

Oklahoma Innovations Radio Show

Air Date: October 15-16, 2011

Guests: **Kinnee Tilly**, Tulsa Metro Chamber; **Jeri Koehler**, Rogers State University; **Daniel Pullin**, OU Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth; **Craig Shimasaki**, BioSource Consulting

[Music]

>> From the OCAST Radio Network, this is *Oklahoma Innovations*, a weekly science and technology radio magazine brought to you as a service of OCAST, the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology. OCAST is the state's only agency whose focus is technology, its development, transfer, and commercialization. OCAST's mission is to locate and fund promising technologies and allow Oklahoma to compete in a global market economy from our own backyard. This program features some of the state's most gifted and talented scientists and inventors, entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and business leaders who all have one common goal – developing technology-based economic growth for all Oklahomans. Now here are your hosts Gary Owen and Steve Paris.

>> **Gary Owen:** We are on the road this week, and we're coming to you from what is called the Oklahoma Technology Showcase. It's sponsored by EPSCoR, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, OCAST, i2E, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and the University of, of Central Oklahoma, and MidFirst Bank. And, Steve, when we say Oklahoma Technology Showcase, people think this is a place where people are showcasing technology. Well, kind of -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah. It is, Gary, and what we, we're going to have today is we've got about ten people from actually all across the state. We have folks from Tulsa, we have folks from Oklahoma City, some from Lawton, some from Ardmore, Norman, Stillwater, who are going to be showcasing some of the technology that's been developed under OCAST funding. And so, you know, it's not the only technology that's being developed in Oklahoma -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right.

>> **Steve Paris:** But it's, it's an important part of it, and we want people to have a chance to understand where their hard-earned tax dollars are being used to create businesses in Oklahoma -

>> **Gary Owen:** But it's also a, a, a presenter position for young entrepreneur wannabees -

>> **Steve Paris:** Well -

>> **Gary Owen:** Come and see the, how these people did, you know, learn the hard knocks -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely, and that's, that's actually the first part of this program is teaching entrepreneurship, and, and, of course, our, there are several folks that you mentioned, the sponsors. We also work very closely with i2E. That stands for Innovation to Enterprise, and they're an organization whose job it is to help commercialize technology in Oklahoma -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right.

>> **Steve Paris:** And we have with us an individual who represents Tulsa, and it's Kinney Tilly. She's been on the program before. She's vice president, business retention, expansion, and small business, and she is going to be talking to us about what is going on in Tulsa, the second largest

city in the state, and such an important, vibrant community. You know, if you try to imagine an Oklahoma without Tulsa, well, it just wouldn't be an Oklahoma, and Tulsa's so important to this, to the state, to the economic growth of Oklahoma, and -

>> **Gary Owen:** I was, this past week, I, this past week I actually attended a Chamber meeting. I guess when I have to understand it's one of the largest, or not Chamber, Rotary meetings, and I understand they have one of the largest Rotary groups in OK, in, in the country. And I was quite impressed with the new baseball field there, and all the things that they're doing there. So Tulsa has a lot of happenings in downtown areas -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Absolutely -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** We have a very vibrant downtown. We're very fortunate to have an executive director for downtown development, Delise Tomlinson, who has a great background in urban planning. Works very, very well and very closely with all of our downtown entities to help it grow.

>> **Gary Owen:** That's awesome. Well, tell us, let's refresh our audience about who you are and talk about your organization.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Absolutely. I am, as you said, vice president for business retention, expansion, and small business for the Tulsa Metro Chamber, and my focus is really on helping the businesses that are in Tulsa stay in Tulsa, stay strong, help them face any adversity, and also find opportunities for growth.

>> **Gary Owen:** And how do you do that because that's, that's kind of a challenge?

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Well, we have an outstanding business retention and expansion program, which we've had in place for a couple of years now. Very fortunate to have several staff members that work with us on that, in that area, and our, our focus is really just going out and talking to our local businesses. Obviously, we focus on our, our key industry sectors such as aviation, manufacturing, health care, and energy, but we're going out and talking to these business and finding their needs. Is it workforce? Is it a new facility? Do you have an issue with permitting or with, or something with the city we can help with? We work very closely with the City of Tulsa to make sure these businesses have everything they need to help grow -

>> **Gary Owen:** You know, Steve, I would be curious to know between the two of us the consensus you're getting in the economic environment of Tulsa because Oklahoma City is thriving and doing well, and from what I gathered from the Rotary meeting in Tulsa this past week that Tulsa's really -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Doing extremely well -

>> **Gary Owen:** Doing extremely well.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Extremely well. Just in the past six months, we had over 4,000 new jobs in the manufacturing sector -

>> **Steve Paris:** Wow -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** And those are companies that we have worked with. So in, in, unbelievable growth in manufacturing right now. Just an increase in their workforce. So, yes, our

unemployment is low. It's about six percent right now. We didn't have a really bad time during the recession. I would have to say we fared very well. So we were very fortunate there.

