

Springfield Community Leadership Visit
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
August 10-12, 2006



Springfield Area Delegation

Jim Anderson, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Ann Marie Baker, UMB Bank

Jim Baker, Missouri State University

Tom Barr, Ozark Mailing Service

Harold Bengsch, Greene County Commission

Brad Bodenhausen, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Mike Briggs, Willow Brook Foods

Greg Burris, Missouri State University

Tom Carlson, Mayor, City of Springfield

Mary Collette, Springfield City Council

Dave Coonrod, Presiding Commissioner, Greene County

Steve Crowder, Decorize

Bob Cumley, City of Springfield

Gary Deaver, Springfield City Council

Tom Finnie, City of Springfield

Gary Funk, Community Foundation of the Ozarks

Conrad Griggs, Springfield City Council

Keith Hartner, Associated Electric Cooperative

Mike Hoeman, Springfield R-12 Board of Education

Evelyn Honea, City of Springfield

Tracy Kimberlin, Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau

Allen Kunkel, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Gerry Lee, Springfield R-12 Board of Education

Ralph Manley, Springfield City Council

Kyle McClure, City Utilities of Springfield

Mike Nietzel, Missouri State University

Todd Parnell, Springfield-Branson National Airport Board

Doug Pitt, ServiceWorld Computer Center

Barby Pohl, Great Southern Bank

Tom Rankin, Sperry Van Ness/Rankin Company

Norm Ridder, Springfield Public Schools

Ralph Rognstad, Jr., City of Springfield

Marc Thornsberry, City of Springfield

Chris Tuckness, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Denny Whayne, Springfield City Council

Greg Williams, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Rusty Worley, Urban Districts Alliance

Shelia Wright, Springfield City Council

John Wylie, Springfield City Council

Photos courtesy of Greg Burris of Missouri State University and the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The story of Oklahoma City's success in recent years is one of a community that has turned its setbacks into opportunities. In the early 1990s, the city's economy was largely dependent on the oil and gas industry - which was in the midst of a major downturn - and Oklahoma City had just lost a bid to locate a United Airlines maintenance facility there.

Community leaders in OKC decided an ambitious plan was needed to re-cast the city's image and diversify its economy. The resulting proposal was called Metropolitan Area Projects, or MAPS for short. MAPS was a temporary one-cent sales tax that funded numerous capital improvement projects and resulted in more than \$2 billion in public and private investment in the city's downtown.

Along the way, Oklahoma City faced another tremendous challenge with the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in the nation's worst act of domestic terrorism. The loss of life and destruction of property was extensive - yet once again Oklahoma City rebounded and used the tragedy as a rallying point for the ongoing improvement of the city's image.

The MAPS projects were successfully completed and then the concept provided a model for Oklahoma City leaders to follow in their efforts to improve education in the metropolitan area. MAPS for Kids, the second version of MAPS, is using the sales tax to raise more than \$500 million for 24 school districts in the metropolitan area. The plan will provide funding to allow every student in the Oklahoma City school district to attend class in either a new or fully renovated school building.

