

# MAKING PLACE MATTER

**President's Annual Assessment**



**NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

***The Northeastern Oklahoma Regional Summit aimed to improve the competitiveness and strengthen the long-term economic well-being of the Region. The Region is comprised of seven counties in Northeastern Oklahoma with a total population of approximately 327,000. The Summit was a collaborative effort between the Cherokee Nation, Northeastern State University, and SACC-EZ a regional economic development cooperative. Many local and partners joined the effort including Smart Start, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, and Cherokee Nation Entertainment.***

The Summit had three primary goals:

1. Obtain commit from community leaders throughout the Region to a collaborative process;
2. Create a framework for development and a foundation for Regional planning;
3. Identify and prioritize assets on which to build and critical barriers to sustainable growth;

Regional partners made great progress in achieving the Summit goals and pledged to maintain momentum by analyzing the Region's best long term sustainable growth plan by engaging community leaders.

The analysis will encompass:

- Knowledge infrastructure analysis to develop actions through which we can strengthen workforce education.
- Regional identification and communication analysis to develop our *Regional Voice and Brand* while maintaining the individuality of communities.
- Socio-economic analysis to assess the Region's ability to overcome growth barriers.

In Spring 2010, Summit participants and community leaders will be engaged to continue dialogue in order to amplify issues discussed at the Summit, including action plan and goal development. The planning events will have three main objectives:

- Pool knowledge about the Region's economy, including a thorough mapping of the Region's distinct economic assets.
- Identify unexploited opportunities, focusing attention not on what is but what could be.
- Weigh strategic opportunities, gathering input to craft the best possible strategy for sustainable growth.
- Inform the Region, providing objective information on the Region's challenges and opportunities, and show the benefits of regional collaboration in seizing new opportunities.

The following section of this summarizes the key findings from the Summit. The principal finding is that the Region can tackle overriding concerns about income and education levels, as well as a migration of talent, but only through a regional collaborative effort.

Section two outlines a strategic framework to guide this collaborative approach. The framework has three pillars: establish or identify an enabling organization to implement the Growth Plan, focus on transforming the Region, and boost the Region's capacity to innovate and create wealth.

## Principal Finding

The Northeastern Oklahoma Region as a significant collection of assets, yet income and education levels continue to pale in comparison with the rest of the state and most of the nation. The Region's rurality aggravates growth issues necessitating collaboration to voice needs and concerns and illustrate/provide resources to enhance growth.

### Specific Findings:

**Our Region's natural and cultural resources are beyond compare.** Every area of our Region identifies numerous attractions and activities that provide an excellent 'quality of life' for our population and serve as a basis for a strong tourism industry.

**Northeastern Oklahoma has difficulty in retaining a skilled, ready workforce.** Our regional population is growing in comparison with the rest of the state. Additionally, although our population of youth and elderly exceed that of the state and the nation, population of those in the workforce, aged 30 to 59, is less than that of the state and the nation. Our wages are at the lower end of the spectrum in comparison with the state. Two of our counties, Cherokee and Adair, are consistent poverty counties due to low wage rates. Our unemployment rates are lower than the national average, although it varies greatly by county .

**Northeastern Oklahoma's top net occupations are expected to shrink by 2015.** With the exception of agriculture managers, agriculture workers, and drivers, our top occupations are expected to decrease by 2015. This includes building cleaning workers, retail sales, clerical positions, teachers, fast food workers, registered nurses, and laborers.

**We have strong local and tribal governments that provide critical leadership and essential services.** Local governments are cooperative and willing to work with one another to address growth issues and encourage collaboration. Indian tribes create additional jobs in the area, create jobs, and provide cultural significance.

**The educational attainment of our population is abysmal.** Our regional population is far less likely than other areas of the state and the nation to go to college, much less obtain a bachelor or graduate degree. Our region exceeds the state and the nation in obtaining high school diplomas, although areas of our region experience some the highest drop out rates in the state. The Educational Needs Index lists four counties within our Region as Most Critical and two counties as Critical. Additional gaps in our workforce's education occur in the areas of managerial skills and leadership training.

**Higher education opportunities abound in our Region.** Access to higher education and vocational training is very open. Additionally, Oklahoma universities are focusing efforts on building capacity and supporting community development in order that their graduates have a place in their community. The Oklahoma Vocational Education system is ranked as one of the top vocational systems in the state.

**Infrastructure in many rural areas cannot support current systems or growth.** A digital divide exists in many of the Region's more rural areas and alternative access is cost prohibitive.

Additionally some of our communities have limited access to utilities, including water. We must remain conscientious about balancing our ecosystem with growth.

**Quality of life within our region is good.** Our Region is sandwiched in between the Tulsa and Fayetteville Rogers metro areas. Our cost of living is fairly low, real estate prices are very competitive, and we have many recreational activities, particularly outdoors.

**Socio-economic issues hinder growth potential.** Additional resources, including parenting skills training, must be directed toward family services that target children zero to three. This is a critical age for child development to provide a solid foundation in order that the child can learn and avoid behavioral issues occurring in our rural areas such as drugs, violence, and domestic abuse. Educational services must focus on the 'whole child' versus small skill sets. Northeastern Oklahoma continues to struggle with cycles of poverty of among families. Additionally, Eastern Oklahoma is ranked on the Well Being Index and Oklahoma is the only state in the nation to suffer a declining life expectancy.

**Our people and civic organizations are the backbones of our communities.** Our Region is home to many strong community leaders and strong civic organizations. Our leadership is progressive and our population is friendly and generally civically engaged.

**We must share a common voice and tell our story.** The Region should understand its commonalities, define a regional identity, and build both internal and external communication infrastructure to better network and voice ourselves to state officials and media outlets.

## **2009 Regional Economic Summit**

### **Introduction**

Well over a year ago, three concerned organizations (the Cherokee Nation, Northeastern State University, and SACC-EZ) sat down across from one another and began to plan for a 7-county Economic Summit. These three organizations shared a common belief that a working conference must be planned and implemented so leaders from a multi-county region could cross borders to build the regional economy and our communities. The overall goal for the Regional Economic Summit was to develop a shared regional future; a shared agenda; a shared commitment; and shared leadership.

After much planning from both small and large group planning committees, the first annual Regional Economic Summit was held on November 3rd and 4th, 2009 at Northeastern State University with over 400 individuals attending. Groups represented included state and federal legislators, county governments, city governments, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, chambers of commerce, industrial authorities, economic development organizations, educators, business leaders, non-profit groups, and community members. The planning group worked hard to create a venue to encourage participants to speak about challenges facing communities and businesses so that we can identify common, regional solutions.

The Economic Summit's interactive agenda provided opportunities for networking and creating partnerships; activities to begin building common ground by identifying common assets and common growth issues; connecting with federal, state, and tribal resources; and employing useful tools to facilitate growth in the region. The primary speakers included the following list of distinguished individuals:

- Bill Millet - Founder and President of Scope View Strategic Advantage
- Steve Shepelwich - Senior Community Affairs Advisor at the Federal Reserve Bank in Oklahoma City.
- Deidra Myers - Director for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce Research and Economic Analysis Division
- Houston Davis - Vice Chancellor of Academics for the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education
- Rick Brinkley - Tulsa Better Business Bureau President and Chief Executive Officer
- Dr. Don Betz - President of Northeastern State University
- Jay Hannah - President of Financial Services at BancFirst and the Cherokee Nation Businesses Board of Directors
- Meredith Frailey - Cherokee Nation Council
- Wilma Mankiller - Former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation

Day one of the Summit kicked off with a networking breakfast and business card exchange targeting similar interest groups such as education, local government, businesses, allied health, and chambers of commerce. Later that day, Summit participants worked together in small groups to identify and prioritize local and regional

assets through facilitated and recorded sessions and then later repeated a similar process by working in groups to identify growth issues specific to areas such as learning communities, personal mobility, workforce readiness, infrastructure, working with state legislators, and how we tell our story. Day one ended in an amazing way, with Summit participants treated to a networking reception teaming with wonderful food and drinks, great entertainment, and a vast array of nice door prizes.

Day two of the Summit started bright and early with a Legislative Breakfast and a live teleconference from Washington D.C. with U.S. Representatives Dan Boren and John Sullivan followed by a panel discussion. Tools for Success Workshops were then presented two different times to give Summit participants the opportunity to attend two of the following workshops:

- Industry Clusters - What they are and how do we use that information?
- Demographic Information at Your Fingertips
- Regional Collaboration Success - Mobilize Maine Project
- Community Infrastructure - USDA Rural Development
- Funding Opportunities - Resources to fund your economic development projects
- Making Connections - Building sustainable partnerships and networks
- Northwest Arkansas Connection — How do we collaborate with one of the fastest growing economies in the country.

Day two concluded successfully with a report from the working sessions and a call to action by Mr. Jay Hannah. Tourism, natural resources, active civic organizations, a diverse workforce, lower cost of living, and access to higher education were identified as northeastern Oklahoma's top assets by the over 400 regional leaders who gathered at NSU for the region's first economic summit. Barriers to growth included the need for a more skilled workforce, a high level of poverty, communication between the counties and familiarity with assets each has, having a common regional strategy for growth, lack of a legislative agenda, and the need for early childhood services, such as daycare and parenting training.

# GIVING VOICE TO OUR REGION

LEADERS CROSSING BORDERS TO BUILD THE ECONOMY AND OUR COMMUNITIES  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEADERSHIP FOR A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



SACC-EZ

Dear Community Leader,

**“Giving Voice to Northeastern Oklahoma” was a tremendous success!** This momentous gathering attracted over 300 leaders from throughout our region, including legislators, local governments, economic and community development organizations, higher education, early education, public schools, tribal government, and interested citizenry. Participants took advantage of many learning and partnership opportunities, including:

- Listening to nationally recognized speakers,
- Learning how other regional collaborations spurred regional growth,
- Discovering our region’s economic outlook, and
- Developing partnerships with others interested in regional growth.

The workshops primarily revolved around “building capacity in our communities for sustainable futures and regional vitality”. Participants were enthusiastic about the potential associated with developing a regional collaboration and regional growth plan. The summit was the *first step* where we developed relationships and began the critical work of creating a regional plan by identifying regional assets and growth issues. A brief detailing the working session outcomes is enclosed. The working sessions identified commonalities throughout the region and acknowledged that interactions in our region cannot end at the political boundaries of counties or states.

Our next steps include additional working sessions to detail actions that will further develop our assets and mitigate our growth issues. We will also document milestones to monitor and celebrate our success. Your continued participation in this planning process is crucial to our regional success. Information regarding in depth working sessions will be forthcoming. .

If you were able to attend the Summit, thank you so much for your commitment to our region’s growth. We understand not everyone was able to attend the summit due to other conferences throughout the state. If you were unable to attend, please note your participation in the regional collaborative and the regional planning process is essential and we look forward to your future involvement.

To Our Future,

Don Betz, President  
Northeastern State University

Chad Smith, Principal Chief  
Cherokee Nation

Bill Langley, Chair  
SACC-EZ

# GIVING VOICE TO OUR REGION

LEADERS CROSSING BORDERS TO BUILD THE ECONOMY AND OUR COMMUNITIES  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEADERSHIP FOR A SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



NOVEMBER 3-4

UNIVERSITY CENTER

NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY  
TAHLEQUAH, OKLAHOMA

## NOVEMBER 3, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS)

**8:00AM - 4:45PM** RESOURCE ROOM EXHIBITS, BALLROOM LOUNGE

**8:00AM - 8:45AM**

### NETWORKING BREAKFAST/BUSINESS CARD EXCHANGE

UNIVERSITY CENTER

**MAKING CONNECTIONS** Roundtable discussions

#### **EDUCATION** Room 223

Discussion Leader **Dr. Neil Morton**, Cherokee Nation Education Services Group Leader

#### **ALLIED HEALTH** Room 222

Discussion Leader **Dr. Martin Venneman**, NSU Dean, College of Science and Health Professions

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** Room 224

Discussion Leader **Ken Purdy**, Tahlequah Mayor

#### **CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE** Room 226

Discussion Leaders **Sue Harris**, President and CEO, Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce and **Bill Langley**, SACC-EZ Chair

#### **BUSINESSES** Room 225

Discussion Leader **Jeff Reasor**, Reasor LLC Chief Executive Officer

**9:00AM - 9:15AM**

### WELCOMING ADDRESS -- ROZELL BALLROOM

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS - MAKING PLACE MATTER

NSU President **Dr. Don Betz**, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief **Chad Smith**, and Four County Economic Development Cooperative (formerly SACC-EZ) Chair **Bill Langley**



## NOVEMBER 3, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS) *cont d*

**9:20AM - 9:50AM**

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS -- ROZELL BALLROOM**

**REGIONAL COLLABORATION** - *What is it? How do we do it? Why is it important?*

**Bill Millett**, Founder and President of Scope View Strategic Advantage

**9:55AM - 10:35AM**

### **PANEL DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS -- ROZELL BALLROOM**

**STATE OF THE REGION** - *Regional Demographics, Regional Economy, Rural Issues*

**Deidre Myers**, Oklahoma Department of Commerce Director of Research and Economic Analysis and  
**Dr. Houston Davis**, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

**10:45AM - 12:00PM**

### **WORKING SESSION**

**ASSET MAPPING** - *Small workgroups will identify and prioritize local and regional assets through a facilitated and recorded session.*

**ADAIR COUNTY** Room 222

**CHEROKEE COUNTY** Morgan Room

**MAYES COUNTY** Room 224

**DELAWARE COUNTY** Room 223

**MUSKOGEE COUNTY** Redbud Room

**SEQUOYAH COUNTY** Room 225

**WAGONER COUNTY** Room 226

## NOVEMBER 3, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS) *cont d*

**12:00PM - 1:00PM**

### **LUNCH -- ROZELL BALLROOM**

**12:30PM - 1:00PM**

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS -- ROZELL BALLROOM**

**COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS** - *Individual Responsibility for Community Development*

**Rick Brinkley**, President and CEO, Better Business Bureau of Eastern Oklahoma

**1:30PM - 2:45PM**

### **RESOURCE SPEED DATING -- 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR UNIVERSITY CENTER**

Fast paced introduction to numerous resources from national, tribal, state, and local levels.  
Room assignments for your beginning start time will be given to you at lunch!

## NOVEMBER 3, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS) *cont d*

**3:00PM - 4:30PM**

### WORKING SESSION

**GROWING OUR REGION** - Small workgroups will identify and prioritize local and regional issues regarding regional growth through a facilitated and recorded session.

#### LEARNING COMMUNITY - Morgan Room

##### EARLY EDUCATION TO CONTINUING EDUCATION

Facilitator **Sandy Garrett**, Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction

#### HEALTHY LIVING - Room 226

##### IMPROVING OUR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Facilitator **Julie Deerinwater**, Cherokee Nation Head Start

#### PERSONAL MOBILITY - Room 222

##### MOVING PEOPLE

Facilitator **Wilma Mankiller**, NSU Sequoyah Fellow

#### WORKFORCE READINESS - Redbud Room

##### WORKFORCE SKILLS AND SUPPORT ISSUES

Facilitator **Norma Noble**, Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development

#### INFRASTRUCTURE - Room 223

##### ROADS, BROADBAND ACCESS, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Facilitators **Michael Lynn**, Cherokee Nation Community Services Roads Director and **Craig Cromley**, AT&T Area Manager of External Affairs

#### WORKING WITH THE STATE LEGISLATORS - Room 224

##### VOICING OUR NEEDS

Facilitator **Brad Williams**, Legislative Liaison Oklahoma Department of Commerce

#### HOW DO WE TELL OUR STORY - Room 225

##### MARKETING OUR REGION

Facilitators **Nancy Garber**, NSU Director of Communications and Marketing, and **Donna Tinnin**, Tourism Development & Planning, Cherokee Nation

## NOVEMBER 3, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS) *cont d*

**4:45PM - 7:00PM**

### NETWORKING RECEPTION -- ROZELL BALLROOM

#### TASTE OF THE REGION

Regional restaurants prepare sampling dishes and drinks. Entertainment by **Robert Lewis**, Cherokee Storyteller and the NSU Jazz Ensemble  
Door prizes at end of event!