>> **Gary Owen:** I attended a, a, an event. I shared this with Steve recently. I was at the Oklahoma City's Metro 50 Awards, and our mayor, Mayor Cornett, was the MC, and he said one of the things that outsiders, business leaders outside of our state were asking him is what are you guys doing down there to, and he said, you know, I really don't know. He said I really don't. It's just, it's just, I think it's just a synergy going on -

>> **Steve Paris:** Well, it is, Gary, and, of course, the energy industry all across the state has made a, a big impact. It's not the only factor, but it is a major factor, and Oklahoma's better positioned relative to the rest of the nation. You know, I think the nation right now is at, what, 9.3. I have forgotten the exact number, but -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** It's about that -

>> **Steve Paris:** But more than nine percent unemployment, and here in Oklahoma we're substantially lower than that. I think we're something like 5.3 -

>> **Gary Owen:** That's right -

>> **Steve Paris:** Overall, and, you know, you're talking about a vibrant city, the City of Tulsa. It, and, and things aren't always the same. I mean, you go through down times and up, better times, and every city does that, every region does that, and you all are, are really coming on at 4,000 jobs added in the last how much -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Six months.

>> **Steve Paris:** Six months. That's -

>> **Gary Owen:** Man, that's substantial.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** It's, and our manufacturing sector has been one that's extremely strong for us. We do have a lot of manufacturers in the Tulsa area, obviously, related to the energy industry as well as aviation -

>> **Gary Owen:** Sure.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** And to have that kind of substantial growth in manufacturing has been very beneficial -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely. And, you know, when, Tulsa's synonymous with aviation. I mean, a lot of people may not understand, who've come late to the game, but you go back, you know, many, many decades, and you had a major presence in, in Donald Douglas. Of course, that goes back to World War II times, and, and they've had a major presence there. American Airlines and so forth. And, and, you know, there's, just lots of growth in Tulsa. What kind of challenges do you see, Kinnee, coming down the road that you're going to have to deal with because no, we know it's not going to all just be peaches and cream forever. It never is. It's always a challenge in economic development -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** I'd say one of the biggest challenges we have right now is with workforce. We work diligently with our higher eds, we our career techs to make sure that we're turning out that consistent pipeline for our workforce, and it's not something particularly specific to Tulsa or to

Oklahoma. I talked to other economic developers across the nation, and they are concerned with the same thing we are. We need engineers. We need a lot of -

>> **Steve Paris:** Engineers -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Engineers.

>> **Steve Paris:** The stem programs -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** And absolutely. And -

>> **Steve Paris:** Science, technology, engineering, and math -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Absolutely, and that's one of the things we're very focused on is working with our higher eds. We have great higher ed partners in the Tulsa area -

>> **Steve Paris:** You do.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Absolutely -

>> **Steve Paris:** Everybody's there.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Yes. University of Oklahoma. We have Oklahoma State. So -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** We have -

>> **Steve Paris:** Roger State, Northeastern -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Some great ones right there -

>> **Steve Paris:** And I know I've left some out.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Langston as well.

>> **Steve Paris:** Langston has a presence there -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** We're, we're very fortunate to have that, and that is something that does help us attract and retain that workforce -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely -

>> **Gary Owen:** And we should, what is the motivation when you look at college, high school to try to motivate more individuals into this -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Into manufacturing. Well, the, and I think that's something that we haven't done as good a job as we could, and we need to work on that is to help young people understand the opportunities and the, the careers that they can have in manufacturing, and those are very high-paying jobs -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yes.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** And we need to do that in a better fashion, and hopefully we'll be able to do. We work, as I said, very closely with our career tech, who does an outstanding job in making sure that those young folks in high school understand the opportunities they have -

>> **Gary Owen:** And we have a great listener base in your area because of our, our home station there, KRMG in Tulsa. When we talk to your audience there on this program, tell them a little bit about some of the services that your organization offers business people.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Well, I will talk a little bit about our, our BRE, our business retention expansion program. If you do have a business, and you have a business need, if you're looking for workforce, if you have facility needs, if you are trying to work in some new product lines, and you just don't really know how to get there, or if you're looking at the potential of doing business overseas, please do contact us. Not only do we do what we do for free, we do not charge -

>> **Gary Owen:** Oh.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** But we can connect you with the appropriate resources that, we might be able to find state incentives that you might have as a potential for you. Or we can connect you with workforce resources through the workforce board. We have a person on staff, Denise Reed, who is our workforce strategist who can assist your business in finding the appropriate personnel.

>> **Steve Paris:** Let me just point out. We have a couple of our strategic partners here at OCAST who have a major presence in Tulsa. The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance is there, and, of course, their mission is statewide, but they're headquartered in Tulsa. And, of course, i2E has an office, Innovation Enterprise has an office there, and their job is to commercialize technology. You talked offline a little bit ago about, about some of the success you've had in Tulsa in the beginning. Some, some funding. Something like 600 -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Yes. I do want to talk a little bit about that. We have a young professionals group called Typrose, and they have put together a young professionals' incubator. I believe they have six businesses in it right now, and one of the things that they were very focused on doing is making sure that they had a facility in which they could attract young professionals, give them a co-working space, provide opportunities to have an, an incubated company there, and to that end, they applied for funding through another partner organization, Tulsa Economic Development Corporation, to purchase a building and were given a grant in, in the amount of \$600,000 -

>> **Steve Paris:** Wow.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** To purchase that building.

