

# *Chapter 17*

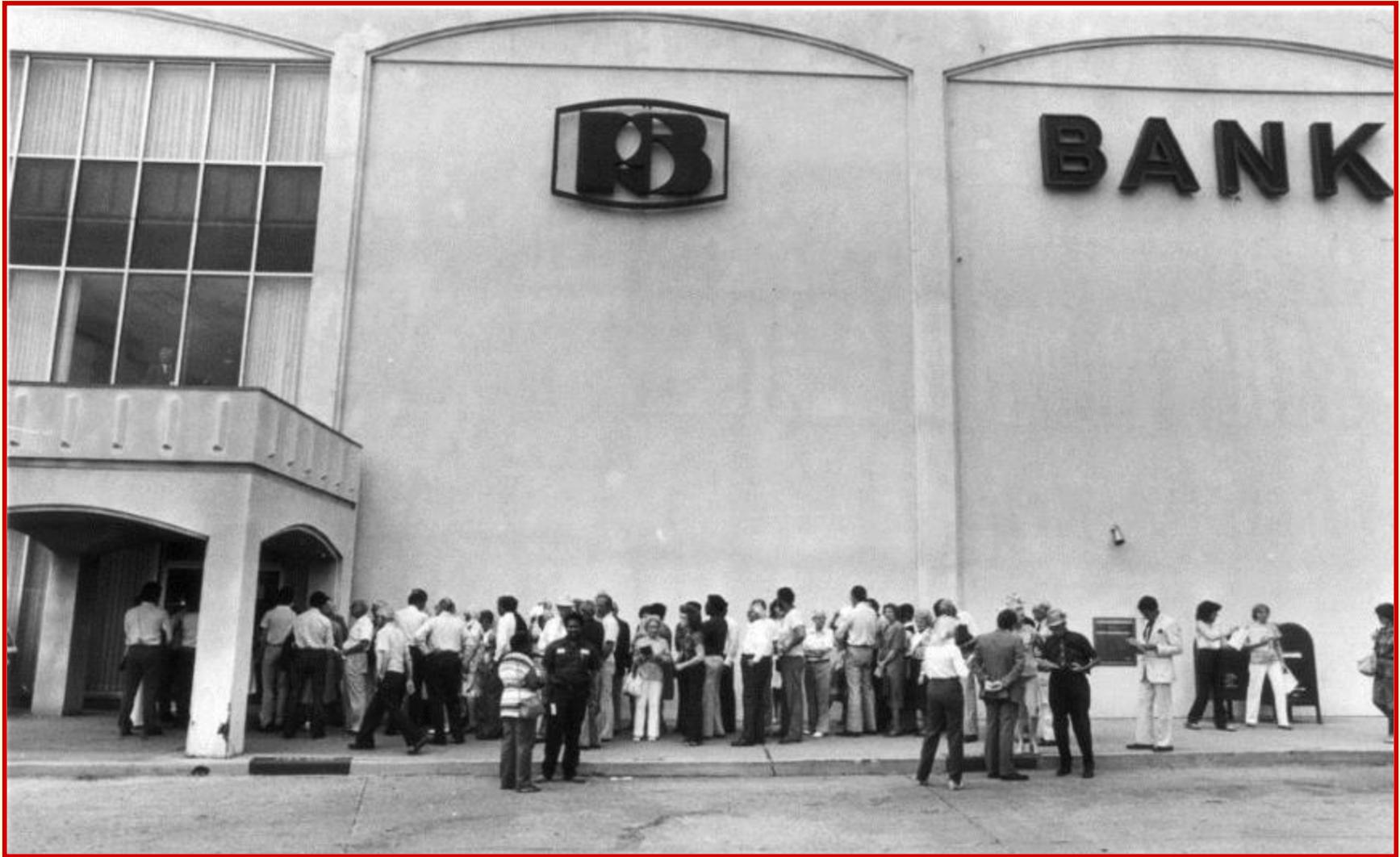
## **Modern Times**



*In this chapter:*

- ❖ *In the 1980s and 90s, several Oklahomans will rise to positions of power in the federal government. But major scandals in the banking industry and in county government will cripple the state's economy.*
- ❖ *The 1990s and the new Millennium will include devastating weather events and the worst domestic terrorist act in American history. But citizens will react with courage and compassion to establish "The Oklahoma Standard."*