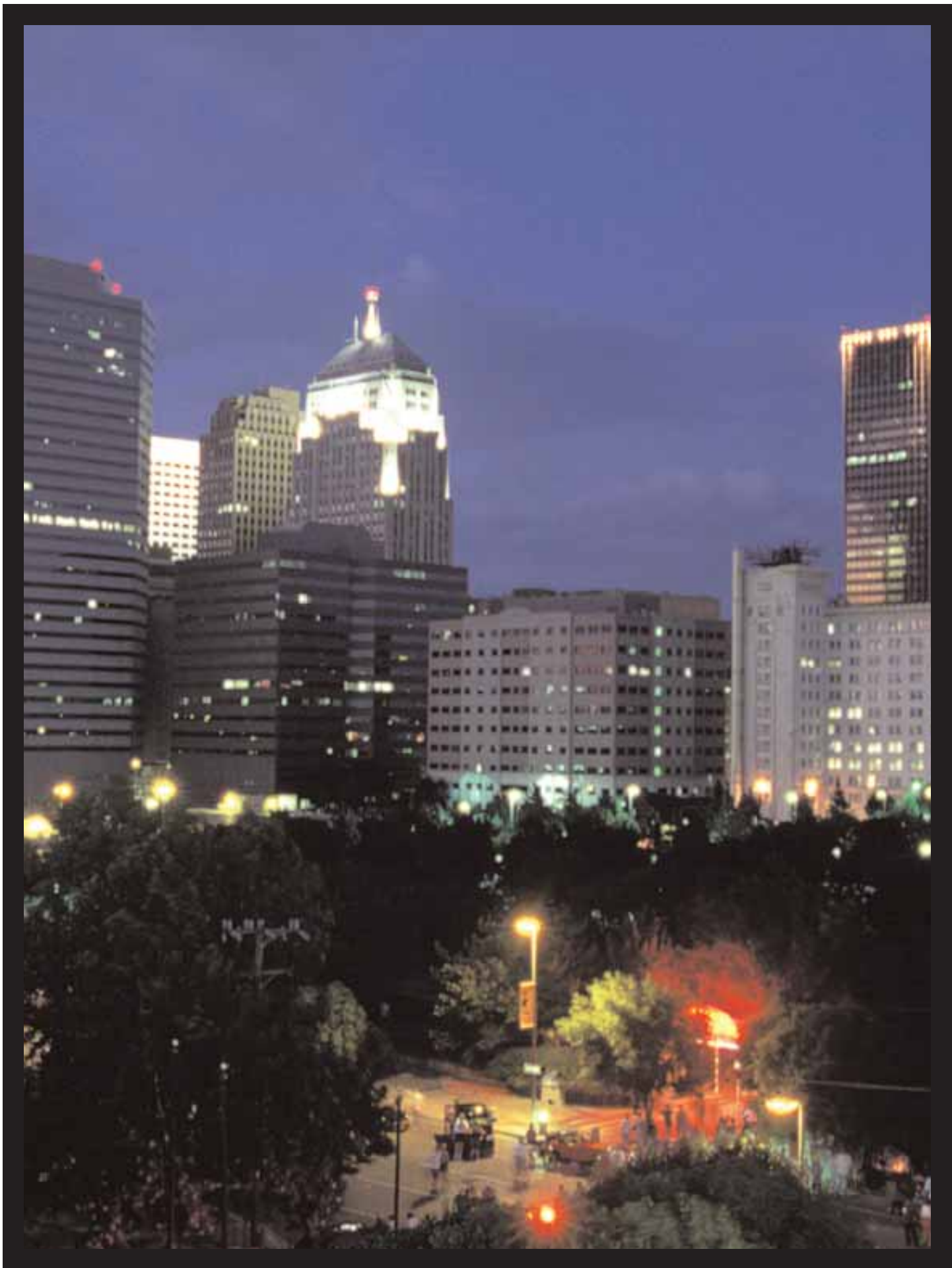
Thirty-nine business, education and government leaders from Springfield-Greene County heard the MAPS and MAPS for Kids stories during the Chamber's 13th annual community leadership visit August 10 - 12. The three-day visit also included sessions on Oklahoma City's approach to regional partnerships and Oklahoma's bioscience initiative.

As with the Chamber's previous community leadership visits, the goal is to visit another city and learn from their experiences, bringing home ideas that will benefit community and economic development efforts here. Previous intercity visits have served as catalysts for important local projects like Jordan Valley Park, the publication of a community report card and the midfield terminal expansion at Springfield-Branson National Airport.

This report will outline the findings and recommendations that resulted from this year's visit to Oklahoma City, with a special focus on regional collaboration, downtown development, education and biosciences.



Oklahoma City National Memorial



Greater Oklahoma City Partnership

The Greater Oklahoma City region has about 1.3 million people in more than 100 communities. The Greater Oklahoma City Partnership consists of all the entities in the 10-county region that employ full-time economic development professionals. As a result, the Greater OKC Partnership is a typical regional economic development organization that pools resources for marketing the entire region.

