

## **Oklahoma Innovations Radio Show**

**Air Date:** November 14-15, 2015

**Guests:** Joyce Burch, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Commerce

>> 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 sole focus is science and technology. The OCAST mission is to identify and fund promising research and technologies that allow Oklahoma to compete in a global market economy from our own backyard. This program features some of Oklahoma's most gifted scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, manufacturers, educators 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 Tessa North.

[ Music ]

>> Thank you so much for joining us on this week's edition of *Oklahoma Innovations*. Chad Mullen, co-hosting this week. And Chad, we're going to be talking about something really cool and it's very exciting. We've-- In fact, we kind of mentioned this over previous months about the emerging innovation district in Oklahoma City and that's going to be our topic today, right?

>> Yeah, absolutely, Gary, a lot of stuff, really exciting things happening in the innovation economy here in Oklahoma City, and then of course all across Oklahoma. We have Joyce Burch with the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber Commerce with us today, so we're excited to hear from her.

>> Before we get to that, though, I've got a couple of things I want to run through that are happening here at OCAST or happened, or are going to happen, and have happened here at OCAST. So October 20th, we held our SBIR workshop. SBIR, we've talked about on here before, Small Business Innovative--

>> Right.

>> --Research. It's a great federal funding program that has helped launch many small businesses all across the state with their new ideas, their new developments. And we had a professional firm, called Grow EC, come in from Oregon and host the workshop right here in the University Research Park in Oklahoma City, and we're going to learn more about that in a minute. But it was a great program, great turnout, and it was very exciting to see a lot of these small, innovative companies and new entrepreneurs branching out. I think one of the things we talked about a lot here in Oklahoma is what-- the impact of the oil and gas industry has. And, of course--

>> Right.

>> --it's a leader in our industry or in our state. We're thankful for it. But one of the kind of interesting things that I think has set Oklahoma apart from, well, the past few years is when we're-- as we're experiencing this current downturn, we're seeing a lot of folks that maybe are displaced by that downturn, starting new companies, new businesses, taking their ideas in the new markets, and really kind of lessening that blow, so it's-- it was pretty exciting to see the turnout that we had. The other thing I want to mention, we're holding a regional innovation

forum in the ramp on November 16th. That's going to be held at the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, registration and breakfast at 8 o'clock in the morning. You can visit the OCAST website, [ocast.ok.gov](http://ocast.ok.gov) to sign up. There's still time to register for it. It's-- We're going to hear a lot of interesting things both about an innovation economy, and then also just some innovative ways, small towns, especially in Southeastern Oklahoma are developing their economies, and we're going to have some folks. One of the ones I'm most excited about is the city manager and the economic developer from Wewoka, a small town in Oklahoma. That's-- That area is kind of where my family is from. We got deep, deep roots in that part of the state. And they have done some great things. Wewoka, at one point, was a thriving town in that part of the state. It was the-- It was a switch for the railroad companies, so there's lot of activity that brought there, but, you know, as time progress, it got slowed and population decreased, but it's on the rebound now and they're doing some great things. So if you have a chance, it's a-- it would be a great forum for you to come and listen and hear about things in the-- in that part of the state, Southeastern Oklahoma.

>> You know, there is some good news in Oklahoma's economy because I know several decades ago, when we saw the last oil and gas business and jobs flattened out primarily in the western part of the state, it had a domino effect on a lot of business and I know a lot of people are concerned and nervous about Oklahoma's next turn. And-- Well, I think we've learned a lot from the previous years. And one of the things we're going to talk about on this show today is how Oklahoma City and Tulsa and surrounding communities have learned from those lessons. And one of the things Oklahoma City has gotten very, very good at with the Chamber and other strategic partners is developing a technology base in Oklahoma City. And we're going to talk today about the emerging innovation district in Oklahoma City. Now, those of you who have come to Oklahoma City or lived in Oklahoma City and have been down around the state capital, and down around the OU Med Center, and the Children's Hospital, the Dean McGee Eye Institute, all of those facilities and the educational facilities here, that's kind of what we're talking about. And, of course, we have the new GE Oil and Gas Research Center that's currently under construction, which is just west of the OU Research Park where OCAST is located. So talk a little bit about that, Chad.

>> Yeah. It's really been amazing to see the transformation in this area and, of course, you know, the state-wide programs. Later on the show, I'm going to talk about some new things that Claremore is doing, that Tulsa is doing, but it's fun to talk about Oklahoma City as well. I started working on Lincoln in the early 2000s. And when I came to this part of the town, there was not much going on. Bricktown was coming online, there were some restaurants in that area, not many. There were-- There was not a lot-- well, let me put it this way, it was very easy to get from one end of Lincoln Boulevard to the other. That is not the case today and--

>> Right.

