

Volume 2
Four Futures for Oklahoma

This is Volume 2 of a two-volume set of resource materials. These volumes are the final products of the Oklahoma Academy's April 1998 Conference. The Conference theme was "Technology Applications: Accelerating Towards Prosperity".

This volume contains four scenarios, or stories, that describe different "futures" for the state of Oklahoma. Each "future" is possible and plausible. The decisions we make today will determine which of those "futures" is most likely to occur.

These scenarios suggested public policy actions that would help Oklahomans be more prosperous. It is this body of information and analysis that will provide the basis of an Academy Action Plan to introduce these items into the Oklahoma arena of public policy debate.

Each of the two volumes is available at the Oklahoma Academy Internet website and are in both .html and .pdf formats. They are accompanied by 27 slides viewable through your Internet web browser.

Four Futures for Oklahoma

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An Oklahoma Scenario

Global Wannabes

An Oklahoma Scenario

Global Wannabes

In this scenario, we see an Oklahoma where leaders thought "global" ... but the lack of competitiveness of the state's institutions and people precluded success.

The story shows that even the super-human efforts of the "best and brightest" are rarely enough to make significant improvements in something as complex as a state.

It illustrates that less than comprehensive ideas, even when implemented, seldom have a broad impact. It demonstrates that significant state success requires a strong foundation. It requires sound institutions, collective efforts by large groups, and sound public policy investments, and the "tincture of time."

In the global competitiveness game, the steady tortoise more likely wins the longer races.

The Founding Five

M. E. Leader	Chairman of Committee of 50
Sandy Sandoval	Vice-Chairman and Progressive Sooners, Inc.
Robert Bigheart	Heartland Multi-Media Conglomerate, Inc.
David Davis	Davis Institute of Davis
Etta Henry	Mayor of Henryetta

July 2011

One-on-One with Mike Browning

MIKE BROWNING: "Welcome to One-on-One. I'm Mike Browning, news anchor for Internet Port 22.236 on Net Host Tulsa 100. We are here today with the Chairman of Oklahoma's Committee of 50, Mr. M. E. Leader of Tulsa. "

Ten years after forming the Committee of 50, this group of Oklahoma's foremost leaders threw in the towel today. In a news conference at the Capitol, the group expressed disappointment at the failure of Oklahoma to attain greater increases in per capita income and population growth. New population and income data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis showed that Oklahoma's rate of population growth was the lowest of any state west of the Mississippi River, and that income growth was slightly below the national average. Mr. Leader, why did the Committee dissolve today?

M. E. LEADER: "Mike, we thought we could be a player in the national and international scene, but it just didn't work out that way. We thought that we had some great ideas for Oklahoma that were do-able. "

"We had some scattered successes, but just couldn't get over the hump. We don't regret the time and energy we spent, but change is hard and maybe we need different people to do it a different way. Maybe the task was harder than we thought. Maybe it just takes more time."

"We are having a major meeting of the Committee next weekend in Dallas. After that, I'll come back and we'll be real honest with you about how we assess things. It's a little hard to talk about now until we all can collect our thoughts."

BROWNING: "If you could write your headline today, what would it be"

LEADER: "That's pretty easy. I'd say 'Disappointment: Ten Years Later - Still 80%'"

Same Evening

Southern Hills Country Club

CHAIRMAN LEADER: "I never felt so damned embarrassed in my whole life. I would have bet a million dollars that our "Committee of 50" was the right thing to do and that great results were guaranteed. I would have lost another million bucks."

"I just can't understand why people are so satisfied with being "80 percenters." It seems that so many Oklahomans want to work or study 80% as hard; are satisfied with 80% incomes; and we now have 80% of the congressman we had 10 years ago. What the hell went wrong? We were so sure we were on the right track. We had our business sector behind us; the politicians said they'd do their part; and the polls said that Oklahomans were tired of being the 40th-something state and really wanted to be somebody. So what do you guys think?"

VICE CHAIRMAN SANDOVAL: Our worst fears were realized. I don't think any of us fully understood the power of culture and demographics. We all used the words but I don't think we understood. I don't think anybody could get his or her mind around it. Looking back on it, I wouldn't have invested all this time and money if I knew how hard it was. On the other hand, it wasn't MY money ... it never is. But just the same, if I could give advice, I'd tell them never to under-estimate the barriers. And that we shouldn't expect that kind of change immediately, but rather invest and trust the 25-year fuse. That's a hard sell. But that's the way it is.

BIGHEART: The hell with this. I'm goin' to Nashville tomorrow. We still have our money. We can do this post-mortem after a chicken fry and drinks. Let's get some beer in front of us before we start cryin' in it. Let's order. Let's forget this until we meet the folks in Dallas.

The five founding members (The Founding Five) of the "Committee of 50" were meeting at the Grill in the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa. Meeting is an overstatement. They were gathered in collective disappointment, and were drinking some of their troubles away.

Ten years ago they were full of sass and vinegar. They had power, money and clout. They were sure that, if they worked together and exercised their collective vision and leadership, they could cause great change in Oklahoma. Each had been very successful in business and civic life. They represented a "cross-section" of Oklahoma, or so they thought.

Why couldn't they simply drag Oklahoma into the future? After all, they thought that if "we have a vision, and organize our friends to help implement big ideas", that success would come Oklahoma's way. They knew that Oklahoma could be a "player" in the national and international economy. They knew that all it took was a "vision."

Well it didn't work out that way.

Here's their story.

Summer 1998

Wilderness Lodge near Stroud

The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals was "thinking outside the box." Their annual conference was entitled "Technology Applications: Accelerating Towards Prosperity." The conference, and its subsequent working committees, developed some interesting, bold ... even radical ... ideas. They were focused upon harnessing advanced technology to accelerate significant improvements in opportunity, wealth creation, income growth, and quality of life.

The Academy released their recommendations to the public in late 1998. After seeing the results, ideas and preliminary recommendations, several public-spirited Oklahomans quietly organized the Committee of 50. They sincerely felt that the time was right for some bold and radical change in Oklahoma. All that was lacking was the right people to get on board and promote these ideas.

The Super Committee of Ten invited 40 additional friends and business acquaintances. They were from all parts of the state and represented business and public service groups. Government people were excluded because they would slow down the process, or so was the thought at the time. They were men and women; rural and urban; liberal and conservative; and natives and "immigrants" from up-North. They were confident, energetic and moved with a hint of swagger. They knew how to get things done ... they had the vision ... they would drag Oklahoma kicking and screaming into the 21st Century.

Here's what they would do.

Spring 1999

The Agenda

The Committee of 50 gathered at the Oklahoma City Country Club on a beautiful spring day. Optimism was in the air along with the pollen. Each of the members had a spring in their step. Each knew that they were going to do something important. Each was confident.

The Founding Five greeted the group and each gave an upbeat presentation. They had worked out an agenda and every member basically bought in to it.

Vice-Chairman Sandoval rattled off the "State of the State" in 1999. He described an Oklahoma that wasn't very competitive ... but also told of the global visions of the Governor and some key state legislators. He said that even if everyone "doesn't get it" we have a small group of visionaries that will take Oklahoma "to the next level and beyond."

Mr. Sandoval proceeded with a litany of current ills that needed attention. He described Oklahoma as an "island" in a sea of progress. He showed how states all around are increasing their populations and income at faster rates than we were. Among other things he discussed:

- NAFTA Corridor bypassed Oklahoma
- Three national reservation centers have moved out-of-state
- Export statistics are declining
- Tech-sensitive industry is stagnant
- An aging population
- A shrinking labor force
- Underfunded universities

"Enough of the negative stuff" interrupted Mr. Bigheart. We know all that. Let's get on with the fix. "Everybody knows what it is. If you don't, let me tell you."

"We first need an anchoring vision. That we already have. We are going back to the glory days when oil and cotton were king, when prosperity reigned, and when people from around the world came to Oklahoma looking for expertise and opportunity. As far as I'm concerned, if we did it with oil and gas we can do it with these computers and other doo-hickeys that people call technology. We'll get some legislation passed and throw some money at it and ... BAM ... things are gonna fly around here."

The group appreciated the "vision" and was relieved that someone stepped forward to lead. There was uneasiness about a simplistic solution, but the Bigheart Family always seemed to bull ahead and get things done. Why argue?

2000

The Plan

The Committee fashioned an agenda. It was a "quick strike" plan to launch Oklahoma "into play" on the national and international scene. As each member enthusiastically brought their own agenda to the table, the list of projects grew. The operation of the Committee only allowed for minimal research and testing of ideas. No one wanted to be negative. After almost a year of discussions, the list of major initiatives was formed. The Committee selected eight areas of technological application. They vowed to make Oklahoma a major national and international force in each.

These areas of emphasis included meteorology, bio-medical research, food processing research, mineral extraction applications, telecommunications and computer hardware manufacturing. In addition to these areas of emphasis, the Committee launched major initiatives in education reform, environmental protection and major transportation initiatives.

Given that most members of the Committee were graduates of state universities, additional emphasis was given to raise both comprehensive state universities to the highest levels of funding, research and reputation.

In addition to the broader agenda, the Committee formed a "public revenue" sub-committee to identify tax credits and/or relief that would encourage technology companies to grow and prosper. That sub-committee also actively led the attempt to repeal State Question 640, the taxation limiting provision that required that a vote of the people, or 2/3 of the Legislature, be required to authorize any tax increase.

2001-2006

The Work

The Committee of 50 devoted five years speaking to civic groups, Chambers of Commerce, school boards and anyone else who would listen. The responses were polite and occasionally enthusiastic. The whole idea of "hi-tech and hi-wages" seemed to be catching on. Their message was "we can be a global player." It had a ring of excitement to it. Year after year, businesses and civic groups ... Legislature and Governor ... universities and the general public ... were exhorted to "be all we can be." At every sector, expectations and mandates were cleverly applied towards making everyone participate in the New Global Economy. Given the generally constrained state budget, a great deal of funds were swapped annually to make sure all of the agenda areas received some support, even though all groups felt that too much was asked in return for very little.

Centennial Year 2007

The Birthday

The Committee of 50 was featured at the Oklahoma Birthday celebration in the Capitol Rotunda. Nancy Circle spoke for the group when she said, "our work is starting to get results. We can just feel it. Optimism is up, employment is up, earnings are up, and business starts are up. Full-blown prosperity is just around the corner. Businesses and governments from Europe and Asia are taking note. We are building business and research relationships as never before.

This is our Committee's birthday present to Oklahoma. Enjoy."

2008

More Work

The Committee of 50 continued promoting the message, but privately began to wonder if anyone was listening. At every stop, people agreed and applauded, but when it was time to perform ... well, most people took a pass.

One thing after another seemed to distract the vision. The university football programs continued their flirtation with break-even seasons and it perpetually upset a lot of people. The Legislature was always moaning about not having enough money. The fishing wasn't what it used to be ... even with the hi-tech fishfinding gear that they built in Coweta. And this Committee of 50 was starting to get on people's nerves.

Some started to speak out. Some Call the Editor comments during 2008-2010 were:

- "Global Schmobile. Who the hell wants to do business with foreign people anyhow?"
- "I'm tired of paying high taxes to educate a bunch of Chinese people."
- "Can't even find a restaurant run by an American anymore. Where did all these immigrants come from?"
- "Just get me my check, my rod and my worms. The hell with hi-tech. It's all just hi-stress as far as I'm concerned."
- "I'm enrolling in the University of Colorado. I know it costs a lot more, but it's worth it. They have the equipment, professors, programs and job opportunities. See y'all in Boulder."
- "I came here to retire, not to 'invest' in children who will still be in school when I'm on a fixed income in a nursing home. We educated our kids. Now they should pay for theirs. If you can't feed'em, then don't breed'em."

