2017 has been a productive and very active year for Muskogee as well as for the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce. It was my honor to serve as the Board Chair this past year and to be an integral part of so many positive changes. As a Chamber of Commerce member, you can be assured that staff, the board of directors, committee members and other community partners are working hard to help build Muskogee’s economy and assist with the success of your business.

The Chamber served the business community in great ways in 2017. Chamber staff and volunteers continued to adapt to the needs of local businesses and provide positive solutions to their needs. Innovative programs, such as the Small Business Initiative, provided more customized support and benefits to Chamber members. Chamber leadership continues to prioritize these needs on a continuous basis and is committed to being a strong voice for the Muskogee business community. I hope you will take a few minutes to read this annual report to learn about the important role the Chamber of Commerce plays in your community and how the Chamber may be able to add value to your business.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve as the 2017 Chairman of the Board and look forward to continuing to be of service to the Chamber and its membership.

Rodney Bond
2017 Chairman
Georgia Pacific

Many exciting improvements and initiatives made a valuable impact in Muskogee in 2017 and 2018 is poised to be one of continued growth and development for the Greater Muskogee Chamber of Commerce and member businesses. Our mission will guide our efforts in support of our membership and in the promotion of Muskogee businesses and tourism. We will serve as a voice and resource for member businesses, foster effective partnerships and community prosperity; and cultivate economic growth. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” Your Chamber staff and Board of Directors are enthusiastic about the coming year. It is an honor to serve as the 2018 Board Chair and I invite you to join us in working together for a great year in Muskogee.

Phyllis Spriggs, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Muskogee Area Human Resource Assn.
FROM THE CEO

Chamber Friends:

We are so excited to share the enclosed information with you. As you read through it, you will see that 2017 was a momentous year for the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. We made significant strides in the overall improvement and efficiency of our internal operations and processes, as well as increased 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 significant agent for positive growth in Muskogee.

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 strong 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, excellent education opportunities 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 2018 for Muskogee businesses and hope you will call on us if we can help you.

DJ Thompson
President & CEO

Meet Your Staff

ANGELA WILSON
VICE-PRESIDENT

KEVIN IGERT
MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER

ASHLEY WILBOURN
TOURISM DIRECTOR

JUSTIN O'NEAL
MARKETING COORDINATOR

SHERRY PILANT
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

AMBER CRALL
OFFICE & FINANCE MANAGER

SHARON SHARP
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
GETTING INVOLVED

Joining a committee is a great way to get involved and start getting to know people. For more information about joining a Chamber committee call Angela at 918.682.2401 or email at angela@muskogeechamber.org

2017 COMMITTEES

AGRI-BUSINESS COMMITTEE
Chairman - Cheryl Leatherman, Tonto Construction
The committee meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 3:30pm

AMBASSADORS COMMITTEE
The committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 12:00 Noon

GOLF CLASSIC COMMITTEE
Chairman - Mike Trimble, Armstrong Bank
Contact Angela Wilson for more information on committee.

LEADERSHIP MUSKOGEE
Chairman - Josh Cotten, Cotten Wealth Management

MY MUSKOGEE CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE
Chairman - Darrell Hamby, Hamby TV & Appliance
The committee meets regularly August - December

MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Chairman - Gordon Carlin, Camp Gruber
This committee meets the 1st Thursday of every month at 4:00pm

PAUL REVERE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
Chairman - Jerry McPeak
The committee meets the 4th Friday of January - June; and October at 7:30am

TOURISM COMMITTEE
Chairman - Jim Blair
The committee meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm

VISION COMMITTEE
Chairman - Jim Eaton, Bank of Oklahoma
The committee meets the 3rd Friday of Jan-March; May; July-October at 7:30am

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE
Chairman - Phyllis Spriggs, MAHRA
The committee meets regularly March - July to coordinate the event

YOUTH LEADERSHIP
Chairman - Ron Morton, TTCU - The Credit Union
Meets as needed
PARTNERS that make a commitment to the Chamber at a level of $2,500 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 2017 Legacy Members!

American Bank of Oklahoma
Advantage Controls / Terrafab
Armstrong Bank
Arvest Bank
Bank of Oklahoma
Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson
Connors State College
Creek Nation Casino
Edward Jones Investments
Firstar Bank
Georgia Pacific
Green Country Behavioral Health
Indian Capital Technology Center
Love Bottling
Northeastern State University
OG&E
Oklahoma Natural Gas
Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee
ServPro
TTCU - The Credit Union
2017 HIGHLIGHTS & SUCCESSES

Business and Economic Development

GMACC 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 business and industry.

Recognizing the individuals and companies who work in the industries that are the core of Muskogee, is one way GMACC 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, 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 this section 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 GMACC. We worked with the City of Muskogee, Arrowhead Mall, Main Street Muskogee and local business owners to promote Small Business Saturday and to encourage shopping Muskogee year round.

- Hosted the Veterans Appreciation Dinner and honored our local Armed Forces with the Military & Veteran Banner project that displayed over 30 banners in Downtown Muskogee;
- Delivered lunch to all Muskogee Public School employees during teacher in-service;
- Provided breakfast for over 370 Public Service employees of OG&E, City of Muskogee Water, Police and Fire Departments;
- Hosted My Muskogee Christmas and Shop Smaill Saturday to encourage local shopping and community participation;
- Hosted Principal for a Day with Muskogee Public Schools.
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 2016 Leadership Muskogee Class 23 and kicked off the 2017 class. Leadership Muskogee Class 23 had 19 graduates.