>> --that's a great thing. Automobile Alley was a collection of abandoned buildings at the time. And for those of you who aren't from the Oklahoma City area, Automobile Alley is Broadway Avenue that's just north of downtown Oklahoma City. Not a lot going on downtown either at that time or just in the last, you know, 10 to 15 years. The change and the transformation has been amazing on all fronts, but specifically on our part and the part that OCAST is interested in, and those who are interested in science and technology, the OU Campus, the OU Health Science Center and what we're now calling the innovation district, and we'll-- and we're going to hear

more about that in just a moment, has really exploded with companies, with research firms, with research institutions. OMRF has been here for decades, has--

>> Right.

>> --has grown and doubled and-- or quadrupled I guess in size. And it's just a lot of exciting things are going on. And what we're seeing today, both in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and the surrounding areas is that with this downturn in energy, we're not-- things are not as bad as they could be.

>> And the interesting thing when you talk about the Research Parks is the talent that we're attracting to Oklahoma in the research centers. Talk about that, because we have done really well in getting some respected talent here and they're amazed at the lifestyle we have here.

>> Well, I think that's the lifestyle, and I don't want to steal college voice's thunder, so we'll talk a lot about the lifestyle and that be-- yeah, you're right, the-- I-- we still have an issue of-- with brain drain in Oklahoma and that's folks that are skilled that have gone through the educational process in Oklahoma leaving the state. That issue is still real, it still exists, but it's far less of an-- a problem that it was even 10 or 12 years ago. So we're recruiting topnotch researchers, topnotch developers. And then the space that I work in quite a bit, we're really starting to see some angel investors, some venture capital investors. And we're starting to build that investment entity around these folks as they-- as their research products commercialize. So it's been tremendous. Tulsa is doing the same thing as well. And their entrepreneur community is thriving. And then some of the more rural towns are doing the same thing. We'll talk more about that--

>> Well, another thing, too. We talked about, and we haven't done it in a while, but recently, the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance had their state conference, a lot of positive news of how the manufacturing industry is having a great impact on the state's economy, right?

>> Yeah. No doubt about that. And, again, that's kind of-- it's kind of an interesting dichotomy there because a few years ago, the last downturn that we had, the manufacturing industry was kind of on the bleeding edge of that downturn along with the oil field, the folks working out in the oil and gas field, because our manufacturers were manufacturing products for the oil and gas industry, but today, they've done a great job diversifying and they're all in all sorts of other industries, so they're able to really kind of profit and take a lot of profit off of oil and gas when it's up high, but then they're also able to survive and supplement when it's down low. So that's, you know, it's the-- diversification is the theme in the economy and we've certainly accomplished it. And to give you another example, Treasurer Ken Miller's report came out a few days ago and, you know, and the surface looked a little bit dire, and so our state revenues go and that sort of thing, but if you dig down into it deeper, the only revenue source that fell was severance tax, the oil and gas tax, or the tax actually coming from the extraction of oil or gas or other minerals out of the ground. But everything else was up, home sales were up, motor vehicle tax was up, sales tax was up, personal income tax was up. Corporate income tax is a little bit different deal, it fluctuates wildly no matter what the economy is doing here in Oklahoma, so kind of a weird tax system that we have in regards to that. But when you look at the core things, consumer confidence in Oklahoma City and in Oklahoma is still very high and still doing well, so.

>> Well, look what we're doing, attracting Boeing. Boeing is just now-- their transition of period is going on right now. So when you look at companies like Boeing and GE and many of the other partnerships coming into the state, that's where a lot of the growth is starting to happen, so.

>> Yeah. And Gary, let's introduce Joyce to the program. So we're excited today to have Joyce Burch with us. She's the Senior Manager of Innovation and Entrepreneurship with the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. Joyce, welcome to the show and--

>> Thank you.

>> Sorry. We talk so much.

>> That's OK.

>> I get excited about--

>> Yeah.

>> --so it's hard to shut me up on that, but--

>> Well, that's OK, you know, as you're talking about workforce and about recruiting people in, I was dying to jump in because that's one of my favorite subjects and--

>> Well, tell us a little bit about yourself, where you're from, and then what your job has been, and is now at the Chamber.

>> OK. Well I am an Oklahoma City girl. I grew up and more proud to be from Oklahoma. I love representing the state. I've actually been at the Chamber for almost 10 years now. And I started on-- in the Education and Workforce Development Department, working on the Greater Grads program. And the purpose of that program is to keep students in Oklahoma-- college students in Oklahoma after they graduate. And so when I started on the program in 2006, I would go and talk to students about what was great about Oklahoma and why this is where they should start their career. And I got kind of a skeptical reception, you know. They weren't quite sure what to make of it and weren't sure that they wanted to stay here. But, you know, as we added more amenities and there were more jobs and more opportunities, the reception I got was very positive. All they wanted to know was where do I get started. And so it's much different now than it was five years ago and certainly more than 10 years ago.