## NOVEMBER 4, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS)

**8:00AM -12:15PM** RESOURCE ROOM EXHIBITS, BALLROOM LOUNGE

**7:30AM - 8:45AM**

### LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST -- ROZELL BALLROOM

**POLITICAL COLLABORATIONS** - *How Do Legislators Collaborate? How Do We Bring A Collective Voice To Our Region?*

Breakfast with federal, tribal, and state legislators—Facilitated by **Bryan Gonterman**, President—AT&T Oklahoma

**9:00AM - 9:20AM**

### WELCOMING ADDRESS -- ROZELL BALLROOM

#### BUILDING OUR TEAM

Regional Summit Emcee, **Jay Hannah**, BancFirst Corp. Executive Vice President of Financial Services

## NOVEMBER 4, 2009 - DAILY AGENDA (ROOM ASSIGNMENTS) cont d

**9:30AM - 10:15AM & 10:30AM - 11:15AM**

### **WORKSHOPS -- UNIVERSITY CENTER**

**TOOLS FOR SUCCESS** - *Workshops will be held concurrently and repeated once, giving participants the opportunity to attend two workshops.*

#### **INDUSTRY CLUSTERS - Room 224**

**WHAT ARE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS, HOW DO WE USE THAT INFORMATION?**

**Deidre Myers**, OK Dept of Commerce Research and Economic Analysis Division

#### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION - Room 222**

**AT YOUR FINGERTIPS – oklahomavirtualcommunity.com**

**Ray Murphy**, Oklahoma Rural Development Center Director, NSU

#### **REGIONAL COLLABORATION SUCCESS - Room 223**

**Mike Eisensmith**, Northern Maine Development Commission Economic Development Director

#### **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE - Morgan Room**

**USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT, HOW THEY CAN HELP?**

**Ryan McMullen**, USDA Rural Development Oklahoma State Director

#### **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES - Redbud Room**

**RESOURCES TO FUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**Rhonda Clemons**, Executive Director, Zoë Institute

#### **MAKING CONNECTIONS - Cedar Room**

**SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS**

**Steve Shepelwich**, OK Senior Community Affairs Advisor, Federal Reserve

#### **NORTHWEST ARKANSAS CONNECTION -**

##### **Dogwood Room**

**HOW DO WE COLLABORATE WITH ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES IN THE COUNTRY?**

**Darin Gray**, Northwest Arkansas Business Journal Chief Executive Officer

**11:30AM - 12:15PM**

### **MOVING FORWARD -- ROZELL BALLROOM | REPORT OUT**

Regional Summit Emcee, **Jay Hannah**, BancFirst Corp. Executive Vice President of Financial Services

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



### **BILL MILLETT**

**FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF SCOPE VIEW STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE**

Bill Millett established Charlotte, N.C.-based Scope View Strategic Advantage in 1995 to deliver substantial and sustainable value to private, nonprofit and public firms through support in a broad range of economic, organizational and business development areas. Its client list includes corporations, architectural firms, professional associations, chambers of commerce and other economic development bodies, United Ways, partnerships for children, a diverse range of not-for-profits, elected bodies, councils of government, school districts and municipal, county and state agencies.

He has served as Executive Director of two Regional Councils of Governments including the largest such agency in South Carolina; Senior Vice President in charge of Economic Development for the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce; and Principal for Business Development for a major design firm. Millett has served on the boards of major national, state and regional organizations, and accordingly has a solid working knowledge of economic and business development from both policy and management perspectives. His leadership positions have included five years service on the Board of the National Association of Development Organizations, including First Vice Presidency; Past President of the Carolina Economic Development Association; Charter President, Southeast Community Development Association; Past member, Governor's Committee on Local Government (SC); and Chair, Regional Council Executive Directors Association.

A frequent speaker at state, regional and national meetings, Millett has facilitated strategic initiatives, retreats, and workshops for more than 120 organizations during the last five years. Millett holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Political Science and Economics from the University of South Carolina.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



### RICK BRINKLEY

**TULSA BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

A former Emmy-Nominated Producer of the "Sally Jessy Raphael" show in New York City, Rick Brinkley travels throughout the nation as a speaker, conference leader, and lecturer. His career in television has allowed him to serve as a consumer reporter, investigative producer, talk show producer, writer, and on-air personality. That career, combined with a master's degree in counseling, has also allowed him to serve as a motivational/communications consultant to national titleholders, politicians, news anchors, and champion athletes. He serves as a leader in communications and personal impact for corporations, non-profits, and educators. In addition, he was asked to serve on the Blue Ribbon Panel of Judges for the Emmy Awards for Nine years. He is also the author of "Communicate To Win."

He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Langston University and a Master's degree from the Oral Roberts University School of Theology and Missions. For almost ten years, Rick served on the staff of The Community Church in Collinsville, Oklahoma. For five of those years, he was Senior Pastor and now preaches throughout North America. He serves on the Associate Board of Oasis Adult Day Care Facility as well as the Boards of Theater Arts Productions, The Petroleum Club of Tulsa and the National Board of Directors of the Council of Better Business Bureaus

Currently, Rick is President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Eastern Oklahoma and he has served as the National Judging Consultant for the Miss America Organization since December 2004. However, his greatest achievements are his son, John, and his eleven-year-old grandson, Cristian.

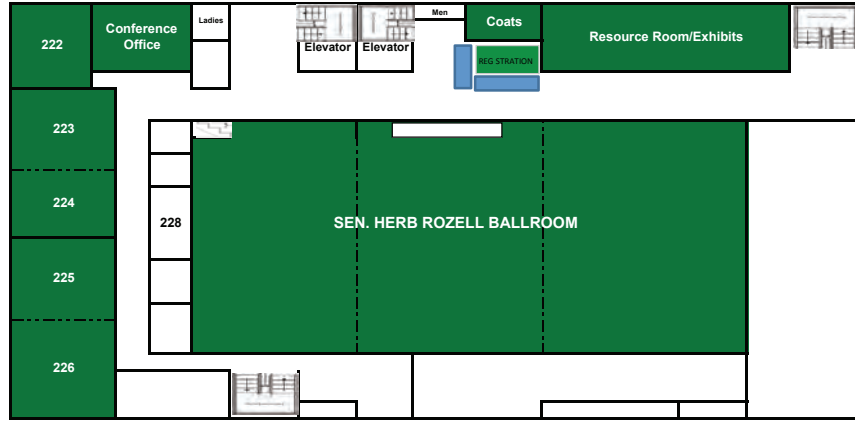
## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THESE SPONSORS



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

# UNIVERSITY CENTER

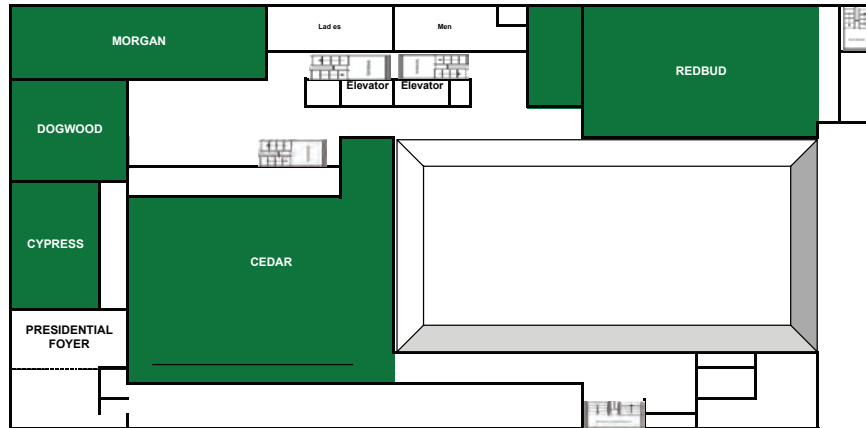
## 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

# UNIVERSITY CENTER

## 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR



HOSTED BY



# SACC-EZ

# REGIONAL SUMMIT

## November 3-4, 09

REFLECTIONS

# ASSET MAPPINGS

- Many similar assets in each area-with tourism (festivals & events, as well as cultural, historical, and recreational )w
- Natural resources-parks, lakes, and underdeveloped areasw
- Strong and engaged civic organizations-chambers, economicw development organizationsw
- Strong community leaders and ready workforce (although onlyw some noted skilled workforces as retention of skilled workforce wasw a growth issue)w
- Affordable cost of livingw
- Access to higher education &w
- Infrastructure (although this varied by county)Cherokee Nationw

# GROWTH ISSUES

- Lack of networking with each other, unfamiliarity witht each other, lack of partnerships and collaborationst
- Retention of skilled workforcet
- Community based education and trainingt
- Parenting skills and services to parents of childrent aged 0-3t
- Education of the whole child versus small skill setst
- Emergency Services and utility service in some of thet more rural areast
- Lack of a regional strategic plant

# What does this mean for NSU?

- Look inward for change before we can expect changes in the Region.
- Reflect/evaluate our programs, class structure, majors and academic priorities
- How do we leverage the indicators that surfaced?
- Access/isolation
- Poverty
- Race
- Education....all related to Economic Development
- Myriad of issues ....all addressing our own. educational investment.
- Internally.
- Externally.
  
- Community Based Problems.
- How do we build the capacity of the. communities we serve?.



# What Did We Learn?

- Regional counties (rural) have different characteristics.....
- Different access to resources
- Different economic structures
- Different social norms
- Different demographics
- Recurring themes (same problems & same solutions)
- Interrelationships of the issues make analyzing the causes difficult
- Diversity of the communities prohibits partnerships
- Strong links to both the Cherokee Nation and Northeastern will require us to review the issues as a system. As a result of our partnership, we can use multiple strategies that encourage a greater mix of both institutions as a combined educational investment.

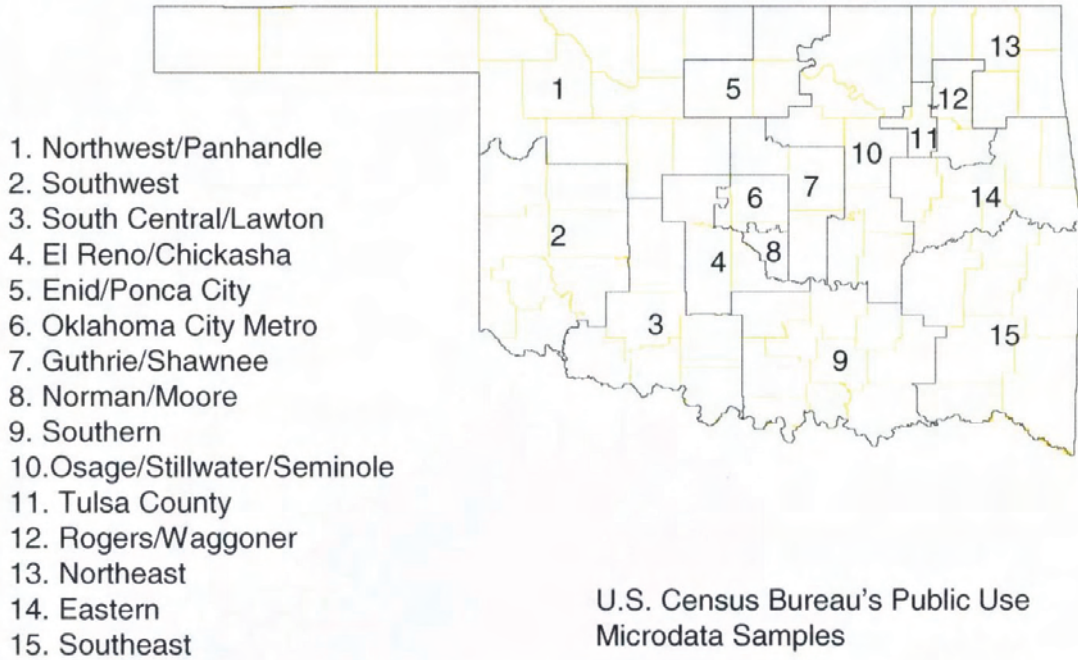
## NEED....,

- Community based solutions because of the, different locales,
- Collective review of our resources,
- Balance of local solutions with innovative, programs, activities, research .,
- (Both CN & NSU),
- Focus on basic development issues such as, Asset Building, community developmentU, building partnerships and collaborations,

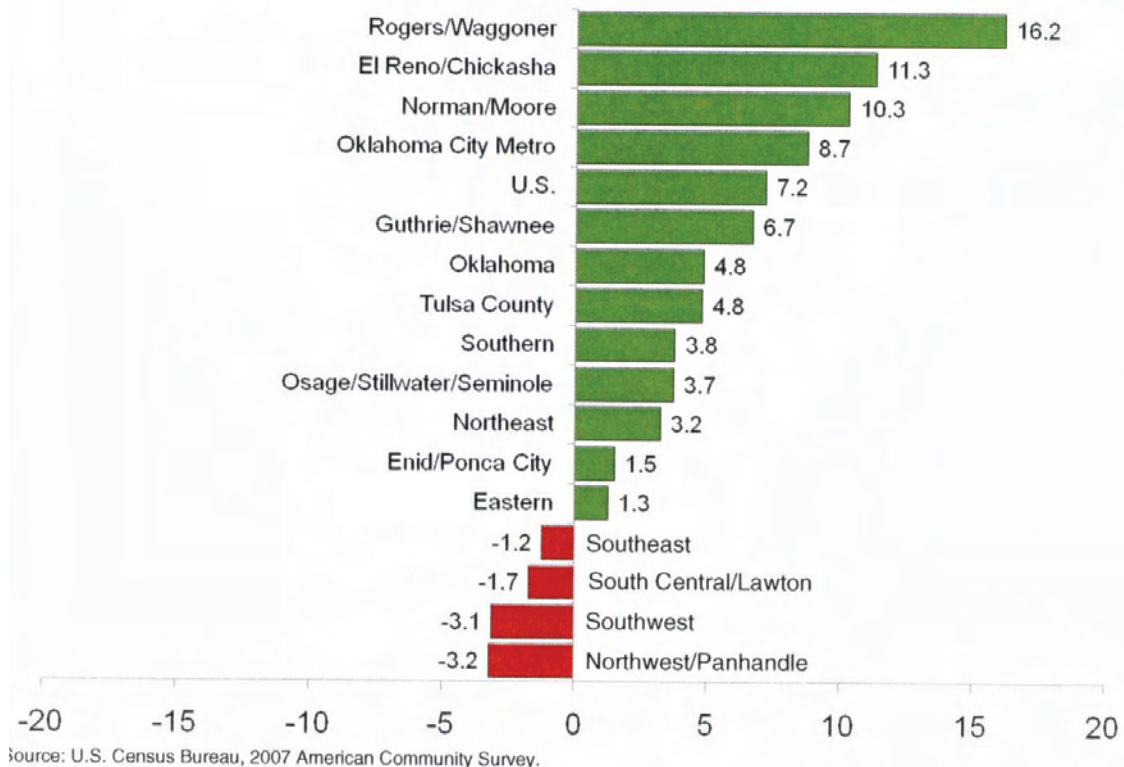
## ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

- Mix of industry
- Fewer skilled workers
- Areas that rely on one industry are more susceptible to recession
- Lower wages limit opportunities
- (tax base...schools)
- Result:
- low educational aspirations, narrow view of opportunities, sense of helplessness, all influence next generation view and at itude.

