioneer Abstract

Suddenlink

Three Rivers Museum

York Street Tires



Membership Development & Partner Relations

Creating and maintaining strong partnerships with the business community is critical to meeting our mission. Our **Ambassadors** are a key part to the Chamber's volunteer Membership and Public Relations team. The Ambassadors help improve awareness of Chamber benefits, acts as a host at our events, attend ribbon cuttings and are a "go-to" resource for the business community. The Chamber Ambassadors hosted **24 ribbon cuttings** in 2019.

The Chamber hosted various events in 2019 to enhance the experience of our members, as well as provide them with various opportunities to network and support the work of the Chamber.

- The **Chamber Banquet** was held in March, where approximately 325 guests came to enjoy a Vintage Vegas themed night of networking and celebration.
- The Chamber hosted the Annual Meeting to celebrate the volunteers and businesses that made the Chamber's work a success. Five awards were given to those who made an outstanding impact with the Chamber: Volunteer of the Year, Judy Hoffman; Tourism Award, Muskogee Parks & Recreation Department; Small Business of the Year, The Rail Taproom; Okie from Muskogee, Mark Wilkerson; Business of the Year, Economy Pharmacy.
- In May 2019, we partnered with Bravado Wireless, the City of Muskogee Foundation and the City of Muskogee to host the second **APT Real Okie Championship**. This full week of pro golf events included a pro-am tournament in which 36 teams participated. The pro golf portion of the event hosted over 120 men & women pro golfers from around the world.
- 24 members participated in the 2019 **Partnership Opportunities Program**, positioning them as leaders in the community, and providing critical financial support to the Chamber.
- Approximately 375 people attended the Chamber's annual **State of the City Address** event held in September at the Muskogee Civic Center. Mayor Janey Boydston delivered an inspiring address that showcased the progress of our City in 2019, some of the challenges moving forward and what a great year 2020 is sure to be.
- In 2019, **40 businesses** became new members of the Chamber. The Chamber ended the 2019 with **505** members.



Tourism

The GMACCT is the organization designated by the City of Muskogee to promote and grow tourism in Muskogee. In 2019, we worked to positively impact Muskogee's economy by promoting, fostering and advertising the City of Muskogee as a premier tourist and convention destination.

- **Branding** - The Tourism Department continues to promote the REAL. Okie brand, emphasizing that Okies from Muskogee have a genuine strength of character that often goes unrecognized. This campaign was designed to bring awareness of all that Muskogee has to offer and increase community pride.
- **Promotions** - The GMACCT developed and executed new and innovative ways of enhancing tourism awareness both within, and outside of, Muskogee. Ads and billboards were strategically designed and placed to build awareness.
- The **Visit Muskogee App** has seen great numbers in 2018 with the utilization of geofencing and personalized messaging around all Muskogee attractions and Museums, as well as the entire city limits, welcoming visitors to Muskogee and promoting events.
- **Community Support Grants** provided financial support for multiple events, attractions, and activities that met the criteria for expenditure of Hotel/Motel tax revenue totaling \$50,000.00. We also took part in four different major events through our Large Special Projects fund, The Oklahoma Festival of Ballooning, APT Pro Golf Tournament, Bassmaster Opens and Muskogee Exchange Club Chili & BBQ Cook-off Kick-off Party, all totaling \$61,000.00.
- **Networking** with other Tourism professionals statewide and nationally, as well as with local hotel owners and Muskogee attractions helps foster mutually beneficial relationships. Our continued involvement in the Muskogee Hotel & Lodging Association, Main Street Muskogee, and state organizations such as the Oklahoma Tourism Industry Association ensures our continued partnerships are successful in advocating for increased marketing efforts in our community.



Tourism continued...