June 2011

It's Over – Throwin' In The Towel

The Committee of 50 met for the final time. They had given up interstate travel years ago and now simply joined in the desktop video conference calls. Every member knew the leadership (and major financiers) of the Committee decided to disband the group, declare minor victories, and move into retirement. After all, this is the year that the leading edge Baby Boomers (born in 1946) would turn 65. The average age of the Committee is less than that but they had made their money and would now enjoy it.

It was common knowledge that the Committee was responsible for several glittering successes. They included the securing of the National Molecular Biology Research Center; a major expansion of General Motors and Ford manufacturing plants; the sponsorship of the nation's newest Interplanetary Observatory; major construction on the state's college campuses; and the launching of the state's own satellite called the Sooner Satellite.

Not noticed in the euphoria of these achievements was that each was secured with significant federal assistance through the state's senior U.S. Senators and the Congressional delegation. Also, all were done in the first two years of the Committee's existence; and that those officials responsible have now been "term-limited" and are in private business in Washington. The newer members of the delegation no

longer have influence or clout in Washington. None of the projects could have been done with state funds or private investment.

As the Committee focused upon institutional reforms and cultural behaviors, the successes quickly disappeared. The Committee became increasingly frustrated, perplexed ... then cynical. This wasn't fun any more. It was work and it was too hard. They individually asked themselves "why are we busting our horns like this when we can be teeing it up in Scottsdale?"

The group unanimously agreed to disband. They would agree to issue a tepid press release. And they would schedule their final get-together for August. At that time they would critically discuss their efforts. They would catalog the successes and analyze the failures.

It would be their legacy for the Oklahoma leaders of tomorrow.

July 2011

One-on-One with Mike Browning (interview on page 2)

August

The Post-Mortem in Big D

The Committee of 50 met at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas. They picked the Adolphus for several reasons. The primary one was to reward themselves with a mini-vacation and to treat themselves to the best the region had to offer. Given the lifestyles of the Committee, they subconsciously think of Dallas as a part of Oklahoma and vice-versa. The irony of meeting outside the state never occurred to the group.

CHAIRMAN LEADER: "Boys ... and Nancy ... we gave this deal one helluva a ride. We have every reason to feel proud of all we accomplished. We probably took Oklahoma farther into global competitiveness than any other group could have done. But even we have our limitations. The purpose of this meeting is to be honest with ourselves so that we may leave a legacy that others may know. We've run into our share of barriers and disappointments. Let's help those who follow to avoid those same pitfalls and missteps.

MR. BIGHEART: "People, we all know what went right and wrong; what went left and right. How about we get this post-mortem over before lunch so I can get back to Nashville and the rest of you can get 18 holes in before dark."

They did just that.

September 2011

One-on-One with Mike Browning - Again

MIKE BROWNING: "Welcome to One-on-One. I'm Mike Browning, news anchor for Internet Port 22.236 on Net Host Tulsa 100. We are here today with the Chairman of Oklahoma's Committee of 50, Mr. M. E. Leader of Tulsa. "

"You will remember that Mr. Leader was our guest two months ago. We discussed the dissolution of the Committee of 50 and his thoughts about their work. Mr. Leader told us "we are having a major meeting of the Committee next month in Dallas. After that, I'll come back and we'll be real honest with you about how we assess things. It's a little hard to talk about now until we all can collect our thoughts."

"Mr. Leader is back. And we are going to devote a full half-hour to the after-thoughts of the Committee of 50 and what they foresee for Oklahoma."

"Mr. Leader, what do you think?"

M. E. LEADER: "Once we got past our initial disappointments, things seemed to clear up for us. I hope I can say these things without offending anyone."

BROWNING: "I think everyone now knows about the bold agenda of the Committee. And many of us cannot thank you enough for all of your time and efforts. So I don't think you need to apologize for any frank assessments you make. Perhaps we should have been more insightful and patient ten years ago."

LEADER: "Let's oversimplify our "lessons learned." Here's a few.

- The 'long view' is better than the 'quick fix.' The tortoise beats the hare. The turtle beats the rabbit. The problem is that this is a very hard sell to "take-charge visionaries." And it is just as hard to sell it to the general public.
- Institutional change requires time, patience, diligence and commitment. Sometimes you just can't get all the things done you want. We just can't hire a public relations firm and make believe everything is fine. You can fool the people, and you can fool yourself ... but you can't fool Mother Economics.
- Our Constitution was a bigger barrier than anyone imagined. It seems like every time we tried something really bold, the Constitution was there wagging it's legal finger. It sounds awfully pretentious to blame a Constitution, but I think we proved that our ill-written Constitution is not compatible with today's economy. Sometimes it felt like an albatross around our economic development necks.
- You can't make any impact on "education" by nibbling around the edges. We should have taken the opportunity to turn the system inside out and redefine the meaning of public education. But we nibbled around the edges while telling ourselves we were bold. And while we were doing that, other states were making real changes and we are still playing catch-up. We worked like hell to simply keep up. Somehow we have to fundamentally change the overall system dynamics.
- There's a term called "80 percenters." It's applied to those for whom 80% of effort, earnings, potential etc. are enough. We have to recognize that there will always be people and institutions that are "80 percenters." What we need is to build or create a critical mass of "110 percenters." We have some, need more, and didn't develop enough. I'm talking of individuals, companies, and institutions. It is a fundamental arithmetic problem that if most or all of Oklahoma operates at 80%, it may be comfortable and stress-free ... but we can't bellyache if we make 82% of national income.

BROWNING: "Given that Mr. Leader, if someone were to start this process over again, what advice would you give them? "

LEADER: "Hmmm. For starters, it's one thing to have a big idea and vision. It's another to get it done. Also, it's easy to get too many things going and not do very many of them well. Another is that the fundamental actions necessary may not be very sexy or photogenic; therefore we tend not to do them. And finally, I suppose we should have been more disciplined in identifying those few fundamental issues ... resolved them the best we could ... then trusted the people, institutions and marketplace to do their jobs. In the end, 50 well-intentioned folks can't individually convince each of our 4 million people to do this or that."

"In general, we'd try to set up the 'dominos' so that when we knock down the right one, many others follow. Otherwise, you can get distracted pushing ropes uphill."

20 minutes of anecdotal discussion ensued.

BROWNING: "What letter grade would you give the Committee?"

LEADER: (Grinning unctuously into the camera). "We get an A+ in my grading book. We did everything that was possible to do. The rest was out of our hands."

BROWNING: "Thank you for joining us for One-on-One with me ... Mike Browning. Today's guest was Mr. M. E. Leader, past Chairman of Oklahoma's Committee of 50. Thanks Mr. Leader. And, by the way, congratulations on your recent election to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. It's a richly deserved honor."

"Please join us on October 8th for our interview with Ms. Etta Henry from Henryetta. Ms. Henry is forming an exciting group to continue the Committee of 50's work."

"Good night everybody. Access Port 277 for the 'Son of Springer Show'. See you next week."

A New Way?

Oklahoman.news.net

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Oklahoma Thinking "Global" - Again

OKLAHOMA CITY (MS/AP):

The Oklahoma Leadership Alliance today announced the formation of a new, dynamic and visionary action group that "will take Oklahoma into the next level of wealth creation."

The group was initially formed from a few members of the dissolved Committee of 50. Additional members were recruited from Oklahoma's technology community.

The Committee of 50 was noted for its heroic efforts to raise the standard of living and quality of life in Oklahoma.

Recent national data indicated that little progress

has been made over the last ten years. But many believe that the Committee accomplished many good things for Oklahoma. And they believe things would be a lot worse without their efforts.

Ms. Etta Henry from Henryetta was announced as the newly elected Chairman of the group. In a prepared statement, she said, "we are going to do this vision thing different this time.

"We now think we have a handle on how this global economic development stuff is done. And we think we now know better how to leverage technology to make us all richer.

"We'll release our detailed plans later this month."

When asked if she would use the findings of the Committee of 50 as a blueprint, she said, "No. We have assembled the best and brightest minds in the state. They all have been very successful in their own right. They have a wonderful vision for Oklahoma and they have great ideas. And they are very savvy with advanced technology and how to make money from it.

"We don't want to be influenced by historical things. We fear that it may influence our vision of Oklahoma being an important player in the global marketplace."

An Oklahoma Scenario

Oklahoma is OK

An Oklahoma Scenario

Oklahoma is OK

In this scenario, we see an Oklahoma that has become non-competitive in a technologically savvy world; and an Oklahoma that has withdrawn into a local and parochial investment perspective.

Oklahoma public policy worshipped the short term and ignored the long view. Low taxes, low costs of living, and populist sentiments have created an Oklahoma where outsiders regularly create and remove wealth. Oklahoma has joined a dozen other smaller states in becoming a "colony" for others to exploit.

It is an irony that the "outsiders" in this scenario were once forced out of Oklahoma, and have now returned with capital, technology and a grand vision. It describes the return of the once infamous Joad family of the "Grapes of Wrath". The Joads personified the "Okie" migrants seeking a better life in California.

The Joad Family

Tom Joad	Chairman Emeritus	Age 100
Henry F. Joad	Chairman of the Board	Age 67
Julie Joad	President & CEO	Age 47

Officers, Joad International

Susan Familee	Vice President, Human Services
William Dollar	Chief Financial Officer
Jack Web	Chief Information Officer
Robert Lobby	Vice President, Government Affairs
G. B. Green	Vice President, External Affairs
Jennifer Keating	Strategic Consultant

tulsaworld.news.net12

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April 3, 2013

The Joads Are Coming Home

BAKERSFIELD, CA (MS): It was announced today that Joad International (California) plans to invest at least \$800 million in Oklahoma. The company has purchased major land tracts in several Oklahoma communities, and has bought several thousand acres of additional undeveloped land in undisclosed locations.

Joad International is the nation's leading knowledge-based and techno-land development firm

specializing in creating "2020+" retirement and leisure communities both here and abroad.

President and CEO Julie Joad said "the company combines savvy in communications, life sciences and information technology with real estate and financial management expertise. We have applied advanced technology become the nation's leading creator of the most contemporary, affordable and functional living concepts. She said "when we

unveil our modern concepts for 'hi-tech/hi-touch' environments and communities, you will be very surprised. That's why people love to retire and/or work in our communities."

Tom Joad, Chairman Emeritus of Joad International, is America's most visible and energetic centurion. He turns 100 years old today. Mr. Joad is said to be very pleased to have finally returned to "my roots".

October 2012

Meet the Joads

My name is Tom Joad.

Many people know me as the patriarch of an international knowledge-based corporation specializing in techno-land development to meet modern human needs. Many people also forget my roots. Steinbeck wrote about it in the 'Grapes of Wrath.' It was worse than that.

I'm the original 'Okie' who migrated to California in 1936. I served four years in the McAlester State Prison for killing a man who tried to kill me. When I got out, the bankers had foreclosed on our family farm, and we were about run out of the state with thousands of others. We lit out for California where everything was supposed to be green and lush. We experienced hardships, hatred, violence and filthy living and working conditions. We experienced the "Grapes of Wrath".

I sharecropped and worked in an aircraft plant near Bakersfield during the war and saved some money. My son, Henry, proved to be a whiz at finance and real estate. When he graduated college, we parlayed that land into residential tracts during the California boom years. When my granddaughter Julie graduated college she worked in the Silicon Valley. She came home and helped us shift our assets into information and life sciences technologies. We did this in the 1980s-90s.

We also invested in research by endowing chairs at major research universities. We are now positioned with cash, information, experience and know-how. We are ready to combine technology, money and human beings to create a standard of living this nation has never seen. And I intend to make a bundle doing it.

We left Oklahoma because they foreclosed on us and we had no place to live, and then we went to California to find a better life and all they wanted us for was to pick fruit at five cents a bushel. I haven't forgotten. I told myself what goes around comes around and I figured that the day will come when things will be different.

That day is here.