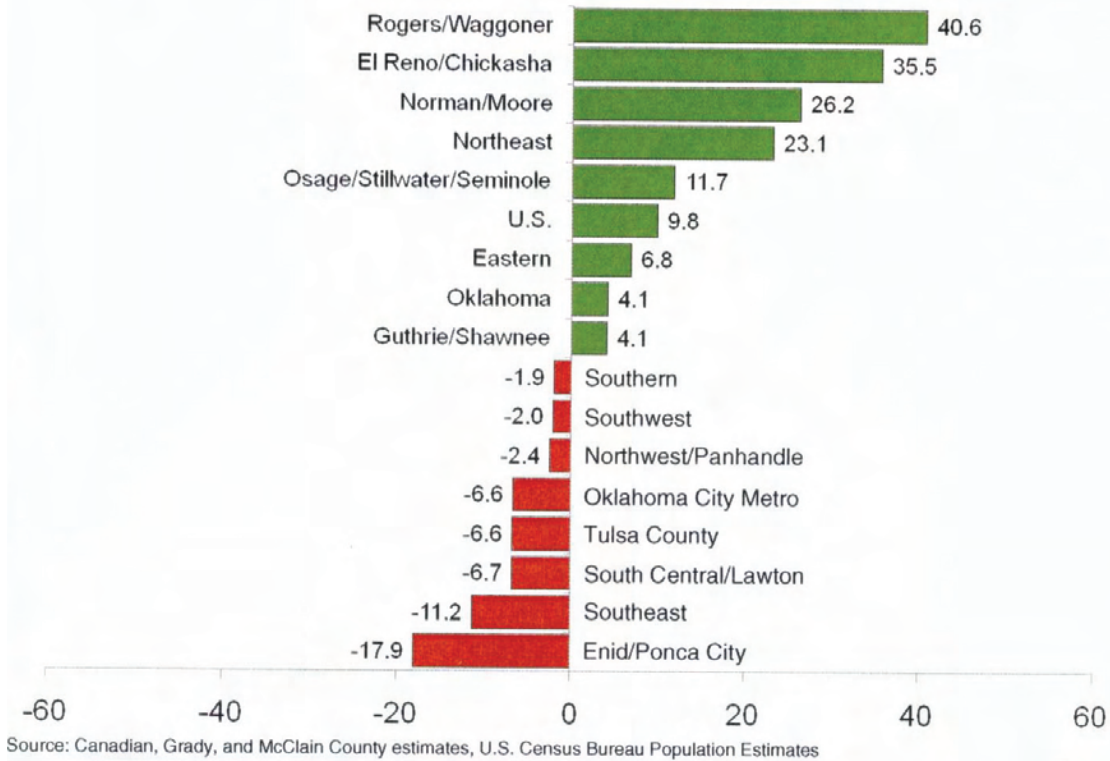
## Oklahoma Regions for "Making Place Matter" Data



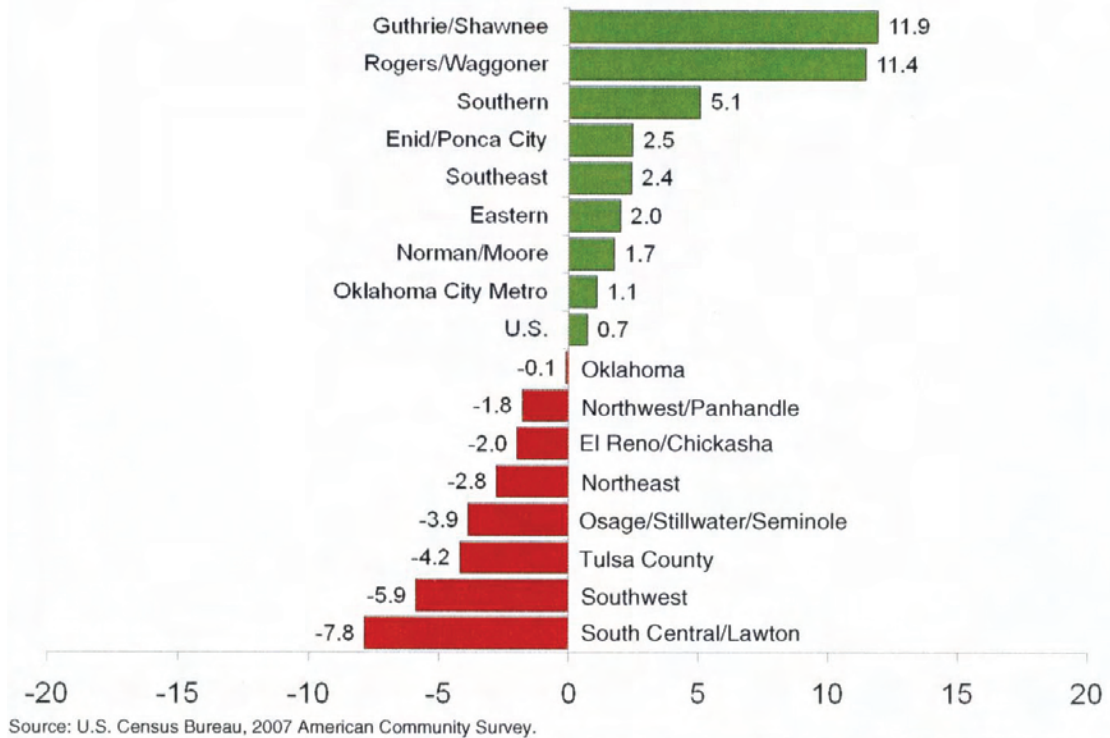
## Total Population Change (%) by Region, 2000-07



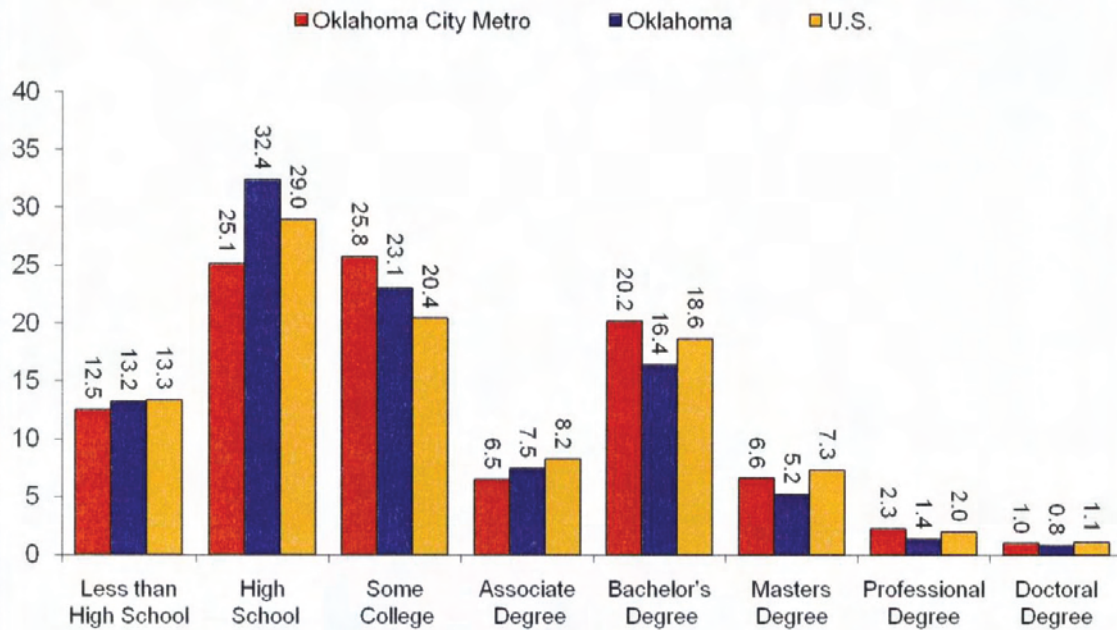
### Age 18 to 24 Population Change (%) by Region, 2000-07



### Age 25 to 49 Population Change (%) by Region, 2000-07

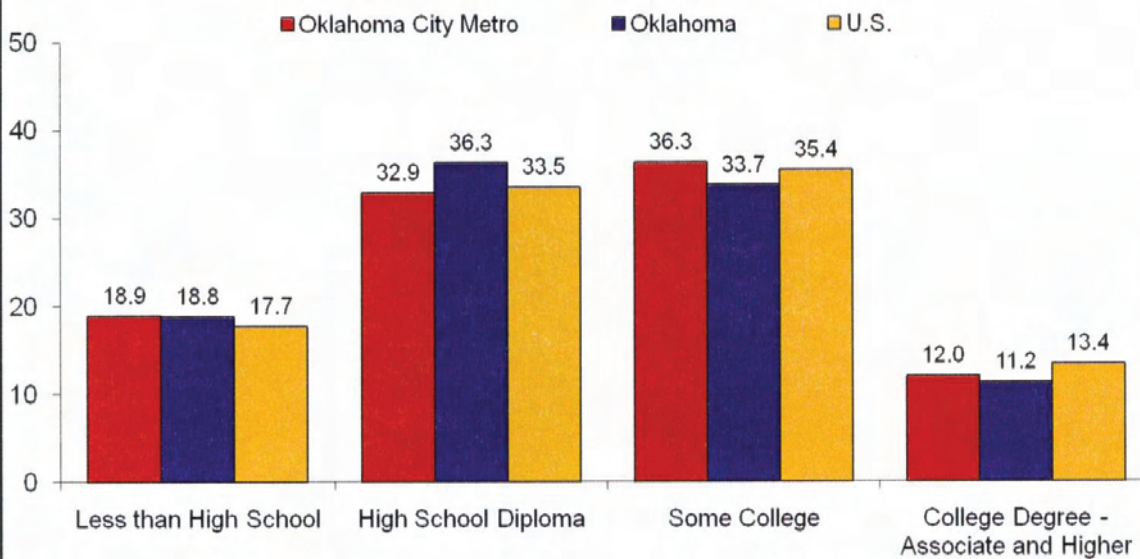


## Educational Attainment of 25 to 64 Year Olds, 2005-07



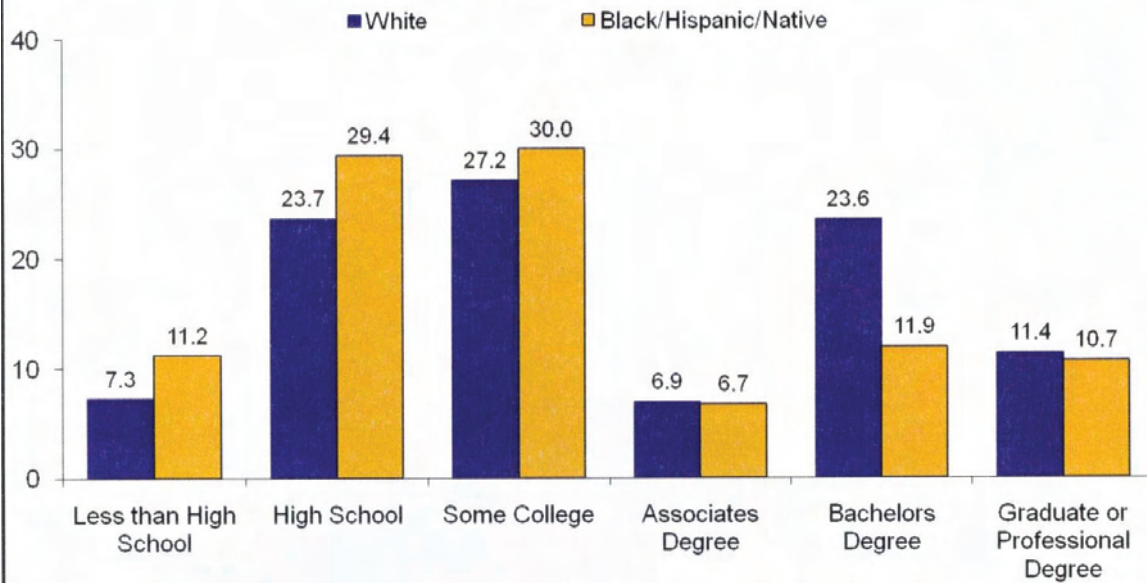
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

## Educational Attainment of 18 to 24 Year Olds, 2005-07



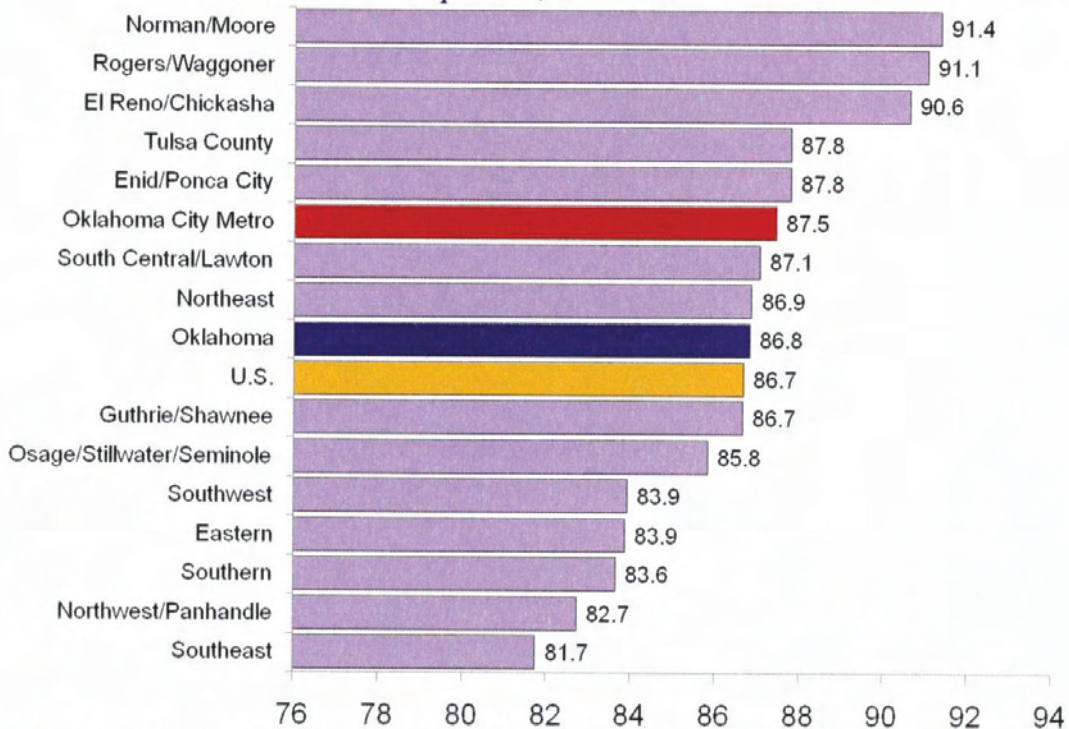
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Educational Attainment (%) of 25 to 64 Year Olds by Race/Ethnicity, 2005-07 (Oklahoma City Metro Region)*



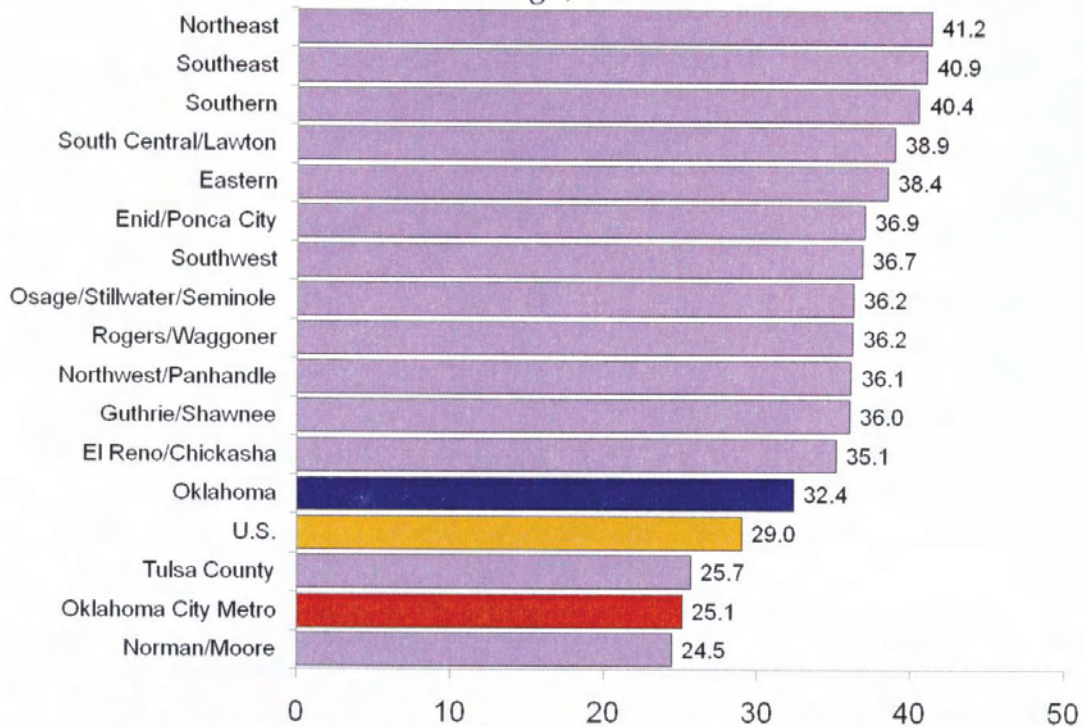
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Percent of 25 to 64 Year Olds with at Least a High School Diploma, 2005-07*