# *Section 1: The 1980s*



## George Nigh was elected governor in 1978, and was the first elected to two consecutive terms.



- *He was the longest-serving Lieutenant Governor in state history, serving from 1958-1962 and again from 1966-1978.*
- *Nigh had also served as governor for 9 days in 1963. Senator Robert S. Kerr died unexpectedly, and then-Governor J. Howard Edmondson resigned, making Nigh the Governor. Nigh appointed Edmondson to Kerr's Senate seat.*
- *He is the first governor to win all 77 Oklahoma counties.*
- *As a state representative in 1955, he introduced legislation making "Oklahoma!" the state song.*
- *He later served as president of Central State University from 1992-1997.*

**Jeane Kirkpatrick of Duncan served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from 1981 to 1985.**

*She had served as foreign policy advisor to Ronald Reagan during his 1980 presidential campaign as well as serving on the National Security Council after Reagan was elected.*

*Following her government tenure, she taught at Georgetown University.*



**Admiral William J. Crowe of Oklahoma City served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.**



*He was the highest-ranking military officer in the United States under presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.*

*He was the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.*

# Wilma Mankiller became the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation, serving from 1985-1995.

- *She was elected deputy chief in 1983, and assumed the chief's duties when he resigned to become head of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. She was re-elected twice, the last time with 83% of the vote.*
- *Mankiller reinvigorated the Cherokee Nation through community development projects, tribal-owned businesses, and building a hydroelectric dam.*
- *She was Ms. Magazine's Woman of the Year in 1987.*
- *She revived the tribal Sequoyah High School and was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton.*



# In 1980, the FBI began investigating what became known as the County Commissioner Scandal.

*Commissioners in 69 of the state's 77 counties were forced to resign, and 13 counties lost all three of their commissioners in connection with the scandal.*



*Commissioners, contractors, and suppliers were convicted of taking kickbacks, or illegal payments from profits made on overpriced merchandise and services.*

*In 1983, Oklahoma experienced its first-ever revenue failure, where tax collections fell below 95% of estimates, leading to government budget cuts.*

*Unemployment increased and many businesses went bankrupt.*



*Among the casualties was the Champlin Oil Refinery in Enid, which shut down in part due to tougher new environmental protections laws.*



**Overproduction in the oil fields in the late 1970s caused the oil market to crash in the early 1980s.**



**One Oklahoma City bank had financed a large number of loans to oil companies that now couldn't be repaid.**

# The Penn Square Bank Failure resulted in losses of more than \$500 million for its customers.



*By 1990, more than 50 other Oklahoma banks and many national banks closed due to similar problems.*