>> **Steve Paris:** That's not small potatoes. That's a big operation -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** That is, it's very big for us. We're very grateful to Pedro Garza and to the folks at EBA -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** It's a great opportunity for us to provide up, a space for young entrepreneurs to start that business and to attract young entrepreneurs to our city -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely, and, of course, the Tulsa Metro Chamber is made up of business people from across the City of Tulsa who are trying to improve the overall economic situation -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Certainly -

>> **Steve Paris:** For the whole, whole region, and, you know, you work with some pretty nice people. Old Mike, you know, Mike Neal's just a fantastic guy -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** He's amazing -

>> **Steve Paris:** He's a, he's, talk about energy. I mean, the guy is [crosstalk]. You bet. Well, this, this \$600,000 now, that was an EDA grant, and give us an idea of, of what we can expect to see come out of it. You'll actually see young people starting new businesses -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** We actually have some six companies in our incubator right now, and they have started growing. They're hiring. They did this in a very short time. Surprised us even at the, the growth potential there, but it's a great way to attract those young entrepreneurs and provide them a venue to go to after they've gone through some of our programs at TU or at TCC. TCC has a great program called Launch for entrepreneurs. This actually gives them a landing place after they've gone through that programming, to have a physical spot to start a business -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Gary Owen:** Cool.

>> **Steve Paris:** And, and you mentioned Tulsa Community College. That's, that's the one I left out while -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** That was the other one -

>> **Steve Paris:** And I did not mean to leave them [crosstalk] -

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** And they're, they're a wonderful -

>> **Steve Paris:** Fantastic. You bet.

>> **Gary Owen:** I'd like to, while we have a moment here, we've got about a minute left in this segment. I want to give your website so that those listening in your area can, and anywhere in the state for that matter if you're interested in maybe possibly considering starting a business in the Tulsa area, whatever. It's grow metro Tulsa dot com. What will they find on that website?

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Gives you a variety of resources, and I would kind of like to direct them, and they can find it on our website there to a program we have called Source Link Tulsa, and I know you guys had an opportunity -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yes.

>> **Steve Paris:** Yes.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** To talk to us about that last year -

>> **Gary Owen:** That's right.

>> **Kinnee Tilly:** Source Link is a, essentially a one-stop shop for people who are wanting to start a business. They can find information there to get help on a business plan, on funding, even start looking for a patent attorney to help them with intellectual property. So I, I really encourage people to start with Source Link Tulsa.

>> **Gary Owen:** OK. That's very good. Again, the website is grow metro Tulsa dot com, and, Kinnee, you're always a great guest, and keep us apprised of what's going on in the Tulsa area, and that it's nice to see the growth of jobs in, in that -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Gary Owen:** State, isn't it. It's wonderful. Alright. We're going to take a break. We'll come back and talk to our next guest on Oklahoma, from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase on *Oklahoma Innovations*.

[Music]

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>> We now return to *Oklahoma Innovations* with Gary Owen and Steve Paris on the OCAST radio network.

[Music]

>> **Gary Owen:** Steve and I are coming to you from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase. By the time you hear this program, the Showcase will have been long gone, but this is a great opportunity for people interested in being entrepreneurs in technology-based businesses. They feature CEO's from ten of the fastest-growing small businesses in Oklahoma, and a lot of great attendance here at the Reed Center in Midwest City. Steve, and our next guest is from one of my favorite towns in Oklahoma, Claremore -

>> **Steve Paris:** Claremore, Oklahoma. We have Jeri Koehler, who is a business development specialist with Rogers State University, and she's here to, probably to learn and to teach because that's what she does. She teaches, and she has several areas where we're going to talk about here in just a minute, but, Jeri, give us a quick rundown of just who Jeri is, how you came to be an education at Rogers State University.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Well, Steve, I owned my own businesses right out of high school, and I kind of worked my way up the hard way, and I realized I needed to know more. So I became a student at Rogers State University, actually, and received a bachelor's degree there while running my own businesses. I owned three, one with a partner, two with my husband. He's still my husband, which is a blessing because running your business with your spouse can be difficult, but -

>> **Gary Owen:** It can be.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** So I did the businesses. I received an education through Rogers State University. I had an offer through one of my professors to come and work at the, at the University. So I took that opportunity, and I left the businesses with my partners and spouse, and, and that's how I, that's how I got to where I'm at through Rogers State University -

>> **Steve Paris:** Now, are they still in, in the same business?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Two of the three are still there -

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes.