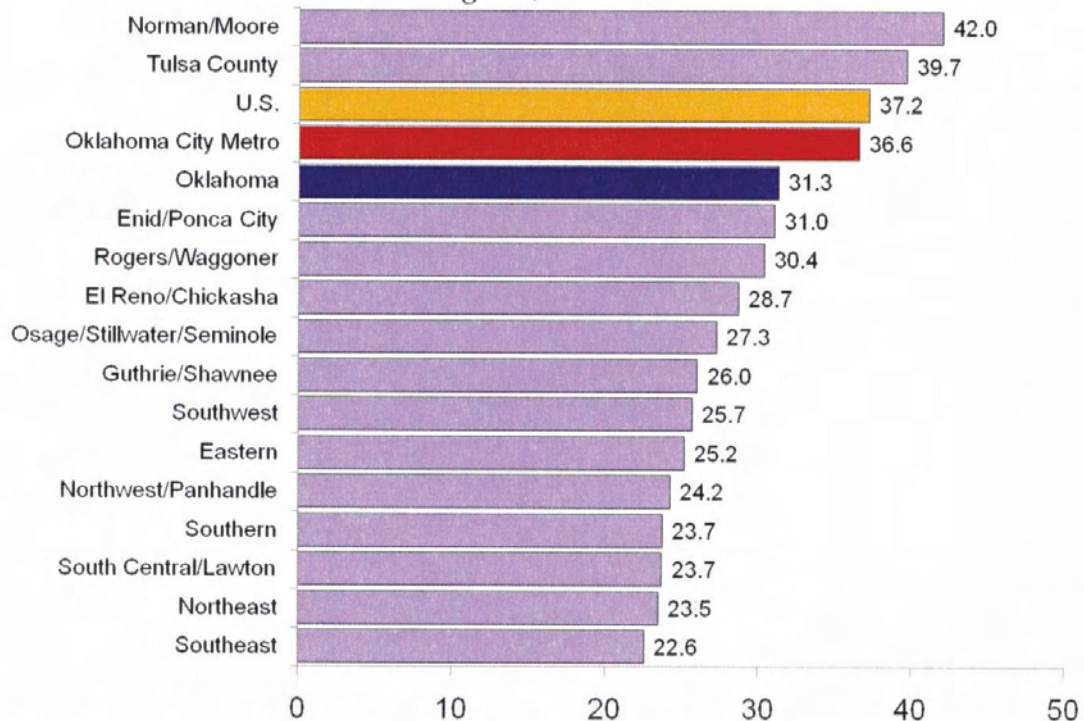
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Percent of 25 to 64 Year Olds with a High School Diploma, but No College, 2005-07*



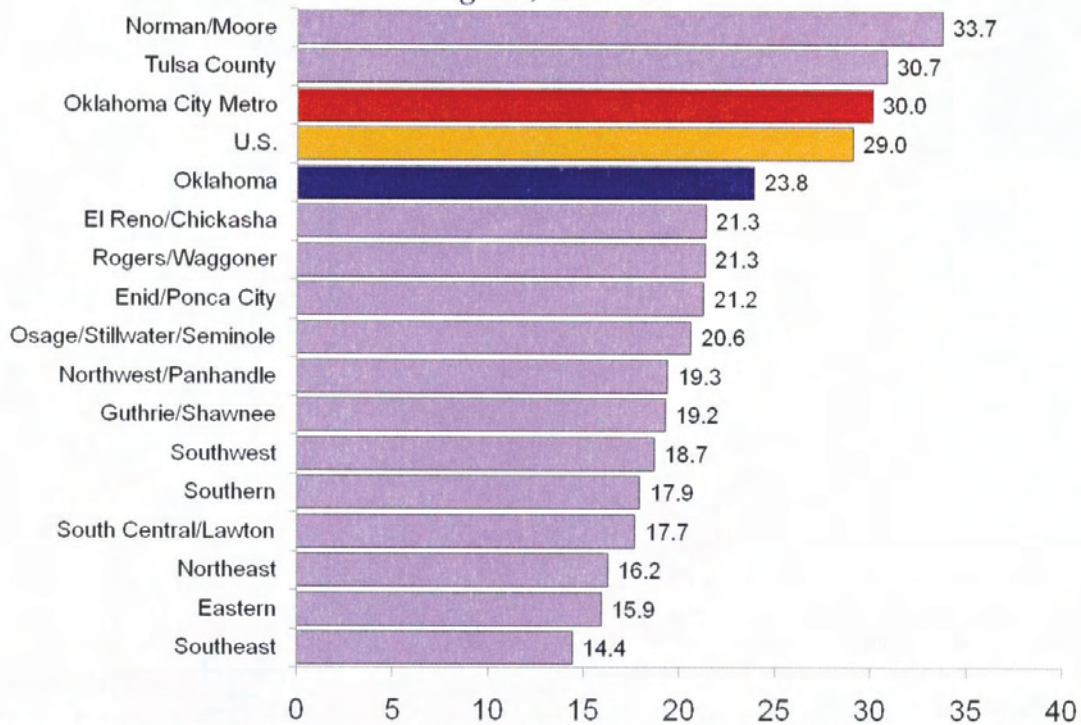
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Percent of 25 to 64 Year Olds with an Associates Degree or Higher, 2005-07*



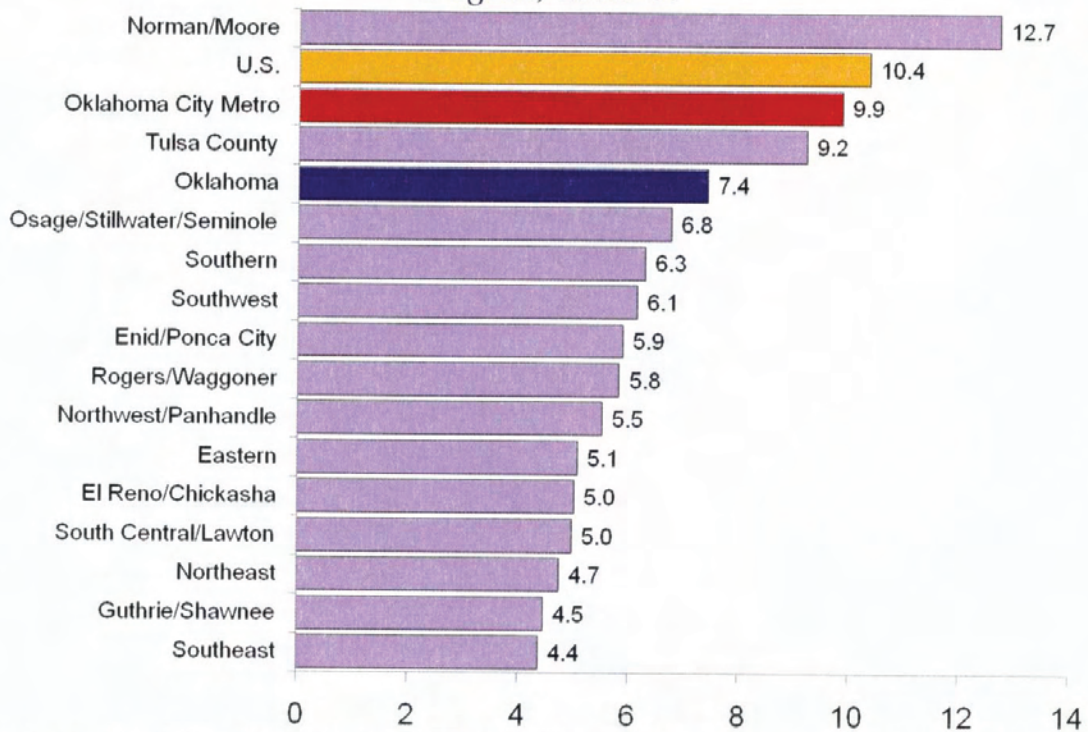
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Percent of 25 to 64 Year Olds with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2005-07*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

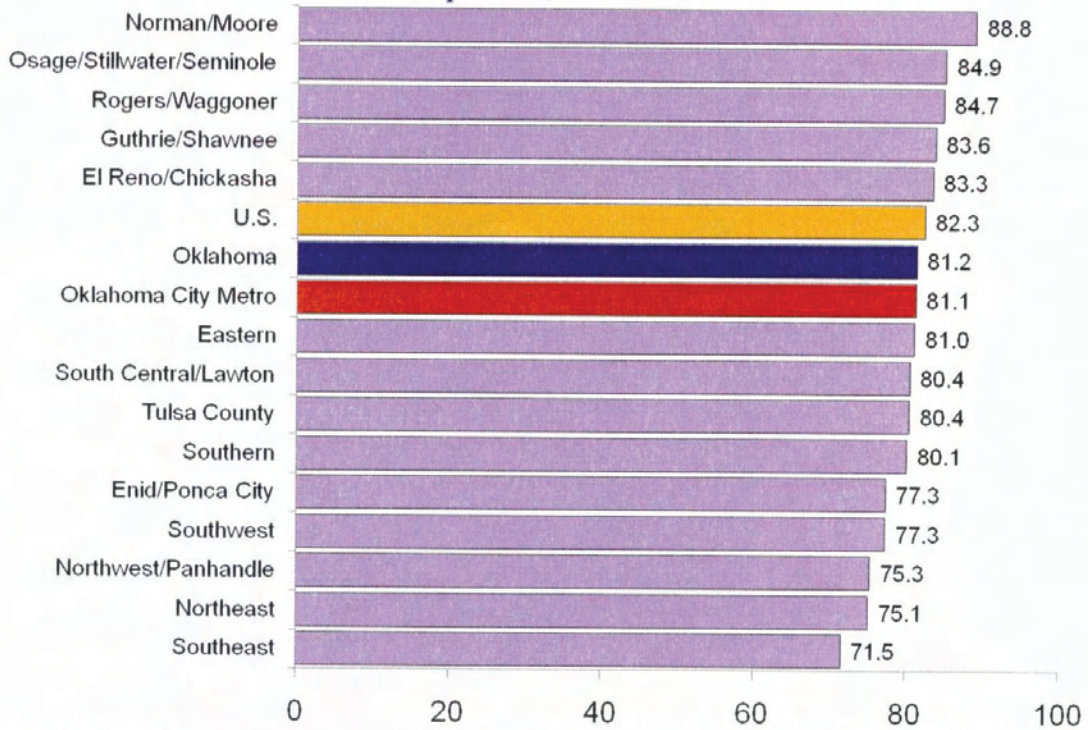
*Percent of 25 to 64 Year Olds with a Graduate or Professional Degree, 2005-07*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

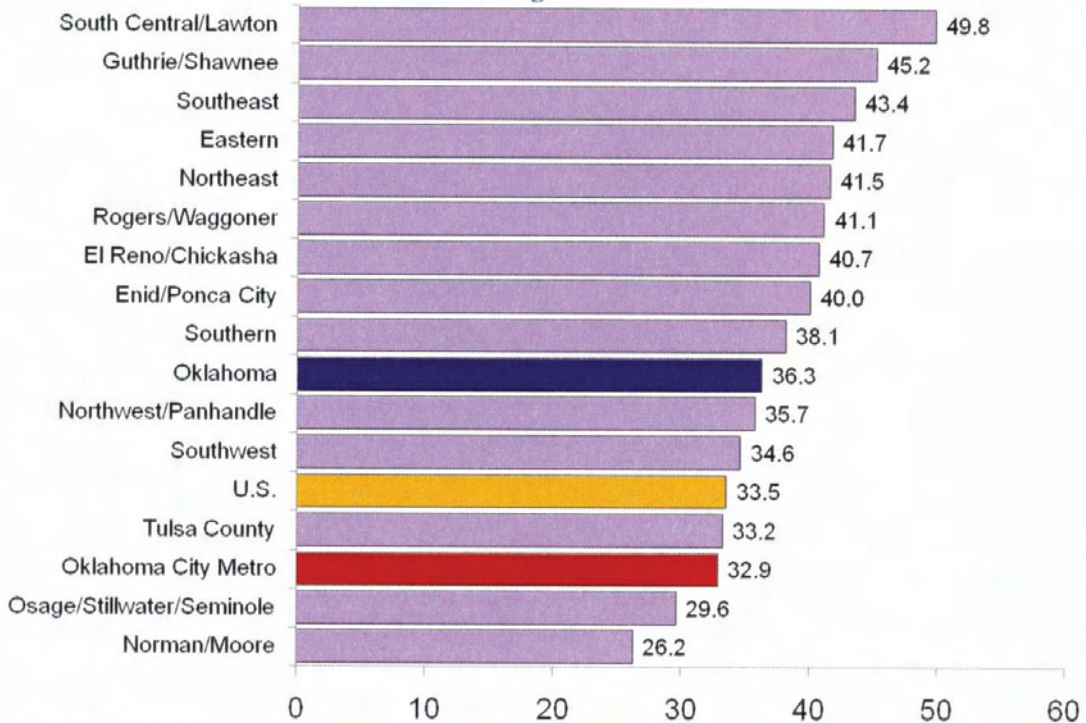


*Percent of 18 to 24 Year Olds with at Least a High School Diploma, 2005-07*



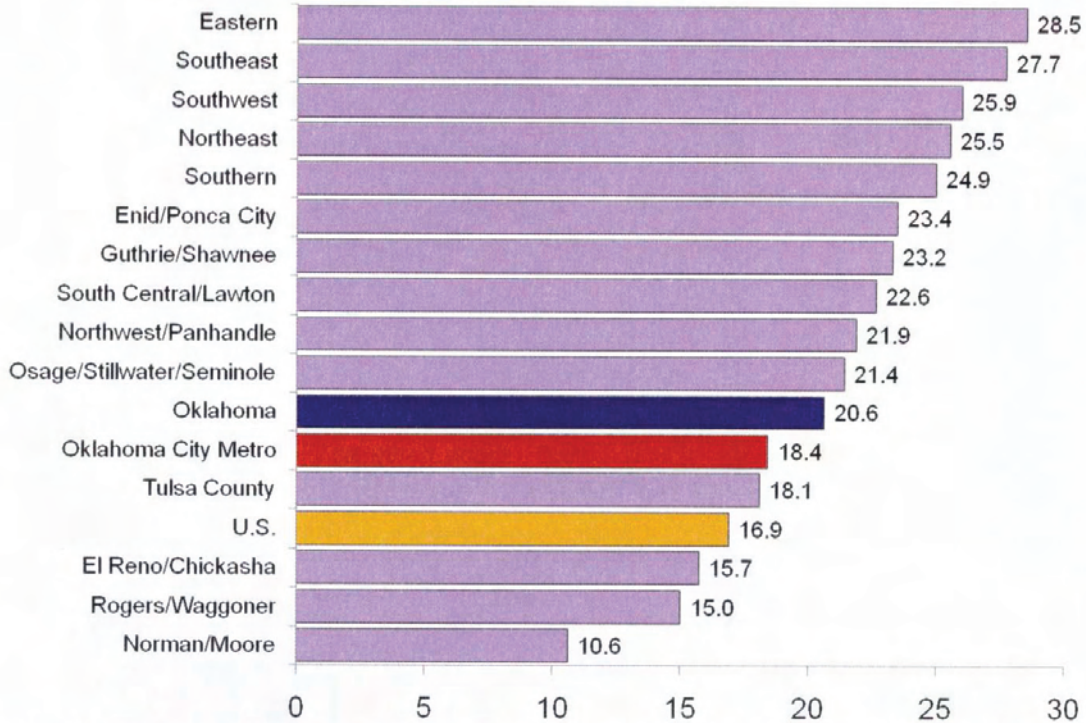
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File

*Percent of 18 to 24 Year Olds with a High School Diploma, But No College, 2005-07*