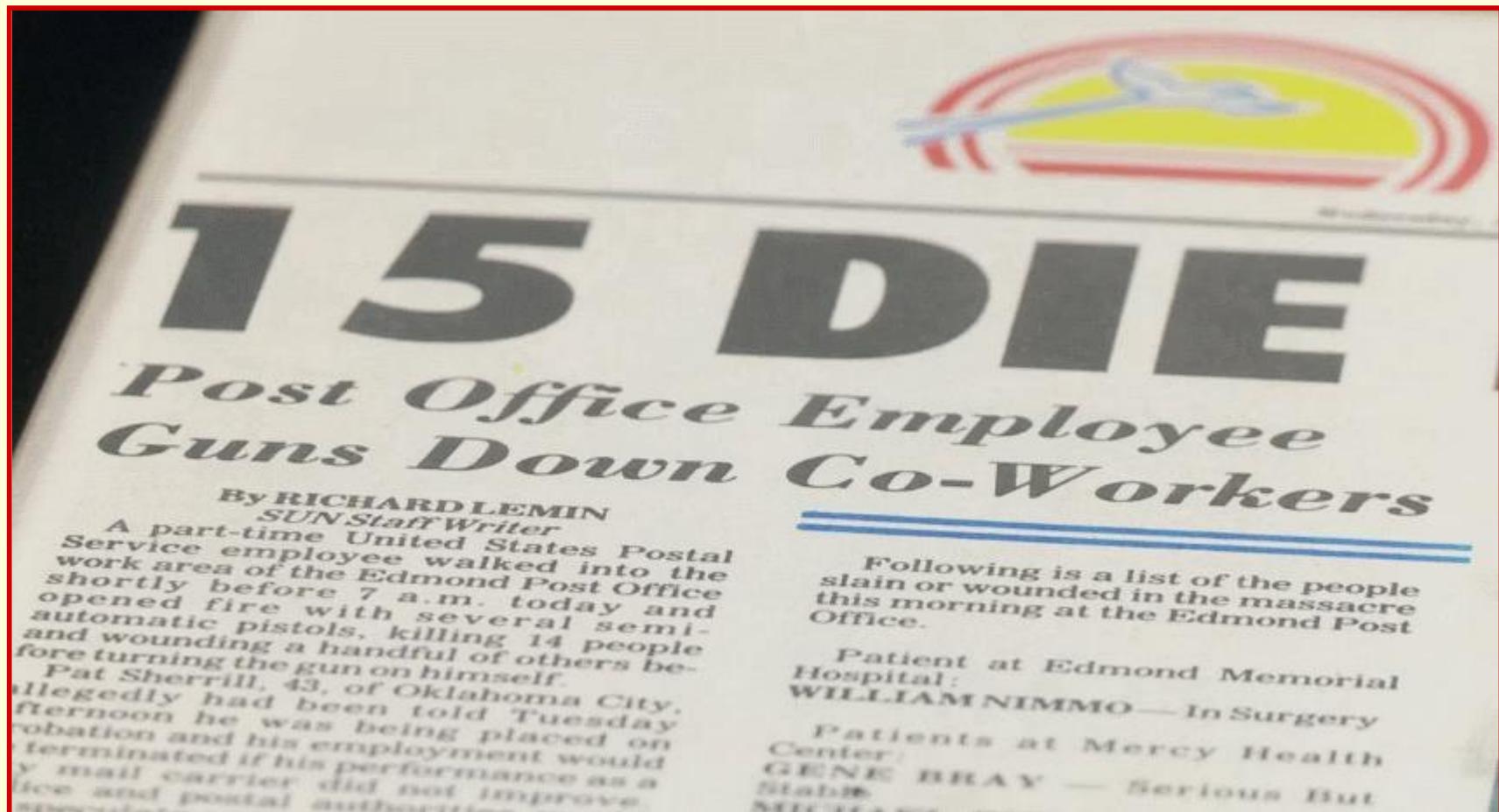
**The Indian Blanket, or *Gaillardia pulchella*, was adopted as the state wildflower in 1986.**



**In August 1986, Oklahoma suffered the loss of 14 lives in a massacre at the Edmond Post Office.**

*At the time, it was the third-largest incidence of gun violence in U.S. history.*

*I covered the story as a reporter for the Edmond Evening Sun newspaper.*



In order to stimulate the faltering economy, voters approved pari-mutuel wagering in 1982.

The state legalized gambling on horse races as a way to generate public revenue.

### The Three Basic Bets

You bet on a horse at the given odds.

#### WIN

This is the simplest and most common bet. You win money only if your horse finishes **FIRST**.

#### PLACE

You win if your horse finishes **FIRST** or **SECOND**.

#### SHOW

You win if your horse finishes **FIRST**, **SECOND** or **THIRD**.



**Remington Park opened as a racetrack in 1988,  
and a casino was added in 2005.**

*Blue Ribbon Downs opened in Sallisaw in 1984 but closed in 2010.*



*Rural towns suffered from the hard times in the oil and agriculture businesses of the 1980s.*

MAIN STREET



NATIONAL TRUST  
*for* HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**The Main Street Program helped communities  
revitalize their historic downtown areas.**

*Duncan became the first Oklahoma town to get the makeover,  
including new streetlamps, sidewalks, and more than 80 renovated storefronts.*

*The OK Mozart Festival attracted musicians from around the world when it debuted in 1983.*



*The state hosted hundreds of international athletes at Olympic Fest '89, a 13-day, 38-sport event.*

*It is credited with the arrival of professional-level sports to the state.*



The state commemorated its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1982,  
known as The Diamond Jubilee celebration.

*Activities were held throughout the state, culminating with a  
star-studded show at the Myriad Convention Center in Oklahoma City on Nov. 16.*



*The festivities started with an address by  
“President Theodore Roosevelt.”*



**THIS IMPOSING DOCUMENT**

(which was printed on a good grade  
of paper, certifies that)

**Richard Lemin**

is the recipient of the  
**STATE OF OKLAHOMA'S**

**You Done Real Good!**

(all things considered and being the way they are)