The regional partnership is a separate organization that is coordinated by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. The Greater OKC Partnership consists of 39 organizations, including 10 counties, 27 communities, and two energy companies. The goal of the partnership is to provide a one-stop shop for businesses looking at the area for a possible new location or expansion - attempting to market the region to potential customers as a "product." The partnership's main objectives are to increase the number and quality of leads and prospects for the region, and to close more deals. They have invested substantial resources in developing a database system into their website called MetroComp. This system can provide real-time economic comparisons for their clients.

Although there were many great assets offered by the Greater OKC Partnership in terms of high quality website, research, and marketing materials, it was also noted that their organization has faced some challenges in nurturing relationships throughout the region. The economic development professionals involved in the Greater OKC Partnership understand the benefits of working regionally, but the community representatives of both Edmond and Moore mentioned that their boards and political leaders did not always feel the same way. Additionally, one of the key cities in the region (Norman) is not a member of the partnership program.

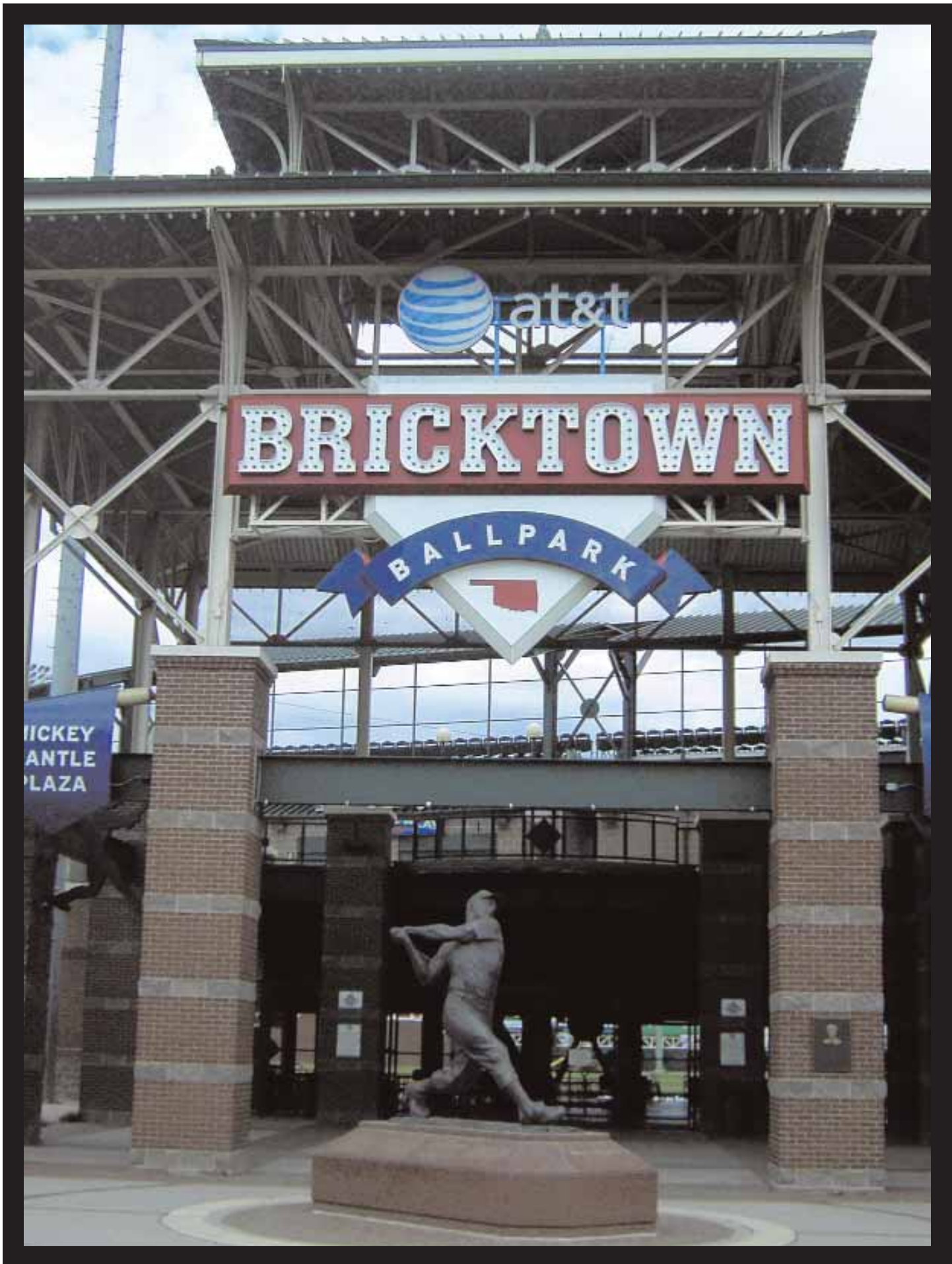
In contrast, the seven-year-old Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership (OREP) tries to focus on relationships by constantly improving communication and trust, especially among community leaders. Another important factor is that the Ozarks region only has two or three full-time economic development professionals outside of Springfield. Therefore, the expertise offered by OREP staff has become much more of a resource for the 68 members of the partnership.