Two Days Later

TOM: Henry ... Julie ... I may be almost 100 years old. But you know that I'm in extraordinary health thanks to good genes and the latest bio-medical advances. I normally don't interfere much in what you do because you do it so well. But I've had this idea for a long time, and I think it will yield us bigger returns for a longer time than anything we have ever done.

I think it's time to gather all of our assets and know-how, and do something big. We need to take our 2020+ Communities concepts and build them on larger scales. It will require cheap labor, resources and land ... and low taxes. I used to know a place like that and I'll bet it hasn't changed all that much. I have a hunch the place we're lookin' for is Oklahoma.

We should make at least an annual 20% ROI on this project ... and we should bump our annual earnings by 10% every year. If we can't do that ... we'll look somewhere else like maybe Mexico.

Let's start the planning.

March 2013

Staff Meeting - 5 Months Later

JULIE: I have been waiting for this day for five months. So let's get with it. You remember that this project is to present your basic research so that we may create a sound business plan. If we can do that, we'll bring it to Tom and Henry ... and then to our Board ... for approval.

We are looking for a place that has inexpensive resources that we can combine with our know-how to create advanced 2020+ Communities.

I have asked you to examine Oklahoma in-depth. You were to consider its investment potential for what we do best, that is blend very advanced technology with human needs. Your analysis must cover social, technology, economic, environmental and policy considerations.

We are into creating profit. If we can do some good by doing well ... that's nice. But this is not some sort of economic bailout or charity.

We don't care about their football teams; and we don't bleed for old State U. If one city wants to fight with another, it's all the better for us; and frankly, the romantic rivalries of one state versus another are quaint. If the farmers and cowboys want to be friends that's great. If they don't ... we don't care. All we care about is the bottom line.

I know Oklahoma is not hot with investors. But I have a hunch they can't match the product with the opportunity there. I have heard that Oklahoma investors, particularly those in real estate, will limit their investments to projects in Tulsa or Oklahoma City ... and would rather invest in out-of-state than other parts of Oklahoma. They seem to want the sure thing quickly.

Can we exploit some opportunities they can't see? I hope so.

We have a \$800 million dollars to invest. Is there any opportunity? Susan, please start?

The Oklahoma Culture and Workforce **Are the Farmers and Cowboys Still Friends?**

SUSAN FAMILLEE: The social fabric of Oklahoma is pretty darned unique. First the state is over 100 years old but not yet really mature. Its citizens are both younger and older than national averages if that makes sense. Then there is a large Native American population that is semi-assimilated. There are at least six distinct cultures: urban, rural, southern, heartland, Hispanic and Native American. Many people live in more than one.

The Oklahoma rates of growth of both population and income have declined compared to other states. The out-migration of younger people seems to be increasing ... but an in-migration of others, particularly Hispanics, is offsetting that.

Tulsa and Oklahoma City have begun to show signs of inner city syndrome ... that is a stagnant central city surrounded by scattered and growing suburbs. There has been growth of high-end gated communities in those suburbs.

State Subsidized Profit

Oklahoma higher education enrollment is flat. Common education in Oklahoma rated well below average in expenditures per student, scholastic achievement and test scores.

The state Vo-Tech schools and community colleges have developed programs to train workers and to attract retirees. Favorites include genealogy, estate planning, and arts and crafts.

Educational Priorities and Values

Oklahoma attitudes toward education have not allowed for widespread excellence in their system. There are too many institutions depending upon too few dollars. The result is that most schools are simply under-funded. But that doesn't mean that there are not good schools, excellent programs, or good opportunities. It just means that it is very unlikely that these schools will cause a critical mass of technological/other expertise to form. And without that critical mass it is unlikely that wholesale improvements in the economy will occur.

Oklahomans have declared their priorities when offered educational reform opportunities. For example:

- Efforts to decrease the number of schools always produced more schools in the end.
- The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals recommended year-round schools several years ago. It was soundly rejected because it would interfere with summer church, cheerleading and sports camps. The Academy also recommended that education be redefined, and funded, to include Pre-K through 14. It met with the same fate for different reasons.
- The Academy recommended a radical restructuring of high schools ... so that they resembled college more than middle school. It, too, was rejected because teachers thought it was more work, taxpayers thought it was more expensive, and booster clubs felt it would screw up football programs.
- The Academy noted the success of the experimental high school called Oklahoma School for Science and Math in Oklahoma City. They called for an additional five schools to be established over a 5 year period. They would be in Tulsa ... and in four regional communities such as Enid, Lawton, Tahlequah and McAlester. The measure was narrowly defeated in the Legislature because of the additional "benefits" for rich kids.
- And the same Academy noted that Oklahoma's public universities are graduating only a handful of discipline specific science and math education majors trained in science and math instruction. They recommended a radical restructuring of science/math teacher preparation, credentialing and compensation. The measure was opposed by the teacher's associations and narrowly defeated in the Legislature.

After a number of other attempts, public officials capitulated to teachers unions, fixed income taxpayers, and sports/activities enthusiasts. Education reform is dormant. What does it mean if we go to Oklahoma? Well, I think it's good news for us.

There will be a workforce of underachievers that we can employ for lower wages. But they have the untapped skills we can exploit through state-funded training programs. The beauty is that we get good labor for less cost, get them trained for free ... and they will thank us for the opportunity. And all of this is already a part of a very low tax base so we can expect our taxes to stay low.

Oklahoma Advantages

In summary, the attractive features appear to be:

- Low cost full-time labor
- A service oriented economy
- Excellent part-time labor (retirees)
- State subsidized education and training programs

Economic Development/Capital and Investment

OkieNomics

WILLIAM DOLLAR: The Oklahoma economy has finally made the conversion from the Oil Bust of the 1980's to a more diversified ... if less prosperous ... one. Remember when oil used to cost \$38 a barrel? They haven't seen that price in 40 years because new technologies make discovery more certain and reclamation very inexpensive. Oklahoma developed systems and institutions that were built around oil and gas extraction. Unfortunately that economic boom lasted for only 50 years, and was even volatile during that time. Oklahomans have become basically satisfied with decent wages and 'good jobs'.

Scarce Public Revenue

It is very unlikely that Oklahoma will generate enough public investment capital to accomplish much. There are several reasons.

- Taxes were capped in the late 20th century. The no taxes without a vote of the people provisions still apply.
- Oklahoma has not kept pace with public obligations. So all new growth dollars have already been spent and now must be repaid. For example, the State Teacher's Retirement System liabilities were under-funded by over \$4 billion in 1998. A plan was supposed to pay off that debt by 2013. Political excuses and expediciencies such as additional prison costs, precluded that from happening.
- Oklahomans simply refuse to pay significant property taxes.

The Words & The Language

There have been many attempts at economic development but it has been difficult to sustain the momentum. It's likely that creating a self-sustaining critical mass requires more work and long term investment than the state is willing to commit. And if every place was an Austin, there would be little opportunity left. In so many cases, Oklahoma seems to know the words but doesn't understand the language. There seems to be a populist power at work that doesn't want any one place or thing to get too far ahead.

Industrial Decline

The state's failure to adopt technology policies that provide incentives to advanced technology businesses and employee skill development programs. This failure is a shortcoming and is responsible for the state's industrial stagnation. There's some great techno-stuff based in Oklahoma, but the larger investments made by those businesses are made elsewhere. Oklahomans don't seem to mind.

The Oklahoma industrial base is characterized as a core technology state competing on a commodity basis with emerging third world countries for market share. In other words, they export raw materials to others, then buy the finished goods at high prices. If it sounds like a 19th century colony ... well, there is a similarity.

The Oklahoma workforce is inexpensive, trainable, and very reliable. The average wages remain well below the national average. China and Mexico have started to locate assembly plants in rural Oklahoma to take advantage of central distribution locations and cheap labor.

I wondered if Oklahoma would remain primarily a service economy?

There's no evidence that it will change. I get the feeling that to convert the economy to one requiring a major long term investment is not the Oklahoma style. They're really nice folks ... but their institutions and culture seem to work against the long view ... that is, making an investment today for a return 25 years from now.

The most important advantages I see are:

1. Low costs of living
2. Low costs of doing business
3. Low taxes with little chance of increase
4. Labor costs well below the national average

The State of the State's Technology
The Digital Sooners?

JACK WEB: I think we've found a sleeping giant. Oklahoma has put together a pretty nice sector of their economy wrapped around telecommunications networks and information flow.

Techno-Catters

In the midst of some widespread mediocrity, there are some very internationally savvy groups and companies. There are some very innovative hi-tech research and development efforts. They are entrepreneurs who we call techno-catters ... sort of like the old Oklahoma wildcatters. They like the Oklahoma lifestyle and do not require either location or expanded infrastructure.

They enjoy the local living conditions and love to sandbag folks on both coasts who think they are dealing with dumb Okies. These guys are sharp. But there's not nearly a critical mass of them like in Austin, Silicon Valley ... or Bangalore, India. I think they like it that way.

Oklahoma's Public Networks

The state has invested in a public information network (ONENET). Once the network management and support was contracted to an effective and well-staffed contractor, they have developed several high-high capacity networks. Digital infrastructure is plentiful and contemporary. Its utilization is well below capacities. That's good news for us. We can buy bandwidth cheaply as necessary.

Capital investment in technology has declined as industrial revenues shrink due to global competition.

There are several examples of technological applications that will be of value to us.

- Almost every bank has a digital branch to allow all financial business to be conducted from anywhere else.
- The state has developed quite an advanced telemedical capability. Several years ago, international visitors to Oklahoma asked state health care leaders to help in several areas. For example, Danish officials asked the MedOne Health System to contract for the electronic monitoring of Denmark's emergency rooms in the evenings and on weekends. The MedOne officials responded, "Nah ... we aren't interested. Denmark isn't in our strategic plan". Since then, MedOne has installed similar systems in smaller Oklahoma hospitals.
- We also discovered that the telemedicine application that has virtually eliminated diabetes retinopathy among Indian tribes was developed at the University of Oklahoma. However, it is now being franchised and operated from the University of Arizona in Tucson.
- There are high speed-high bandwidth systems connecting every community. In the metro areas there are some companies with national expertise and national reputations.
- There's a lot to tell ... but I will summarize by telling you that being in Oklahoma is no technological disadvantage. They have all we need and the skilled technicians to operate it. Thank goodness we invested in the world-wide Iridium Telecom project in the '90s. We also have our private satellites that we can re-position. And we have a good set of land-based networks in Oklahoma.

No one in the Heartland will have seen anything like what's coming out of our labs.

Here's an example. We have some things in the labs that are ready for practical application. As you know, the microchip has changed the world much the same as the printing press and the internal combustion engine. It's now 2013 and society is becoming used to them. Oklahoma, like so many states, would sell their souls for a chip manufacturing plant. What they don't know is that those plants are becoming obsolete. Offshore and third world countries will meet the needs, and the nature of the chip itself is about to change.

We are ready to release the DNA and liquid microchips. These will turn the body into computers so you never have to plug-in ... you just have to be alive! It will revolutionize the way we live as the chip did 20 years ago. It will revolutionize surgery, transportation and financial services. There's not much that will be unaffected, And we own the patents. There are other examples in genetics, health care, and transportation. It's going to be a brand new world ... again ... soon.

Oklahoma Policy and Politics

Too Much To Do - Not Enough Money

ROBERT LOBBY: By any measure, Oklahoma seems divided by east and west ... with the east centered upon Tulsa ... and the west centered upon Oklahoma City. There is a north/south division that seems less pronounced.

This split is further compounded by Tulsa and Oklahoma City being more rivals than mutual supporters. Frankly, any state of 3 million people is simply too small to be fragmented. While 2 million people may live within one hour of Stroud, national businesses do not see that concentration. They see separate pockets of people of about a million or less.

So for our planning purposes we can assume that we are dealing with two separate "Nebraska sized states" ... each with their own capital ... rather than a single Oklahoma. It's to their disadvantage in creating "critical mass" ... but to our advantage because any opposition will be diluted.

