



Brad Henry
Governor

Mary Fallin
Lt. Governor

George Nigh
Interim Director
Tourism and
Recreation
Department

Tina Gilliland, CAE
Director
Travel and Tourism
Division

Krista Townsend
Editor
Tourism Momentum

Important Dates

Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission Meeting

10 a.m.
February 27, 2006
OTRD Offices
120 N. Robinson,
Suite 600

Oklahoma Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee Meeting

10 a.m.
February 9, 2006
Ackerman McQueen
1601 N.W. Expressway
21st Floor



Tourism Momentum

NEWS FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN OKLAHOMA TOURISM

OTRD Prepares for 2006 Travel Season



Tina Gilliland

The Travel & Tourism Division has kicked off the new year with a flurry of activities and programs, all designed to grow travel to and within our great state. Ultimately, it's our goal to improve the quality of life in Oklahoma by increasing the impact of tourism on our state's economy. And, the newest figures released from the Travel Industry Association certainly prove that the tourism industry is vital to our state.

In 2004, direct domestic travel spending in Oklahoma reached nearly \$4.5 billion, a 5.9 percent increase over 2003. This spending supported 70,700 jobs for Oklahomans employed in the tourism industry. Without these jobs generated by tourism, Oklahoma's 2004 unemployment rate would have been 4.1 percentage points higher than it was. In addition, domestic travel spending generated \$760.4 million in tax revenue to help fund federal, state and local government services, up 3.7 percent from 2003. We should all take pride in the tremendous impact our industry has on Oklahoma. A copy of the entire "Economic Impact of Travel on Oklahoma Counties 2004" can be obtained free of charge by contacting our office.

As the marketing branch of the Tourism & Recreation Department, it is our job in the Travel & Tourism Division to promote Oklahoma through every avenue possible. Here are JUST A FEW of the 2006 program highlights from our division.

The 2006 *Oklahoma Travel Guide* and the 2006 *Calendar of Events* were redesigned and revamped this year to be more user-friendly for travelers. So far, the brochures have been met with rave reviews and are flying off our shelves. Our public relations staff work daily with media on

all levels – local, state, regional, national and international – and will represent Oklahoma at five national and international media marketplace events this year. This gives them the chance to meet one-on-one with journalists to provide story ideas and obtain editorial placement for Oklahoma's attractions. Our travel development staff is on the road, exhibiting at 25 consumer and trade travel shows this year. Our call center staff is gearing up for the spring tourism advertising campaign which started in January with print advertisements and will continue with television ads beginning in February. And, we just received word that a new Tourism Information Center will be constructed to replace the aging center at Erick. Plans are underway to replace the Blackwell center as well. That means Oklahoma is on its way to having an entire tourism information center system where the quality of the facilities will match the outstanding service provided by our TIC employees and are the caliber structures that truly represent our state.

I encourage all of you to sign up to participate in one of our newest and most exciting programs. Travel Development and Public Relations staff are hosting marketing/sales media blitzes to Dallas Mar. 28-29 and to Wichita and Kansas City Apr. 4-6. Participating industry partners will have the chance to be part of teams that meet one-on-one with media, travel agents and tour operators. During the blitzes, we will also be hosting receptions for the travel trade and media in those cities. Help us take these important markets by storm as we enter the summer travel season. For more details, go to the Tourism Industry link on TravelOk.com.

I want you to know how much we appreciate the work of our industry partners. Together, we all make Oklahoma a better place to live and vacation. I'm looking forward to a great year in 2006.

Apply Now for Centennial Event Designation

The Travel & Tourism Division is partnering with the Oklahoma Centennial Commission to compile a calendar of official Centennial events for 2007. Through this partnership, Oklahoma events that exemplify Oklahoma's heritage, culture and history can now apply to be official Oklahoma Centennial Events by completing an easy application process through the Centennial Commission Office.

Oklahoma's Centennial celebration has the potential to gain international media attention for our state and for official Centennial events. The Travel & Tourism Division is working now to promote Centennial events and projects to major media outlets, tour operators and consumers. The benefits for events receiving official Centennial designation include:

- The right to use the official Oklahoma Centennial logo;
- Promotion with other Centennial projects through press releases, newsletters and other vehicles distributed by the Oklahoma Centennial Commission office and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department;
- The receipt of an Official Centennial Project Certificate;
- Official designation in Oklahoma Tourism Department publications and on the state's official travel information

website, www.TravelOK.com.