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** The other one we actually sold it -

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** And they relocated. So -

>> **Steve Paris:** Well, that's a part of the process -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** It is -

>> **Steve Paris:** Is an exit strategy sometimes. Selling the business. That's, that's, that doesn't mean you haven't succeeded -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yeah, absolutely. So that was, that was good.

>> **Steve Paris:** Very good. So now you're teaching people, entrepreneurship over at Rogers State. Let's talk about small business counseling. Sounds like you've been there.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes. That is probably our most popular service. We counsel clients throughout northeast Oklahoma that are interested in either starting a business or they're in business. So we get the range of they have a business plan on a napkin all the way to they've been in business for 27 years, and they have a hundred employees. We help them with lots of different things, which we can talk about that later. We see approximately 20 clients a month, and those come through my office, and I counsel with them sometimes one time, sometimes multiple times -

>> **Steve Paris:** Now, how do you recruit these folks? Do they hear about you, and are, do, do you have outreach programs?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** We have partners throughout northeast Oklahoma including the Career Tech Centers, the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence. We have an alliance agent that works through the University -

>> **Steve Paris:** Manufacturing [crosstalk] -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes, yes -

>> **Steve Paris:** Right.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** And he is amazing. He, he brings us excellent clients. We love to work with his people. And then the chambers. You know, we work closely with all the chambers that, you know, if you're going to start a business in a community, you usually hit the Chamber of Commerce first -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** And so they push them up the hill there at, in Claremore -

>> **Steve Paris:** Sure -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** To the University.

>> **Gary Owen:** What is [crosstalk] -

>> **Steve Paris:** Literally.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yeah.

>> **Steve Paris:** [Inaudible] at the top of the hill.

>> **Gary Owen:** When you look at people who are starting out in business versus those we have been in the business, common thread between the two or common thread between the two categories that you constantly run in to?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Well, they all face similar challenges in planning, in marketing. Financing is an issue, whether you need startup funding or whether you're just trying to keep your inventory in the levels that your suppliers want them to be or your customers want them to be. So the, I, I would just say the common threads would be business topics in general. Marketing, accounting, management, strategy, things like that -

>> **Gary Owen:** Any based on the services that you provided? Do you have a success story you could share with us that was maybe kind of unique that always is a recall for you when you talk about there was this one company, and I remember when they came to us, or a new business, a startup, and where they are today?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Well, yes, of course. We had this one company. He had relocated from Ohio to Tulsa to work in a big manufacturing facility. He got there, and he realized he just didn't like it. He wanted to do his own thing. So he launched his own business with himself and a few partners, and within six months, they had 20 employees, and they were doing a marvelous service in the Tulsa metro area, and, and they're still in business today. They've been a great success story for us -

>> **Gary Owen:** Wow. That is a good one.

>> **Steve Paris:** Wow. And, and those folks, I mean, the opportunity for going out of business as you start a business is pretty tremendous. A lot of them fail -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes.

>> **Steve Paris:** But there, there are things that you can do, and you teach part of that and how to kind of smooth out some of those rough spots and get over the hump on, on, and the challenges, is that right?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes. That's right. You know, the failure rate, as they say, 80 percent of small businesses will fail within the first five years. We actually are a technology business incubator. So we provide space as, as well as services if they need the space, and if a business locates in a technology business, or in a certified incubator, then that statistic flips. So then they have an 80 percent chance of success through the services provided through an incubator system.

>> **Steve Paris:** Very good. So you, now, do you work much, are, are most of the people who you teach and you work with, are they younger people, or are they people in the business community already?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** We have a, a strong mix. We work very closely with the School of Business and Technology. So we have student entrepreneurs, and then we have the general community as well, and that goes anywhere from, from younger people who maybe didn't go to college all the way up through baby boomers and into retirement.

>> **Steve Paris:** Cover the gamet, huh?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes, we sure do.

>> **Steve Paris:** What drew you to education? The business, I guess.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yeah. The business side of it. I love the, I love the opportunity to deal with college students, and they absorb so much so quickly -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** They're super sharp, and I love dealing with them -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah. In the area of, of competitive business intelligence. Now, wow, that's a, that's a mouthful -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** It is.

>> **Steve Paris:** What does that mean?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Well, what we try to do is make our businesses in northeast Oklahoma more competitive in their environment. So we do market research with them and for them. We have many resources available to do that kind of market research, and so we draw those resources and tools in, and we provide them to the small businesses that typically wouldn't be able to afford, you know, a \$10,000 database or -

>> **Steve Paris:** Sure.

>> **Jeri Koehler:** A \$45,000 software training system. So -

>> **Steve Paris:** So if they're in your community or anywhere near Claremore, I mean, if that, if they're not availing themselves of your services, they're missing the boat -

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yes, absolutely. Our services are very affordable and available to anyone in northeast Oklahoma. So whether you're in business or just starting out, either way, we have resources available for you -

>> **Gary Owen:** Let me give you the website. It is www dot rsu dot edu forward slash innovation. Jeri, great guest. Is, did I do that right?

>> **Jeri Koehler:** Yeah. Yeah.

