

#TULSATOURISM

TULSA

2016 Regional Tourism Annual Report



VISITTULSA 2.0 INVESTORS

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE



INVESTORS

Ambassador Hotel Tulsa

Ameristar Perimeter Security
USA Inc.

Anheuser Busch Sales of
Oklahoma

Anish Hotels Group

Anonymous

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk
Management Services, Inc.

Arts & Humanities Council
of Tulsa

Arvest Bank

Bama Companies

Bill Knight Automotive Group

Blue Cross Blue Shield of
Oklahoma

Case & Associates Properties, Inc.

Central Bank of Oklahoma

Charles and Lynn Schusterman
Family Foundation

Commerce Bank

Conner & Winters, LLP

Cox Communications

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Downtown

Embassy Suites Hotel

Expo Square

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GH2 Architects, LLC

Grand River Dam Authority

Hall Estill

The Hille Foundation

Hyatt Regency Tulsa

JD Young

Jim Norton Toyota

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Lounge

MabreyBank

Magellan Midstream Partners, L.P.

Mahogany Prime Steakhouse

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Omni Air International, Inc.

The Philbrook Museum
of Art, Inc.

Public Service Company
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Promise Hotels

Regent Bank

Rogers State University

Saint Francis Health System

SJS Hospitality

The McNellie's Group

The Polo Grill

The Ross Group

Thornton Automotive Group

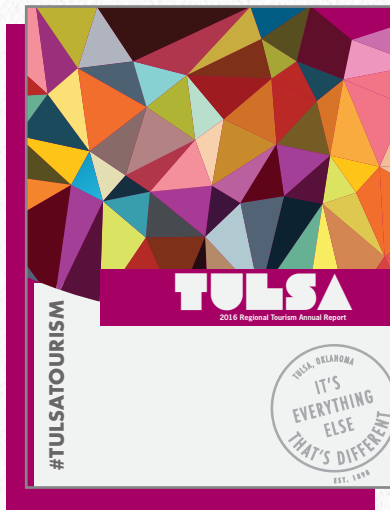
Tulsa Airports Improvement Trust

Tulsa Drillers

Tulsa Federal Credit Union

Unifirst Corp.

The University of Tulsa



ABOUT THE COVER

Aaron Whisner is co-founder of **Clean Hands**, a Tulsa based mural crew and streetwear shop. Aaron has been actively painting since the mid 90's. With roots in graffiti and street art scenes, inspiration is drawn from hand painted signage, street textures and type. Bold use of imagery and technique is used to capture public attention while maintaining balance with surrounding environments.

Aaron partnered with the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts and Culture and created the artwork used on the cover of this publication for the Tulsa Boom Factory event at South by Southwest, visually expressing Tulsa's colorful identity as a competitive destination filled with cultural diversity, local artistry and vibrancy.

Aaron also created the mural design featured on pages 54-55 as a visual art piece inspired by some of Regional Tourism's proudest moments during the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

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VISITTULSA MISSION: Regional Tourism will enhance the Tulsa region's economy through tourism to position and sell our region worldwide, in partnership with the public and private sector, as a premier destination for conventions, trade shows, corporate meetings, multi-cultural groups, sporting events, and top-tier equestrian competitions.

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

TULSA REGIONAL TOURISM IS MEETING AND EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS.

Over the last five years, we've witnessed a great renaissance in the Tulsa region as a preferred hub for artists, horse enthusiasts, cyclists, anglers, sports fans and more. With national headlines touting Tulsa's cool factor, to research experts using descriptions like active, family-friendly, cultural and vibrant, we affirm Tulsa's competitive identity as an attractive, welcoming place for travelers from across the globe.

Recent events like the GEICO Bassmaster Classic, the Pinto World Horse Championships, NCAA Division 1 Men's and Women's Tennis Championships and USA Wrestling culminated an economic impact of \$192,310,842.06 in direct business sales in the 2015 / 2016 fiscal year. We're winning new bids like the Brumley Gospel Music Sing; retaining business like the Arabian Horse Association's Arabian Horse Show; and breaking new ground by passing transformative legislation to implement Tourism-based Improvement Districts, allowing for dedicated marketing dollars to promote cities throughout our state as a destination for event planners and tourists.



Oklahoma's own Edwin Evers crowned 2016 Bassmaster Champion



OSU Cougars play at NCAA 2016 Division 1 Tennis Championships

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO INCREASE OUR COMPETITIVENESS AND BRAND IDENTITY.

The Tulsa community of volunteers and local ambassadors led the charge to overwhelmingly pass Vision Tulsa, laying a solid foundation for economic development projects that will enhance our convention center, bring USA BMX National Headquarters to Tulsa and make Mohawk Sports Complex a more competitive soccer venue for youth sports teams and families. Additional enhancements will be made to the Tulsa Zoo and Living Museum, the Performing Arts Center, Tulsa Fairgrounds, Gilcrease Museum and residential neighborhoods and experiences along Route 66.

We are exposing our competitive identity by bringing Tulsa's best singers and songwriters to national stages in places like Austin, TX during South by Southwest, and we're steadily enhancing local and iconic classics like the 39-year-old Tulsa Federal Credit Union Tulsa Run.

These accomplishments simply do not evolve within a beige, lifeless community. Tulsa's external perception affirms our reason for touting positive TripAdvisor ratings throughout the pages of our visitor's guides, while inspiring us to find creative ways to share our captivating story with the rest of the world.

Your engagement, endless volunteer hours, financial investments and commitment to our mission advances this great city forward toward a new paradigm. On behalf of the Tulsa regional tourism team, our volunteer boards and the VisitTulsa 2.0 Oversight Committee, we are extremely honored to work beside you during this historic time. ■


JOHN HEWITT

Chair, Tulsa Regional Tourism
Executive Board
President and CEO
Matrix Service Company


ROBERT D. MCGREW

2016 Chair, VT 2.0
Oversight Committee
President and CEO
T.D. Williamson, Inc.


RAY HOYT

President
VisitTulsa, Tulsa Sports
Commission, Tulsa FMAC

VT 2.0 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The VisitTulsa 2.0 Campaign Oversight Committee serves to ratify and approve the VisitTulsa 2.0 program of work and annual budget, overseeing implementation of initiatives and assisting the staff, as needed, with specific convention and tourism opportunities.



ROBERT D. MCGREW

2016 Chair, VisitTulsa 2.0
President and CEO
T. D. Williamson, Inc.



BYRON BIGHORSE

Chief Executive Officer
Osage Casino



STEVEN G. BRADSHAW

President & CEO
Bank of Oklahoma



JENNIFER CARTHEL

Advertising Director
Tulsa World Media Company



JERRY FLOYD

General Manager
River Spirit Casino



JOHN HEWITT

President & CEO
Matrix Service Company



TERRY SPENCER

President & CEO
ONEOK Inc.



MICHAEL S. NEAL

President & CEO
Tulsa Regional Chamber



JEFF NICKLER

General Manager
SMG Management



SHAWN SLATON

CEO
Cherokee Nation Businesses, LLC



JEFF STAVA

Chief Operating Officer
Tulsa Community Foundation &
George Kaiser Family Foundation



RAY HOYT

President
VisitTulsa, Tulsa Sports Commission,
Tulsa FMAC

REGIONAL TOURISM EXECUTIVE BOARD

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CHAIR
President & CEO
Matrix Service Company

JEFF STAVA

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Chief Operating Officer
Tulsa Community Foundation &
George Kaiser Family Foundation

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OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
President & CEO
T.D. Williamson

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SJS Hospitality

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SVP/Regional Manager, Business
Banking BOK Financial
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Kanbar Properties

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& Treasurer
University of Tulsa

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GENERAL MANAGER,
EXPO SQUARE
General Manager
Expo Square

JEFF NICKLER

GENERAL MANAGER, SMG TULSA
General Manager
BOK Center/Cox Business
Center - SMG Tulsa

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REPRESENTATIVE, CITY OF TULSA
FOR MAYOR BARTLETT
Economic Development
Coordinator
City of Tulsa

KAREN KEITH

REPRESENTATIVE, TULSA COUNTY
Tulsa County Commissioner
Tulsa County

MIKE NEAL

PRESIDENT & CEO, TULSA
REGIONAL CHAMBER

RAY HOYT

PRESIDENT, VISITTULSA, TULSA
SPORTS COMMISSION
& TULSA FMAC

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SECRETARY
Executive Director
Tulsa Sports Commission

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President
Arvest Bank

PETE PATEL

President & CEO
Promise Hotels

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General Manager
Don Thornton Cadillac

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CFO
Enovation Controls

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Executive Director
Grand River Dam Authority

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Nabholz Construction Company

JAMES CUNNINGHAM

General Manager
Hyatt Regency Downtown

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President & CEO
Tulsa Federal Credit Union

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Magellan Midstream Partners, L.P.