Event organizers and communities must submit nominations by Mar. 3 to the Oklahoma Centennial Commission to be considered for official designation. (Please note: This is not an application for funding.) Please direct any questions regarding the application process to the Oklahoma Centennial Commission Office, 405-229-2009 or email thumphrey@oklahomacentennial.com. You can download the application forms on www.TravelOK.com. Click on the Travel Industry link, go to "Forms."

Calling All Artists

The Oklahoma Arts Council is developing a resource list to connect Oklahoma artists to communities that are developing arts and cultural festivals, opportunities for arts education in schools and communities, and cultural heritage tourism.

Barbie Elder, destination development manager with OTRD, has been working with the Oklahoma Arts Council to compile a list of artists statewide. This list, or database, will be made available to attractions, events and festivals across Oklahoma that may be in need of artists or their work – whether they be performing, visual or demonstrative artists.

The Arts Council is seeking information on all types of artists including painters, musicians, quilters, dancers, performing arts, glassblowers, saddlemakers, jew-

elry-makers, theatrical troupes, bands, stained glass artists – you name it, they want your information. The database already contains information on approximately 500 artists.

If you would like to be included on this list or know of an artist who might be interested, please visit the Arts Council website at <http://www.arts.state.ok.us/artists/okartsurv.html>. There is a detailed questionnaire artists are asked to fill out, providing information on their talent, abilities, resources and availability. Artists from all cultural heritages and backgrounds are encouraged to complete the on-line survey from which the statewide arts resource list will be developed.

For more information contact Georgia Williams at (405) 521-2931 or Georgia@arts.ok.gov.

New TIC Planned

OTRD Interim Director George Nigh recently announced plans to construct a new Tourism Information Center (TIC) in Erick. The project is a collaborative effort of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and OTRD.

"ODOT really made this possible," said Nigh. "They secured the funding and shared in the vision we have for welcoming visitors to Oklahoma."

The new building is slated for construction on the site of the current information center. Initial building plans will be developed using the Thackerville Travel Information Center as a model. In addition, the Erick center should include a dog park, a jogging trail and a

handicapped accessible playground.

"We want visitors to leave our centers with a positive image of Oklahoma by providing them with more than restrooms and coffee," explained Nigh. "We already have a first-class staff at this location, now we need a first-class facility."

Tourism Momentum

IS PRODUCED BY THE TRAVEL & TOURISM DIVISION OF THE OKLAHOMA TOURISM & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Meet the newest additions to the T & T Staff



Pamela Wilcox

Pamela Wilcox joined the OTRD staff in December as the Cultural & Heritage Tourism Programs Coordinator for Destination Development (say that in one breath!). As the C&H program coordinator, Wilcox will work with groups, attractions, events and communities throughout the state to tell the story of their history and culture in order to create rich and diverse tourism programs and opportunities.

Wilcox has extensive experience in economic development, spending nine years in Ocala, FL as a project manager and marketing coordinator where she was instrumental in the creation of more than 3,800 new jobs.

In her spare time, Wilcox enjoys designing jewelry and stained glass. She says she's particularly fond of the fall season in Oklahoma because she loves college football, not to mention the fact that she is once again enjoying a state that truly has

all four seasons! Wilcox also enjoys spending time with her pet African Grey parrot, Kathryn, and her cat, Pickles.



Cody Cutter

Cody Cutter joined the OTRD staff as Fulfillment Coordinator in January. As Fulfillment Coordinator, Cutter is responsible for fulfilling consumer requests for OTRD publications and brochures.

Cutter is also currently studying computer science at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. His last position was as assistant manager at Gamestop and his experience includes five years in retail. In taking the position as Fulfillment Coordinator, Cutter is hoping to branch out into more exciting areas of work.

Cutter enjoys watching television and movies, playing video games, and playing frisbee golf.

Megan Hazzard began working for OTRD in December of 2005 as Public Relations Project Coordinator. Hazzard works on special and ongoing projects designed to support and fur-



Megan Hazzard

ther the mission of the Public Relations section to obtain and measure media coverage for Oklahoma's travel attractions and destinations.

Hazzard graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond with a bachelor's degree in Communications and went on to obtain her Masters in Business Administration from Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City.