Lost Congressional Clout

The most defining and traumatic events have been the recent loss of two of their six congressional seats. They lost one in 2000 by a wide margin because of the slow population growth of the late 1980's - 1990's. It was expected. Oklahoma was the only state west of the Mississippi River to lose a seat. There was a lot of public embarrassment and angst. It caused lots of questions that received few answers.

They lost another seat by a hair in 2010. That was a shock because state leaders thought they set in motion a plan to reverse the population trend. Starting in 2002, Oklahoma worked closely with the INS to increase targeted immigration, particularly of Hispanics from Mexico and Central America.

Change By Term Limits

Oklahoma term limits went into play 16 years ago. The results have been mixed. They lost a lot of institutional memory and experience ... but then again, lots of it was worth losing. They have stabilized at the state legislature and probably have a healthier mix of elected officials now than before. From our standpoint, I think they are easier to deal with. And there are still some that really respond to the soft money. The Legislature will not be a problem for us.

Fighting With Friends

Governmental and political affairs sometimes seem infinitely complicated and filled with intrigue. Let me try to simplify what we have seen.

- The urban areas are competing fiercely for commercial prospects, many times against each other.
- Many argue that tax incentives offered business relocations have a negative benefit/cost ratio for the community.

- Higher education institutions are in a very competitive battle among themselves for limited funds. Oklahoma City and Tulsa continue to fight in the media over industrial poaching.
- There are two, uncoordinated, public sector development efforts underway.
- The rural legislators formed a coalition to push for rural programs ... and have secured state money allocated for national marketing effort to promote economic development in rural Oklahoma.
- Tulsa and Oklahoma City continue to sponsor national corporate recruiting campaigns. They promote quality of life, the Oklahoma work ethic, and low costs of living. The primary targets are semi-conductor manufacturing plants that moved off-shore 10 years ago.

A Constitutional Prisoner

The Oklahoma Constitution was written with heavily populist bias for an agrarian society. It is complex, and restricting to 21st century issues of governance. Some have argued for a Constitutional Convention, but analysis concludes that would likely cause more problems than it would solve. Others believe that it can be amended judiciously and have the effect of reform. In any case it is a handicap to significant and rapid development that is in our favor.

The Voters Speak: Say No!

Oklahomans have turned down three major state bond issues in the past 10 years. They were:

- State bond issue to consolidate the Tulsa/OKC airports into a single complex in Stroud. This Shannon Lucid International Aviation Center would have been connected to Tulsa, OKC, Stillwater, Tinker AFB, Norman, Enid and Lawton with high speed light rail services. And would offer a consolidation of the statewide aviation industry via a unique multi-community joint operating agreement. The vote passed in all three cities ... but was defeated by the state-wide vote.
- A major education reform bill would have instituted year-round schools; restructured high schools; placed major educational emphasis on science and math; and added five additional state high schools for science and math. Interestingly, this vote passed in the rural counties but was defeated in the metro areas. Political scientists are still trying to understand that vote.
- A technology bond issue that would have authorized significant investments in the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) major research in the state. This was defeated statewide by a consistent 70% against vote.

JULIE: I've always heard that Oklahoma is a rough political state. Is it true? Will it affect us?

BOBBY: That's true. They generally are real nasty over the small things. The bigger things sail by. What we are looking for is a state where there is less government and less regulation ... a state where political inertness is a plus. We don't want some graft-ridden place like Louisiana ... but rather a benign place like Oklahoma!

The main factors I see are:

- Oklahoma desperately wants population increases.
- Oklahomans will settle for jobs in lieu of careers.
- The Legislature is becoming more progressive and agreeable.
- Public/private partnerships are elusive.
- Major public investments (higher taxes) are not likely.

The Oklahoma Environmental Assessment
Where the Wind Comes Sweeping Down the Plains

I. B. GREEN: I'm going to cover a wide range of issues here. I'll include basic environmental factors like water and air quality; and also discuss public infrastructure such as roads.

Natural Resources

Oklahoma is blessed with natural resources. It's on the southern Great Plains so coastal and mountain people aren't used to it. Oklahoma has lots of lakes, streams, mountains, plains and wildlife. With the exception of a couple of major metro areas ... the water quality is excellent and cheap. And the energy resources are clean, even the coal. And they are cheap also since utility deregulation.

Rapid Permit Systems

Near and dear to our hearts is a concern of how much the environmental bureaucracy will tie up all of our building and land development permits. Great news. Oklahoma has developed a rapid permit system that will allow us to build a year sooner than any place else. And for the record ... they will not cut corners or allow us to spoil their environment ... they are just better coordinated than any place else. That's another year of profits for us.

There are two attractive features:

- We can fast track all the environmental permits.
- The energy resources are quiet, clean and cheap.

Recommendations to the Board
"Let's Go For It"

JENNIFER KEATING: I am very impressed that each of you approached the analysis from a different perspective. But each of you overlapped so much in your conclusions. I feel confident that we have identified those factors that will allow the ROI we want, and that will generate significant additional earnings for the company.

We will offer these reasons.

- Low cost of living
- Low and stable taxes
- Excellent four season weather
- State subsidized job training programs
- Reliable, service oriented workforce
- Advanced digital networks and services
- Abundant and cheap power and water supply
- An acceptable mix of entertainment and cultural amenities
- Almost every downside factor relates to those barriers to Oklahoma becoming one of the nation's premier state economies. We aren't looking for that. So they really become assets to us.

This is a helluva deal. We are simply lucky no group in Oklahoma thought of this first.

The Joads met with me shortly before the analysis of this project was started. One point they stressed was that Oklahoma seems much like a 21st century colony in that there seems to be an affordable workforce, minimal government interference and adequate technology. In other words, these are the raw materials of the new economy. They thought we could exploit those 'colonial' qualities by adding value through our corporate assets ... and then sell the services back to the locals and new residents at a higher price.

By golly ... I think their instincts were right.

April 1, 2013

One Month Later

The Board approved the project. Tom was pleased.

TOM: I still know those bankers and real estate shysters. They'll inflate the price 30% ... and we'll give them their short-term profit. Then we'll make ten times the profit off that land as we add value to it.

The Oklahoma bankers and land sharpies ran me out of Oklahoma 75 years ago. We're going to stick it to 'em. And even so, we know they will sentimentally treat me as some kind of good ole boy Prodigal Son and likely give me some state honors for creating jobs.

What they don't know is that sentiment has nothing to do with this. Oklahoma is ripe for pickin' ... and old Tom is going to fill the family basket. And this time we're going to get more than five cents a bushel! What goes around comes around.

Julie ... let's send out a press release about this deal. Make it effective the day after tomorrow ... it's my 100th birthday. The media will lap it up. Let's tell'em what we are doin' and what we plan. But let's make it soft and fuzzy. Let's make it sound like we are sentimentally investing in Tom's old home state ... and how we are going to visit often and all that. Those folks will like that. We'll fly in and out for appearance sake. But that's about it for me.

The ironies are too much for old Tom. He smiled, chuckled ... and rubbed his hands together. He was finally back in an Oklahoma land deal he liked ... one that he couldn't lose.

What a birthday present!

June 2013

Ten Weeks Later

tulsaworld.news.net12

Digi-Feature/Port 13

6.14.13/1430

June 14, 2013

No Progress As Special Session Ends

OKLAHOMA CITY - Governor Junior Lopez angrily announced the end of the special session today.

He convened the session to examine how and why Oklahoma missed the Technology Revolution?" ... and to develop some bold and quick remedies.

Several committees re-examined the "opportunities lost". The Legislature could not reach consensus.

Many in the Legislature have espoused the view that things aren't so bad. Taxes are low; costs of living are affordable; lower wages aren't such a bad tradeoff for open spaces and less traffic.

Educated and skilled Oklahoma kids have some good opportunities in Tulsa or Oklahoma City ... and great opportunities in other states. In fact things are really okay in Oklahoma. Everyone can't be a national leader in everything.

The only consensus that was reached was a resolution to modify the Oklahoma license plate from "Native America" back to ... "Oklahoma is OK." The session then adjourned.

FLASH: The World's HyperNet News reported that state prisoners will be trained in the new hi-tech holographic engraving procedures that will give Oklahoma the flashiest ... and most expensive license tags in the nation.

An Oklahoma Scenario
Turkey Tales

An Oklahoma Scenario

Turkey Tales

In this scenario, we describe an Oklahoma where the investment perspective is more local than global, but where Oklahomans are demonstrating competitiveness in using advanced technology.

We see an Oklahoma family that experiences the trials and tribulations of an ever-changing technological society as it applies to their personal and private lives.

The story unfolds over the course of a decade in a series of political and cultural conversations held around the dining room table. Each Thanksgiving, the family experiences new insights about technology and how it relates to their small town.

As the environment grows more competitive, so does the tension among family members. Eventually, we watch as technology comes full-circle in the community and around the dining room table.

McAlister Family of Chickaway

Ruthie Jo	Wife of Chester, Native American, 65-years old, raised the kids.
Chester Ray	Husband of Ruthie, retired OG&E lineman, 67-years old.
Mary Sue	Daughter of Ruthie Jo & Chester, single, lives in NYC, 40-years old, fashion designer.
Ray Jo	Son of Ruthie Jo & Chester, 38-years-old, commutes to Ada as software engineer at ECU, married to Debbie.
Debbie	Wife of Ray Jo, former prom queen, local ACLU civil rights attorney.
Hunter	13-year-old son of Ray & Debbie.
Montana	8-year-old daughter of Ray & Debbie.

Thanksgiving 1998

Chickaway, Oklahoma (pop 14,529)
Home of Chester and Ruthie Jo McAlister

Early Morning

The alarm clock sounds its usual melodic hum at 5:30 a.m., the same buzz it has made for the last 50 years of Chester McAlister's life. After decades of working the early-bird shift as a lineman for OG&E, the newly retired Chester is a man of many habits.

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," chuckles the 67-year-old Chester as he stumbles to the kitchen to brew a fresh pot of coffee. His morning trip to the Daylight Donut Hut, Chickaway's one-stop gossip and watering hole, is canceled today in light of Thanksgiving.

"Ches, don't forget to take the bird out of the freezer," yells Ruthie Jo, a portly woman with beautiful bronzed skin courtesy her Chickasaw heritage. "The kids will be here before you know it and I still need to whip up my famous pumpkin pie."

Thanksgiving in the McAlister home would not be complete without one of Ruthie Jo's county fair award winning mouth-watering pies. Ruthie Jo desperately wants to make one for her 40-year-old daughter, a couture designer living in New York City. Mary Sue, known as "Marsu" by those in the fashion biz, fled Chickaway the day after high school graduation and never looked back.

Anticipating her daughter's arrival, Ruthie Jo climbs out of her king-size waterbed and races to the kitchen to prepare for the festivities. Her comfortable three-bedroom ranch-style home seems too quiet now that the children are grown. She anxiously awaits the sights, sounds and smells of Thanksgiving with all the McAlisters under one roof again.

Late Morning

"Hey, Papa, wanna watch the Macy's parade on TV?" cries Montana as she races through the front door with a hand-held computer game in tow. The 8-year-old whiz kid and her 13-year old brother, Hunter, know the routine of visiting grandma and grandpa who live just blocks away.

The kids have always called Chickaway home seeing as how their dad, Raymond, graduated from Chickaway high school and married the local prom queen, now a prominent civil rights attorney. Debbie McAlister had made a name for herself in southeast Oklahoma as both a powerful litigator and a supporter of the American Civil Liberties Union. A cause that, no doubt, troubles the elder McAlisters who believe their daughter-in-law too liberal for a small, conservative, Baptist town like Chickaway.

Chester snaps up the remote control, glad to see his granddaughter.

