Economic Summit draws impressive crowd

Chancellor Johnson delivers keynote address

Some 100 professionals from business, industry, economic development, and higher education converged June 4 at Southeastern Oklahoma State University for the E3 Summit. This economic development event was hosted by Southeastern as part of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Making Place Matter initiative.

A total of 13 individuals – including Chancellor Glen D. Johnson of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education and Oklahoma State Senator Josh Brecheen -- presented comments on a wide variety of topics, divided into four categories: Collaborative Governance, Social Inclusion, Livable Community, and Innovative Economy.

Southeastern president Larry Minks offered welcoming remarks, and Kathy Hendrick, director of the Center for Regional Competitiveness, was the event organizer.

In his keynote address, Chancellor Johnson, who served as president of Southeastern from 1997-2006, noted the strong degree of linkage between economic development and higher education.

“The overwhelming majority of states that have a high percentage of their citizens with a college degree have a higher per capita income,” he stated in his presentation.

“If Oklahoma is going to remain economically competitive, we must have the best educated and productive workforce that we can assemble,” he said.

The chancellor noted that the state system has an “aggressive plan” in place to address the changes and challenges in the 21st century. He cited the Complete College America program -- a degree completion initiative that exceeded its first-year goal of a 12-year plan -- as one example.

“We know that in a global economy, over 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs will require a college degree,” he said.

Johnson also pointed to the value of a college degree, citing statistics that demonstrate the lifetime earnings far exceed the holder of a high school diploma. Also important, he said, is the fact that 89 percent of Oklahoma college graduates with bachelor degrees stay in the state and are employed one year after graduation.

Finally, Johnson emphasized that studies/surveys by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Chamber Foundation, Fallin for Business.com, and the Battelle Study all gave high marks to higher education in the state.

Conducted for the State Chamber of Oklahoma by the research firm Battelle Technology Partnership Practice, the study states that public higher education “brings highly substantial benefits for Oklahoma.”

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Presidential Golf Classic

Roma Italian Restaurant carded a hot 50 to win Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s 16th-annual Presidential Golf Classic on a warm June 14 at Chickasaw Pointe Golf Club. Attorney-at-Law Brett Morton’s team finished second, with Salita’s Mexican Restaurant taking third place. Morton’s team also shot a 50 and Salita’s scored 51. The results were determined by a scorecard playoff. Longest Drive went to Pam Young and Justin Brown. Kelsey Hanebaum and Mac Hamilton won Closest to the Hole honors. Southeastern president Larry Minks presented the award to the first-place team. Pictured from left: Dr. Minks, Tony Liridon, Brad Aycock, Boston Brittain, Jordan Sullivan, Josh Hobbs, and Stewart Murray.

Plumb named to Continuing Higher Education board

Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s Dr. Robin Plumb has been nationally recognized with her election to the Board of Directors of the Association for Continuing Higher Education.

Plumb is in her third year as Director of Academic Services for Southeastern at the University Center of Southern Oklahoma (formerly the Ardmore Higher Education Center).

Plumb is one of three new members of the board of directors, joining Paula Hogard of Penn State and Terry Ratcliff of Whitworth (Spokane, Washington) University.

Southeastern’s primary representative at the University Center for Southern Oklahoma, Plumb is responsible for the day-to-day operations, coordinating academic programming, and teaching courses as needed. She also serves as faculty advisor for Professional Education students, as well as advising and assisting students in other academic disciplines.

She also advises students regarding financial aid and scholarship opportunities available through the University.

From 2010-2012, Plumb was an assistant professor of Educational Instruction and Leadership and coordinator of field experiences at Southeastern. Prior to that, she was director of academic programs for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.
Southeastern to host OCAN kickoff event on Aug. 6

Southeastern Oklahoma State University will host a kickoff event for the Oklahoma Community Anchor Network (OCAN) on Aug. 6 at 10 a.m. in the Glen D. Johnson Student Union.

Guest speakers will include Chancellor Glen D. Johnson, State CIO Alex Pettit, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Secretary Gary Ridley, Southeastern president Larry Minks, and Durant mayor Jerry Tomlinson.

A reception will immediately follow the event.

OCAN is a partnership among the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

Funded by a $74 million grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, OCAN is designed to deliver high-speed broadband services to rural and underserved Oklahoma. OCAN’s expanded broadband network encompasses 1,005 miles, reaching 35 Oklahoma counties.

The network connects 33 community anchor institutions, including state colleges, universities, hospitals and local libraries, to the state’s existing networks.

Campus beautification efforts continue

If you’ve driven by the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University lately, you may have noticed some visible changes, not the least being an improved appearance thanks to landscaping on the ground in the form of flowers and stonework.

The area around the loop is visibly improved, with new decorative safety lighting and sidewalks enhancing the overall look.

“Campus beautification has been a priority for quite some time, but our resources have been limited somewhat,” said Southeastern president Larry Minks. “We have benefited greatly from the services of a landscaping architect (Scott Fairbairn with Howard-Fairbairn Site Design from Oklahoma City) in developing a campus master plan that follows landscaping principles and guidelines. In addition, groups such as the Alumni Association and Student Government Association (SGA) have stepped up to lend support. We’ve also utilized grant money to plant a number of trees across campus.”

Among the major improvements are:

-- The Fine Arts-Russell Corridor and Campus Loop Projects, which included major improvements involving drainage, parking, sidewalks, ADA ramps, steps, decorative safety lighting, and landscaping. Parking around the loop is now limited to visitors and handicapped, and a bus drop-off area has been constructed north of the Morrison Building.

-- Landscaping in the fountain area on the Morrison Front Lawn. Thus includes flower bed work and other landscaping that was funded by the Alumni Association

-- Landscaping near Bloomer Sullivan Arena, the Theatre Building, and the new General Classroom building

-- Landscaping on new parking lots, located adjacent to the Visual & Performing Arts Center, at First Avenue and University Boulevard, and at Fourth Avenue & Montgomery

-- ODOT Tree grant that was utilized on Highway 69 from Montgomery Street to University

Additional campus lighting and improved signage are among the areas of need to the overall plan, according to Minks.

The SGA held an educational forum on campus beautification in the spring at which it presented the results of its survey on the topic.
University hosts Summit

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According to Battelle, Oklahoma’s higher education system generates economic returns that equal nearly five times the amount of funding it receives. Released earlier this year, the report says the state sees $4.72 in return for every dollar of state funding that public higher education receives.

Other speakers at E3 included Donnalla Miller, business owner; Bob Rhoden, Workforce Solutions Texoma; Kathy Hendrick; Kerry Manning, Southern Workforce Board; Kenny Simpson, Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma; John Redman, USDA; Bill Carter, Oklahoma Small Business Development Center; Susan Stockton, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Brad Underwood, Texoma Area Paratransit System; Tony Kaai, Denison Development Alliance; and Brian Aspell, manufacturing executive.