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Commerce Announces Hiring of State Automotive Director

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce) announced the hiring of Jimmy Cagle as the State Automotive Director. Cagle is retiring after 37 years on the communications staff of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, 12 of which were spent at the company's Lawton facility. In his role with the Commerce Business Development Team, he will lead the state's efforts to grow Oklahoma's automotive sector and supply chain.

"We are truly excited to welcome Jimmy Cagle to the Commerce team," said Scott Mueller, Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development. "Tens of billions of dollars are being invested into the automotive industry as automakers are investing in electric vehicle manufacturing and making sure that the industry continues to grow in Oklahoma has been one of my top priorities since I took on this role. Jimmy is an impressive individual and his extensive experience in Oklahoma's automotive sector will play an integral role in helping us capitalize on the tremendous potential of this industry to further grow and diversify Oklahoma's economy."

In 2020, Commerce launched the Automotive Accelerator Program to boost industry growth. Since then, the state has seen increased interest from automotive manufacturers and suppliers, including the announcements from electric vehicle maker Canoo which will result in an estimated 2,000 new jobs and more than \$1 billion in investment to the state. Currently, Commerce is working 19 economic development projects in the automotive sector.

"The interest we've seen from automotive companies and suppliers over the past 18 months is truly incredible," said Jennifer Springer, Commerce Director of Business Development. "Oklahoma's central location, focus on supply chain growth and low cost of doing business are some of the key selling points as we work to attract additional automotive manufacturers and suppliers to the state."

"I am excited about the opportunity to join the Commerce team and further develop the economic development opportunities in the automotive sector," said Cagle. "The auto industry is undergoing tremendous change as it adjusts to market trends such as the move toward electric vehicles. We want to do all we can to show companies that Oklahoma is a premier location for automotive operations."

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