"Baby, can you fix this thing again. I just can't seem to get it working now that the cable company has us hooked up to so many channels. I just don't know about these electronic gadgets. You know your grandma still won't use that microwave y'all bought for her. Says she's afraid it'll bow up the whole house!"

Ray, a 38-year-old computer engineer with a knack for fixing things, laughs at his father's technological angst. But despite his funny quirks, Ray feels an obligation to live close to his aging parents. Thus, every morning Ray hops in his min-van to drive the 40-mile commute to Ada where he is a tenured professor at East Central University.

"It sure is great to be home again!" cries Mary Sue as she barges through the door with a palm-sized cell phone ringing loudly from her purse. A noise that startles the elder McAlisters, who still own one of the only rotary phones in Chickaway.

Early Afternoon

"More stuffing, please," says Hunter as he gobbles down yet another helping of his grandma's yummy Thanksgiving spread. "I'm a growing boy, you know."

"That's for sure," says Ray under his breath as he excuses the kids from the grown-up table. "I just don't know what we're going to do with Hunter. Why the other day Debbie and I caught him surfin' the Internet looking at girlie pitchers. Said he was checking out architectural sites on the Web."

Choking on her food, Mary Ann cracks a short-lived smile.

"While in my day we would have gotten a good whipping for such a thing" Chester proclaims. "I told you that expensive computer was nothing but trouble. If I was you, I'd unplug that thing and take it back to the store where I got it. Hunter don't need some fancy machine to mess up his mind."

Ray, left momentarily speechless, takes a deep breath.

"Dad, I know you mean well, but Hunter and Montana need access to computers for many reasons. I would never deny my kids the opportunity to learn, and besides, they need to be online to stay competitive at school. In fact, the whole town of Chickaway should have access to the Internet and that's one of the reasons I'm going to run for city council. In fact, I'm faxing my candidacy announcement to the newspaper this afternoon. And my students at East Central are creating a Web page for me to tell constituents where I stand on the issues. "

The room grows deadly quiet except for the high-pitched squeal of Montana's computer game.

A cautious Ray continues. "You see, Dad, I have this plan to revitalize the downtown Main street district by creating a Telecommunications Community Center. A place where business can access the latest in computer, voice and video technology. You know the Daylight Donut Hut is for sale and I was thinking that we could renovate the old place and turn it into a hub, of sorts, for all kinds of cottage industries. With support of a major bond issue, we could really put Chickaway on the map and position the town as an economic stronghold.

"I think Ray is really onto something," exclaims Debbie. "Down at the office we see all kinds of opportunities for technological growth but no resources for development. With Chickaway's Native American population, there's no telling what kind of state and federal matching grants are available. Picture a beautifully landscaped downtown pedestrian mall with specialty shops and restaurants. Just like the old times, but with an emphasis in modern technology!"

Sensing her husband's discomfort, Ruthie Jo offers up a piece of her famous pumpkin pie. The bulging stomachs and eyes accept, except for a distraught Chester.

"You've got to be kidding, son," growls Chester as he tries to steer his son away from politics. "What this town needs is a return to the good ol' days when boys played kick-the-can not click-the-computer! I'll tell you right now that the boys down at the Donut Hut ain't gonna like the idea of giving up their territory. Why we've been meeting down there to shoot the breeze for decades."

"That's what I mean, Dad. This town needs a real community center where families can go to access information, very similar to what the guys do at the coffee shop everyday. Don't you want Hunter and Montana to grow up in a thriving community? With Wal-Mart pulling out of town next month, this place is going to dry up and fall off the map. With the addition of a technological infrastructure, Chickaway could become a booming town again."

Beep ... Beep ... Beep

"Sorry guys, that's the office paging me about an upcoming runway show," says Marsu as she slides away from the table.

"I'm stuffed like the bird!" exclaims Ruthie Jo, proudly lifting the last bite of pumpkin pie from her plate.

"Too much nutmeg," states Debbie, much to her mother-in-law's chagrin.

Thanksgiving 2001

Early Morning

As usual, on special days like this, Ruthie Jo is up at the crack of dawn scurrying about her kitchen. She hears Chester clamoring down the stairs for a cup of coffee and then to the front porch where he slides onto the suspended swing to reminisce about days gone by. It was about the same time last year when Wal-Mart announced it would close its Chickaway store and relocate in another town. The community had lost maybe 200 residents; a lot of young people, some lawyers and doctors and teachers because of fewer kids in the school. What is happening, he thought, why can't things be like they were?

Suddenly, Marsu who slipped in late the night before from New York brings Chester back to reality.

"Well Mary Sue," Chester begins slowly, "I'm not sure how to make sense out of it. You know about Wal-Mart and OG&E shutting down. It's not been good for the town or for us. Ray is half-way through his second term on the City Council. He's done some awfully good things for Chickaway, but for the life of me I think a lot of it is risky. Hell-it's dangerous."

"Daddy, what do you mean dangerous?" Mary Sue responds.

"Well look at the schools in Chickaway, they're full of technology. They're teaching Hunter and Montana about how to use computers and search the Internet and, my goodness, they're teaching them how to do it by themselves!! Do you know what's on the Internet Mary Sue? Three years ago it was just a game, now it's a major part of what we're teaching our children."

Mary Sue gently puts a hand on Chester's arm. "Dad, the Internet is a reflection of what the world is like. It can certainly seem confusing and chaotic. We don't need to keep the kids away from the Internet, we need to teach them how to use it and make sense out of it and to discard what is harmful or useless."

"Mary Sue, maybe you're right," Chester replies, "but I'm not sure its at all a good idea to have NYC in our back yard and fiddling with Chickaway's hearts and minds, especially our kids."

Noon

The big meal is underway. Chester Ray is impressed with the accomplishments of his daughter and son and daughter-in-law, but uneasy. So is Ruthie Jo. Maybe there is no escape from the future, but neither is there an escape from the past. Maybe the values and standards of the future must recognize a different set of criteria in determining proper behavior and personal and professional behavior, but does that mean that all we've lived for and worked and sweated for, worried to death for and pained terribly for, is worthless and irrelevant?

"Is it good that Wal-Mart is gone," Chester wonders, "is it good that OG&E—a mainstay of Oklahoma's historic economic infrastructure—is no longer what it used to be? Is it good that my Montana and Hunter have access to images and information that Grandmother and I don't approve of let alone don't even understand? Is it good that Hunter prefers to surf the computer rather than do the few jobs we've agreed to in order to earn a bit of extra cash?"

Afternoon

All retire to the living room stuffed, lounging and lazy in the effort to pursue conversation. But there are a few loose ends to tie up before utter informality and aimlessness get control.

Ray proudly made an announcement. "Debbie and I decided last night, and we'd like to announce it today to all of you first. I'm going to run for mayor. Debbie is going to manage the campaign. We've talked about a platform but we've not fleshed it all out yet. We have a couple of possibilities."

"For one thing, our development of a technology infrastructure to date is only the tip of the iceberg. We've got to work on Chickaway's connections to the outside world. I've got a meeting set up next week with representatives of 10 communities to talk with OSU telecommunications people, the following week with cable and telephone companies."

"Mary Sue, we do need to market Chickaway on the east and west coast; get our 'Wildwest' products into those markets. We need to attract those folks here as tourists, match our local 'colorful' personalities with our products and our frontier heritage and get them to stay and spend for several days."

"Our next move with the Mainstreet Program needs to include a visitor's center and a museum facility that tells the history of Chickaway and the county. And either East Central will create a branch campus in Chickaway or else we'll create our own electronic, distance education center and invite whatever colleges or universities are willing to come and offer courses and programs."

Mary Sue excitedly congratulates Ray and Debbie on their decision. Montana and Hunter think it's great that daddy is possibly going to be a big shot. Ruthie Jo and Chester Ray can't help but be proud of their son and daughter-in-law, but at the same time concerned about taking Chickaway into a confusing and dangerous world and bringing that same world back to Chickaway.

Thanksgiving 2003

Afternoon

The big dinner is over. Chester has carved the turkey. Everyone has eaten too much and had desert. Mary Sue, Montana and Hunter decide to "walk off" some of their lunch.

Chester leans back in his chair, pats his protruding stomach, lets out a sigh and says, "Well Ma, you did it again. Made the best pumpkin pie in the country." Debbie, who is clearing plates, grumbles in Ray's ear, "Too much nutmeg." Ruthie Joe brings Chester the handful of pills he's supposed to take after each meal and he proceeds to take them with sips of water.

"How do you like that new telemedicine center that you're going to now, Dad?" says Ray. "Well, it sure ain't like having old Doc Jimmy poke and prod at me, calling me an old goat!" says Chester.

Ruthie Jo interjects, "I sure like not having to drive him all the way to Ada every week for his check ups!"

Ray decides that now is the time to bring up the subject. "Dad, Mom, I want to talk with you about something." Ruthie Jo and Debbie both sit down and focus their attention on Ray. "I'm thinking about running for the legislature next year."

"Well, why would you want to do a fool thing like that?" says Chester.

"Well Dad, several people have approached me with the idea. They say that I've done such a good job on City Council and as Mayor, that they're sure I can represent Chickaway well in the State House. They say that the revitalization of downtown is being looked at by lots of other communities in the state as a model for high tech-high touch. The program that I helped get into the county jail – you know – the one that helps prisoners learn how to repair computers and industry technology? Well, they say that it is being submitted for an award for the most effective innovation in this region's correctional system. The guys that get that training get good jobs.

Chester turns back to Ray and says, "Well why go the State House? They say you can't get anything done there."

"Dad, I really want to work on our education system and how we treat technology. I truly believe that we need our public schools to integrate the use of technology and the subject of technology because it is driving our whole economy. And it shouldn't be an option! It should be required – from pre-school all the way through bachelor's degrees.

Ruthie Jo joins in again, still with a worried look. "What do they do at that Wal-Mart store now? I went in there once and it had changed so much, I got scared and turned right around and went back out without buying anything.

Ray explains, "Oh, Ma, you'd love it once you got used to it! With the revitalization of downtown, Wal-Mart had to rethink their role in each community. I met with them several times about the kinds of things that Chickaway needs and they put together this new concept. First, they've got something called "incubator" space. It's where people starting businesses can set up without having to rent a whole building before they can afford it. They also have video conferencing facilities, special computers and special industrial machinery for people who need it. People just pay for the time they use it instead of buying the whole thing. They then have the Purchasing Center. You know how you can order so much stuff on the Internet these days? Well, they have purchasing agents who help you get the right things, at the right price, and so on. So your order gets the "Wal-Mart discount." You tell them what you want and they do the ordering and receiving, then deliver it to you."

"How do they get paid?" says Ruthie Jo.

"They get a percentage of your order." Explains Ray. "A lot of the cottage industries say they couldn't do without this service. And Ma, they're moving the Telemedicine Center over there in a few months. They'll have more space and be able to add the kinds of services they offer."

"Well, the parking sure will be better." Says Ruthie Jo.

Debbie realizes that Chester hasn't said anything for a while so she tries to bring him back in to the conversation. "Dad, you still going to the donut shop every day?"

"No, had to quit. It got so crowded with all the kids stopping in that are going to their college classes at that new-fangled center downtown, that I couldn't hear myself think! 'Sides, Ma says I shouldn't drive anymore and she doesn't want to go out that early."

Just then, Montana, Hunter and Mary Sue come back in the house from their walk. "Ma, Montana and Hunter told me how much you're using your Web TV."

Ruthie Joe stands up, takes Mary Sue's arm and directs her toward the kitchen so they're out of range of Chester's hearing. "Since I can't really leave your dad alone, I use the new TV thing to order my books from the library. They bring them to me the next day!"

From the dining room is Chester's voice, "Ma – you got any more of that best pumpkin pie in the country?" Debbie mumbles, "Too much nutmeg."

