

Collaboration Successes

The Regional Collaborative is such a success that it has inspired several groups to collaborate and think outside of the box to formulate new strategies and create new programs for success in our region. Here are some of the most recent success stories:

Armed Forces Reserve Center

The City of Coweta, Broken Arrow and Wagoner County are working together to improve access to the new Armed Forces Reserve Center to be located on 101st near 257th. The site abuts all three entities in a unique location that will bring 1,200 members of the state's National Guard and Reserve units every month to the facility. Improvements are needed on 101st and 257th as well as the intersection of Highway 51 and 257th where a traffic light is being planned. The 3 entities have been working with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to plan the improvements needed and are currently working on cost sharing.

Cherokee Hills Byway

The Cherokee Hills Byway is being developed to showcase the unique qualities that can only be experienced in Northeastern Oklahoma. The development of the byway is the outcome of a regional collaboration which encompasses four counties in Northeastern Oklahoma; Delaware, Adair, Cherokee and Sequoyah. The Cherokee Nation is involved throughout these counties with numerous agencies, municipalities, organizations and institutions working together to create not only a memorable traveling experience but as a viable economic development tool to enhance the region. The Cherokee Hills Byway is a catalyst for future development in the region. Being recently designated as an "America's Byway" creates a greater opportunity national and international visitors.

Community Partner Updates

SACC-EZ provides on-going technical assistance for rural areas that are striving to provide infrastructure and other types of economic development in their community. Recently, two different social service organizations from the Stilwell community contacted our office for grant writing assistance and advice. After meeting with both organizations, it was determined that they shared a common focus and a partnership was encouraged. We are now happy to report that the Orchard Road Community Outreach and the Adair County Resource Center are now planning a partnership to gather grant funds to provide social service activities for needy Adair County residents.

Rhonda Clemons, SACC-EZ

Certified Work Ready Communities

As part of its commitment to partnering with entities to ensure that Northeastern Oklahoma's workforce is ready to work, which was a major theme that emerged from the 2009 Regional Summit, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Governor's Council for Workforce & Economic Development have launched the Certified Work Ready Communities program.

Oklahoma's Certified Work Ready Communities is an innovative program that encourages communities to put workforce at the front of their economic development agenda. It builds on the success of Oklahoma's Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program, which assesses and certifies individual workers' skill sets and abilities.

A certified "community" can be individual communities or counties, groups of contiguous cities and counties, or a regional partnership. To be certified Work Ready, the community must meet the following requirements:

- 3% of its incumbent or existing workforce must have a either a [gold, silver, or bronze CRC](#);

- 25% of its workforce not currently employed but looking for work must have a CRC;
- The school system must graduate 82% of its high school seniors or 82% of its high school seniors must have a CRC.

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce and the Eastern Workforce Investment Board will assist SACC-EZ, Northeastern State University and the Cherokee Nation with defining their Work Ready Community and obtaining Work Ready Certification.

Lisa Clark, Oklahoma Department of Commerce

USDA

The USDA State Directors of the Farm Service Agency, Francie Tolle, and Rural Development, Ryan McMullen, organized a Community Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth on Monday, January 4, 2010. Many summit partners were invited to attend this event. USDA is leading an effort to hear Rural America's ideas on what is needed to create jobs and economic opportunities in rural communities across our nation. This forum provided an opportunity to contribute to Oklahoma's response to seven questions the White House is asking Rural America. The final report will be shared with our summit partners shortly.

Rhonda Clemons, SACC-EZ

Tahlequah Master Planning

The city of Tahlequah, Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce, Cherokee Nation, and Northeastern State University have realized the power of regional planning and collaboration. Several key stakeholders in the city of Tahlequah have joined together with a common interest; to develop the downtown area for regional success. The entities are working together to discuss the identity of the town and to develop a plan, together. The plan includes signage, recreation, tourism, business development, landscaping, housing, dining, and many other activities that create a safe, happy, and healthy community. More importantly, the stakeholders are meeting not just to develop a plan, but how each can contribute to developing a model community.

As you travel the streets of Tahlequah, you can already notice the visible changes of this planning and collaboration. Simple things like using the same style and color of architectural accessories have beautified downtown. The group will continue to work together and implement many more successful projects over the next several months and years. Watch Tahlequah grow through partnership and the Cherokee spirit of ga-du-gi.

Todd Enlow, Cherokee Nation

Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri

A cross-state collaboration story in which our group helped the Miami/Quapaw area competitively attract more than 150 new jobs to the area. The link for this national case study is online at: http://www.economicmodeling.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/cs_oklahoma-umicore.pdf.

Jasen Jones, Executive Director
Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri

To submit a Collaboration Success Story, please contact:

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