>> And let me jump in here, Gary, for a minute. The program that Joyce is talking about, the Greater Grads program, it not-- I think a lot of people don't know or I didn't know anyways until I started-- I get involve slightly with the Chamber on that program, but there are companies like Chesapeake and Devon and many other companies actually get interns from all over the country that come and work in the-- here in the summer. So it's not just necessarily students from-- that are in Oklahoma colleges or universities, but they may be at, you know, I mean they could be at Harvard, they can be in Northwestern, they could be UCLA or wherever, and they've come to Oklahoma to do an internship over the summer, and that's where you spend a lot of time really kind of welcome then to the city. Is that we got--

>> Exactly.

>> What are some of the things you do on that.

>> Exactly. Well, we have our program called Intern OKC and any of our Chamber members can register their students to attend this program. It's a series of five lunches through June and

July. And in each session, we have a different theme and we talk to them about why Oklahoma City is such a great place to live.

>> OK. To-- Well, let me stop you there because we're getting-- we're doing our break because we want to hear more about this.

>> Yeah.

>> This is exciting to stop, and you're hearing some great positive economic news and some exciting things happening in Central Oklahoma. We'll take a break. We'll come back with more on *Oklahoma Innovations*.

[ Music ]

>> When I invented my new product, I faced a lot of challenges from securing capital to recruiting qualified employees. It's a very complex path from innovation to the marketplace and I needed some help navigating the process.

>> The Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology and its strategic partners, the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance and i2E help entrepreneurs. They support existing and startup companies so they can succeed and create jobs, increase per capita income, and grow the state's economy. In its 26-year history, OCAST has funded nearly 2500 research projects and provided support to hundreds of Oklahoma based companies. The investments made in these businesses yield high returns for our state by strengthening and diversifying our economy. Advancing innovation is investing in a positive future. That's what OCAST is all about. For more information, call OCAST toll free at 866-265-2215 or visit us on Facebook or our website at [ocast.ok.gov](http://ocast.ok.gov).

>> Now in its 20th year, this is *Oklahoma Innovations* on the OCAST Radio Network.

[ Music ]

>> We're visiting with Joyce Burch who's Senior Manager of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. Now, Joyce, before the break, you were talking about the Greater Grads program. So I'll let you go back on that for just a moment.

>> Right. So we have an internship program in the summer, the Intern OKC program series of lunches. This year we had just under 500 students participate. And each week, there's a different theme, but what we've really want to get across is that Oklahoma City is a great place for them to start their careers. So, generally, we'll have about half that are from Oklahoma and are pretty familiar with what's already going on here, but half are from out of state. So for example, a lot of our energy companies recruit from the Colorado School of Mines, you know, from, you know, universities all over the country. And this is very likely their first experience or their first knowledge of Oklahoma. And so when we bring in our speakers and we have networking events for them to get to know each other, that really changes their perception about living in Oklahoma after graduation. And we found that's very effective in changing what they decide they want to do after they graduate. We also help employers start new internship programs. And the reason that we're so focused on internships is because a student who has an internship is more likely to stay in a community after graduation. They make connections, they get to know the community, and it's just more likely that they'll either take a job with that company or even with another company.

>> And you know what's cool if they stay in Oklahoma City area and Tulsa too I guess, but we're talking about the-- when you talk about the innovation district, look at-- as Chad you were talking about earlier about the development of what's happened down in the Bricktown, in the downtown area, and the Automobile Alley with all the condominiums that have built up. And if you come to downtown Oklahoma City on-- any week night, but primarily on the weekends, you're going to see the new generation and there-- a lot of them living downtown, they're bicycling, they're walking, restaurants--

>> Right.

>> --nightclubs. And you get down on-- you go down to Bricktown, lots of stuff happening because our ballpark is there--

>> Right.

>> --there's music, and there's theater, lots of restaurants. It's just really-- So what kind of feedback do you get from the students when they see all this? Like, "Wow. We had no idea Oklahoma City had this." Plus the Thunder basketball, we don't want to leave that out.

>> I know. I know they love basketball. And they're really excited about the ways that they can gather, so the ways that they can interact, the things that there are to do for younger people. You know, we've got about 2000 people a month moving into the metro area.

>> Wow. Really?

>> And a large percentage of them are millennial. So either just out of college or maybe just, you know, starting their careers. And that's what we really need, is to get those young, exciting, vibrant people in here that can really make a difference in their community.

>> And one of the things Chad and I talked about on this program, Chad is maintaining and keeping the talent that was born in and reared here.

>> Oh, yeah, absolutely. I mean, that's-- and that's something I think, with the help of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, all the corporate partners, and citizens in the area that we've done a great job with. But as you're aware, OCAST has an intern program as well, where we work to try to do that very same thing. And I'll tell you, Gary, a funny story on the-- So I think-- and originally from Catoosa, east of Oklahoma to where I grew-- or east of Tulsa where I grew up, came down to the Norman area to go to the University of Oklahoma. And, you know, my thought was as soon as I graduate, you know, I head back up to Tulsa. It was the prettier town at that time and arguably still is.