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Executive Director
OK Tourism

SARAH HANSEL

Partner
Hall Estill

VANESA MASUCCI

Vice President
VisitTulsa

REGIONAL TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

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Utica Square

JOHN BENJAMIN

Community Volunteer

BYRON BIGHORSE

Osage Casino

GREG BOUDREAU

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City of Tulsa

LEW ERICKSON

First Oklahoma Bank

JERRY FLOYD

River Spirit Casino

SCOTT GRAUER

Bank of Oklahoma

LAURIE GRAVES

Bama Companies

TONY HEABERLIN

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Cox Communications

STEVE HOBBSSouthwestern Payroll
Services, Inc.**DARRELL HORN**

Security Bank

ROBERT IRWIN

Farmers Insurance Group

LYNN JONES

Community Volunteer

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Summit Bank

DAN KIRBYOklahoma State
Legislature**BILLY KULKIN**

Cubic

SUSAN MEEKER

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Tulsa Drillers

JOSH MILLERGeorge Kaiser Family
Foundation**ELLIOT NELSON**

The McNellie's Group

JOHN PETERS

Cintas Corporation

**WILL
RICHARDSON**Citizens Bank of
Oklahoma**CHUCK RYGIEL**Blue Cross Blue Shield of
Oklahoma - retired**NICK SALIS**

University of Tulsa

PAT SELCERLamar Outdoor
Advertising**DAVE SHULTS**

JD Young

SHAWN SLATONCherokee Nation
Entertainment, LLC**PRINCIPAL
CHIEF GEOFFREY
STANDING BEAR**

Osage Nation

DOUG STUART

JD Young

BEN THOMAS

State Farm Insurance

STEVE TURNBO

Schnake Turnbo Frank

FRED UTTER

Community Volunteer

STEVE WALTONFrederic Dorwart,
Lawyers**TOM WEDDING**Oklahoma Soccer
Association**VINCE
WESTBROOK**

University of Tulsa

MATTHIAS WICKS

Tulsa Public Schools

JERRY WILKINS

Emerge Diagnostics

MIKE WILLIS

Tulsa County

PAULA MARSHALL

Bama Companies

**STEPHANIE
CAMERON**

APSCO

JESSE BOUDIETTEPropeller
Communications**KEN MORGAN**

Embassy Suites Tulsa

TULSA DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SERVICES PROPOSAL

—
RESONANCE



DESTINATION TULSA 2025

The Destination Tulsa 2025 process of research, stakeholder engagement and workshops was designed to identify and define a competitive identity that can unite efforts to market the region to attract more talent, tourism and investment to Tulsa.

A competitive identity is a positioning strategy developed by identifying the intrinsic strengths and differentiating characteristics of a community, city or region. Stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys and research informed a series of workshops focusing on Tulsa as a place to live, work and visit during which participants identified a wide variety of opportunities and challenges for Tulsa. This process uncovered common threads from all three workshops and identified six key characteristics that shape Tulsa's competitive identity: Creative, Vibrant, Active, Family-Friendly, Historic and Entrepreneurial,

Ideas and opportunities to reinforce and develop these characteristics were generated in the workshops and are presented in the recommendations that follow. They are based on input from participants in the three workshops and seek to differentiate the Tulsa region by enhancing certain characteristics of the region and enriching some of its experiences in order to make it more appealing to visitors, talent and investment.



PLACE

Perceived quality of a city's natural and built environment

PRODUCT

A city's key institutions, attractions and infrastructure

PROGRAMMING

The arts, culture and entertainment in a city

PEOPLE

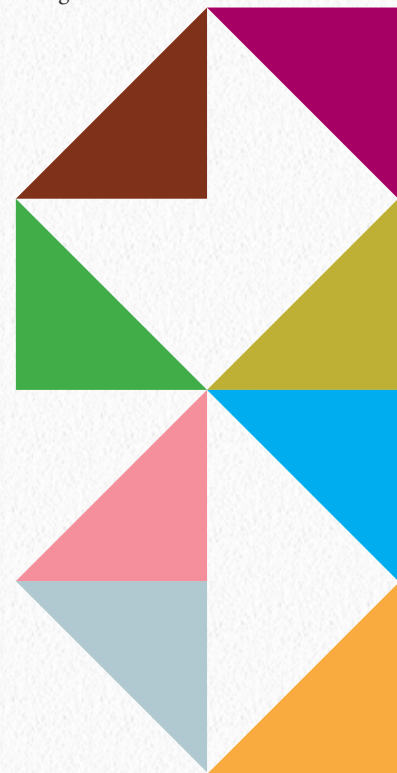
Educational attainment, immigration and diversity of a community

PROSPERITY

Employment, income, poverty and companies

PROMOTION

Quantity of articles, references and recommendations online



TULSA'S COMPETITIVE IDENTITY

A PLACE TO VISIT

With a new generation of Millennials beginning to travel in significant numbers and international travel forecast to double over the next 20 years, few industries in the world are growing, or changing, faster than travel and tourism.

Last fall, in partnership with the Tulsa Regional Chamber's economic development and workforce programs we engaged Resonance Consultancy in an extensive, communitywide research project called **Destination Tulsa 2025** to define a destination development strategy that will attract talent, tourism and investment to the Tulsa region. This effort ignited a collaborative process that included industry, civic and community leaders as well as Tulsans at large, and resulted in providing the travel and tourism market with data to create effective marketing strategies that will positively impact our region's future.

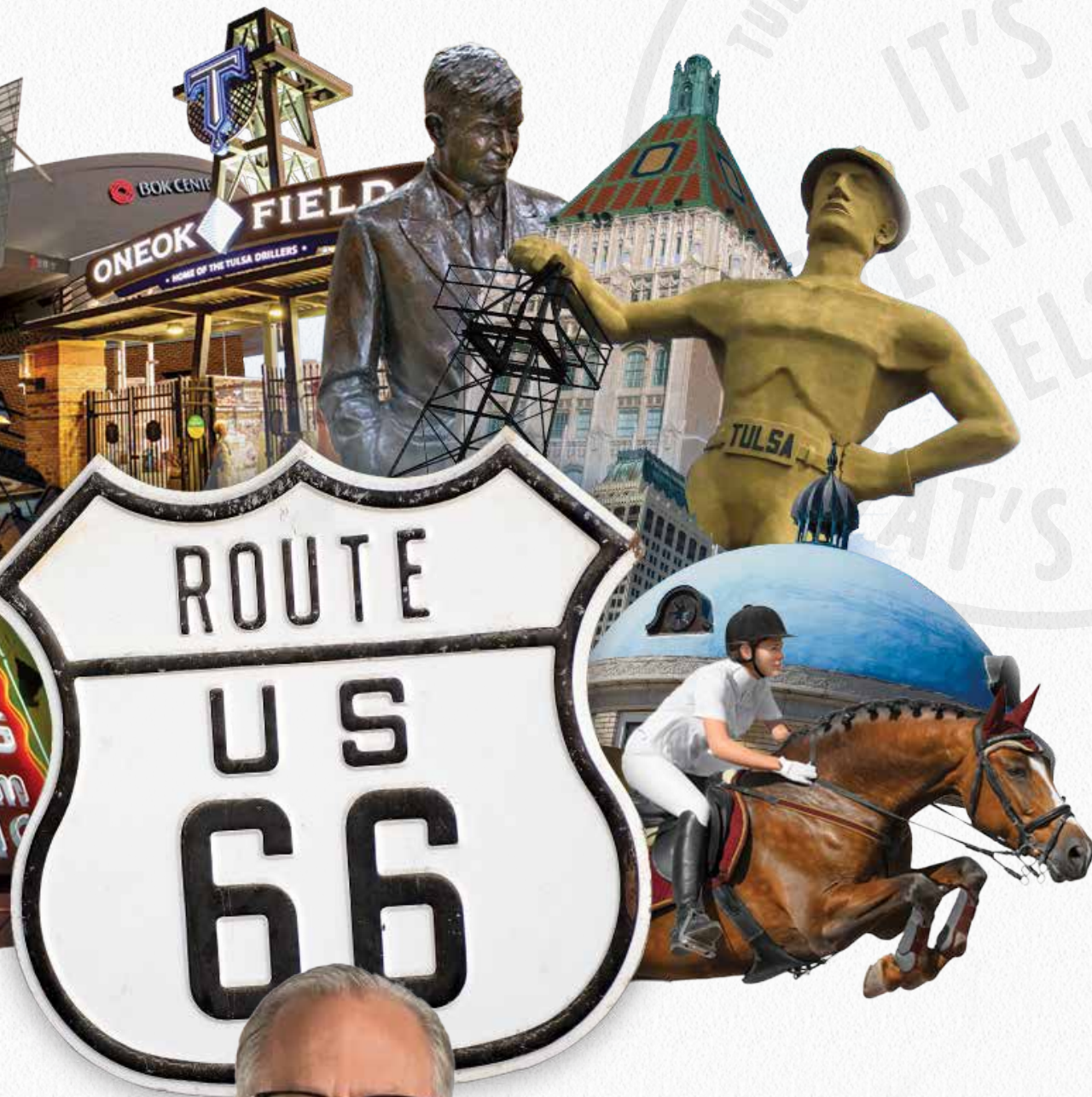
APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

This project brought together the development of Tulsa's competitive identity, an economic development strategy and an urban planning perspective in order to create a series of interrelated and interdependent strategic recommendations. These recommendations will ultimately inspire a vision for how Tulsa should shape and plan its physical and geographical assets to create a stronger sense of place. ■

THE NINE MONTH PROCESS EVOLVED INTO SIX STAGES:

1. Kick-off & Project Planning
2. Research & Analysis
3. Situational Analysis
4. Opportunities Analysis
5. Recommendations & Review
6. Final Report Writing & Delivery





"Our employees and customers are committed to Tulsa and building a high quality of life in our community. Creating interest in our community by leveraging the more than \$1 billion in infrastructure investments made by the public and private sector to generate tax revenue to support local needs is both logical and responsible. As a large corporate company domiciled in Tulsa, we utilize the many first class amenities across the region to both attract and retain top talent. We live in a hyper competitive environment and VisitTulsa enhances the competitive position of our region."

