

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for the invitation to speak to you today.

I understand the theme of the symposium is knowledge management...so I was sure there was some mistake that I was asked to address you.

I'm sure over the last few days you have digested many ways today's industry leaders are applying knowledge management in their businesses. Its meaning different for each of you...as well has how you may apply it.

The Chamber is a business and an industry of itself. And like all businesses,—it has various challenges to funding its programs and maintaining the right ingredients for success.

Since its inception in 1903, the Tulsa Metro Chamber has played a part in nearly every major community and state initiative.

Although the extraordinary story of Tulsa’s development is chronicled in many forms—such as contemporary newspaper articles, the memoirs of its leaders, several “official” histories, and filings of legal transactions—

The most accurate record of what made the city it is today can be found in a single source: the records of over one hundred years of the actions of the leaders among the Tulsa Metro Chamber.

You see, knowledge management is not only the process of gathering information to make educated decisions today, but rather it is also the practice of maintaining critical knowledge...from yesterday.

Without the Chamber setting in motion a score of crucial initiatives....there would simply be no Tulsa as we know it today.

Historians say it might have grown little beyond the 1,400 residents that lived here in 1900. That was the fate of many neighboring communities...

But that was not what Tulsa—its leaders—wanted the community to be.

An understanding of the pivotal events that have shaped Tulsa may be unclear to today's generation, but it's the dedicated practice to knowledge management—exemplified through a century of minutes and publications of the Tulsa Metro Chamber—that is now the script that traces the building of an American city.

We know there are lessons to be learned from the legacy of the past in order to shape today's future.

Through all of the trials and successes of a day, a week, a year or even a decade—the Tulsa Metro Chamber continually identifies ways to make our economy more diverse, our jobs more plentiful, our workforce more prosperous and our schools more competitive. In other words, we provide community assurance that our region's quality of life will remain at an optimal level.

The greater Tulsa region and much of Northeast Oklahoma is the Chamber's product.

And like many of you in the private sector, our product must continually evolve to remain competitive in today's marketplace.

Projects devised to improve our product may remain the same for decades—for example, the successful completion of the McClellan-Kerr Navigational System and the opening of the Tulsa Port of Catoosa was the number one priority for Chamber leadership for six decades. That's right—more than 60 years of planning.

Volunteers changed, staff changed and elected officials changed, but the goal remained constant. The knowledge base passed from generation to generation throughout the process.

Another example—it's been 20 years since this community made the last significant investment in the Arkansas River.

Under the leadership of Mayor Inhofe—a low water dam was built and Zink Lake developed along with the construction of the River Parks Amphitheater.

And we've been planning to do more ever since.

There are additional lessons learned along the way and more than one single entity remained in possession of that knowledge.

And when it's time...how do we—as a community—begin the discussions of plans buried for decades?

The Chamber's unique form of knowledge management is also in the form of assembling our community partners.

Typically tied to organizational objectives such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation, developmental processes, lessons learned transfer and the general development of collaborative practices—the most

basic form of knowledge management is illustrated in the Chamber's recent strategic planning process.

The 2007 – 2012 five-year strategic plan was developed through a year-long, facilitated process with input from our volunteer leadership, staff, and the Chamber's community partners—such as the City of Tulsa, Tulsa County, INCOG, surrounding communities, and area chambers.

When many people come together to meet objectives, something magical happens—creativity, an expansion of ideas, new approaches and a plan for bigger results.

Through the process we identified three roles in which the Chamber plays a part in the community:

As a collaborator or convener—the Chamber can support an initiative by fostering collaboration across diverse interest groups.

If another entity has taken the lead on an issue, but needs the resources of the Chamber...then we will do what we can if possible to help leverage their position.

If the Chamber takes the lead on an initiative--we will also accept the responsibility and accountability to assure a successful outcome.

Simply stated:

The Tulsa Metro Chamber will lead, leverage and collaborate in order to effect change in the Tulsa metro region.

Through a new strategic plan, we have narrowed our focus and committed resources to seeing through a plan for the following five key initiatives and more.

**Our first is Jobs and People.**



It's a new era of economic development and today's market demands an equal balance between recruitment of jobs and recruitment of people.

One of the most critical issues facing our businesses today in Northeast Oklahoma is the inability to find and hire workers of all levels.