Additionally, the Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership has engaged the private sector throughout its 10-county region by including local chambers of commerce in the organization. This has greatly benefited outreach efforts and improved communication within the region on various economic development issues, such as workforce development, transportation, water quality, and growth management. In doing so, the partnership has become a model that has been replicated in southeast Missouri and is being studied by business and government leaders in central Missouri.



Downtown Oklahoma City





MAPS and Downtown Development

The decision of United Airlines to locate its new maintenance facility in Indianapolis rather than Oklahoma City was "the silver bullet that missed my head," said Ron Norick. The former mayor of Oklahoma City said the city's failure to get the nod from United forced Oklahoma City to take a hard look in the mirror and question why they weren't able to land the project.

That introspection became the impetus for a movement among Oklahoma City leaders to develop a plan to improve Oklahoma City's image and quality of life. But this was a "visioning" process that didn't emerge from the grassroots. Rather, it was undertaken by a group of eight government, business and community leaders who met "in secret" for about 18 months in order to allow candid and creative brainstorming shielded from public scrutiny.

The result of their brainstorming was the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) proposal. MAPS was a temporary one-cent sales tax that funded numerous capital improvement projects and resulted in more than \$2 billion in public and private investment in the city's downtown. The sales tax was approved by OKC voters with a 53 percent yes vote in 1993 and a six-month extension of the tax to complete the projects was resoundingly approved in 1998.

The MAPS projects included:

- The 15,000-seat AT&T Bricktown Ballpark, which is home to the Triple-A Oklahoma RedHawks. This \$34 million facility was completed in 1998, becoming the icon of MAPS and a turning point in motivating public support for the overall re-development program.
- The \$23 million Bricktown Canal, opened in 1999, extends through the Bricktown entertainment district. Shops, restaurants, hiking and biking trails, and park areas are part of this developing area. The attraction of having a water feature in Bricktown was frequently noted by members of the Springfield group.
- The 20,000-seat Ford Center opened in 2002. The most expensive of the MAPS projects at \$87.7 million, the facility includes 56 suites and 3,600 club-level seats. The arena is home to the Oklahoma City Blazers of the Central Hockey League and the Oklahoma City Yard Dawgz arena football team. The Ford Center is the temporary home of the NBA Oklahoma City/New Orleans Hornets for the 2005-06 and 2006-07 seasons. The arena also hosts major concerts, family events, ice shows and other entertainment events.
- Adjacent to the Ford Center is the Cox Business Services Convention Center, which is the result of a \$60 million renovation of the former Myriad Convention Center.
- Performing arts was addressed with the \$53 million facelift to the historic Civic Center Music Hall.
- Facility renovations to horse stalls and barns at the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds arena totaled \$14 million.
- The \$21.5 million Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library houses a business information center, updated information services, and classrooms and meeting spaces for area universities.
- A new trolley system, the Oklahoma Spirit, now covers a three-mile area and loops through the downtown. Additionally, a seven-mile stretch of the North Canadian River has been transformed into a waterway bordered by landscaped areas, trails and recreational facilities now known as the Oklahoma River.