STEVE BRADSHAW
PRESIDENT AND CEO | BANK OF OKLAHOMA

KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT WILL IMPACT THE TULSA REGION'S COMPETITIVE IDENTITY:

CREATIVE

The global economy is in the midst of a tremendous shift: whereas access to natural resources or location to trade routes drove the rise of cities in the Agricultural and Industrial Ages, regional economic success now hinges increasingly upon the ability to attract and retain talent. Social and economic theorist Richard Florida has coined this new era the “Creative Age” because of its dependence on human creativity as the key indicator of economic growth. Creativity is what sparks new ideas and new commercial innovations. Creativity leads to new businesses, new jobs, higher wages and economic growth. The “Creative Class” consists of those who work in today’s knowledge-based industries, such as science and technology, arts and culture, business and management, and education. The Creative Class describes those who create new ideas, technologies and innovations. Despite Tulsa’s solid base of creative workers and industries, the region is not yet maximizing its full creative potential. The Tulsa region needs to draw on its existing assets – including its arts, cultural and academic institutions – to establish itself as a destination for creative workers, particularly if it wants to compete with the likes of Portland, Nashville, or Austin. ■

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Develop a Creative Class Ambassador Program
- » Create a Tulsa College of Arts and Design
- » Create a Music Incubator/Accelerator
- » Promote OK-Homegrown



Guests at the 2016 Tulsa International Mayfest were given a brush and paints to make their own masterpiece.

VIBRANT

The ideal vibrant place is diverse and differentiated. It is welcoming to many kinds of people; it is varied in its architecture, activities and events; it is a place that invites people to engage, and it provides rewarding experiences for the effort. A vibrant place offers opportunities to gather in beautiful spaces and showcases a unique cultural face – be that in arts, music or food. A vibrant place feels healthy and alive. Vibrancy, in effect, is really the result of all the recommendations in this document. Vibrant cities are the ones people want to live, work, play and invest in. People are emotionally attached and want to return to vibrant cities.

Tulsa's vibrancy and character is the result of an organic collaboration led by entrepreneurs, music lovers and artists. New restaurants, stylish cafes, street art, a music scene, concept stores and quirky bars sprinkled across different neighborhoods illustrate this creative momentum. Large-scale investments in culture, such as the BOK Center, and the development of areas such as the Brady Arts and Blue Dome Districts, are helping shape Tulsa's identity.

However, connectivity and walkability remain a major challenge for Tulsa in comparison to other places. Current surface parking downtown limits pedestrian interactions, civic life and local retail development. A lack of transit into and around Tulsa's core impedes accessibility and connectivity. Re-prioritizing infrastructure investments from favoring a car-oriented approach towards favoring walking, biking and transit would position Tulsa as a modern and lively region, while adding economic and social value to striving neighborhoods and businesses. ■



Onlooker gives a thumbs up to the crowd at the 2016 Hop Jam.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » *Foster Downtown / Arena Entertainment District*
- » *Center City Planning & Development*
- » *Parking Activation Program*
- » *Regional Transit Program - From Cars to Walking, Biking & Public Transit*
- » *Design Streets for People - Sticky Streets*
- » *Regional Main Street Coordination Strategy*
- » *City Building Innovation Forum*

Active adventurers is an important market segment for Tulsa.

ACTIVE

Active cities make it easy and inviting to engage in physical activity. The best active cities make activity irresistible to visitors and residents. This can range from simple movement, like walking from place to place in the urban core, to having access to bikes and parks and their respective recreation and activities, all the way to providing opportunities for competitive athletics.

Research for this project indicates that the visitor psycho-demographic segment called Active Adventurers is an important market segment for Tulsa. As their name implies, Active Adventurers have a great interest in engaging with nature and participating in outdoor sports. This group doesn't see a vacation as a time to slow down or be indulgent. They want to explore new things and be, well, active.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Build River + Riverfront Development
- » Create Oklahoma Horse Park
- » Rebuild Chandler Park

A whopping 91% participate in outdoor sports while at their destination. This psycho-demographic segment doesn't just embody visitors – it is also reflected in Tulsa residents themselves, who have identified a number of outdoor activities in the Tulsa region as important to their quality of life. These include the beautiful geography, the bike trail system, parks / recreation, nature, urban wilderness, and of course, the future Gathering Place. The passion for outdoor activity is also reflected in the Vision 2025 “yes” vote to fill the river with water and create endless opportunities for water-related outdoor activities. As a result, the focus of three major recommendations for this project is to further engage and stimulate this important visitor market segment and resident group by developing outdoor-related infrastructure, activities and events that will keep them active ■





Tulsans enjoy the biking and running path along Riverside Drive.



Photo courtesy of Tulsa River Parks Authority

Runners on the trails at Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area.



Thousands head downtown to view the sights and sounds of the Tulsa International Mayfest.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

Family-friendly cities take into account the desires and needs of the generations of residents now and in the future, as well as visitors. Family-friendly places offer attractions like markets, parks, and amusements that carefully consider the diverse needs of everyone from the very young and very old, to those in their youthful prime. This commitment to catering to every age group results in events and gatherings with a universal appeal, where everyone can find their place.

Research for this project indicates that the visitor psycho-demographic segment called Family-Oriented Frugals is an important market segment for regional Tulsa. Family-oriented Frugals are more inclined to choose a multi-generational vacation or a family vacation with the kids (32%). Their priorities are safety (71%), cost (52%) and good climate (51%). Aside from dining (96%), Family-Oriented Frugals are most interested in fun attractions (93%). This psycho-demographic segment is also reflected in Tulsa residents themselves, who told us that Tulsa is a great place to raise a family. Residents definitely appreciate the cultural diversity, the people of Tulsa, the progressive and pioneering character of the city and the fact that it's a welcoming small city/big town kind of place. With that said, stakeholders have suggested a few family-oriented activities that would enhance the quality of life in Tulsa and keep children and adults entertained and engaged. The recommendations include an amusement / theme park, a central public market and a new events & festival strategy focused on appealing to residents and visitors alike. It goes without saying that Tulsa residents and visitors are very much looking forward to the Gathering Place, one of the best new public spaces for families in the entire country. ■

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » *Attract Amusement / Theme Park*
- » *Create Central Public Market*
- » *Develop Events & Festival Strategy*



Route 66 Gateway, funded by Vision 2025.

HISTORIC

Cities that capitalize on their past can make history a part of modern life, championing and honoring the past in order to enrich the experience of the present. Whether you live in Tulsa or you are just visiting, it's impossible to miss the richness of this historically textured place. Tulsa is full of history and stories, including everything from the land rush and the oil boom, to the art deco skyscrapers, to life along Route 66, to the American art collections housed in our museums. In fact, stakeholders (residents, business people, government officials) who were engaged in this project emphasized how the historic people, events, companies and institutions helped shape the region and give it the character, values and opportunities that are relevant today. That said, it was also clear that pressures to develop, change, modernize, and survive have sometimes left Tulsa's history by the wayside – not lost entirely, but just a little bit forgotten. As a result, three major recommendations were made that capitalize on Tulsa's history to re-engage with residents and visitors, and to give the history the recognition and visibility that it deserves. ■

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » *Showcase Gilcrease Museum*
- » *Develop Route 66 Experience and More*
- » *Nominate Art Deco to World Heritage List*

ENTREPRENEURIAL

It's time to get excited about the future of Tulsa's entrepreneurial economy. The region is steeped in a long history of innovation, ranging from production in the oil and gas industries, to new knowledge-based industries like aerospace and information technology. Tremendous opportunity exists to transfer the expertise from these industries into growing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sectors.

The university system will be critical to Tulsa's "brain gain" and talent retention strategies. Tulsa's universities are already home to nationally recognized programs in petroleum, cyber security and advanced manufacturing. Although Tulsa lacks the Ivy League institutions that have seeded some of the nation's leading R&D centers, it does have a unique regional higher education system that can quickly adapt to industry shifts and respond to needs for innovation. The Tulsa Achieves college funding program offers easier access and onboarding into higher education for students. Tulsa can leverage this distinctive university environment to attract and retain human capital, and promote entrepreneurial growth.

As Tulsa grows its innovation ecosystem, its arts and cultural assets become increasingly important. The way businesses decide the location of their headquarters has fundamentally changed. No longer do firms move their companies based upon the cost of land, taxes or where the CEO lives. In today's knowledge-based economy, companies are moving to where they can find easy access to highly educated and innovative talent. That talent they seek is clustering in vibrant, mixed-use districts where they have the ability to live, work and play in close proximity to other innovators. With strategic investments, Tulsa can be well positioned to offer this environment. ■



36 Degrees North is the central gathering point for Tulsa's entrepreneurs and startup programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » *Create a Tulsa Maker + Innovation District*
- » *Develop a Regional Tulsa Sprout Fund*
- » *Promote the Tulsa Region as a Living Lab*
- » *Create a "Startup Tulsa" Directory*
- » *Develop a "Campus Tulsa" Strategy*
- » *Create a "Maker-in-Residence" Program*
- » *Support a Culinary / Restaurant Incubator*



Visitors at the 42nd Annual Mid-America Ford & Shelby Nationals take a break at the Prairie Brewpub.



"As a life-long Tulsan, I've long recognized how special my hometown is. I invest in VisitTulsa because I want others to discover our great city as an interesting destination and a surprisingly unique place to live."

JAY EHELMAN
REGIONAL PRESIDENT | ARTHUR J GALLAGHER RISK MANAGEMENT
SERVICES INC.