November, 2008

Two weeks before Thanksgiving

As Chester goes about his business, Ruthie emerges from the back of the house. She pauses for a moment to watch the man she has spent virtually her life with. Ruthie doesn't see the 77-year-old man who is actually working the garden, but sees the 18-year-old she fell in love with.

As Ruthie is lost in the magic of her private moment, Chester begins to harvest the pumpkins that have ripened over the last couple of days. Chester struggles around the garden with one of the pumpkins, looking for the open tailgate of their old pickup truck.

As Chester sets his load onto the tailgate, he feels a wave of nausea overwhelm him. He steadies himself on the side of the pickup. Ruthie looks on wondering if he has over-done it again. As she is about to call out to Chester, wanting to again caution him to "take it easy, you're not as young as you used to be," Chester turns toward her with his back to the pickup and clutches his chest with his right hand.

Ruthie begins to move toward Chester. As she takes the first couple of steps Chester slides down the bed of the pickup with his fist pressed hard to his chest. In seconds Ruthie is by his side. Chester is in agony, unable to draw a breath. His left arm is shaking uncontrollably. Ruthie kneeling by his side chokes out "CHESTER!" Chester speaks softly between clinched teeth "Sweetie, I've really gone and done it this time." Ruthie steadies herself and tries to focus on the actions that will help Chester. She comforts him, the pain seems to ease up a bit. Ruthie, trying to steady her voice says softly "Chester we've got to get you to a doctor."

Ruthie and Chester struggle to get him into the cab of the pickup. Ruthie slides in under the wheel and turns the engine over. As the engine roars to life Ruthie puts the truck in drive and pushes the accelerator to the floor board in one fluid motion. The pickup fishtails out of the garden and onto the driveway with pumpkins flying out of its open tailgate.

Twenty-five minutes have elapsed since Chester first felt ill. Ruthie swings the truck into the ambulance bay of the local hospital.

Two Hours Later

Montana races through LaGuardia with Marsu chasing after her lugging bags and shouting at the people who are unfortunate enough to get in her way. When they reach the gate the plane has boarded and they can hear, "Last call for passengers boarding flight 7865 for Oklahoma City. They scramble onto the plane and into their seats in first class. Marsu stuffs her bags into the overhead as Montana plops down into the window seat with her laptop in her lap. Marsu sits down and buckles up tears begin to stream down her face. Montana tenderly inquires, "You going to be all right?" Marsu responds, "the only time I ever got back to Oklahoma was for Thanksgiving. For years I've done everything I can to forget I came from Chickaway. Now I'm wondering why I did it that way." Montana says soothingly, "we all do what our destiny calls us to do. No sense sitting around crying about the decisions we made in the past. Grandpa had a great life."

Three Days Later

Later that afternoon at the McAlister family home, all the guests have finally drifted off. Ray asks Montana how her trip to NYC was going before she and her aunt had to leave in such a hurry. Montana says, "Oh Dad, I really enjoy all the activity there. I know that you're always going to worry about your "little girl," but I'm doing fine right now. I have been considering studying at NYU or Columbia. I can

split my time in NYC and on the East Coast and still make classes with either schools Web Matriculation program. And I so love working with Aunt Marsu."

Ray asks, "What would you say if I told you that both OU and OSU are going to be offering Web-based study programs in the near future?"

MONTANA: "Really? What drug them into the real world?"

Debbie, overhearing the conversation decides to chime in, "Your Dad has been pushing for a few new programs that might change the face of Oklahoma.

Montana asks, "What have you and Mom been cooking up lately?"

Hunter jumps in, "It's not just Mom and Dad, Sis. I've been working with Dad at the state capital and think we have really come up with some terrific programs for developing the state's economy. You know the old Wal-Mart stores have turned into healthcare centers and places where the entire town goes for staples. But that's old news. Dad has gotten all the state to formally begin the education process at K-1 and has the legislature focused on getting everyone in Oklahoma through 4 years of college or trade school. He's even gotten a bill through committee that will force the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to screen all inmates and put those that can be rehabilitated into new prison facilities They will provide them with whatever educational program where they can maintain a "B" average. Once they are released they will be able to help our region become more competitive. We'll give them skills to use after release. If we create a great software engineer, and put her to work for some firm that needs a software engineer, from his or her jail cell, they probably won't be fired or replaced once she's out of jail."

MARY: "My, you all have been really busy haven't you."

Ruthie enters the living room and says, "You just wait until they outline their plans to facilitate technology transfer from educators to the private sector. That is a program that may cause investment in this part of the country to soar." They all look at Ruthie shocked.

RUTHIE: "What do you all think I've been doing at the Wal-Mart, ordering peas?" Wal-Mart has become an electronic school house for old people like me."

Mary says, "Let me get this straight, Wal-Mart takes stores and turns them into incubators for high tech companies, telecommuters and functions as healthcare centers. They also offer access to the Internet and libraries." Everyone nods.

MARY: "What did Dad think about all this?"

RAY: "He didn't quite understand the significance of all the high tech gadgets and gizmos until the county extension service began to support precision farming. Once the county implemented a prototype precision farming program 30 miles from here, Dad could actually go and see the benefits of the technology. He didn't think I knew of all the trips he made out there to watch what was going on, but I did."

Hunter offered, "The way we need to look at the economic growth of Oklahoma is through the development of Oklahoma within a much larger geographical region. From the Great Lakes, Chicago through Kansas City to OKC and Tulsa, then on to Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. Dad will be proposing a public/private partnership to support the Oklahoma segment of a bullet train connecting all these cities. NAFTA has caused I-35 to be jammed with traffic headed for distribution centers in Chicago. Those distribution centers will be spread out all along the route the bullet train travels."

Ray interjects, "We all need to get some rest. I have some work I need to get done in the morning. You know Thanksgiving is next week and the legislature will be adjourned. See y'all in the morning."

Thanksgiving Morning 2008

Debbie is up at 5:00 am getting the feast ready for the tribe. Ruthie is sleeping in today. She wanted to get up and do all the work, but the doctor that she is seeing at the psychiatric clinic in OKC via telemedicine has cautioned her to take her time and allow herself to grieve for Chester.

The day progresses slowly, each person remembering the patriarch and missing him. Ruthie even set a place at the table for him without thinking.

As they gather for the meal, Hunter brings in the turkey and sets it down in front of his father, "Gran thinks you should do the honors this year, Dad." Ray chokes back a response and decides to simply nod. He takes the carving knife in his right hand and a large fork in his left, "Now everyone save room for some of that famous pumpkin pie!"

As the meal winds down and conversation waxes between remembrances of Chester and thoughts of the future, Hunter decides it is time to let his family in on a secret. "Dad, what made you decide to run for city council 10 years ago?"

RAY: "You remember, you were there. I wanted Chickaway to be a better place for you and Montana to grow up."

Why?" Hunter squirms in his chair and asks, "Why did you decide to run for mayor and then state senator, Dad?"

Ray responds, "Hunter you were there, too. Your mother managed the campaign for both races. What's this inquisition all about Hunter?"

HUNTER: "Bear with me Dad. You ran because you thought you could make a difference. Right?"

RAY: "Yes, son. Where are you going with this?"

Montana chimes in, "Hunter have you decided to run for office? You have, haven't you! Are you going to run for mayor?"

Ruthie responds before Hunter can catch his breath, "Hunter and I had a long talk the other night. He believes what you're doing, Ray. He thinks it's wonderful and he is so proud of his you. He, too, wants to do something for Chickaway and for Oklahoma. Hunter is going to run for the U.S. Congress next fall. Can you believe it?"

Ray and Debbie both clutch their chests and everyone lets out a collective gasp. Montana and Debbie recover first and immediately begin discussing campaign strategy. Marsu looks at Ray, who still hasn't recovered and says, "See what you've done? You've given him the same sense of obligation our father gave you."

Too Much Nutmeg

RAY: "Well, he'll do fine, sis. He'll do just fine ... and maybe he'll develop the politically correct way to tell Mom she still uses too much nutmeg!"

An Oklahoma Scenario

Prosperity Unleashed

An Oklahoma Scenario

Prosperity Unleashed

What if Oklahoma "bet the farm" and aggressively pursued a vision of being a globally oriented and highly competitive state in the national and international economy?

This scenario describes a future where Oklahomans join together to remake our economy and institutions to accelerate us toward greater prosperity. The ideas are big and bold, but not unachievable.

The only barrier to achieving this sort of Oklahoma is our collective will, timely leadership, and some luck.

The Techno-Leaders

Dr. Frederick Lannigan Born: 1945; Age: 67
Hometown: Stroud, Oklahoma
Education: Oklahoma State University, Cum Laude, B.S. Aeronautical Engineering, 1966;
M.S. Engineering Mechanics, 2002; Ph.D., Engineering Mechanics, 2006;
A.G. Stark Professor of Engineering Mechanics, OTI.

Senator Lee Smith Born: 1947; Age: 62
Hometown: McAlester
Education: University of Oklahoma, J.D. 1971; Oklahoma State University, B.B.A. 1969
Employment: Oklahoma State Senator

The Techno-Students

John Bates, Jr. Born: 1993; Age: 17
Hometown: Guymon, OK
Education: Senior, Guymon High School

Sarah Salolaneeta Born: 1993; Age: 17
Hometown: Tahlequah
Education: Senior, Oklahoma School of Science and Math (OSSM)
Employment: Interning at the National Telemedicine Health Care Center in Oklahoma City

George Ellogy Born: 1993; Age: 17
Hometown: Dewey, Oklahoma
Education: Graduate, Dewey High School; Incoming Freshman, University of Oklahoma
Employment: Interning at Phillips Petroleum Research and Development Lab

The Timeline

Sunday Bartlesville
George Ellogy prepares to enroll in the Oklahoma Technology Institute

Monday Tulsa
Students examine a variety of emerging technologies
George Ellogy Presents "Photovoltaic Energy in Oklahoma"

Tuesday Tulsa
Students have additional "hands-on" technology experiences

Wednesday Heartland Conference Center (Stroud)
Meeting Senator Smith; Traveling to Norman for the Stark Awards

Thursday Oklahoma State University, Stillwater
John Bates Presents "21st Century Agriculture: Hydroponics and Aquaculture"

Friday Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, Oklahoma City
Sarah Salolaneeta Presents "The Black Box"

Saturday Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma City
Welcoming the Oklahoma Technology Institute
Keynote Speaker: Senator Lee Smith

January 2010

Introducing ... The New Oklahoma

Oklahoma charged into the 21st century with bold projects and initiatives that surprised the country ... and itself! After many decades of economic mediocrity, interrupted by an occasional Oil Boom, state leaders and state citizens decided to "shoot for the moon."

It worked in spades.

The state developed the creative Oklahoma Technology Institute; built the Ribbon Train and Heartland International Airport; Privatized the state's OneNet System; and negotiated the Clinton-Sherman Shuttle Landing Site. In the process, state leaders took pains to insure that the projects were designed to enhance and complement Oklahoma's excellent natural environment.

The Oklahoma Technology Institute

Modeled after the Leadership Oklahoma Program of the '90's, the Oklahoma Technology Institute was formed in 1998 by a group of Oklahoma companies. The purpose was to expose bright and promising Oklahoma high school and college students to the diversity of job opportunities available within this State in technology-based companies. The program lasted for two months in June and July.

The founders of the Institute included:

- Noble Foundation (Ardmore)
- Eagle Pitcher Corporation (Miami)
- Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (Oklahoma City)
- National Institute for Petroleum and Energy Research-NIPER (Bartlesville/Tulsa)

For the sake of convenience, the original group began meeting on a quarterly basis at the Wilderness Challenge Center near Stroud. They were soon joined in their efforts by:

- CONOCO
- Phillips Petroleum Company
- Oklahoma State University
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Tulsa

When the Oklahoma Foundation for the Disabled offered to sell its interest in the Wilderness Challenge Center, members of the Institute bought the facilities and the Oklahoma Technology Institute moved into permanent quarters.