>> **Gary Owen:** OK, alright. And I tell you what, this has been a, you know, this is a fun show -

>> **Steve Paris:** I'm learning -

>> **Gary Owen:** I'm learning stuff, yeah -

>> **Steve Paris:** Well, she's a teacher -

>> **Gary Owen:** Let's go into business together. We've got to take a break. We'll be back with more from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase on *Oklahoma Innovations*.

[Music]

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[Music]

>> **Gary Owen:** Welcome back to *Oklahoma Innovations*. Before we took a break, we mentioned we're coming to you from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase. If you joined us late, and you say what is that. That Oklahoma Technology Showcase is for the intellectually curious and forward-thinking individual who wants to experience the ideas of some Oklahoma, some of Oklahoma's best entrepreneurs, Steve.

>> **Steve Paris:** And we have with us Daniel Pullin, who is, this, he's got several titles here. One is the university vice president for strategic planning and economic development at OU, and he's also the chairman of the Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth, and we're going to ask Daniel about all of these things. But first, before we do, Daniel, it's been awhile since you've been on the program. Give us a little background on who Daniel Pullin is.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Oh, well, it's great to be back on, and I, you know, appreciate the opportunity. Well, I guess most recently I, I was able to return to Oklahoma about five years ago to, to really contribute and be a part of the, the, I think the momentous acceleration and diversification of Oklahoma's knowledge-based economy, and -

>> **Steve Paris:** It's really ramping up, isn't it -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** It's unbelievable. I mean, even, even, even the last five years, when, when, when we were brought here to, to, to launch what's known as the Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** I mean, you could feel the momentum then, but now you're seeing that momentum translated into real opportunities, new jobs and economic diversification. And so we're not done yet. We're, we're, we're proud of what we've done, but, but we're not going to rest on our laurels, laurels and going to definitely keep going -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely, and it right now Oklahoma is, is occupied or positioned as a state where we have just a little more than five percent unemployment compared to the nationwide over nine percent, and I'm not going to tell everybody that you did that all by yourself, but you had a role in that.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Well, I think it, it, it takes all of us, of course, -

>> **Steve Paris:** It does. It does -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** And look at what I've really recognized is that Oklahoma is a can-do state.

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** And we're not a, not a state of people that sit around and, and wallow about the fact that there might be nine percent unemployment across the nation. We're a state that gets up off the couch and goes and, and becomes productive members of, of society and the economy -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely. President David, President David Boren chose you, he assigned you the job of university vice president of strategic planning and economic development, and I know that's a mouthful, but I know it's also a very important position. Talk to us about that role.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Well, sure. There are two, two, two different sections of that, and on the strategic planning side, it really is having the wonderful opportunity to work with and learn from President Boren and the other administrative officers at the university to provide the fact base to, to support the long-term planning of the university. Where are we going to be in five years, in ten years, and, you know, I'm really there to support President Boren's vision and leadership, and it's just a wonderful opportunity for me to learn from him and, and, and contribute to that vision. Secondly, the economic development function is one that we've recrafted I think in the past 18 months to really align existing university resources to make the biggest impact we can on Oklahoma's economy. Certainly, we are not getting away from the university's traditional mission of teaching and research and service. In fact, you could argue that our role in catalyzing Oklahoma's economy is a part of that service mission that we have. And so what we've done is taken three different sort of leaders of economic development assistants and united them in one organization to, to make sure that we're moving as quickly as we can, as thoughtfully as we can, and as impactfully as we can to do our part to make sure that Oklahoma's economy is as competitive as it can be in the nation, and, therefore, making the nation as competitive as it can be in the world.

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah, it [crosstalk] anybody that doesn't understand. Universities, essentially university like University of Oklahoma, are, are drivers of, of economic development. I mean, that, they play a major role, and a lot of it has to do with R&D, the research and development that goes on there. There are other factors, too, but there's so much that goes on there. If you didn't have, if you didn't have University of Oklahoma, you have to wonder where Oklahoma would be right now, and really won't think about that. You know, you have other roles to play.

You also are chairman of the Center of the Creation, let me say that again, Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth, and that's been around for, what, five or six years now -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Yeah. Just, we're actually just this fall celebrating our fifth anniversary.

>> **Steve Paris:** Outstanding. Well, tell, we've, we've talked about that, but it's been a long time since we discuss it. Let's talk about the Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth, located on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. What's that all about?

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Well, it's, we're actually located in the heart of the university's research campus, which abuts the south side of the traditional campus in Norman. And, essentially, it is a business incubator that, that leverages the fact that on the research campus we have private sector tenants, we have faculty researchers, and university resources as, as well alongside of federal government presence, and we pull those different, different collection of, of people together in a common ecosystem, and we leverage the best talent of those three different sectors to create things that, honestly, didn't previously exist -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** So we might take a piece of innovation that was generated out of OU research, marry that, that thought leadership of a OU faculty member, perhaps, with the energy and the enthusiasm of talented student interns from all academic disciplines who want real-world entrepreneurial experiences to different shape themselves as they move forward in their career as well as to make an impact on Oklahoma's economy. And then, finally, we reached into OU's alumni and friend network to find established, seasoned business leaders who want to give back to the university by writing a, an intellectual check of their time and talent to mentor and guide these talented inter-disciplinary students alongside these, these world-leading faculty to, to build businesses and new opportunities that, as I mentioned, didn't exist before.

