



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Oklahoma Department of Commerce Celebrates Growth and Accomplishments in 2022**

Entering the new year, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce) is excited to reflect on the major accomplishments achieved throughout 2022 and the groundwork set for continued economic success in 2023.

In 2022, Commerce set out to bring more opportunities to small businesses with a focus on rural Oklahoma while also continuing to attract investment through sector-based economic development recruitment efforts. The agency also administered multiple programs to provide assistance to Oklahoma communities, supporting infrastructure investment and bolstering economic development opportunities.

“The business announcements made during 2022 represent the type of economic growth and diversity we want to carry into the new year,” said Chad Mariska, Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development. “As we move forward in 2023, we will continue to focus on helping Oklahoma grow through initiatives focused on bringing new jobs and investment to the state while also finding new ways to support existing Oklahoma businesses and their communities. We have strong momentum and I anticipate 2023 will be even more successful than the last.”

“I am proud of the Commerce team and the progress we made during 2022,” said Brent Kisling, Executive Director of Commerce. “I’m particularly proud of our efforts to support Oklahomans and communities across the state. Whether it was through the growth of our Oklahoma Film Friendly Community Program, the addition of new Main Street communities at all program levels, the awarding of Economic Development Administration grant funds for site infrastructure or the ARPA for Nonprofits Relief Program, Commerce continues to meet Oklahoma businesses and communities where they are and strives to work alongside them to make a positive impact.”

Major accomplishments during 2022 included:

**Securing the first domestic Rare Earth Metal and Magnet manufacturing facility.** Governor Kevin Stitt and Commerce secured the Americas’ first rare earth metal and manufacturing facility. USA Rare Earth plans to invest more than \$100 million in developing a manufacturing facility in Stillwater and will utilize its own facilities and technology to convert rare earth oxides into metals, magnets and other specialty materials. Initial production at the facility is expected to commence in 2023, with the project aiming to create more than 100 new jobs and generate over \$6.6 million in wages once fully operational.

**Attracting Foreign Direct Investment at the Oklahoma Air & Space Port.** A historic win for Oklahoma Aerospace & Defense, Governor Kevin Stitt and local leaders announced that Premium Aerospace Center (PAC) will locate its international headquarters at the Oklahoma Air & Space Port complex in Burns Flat, Okla. PAC will invest several million dollars to renovate and expand two existing hangars and build a third hangar at the facility. The company estimates as many as 600 new jobs to be added once the hangars are complete.

**Supporting community growth and startups.** During the year, Commerce implemented or administered multiple programs to foster economic growth in Oklahoma communities and to encourage startups and entrepreneurs. Such programs included the ARPA for Nonprofits Relief program, the Oklahoma Rural Jobs Act and the Invest in Oklahoma Program.

Other key initiatives included the Economic Development Assistance (EDA) grant which allowed Commerce to award 28 communities with funding to support the development of 28 new industrial sites to market; and the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant which awarded Oklahoma with \$350,000 to help provide small businesses the information and tools they need to succeed in export-related activities.

**Increased investment in infrastructure.** Utilizing research conducted by Commerce, the Oklahoma legislature made a historic investment in the state's infrastructure, allocating nearly \$1 billion in project funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) with specific investment in broadband access. The legislature also allocated another \$250 million in state funds to create the Progressing Rural Economic Prosperity (PREP) fund which will help industrial parks and aeronautics facilities in rural areas of the state modernize and expand infrastructure, leading to increased economic development opportunities.

**Improving supply chains for the manufacturing industry with Connex Oklahoma hitting 500 manufacturers.** Through the supply chain database tool, Commerce was able to provide greater access for our local companies across the state.

**Continued support of Oklahoma companies** in partnership with the Oklahoma Finance Authority and the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance. In its second program year, the Oklahoma Innovation Expansion Program (OIEP) accepted 122 applications with 108 actively participating in the program. Of the participants, the participating companies are generating \$51.3 million in total joint state and business project investment statewide.

**Supporting workforce development.** Through the Impact Partnership Grant, the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, a division of Commerce, awarded six new applicants up to \$175,000 to invest in their industry-led, collaborative community projects. A total of \$1,000,000 in funding will be allocated to the awardees, extension projects, and Regional Workforce Boards.

**Oklahoma's film and music sector continues to shine with** the Oklahoma Film + Music Office (OF+MO) receiving the "Outstanding Film Commission" award at the 2022 Location Managers Guild International Award. Additionally, the Oklahoma Film Friendly Community Program grew by 14 communities during the year.

**Oklahoma Main Street saw tremendous growth with the addition of multiple new programs and local reinvestment milestones.** Introducing a new program including three levels of participation – network, associate and fully-designated – allowed the Oklahoma Main Street Center to attract more interest in the program.

**Increasing state investment through historic project wins.** Commerce-led economic development projects won during the year are expected to bring more than 7,000 new jobs and \$3.7 billion in new

private investment. Some of the projects contributing to these numbers include the following major announcements:

- **Simple Modern**, a company that specializes in the design and manufacture of insulated stainless steel and plastic drinkware, has experienced phenomenal growth since it first opened in late 2015. Due to that growth and the desire to onshore its manufacturing capabilities, the company began domestic manufacturing operations in Oklahoma City in September.
- **Northern Data**, a Germany-based tech company, announced plans build its North American operational headquarters at MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor, investing at least \$270 million and employing 150 people with salaries reaching up to \$140,000.
- **BrucePac**, a family-owned company with food processing facilities in Oregon and Oklahoma, held an official groundbreaking ceremony at the company's food processing facility in Durant, Oklahoma. The event marked the start of a \$22.5 million-dollar expansion to the Durant location, to include additional production areas, refrigeration, and processing equipment. In the coming year, BrucePac expects to hire an additional 100 new employees to support future growth in Durant.
- **Signify Health, Inc.**, a leading healthcare platform that leverages advanced analytics, technology, and nationwide healthcare networks to create and power value-based payment programs, announced the official opening of its new regional service center in Oklahoma City.
- **RENEW Energy** announced the construction of a new remanufacturing facility in Enid, Oklahoma. The new facility will remanufacture wind turbine drive trains, and will hold the largest capacity in North America in regard to the size of said turbines.
- **Webco Industries** started construction activities on the first building of the F. W. Weber Leadership Campus in Sand Springs. The more than 72,000-sq-ft building will house Webco's corporate leadership team, Webco University and the Webco Tech Center. The leadership campus will occupy about 35 acres of land located adjacent to Webco's existing Star Center Tube Manufacturing plant.

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