Hazzard previously worked as an assistant manager for Trajen FBO Network and as office manager for Spring Operating Company. She and her husband Justin also own a photography business.

Hazzard said she loves exploring the outdoors, traveling, and spending time at the lake, and most importantly, she just found out that she is expecting a baby girl in early June. Congratulations Megan!

Kelly Petrusawich joins OTRD as a Public Relations Intern for the spring semester. Petrusawich is a junior at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond majoring in public relations.



Kelly Petrusawich

As a PR intern, Petrusawich will assist in the day-to-day activities of the public relations department, including writing press releases, working with the media, and writing articles for *Tourism Momentum*.

Petrusawich's goals for the future include graduating (of course!) and a career in public relations, preferably, she says, in the travel and tourism industry.

She also currently works as a research analyst for a private investigation agency and as an event coordinator for Harn Homestead. Her hobbies including home remodeling, shopping and spending time with her Great Dane, Atlas and Beagle, Nova.

Enid Named One of Top Five Growing Cities in US

"Good Morning America" recently named Enid as one of the top five "up-and-coming" cities in the nation.

The morning talk show, which airs each weekday, recently featured contributor and proclaimed real estate mogul Barbara Corcoran who suggested five locations ripe for investment. Enid was included as one of her top five hottest areas in the country.

According to the report, several things stood out about Enid – affordable real estate, job growth and quality of life.

Corcoran states that if you want a big house for a small price, Enid is your city. A nice, spacious house in Enid costs less than half the average home price nationwide. Corcoran also said the town is experiencing a business boom and in the last three years, private



Downtown Enid

business has brought in 900 new jobs. The downtown area was recently rebuilt, and many well-to-do families from Austin and Houston, TX have moved there for the small-town charm.

Jon Blankenship, President and CEO of the Enid Chamber of Commerce, was thrilled with his city's recognition by national media.

"It's been very exciting to have Enid featured on *Good Morning America*," said

Blankenship. "We've already seen an increase in requests for information through the chamber, as well as substantial media interest from across the country."

Blankenship expounded on the reasons for the designation. The recent increase in job growth includes Advance Food Corporation announcing 500 new jobs, and Oklahoma will soon get its first major ethanol plant which

will create a minimum of 30 new jobs and \$1 million in payroll. This will also result in 50 – 60 new jobs from industries supporting the ethanol plant, including creation of a new local agricultural market. Sorghum and milo crops will be needed to support the production of ethanol.

Vance Air Force Base will also see expansion with the creation of 100 new civilian and military jobs. In addition, a new National Guard and Reserve Center is expected to be built in Enid within the next three years, adding even more jobs.

As for quality of life, Blankenship cites several community-wide efforts for which he credits Enid residents such as the revitalization of the downtown area, improved schools, protection of Vance AFB, and the addition of quality jobs.

OTRD Hosts Industry Meetings Across OK

OTRD's Travel & Tourism Division is hosting a series of discussion meetings in 11 Oklahoma communities to learn about new tourism developments and to hear about the issues important to those involved in the state's tourism industry.

Anyone involved in Oklahoma's tourism industry is encouraged to participate in these sessions.

"With the 'Tourism Buzz' sessions, we are striving to create a casual environ-

ment that fosters open, candid dialogue and creative ideas," said Tina Gilliland, director of the Travel & Tourism Division. "The goal is to share information and formulate action steps designed to help our industry reach its potential. Everyone involved in Oklahoma's tourism industry is invited to gather around the table for some informal, productive discussion."

Admission to the meetings is free, but reservations are recommended. Those interested in attending should

RSVP to Megan Hazzard at megan@travelok.com or call 405-230-8427.

Tourism Buzz sessions have already been held in Duncan and Sayre. Meetings are planned for the following communities and locations:

Feb. 7 - Durant, 10 a.m. - noon, Durant Chamber of Commerce

Feb. 8 - Broken Bow, 9 - 11 a.m., Broken Bow Library

Feb. 22 - Guymon, 9-11 a.m., Super 8 Motel

Feb. 23 - Alva, 9 - 11 a.m. NW Tech Center

Feb. 28 - Muskogee, 10 a.m. - noon, Muskogee Civic Center

Mar. 3 - Grove, 9-11 a.m. Grand Lake Association

Apr. 12 - Norman 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., Norman Visitors Center

Apr. 18 - Stillwater, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., White Barn Estate

Apr. 25 - Ponca City, 1:30-3:30 p.m., City Hall

New OKC Landmark Christened

The Chesapeake Boat-house is one of Oklahoma City's newest landmarks and promises to become a popular destination along the Oklahoma River.