Tulsa's job market is growing at a faster pace than the rest of the nation which is certainly good news.

In 2007, we ended the year with a positive net job growth of 6,100. In 2006 we were up 10,500 net new jobs.

In 2005, the Chamber launched a program called Tulsa's Future a five-year program to create **twenty-six thousand** jobs—of which **ten thousand** are high value jobs with minimum annual salaries of \$45,500.

In 2007, Tulsa's Future assisted in the creation of 4,922 direct jobs, of which 3,204 equaled or exceeded the \$45,500 minimum salary needed to qualify as high-value jobs. In fact, the average salary of these jobs is \$59,903.

Year-to-date, the Chamber has assisted with three new locations and 21 expansion announcements. These projects will create 2,795 jobs, of which 1,534 exceed the \$45,000 minimum salary goal.

The results speak for themselves.

The Tulsa metro region perfectly balances convenience and affordability with the advantages of a talented workforce, a central location, and a pro-business atmosphere which makes the region an ideal home for progressive companies competing in a global economy.

However, we can't create new jobs unless we have a talented and skilled workforce.

Which leads me into our second initiative: **education**.

Education is our pipeline supplier for all employers and is our best opportunity to remain competitive in today's marketplace.

It is our goal to make the Tulsa region an innovative leader in workforce preparation by working hand-in-hand with our secondary education system to ensure we are supplying our businesses with the skilled employees they need to grow.

These efforts will range from early childhood, to K-12, to higher education. We need to improve the graduation rate and encourage enrollment in a stronger curriculum to prepare our children to become career students.

Furthermore, we need to work closely with area businesses to encourage employees to return to school for further training and education.

The new superintendent for Tulsa Public Schools visited with our Board leadership on Monday and we look forward to expanding our visibility and our assistance in the coming months.

Our third initiative is **Legislative Success**.

Last year, we made great strides in creating one, unified voice to represent our region at the State Capital and in Washington, D.C.

The end of the 2008 legislative session is by far one of the most successful in the Tulsa region's history.

In the final days, the Chamber productively advocated on behalf of all three bond proposals to adequately fund transportation infrastructure, higher education and local projects for Tulsa, Oklahoma City and rural communities.

Work to formulate the 2009 Legislative Agenda continues at the Chamber's Regional Business Summit next Tuesday, August 26 at the Gilcrease Museum. The Chamber will host all of our regional partners and elected officials to design the local, state and federal agendas.

This leads me into our fourth initiative...**Community Development and specifically the development of the Arkansas River corridor**, which remains a top priority for the Chamber and our leadership.

In my experience, there is not a single urban area in America that has not been successful after dedicating resources to develop its riverfront. The Arkansas River is

the heart and soul of our community and is what connects us.

Our leadership is resolute. Planning will continue and the opportunity to develop the river will happen again in the coming years.

And finally, our last initiative is **downtown revitalization**.

Research shows that a healthy and vibrant downtown boosts the economic health and quality of life in a community.

Specifically, it creates jobs, incubates small businesses, reduces sprawl, protects property values, and increases the community's options for goods and services.

Simply put...these are signs of life in urban areas. I certainly saw that where I came from in Nashville.

The heart of our region is Tulsa, and as Tulsa goes, so goes the region. And as the region goes, so goes Tulsa.

It took public and private efforts to pass Vision 2025 to fund the BOK center and rehab the convention center, but the work is not done.

We must turn a business-centric center that appears dead after dusk into a vibrant 24/7 metropolis bustling with residents, restaurants, retail and entertainment.

If we are going to accomplish any of these initiatives it will be through building relationships, fostering communication and providing cooperation.

This strategic plan has provided staff and volunteers clear, measurable goals to benefit our members and the communities we represent.

Paramount to the early success of implementing the plan has been regular staff and volunteer updates and reviews using a dashboard approach for reporting.

Statements of End Result, Goals, Objectives, Strategic Dimensions, Accountability Stakeholders, Target Dates, and Target measures has become engrained as part of our knowledge management system.

We will be able to track the progress of these strategic initiatives throughout the years, while also recording new chapters of information to be shared with future generations.



I will gladly stop and entertain some questions regarding  
the Chamber or our initiatives...