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely. Now, you have at, at the University of Oklahoma, you have students from, I am sure, every county in the state, and plus a lot from outside the state -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Right.

>> **Steve Paris:** Now, when you deal with economic development, I mean, a lot of it may be kind of centered around Norman, but you also have an impact in other parts of Oklahoma, do you not?

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Absolutely. Well, certainly, the university itself has campuses in Oklahoma City, in Tulsa -

>> **Steve Paris:** Tulsa, absolutely -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** And so just from the physical presence, you know, there, there's opportunities there, but, but from student perspective, alumni, friends of the university, businesses that we partner with, that, that occurs across the state -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Urban, rural, and everything in between. We are the University of Oklahoma, not just the University of Norman -

>> **Steve Paris:** There you go -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** We take that, we take that reality very seriously. In fact, CCW itself, in, in sort of honor of its fifth anniversary, we've made the decision that starting in January, we're expanding to have a physical presence at the OU Tulsa campus as well. So -

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** You know, we're not just saying this. We're, we're taking our show on the road as well -

>> **Steve Paris:** Absolutely. Well, let's talk about Tulsa because we have a lot of listeners listening on KRMG in Tulsa in, in addition to KTOK in Oklahoma City, and, of course, Cameron University picks us up and, and takes us all over western Oklahoma, but just, let's look forward to Tulsa just a minute. You're, you're talking about, I don't know how many students OU has up there approximately, and if you know, let us know, but, but you have a major presence there. Of course, in health treatment, or in, not treatment but in training. You know, the Shusterman Center and, and on and on and on -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Absolutely.

>> **Steve Paris:** Let's talk about all the things that you, that are in Tulsa now that weren't always there.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Yeah. No, it's been an incredible growth. Certainly, the university's presence in Tulsa and, and the university's commitment to, again, you know, the teaching research, but, but, but also a very strong link of service. I mean, you're seeing incredible community outreach and collaboration between the university and, and the broader Tulsa community I think to both, both organizations' benefits. So what, what you're seeing particularly as we think about it through the economic development when, as part of what CCW is now focusing on is an element of social entrepreneurship and using the power of commerce to solve real-world problems in a sustainable way. And I think that dovetails very nicely with Tulsa's commitment to improving the quality of life in Tulsa at large. And so if we can take these business development and social entrepreneurship perspective of CCW, match that with the, the enthusiasm and the progress going on at Tulsa, I think that the community can benefit from this additional presence.

>> **Steve Paris:** You know, Oklahoma about, I believe it was 1998, was passed a couple of state questions which allowed professors to take an equity position in the research that they do at the universities, which I think probably created a lot of incentive to, for business development. I guess you're familiar with state question [crosstalk] -

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Six eighty and 681 -

>> **Steve Paris:** Six eighty, 681, absolutely, and those were passed by the people in the State of Oklahoma. Those, I think, if, if I'm wrong, tell me, but I think those had a major impact on the way universities do business now and changed some of their focus a little bit. Not, not to eliminate, you know, the, the teaching part, but to add to it.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** No, it is, it, it's definitely additive, and, and those, and those two voices from, of the people were, were transitional for everything that we're trying to do it on from an economic development perspective, and, and it is complementary. You know, when, when, say, a faculty member creates an innovation, certainly there are traditional outlets like a publication or perhaps a presentation at a, at a conference, traditional forms of knowledge dissemination, but

what about the power of that knowledge being embodied invention that, that turns into new products and services that really benefit all of mankind -

>> **Gary Owen:** There you go.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Think about the impact of that notion of knowledge dissemination improving all of our lives. And so I think that by passing those two state questions, we've unlocked the potential here in the State of Oklahoma to have that, that kicker effect beyond just traditional forms of scholarly dissemination.

>> **Steve Paris:** And I think that had a lot to do with that, that vibrance that you talked about earlier when, when you first came back to Oklahoma, and, and you see all this, this opportunity. People are focused now. You see businesses rising. You see investment happening. Things that maybe weren't happening on quite the same scale just a few years before.

>> **Daniel Pullin:** Absolutely, and you're seeing it I think trickle, that same level of enthusiasm trickle down to our young people. If you look at, you know, the students that are having these real-world entrepreneurial experiences in CCW and at the Price College of Business and our College of Engineering, College of Law even and on and on and on, they're, they're, they're getting the bug. They're seeing that it can be done in Oklahoma. They're gaining the confidence and network to do it right here in Oklahoma. So I'm just thrilled to see that.

>> **Gary Owen:** Daniel Pullin, our guest this segment from the University of Oklahoma. Gentlemen, we've got to take a break from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase on *Oklahoma Innovations*.