>> Did you hear that Tulsa, he said, a prettier town.

>> Yup. Certainly from landscape--

>> Yeah.

>> --and the skyline--

>> It is a beautiful city.

>> --perspective. And the other thing is I've been a subscriber to Outside magazine since the start, which I think is around '97 or '98. And every year they do top towns-- top cities to live in. And so these are cities like Hawaii, Boulder, you know, Jackson Hole. These are, typically, the cities that are on the list that have a lot of outdoor activities, stuff for young folks to do, that

maybe have a craft beers brewery seen. And two years ago, Oklahoma City made that list. And I mean, I fell out of my chair.

>> Wow.

>> Because you wouldn't necessarily think for those of us that have lived here our whole life--

>> Right.

>> --that this is an outdoor haven. But one thing we done here in Oklahoma City, we built it, so we're building the Whitewater rafting area. We have many, many urban mountain bike trails in the area. We have some great ones kind of on the periphery of the city. We have that water in our river, which is a huge accomplishment. And Tulsa is working to do the same thing right now. So I think we're going to see some exciting development on there. And all these things kind of-- and the other thing is the-- I mean, the summers are hot here. But the winters are, you know. They're really quite nice.

>> That's right.

>> And so you can, if you're an outdoor enthusiast, you can be outdoor year around--

>> Right.

>> --pretty much. There's--

>> And anywhere in Oklahoma, if you're a hiker, if you're a biker, if you're an out-- if you use-- whatever outdoor enthusiast, do you feel like hunting and fishing? It's all--

>> Yeah.

>> --available in Oklahoma.

>> Well, and just last week, the Urban Land Institute recognized the Myriad Gardens as top outdoor space.

>> Absolutely.

>> That's globally. And if you haven't been by there recently, it's--

>> A lot of changes.

>> --beautiful.

>> Yeah.

>> Yes. They have great activities for kids. They have a dog park. It is gorgeous.

>> And they got a pumpkin patch going on through, well, I guess, through Thanksgiving. So, there's--

>> Wow. Nice.

>> --all sorts of things going on. Now, we're going to talk-- we're going to have to switch gears here because-- to talk about what all of that means to attracting and creating an innovation of economy. And so before you get there, though, there's an exciting conference that was just held this last week, here in Oklahoma called SSTI and that stands for the State Science and Technology Institute. That is the organization that TBED entities and-- belong to. OCAST is a TBED entity. TBED stands for Technology-Based Economic Development. And before we get

in the break, Gary, I just want to-- because I-- we're going to spend the next half of the show really talking about SSTI and the innovation district that's here in Oklahoma City. But technology-based economic development is a little bit different than traditional economic development in the sense that really two ways. Your time horizons are much different with technology-based economic development than traditional economic developments. On traditional, you have a company, they're going to bring X number of jobs here to the state or they're going to expand X number of jobs so you-- there's a lot of-- I mean, there's always uncertainty in business, but there's some certainty in the outcome. With technology-based economic development, a lot of time, the companies that we're dealing with, there is no market. They're developing a new market, they're coming up with new ideas and concepts. And so time horizon is a little longer. Your risk is a little higher. So the SSTI conference is all about that. And we're excited to have it in Oklahoma City. And after the break, we're going to hear more about it.

>> Absolutely. I'm excited to hear about this. Our guest is Joyce Burch with the Oklahoma City Chamber. And when we come back, she's going to give us more insight as to the submerging innovation district in the heart of Oklahoma City. Stay with us. A lot more to come on your science radio magazine, *Oklahoma Innovations*.

>> From Oklahoma City to Tulsa, Woodward to Lawton, this is your science and technology radio magazine, *Oklahoma Innovations* on the OCAST Radio Network.

[ Music ]

>> Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths with a median survival range of only six months. As an oncologist, I see far too many families suffer from the effects of this terrible disease. We need better treatment options for patients.

>> With the support of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, the researchers at Core Biotechnology have what they hope will eventually be a treatment even a cure for pancreatic cancer. They have identified a protein that if blocked may prevent tumors or keep them from growing. With help from OCAST and i2E, the team at Core was recently awarded an SBIR research grant to enable them to continue their research and move closer to a treatment for pancreatic cancer. If you're a researcher or a small business in Oklahoma and are considering applying for federal SBIR funding, contact OCAST toll free at 866-265-2215 or visit us on Facebook or our website at [ocast.ok.gov](http://ocast.ok.gov).

>> I'll graduate from college soon. I wanted real world experience that would make me stand out to potential employers. That's what I like about my internship. It's preparing me for a competitive job market.

>> With the support of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, more than 500 Oklahoma students have interned with science and engineering companies. OCAST's intern program helps students connect with mentors, operate instruments not available in the classroom, build confidence, and gain practical experience.

>> The OCAST internship gives me the opportunity to put into practice what I study in the classroom. It's a great learning experience and a chance to work with topnotch professionals.