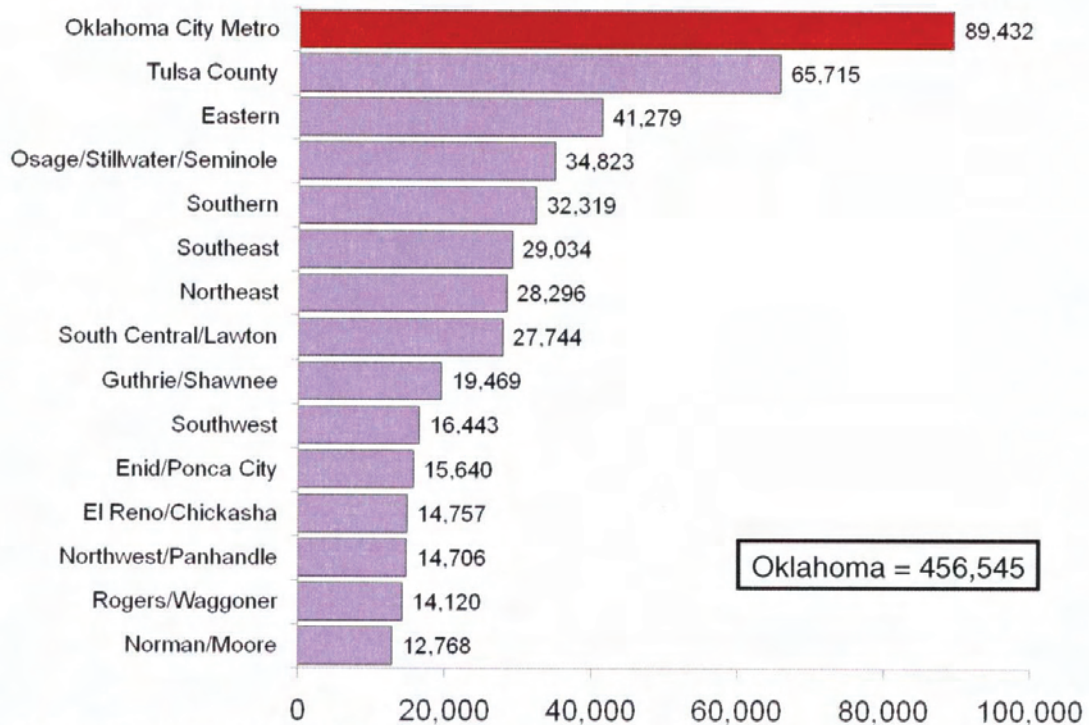
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Percent of 18 to 64 Year Olds Who Have Just a High School Diploma or Less and are Living in Families with Incomes Below a Living Wage*



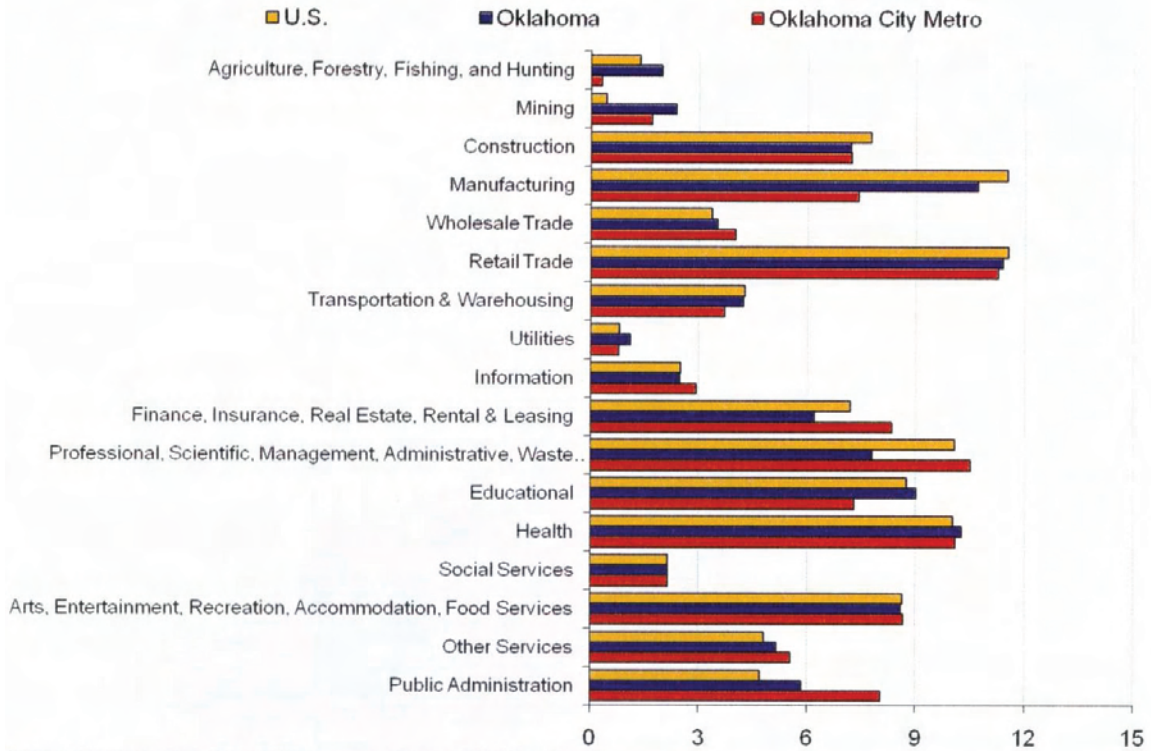
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Number of 18 to 64 Year Olds Who Have Just a High School Diploma or Less and are Living in Families with Incomes Below a Living Wage*



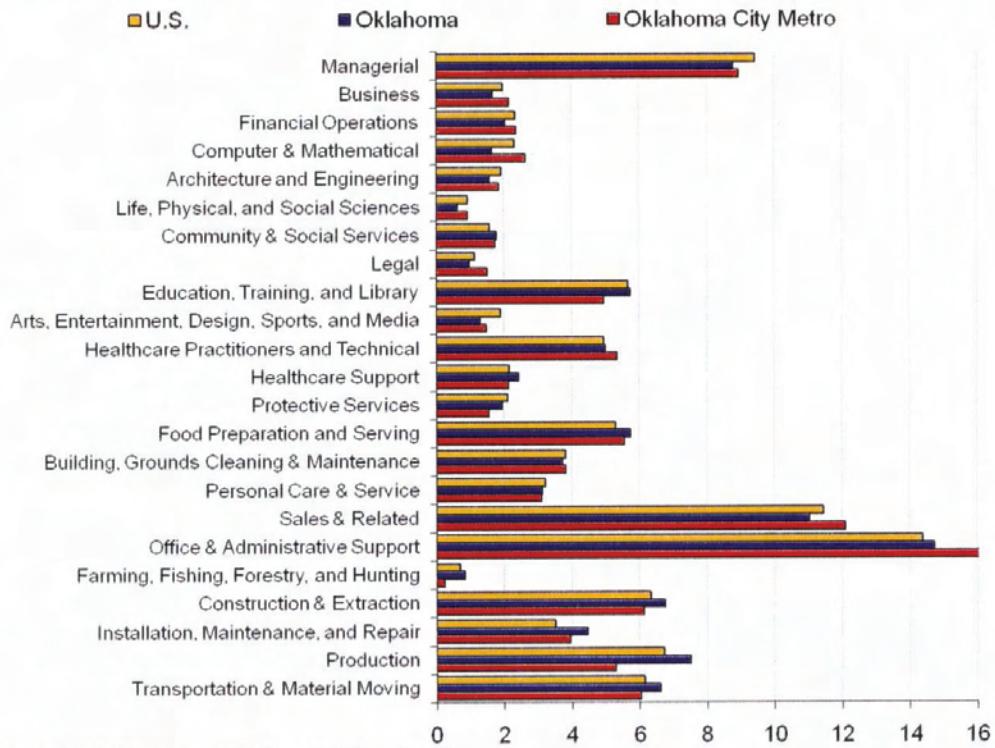
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

## Percentage Employment by Industry, 2005-07



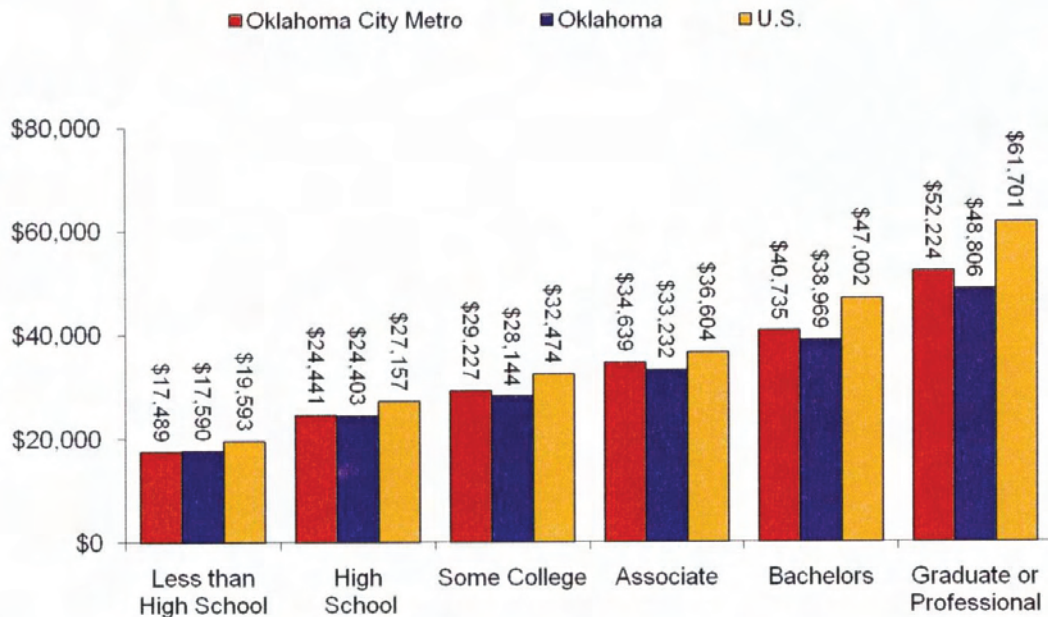
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year File.

## Percentage Employment by Occupation, 2005-07



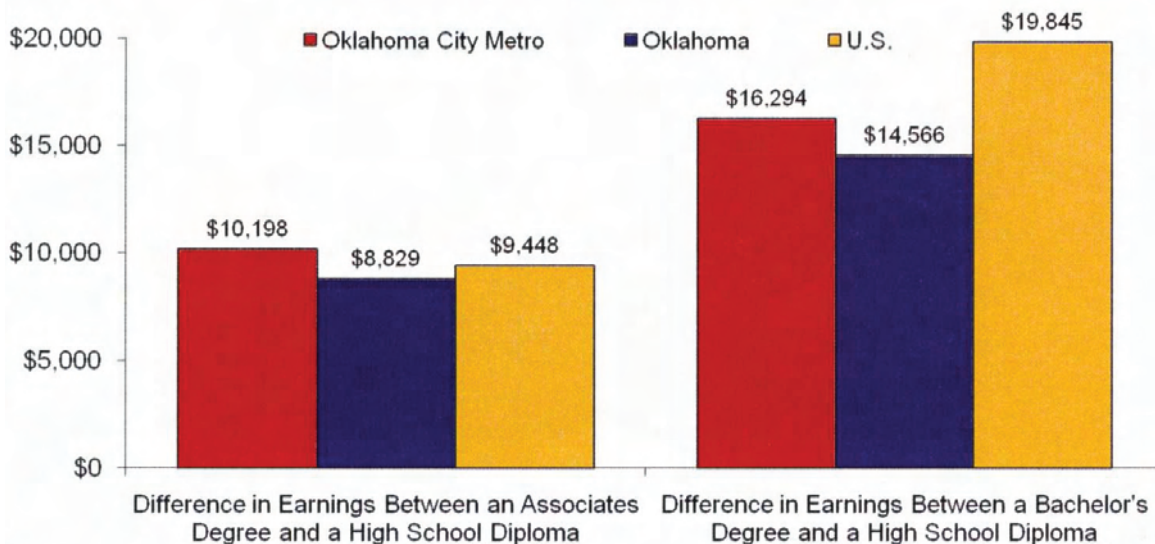
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year File.

## Median Earnings by Degree-Level, 2005-07



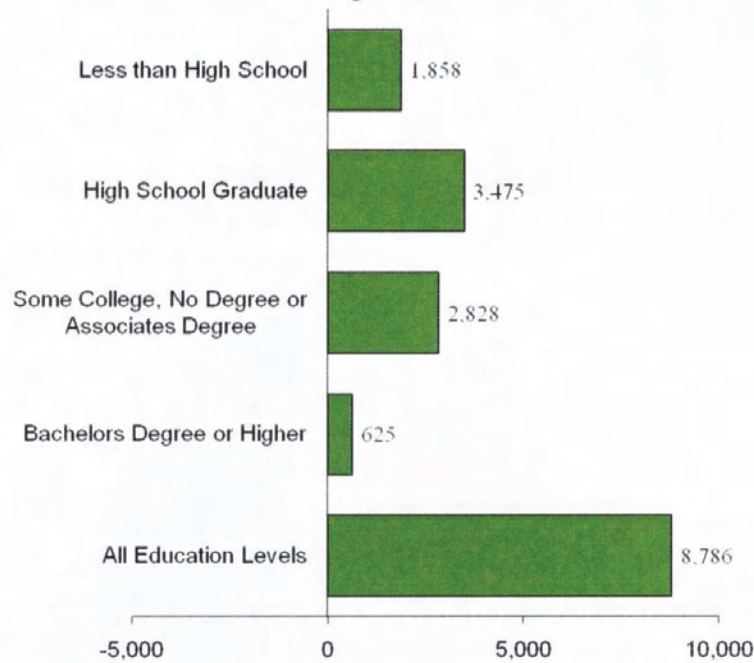
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

## Increase in Earnings from a High School Diploma to a College Degree, 2005-07



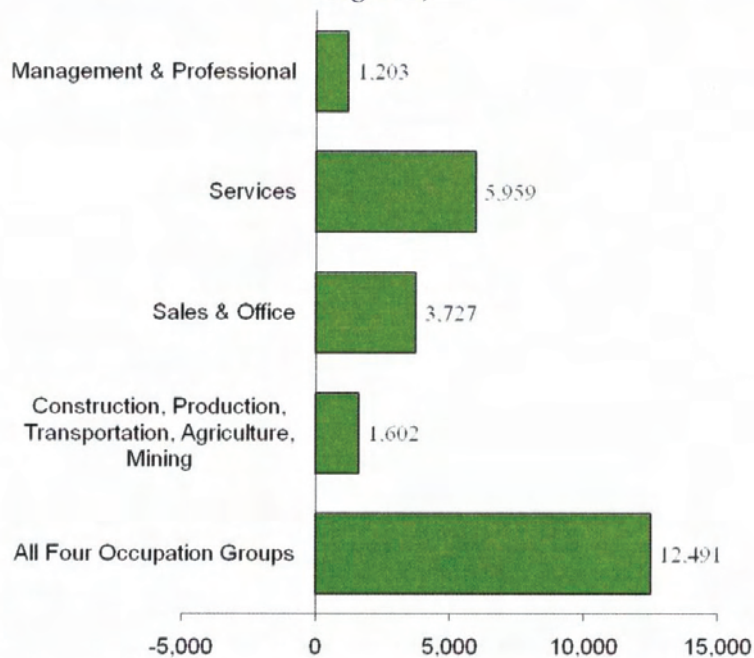
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Average Annual Net Migration by Degree-Level (2005-2007) 22-64 Year Olds  
(El Reno/Chickasha, Oklahoma City Metro, Guthrie/Shawnee, Norman/Moore  
Regions)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.

*Age 16+ Average Annual Migration by Occupation Group, 2005-07 (El  
Reno/Chickasha, Oklahoma City Metro, Guthrie/Shawnee, Norman/Moore  
Regions)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-07 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File.



## Regional Clusters

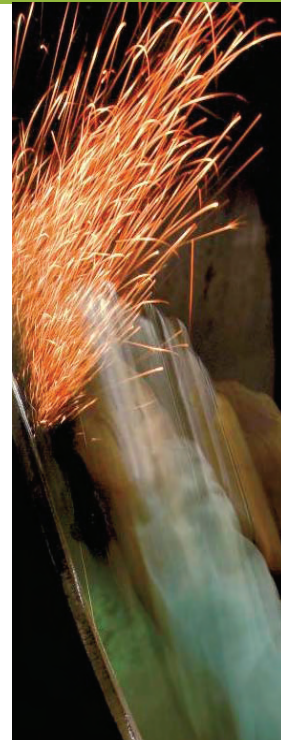
**Deidre Myers**  
**Director of Research and**  
**Economic Analysis**  
**November 4, 2009**



# Regional Clusters

- Identifying Clusters
  - ✓ What are they?
  