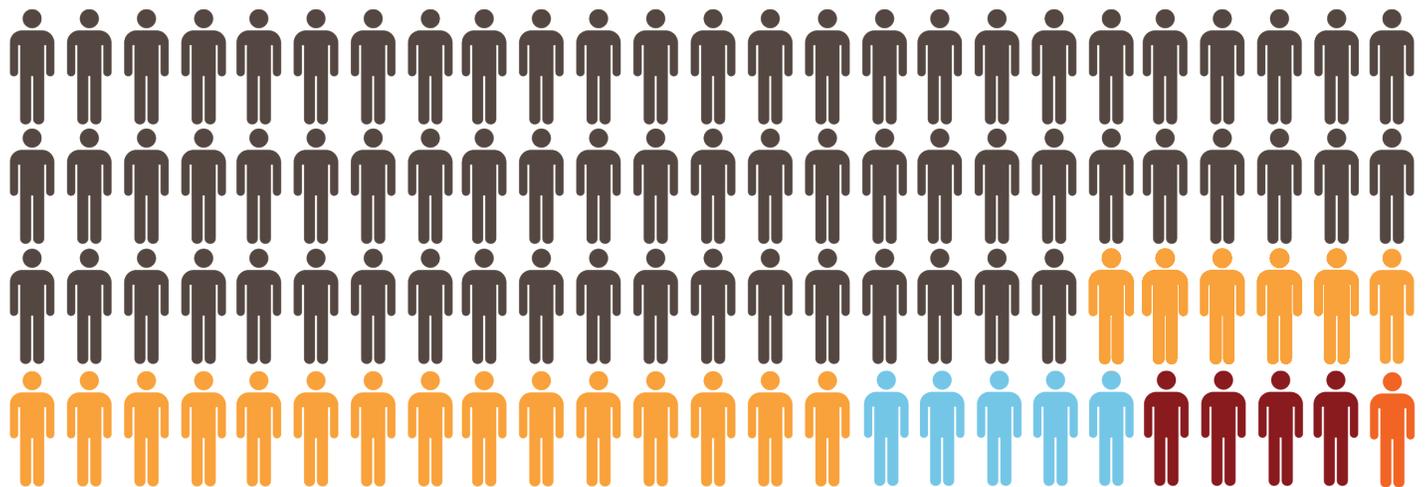
- **Government and City Relations** - Collaboration with city representatives in 2019 was a high priority to ensure a unified approach to being a top tourist destination and a visitor friendly community. The City of Muskogee implemented new policies and procedures to ensure the hotel-motel tax revenue is being accurately reported and tracked.
- **Trade Shows** - Muskogee Tourism was represented at 14 trade shows across the country to promote Muskogee as a destination, and to heighten public awareness of our local attractions, accommodations, and events.
- **Visitor Tracking** - The GMACCT is working on innovative ideas and solutions for tracking and logging visitor numbers at key area attractions. The total number of visitors tracked was approximately 2.5 million
- **Hotel Tax Collection** - The total amount of Hotel/Motel Tax that was collected in 2019 calendar year, was \$887,198.
- **Visitor Information** - Tourists can access local community information at four tourist information centers throughout Muskogee. This program helps drive traffic to those attractions, as well as making tourist information more accessible to travelers. Locations include The Castle, War Memorial Park, Three Rivers Museum and the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce office.
- **Merle Haggard Partnership** - We have signed a contract with the Merle Haggard Estate focusing on cross-marketing the City of Muskogee with the Merle Haggard and Okie From Muskogee brand. Along with general marketing campaigns featuring Merle Haggard, an official “Hag” merchandise shop will be located inside the REAL. Okie store with possibilities of expansion to other locations in the future.
- **50th Anniversary of Okie from Muskogee** - In 2019 we celebrated the historical night which took place inside the Muskogee Civic Center on October 10, 1969. This year, with the help of Ben, Noel and Theresa Haggard (Merle’s sons and wife), Muskogee Civic Center was host to over 3,500 “Hag” fans. Attendees traveled from over 11 states to celebrate this night, *Okie From Muskogee* and Merle Haggard.



MEMBERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Our membership is the driving force for everything that we do. Member involvement and input is what makes the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce successful. We understand the importance of knowing our membership and tailoring what we do best to serve their needs.

2019 MEMBERSHIP BY BUSINESS SIZE



● 1 - 10 Employees

● 51 - 100 Employees

● 11 - 50 Employees

● 101 - 500 Employees

● 500+ Employees

Total Members - 505

New Members in 2019 - 40

Thank You, Muskogee!

GREATER MUSKOGEE AREA
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE
& TOURISM

2019
YEAR IN REVIEW

 **40**
New Members

5 SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
opportunities

 **24**
Ribbon Cuttings!

Eight
ANNUAL
CHAMBER EVENTS

917,373
ONLINE BUSINESS
REFERRALS

WHERE WE ARE GOING IN 2020...

WE WILL **PROMOTE** YOUR COMPANY AND OUR COMMUNITY TO ATTRACT VISITORS AND BUSINESS TO OUR AREA BY:

- Maintaining a responsive web site with easy navigation and increased search engine optimization.
- Helping you know how to best utilize your membership profile to gain more exposure and referrals.
- Maintaining professional facilities and partnering with other organizations to provide locations for your company's information and promotional materials.
- Developing quality publications as promotional tools and resource guides for our members and for visitors to Muskogee.
- Actively recruiting and helping host conventions and large attractions.
- Ensuring small businesses have opportunities to be successful.

WE WILL **EDUCATE** YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH INFORMATION AND RESOURCES BY:

- Providing a quality leadership training and community development program through Leadership Muskogee.
- Providing Women in Business networking luncheons and monthly Small Business Forums.
- Supporting initiatives that create a quality workforce.
- Sending you emails regarding current affairs and events, Fun Things To Do in Muskogee, legislative updates, special announcements and other Chamber related news.
- Contributing monthly articles regarding Chamber activities, Tourism, and our member businesses to the local and regional media sources.

WE WILL **ADVOCATE** FOR YOU SO YOUR TIME CAN BE SPENT RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS BY:

- Identifying the key issues of our members to gain valuable insight to their needs.
- Providing a forum through our committee structure to vet issues and develop positions that are in the best interest of the business community.
- Providing access to elected officials through roundtables, forums, an annual State of the City Address, and other venues.
- Utilizing our partners nationwide to ensure we are aware of legislation on pending issues that affect City and County business.

WE WILL **CONNECT** YOU TO POTENTIAL CLIENTS, CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES BY:

- Hosting a variety of special events with diverse attendees and offering our members premiere advertising locations.
- Partnering with the City of Muskogee and other entities to ensure your business is a priority.
- Continuing efforts to host a quality Intern Muskogee program where businesses and organizations are able to post opportunities to prospective candidates, and students may attend professional development and soft skills training hosted by the Chamber.

WE WILL **CULTIVATE** ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR MUSKOGEE BY:

- Expanding and implementing innovative ideas for tourism in Muskogee.
- Working with the City of Muskogee, the Port of Muskogee and Industrial Development, Muskogee and Hilldale Public Schools and Main Street Muskogee to build collaborative solutions and ideas for expansion and growth.

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SERVING

as a voice and resource for business

FOSTERING

partnerships and community prosperity

CULTIVATING

economic growth