Located in Regatta Park just south of Bricktown, the boathouse offers rowing, kayaking and dragon boating for all ages. It also features paddling programs, a fitness center (with the latest in cardio equipment and fitness classes such as yoga and pilates), as well as a state-of-the-art event center overlooking the river.



Chesapeake Boathouse on Oklahoma River

A ceremony to "christen" the boathouse by local community leaders was held recently. The ceremony featured a procession of

boats into the facility, a reception, public tours, and an official lighting of the boathouse. The official grand opening of the

boathouse will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Apr. 8, as they mark the first day of spring on the river.

Stay for free boathouse tours, rowing lessons, dragon boat rides and more. All of their rowing crews – Juniors, Masters, OU and OCU – will be on hand to welcome guests. So sign up for some rowing lessons, or reserve it for your next meeting or special event – and check out that spectacular view of the river!

For more information, visit www.chesapeakeboathouse.org.

Agritourism Workshops Now Offered

A series of five agritourism workshops begins Feb. 21. Anyone that has or is considering a business in agritourism, or anyone with an interest in helping agritourism in

Oklahoma, is encouraged to attend.

At the workshops you will learn about tourism trends, identifying your target market, how to make your business unique, how to

develop a website, hear Oklahoma success stories and more. Workshops will be held on the following dates from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Feb. 21 – Expo Center in Shawnee
- Mar. 7 – Southeast Expo Center in McAlester
- Mar. 14 – Quartz Mountain in Lonewolf
- Mar. 23 – Career Tech Center in Bartlesville
- Mar. 28 – Career Tech Center in Fairview

For more information contact – Francie Tolle, director of Oklahoma Agritourism, at 405-522-5652 or email at francie.tolle@oda.state.ok.us.

To register, please visit www.oklahomaagritourism.com/eneews/reg_form.pdf.

T & T Markets to Texas Journalists

Krista Townsend, public relations specialist for OTRD, recently exhibited at the Texas Press Association Trade Show in Dallas, TX. More than 200 reporters, editors, publishers and writers from newspapers and publications across the

state of Texas attended the show.

Townsend was there to meet with journalists to talk about current events and hot topics in Oklahoma. "The show was a great opportunity to network with members of the Texas press and to share

story ideas," said Townsend. "With Texas being one of our major target markets, what better way to promote our state than through journalists that write stories for people living so close to Oklahoma."

Oklahoma Today Celebrates 50 Years

OTRD is proud to announce the 50th anniversary of *Oklahoma Today* Magazine. Since 1956, *Oklahoma Today* has been recording our state's history as well as helping to envision our future. The magazine has become a state treasure in which Oklahoman's take pride. To show their pride Governor and Mrs. Brad Henry held a ceremony on Jan. 12 honoring the magazine's many achievements at the State Capitol. During the ceremony, Gov. Henry proclaimed

"*Oklahoma Today* Day" across the state.

"The 50th anniversary event was a night to remember,"

said Joan Henderson, *Oklahoma Today* publisher since 1997.



"Three governors, two first ladies, legislators, state officials, advertisers, educators, and friends were there to help us celebrate our first 50 years. We're delighted to usher in the next half century." *Oklahoma Today* is a general interest, bi-monthly,

consumer magazine that focuses on the art, culture, history, people and places of Oklahoma. It has won more national awards in the past decade than any other state-owned magazine, including five *Magazine of the Year* awards.

This month's anniversary issue features articles on Oklahoma's own American Idol winner and Oklahoman of the Year, Carrie Underwood. Also read about Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower skyscraper in

Bartlesville and a 32-page index of the past 50 years.

Oklahoma Today also maintains a very easy-to-use website that allows readers to order past issues, shop in the online store, subscribe to the magazine and access a searchable index. Take a look at the magazine - it can be found at local newsstands and Barnes & Noble bookstores, or visit the website at www.oklahomatoday.com.

Parks, Resorts & Golf Division Exhibiting at Shows Thru March

The Oklahoma Parks, Resorts and Golf division is exhibiting at RV and boat shows now through March. These shows include *The Original Free RV Show*, *The Tulsa Boat, Sport and Travel Show* and *the Oklahoma Boat, Tackle & Sport Show*. The

shows display hundreds of recreational vehicles and boats and feature fishing guide services and lodging facilities.