>> Internships play an important role in connecting Oklahoma's brightest students to quality technology jobs in Oklahoma, creating opportunities. That's what OCAST is all about. For more

information, call OCAST toll free at 866-265-2215 or visit us on Facebook or our website at [ocast.ok.gov](http://ocast.ok.gov).

>> Research and development, technology transfer and commercialization, creating high paying jobs in Oklahoma is what OCAST is all about. This is *Oklahoma Innovations* on the OCAST Radio Network.

[ Music ]

>> Thank you so much for joining us on this week's edition of *Oklahoma Innovations*. And we are so glad that you joined us when you can each week because we try to bring you interesting guests from around the state. We're involved in innovation, education, commercialization, manufacturing, all of that that helps really keep Oklahoma's economic structure strong and going. We are with the-- Joyce Burch. She is the Senior Manager of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. And before the break, you and Chad were talking about this conference that was held, SSTI. Tell us what that was about. Give us an overview so that our audience kind of gets the picture.

>> OK. The State Science and Technology Institute had their conference last week. And this is a group that supports tech-based economic development through science technology, innovation, entrepreneurship. And people that attend would generally be tech companies, academics from universities that are kind of focused on economic development and partnerships with industry, EDOs, economic development organizations, Research Parks, consulting firms. So, basically, those that are interested in any kind of tech-based economic development. Had some great speakers. Mike Bowman from the GE Global research center. And he is-- he was talking about advanced technology for sustainable energy. He was one of our speakers there. And one that I was particularly interested in and thought it was just fascinating, Mayor Mick Cornett was the emcee for a panel of local folks that we're talking about how quality of place affects local recruiting efforts and how they could build a talented workforce. I find this topic fascinating. But I think it's also at the top of mind right now. Some of the panelist on that were Taylor Shin [assumed spelling] from GE Global Research and Jeb Boatman from Boeing, and Evan Anderson from Oseberg Analytics. It was a great panel. And they've really talked about how we can bring some of these millennials and younger people into Oklahoma City and what gets them excited about our community. Because we've got lots of exciting opportunities, we just need to make sure that we've got the workforce to be able to staff these companies.

>> Chad, you were on a panel, right?

>> I was, Gary. And it was a panel regarding the innovation economies and adopting the innovation practices and policies in rural areas. And so rural areas, a lot of times we take for granted what we have in Oklahoma City or in Tulsa, where we have a comprehensive research universities on site, and there's a lot of activity in the area, and there's a lot of population in the area. In the rural areas, it's a little bit different, your approach and your tackle to it. And so I was actually very excited to have one my favorite people in the state, Jerry Taylor [assumed spelling], from the Claremore Industrial Economic Development Authority, make sure I said that correctly.

>> Mouthful, yes.

>> And from Claremore, Oklahoma. And Claremore is doing some really innovative and great things in their city so they-- of course, they have a strong manufacturing base like many rural

areas. They have an ag. base as well. They have a regional university in their city. But more interesting than that, they actually have a private undertaking that's developing a collaborative workspace in their town to bring entrepreneurs into one area, they're rehabbing an old building on Main Street. Amy Gordon is the director of that. She has a company called More Claremore which is a digital marketing or digital media firm and marketing firm. And she just took the initiative to really embrace and-- a culture of innovation in the area and is spearheading that. So some great things going on in Claremore. And you see those type of things happening, you know, all across state at Tahlequah, and Duncan, and Lawton, even a little bit larger city, Durant, just all across states. So we had a great conversation on that panel about some things you can do that are a little bit different than maybe what you do in Oklahoma City and in Tulsa. But the theme was, is developing great places to live, to work, and to play. And that's taking place in Claremore. And then, Joyce, that's taken place here-- right here in Oklahoma City, right?

>> Oh, absolutely. That's been our focus for quite a while, is making a great place to live, work, and play, not only for young people, but for people of all ages as well.

>> You know, we have a lot of listeners in Western Oklahoma and, of course, a lot of people are nervous again because of what's happened to the oil and gas industry out there, the energy industry has as a whole. And I know Woodward, for example, has been a very progressive city on other levels as well. Do we have any consensus, you guys, about what is going on in the western part of the state, when you take the borders, say, from Woodward on down to Lawton, you mentioned that. But any consensus as how the-- what they've done out there to kind of survive the waters if you will? Have you heard any buzzes about that? In manufacturing, for examples. Chad?

>> Yeah, absolutely. So the-- In the western half of the state, there's a lot and many things going on whether for, for example, Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

>> Right, right.

>> And it's kind of interesting, it is a regional university, but it also has a pharmacy school. So you have a lot of pretty talented research folks at that school that have branched out and spun off some businesses--

>> Awesome.