- Analyzing Clusters
  - ✓ Growth, wages and location quotient
  
- Developing and Supporting Clusters
  - ✓ Working with businesses

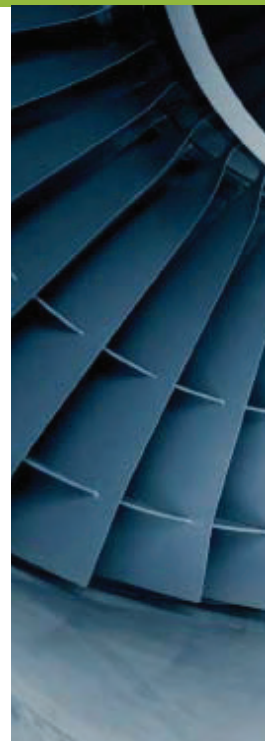
Source: Joe Cortright, "Industry Clusters: Definition, Analysis, Action."  
Impresa Consulting



# Regional Clusters

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field, including:

- suppliers of specialized inputs, machinery, services
- distribution channels and customers
- manufacturers of complementary products
- companies related by skills, technologies or common inputs
- related institutions such as research organizations, universities, standard-setting organizations, training entities, and others



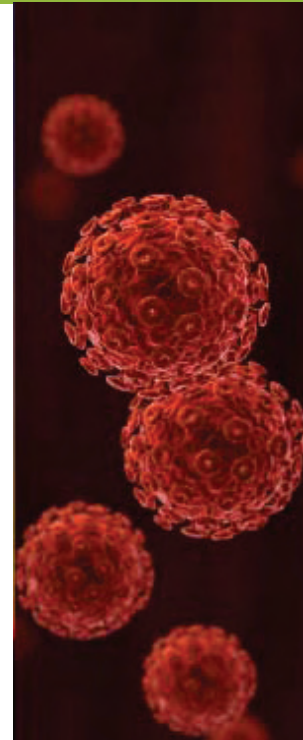
# Sectors v. Clusters

## SECTORS

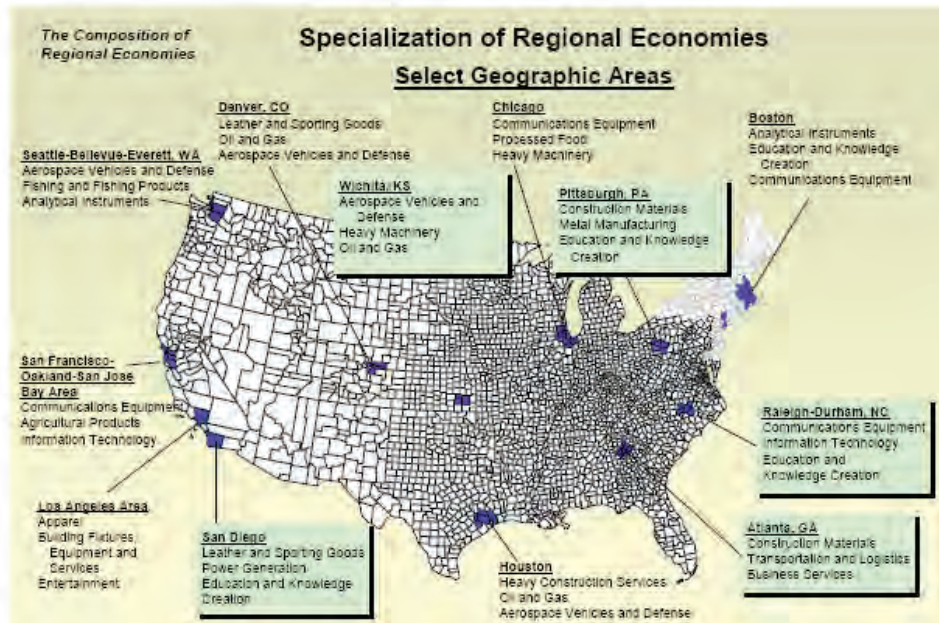
Most quantitative analysis relies on data organized according to the SIC or NAICS classification schemes to define industries

## CLUSTERS

Qualitative analyses define clusters according to local relationships. Cluster theory maintains that clusters cut across sector lines; many clusters are highly specialized

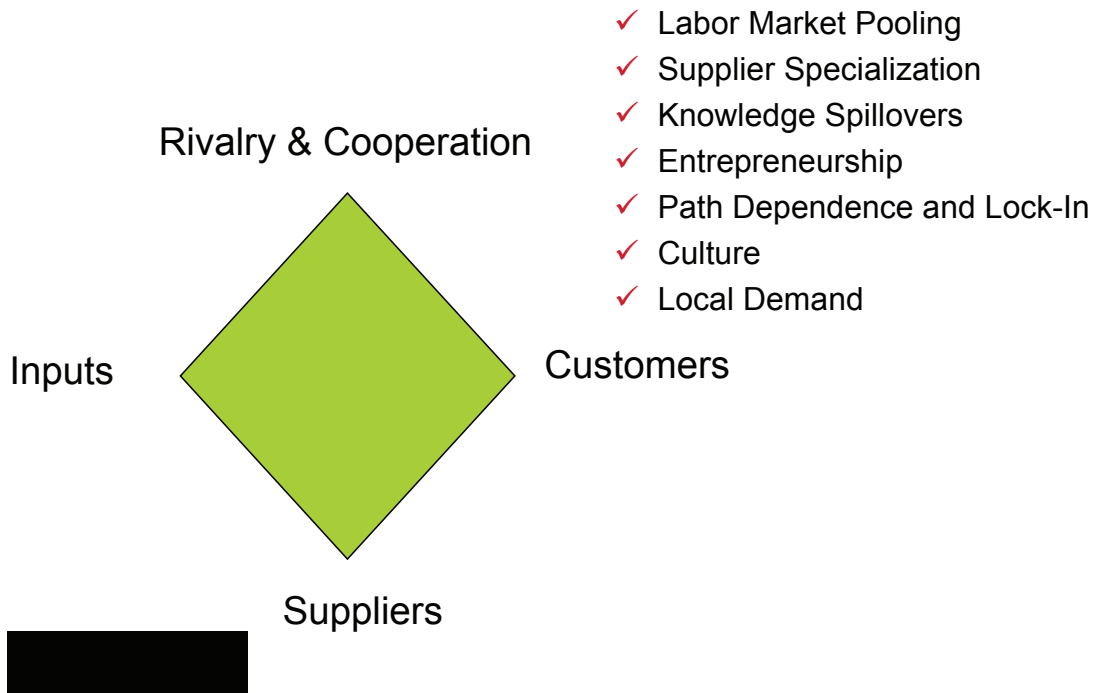


# Examples of National Clusters

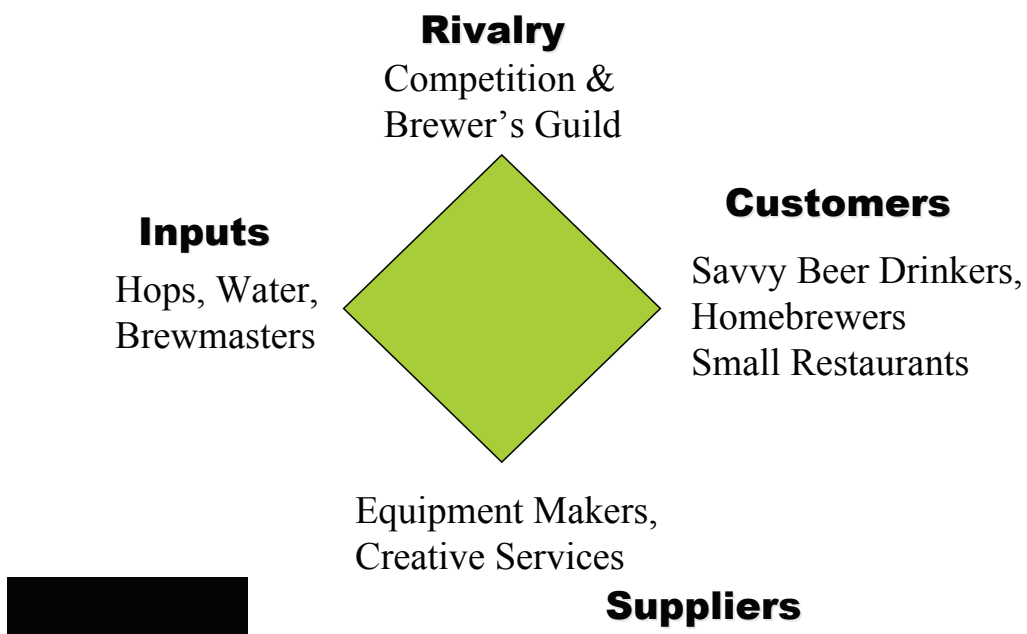




# How Clusters Organize

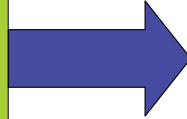


# Oregon's Microbrew Cluster



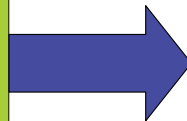
# Advantages

Supply chains  
Labor pools  
Specialized services  
R&D and technology  
Capital



*Reduced costs*  
*More options*  
*Quicker responses*

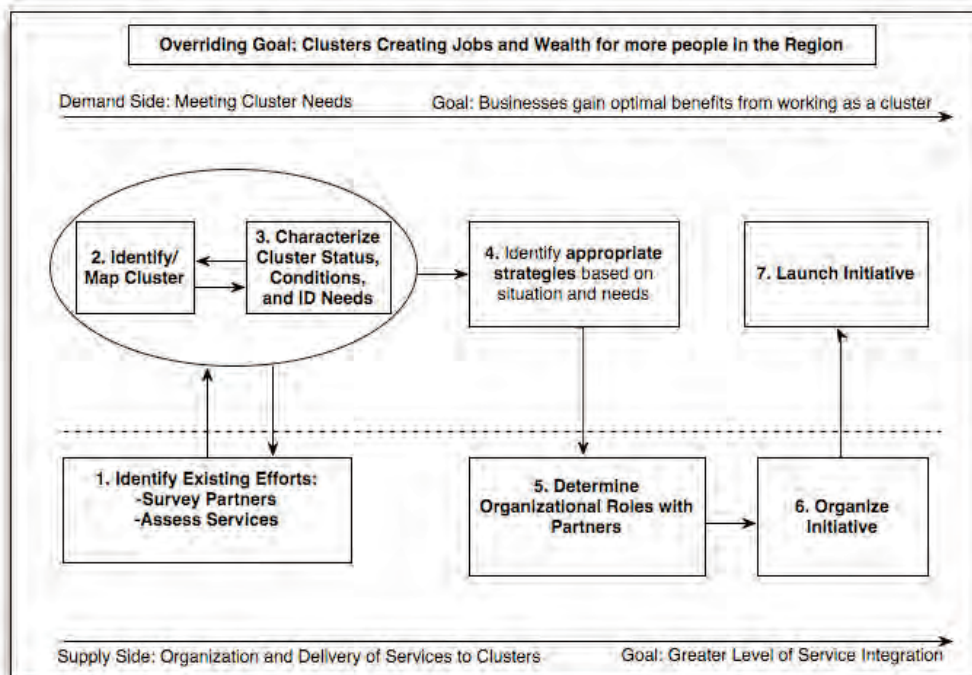
Association  
Networking  
Tacit learning  
Knowledge leaks  
Labor grapevines



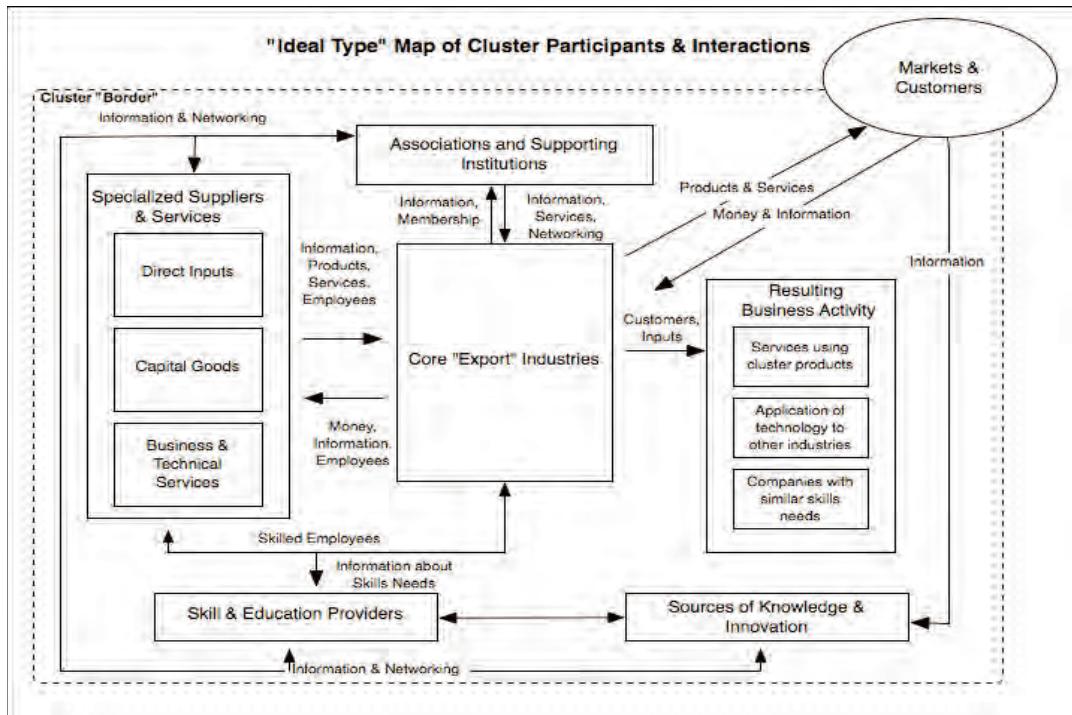
*Collective influence*  
*Innovation*  
*Imitation*



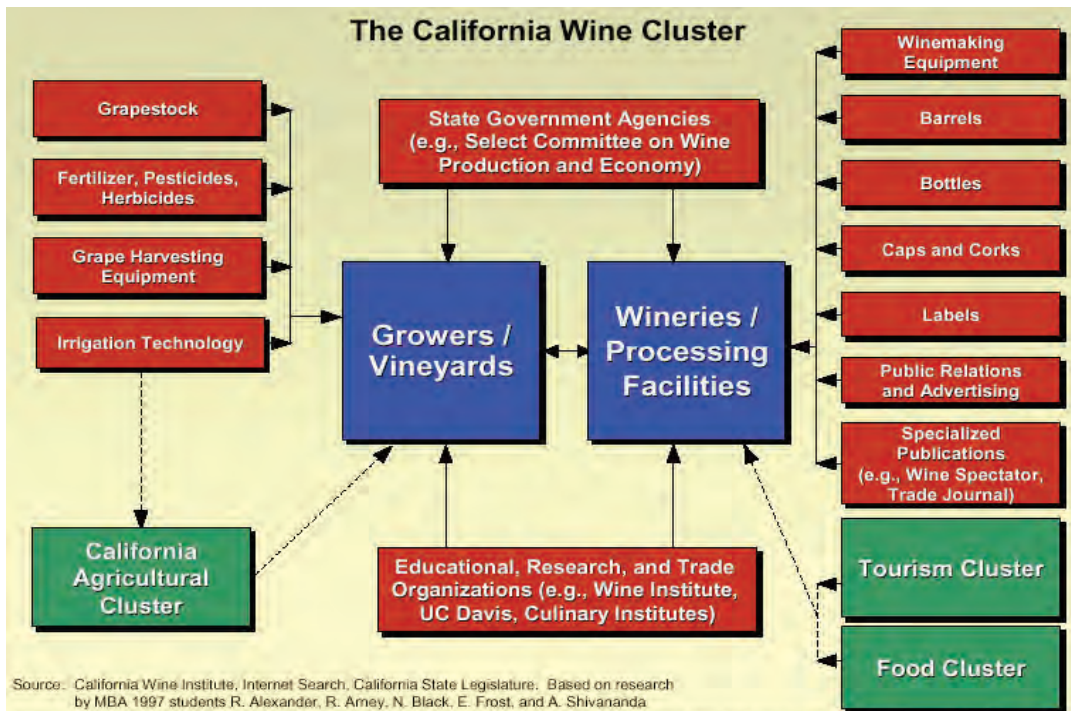
# Cluster Development Strategy



# Mapping a Cluster



# A Mapped Cluster



Source: California Wine Institute, Internet Search, California State Legislature. Based on research by MBA 1997 students R. Alexander, R. Arney, N. Black, E. Frost, and A. Shivananda

# NE Region Cluster Rankings

Cluster Name	2009 Jobs	Current EPW
Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology	14,374	\$19,881
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)	8,505	\$31,818
Business & Financial Services	5,728	\$29,232
Energy (Fossil & Renewable)	5,534	\$41,039
Advanced Materials	3,277	\$54,215
Transportation & Logistics	3,116	\$39,570
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries	2,936	\$18,144
Forest & Wood Products	2,770	\$47,293
Information Technology & Telecommunications	2,032	\$41,294
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	1,991	\$53,629
Machinery Manufacturing	1,738	\$59,845
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,627	\$49,615
Aerospace	1,622	\$40,444
Defense & Security	1,170	\$31,187
Education & Knowledge Creation	903	\$19,793
Glass & Ceramics	895	\$52,259
Printing & Publishing	681	\$29,994
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	595	\$58,557
Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Manufacturing	578	\$41,857
Primary Metal Manufacturing	512	\$51,598
Mining	352	\$73,266
Apparel & Textiles	225	\$27,401
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	82	\$48,869

Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Estimated Growth

Cluster Name	2009 Jobs	2015 Jobs	Growth	Growth %
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)	8,505	10,178	1,674	20%
Business & Financial Services	5,728	6,594	867	15%
Education & Knowledge Creation	903	1,093	190	21%
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	1,991	2,168	176	9%
Glass & Ceramics	895	1,059	164	18%
Defense & Security	1,170	1,294	124	11%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,627	1,689	62	4%
Mining	352	367	15	4%
Aerospace	1,622	1,630	8	0%
Printing & Publishing	681	686	5	1%
Information Technology & Telecommunications	2,032	2,026	(6)	0%
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	82	75	(7)	(9%)
Transportation & Logistics	3,116	3,108	(8)	0%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Manufacturing	578	563	(16)	(3%)
Forest & Wood Products	2,770	2,749	(21)	(1%)
Apparel & Textiles	225	198	(27)	(12%)
Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology	14,374	14,327	(47)	0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries	2,936	2,886	(50)	(2%)
Energy (Fossil & Renewable)	5,534	5,482	(52)	(1%)
Primary Metal Manufacturing	512	389	(123)	(24%)
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	595	459	(136)	(23%)
Machinery Manufacturing	1,738	1,567	(171)	(10%)
Advanced Materials	3,277	3,057	(219)	(7%)

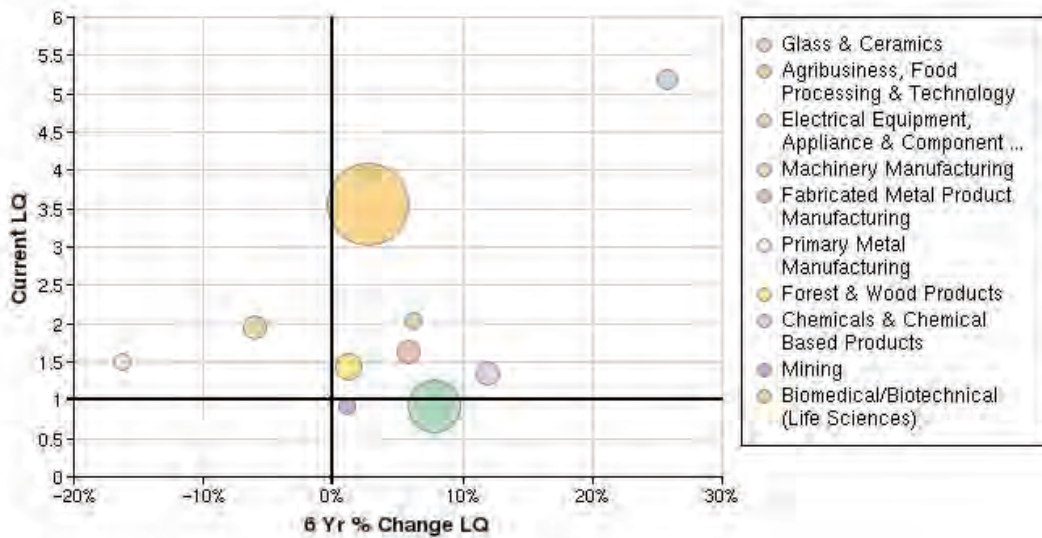
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Cluster LQ

Cluster Name	Size (Jobs)	6 Yr % Change LQ	Current LQ
Glass & Ceramics	895	26%	5.19
Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology	14,374	3%	3.56
Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Manufacturing	578	6%	2.03
Machinery Manufacturing	1,738	(6%)	1.96
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,627	6%	1.64
Primary Metal Manufacturing	512	(16%)	1.49
Forest & Wood Products	2,770	1%	1.43
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	1,991	12%	1.35
Mining	352	1%	0.92
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)	8,505	8%	0.92
Advanced Materials	3,277	(5%)	0.82
Energy (Fossil & Renewable)	5,534	(7%)	0.75
Transportation & Logistics	3,116	(7%)	0.73
Aerospace	1,622	2%	0.66
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries	2,936	(10%)	0.52
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	595	(21%)	0.44
Business & Financial Services	5,728	2%	0.42
Information Technology & Telecommunications	2,032	(5%)	0.36
Education & Knowledge Creation	903	9%	0.36
Defense & Security	1,170	(1%)	0.29
Printing & Publishing	681	(2%)	0.29
Apparel & Textiles	225	(7%)	0.19
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	82	(2%)	0.09

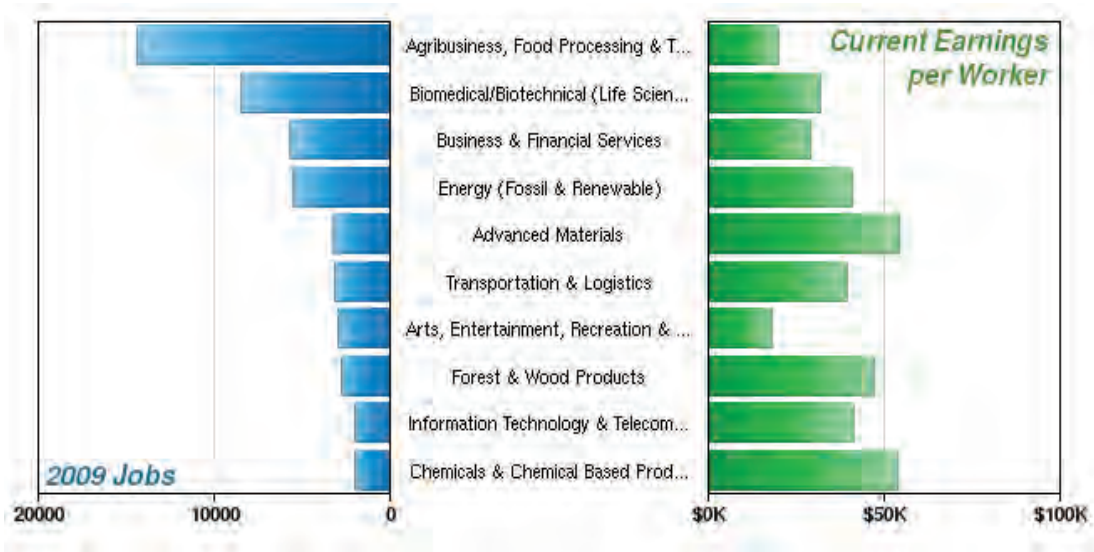
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# LQ Growth



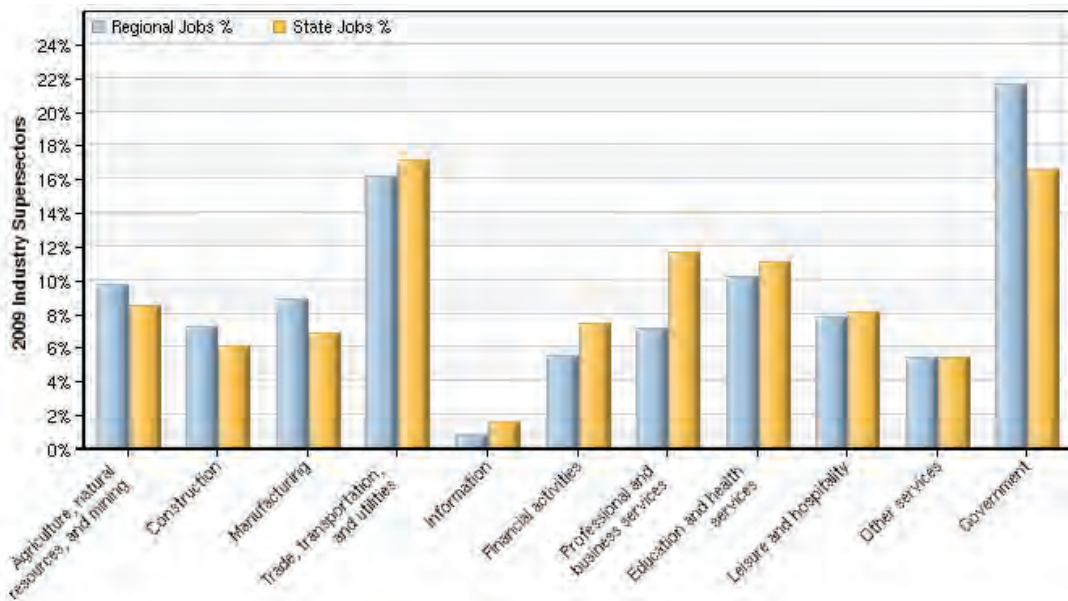
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# Clusters and Earnings



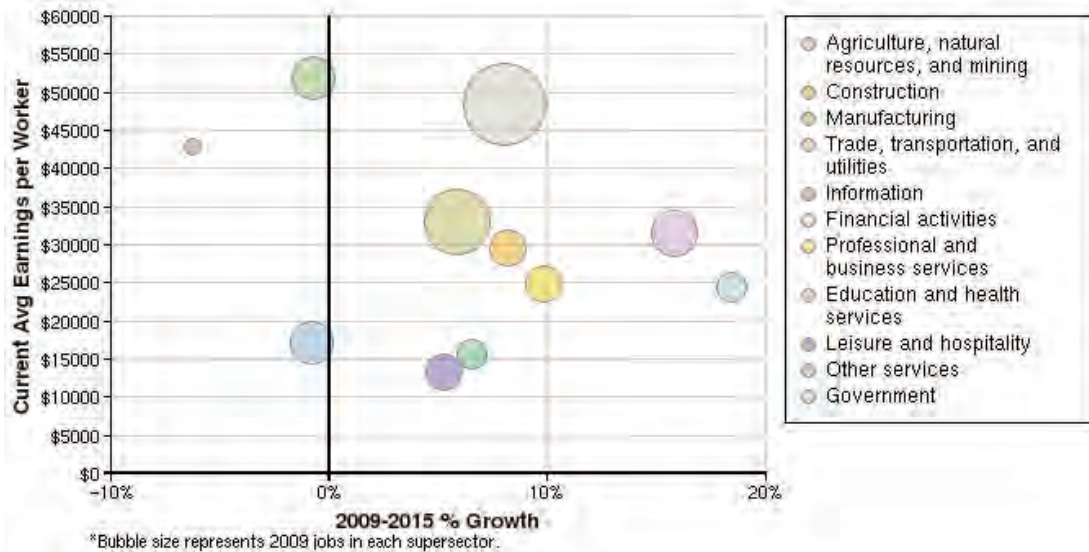
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Industries



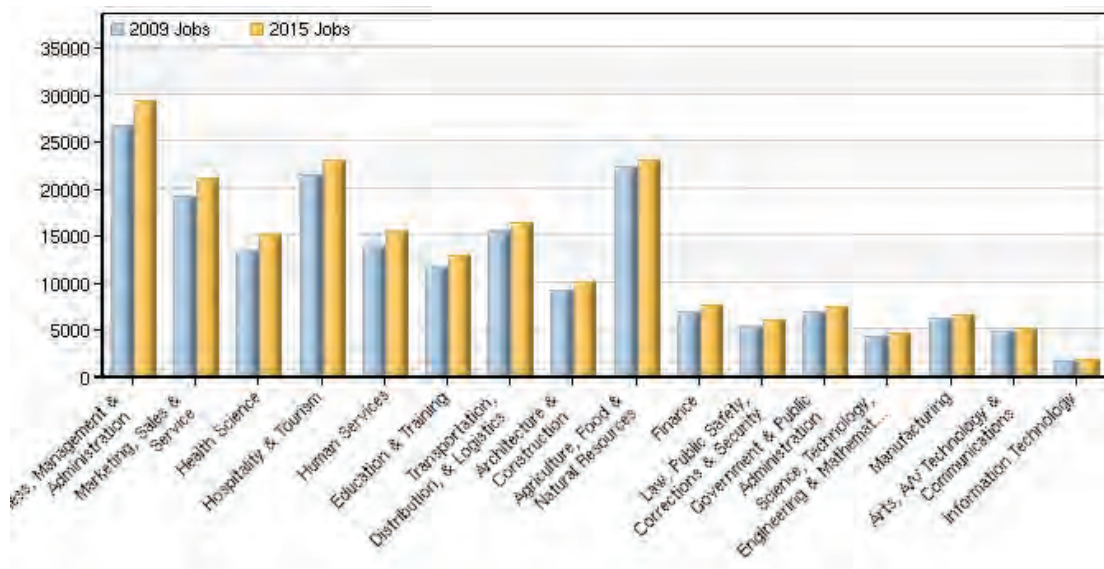
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Industry Growth



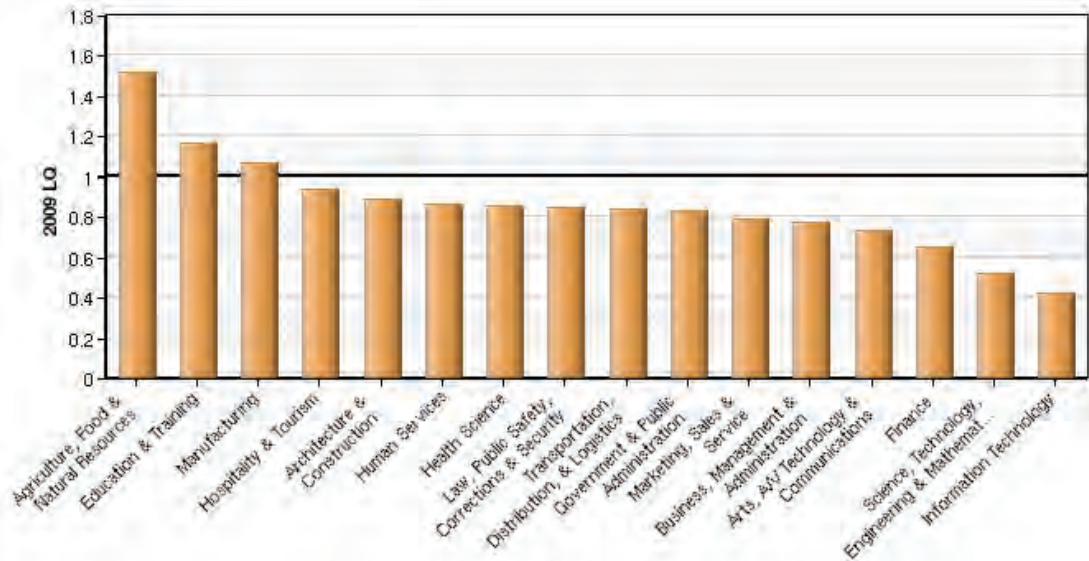
Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Region Career Clusters by Growth



Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

# NE Career Clusters by LQ



Source: EMSI, Complete Employment – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

## Conclusions

- Clusters give a regional economy stability and economic competitiveness
- Clusters should build on the assets of the region and be data driven
- The NE Region has opportunities in:
  - Glass and Ceramics
  - Biomedical and Biotechnical
  - Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Manufacturing





## NSU serves as catalyst for area economic development

Tahlequah business owner Jean Ryals says a more welcoming storefront helps bring customers to her home decor and gift shop.

Meanwhile, licensed practical nurse Frachelle Burkhalter moves up a "career ladder" toward becoming a registered nurse and higher pay.

Ryals and Burkhalter owe some of their success to Northeastern State University and its collaborative efforts to improve the economy and standard of living in northeast Oklahoma.

NSU is working with the Cherokee Nation, plus area colleges, technology centers, schools, communities, agencies and businesses in several joint ventures.

They include:

- Annual regional economic summits focus on improving education, business, industry and other economic factors in northeast Oklahoma.
- Joint efforts with Connors, Indian Capital Technology Center and other area educational institutions to help address job needs, particularly in health care.
- The NSU-based Center for Rural Development helps communities attract businesses and helps businesses start.

NSU President Dr. Don Betz said the area's high rate of poverty has prompted the university to seek such cooperation.

"Our region has serious problems that must be addressed," Betz said in a recent interview with the Muskogee Phoenix. "Creating more wealth can help to alleviate some of those issues."