The Privatization of OneNet

The Institute idea soon attracted the attention of the State's key political leaders -- in particular, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the State Auditor and Inspector, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the State Board of Agriculture. These five people, as a group, are the Trustee members of the Oklahoma School Land Commission.

They became convinced that the Land Office could play a stronger role in the technological development of the State -- especially in the fields of advanced telecommunication, telemedicine and some of the newer, market-driven applications of electronic commerce.

They saw that the Land Office could operate in the best interest of Oklahoma's school kids in a new way. And so it was that the 1999 Oklahoma Legislature approved the written investment plan presented by the Commissioners and authorized the Land Office to form individual joint relations with existing telecom providers throughout the state. This set the stage for the State's OneNet Telecommunications System to be purchased by the Land Office. It would be operated by the local telecom service providers as authorized by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

The results were immediate and positive.

The OneNet System grew from a network of 33 hubs to a system that blanketed the State. Problems that so often "glitched" the Oklahoma Telemedicine Network were corrected, almost overnight. Use of a combined Internet/OneNet system brought statewide access to Federal and State bid documents and the matching techniques by which contract proposals might be returned.

This shift in OneNet ownership assured Oklahomans that the communications industry would keep the network current in the rapidly changing world of telephonic technology.

The Land Office sponsorship allowed the statewide OneNet system to be used for commercial purposes on a wall-to-wall basis throughout Oklahoma.

"We simply needed to streamline the system. We needed to consolidate and restructure some of the functions of State Government, and make Oklahoma more competitive," Governor A. William Murray was quoted as saying, when asked about the new communications arrangements.

Heartland International and "The Ribbon"

The \$210 billion dollar Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (HR 2400-- also known as TEA210) rekindled support for possible AMTRAK service in Oklahoma. Oklahoma City and Tulsa were competing to be the site for a major International Aircraft Hub and Maintenance Facility. Both Oklahoma cities prepared effective presentations.

Each was ready to do battle. Competition to land this prize was national; and it was strong!

It became clear that Oklahoma would lose this major industrial prospect to another state unless there was some way to combine the location incentives offered by the two Oklahoma contenders. That's when Oklahoma's share of TEA-210 funding was announced and that's when the real importance of our Congressional Delegation's work to connect rail and air modes of transportation with TEA-210 funding really came home.

A state coalition was formed. It included the Governor, State Secretary of Transportation and Legislative leaders. They were joined by major civic and political leaders from Oklahoma City and Tulsa. The Oklahoma Congressional Delegation weighed in to propose creation of a transportation hub that could nail down the location of this International Aircraft Complex and the 12,000 jobs it would generate ... right between the State's two metropolitan centers!

And it worked!

The Oklahoma Turnpike and Transportation Authority was established to bring into being what became known as Heartland International Airport. OT&T also reintroduced Oklahoma to AMTRAK, which began by operating the high speed "Ribbon Train" that tied the Heartland International complex to Oklahoma City and Tulsa. There were plans to build "spoke connections" to regional cities also.

Maybe it was a tribute to the speed of the thing, as it first blurred across the Oklahoma prairie -- looking more like a ribbon than a train... Maybe it was a regeneration of the pride found in the old Woodie Guthrie song that stretches the people of "This Land" tall enough to reach between "a ribbon of highway and a ribbon of skyway."

The Shuttle Lands

The same collaboration and cooperation resulted in the designation of the former Clinton-Sherman Air Base as an alternate-landing site for the Shuttle. But that was just the beginning. With the addition of support personnel and related services needed to sustain the Shuttle, the facilities at Clinton-Sherman were judged ideal to assume additional responsibilities in training and human resource development. The equipment used to support this effort was provided through the Federal Laboratory Consortium as part of the Harold Metcalf Program, authorized under the Dual Use provisions of the American Technology Preeminence Act (P.L. 102-245) and sponsored in cooperation with the Western Oklahoma Manufacturers Council.

Using teaching methodologies developed at Armstrong Air Force Base and the distance learning network established by Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Clinton-Sherman became the site for the G2 (Global 2000) Applied Research Center, specializing in skills training for adaptive learning in a resident setting.

Older and Better

But as often and as rapidly as technology has caused some things to change, others -- thankfully -- never do. The "Snow Birds" were the first to make the discovery when word got out that Oklahoma's health care services were "telemedically" networked between the smallest towns and the State's urban centers.

The region's natural beauty offered a peaceful setting for retirement communities, which led to the further development of centers featuring graduated levels of assisted living. The serenity of the Ouachita Mountains, the inspiration of Talihina Drive and the pristine tranquility of the McGee Creek Primitive Area took over from there, establishing the area as an oasis of recreation for spirit and soul, alike. People were able to find themselves, as campers and cyclists and hunters and naturalists of all kinds gathered amid the rocks and rills and earth of Eastern Oklahoma.

In a world driven by an ever-accelerating process of technology transfer, the region's natural beauty offers a major benefit.

Sunday, June 1, 2010 Preparing for OTI

It was Leadership Training Week for future members of the Oklahoma Technology Institute. One of the newly enrolled students was George Ellogy of Bartlesville. George was attending church and took some quiet time for reflection.

My Pastor's Calling

It was Sunday afternoon and George Ellogy and his family had just returned from church services at Dewey United Methodist Church. He was about to embark on a week long journey that would open up a new world of people and experiences. Was he prepared for his next test?

Reverend Fuller had remarked in his sermon how dynamic and complex life had become, creating boundless opportunities for those who viewed "the glass as half full." He emphasized the dilemmas the human race now faces.

- Environmentally, we must protect our habitat for our wildlife ... yet we must have enough land to grow and raise crops and livestock for the 8 billion-plus people on this planet.
- Governmentally and economically ... how can we develop a global business and social environment that focuses on collaboration and commitment among all nations; how do we ensure global prosperity for the maximum number of people on this planet while reducing the prospects for famine and war?
- With life spans expected to reach as high as 130 by the year 2050, what can we do to ensure that the quality of life is important as the quantity of years lived. Issues of technology, research, religion, ethics... issues that must be discussed and addressed locally and internationally?
- Then the reverend talked about the energy industry, Oklahoma's economic foundation for so many decades. George thought to himself "here we sit, 20 miles from the very first oil well drilled in this state over 115 years ago, and that commodity still remains a global necessity." Yet, Reverend Fuller queried us as to how we balance the desires for cheap energy sources and the protection of our environment from excessive drilling and excavation. Will our future roads and neighborhoods be populated with electric cars and solar panels as our landscape once was with active rotary rigs?

"I ask each of you – who among you will seize the opportunity and develop solutions for these difficult challenges?"

George became even more inwardly reflective: "Can I seize the opportunities and challenges before me? Do I really have a choice?"

The answers would have to wait because he still hadn't packed his suitcases and his mother was wondering when he'd be ready!

There was a sense of trepidation as he filled his suitcases. Seventeen years in Dewey, with nearly all of his "traveling" experiences done by video conferencing. He also knew he had to deliver a powerful speech, since the first leg of the leadership journey began in Tulsa and focused on discussions, presentations, and visitations on state-of-the-art energy applications across the state, nation, and globe. Would his breakthrough research on photovoltaic panel storage be worthy of inclusion into this day-and-a-half symposium?

On The Shuttle

Monday morning finds George boarding the shuttle at Phillips Petroleum with several other leadership classmates from NE Oklahoma. Making their way down the aisle, Drs. Fred Lannigan, Oklahoma Technology Institute Director, and Donald McGee, Director of NIPER introduce themselves and welcome the students to their weeklong journey.

After they pass, George again reviews the agenda for the week, focusing on Monday when he would be the first student to deliver a presentation that evening.

Orientation Week at the OTI

Monday June 2, 2010

The Monday events were stunning. The students had no idea as to the breadth and depth of technology applications in Oklahoma. Monday morning sessions included:

- Advancements in seismic search technologies;
- Biological materials and their role in energy development;
- Fission power (now accounting for 40% of all electrical generation worldwide); and
- Fusion power - will the dream ever become a reality?

Afternoon sessions included 2-way, real-time, fully interactive video conferencing to:

- Wind farms in western Oklahoma, discovering how electricity is generated, stored and transmitted to all parts of the state and region.
- The Sarkeys Energy Center, looking at how basic research has created a multi-million dollar endowment for geothermal application projects and companies around the world.
- The U.S. Department of Energy Efficiency, where scientists research and test techniques to improve energy efficiency in areas like transportation and industrial processing.
- There will also be satellite-fed videoconferences to three hydro-electric facilities around the nation and globe (Oklahoma has partnered with Motorola to provide 24 hour, 365 day satellite transmission capabilities statewide). The dams visited will be in Tennessee, Washington State, and Egypt. We will examine the operating strength of each and the technological innovation they incorporate.

The Williams Center: George Ellogy Presents

Monday night's dinner and presentation was held at the top of the Williams Center, 60 stories above downtown Tulsa. The Williams Companies represents the kind of corporations flourishing in Oklahoma. It "diversified its portfolio" over 20 years ago and utilizes much of its "energy infrastructure" to carry "bit and bytes" on its vast fiber optic network. It is now a global leader in the development and distribution of energy, voice, data, and video.

Dr. Chet Franklin, the primary developer of the commercial application of hydrogen energy, delivered the after-dinner presentation. He is the Professor Emeritus in Engineering at Tulsa University.

As George listens to Dr. Franklin, he remembers his Chemistry II and Physics classes he took over the privatized OneNet system while at Dewey High. He was pleased that the concepts and theorems he thought were so abstract and meaningless were suddenly very relevant.

George was the winner of this year's American Engineering and Technology Council Award for Student Excellence. He delivered his speech on Photovoltaic Energy and its applications to Oklahoma businesses and residents.

His sweaty palms and churning mind prepared him well -- he knocked their socks off!

Tuesday June 3, 2010

The Port of Catoosa and More

Tuesday is a hands-on day, filled with visitations to the important "applications" that ensure statewide excellence in technology. They include visits to:

- Manufacturing sites that produce, for worldwide distribution, energy equipment, infrastructure, and testing devices.
- Software companies involved in improving the "find rate" in energy exploration
- Educational facilities (K-14 apprenticeships and technical trades and Tulsa University's graduate and post-graduate programs in basic and applied research, with student and professional demonstrations); Tulsa's highly successful technology incubator, where commercial applications are realized
- The 40 year-old Port of Catoosa; Oklahoma's primary supply distribution point for agricultural and manufactured energy products.

Following the visitations, the students board the Ribbon for their overnight stay at Heartland International Convention Center.

Wednesday June 4, 2010

After a full day of interactive video seminars, most of the students were tired by day's end. But John, Sarah, and George were wired. Each was to receive a prestigious Stark Award that evening in Norman. They would meet at the Heartland Convention Center video room for the 80 mile (40 minute) Ribbon Train trip to the University of Oklahoma Academic Hall of Fame.

They thought they were going alone until they met Dr. Lannigan at the train station. And he had a surprise for them. The keynote speaker for the Awards Dinner would be the famous Senator Lee Smith. Lannigan and Senator Smith would join the students on the train. It would be a great opportunity for an "unscheduled" seminar.

The Smith and Lannigan Show

Senator Smith greeted the kids. "So these three are going to Norman with me to receive the Stark scholarships. People, this is a real coincidence as Dr. Lannigan is the Stark Professor of Engineering Mechanics at OTI. Fred had a lot to do with making the Institute what it is today," Senator Smith began.

"The senator is too modest; if anyone was a driving force, he was." Dr. Lannigan added.

Sarah asked, "Dr. Lannigan, how in the world did you ever convince the academic community that a technology institute was a good idea?"

"Universities have been traditionally associated with the expansion of pure knowledge. They required academic freedom without regard to practical application. There is definitely a place for that, but Oklahoma also needed something more. We needed an institution specifically devoted to applied advanced science," Lannigan said.