>> --related to that. They've also attracted some larger corporate partners. And then there's always the wind energy as well that's out there. And you see similar things in Enid. Enid has grown substantially over the past few years and they have actually-- you're talking about being on the bleeding edge of an-- and economic downturn in the past. They've really weathered this one very well and they're expanding-- they saw the housing shortage in the area. So a lot of good things going on in there. Alva has attracted some large companies due to some of the geography and natural things that occur in that area. And they've teamed up with Northwestern Oklahoma State University. And they're doing some great things, so I think you're kind of seeing this thing, and we're going to talk about more here in just a minute about the innovation district in Oklahoma City, but your-- that concept--

>> Yeah.

>> --of not just having one or two key industries--

>> Right.

>> --and then having to leave if you're not part of that--

>> Yup.

>> Right.

>> --is taking a hold of everywhere, but-- and certainly, here in Oklahoma City, on a much much larger scale. So Joyce, tell us a little about the, well, the Brookings Institute and then the-- and the recommendations and their thoughts and then just tell us about the innovations there.

>> Yeah. Because they're going to do like an 18-month study--

>> Exactly.

>> --in Oklahoma City. And whether this emerging innovation district is a viable investment I guess. Is that what--

>> Exactly. Well-- And just a little bit of background about the innovation district, the district encompasses all the hospitals near Lincoln, it also encompasses the OU Medical School, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, OMRF, it encompasses this Research Park that we're in right now. The University of Oklahoma Research Park, the Oklahoma Health-- the entire Oklahoma Health Center campus. But we're also extending it to Automobile Alley as well because, you know, they have the restaurants and the bars over there that we can kind of tie in as well.

>> --just a mile or two away, so why not?

>> Right. It's very close. It's interesting because the highway going through has seemed like a barrier, but I don't know that it has to. And so we've included that as well. So you've got kind of the borders are 13th to the north, Lottie to the east, fourth to the south, and then Robinson to west and including Automobile Alley.

>> And Joyce, for those of the-- for those that aren't familiar with the Oklahoma City area, when Joyce talks about the Automobile Alley, the Broadway extension or Interstate 235, I guess, would be more a correct term, cuts right through that. So it's--

>> Right.

>> --a straight lane highway right in that area. So it's kind of a weird situation where you have a lot of-- well, there's about 20-- or 25,000 people that I think that come in and work in the kind of the Research Park area between the OU Health Sciences campus and the Research Park that we're in. And there's a few restaurants and a little bit of shopping, but not much. But all of that is divided by the highway. But I think there's some plans maybe, a foot, to talk about ways to get across that and really kind of connect those two. Is that right?

>> Well, that's what they'll be looking at.

>> OK.

>> So Brookings and PPS, which is the Project for Public Spaces, were in town a couple of weeks ago for the Chamber retreat, for the board of directors and board of advisers. And they came in and they, first of all, took another tour of the town, talked to some of the stakeholders, people in Automobile Alley, people at the Health Science Center, and so on. And we're able to kind of get a good overview of how people are able to connect within the innovation district. And they'll be continuing for the next 18 months to do some surveys and gather data on that. But

what we'd like is to be able to know how can we find places where people can connect a little bit better so that researchers run into engineers, run into, you know, academics who can come up with these innovative ideas. So wanting to find a place where ideas can collide and happen a little bit naturally. So the Project for Public Spaces is more concerned about how people organically get together and spaces where people naturally gather and seeing if there are ways that we can promote that a little bit better. So, you know, there are a few little parks that are within the area that--

>> Right.

>> --you know, as a matter of fact, they asked me on the phone about the Lloyd Rader park. I had no idea--

>> What is the Lloyd Rader Park?

>> It's just a little clearing basically where they've got some park benches. I think it's at 10th on Lincoln. I had no idea what they were talking about. Initially, passed it and still didn't see it, I finally came from the other direction and saw the sign. But, you know, these are places that maybe we could do a little bit more with. We could put out maybe some different types of sitting, maybe some umbrellas, something where, you know, in the middle of August, you won't melt if you are out under these umbrellas and you can talk, and you know, maybe have a cup of coffee or something with somebody, and you just notice that someone from OMRF comes over and you want to get their input on an idea that you have.

>> Well, we haven't touch based on what the new maps face in Oklahoma City with the new convention center that we haven't touched the surface on how all that's going to help with what's going on possibly with the new innovation district as it evolves. Got to take a break. We'll come back and talk more on *Oklahoma Innovations*. Don't go away.

[ Music ]

>> This is one of the longest running weekend radio talk shows in America, *Oklahoma Innovations* on the OCAST Radio Network.

>> As a police officer, one of the most dangerous parts of my job is arriving on a scene where an armed suspect has barricaded himself or where we suspect some type of booby trap. We're most vulnerable when we don't know what kind of explosives or weapons are on the other side. It can be deadly.