TULSA COMPETITIVE IDENTITY AFFIRMED

The Destination Tulsa 2025 process clearly affirmed what Tulsans already knew, but needed the research to prove it. Nashville citizens knew they were Music City, but they hired research consultants to prove it.

TULSA IS A REGION OF MOVERS AND SHAKERS, DOERS AND MAKERS.

We made art from oil. We make airplanes fly. We make places to meet and paths for bikes. We make space for young guns who make things move. We make the future with hands and hearts. We make music; we make and re-make the Tulsa sound; we make folksingers and other heroes feel at home. We make it easy to live here. Or stay a while. Or start a company. We make everyone welcome. We make breakfast, lunch and dinner. We make a mean cocktail. And a steak you won't forget. We make downtown come to life and we make nature part of life. We make one tough bike race, and we make a big deal about that highway. We make sense, make a scene, make up our own minds. We make friends, make it fun, make it possible, make it profitable, make it better, make it work, make it happen. ■

Mural in the Blue Dome District.

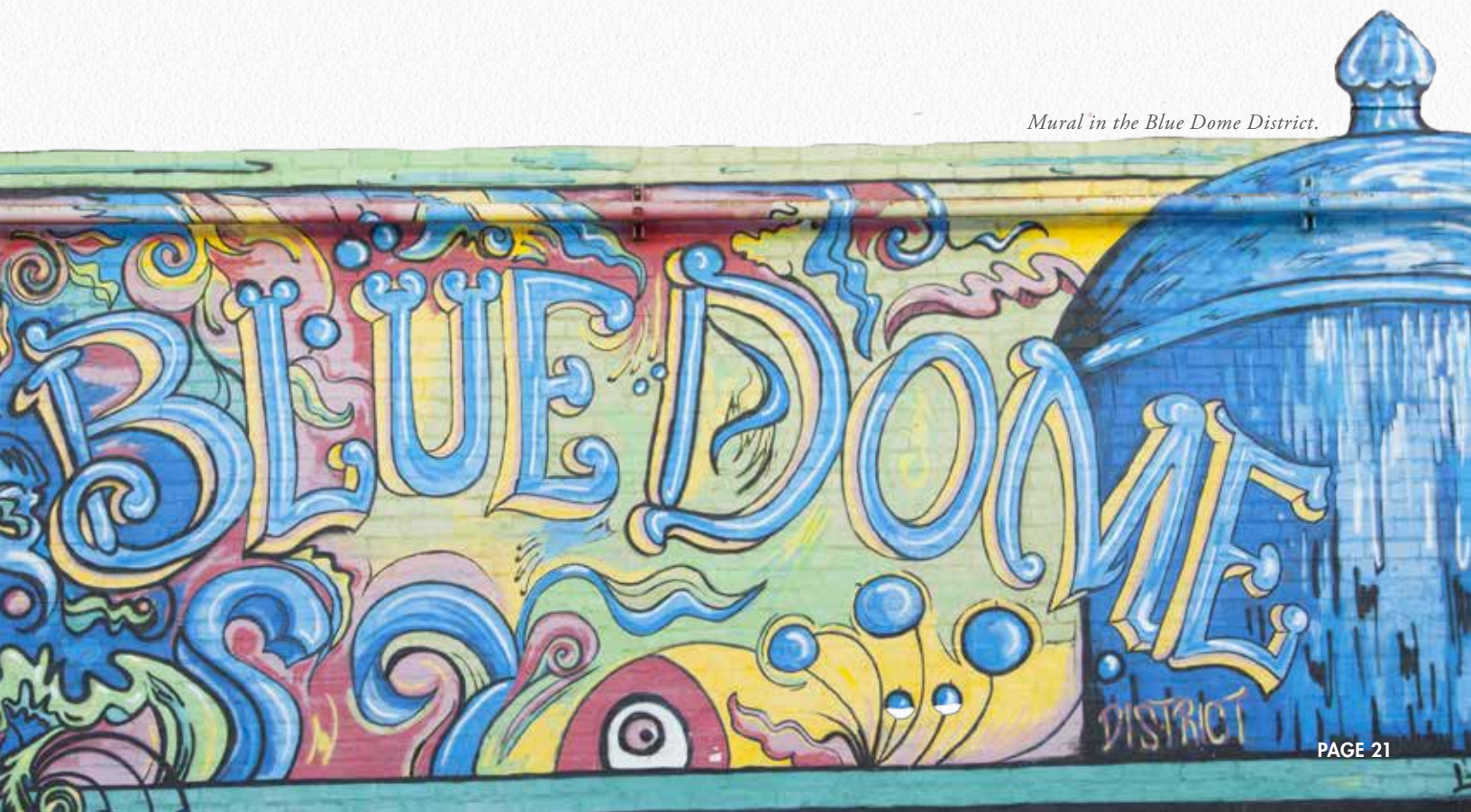




Photo Credit: Rachael Ruffin

Tulsa's vibrant music scene is helping to erase the beige.

ERASING BEIGE

VisitTulsa was the first of its kind to launch a public/private funding campaign in 2012, called VisitTulsa 1.0, in an effort to increase marketing dollars per room, build regional partnerships, re-focus marketing efforts and increase per-visitor spending.

The plan of action was developed following research performed by Randall Travel Marketing and Zeitgeist Consulting, who gathered information from focus groups, meeting planners, leisure travelers and visitors of Tulsa.

Qualitative research hit home the hardest. Those who had never been to Tulsa lacked awareness of the region's key assets. Those who had been to Tulsa focused on the city's lack of marketing presence, and only saw its dusty cowboy roots and suburban sprawl. In one word, they deemed Tulsa as 'beige'.



Visitors to Tulsa's Mayfest stop to admire some of the art on display.

FOUR YEARS LATER

VisitTulsa 1.0 was a tremendous success, allowing the organization to begin to market the region to prospective meeting and event planners, compete with peer cities for events that required financial support, and modernize its marketing techniques with a new website and collateral tools. With 40 investors and \$3.6 million raised to support three-years of tourism work, VisitTulsa 1.0 elevated in the mind of the business community the power and potential of Tulsa tourism as an industry all to itself with real economic impact to our region. It also elevated VisitTulsa's marketing dollars per room from \$149 in 2011 to \$238 in 2014.

Still, in a peer to peer comparison of other cities, our region's bench strength simply did not stack up competitively. The region remained behind its competitive set with the second lowest budget, ranking well below the industry average in marketing dollars per room.

The VisitTulsa 2.0 capital campaign was born to close the gap and capitalize on the momentum. VisitTulsa 2.0 transitioned away from funding operational costs, to funding four major pillars of event business development -- Recruit, Retain, Develop, Enhance — and, in turn, achieved optimal budget competitiveness with its peer city set and optimally leveraged Regional Tourism's private dollars for pure economic impact.

Regional Tourism's room night promise to the city in what has just concluded year two of the VisitTulsa 2.0 campaign was 137,280, with an internal 4 % stretch goal of 137,800. Room nights in Tulsa reached a total of **144,429** in **2016**. Tourism's local economic impact continues to increase, from \$275 million in 2015 to \$362.5 million in direct and indirect total business sales this year. The occupancy percentage increase is the percentage amount of increase in occupancy of hotel room nights from the previous year.

Now launching its third year, VisitTulsa 2.0 aims to continue to position Tulsa as a key competitor. The Tulsa region has risen to an optimal level of competition with its peer markets, like Austin and Memphis, by having a **minimum of \$5 million annual budget and achieving around \$450 marketing dollars per room.** ■



CHERRY STREET BEFORE



GREENWOOD DISTRICT BEFORE



REGIONAL TOURISM FINANCIAL REVIEW

July 2015 - June 2016

	TOTAL ACTUAL	BUDGET
Visit Tulsa/TSC Sponsorships	\$2,445,892.38	\$1,596,070.30
VisitTulsa 2.0 Campaign	\$1,267,370.62	\$1,868,621.06
Lodging Tax Revenue	\$3,029,582.00	\$3,674,921.74
Chamber Contribution	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,992,845.00	\$7,389,613.10

Compensation	\$1,523,599.00	\$1,396,585.44
Office Expenses	\$290,930.74	\$297,745.66
Professional Fees	\$175,574.49	\$182,000.00
Research and Training	\$148,277.73	\$133,000.00
Event Operations	\$1,944,679.00	\$2,243,547.00
Travel and Hosting	\$445,414.00	\$559,240.00
Marketing	\$1,733,337.65	\$1,789,828.00
Publications and Brochures	\$109,125.00	\$154,550.00
Support Costs	\$595,255.00	\$632,403.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,966,192.61	\$7,388,899.10

TOTAL INCOME	\$26,652.39	\$714.00
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Allocation of Lodging Tax Budgeted	\$3.9M per city contract - \$3.6M per calendar 2016
Percent of Lodging Tax Allocated	50.50%
Total Sales Tax Collected Actual	\$7,513,138.00
Room Nights Secured	144,429