"How did you become involved with the Institute?" George asked.

"I began as a volunteer which gave me the opportunity of giving some input. At the time I was unemployed and felt this was an opportunity to contribute based on my education and experiences. Many of the people with whom I dealt liked my work at the Institute and I was offered a full-time position."

"What are some of your past experiences?" George asked again.

"I wanted to be an astronaut, but at that time people who wore glasses were not considered. I then decided that if I couldn't fly spacecraft I would design them. I got a good start in education at OSU, but there was little demand for aeronautical engineers in Oklahoma, so I moved to Florida, then to California, then to Seattle.

When the downsizing of the late 1990's came, many of the first to go were the high paid managers. Those of us who had not maintained our technical skills were out in the cold. One of them was me."

"If the engineering profession was so flaky, why did you continue to follow it?" Sarah asked.

"The truthful answer to your question is simply, because I love it. There is nothing that gives me more pleasure than to see a project roll out onto a runway; or to see a robot contributing to the care of people not capable of completely caring for themselves."

Sarah turned to Senator Smith, "Aside from the need to convince the academic community that the Institute was a good idea, you also needed to convince the electorate and your fellow legislators. How did you manage that?"

"In one sense, it wasn't really difficult, but was very time consuming and took a lot of collaboration and cooperation. We had a lot of help. A lot of effort came from the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals. That group recognized that if Oklahoma was to have a robust economy in our current times, we must develop a stronger technology base."

"What were the economic considerations?" George asked.

"Let's turn back to the Institute and Professor Lannigan. Aside from such matters as academic freedom, the academics were justifiably concerned about funding. If we build a technology institute, will that not take money from the universities? Initially that was true, but we convinced the academics that it would not be true in the long run. Today, the universities enjoy a higher level of funding than ever before in the history of the State of Oklahoma. Again, economic development was a necessity and technology was the main driver."

"How did you convince the electorate and the legislature?"

With a carefully selected team composed of businessmen, academics and people representing a broad spectrum of the electorate, we initiated an intense lobbying effort aimed at all legislators. We also ran a statewide series of short TV, radio and print commercials. The business community underwrote the commercials. We also had town meetings with question and answer sessions to meet face to face with the electorate. In the end, we were able to form a very vocal and strong coalition."

" You mentioned there were other related events that helped convince the electorate and legislators. Tell us about some of those," John asked.

Senator Smith continuing, "Some of the most significant related events were:

1. Chemical and biological war broke out in the Middle East. The research and development resources on both US coasts were redirected at methods to contain the war and protect the U.S.;
2. General increase in the population of the state created by influx of highly educated and sophisticated people looking for a more relaxed kind of life, yet not total isolation;
3. A rise in the level of income, giving more people the financial resources to buy more advanced technological products;
4. The increase in the educational levels of people who in turn, demanded more advanced products to make their lives easier;
5. The aging of the population who were living longer healthier lives, yet needed some assistance.
6. California fell into the ocean and New York self-destructed!

Thursday June 5, 2010

Telebridge Room of the Heartland Convention Complex

Dr Lannigan gave John a nod signaling time to start.

John moved towards a podium and rattled off several verbal commands that went unnoticed to all except Dr. Lannigan. The lights in the room gradually came down. Immediately behind John and to his right and left, from floor to ceiling, approximately a third of the room's wall became translucent. His voice seemed nervous at first but gave way to a sense of calm when he caught Dr. Lannigan's eye.

John began to speak. "Good Morning. Allow me to take you on a tour of two areas of Oklahoma. The world looks to them as leaders in their ability to develop and apply techniques in practical 'consumer satisfying terms'."

The images on the wall changed to a moving aerial shot of the large genetic greenhouse, support buildings, and acres of livestock pens.

"Guymon's "Greenhouse Complex" continues its drive in producing strains of plants and animals that provide consumers around the world better and more effective means to satisfy hunger and repel animal diseases. I am sure you recall the massive kill-off we had in 2004. Things were pretty bad for many of us back then. From my research, this contributed to breaking the legal bottlenecks associated with genetic engineering. All the controls, safeguards and much of the legalities have since been widely established.

"During much of this time Oklahoma was positioning itself to take advantage of this emerging technology in a practical and commercializing way."

Bits of images danced across the wall. Acres of plants, tree, and crops neatly assembled into a grid stretching out for miles. Groups of various animals occupied each pen.

"Oklahoma, led by Texas County and the Noble Foundation in Ardmore, now account for the majority of patents designed to apply the basic research coming out of the last ten years to animal science and farming."

"Stillwater's Precision Farms, please..."

Again, the images change to a moving aerial shot of rows upon rows of neatly assembled acreage filled with lush greenery.

"Precision Farms is an international innovator in applying technology to agriculture. Recent improvements include computerized control of irrigation, seeding, and fertilizing. The concepts are being used around the world. Their hydroponic produce is becoming more and more successful. It will certainly meet a growing demand for the designer food industry and farmers wanting to customize their products to their customers' needs."

John paused allowing a farm hand to answer a question raised from a member of the audience.

"Excuse me, what are they placing in the shipping cubicles?" asked someone from the audience and directing it to the image of a person at Precision. "These things? We are going to ship this test specimen of seafood grown in our aquaculture lab to our sister lab in Norman. They want to run some tests on 'yields'."

John felt a bit self-conscious since he wasn't aware that aquaculture was being developed at Precision. However, he made a few more comments and concluded by asking if anyone had any other questions. None did.

Dr. Lannigan began applauding. The rest of the group joined in.

Friday June 6, 2010

Black Box Full of Light

The class was hosted at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation. Sarah completed her presentation about the cutting edge health care applications of technology. After her presentation, the class took a 30-minute coffee break. Sarah had become close to John and George. They joined her for some snacks.

In Oklahoma City, Sarah, John, and George are attending separately a series of interactive presentations, including presentations from OneMed, National Telemedicine Healthcare and others. During a break, John, George, and Sarah are talking about some of Sarah's background.

"That holographic conference was great," George said.

"Hey Sarah, my mom works for OneMed in Tulsa, and she says you are one of the reasons that the National Telemedicine Health Care Center is located here in Oklahoma City. The speakers on the center said it was developed in 2002. You were only nine. How is this possible?"

"Actually that's a stretch. But my family has been involved with telemedicine ever since a black box saved my dad's eyesight," Sarah said.

"What?" John asked.

"My dad has diabetes. Diabetes is the leading killer of my people. After my mom died he was working 16-hour days, in two jobs. He didn't have enough time, or awareness, to seek proper care.

When I was six, we went to the Tahlequah Indian Hospital. The doctors told him that he was way overdue for an eye exam. Thousands of Indians had been losing their eyesight to diabetes retinopathy. It is totally preventable if detected early and treated with surgery.

Dad said he didn't have the time to go to an eye doctor, but the nurse said that they could perform the exam right there in only 10 minutes, and have results back the next day. Dad was skeptical. He almost said 'no,' but he decided to do it.

The doctors had him put his eyes to a "black box" ... actually a sophisticated digital computer/camera. The nurse pressed buttons, took digital images of my dad's eyes. These images were sent via the Internet to OU Health Science Center technicians in Oklahoma City. They then created a 3D image of my dad's eyes. They saw that my dad would have gone blind within six months without the surgery. My dad had emergency eye surgery the next week at Baptist Hospital. His disease was arrested and his eye sight was saved."

"Your dad sure was lucky. What happened since then?" John added.

Sarah said, "To make a long story short, the Dean McGee Eye Institute has since become the national center for Native American eye screening. The Oklahoma Technology Commercialization Center helped take the service to market. All the screening is done digitally and necessary surgeries are done close to the patients' home. The cost of these screening machines is less than \$1,000. Diabetes retinopathy screening is now routine and automated in every Indian Health Service facility. Aside from doing good and saving lives ... it makes a lot of money for Oklahoma and Oklahomans. Finally it was the application that led the federal government to establish their National Telemedicine Center here in Oklahoma City."

"Well, I guess its time for our holographic conference with the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientists," John said alerting the group.

"That's right. The OMRF is great. It's the new home for the National Center for Emerging Viruses. They have stuff going on there that is of international importance. Like when they discovered the key to reversing HIV infections last year."

Sarah, George, and John all smile in excitement as they arrive at the OMRF holo-conference.

John muttered in disbelief..."All because of a black box."

Saturday June 7, 2010

Oklahoma Proud

Formerly a 12-year member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and a current member of the Oklahoma Senate of 20 years, the Honorable Lee Smith has committed his energy to Oklahoma's future growth. Senator Smith graduated from OSU, and received his JD from OU in 1971. He worked for 5 years in his hometown as an attorney before entering the field of politics as a young man. Senator Smith is a 5th generation Oklahoman, and the first in his large family to earn a college degree.

It is Saturday evening. Senator Smith is giving the keynote speech for the assembled parents, students, corporate sponsors, Academy members and leaders of the OTI.

"I want to begin my speech tonight with a trip back in time to 1999. I was a member of the Senate. I saw a presentation by the Oklahoma Academy. Real data. Good stuff. I asked myself - "what do I want as my legacy? What does a crotchety Senator want to leave behind?" I decided that no one in this state is more important than our youth."

"Let me tell you what it looked like around here in '99. Most of you kids were about 5 or 6 years old, then. I'll bet you were designing your first science fair project at your first grade."

"I got to thinking that we needed more in place to make it possible for you and your kids and your grandkids to have the best, and I was gonna get those other Senators off their lazy butts and get them

doing some hard stuff. Not just pleasing Senior Citizens by building more prisons or hospitals for the other old farts." Laughter filled the room.

"My career goal was not more recognition for me. It was a better Oklahoma for you."

"In the late 90's we had a very low unemployment rate. Everyone had a job....BUT did they have a GOOD JOB? Did they have benefits? The Quality Jobs Act did a lot to improve the situation for folks at new and expanding companies, but not enough. We still had lots of what I called "slumlord" employers who wanted cheap labor at \$6 or \$7 per hour. They did not want to give health insurance, paid vacations, additional training, and all the things it takes to buy a home, raise a family and stay in our home state."

"AND...quite frankly, who could blame them? Our educational attainments were below national averages and going in the wrong direction."

"Professor Lannigan... not that money is everything ... would you like to guess how much was spent in the average school district in the U.S.? Not the HIGHEST district ... the AVERAGE district." Lannigan guessed \$150,000, then several higher amounts. Grinning, Smith says, "Nope, The average spent was \$336,510, and when I learned that I was stompin' mad."

"Here is another fact for you ... how many elementary school classrooms even had 1 computer? Only 39%."

"I've been talking about our elementary schools, but you 'hoity toitys' in the Ivory Tower have NO room to brag. You were awarding less than 20% of your degrees in Sciences and Technology. If I were a wagerin' man (my momma taught me never to gamble or drink, or dance, but she forgot to mention cigars! ... laughter) I'd bet that those students in Sciences and Technology were mostly international students. We were way, way below the US average here. What were those college professors training our kids to do?"

"Well in my assessment, from my simple country boy mind, things were not getting any better. We had a job to do. We rolled up our sleeves, "bet the farm" and focused on four main areas: Transportation, Energy, Agriculture and Life Sciences. Things we were already pretty good at.

"Anyway, here we are tonight. The things you saw this week are only a glimpse of things you will build. Thank you for being bright and ambitious. After you travel the world ... and we insist you do ... please come back home. We need you. As you mature, you will know better that Oklahoma is a great place to live, work, and play ... because you helped make it so."

The End

Companion Volume 1

Separate and accompanying documents include an Executive Summary and the detailed recommendations and discussions.

The stories and recommendations are on the Oklahoma Academy website (www.okacademy.org) and are in both .html and .pdf formats. They are accompanied by 27 slides describing our April 1998 technology conference. The slides are viewable through your web browser without additional software.