>> Tactical Electronics, an Oklahoma based company, invents, manufactures, and sells tools such as under door cameras and video fiberscopes that are used by law enforcement officers, military, and counter-terrorism personnel around the globe. The tools allow areas and packages to be inspected from a safe distance, which reduces the risk of injuries and death. With the support of OCAST, the company is developing image recognition software that scans packages and within milliseconds, identifies what's inside. OCAST is advancing science and technology that not only improves, but also saves lives. For more information, call OCAST toll free at 866-265-2215 or visit us on Facebook or our website at [ocast.ok.gov](http://ocast.ok.gov).

[ Music ]

>> Well, we hope you're certainly getting a different picture of the possibilities in Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas of Oklahoma County, and some of the outlying areas. It's really nice to hear, Chad, some of your comments about how some of the rural areas are becoming

innovative and creative in generating new business, employment, economic development, all of those kind of things. And, you know, the other thing that-- when you're talking about Claremore and many towns around Oklahoma, not just Oklahoma City, also have those extra bullets of tourism attractions in those areas, whether they're museums, whether they're, I mean, events that go on around the state every year. I mean, all of those communities have a lot more than just the economic development we've talked about. Joyce Burch is our guest with the-- she's a Senior Manager of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. She's been talking about the subject called the emerging innovation district. And she was talking about the Brookings Institution doing a project, 18-month study in Oklahoma City to see how this might pull together and connect with other areas of downtown Oklahoma City.

>> Yeah, Gary. It's really been a kind of an interesting shift to watch, you know, I guess I'm-- I don't know if I'm generation X or Y, I'm not a millennial. And, you know, my-- you-- I know where you live, you live out by me, and we all began our careers and moved to the suburbs.

>> Right.

>> And that was just the thing that everyone did.

>> Absolutely.

>> And, you know, the things that that creates is congestion and you have to build more highways, more infrastructure, there's more traffic, you know. There's many nights that I get early, leave late, and I'm thinking, "Why am I driving 40 minutes--

>> Right.

>> --just to sleep?" And-- But the new generation, they were really seen as kind of-- as the nation, as the-- emerged from the recession, are thinking about ways in which they can work, live, and play all in the same area. And we see that, of course, in the rural areas, but we're definitely seeing it right here in Oklahoma City, in the innovation district. So I mean, Joyce, tell us a little bit about-- a little bit more about the innovation district and this whole concept behind live, work, and play in the same area.

>> Well, you know what we'd really like to have in this innovation district is more of a 24-hour kind of locations. So instead of people driving in at 8 o'clock and then living at 5 o'clock, a mass exodus from town, wouldn't it be wonderful if we had an area where people could hang out after work, where they could go to a restaurant, where they could meet their coworkers, or maybe their kids get to school not very far away, you know, we have a downtown elementary school that's fantastic. But we just like to have a place where people can converge a little bit better than they do right now. And I think that that's really what could happen in this innovation district. So we have the building blocks of it now, we just need to pull it together a little bit more, and I think it could be amazing.

>> And I'll tell you what I love about what the city is doing, is-- and Tulsa has also had the same problem, is making use of real estate that was vacant for so many years, was neglected for so many years, or is basically idle. And here now, investors have come in and say, "Gee, hmm, what if-- and it becomes-- the dream becomes a reality." And wow, the things that have happened just in the last five to seven years in Oklahoma City is just phenomenal and it continues to grow, and we've got national attention because of that.

>> Oh, absolutely. You know, if you compare even a Google Maps from-- or Google Earth from five years ago, this is a completely different place than it was before. And yesterday, I was out with a couple of coworkers, we were on our way back in the side, just to drive around downtown. And just a construction that's going on right now and knowing where things are going to go is amazing. So when I think back to when I graduated from college a couple of years ago, I mean, I couldn't have even imagined that it would become what it has. And on the way back to the office, we drove past the Myriad Gardens and I'll just give them another shout-out, that place is amazing. It's so very beautiful. And the great thing about it is there are so many people that are just walking around in the--

>> Right.

>> --middle of the day. And--

>> That's what I was talking about.

>> Yeah. And when I first started my career that just didn't happen.

>> No.

>> Nobody was walking--

>> No.

>> --and certainly, nobody was walking around after 5 o'clock.

>> Right.

>> So this is a completely different place and it's a place where people can connect a little bit better.

>> Well, and I would tell our listeners who live out of the Oklahoma City area, no matter where you live in the state, because we know a lot of people come into Oklahoma City to go to one of the med facilities here, one of the research centers here for treatments, and their doctors will send them in from rural areas to go to Oklahoma City or Tulsa, whatever, well take time while you're here, just drive down through this district and look at the explosion, look at the heap-- and-- what's happening here. It's amazing.

>> Right. You know, just a mile away from basically all the hospitals, you can go into midtown, Automobile Alley, the plaza district. There are so many restaurants. And I was escorting the Brookings Institution group around last week-- or a couple of weeks ago, I guess, and they were asking me for a restaurant recommendations and I just kept--

>> Yeah.

>> --going on and on about--

>> Yeah.

>> --new places--

>> Yes.