[Music]

>> Stay tuned. Gary and Steve will be right back with more *Oklahoma Innovations* on the OCAST radio network.

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[Music]

>> **Gary Owen:** The purpose of the Oklahoma Technology Showcase is to expose technology-based innovative Oklahoma companies to the state, and Steve and I have had a great time today interviewing some of the people visiting here. Some familiar faces. The Technology Showcase basically provides a glimpse into the future of Oklahoma's innovation and inspiring those entrepreneur wannabees as well as those who are getting new ideas from existing entrepreneurs out there. One of our favorite people will stop by our remote studio here, Dr. Craig Shimasaki. Now, those of you who have been long-time listeners know this guy and know his, he's one of

those entrepreneurs that is always turning new ideas around into business. And, Steve, this guy, it's always, every time I see -

>> **Steve Paris:** Gary -

>> **Gary Owen:** I always say, what are you doing now -

>> **Steve Paris:** He's done more than once -

>> **Gary Owen:** I'm telling you -

>> **Steve Paris:** Which means he is a serial entrepreneur, and he's darn good at it. So [laughs] -

>> **Gary Owen:** He's very good at it -

>> **Steve Paris:** We're going to hear more from Craig here in just a second. Craig Shimasaki, as Gary was talking about, has been around here in, in Oklahoma for quite some time. Been involved in some very innovative businesses. We're going to talk today about Molecular Labs, and that's kind of a new one for me, Craig. So you're going to have to explain. You going to, you got some explaining to do about that, bud.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Sure will. Sure will.

>> **Steve Paris:** Tell us about, well, first of all, tell us what you've been doing since we saw you last.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Well, I have a company called BioSource Consulting, which I do consulting help to other startups to try to help take what their technology is into some business concept -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And translate it into a product, and then various facets of raising capital, putting in marketing strategies -

>> **Steve Paris:** It's always a challenge raising funds and -

>> **Gary Owen:** You ever, do you ever, when you talk to these people, you ever think now why didn't I think of that one?

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Sometimes -

>> **Gary Owen:** Or maybe boy, I'd like to get more involved in that?

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Yes. There are, that's the neat thing about Oklahoma. There is lots of ideas, and any place you go, really, ideas are not in shortage. It's how do you get them to be translated to do something -

>> **Gary Owen:** But knowing you, you, yes, you're a consultant, but you're still a scientist first, wouldn't you say?

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Yes. I am, and I love science, and also I love business. So I think -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Entrepreneurism can be a disease because you always love to continue to -

>> **Gary Owen:** That's right.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Try to birth new, new ideas and products.

>> **Gary Owen:** So tell us about this new venture.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** It's called Molecular Labs. It's a clear-based lab that Dr. Madeline Cunningham at the University of Oklahoma and myself started. It's based on the discoveries that she has identified in what's called molecular mimicry, or autoimmune dysfunction. And there's a disorder that's been described called PANDAS - P-A-N-D-A-S -

>> **Steve Paris:** And you're not talking about bears -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** No bears in this one. It's actually an acronym for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder after strep -

>> **Gary Owen:** Good grief -

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, my goodness, And everybody's dealt with strep -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** That's correct.

>> **Steve Paris:** I mean, that's just all over the place.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so what, what she's discovered is that children that end up getting a strep throat or a strep infection, sometimes these children will develop antibodies that not only will attack the strep bacteria, but then they will also mimic and attack the neuronal cells in the brain -

>> **Gary Owen:** Oh, my -

>> **Steve Paris:** And that, that's not a good thing -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** That's not a good thing. And autoimmune diseases are not uncommon, but it's not been put into this context. So lupus is an autoimmune, arthritis, various forms of arthritis are autoimmune, but it's where your body is making an antibody that actually recognize a normal part or a function of your own body that goes haywire.

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so what happens is these children then end up with these obsessive-compulsive disorders, tics, uncontrollable behaviors, and it's basically a form of autism -

>> **Gary Owen:** Autism, yeah.

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, my.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And what she has found is that if you can identify these five tests that she's developed and find that they are positive that these patients can be treated with different treatment modalities that will actually in most cases eliminate almost all of these symptoms.

>> **Gary Owen:** Wow.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so there's a lot of children who are suffering from this disease, and they go to doctors, and, unfortunately, it's like the old adage, if you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so if you're a neurologist, and you see a neurological dysfunction, you're going to think of there's some neurological problem, and most of these children get put on neuropsychiatric drugs.

>> **Gary Owen:** Oh, yeah.