- Hosted approximately 200 women at our one day Women’s Leadership Conference held at ICTC on July 12, 2017. The day included keynote speaker Dr. Kim Gordon of the University of Arkansas, Fort Smith and three exceptional women were presented the Women In Leadership Awards. Recipients included Marie Synar, Port of Muskogee; Kim Lynch, Neighbors Building Neighborhoods; Joy Sloan, Green Country Behavioral Health.

- 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 2017, 30 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 Warner, 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 nine meetings for our members to give them an opportunity to meet with their local, state and federal legislators on a monthly basis.
- 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.

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 2017:
- Advertisement of your local event in a weekly “Fun Things To Do” email distributed to nearly 2,000 addresses.
- 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 the visitmuskogee.org website.
- Premier advertising opportunities in the Muskogee Chamber offices and Tourism Information Center.
- Public Ribbon Cutting events that included press and photos.
- Press releases and coordination with appropriate partners celebrating positive changes of Muskogee businesses.
- Recognized seven businesses through a monthly Member Spotlight presentation. The 2017 businesses were:
  - Sadler Paper
  - America’s Lender
  - Bob Loftis Furniture
  - Aceco Rentals
  - Kathy Hewitt CPA
  - Cherokee Temps
  - Advanced Workzone Services
  (pictured)
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 of the Chamber’s volunteer Membership and Public Relations team. Ambassadors helped improve awareness of Chamber benefits, acted as hosts at our events, attended ribbon cuttings and were a “go-to” resource for the business community. The Chamber Ambassadors hosted 26 ribbon cuttings in 2017.

The Chamber hosted four events in 2017 to enhance the experience of our members, as well as provide them with varying opportunities to network and support the work of the Chamber.

- The **Annual Banquet** was held in March at the Hangar at Hatbox where guests came to enjoy a Wild West theme. Approximately 350 attendees gathered to celebrate the volunteers and businesses that made the Chamber’s work a success in 2016.

- Our annual **Chamber Classic Golf Tournament** hosted 28 teams from throughout the community that came out in April to spend the day engaged in a friendly competition with other local businesses and colleagues. The Muskogee Golf Club provided a beautiful setting and a challenging course to accompany the good food, drinks and comradery.

- 23 members participated in the 2017 **Partnership Opportunities Program**, positioning them as leaders in the community, and providing critical financial support to the Chamber.

- Approximately 360 people attended the Chamber’s annual **State of the City Address** event held in October at the Muskogee Civic Center. Mayor Bob Coburn delivered an inspiring address that showcased the progress of our City in 2017 and what a great year 2018 is sure to be.

- In 2017, **72 businesses** became members of the Chamber. This is twice the number of new members that joined in 2016. This increase was due in large part to the addition of a Member Services Manager to the Chamber staff in early 2017. The Chamber currently has **555 members**.
Tourism

The GMACC is the organization designated by the City of Muskogee to promote and grow tourism in Muskogee. In 2017, 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 Okie’s 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 GMACC 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 was developed and launched successfully to a worldwide audience.

- **Community Support Grants** provided hospitality and financial support for 17 events, attractions, and activities that met the criteria for expenditure of Hotel/Motel tax revenue. Beginning July, 1, 2017, the Annual Support Grant and Community Support Grant programs were consolidated into one efficient application process.

- **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 con't...**

- **Government and City Relations** - Collaboration with city representatives in 2017 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 properly reported and tracked.

- **Trade Shows** - The GMACC Tourism team attended 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 GMACC is working on innovative ideas and solutions for tracking and logging visitor numbers at key area attractions.

- **Visitor Information** - Tourists can now access local community information at four different locations in Muskogee. Dispersing tourist information throughout Muskogee helps drive traffic to those attractions, as well as making tourist information more accessible to travelers. Locations include The Castle, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, War Memorial Park, and the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce office.
Our membership is the driving force for everything that we do. Our members 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.

In 2017, the number of new members that joined doubled from 2016.

Thank you, Muskogee!
CHAMBER PROGRAM INVESTMENT AND SPONSORSHIPS

- Member & Partner Relations: 37%
- Marketing & Communications: 16%
- Government Relations: 1%
- Business & Education: 16%
- Community & Professional Development: 30%

2017 REVENUE SOURCES

- Tourism: 44%
- Program Investments & Sponsorships: 40%
- Membership Dues: 16%
WHERE ARE WE GOING IN 2018...

WE’RE GOING TO **PROMOTE** YOUR COMPANY AND OUR COMMUNITY TO ATTRACT VISITORS AND BUSINESS TO OUR AREA BY:
- Maintaining a new responsive web site with easier 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’RE GOING TO **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 two emails per week regarding current affairs and events, fun things to do in Muskogee, legislative updates, special announcements and other Chamber related news.
- Contributing two monthly articles regarding Chamber activities and our member businesses to the Muskogee Phoenix.
- Hosting three Candidate forums.

WE’RE GOING TO **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 legislative on pending issues that affect City and County business.

WE’RE GOING TO **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.
- Launching an 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.
THE GREATER MUSKOGEE AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM

SERVING
as a voice and resource for business

FOSTERING
partnerships and community prosperity

CULTIVATING
economic growth