MAPS and Downtown Development

The tax expired on July 1, 1999. During the 66 months it was in effect, more than \$309 million in revenue was collected. In addition, the deposited tax revenue earned about \$54 million in interest. The MAPS projects were completed piece by piece to allow the program to remain debt free.

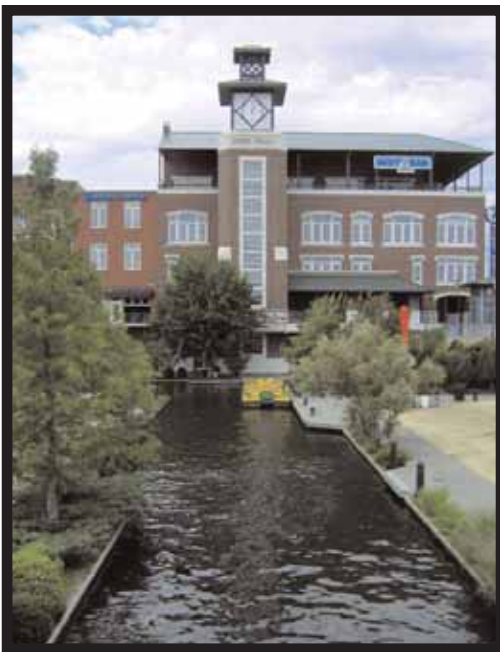
While in the capital city, Springfield leaders toured the Ford Center, Bricktown and other MAPS projects, and heard from a panel of leaders in Oklahoma City's downtown revitalization. The panelists emphasized that MAPS created a reason for people to come downtown and the program has changed the vibrancy and image of the city.

However, looking back, the speakers said they would have been more careful to implore patience among citizens and not over-promise on the timeframe for completion of the projects. This was important because there wasn't a lot of visible progress at first. And private developers wanted to

see the "buildings coming up" before they made commitments, so it took public expenditures to leverage the private sector support.

Members of the delegation noted the way the downtown projects are centralized and within easy walking distance. Oklahoma City has made it easy to navigate the area with way-finding signs for drivers and pedestrians. Oklahoma City is now working on developing more of a residential and retail base in the downtown area.

Several participants also remarked that Springfield has an equally lively downtown, a strong retail presence and considerable residential development when compared with Oklahoma City. What we don't have - and seem to envy - is a water feature on the scale of the Bricktown Canal that will draw even more people downtown.



The Bricktown Canal is a key feature of downtown Oklahoma City.

MAPS for Kids

Building on the success of MAPS in revitalizing its center city, Oklahoma City leaders shifted their attention to education in 2001 with the passage of MAPS for Kids. This second version of MAPS is using the sales tax to raise more than \$500 million for 24 school districts in the metropolitan area. The plan will provide funding to allow every student in the Oklahoma City school district to attend class in either a new or fully renovated school building. The Springfield group toured Douglass High School, the first new school to be completed under the MAPS for Kids program.

What is most unique about MAPS for Kids is the role of the city government in making the idea a reality. Kirk Humphreys was mayor of Oklahoma City when the program was initiated and he said the reason for city involvement was simple. "The city (government) is responsible for building a prosperous, healthy city. And you can't do that without strong schools," said Humphreys. People were choosing to live outside Oklahoma City because of the state of the public schools, with old and poorly maintained buildings and a school board that had lost credibility with the voters.

However, a major hurdle existed because the MAPS for Kids concept - to dedicate city sales tax toward school improvements - was not legal in Oklahoma. Not deterred, Oklahoma City leaders lobbied the state government and changed the law. The legislature passed a bill allowing cities to dedicate funds to address the capital needs of school districts.