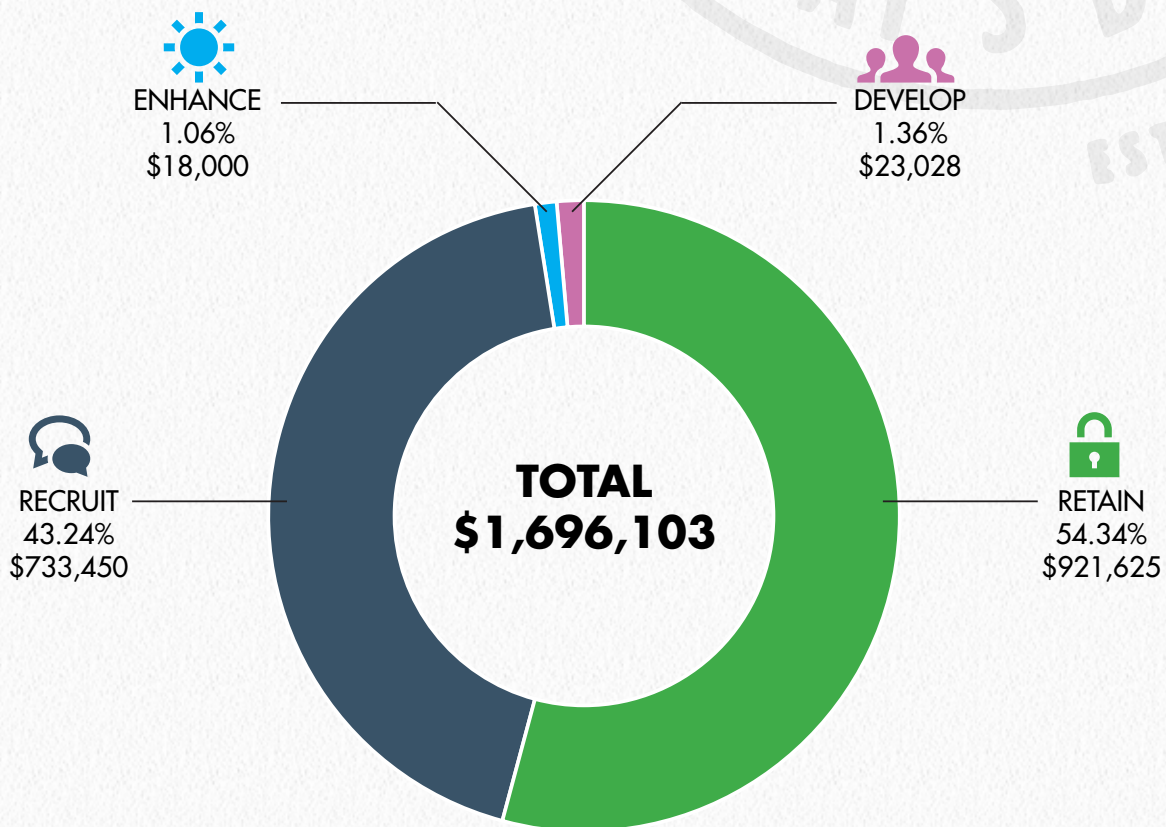
ECONOMIC IMPACT TOTALS:

Business Sales (Direct)	\$192,310,842.06
Business Sales Total (Direct And Indirect)	\$362,532,247.76

VISITTULSA 2.0 PILLARS

The four pillars of the VisitTulsa 2.0 strategy impact every facility and attraction in the Tulsa region. These pillars were put in place to fully take advantage of the return on the significant investments made in developing these tourism assets through the retention, recruitment, development and enhancement of exciting events that increase the region's attributes as a premier destination.

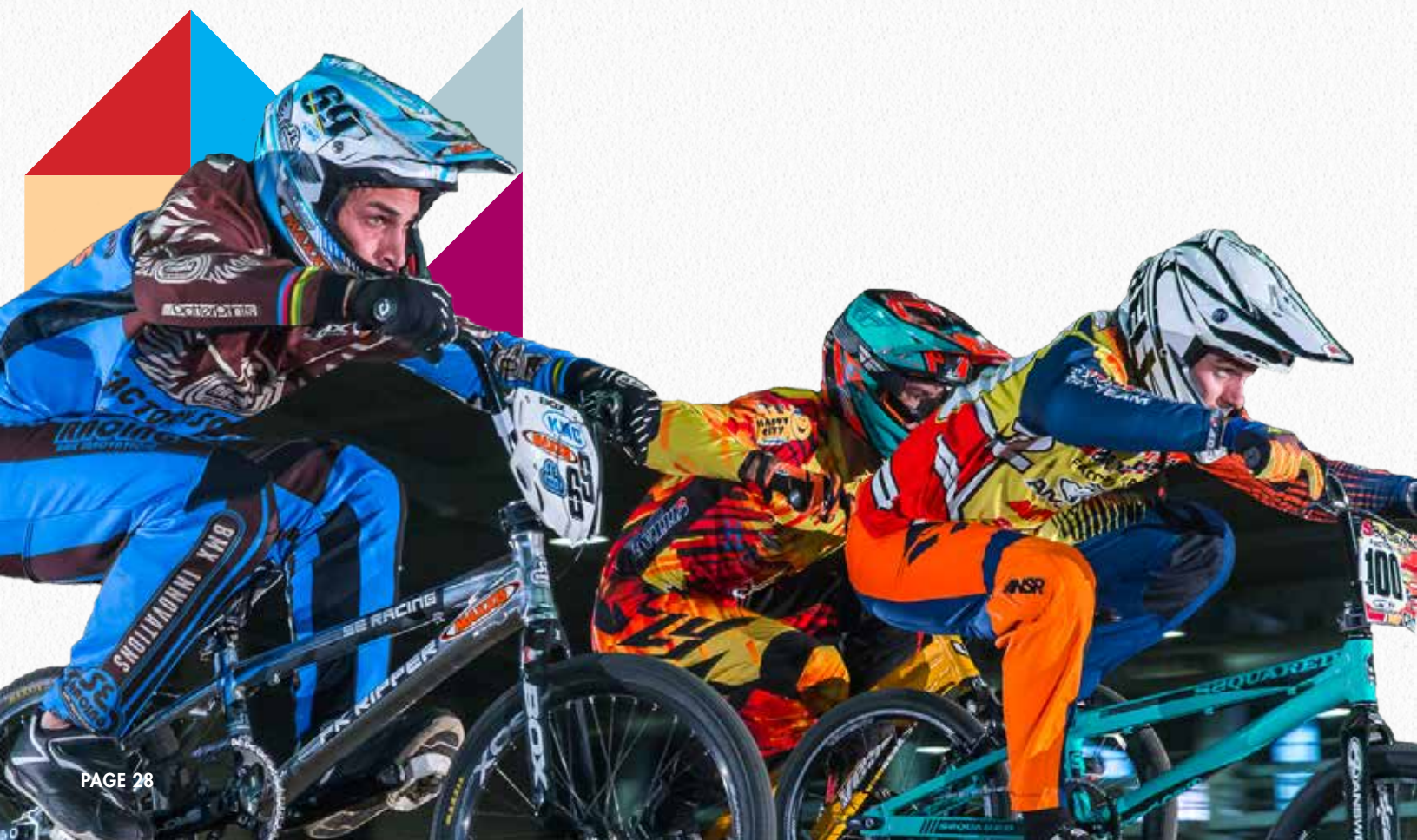
PILLAR SPENDING FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016





RETAIN

Maintaining strong, strategic relationships with clients for long-term events keeps the doors of the Tulsa Regional Tourism industry open for business. Reinvesting in groups provides a sustainable foundation that keeps dollars and foot traffic in Tulsa.





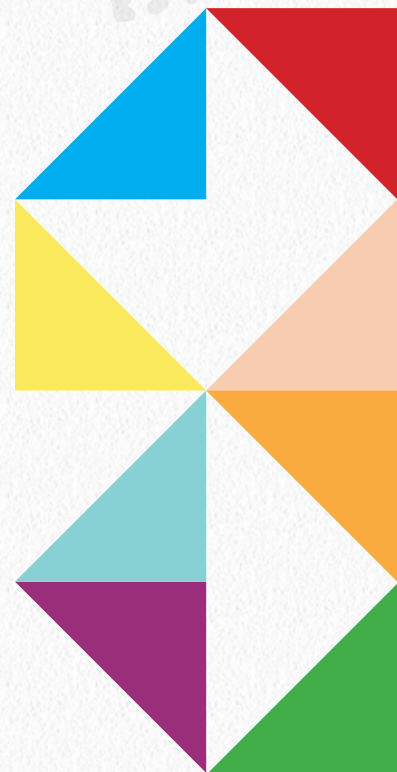
USATF runner Timothy Martin finishes the Tulsa Run in just over 49 minutes.

TULSA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION TULSA RUN SPONSORSHIP RENEWAL

The Tulsa Federal Credit Union committed to another five years as title sponsor of the Tulsa Run. The Tulsa Federal Credit Union has been a key contributor to the run since 2013, donating funds and countless volunteer hours to the event yearly.

“It is a true testament of how unique this event is to our community by the commitment the loyal volunteers and devoted runners have towards its strong history and mission,” said Greg Gallant, Tulsa Federal Credit Union President/CEO. “It is through the philanthropic component of this event that we could establish a perfect partnership that achieves our mission to make a difference by being a positive force in the communities we serve. Kudos to the Visit Tulsa/Tulsa Sports Commission leadership for preserving the run’s legacy.”

The 39th annual Tulsa Federal Credit Union Tulsa Run will be held on October 29, 2016, and continues to be Tulsa's most iconic footrace powered by the Tulsa Sports Commission. ■





ARABIAN
HORSE ASSOCIATION

Trophies and ribbons await the competitors of the Arabian Horse Association's annual championship.