State Parks, Resorts and Golf personnel are available to distribute literature, promote the state-

wide facilities and encourage visitors to enjoy these natural resources.

The State Parks, Resorts and Golf division will also be releasing their newly revised state parks guide in early February.

Fulfillment Program Opportunities

Save time and get your brochure in front of more people through our Fulfillment Program. OTRD can offer your brochure to thousands of potential visitors through our Call Center and website,

www.TravelOK.com, all at regular postage rates.

Attractions supply the brochures, and OTRD mails them as they are requested along with the department's materials. Participants will receive a monthly invoice for post-

age as well as reports to use for contacts, research, sales and cost justifications. For more information, contact Charlotte Andrew, Fulfillment Agreement Coordinator, at 405-230-8422 or email Charlotte@TravelOK.com.

All Oklahoma, All the Time

TravelOK.com is the state's official website for Oklahoma travel and tourism information. Statewide attractions, events, accommodations, and restaurant properties are included on this site, as well as special pages devoted to the media, group travel professionals and tourism industry members. Special offers, coupons and discount packages to Oklahoma destinations are also posted on the site.

To list your attraction, tourism business or event free of charge on the website, please email Rachael@TravelOK.com or call 405-230-8412 for more information.

Film & Music Office Brings Films to State

The Oklahoma Film & Music Office has been humming with activity. OF&MO continues to work diligently toward recruiting films to Oklahoma and in supporting Oklahoma's burgeoning homegrown industry. They are also busy promoting film and music events statewide with their website, www.oklahomafilm.org, and their weekly email blast, *This Week in Film & Music*.

Hoodwinked! The True Story of Red Riding Hood, the independent, animated feature written, produced and directed by five former Tulsans, had its Midwest premiere on Dec. 13 at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. The event drew 1,800 people and raised \$25,000, all of which benefited the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa.

The Weinstein Company's full-length feature finished first in its nationwide opening weekend in January, garnering \$16.8 million in box office receipts. The film features the voices of Glenn Close, Anne Hathaway, and Jim Belushi. This family-friendly film is currently playing at a theatre near you.

The first episode of *Cowboy U Oklahoma* pre-



Still photo from the movie "Hoodwinked! The True Story of Red Riding Hood"

miered Jan. 6 on Country Music Television (CMT). The popular reality series, filmed for three weeks at Sayre's Flying W Guest Ranch, employed a number of Oklahoma's talented crew members and had a great economic impact on the communities of Sayre and Elk City.



Film crew shooting "Cowboy U Oklahoma"

Additionally, some segments of *Beyond the Bull*, a new TLC reality series airing Fridays at 8 p.m. were filmed here in Oklahoma. *Beyond the Bull* follows three bull riders, including JW Hart from

Overbrook competing in the PBR Built Ford Tough Series for the world championship buckle and the million dollar prize.

The 2006 Oklahoma legislative session begins on Feb. 6. As in 2005, OF&MO will be submitting for consideration bills designed to build Oklahoma's

film and music industries. According to Jill Simpson, OF&MO director, there is great potential for the state's industries to create significant revenue streams, image enhancement and jobs for Oklahomans.

Also, this semester OF&MO has four new interns. Jill Blankenship is a graduate student studying English at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. Misty Breed is a

senior history major also at UCO working towards a minor in Film Studies. Janna Dailey, also from UCO, is a Public Relations major. Sarah Kenslow, a junior at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, is a Public Relations major.

In addition, there are two returning interns from the fall semester. Tamlin Klutinis is currently in the Film and Video Production program at Oklahoma City Community College and will graduate from the University of Oklahoma in Norman with a degree in Professional Writing and a minor in Film Studies. Amanda Stonebarger is a senior at OU in the Film Video Studies program and will graduate in May. Each intern has the opportunity to gain experience in web content research and development, editing and posting, learning business protocol, classification and organization of photos for location database, writing press releases and editorial content, and researching, writing and editing a weekly e-newsletter.

If you are interested in receiving the weekly email blast, *This Week in Film & Music*, please contact Julie Porter at 405-230-8442 or Julie@OklahomaFilm.org to be added to their distribution list.