>> --that they could eat. And some of them, I haven't even been to--

>> Right, right.

>> --yet. So we've got a lot more choices for restaurants, for recreation. You know, I took them down to the Boathouse District and showed them what will happen there and what is already going on there. It's fantastic.

>> So Chad, when we talk about the economic impact of what the, you know, the innovation district that holds promise for, it's not just about the innovation jobs. Look at the extension of growth in businesses that will benefit from those-- from that innovation jobs.

>> Now, Gary, I mean, you're absolutely right. I think there's really kind of three major benefits to this. And Joyce, jump in here if I'm way off track. I believe one of the big things behind in innovation district is when folks are living together, working together, and recreating together, good collaborations come out--

>> Absolutely.

>> That's right.

>> So we have a lot of great researchers at OMRF, at OUHSC, in the Research Park, now GE pretty soon--

>> Has a completely different wrinkle to it as well, I think, having engineers and different types of researchers there--

>> Oh, absolutely.

>> --that can really pertain to many different areas.

>> And by the way, we talk about high-paying jobs here.

>> Yes.

>> There was an article that came out recently. Larry Stein was interviewed by the Oklahoman. And there's a comment made about the increase in million-dollar homes in Oklahoma City area.

>> Right.

>> And that they were on the rise, which-- now use that as a base and just to understand what's going in the building of homes well under that. I mean, from what I understand, the real estate area, particularly in some of the suburbs of North Oklahoma City, Deer Creek, Edmond, and outlying areas from there Choctaw is even growing, you think about-- the accessibility to real estate is kind of almost becoming a problem, isn't it?

>> Well, I mean, we're very fortunate that our--

>> We got a lot of land to build on.

>> We do. We do. And, you know, we've got some very nice condos and townhouses and-- right in downtown as well. Just not very far from here, there are some beautiful homes. So yeah, we are very lucky that we do have land to build on, that we do have our, you know, incredible builders. But I mean, that's a good problem to have--

>> Yup, it is.

>> --that we're bringing in people--

>> That's an excellent problem.

>> --who want nice houses.

>> So we got a couple of minutes left. You two, I want you to collaborate a little about where's all this going? What is the future if the-- this report shows promise, what is the next step? Where are we going? What does it look like in the future?

>> Well, and I'll just jump in real quick. But big thing, I'm going to geek out a little bit on city point--

>> Go for it.

>> There's a guy, [inaudible], late 1800s, big cities were being built in England, New York, and he said, "No, you know, you need an area where you can live, work, and play." This was Garden City movement, the Garden City concept, limited population, you had some green balance space, and I think you're seeing that redeveloped here in Oklahoma City, so you got the historic neighborhoods, Miller and Mesta Park, heritage hills, you know, all these areas that are-- this infill is coming back in. So I think you're going to see very positive impact there, it's going to lessen the burden on our infrastructure, and great things there. And then Joyce, I'll let you close this out here on what you think what's next and--

>> What-- Yeah. What's the buzz of the Chamber basically?

>> Well, you know, what I would really hope would happen with the innovation district is that we're able to bring in new companies, good new jobs, but ultimately, create some opportunities for our children. My goal for the last 10 years has been to keep our students, our children here in Oklahoma. And I think that this really plays a big part, you know, having those opportunities. And being seen as a cool place to live as well really plays into that.

>> You know what I love about living here? And I was born and reared in Hollywood, California. So-- And I've been back several times on business, so I understand the lifestyle in places like Los Angeles, New York, Chicago. The nice thing about Oklahoma City, Tulsa, those two, and a lot-- consider those metro areas, is that you don't get that stigma of being a metropolitan area. And Oklahoma City, as much as it's grown over the years, still has that nice, good, home, down-home feel. And we hear that--

>> Right.

>> --from people who come in from out of state to live here, right?

>> Yeah. And we're very welcoming to outsiders--

>> That's that point, yes.

>> --as well.

>> Yes.

>> Yes. And, you know, we always tell students that they can make a difference here immediately. They--

>> Absolutely.

>> --can get involved. You don't have to put in your time before you can volunteer for an--

>> That's right.

>> --organization. So-- And their opinions are valued. I really feel like--

>> That's right.

>> --our city leaders want to know what these younger people think. And I think that that's very refreshing.

>> Well, Joyce, you've been a great guest. And Chad, your input today has been also between the two of you. And I think the-- we're going to look forward to hearing more about how this 18-month study comes out about the emerging innovation district. And it will be exciting to have you back and learn more about that.

>> Yeah, very exciting. Good things happen in the city area.

>> And being [inaudible] actually part of this, Chad, you'll keep us abreast as well.

>> Absolutely.

>> You'll keep us up to date.

>> Well, listen, thank you so much everybody for listening to our show this week. I hope that we've upped you up a little bit in knowing that Oklahoma is doing well and will continue to do well. And we'll talk to you next time on another edition of *Oklahoma Innovations*. Have a great week.

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