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, my.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so what happens is that they're basically treating symptoms. So I like to use an example. If you, you have, maybe a brain tumor, and this is a farfetched example, but it gets the point across, and you go to your doctor, and doctor, I've got a pain in my head, and says, well, take two Tylenol. He says, well, I've got brain cancer, but the pain will go away. What do I do when the pain comes back? Well, take two more Tylenol. It's not a, a demonstration that, that we cannot presume always that something is always the usual cause -

>> **Gary Owen:** Right, yeah.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Or something new. And so, and not that all of these children who have this type of behavior are autoimmune, but what we found is that there is a lot of children who have been treated with what's called [inaudible] or plasma transfers, and the symptoms abate, and they lead normal lives. And so it's just to tell us that our body is very complex, and we don't have all the answers, and, therefore, it's very important that they get properly diagnosed, and that's the basis behind creating this laboratory. Because right now, there are no testing labs around that are running these types of tests and interpreting them -

>> **Gary Owen:** Interesting -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah. My mind immediately goes to the marketing side of it is that you've got to get the word out because you have a way, I assume, of conducting the tests, is that correct?

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** That's right -

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And the interesting thing about this, which is why we created the set lab was that patients were calling the, Dr. Cunningham's lab to try to get this test performed, and she could not take any more than the thousand that she's already enrolled -

>> **Gary Owen:** Wow.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** So they were turning them away, and they had no other place to go -

>> **Gary Owen:** Wow.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And not only that, they were paying out of pocket to just get these, this test run. That's how desperate these parents are. Because when you have a child -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yeah -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** That is dysfunctional, and they're not receiving help, most of these parents spend lots of money just trying to find answers -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yes.

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, yeah. Well, so you've got an up-and-running company. You've got a marketing plan, and you're, you're working on it. Are you, are you in the fundraising mode at this point -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** You've got it.

>> **Steve Paris:** OK. Let's talk about that. The challenges of, of raising -

>> **Gary Owen:** You, you've got some experience in this by now. I mean, you've -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Yes.

>> **Gary Owen:** Been doing this a long time. So -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** I've had a lot of doors closed in my face. So I understand the process a bit. But, yeah, we're raising two and a half million dollars -

>> **Steve Paris:** OK.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** In a series around for an equity investment into this company, and we are looking for accredited investors to participate in this commercial endeavor -

>> **Steve Paris:** Now we know what accredited investors are, but maybe some of our listeners might not know -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** OK.

>> **Steve Paris:** So let's talk about that.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** It's a defined term for an investor that the Securities and Exchange Commission puts on so that basically they have the money, they can lose, and if they lost it, it wouldn't matter -

>> **Steve Paris:** Right.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And they define it as someone who is making at least \$200,000 a year or has an, a net income or a net worth of over a million dollars -

>> **Steve Paris:** There you go -

>> **Gary Owen:** Now, Steve, you could qualify for that -

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, yeah, right. Anyway [laughter]. The, the, but what the point is, is that there are people who are, who do qualify -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Correct.

>> **Steve Paris:** And these are people that we look for these opportunities, and it also gives them a chance to, to improve their position, to maybe make some money, and it also do a very worthwhile thing in the process.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Exactly, and that's what we're looking for, and most of the investors that have come to us have been parents of these children -

>> **Steve Paris:** Yes.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Who have been treated and found out that this was the problem.

>> **Gary Owen:** Oh, boy -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so they are looking for actively how can they help get the word out, or how can we help make this available to other children -

>> **Steve Paris:** Oh, my -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** And so it's a little different than trying to convince someone why they should invest in something -

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** As to trying to bring a fulfilling need -

>> **Steve Paris:** Right -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** That's already there.

>> **Steve Paris:** If you have a child that's going through that, then you, you understand immediately the, the challenges that, that you're facing with -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Right -

>> **Steve Paris:** With that child.

>> **Gary Owen:** We've got about a minute left. You've got a couple of other projects on the board you want to tease us with?

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Sure. We also have started another company with [inaudible], who is, we called it Precision Health Tech, and it is actually a sensor-based device for physical therapists who are actually rehabilitating patients with physical disabilities, and in that industry, most of the, the assessments are done by manually telling qualitatively, you're improving this much.

>> **Gary Owen:** Yeah.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** But reimbursement and health care wants to know how do you know that you are improving if you want me to pay for that patient's improvement. And so we developed a device which is actually a functioning system to be able to monitor, measure, and then improve the reimbursement so that patients can heal faster, and they, the physical therapists can get reimbursed better.

>> **Gary Owen:** Motivator, too, for the patient when they see what they're doing is, oh, maybe I better get up with the program. Because some people don't do the homework like they should -

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Exactly.

>> **Gary Owen:** That's a great idea.

>> **Craig Shimasaki:** Yeah.

>> **Gary Owen:** What an innovation. Man, you are always a great guest, and Steve and I always fascinated with some of the innovations you're involved with and some of the research you're involved with, and we've got to get you back on as a full hour because you always have fascinating stuff to share with our audience. People turn up the dial, and I think they're intrigued with, wow, that's very cool, and it's going on right here in Oklahoma. We've had a great time coming to you from the Oklahoma Technology Showcase, and we hope that you, too, are learning a little bit more about why Oklahoma's doing so well in, in technology and innovation. Steve, we'll see you next week -

>> **Steve Paris:** Thank you, Gary -

>> **Gary Owen:** On *Oklahoma Innovations*. Have a good week.

[Music]

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