Betz said the per-capita income in seven northeast Oklahoma counties is \$19,500.

"That means the average resident is earning just 85 cents compared to the average Oklahoman and just 71 cents compared to the average American," he said, citing figures from the Center for Rural Development. The figures indicate the number of cents the average resident of seven northeast Oklahoma counties earns compared to each dollar the average Oklahoman and average American earn.

Because NSU covers more than 24 counties, the university can help facilitate economic growth in a number of ways, Betz said.

For example, in November, NSU hosted a regional economic summit, "Giving Voice to our Region." The summit drew participants from business, education, government and the Cherokee Nation. Nearly 350 participants looked at ways to help northeast Oklahoma face fiscal issues and poverty. Counties targeted were Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Mayes Muskogee, Sequoyah and Wagoner.

Those seven counties have a combined population of 350,000, or one-tenth of the state's population, said Dr. Ron Cambiano, assistant professor in educational foundations and leadership. He said the summit succeeded in getting different entities together "for a common objective and common good."

Participants focused on the area's assets, as well as its challenges, he said.

The summit focused on three levels of concern: Education from kindergarten through college; skilled work force, and capacity building, described as efforts to build relationships between groups and individuals to meet challenges.

Communities also need to develop their infrastructure, Cambiano said. "Some areas are without Internet services."

The summit spawned new collaborations and improved upon others. "The summit was an expression of a conversation the Cherokee Nation, NSU and the city have had for some time," said Tahlequah Mayor Ken Purdy.

Continued on next page >>

He said NSU worked with the city to develop a downtown park – Norris Park, just south of the Iguana Cafe – and the Tahlequah History Trail, which winds around the NSU campus, through downtown and features signs at historic spots.

“The University contributed on the creative end and came up with the signage,” Purdy said.

In a report on the Summit Web site, [www.neokregion.org](http://www.neokregion.org), Cherokee Nation information systems director Todd Enlow said the tribe, NSU, city and Chamber of Commerce are developing Tahlequah’s historic downtown to improve business and tourism. Efforts include signage, landscaping and facade appearance.

The city transformed an old armory into administrative offices. The Cherokee Nation converted its Supreme Court building into a museum. NSU created a grander entrance as people approach the campus on Muskogee Avenue.

Businesses such as Everything Under the Sun improved their storefronts and saw more customers.

“A lot of merchants redid their facades,” Ryals said. “We redid our whole facade.”

She said she removed a “1980s sign” from above an exterior canopy and made a hanging wooden sign in front of the entrance. “We’re easier to locate now.”

Ryals, who sits on the Tahlequah chamber board, said NSU worked with the chamber, city, Cherokee Nation and businesses to develop the streetscape.

“We all try to network together to make Tahlequah a better place,” she said.

Cambiano said NSU already is planning a summit for next November.

“We’re looking at this to be a 10-year plan, focusing on where we want the region to be in 2020,” he said.

NSU’s collaboration with Connors State College is an example of its commitment to working with other educational institutions. In December, the two colleges broke ground on a 10,000 square foot student services building to house a child development program, bookstore, library and classrooms.

Connors already has moved its nursing program from its downtown Muskogee campus to NSU’s Muskogee campus. The two colleges have a joint “career ladder” program that puts LPNs and paramedics on a fast track to earning a registered nurse degree. CSC Director of Nursing Charlotte Vaughn said students take one year to earn the degree instead of two years.

Burkhalter, who works in a surgical care facility, said the program has been convenient.

“It’s geared to working people,” she said at a Thursday evening class. “It enables me to maintain a home life as I go to class.”

Burkhalter said she and most of her classmates began in June. She said being an RN could give her more job security.

Area communities get further leadership and support from the Oklahoma Center for Rural Development, based at NSU.

Dr. John Schleede, dean of the College of Business and Technology said the center seeks to help communities attract business. The center works with businesses and communities within a 100-mile radius of its Tahlequah, Muskogee and Broken Arrow campuses, a potential reach from Blackwell to Tahihina.

Established in 2002, the center can supply databases on such things as traffic flow, area demographics and income levels.

“Let’s say Muskogee wanted to attract a new restaurant. The center can identify how much traffic passes by a location, how many people live in a three-mile radius,” he said. “Muskogee Development or the Chamber of Commerce can take the information to the prospective restaurant and say ‘x-number of people pass by this site every day.’ That has been what our primary focus has been.”

The Center is broadening its scope to help small business set up in communities.

“We did projects with the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce, and our students created a database of every store within the city limits and created a template for kind of a Shop Muskogee campaign.”

Sue Harris, executive director of the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, said the center helped develop a shopper’s guide for the chamber.

“They did research, and some students designed the cover,” she said. “They also helped in our gap analysis, in which we show who the people are who are shopping outside of Muskogee.”

The center also uses students to do market research for businesses, Schleede said. For example, the Center helped the Broken Arrow Ledger set up focus groups to help it serve readers. The center also helped create an inventory for Har-Ber Village, an antique museum in Grove.

“The team works with business start-ups with new technology,” he said.

“We had 30 requests for data in just the month of January,” Schleede said.

Local

Saturday's winning numbers:  
MUSKOGEE PHOENIX  
MUSKOGEE PHOENIX  
MUSKOGEE PHOENIX

Section 4, Page 3

OUR AREA

Under's best bet

Program to address

Mineral counties

Changing the art for

Doctor health offers

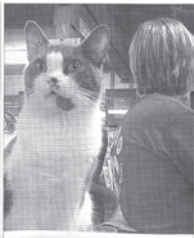
Area businesses receive awards

Just Say No!

Switch to Business Sense Checking and say "no" to fees!

- No monthly maintenance charge
- No charge per credit
- No charge on your first 25 checks
- No limit on ATM fee rebates
- No charge business check card
- No cost online banking

FIRST NATIONAL BANK



NSU helps to provide health care professionals

As need grows, local schools step up to fill void

By Cathy Spaulding  
Phoenix Staff Writer

### Muskogee area assists with stray shortage

Minnesota group works with locals to find homes for overflow of adoption-eligible dogs

When it comes to meeting northeast Oklahoma's health care demands, Cherokee Nation leaders say Northeastern State University exemplifies the Cherokee notion of gadugi, or working together.

### Area businesses receive awards

Area businesses receive awards

NSU helps to provide health care professionals

As need grows, local schools step up to fill void

By Cathy Spaulding  
Phoenix Staff Writer

When it comes to meeting northeast Oklahoma's health care demands, Cherokee Nation leaders say Northeastern State University exemplifies the Cherokee notion of gadugi, or working together.

NSU has worked with the Cherokee Nation, Connors State College, Indian Capital Technology Center and area hospitals to improve health care in the area. The need is critical.

In a recent interview with the Muskogee Phoenix, NSU President Dr. Don Betz said the 2nd Congressional District, which encompasses eastern Oklahoma, ranks near the bottom in physical and mental well being, according to a recent Gallup World Healthways Poll.

"Today, the most substantial regional cluster is allied health care," Betz said. "The Muskogee area is a hub for such services."

Dr. Martin Venneman, dean of the NSU College of Science and Health Professions, said the area has a "very strong demand" for skilled health care workers in a variety of areas. NSU is involved with major partnerships and initiatives to meet the need.

NSU is working with colleges such as Connors State College and Bacone College, as well as Indian Capital Technology Center, the Eastern Workforce Investment Board and public schools.

"We also work with most all health care providers

in Muskogee and Tahlequah and the Cherokee and Creek nations," he said. "The partnership has existed for five or six years."

Cherokee Nation officials praised NSU's efforts to work with them.

"We have had the opportunity to partner with the NSU College of Optometry to provide services to our citizens and other Native Americans in our area for many years," said Melissa Gower, group leader for the Cherokee Nation Health Services Group. "Now, we are working to expand that partnership further in other areas of health care and health-related services. The partnership we have with NSU exemplifies the Cherokee Nation mission of gadugi - working together for the benefit of the entire community. We are always pleased to work with NSU to help us help others."

Cherokee Principal Chief Chad Smith said the NSU College of Optometry has helped provide practitioners for Hastings Hospital and the Nation's six clinics.

"We are helping them develop and provide new degrees of medical practice, including occupational therapy and a master's in nursing degree program," he said.

Venneman said the area has a shortage of trained health care professionals, including nurses and occupational therapists.

"They are experiencing shortage after shortage after shortage," he said, adding that the shortage could continue as the population grows and the Baby Boomers get older. Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, make up a large part of the population.

However, colleges are not having problems re-

# NSU helps to provide health care professionals

## As need grows, local schools step up to fill void

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When it comes to meeting northeast Oklahoma's health care demands, Cherokee Nation leaders say Northeastern State University exemplifies the Cherokee notion of gadugi, or working together.

NSU has worked with the Cherokee Nation, Connors State College, Indian Capital Technology Center and area hospitals to improve health care in the area. The need is critical.

In a recent interview with the Muskogee Phoenix, NSU President Dr. Don Betz said the 2nd Congressional District, which encompasses eastern Oklahoma, ranks near the bottom in physical and mental well being, according to a recent Gallup World Healthways Poll.

"Today, the most substantial regional cluster is allied health care," Betz said. "The Muskogee area is a hub for such services."

Dr. Martin Venneman, dean of the NSU College of Science and Health Professions, said the area has a "very strong demand" for skilled health care workers in a variety of areas. NSU is involved with major partnerships and initiatives to meet the need.

NSU is working with colleges such as Connors State College and Bacone College, as well as Indian Capital Technology Center, the Eastern Workforce Investment Board and public schools.

"We also work with most all health care providers

in Muskogee and Tahlequah and the Cherokee and Creek nations," he said. "The partnership has existed for five or six years."

Cherokee Nation officials praised NSU's efforts to work with them.

"We have had the opportunity to partner with the NSU College of Optometry to provide services to our citizens and other Native Americans in our area for many years," said Melissa Gower, group leader for the Cherokee Nation Health Services Group. "Now, we are working to expand that partnership further in other areas of health care and health-related services. The partnership we have with NSU exemplifies the Cherokee Nation mission of gadugi - working together for the benefit of the entire community. We are always pleased to work with NSU to help us help others."

Cherokee Principal Chief Chad Smith said the NSU College of Optometry has helped provide practitioners for Hastings Hospital and the Nation's six clinics.

"We are helping them develop and provide new degrees of medical practice, including occupational therapy and a master's in nursing degree program," he said.

Venneman said the area has a shortage of trained health care professionals, including nurses and occupational therapists.

"They are experiencing shortage after shortage after shortage," he said, adding that the shortage could continue as the population grows and the Baby Boomers get older. Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, make up a large part of the population.

However, colleges are not having problems re-

cruiting students for health care careers, he said.

"Recruiting is important in K-12 schools," Venneman said. "But the reality is we don't have slots in our programs. The major reason we have a nursing challenge is that area programs do not have the capacity to train nurses."

That is one reason NSU plans to start a master's degree program in nursing education in the fall semester, he said.

Another program NSU is working to start this fall is a joint "career ladder" program with Connors and Tahlequah Community Hospital.

Connors Executive Vice President JoLynn Di-granes said the program puts paramedics and licensed practical nurses on a fast track to becoming registered nurses.

"These are students who already have their LPN or paramedic license, but they can get their RN in not two, but one year," she said.

NSU and Connors have had a career ladder program at the NSU Muskogee campus since June.

Venneman said NSU also is working on a joint program to train occupational therapists and clinical lab technicians.

# NSU's efforts on poverty great first step

## Opinion

FIRST AMENDMENT  
Muskogee Phoenix  
Sunday, March 21, 2010  
Section 4, Page 10

### ESSENTIALLY SPEAKING NSU's efforts on poverty great first step

#### FRICION



Northeastern State University's collaborative efforts to improve the economy and standard of living in northeast Oklahoma deserve our gratitude, but more importantly our cooperation.

NSU President Don Betz said that the university wanted to establish a regional cooperative effort to elevate the economy of the Second Congressional District.

Betz said the district ranks 423 out of the 435 congressional districts for well-being. The ranking takes into account regional economic life and residents' physical and psychological well-being. That ranking is alarming. It deserves attention.

That ranking shows just how dire our circumstances are compared to the rest of the United States.

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NSU has stepped forward to help coordinate an effort to improve our quality of life.

As detailed in today's Sunday Extra, NSU is working with the Cherokee Nation, plus area colleges, technology centers, schools, communities, agencies and businesses in several joint ventures.

We applaud those efforts.

This is a first step in a long and hopeful journey.

It will take years to see a long-lasting positive impact.

It is the beginning of an effort that could be decades to complete.

But it is an effort that begins now with NSU's leadership.

But without other leaders rolling up their sleeves and taking a real interest in this issue, NSU's efforts will take even longer to complete.

Leaders need to be more proactive and face the issue.

Almost all our concerns for our community can be traced to some socio-economic realities.

Jobs. Education. Health care.

These are real issues that need real answers, but that are rooted in our lack of economic development.

Our area leaders must accept the challenge and get started today.

#### THE PEOPLE SPEAK

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Don Betz



### Regionalism: A competitive imperative in a global economy

In today's highly competitive global economy, regionalism is a competitive imperative. It is a way to improve the economy and standard of living in northeast Oklahoma.

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# Higher Education's Role In Rebuilding Haiti

## Reporting on the Haitian earthquake, a French television station asked whether Haiti is a "cursed land."

*From Tulsa World, published January 28, 2010*

Decades of political upheaval that led to a dramatic exodus of its educated citizens, a battered economy with average earnings of less than \$4 per day, a 65 percent elementary education dropout rate, an HIV epidemic and four hurricanes in one month in 2008 have scourged this tiny nation-state – the second-oldest democracy in the Western Hemisphere after the U.S. – giving pause for consideration of that question.

Through substantial international assistance to Haiti, including \$600 million from the U.S. in the past six years, Haiti was headed in an upward trajectory under democratically elected leadership.

The recent devastating earthquake nearly defies description. With a third of the island nation's 9 million population affected, it well could leave us asking, "What next?"

One of the poorest nations in the world, Haiti faces challenges that are legion even on a good day. No other place in this hemisphere is beset with such chronic, debilitating circumstances.

Besides university study and one Haitian acquaintance, my first impressions of Haiti were formed more than 35 years ago when I visited the country with students as part of an international studies program. Those initial images of grinding poverty and limited opportunity amid enclaves of privilege did not fade.

Almost 20 years later, we sent teams of clinic students and doctors from Palmer College on several occasions to both Port-au-Prince and rural areas distant from the crumbling capital city. Post-visit commentaries described the reality: endless lines of people, from newborns to octogenarians, waiting dawn to dusk for "the doctors," for relief and hope for their children and themselves. Our young men and women spoke of the gratitude expressed by those they served each day. Our students' perceptions of their lives and their purpose were reframed during their time in Haiti.

The multiple, protracted challenges facing Haiti were again starkly apparent to me during my work with the United Nations.

Today, Americans are opening their hearts and pocketbooks to donate humanitarian aid – food, water, medical aid and clothing –

through charities and foundations. Higher education institutions have rallied so students, faculty, staff and alumni can easily offer financial help through charitable organizations.

Although the immediate focus is on crisis assistance, those in higher education must consider how we can help Haiti rebuild and how we can make a difference there. Response following Hurricane Katrina is our template; assistance can take numerous forms. Foremost would be a coalition to develop longer-term, sustained relationships with one or more Haitian educational institutions. By doing this, our students and campuses would grow and we would create learning environments so students can advance their global literacy and deepen their commitment to social responsibility.

Sustained relationships can take other forms as well. Haitian students could temporarily study at our institutions and faculty could support redevelopment of courses and programs. Students, faculty and staff could lend assistance during summer, holiday and spring breaks to help Haiti rebuild schools.

The American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU), led by President Muriel Howard, initiated a national dialogue to compile suggestions and ideas from presidents and chancellors. With 430 institutions serving 3.5 million students, AASCU campuses could have an extraordinary impact.

As the chair of AASCU's International Education Committee, I am pleased that institutions nationwide have responded to this call for information-sharing and creative, concerted action. This committee's members are the seeds of a broader coalition of state universities focused on Haitian relief and rehabilitation via connections and relationships with educational institutions there. Hundreds of NGOs, faith-based and other organizations have labored in Haiti for years. This may be our opportunity to model the way and connect through AASCU to the post-earthquake development of Haiti's educational institutions.

Should we succeed, collaborating with others responding to this emergency and committed to Haiti's continuing development, the question of whether Haiti is cursed may finally become a footnote in history.