They also changed the way the school board was elected, providing for an additional member to be elected at-large to serve as chair of the school board. In Oklahoma City, this position has been filled by Cliff Hudson, chairman of Sonic Corporation, giving the school board a high-profile leader to represent the community's commitment to education.

While the jury is still out on the ultimate success of MAPS for Kids, Humphreys emphasized that early indications all point to positive results in the form of clean financial audits, improving test scores and the psychological rebuilding of a school district that was on the brink of disaster.

Humphreys' primary tips for Springfield leaders were to:

- Address the area of most pressing need in your community;
- Have a leader with political clout who is willing to put it on the line;
- Be conservative and realistic in your projections, and
- Ask voters for what you need, then deliver what you promise.

He reminded the delegation that if you are a school district, your customers are not just the students and current patrons of the district. "Your customer is anyone who is moving or thinking of moving to your city," said Humphreys.



Springfield delegation with Vallene Cooks, Principal of Douglass High School.

Oklahoma's Bioscience Initiative

The Springfield delegation also spent time with leaders of Oklahoma's bioscience industry and returned home with a better sense of the potential economic impact of Springfield's Jordan Valley Innovation Center and the role of Missouri State University in supporting advanced technology research and development.

In Oklahoma City, bioscience research has increased 100 percent in the past five years. The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center has moved away from its previous concentration on teaching to a research-oriented focus. OU researchers and others are housed at the 600-acre Presbyterian Health Foundation campus, which provides a high-tech setting for taking basic research to the stage of commercialization.

Speakers on the topic emphasized several keys to success for Oklahoma's bioscience initiative, including the attraction of foundation money and venture capital support, the long-term and patient leadership of the Presbyterian Health Foundation, and legislative action to allow university and faculty participation in R & D with potential business applications. Most of all, however, the panelists pointed to "finding their niche" as the most important aspect of the process.

Dr. William Paiva, with Chisholm Private Capital Partners, summed up this need for a community to find its focus, noting that many U.S. communities are now competing for the same funds and business opportunities in the field of life sciences. "Be wrong because you picked the wrong focus, not because you tried to do everything," said Paiva.

In Springfield, the focus is clear with the Jordan Valley Innovation Center - which is set to open in 2007. JVIC will fill an economic development gap in the region by providing new opportunities for businesses concentrating on the fields of material science and health science. Missouri State University's leadership and strategic vision for the possibilities of JVIC have sparked the anticipation of local community leaders. As a community, we must be prepared to fully realize the job-creation potential of JVIC by attracting the venture capital funding necessary to keep production in Springfield as these innovative ideas are transformed into commercialized products.



Mike Briggs, Chamber board chairman, with Roy Williams, President/CEO of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

Conclusion

Overall, several themes emerged from the community leadership visit to Oklahoma City that might benefit the future development of the Springfield area. Some of the most notable "take-homes" identified by members of the delegation include:

- The observation that Oklahoma City has been successful at defining their community's most pressing needs and applying resources to address them.
- Along those same lines, Oklahoma City has been incredibly effective at converting their challenges (like the oil bust and the federal building bombing) into opportunities to re-make the city's image.
- Oklahoma City has had strong leaders who "think big" and are willing to take risks in carrying out their plans.

- Oklahoma City has been successful at securing legislative support for local projects, either in the form of state funding or the removal of various obstacles that might hinder implementation of the idea.
- But often, it seems, a very small group of leaders make the decisions that impact the future of Oklahoma City.

In contrast to the final point, Springfield area leaders believed the trip reinforced our community's emphasis on inclusiveness and collaboration in civic decision-making. The Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership, Vision 20/20, school district planning, the ongoing makeover of Springfield's center city, and the strong working relationship between the City of Springfield and Greene County are prime examples of this cooperative spirit.

Downtown Oklahoma City Ambassador helping visitors find their way.





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