ARABIAN HORSE ASSOCIATION CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH TULSA EXPO SQUARE FOR U.S. NATIONALS

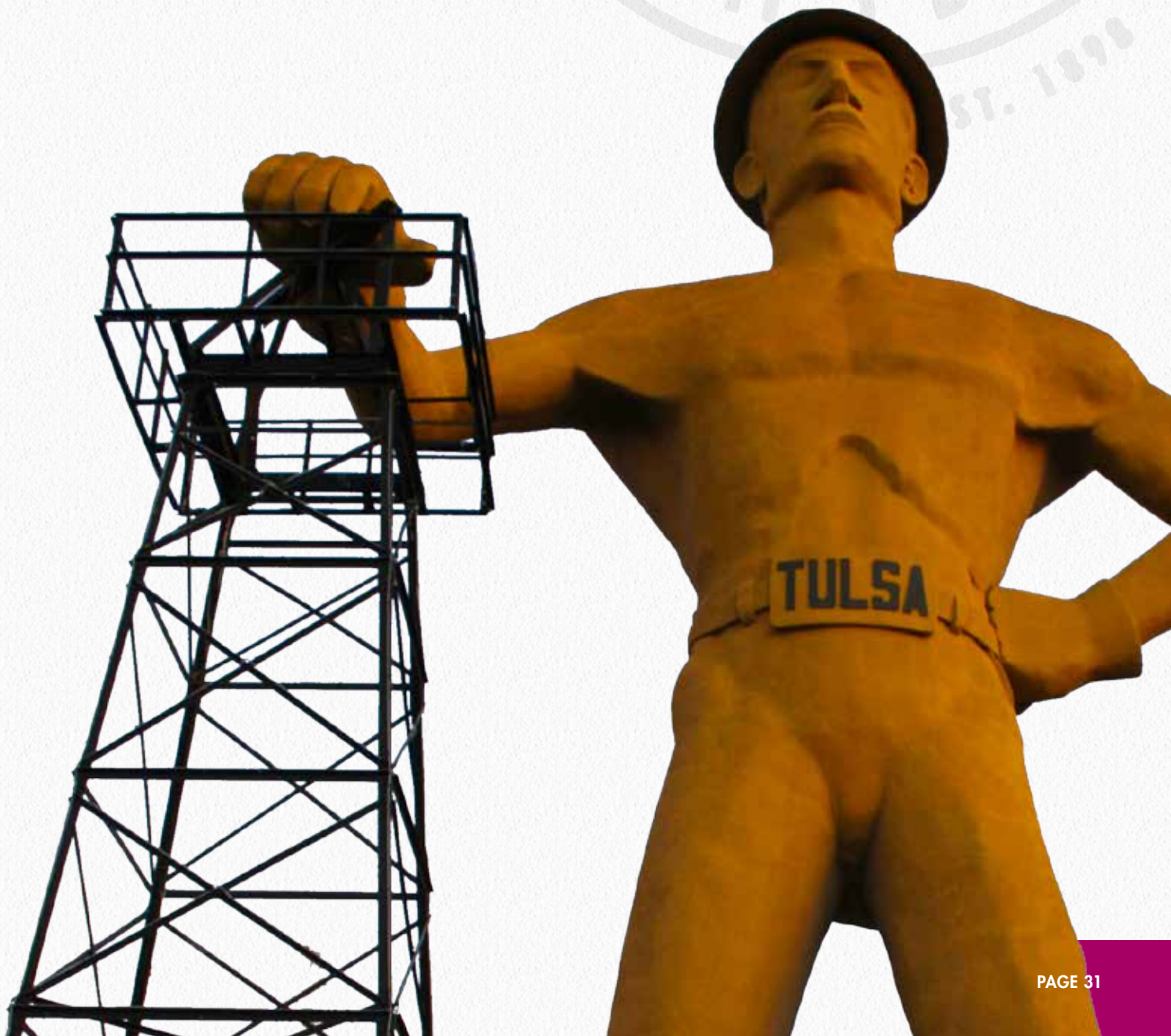
VisitTulsa, in conjunction with Expo Square, announced the partnership renewal with the Arabian Horse Association (AHA) in early 2016. The contract outlines a five-year extension of the AHA's Arabian and Half-Arabian U.S. National Championship Horse Show, retaining the event at Expo Square until 2022.

This renewal equals huge economic impact for the Tulsa community. The 2015 event brought nearly \$27 million to the city, supporting local businesses, hotels and restaurants. It is because of the continued partnership with Expo Square and its world-class facility and staff that Tulsa is equipped to host events like the AHA Arabian and Half-Arabian U.S. National Championship Horse Show. ■



RECRUIT

Providing a premier destination for event planners to host events while continuing to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of the Tulsa community is a critical role of Tulsa Regional Tourism.





Bob Burda, Associate Commissioner - Communications



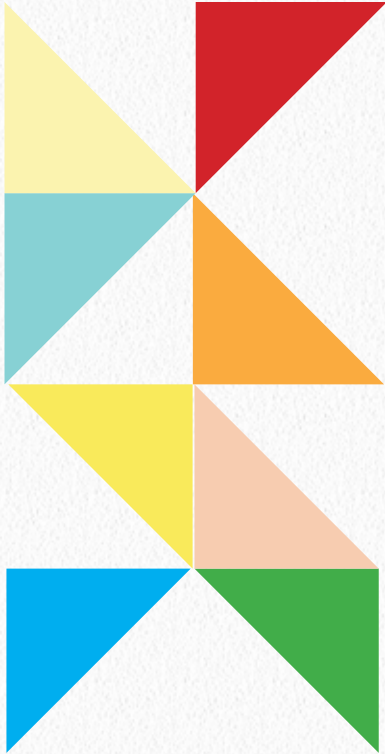
TULSA WINS 2017-2018 BIG 12 WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Tulsa continues to be a popular destination for Big 12 and NCAA events. In late 2015, it was announced Tulsa was chosen as the host site for the 2017 and 2018 Big 12 Wrestling Championships.

The event will be hosted at the BOK Center on March 4-5, 2017, and March 3-4, 2018. This will not only continue to solidify Tulsa as a premier destination for college sports, but also will bring in approximately 5,000 attendees and an estimated annual economic impact of \$1.3 million.

The Tulsa Sports Commission submitted this bid for the 2017 and 2018 Big 12 Wrestling Championships in April 2015. The team worked closely with the following individuals and companies to partner and advocate for Tulsa: OSU Athletics-Mike Holder, Director of Athletics; Dave Martin, Deputy Athletics Director; John Smith, OSU Wrestling Head Coach; Kevin Crutchmer, State Director of Oklahoma USA Wrestling; SMG Tulsa-Jeff Nickler, General Manager; and Michael Owens, Director of Booking, SMG. ■





© Owrestle.com - Austin Bernard

Wrestlers grapple during the USA Wrestling Junior National Duals at the Cox Business Center.

USA WRESTLING JUNIOR NATIONAL DUALS

More than 800 athletes from 35 states came to Tulsa to compete in the USA Wrestling Junior National Duals. The Tulsa Sports Commission was thrilled to host the Duals at the Cox Business Center from June 22-25. Youth from the Tulsa region represented their USA Wrestling clubs alongside competitors from across the nation. ■

TULSA AWARDED AT&T'S STARS AND STRIPES CHAMPIONSHIPS

USA Gymnastics awarded the 2016 Stars and Stripes Championships, formerly known as Trampoline and Tumbling's Levels 5-7 Championships, to the Tulsa Sports Commission and Cox Business Center. The event, which took place July 22-24, featured more than 1,000 of the country's top Levels 5-7 trampoline and tumbling gymnasts. ■



2016 NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Tulsa Sports Commission partnered with the University of Tulsa and its Michael Case Center to host the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 Tennis Championships.

The 12-day event, which began May 19, 2016, produced an attendance of 9,783. This was the second-highest attendance total without a participating team from the host institution since the men's and women's championships were combined in 2006. Tulsa's attendance in 2008 remains the highest (11,844) since the combination.

Since attendance began being tracked in 1976, nine schools have hosted the NCAA Tennis Championships. Other than Georgia, which has been the site of 27 championships, only UCLA in 1996 and Stanford in 2011 drew larger crowds than when the event has been hosted in Tulsa (2016, 2008, 2004).

The 2016 NCAA Championships brought in an estimated \$5 million in economic impact and nearly 4,000 room nights to the Tulsa region. ■



OSU fans showed up to root for the Cowgirls at the NCAA Division 1 Tennis Championships.



"VisitTulsa has made big progress with our quest to show others that Tulsa has moved from a 'great place to raise a family' to a 'great place for activities, culture and entertainment, as well as a great place to raise a family.' As a small business owner, I recognize the importance of having a dedicated initiative to get this message out. The Tulsa Regional Chamber does this well through the VisitTulsa fund."

JANA SHOULDERS
PRESIDENT & CEO | MARINER WEALTH ADVISORS



With a total weight of over 60lbs of fish, Oklahoma angler Edwin Evers wins the 2016 GEICO Bassmaster Classic.

GEICO BASSMASTER CLASSIC RETURNS TO TULSA REGION

The 2016 GEICO Bassmaster Classic presented by GoPro was held in Tulsa for three days of fishing and events. At the final weigh-in at the BOK Center, thousands watched as Talala native Edwin Ever won the title of 2016 Bassmaster Classic Champion, beating out Jason Christie from Park Hill, Oklahoma.

Downtown Tulsa was taken over by all things Bassmaster during the event. In addition to the weigh-ins at the BOK Center, the Outdoor Expo presented by Dick's Sporting Goods was held in the Cox Business Center. The Expo was continually packed, with visitors and locals alike browsing hundreds of vendors from all over the nation.

After months of hard work and planning for the massive event, VisitTulsa deemed the 2016 Bassmaster Classic a huge success for the Tulsa region. The event not only brought thousands of fans to experience the three-day event, but also engaged the anglers and Bassmaster staff in the Tulsa community. ■



BRUMLEY GOSPEL MUSIC SING COMES TO TULSA FOR THE FIRST TIME

VisitTulsa recruited the Brumley Music Company to Tulsa in August 2016. The Gospel music festival was hosted by Oral Roberts University's Mabee Center. Brumley Music Company is one of the most influential gospel, Americana and country music companies in the world.

Now in its 48th year, the Brumley Gospel Sing is one of the most successful and highly anticipated Gospel music festivals, hosting visitors from across the United States during four days of music and entertainment. This event brought some of today's most popular Gospel acts to the Tulsa region. Tulsa is poised to be a part of the Brumley tradition in the years to come. ■



The Brumley family gathers to receive a proclamation signed by Mayor Dewey Bartlett declaring Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015 as Brumley Music Day in Tulsa.



DEVELOP

Partner with the community to develop new opportunities to support use of our facilities and enhance current assets. Create owned and operated events that stay in Tulsa.





Oklahoma flags blow in the wind at the State Capitol Building.

TOURISM-BASED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT SIGNED INTO LAW

The Oklahoma tourism industry scored a huge win with the passage of SB 1206, allowing cities to use hotel-based improvement districts for tourism marketing, commonly referred to as a Tourism Improvement District.

This enabling language will empower cities across the state, Destination Marketing Organizations, and the hotel industry to join together and market their communities as a premier destination for visitors, generating sales tax dollars and creating jobs in the tourism industry.

VisitTulsa led the effort, partnering with communities across the state that also understood the need for increased tourism marketing funds, and the impact of working collaboratively for a common goal at the Oklahoma Legislature. ■





**READY?
HIT THE X.
SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2016**

XPO is a festival for gamers, fans, developers and game industry leaders. Join thousands of other gamers in Tulsa for a packed expo floor, panels and speakers, a first look at new gaming technology, curated film festival, a live \$10,000 tournament, tabletop games, cosplay contests, retro gaming lounge, after parties and general **game badassery.**

COX BUSINESS CENTER
100 Civic Center • Tulsa, OK

Inquiries: info@XPOTulsa.com
XPOTulsa.com
[f](#) [t](#) [@GamesXPO](#)

XPO GAME FESTIVAL

VisitTulsa is partnering with the George Kaiser Family Foundation to make Tulsa, Oklahoma a part of gaming culture with XPO, a three day festival unlike anything else in the central U.S. This September 23-25, over 5,000 attendees are expected to gather at the Cox Business Center in downtown Tulsa to try the latest video games, compete in tournaments, explore virtual reality, participate in cosplay contests, and take in live concerts. Tulsa embodies a spirit of innovation, competition and creativity, which makes it the perfect city to celebrate one of the most vibrant and cutting edge industries in the world.

XPO will be packed with events and activities for all kinds of gamers. Retro game fanatics can compete for the high score in the Retro Lounge, which will be filled with classic arcade cabinets and consoles. Competitive players can duke it out in fighting game tournaments. Tabletop fans can sample board games or play favorites with friends old and new. Meanwhile, XPO's Indie Alley will showcase some of the best independent games from around the world, and tech enthusiasts can try out the latest in virtual reality hardware, including the Oculus Rift and the HTC Vive. XPO will also host live music from internationally renowned video game music acts, including "chip-hop" artist Mega Ran, retro game band Bit Brigade, and YouTube sensation Brentalfloss. ■

"By working together as industry leaders and pooling resources, we can strengthen the tourism market and, in turn, build a better quality of life for those living in the region. There is no better proof than the recent successes of VisitTulsa. They, along with our corporate support and that of many others, have secured the Bassmaster Classic twice. Working together we've made these events a success. Any time you bring thousands of people into your region, it is truly a shot in the arm to the local economy and puts Tulsa on the map."

SHAWN SLATON
CEO | CHEROKEE NATION BUSINESSES, LLC





One of the Shelby Mustangs that invaded downtown Tulsa for the 49th Annual Mid America Ford & Shelby Nationals.



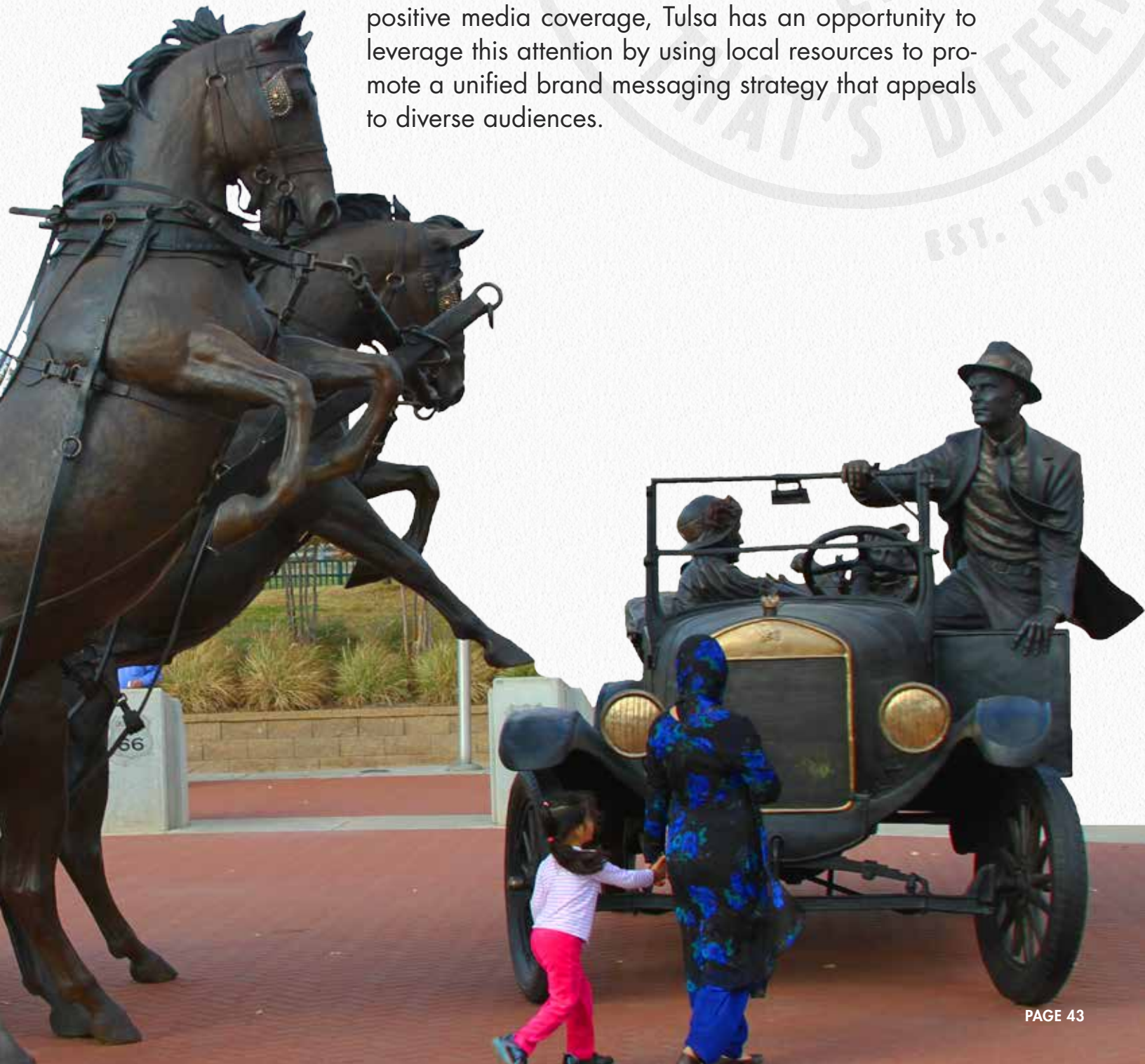
“Quality of life in the Tulsa metro is an essential element to Rogers State University’s plan to attract students from around the U.S. and the world to live and learn on our residential campus in Claremore. We see an investment in VisitTulsa 2.0 as a means to develop and maintain entertainment and cultural activities that appeal to millennials while they are students, while providing additional enticement for them to stay in the region once they’ve graduated.”

DR. LARRY RICE
PRESIDENT | ROGERS STATE UNIVERSITY



ENHANCE

Endless opportunities are available to heighten Tulsa's visitor assets and brand awareness. With an influx of positive media coverage, Tulsa has an opportunity to leverage this attention by using local resources to promote a unified brand messaging strategy that appeals to diverse audiences.



FMAC PRESENTS OFFICIAL SXSW MUSIC DAY EVENT, TULSA BOOM FACTORY

The Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture (FMAC) and VisitTulsa traveled to Austin, Texas, in early 2016 for the South By Southwest (SXSW) Trade Show and the revival of “Tulsa Boom Factory,” the official music day party.

The Trade Show booth, boasting “Created In Tulsa,” highlighted Tulsa as a creative and cultural hub focusing on the music, film and startup scene, as well as tourism. With the help of the Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation, two of Tulsa’s startup companies, The Audio Planet and Leche Lounge, gained great visibility and a launching pad to introduce their products to a new market.

“Tulsa Boom Factory” was revived this year for an amazing day of Tulsa-centric music featuring Tulsa-native bands and artists. The “Tulsa Boom Factory” drew great crowds. Whether originally from Tulsa, a current resident or a SXSW attendee, everyone was excited and impressed with the “Tulsa sound.” ■

Tulsa musician Ben Kilgore plays at the Tulsa Boom Factory at SXSW.





Music and film professionals participate in FMAC's Mixer and Panel Series.

TULSA MUSIC MIXER AND PANEL SERIES/TULSA FILM MIXER AND PANEL SERIES

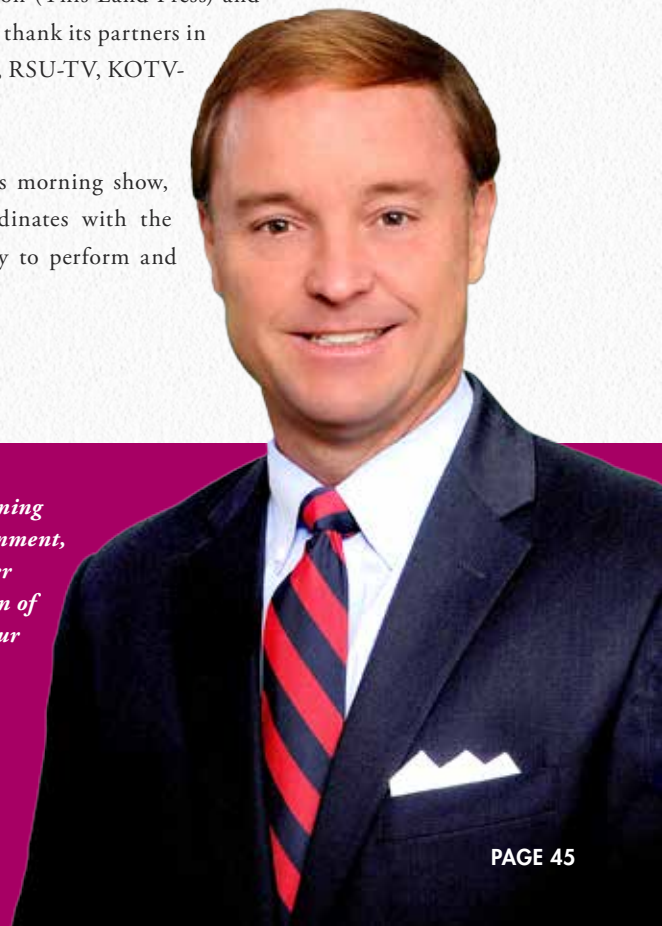
In July 2016, Tulsa FMAC presented the Tulsa Music Mixer and Panel Series at the Woody Guthrie Center on "How To Amplify Your Music: Recording/Publishing/Touring." Tulsa FMAC collaborated with music engineer Brett Baldwin to curate the panel. The panel featured Matt Vandevander (Musician and Music Licensing), Levi Parham (Musician), Brian Horton (Horton Records), Ben Kilgore (Musician and The Manhattan Studio), and was moderated by Jerry Wofford (Tulsa World Scene). Attendance was at an all time high, and standing room only in the theatre. Tulsa FMAC would like to thank its partners in the series: Woody Guthrie Center, From A Basement in Tulsa Podcast, Hanson Brothers Beer Company, VisitTulsa and Yelp Tulsa.

Also in July 2016, Tulsa FMAC presented the Tulsa Film Mixer and Panel Series at Circle Cinema on "Expanding the Frame: Using Visual Storytelling in Journalism." Tulsa FMAC collaborated with KOSU Radio journalist Allison Herrera to curate the panel. The panel featured Christopher Long (Rough House Creative), Kevin Anderson (Steelehouse Productions), Cary Aspinwall (The Frontier), Michael Mason (This Land Press) and was moderated by Jennifer Loren (Osiyo TV). Tulsa FMAC would like to thank its partners in the series: Circle Cinema, KOSU Radio, Hyatt Regency Tulsa, Hall Estill, RSU-TV, KOTV-Channel 6, VisitTulsa, and Videodrone Tulsa.

Additionally, Tulsa FMAC continues to work with KTUL Channel 8's morning show, Good Day Tulsa, in promoting Tulsa musicians. Tulsa FMAC coordinates with the producer of the show to secure a musician every first and third Friday to perform and interview on the show. ■

"It's an exciting time to be in Tulsa as the community blossoms into a booming destination featuring such a variety of high quality attractions, entertainment, festivals, restaurants, and intriguing experiences. Cox is proud to partner with VisitTulsa as we all strive to ensure the region grows as a destination of choice for visitors, conventions, events, and corporate meetings. When our community thrives, so does business. The economic impact of a successful tourism program adds tremendous value in our community's ability to attract and retain new talent and new businesses."

ROGER RAMSEYER
MARKET VICE PRESIDENT | COX COMMUNICATIONS





Tulsa business and political leaders celebrate passing Vision Tulsa.

VISION TULSA

The Tulsa regional tourism industry is blazing trails on a path toward rediscovery, overcoming obstacles and achieving major milestones. This transformative journey has utilized Tulsa's rich history to shape the city into a viable destination for human experiences.

On April 5, 2016, Vision Tulsa (an extension of the original Vision 2025 0.6 percent tax package initiative that Tulsa County voters approved in 2003) passed with more than 75 percent of voter approval. Vision Tulsa supports projects that continue the positive momentum the region has built around economic development and tourism. The previous initiative, Vision 2025, has generated more than \$651 million in economic development.

The following projects will be funded through Vision Tulsa, and will significantly enhance the Tulsa travel and tourism industry.

VISION TULSA REGIONAL TOURISM PROJECTS

- » **USA BMX National Headquarters (\$15m):** In partnership with Tulsa County, funds construction of an olympic level training center for Bicycle Motocross (BMX) athletes, and national headquarters for BMX USA housed at the city-centric Tulsa Fairgrounds campus. *IMPACT: Projected to generate more than \$11 million and 100 events over five years.*
- » **Cox Business Center (\$55m):** Renovates the current convention center by adding 62,800 additional square feet of exhibit space — allowing Tulsa to remain competitive with other regional convention centers. *IMPACT: Creates a master plan for the redevelopment and growth of Tulsa's Arena District, maximizing the economic potential of the BOK Center.*
- » **Tulsa Fairgrounds (\$30m):** Funds infrastructure and building enhancements at Expo Square. *IMPACT: Allows Tulsa to retain and recruit large-scale national and international events that bring additional sales tax revenue to the city.*
- » **Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum (\$25m):** Takes the next step in the Tulsa Zoo's 20-year Master Plan; expands the front entry to accommodate more daily visitors and develops new "Lost Kingdom Elephants" exhibit. *IMPACT: Increase of visitors through continual improvement.*
- » **Citywide & Route 66 Beautification and Reinvestment Fund (\$11m):** Creates a fund for annual beautification of Tulsa's residential neighborhoods, deteriorating commercial shopping areas, and major thoroughfares and entryways into downtown and the city. *IMPACT: Makes Tulsa a charming, home away from home for visitors.*
- » **Gilcrease Museum Expansion (\$65m):** Provides an extensive remodel and expansion of the Gilcrease Museum, creating a world-class facility to put the city of Tulsa's greatest asset to work in generating an economic return for its citizens. *IMPACT: Expansion will provide the needed space to display the museum's incredible collections, bring internationally significant shows to Tulsa, and attract an estimated 500,000 visitors to our restaurants and hotels each year.*
- » **Mohawk Sports Complex (\$3.5m):** Improves parking and ingress/egress to the City of Tulsa's Mohawk Sports Complex, maximizing the potential for high-economic impact sports tournaments. *IMPACT: Allows Tulsa to easily accommodate large scale sporting events.*
- » **Performing Arts Center Renovation (\$1m):** Provides funds for the planning and design to modernize and make renovations to the Tulsa PAC. *IMPACT: Ensures the Tulsa PAC is cutting edge for visitor experience.*



Artist conception of a revamped arena district.



The world renowned Gilcrease Museum.



MARK HARGIS

CHELSEA PENN

MATT STOCKMAN

KATHLEEN BORGNE

KATIE NICHOLAS

MATT HOWE

JESSICA LOWE-BETTS

LAURA PORTH

VINCE TRINIDAD

PROMOTING THE TULSA REGION

With over 50 combined years of travel and tourism experience, this highly qualified team of tourism and sports professionals is dedicated to selling the Tulsa region as a competitive destination for visitors. From securing premier events like the GEICO Bassmaster Classic to entertaining meeting planners and travel writers, this energetic team has one commonality that guides their collaborative success.

They simply love Tulsa.



RAY HOYT

KENNY SMITH

CHRIS ROGERS

HEATH AUCOIN

CASEY KEEFER

VANESA MASUCCI

PATTI KRAUSERT

ABBY KURIN

SABRINA DARBY

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LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Look through the lens of the future. In the future, Tulsa is known across the world as a place with coveted assets, like A Gathering Place for Tulsa. In the future, Tulsa is called a “must-see” destination for music lovers yearning for authentic sounds, flocking to Bob Dylan’s historical archives at the Woody Guthrie Center. In the future, films are being made in Tulsa. You can see public art sprouting up along streets in vibrant entertainment districts. Tulsa is projected on television screens across the world, seen on billboards in major cities, and viewed through interactive virtual reality tours as a result of tourism-based improvement district dollars.

The smells and sounds of construction at the Cox Business Center and the new site for the USA BMX Headquarters fill the air, while additional enhancements pop up all across the Tulsa landscape at places like Mohawk Park, Gilcrease Museum and the Tulsa Zoo.

Moving toward the future, progress continues because Tulsa is on the move.



Rendering of the Gathering Place Tulsa.





#TULSATOURISM

★ ★ EST. 1898





VISIT TULSA 2.0



#TULSATOURISM