*466/1000*

**Award**

DECEMBER 1, 1982

DATE

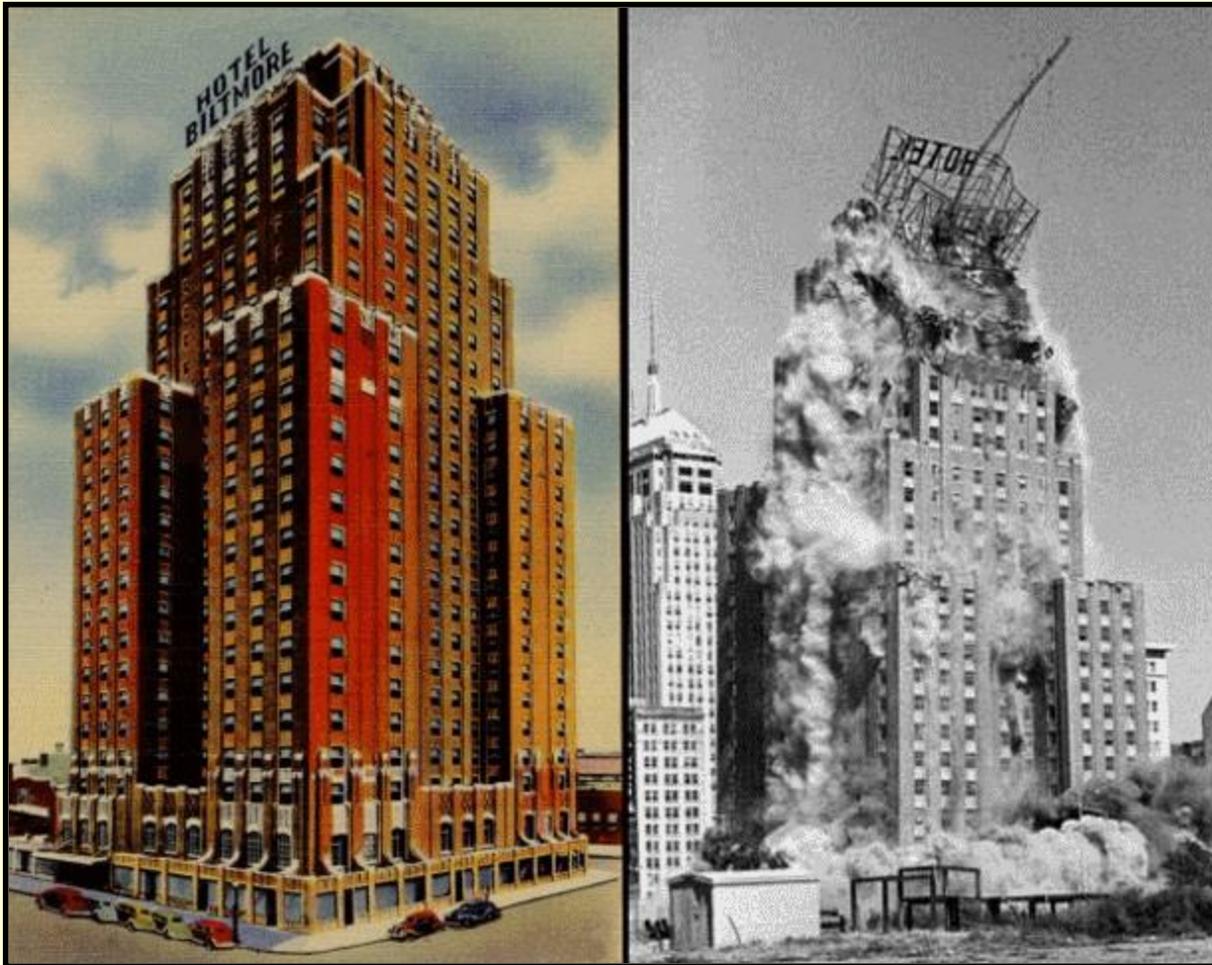


*George Nigh*  
GOVERNOR GEORGE NIGH

## *Section 2: The 1990s and the 2000s*



## Urban renewal led to the demolition of dozens of inner city buildings in the 1970s and 80s.



*The 33-story Hotel Biltmore, constructed during the Great Depression in 1932, was imploded in 1977 as part of a master plan to help revitalize downtown Oklahoma City.*

**The Myriad Botanical Gardens opened in 1988,  
an oasis in the middle of downtown OKC.**

*Its centerpiece is the massive Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory.*



# The Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPs) continued the city's renaissance, starting in 1993.

*The nine projects included the Bricktown Ballpark, renovation of the Cox Convention Center, improvements at the State Fairgrounds, the Bricktown Canal, a new Library, Trolleys, a rebuilt Civic Center, creation of the "Oklahoma River," and the construction of the Chesapeake Arena.*



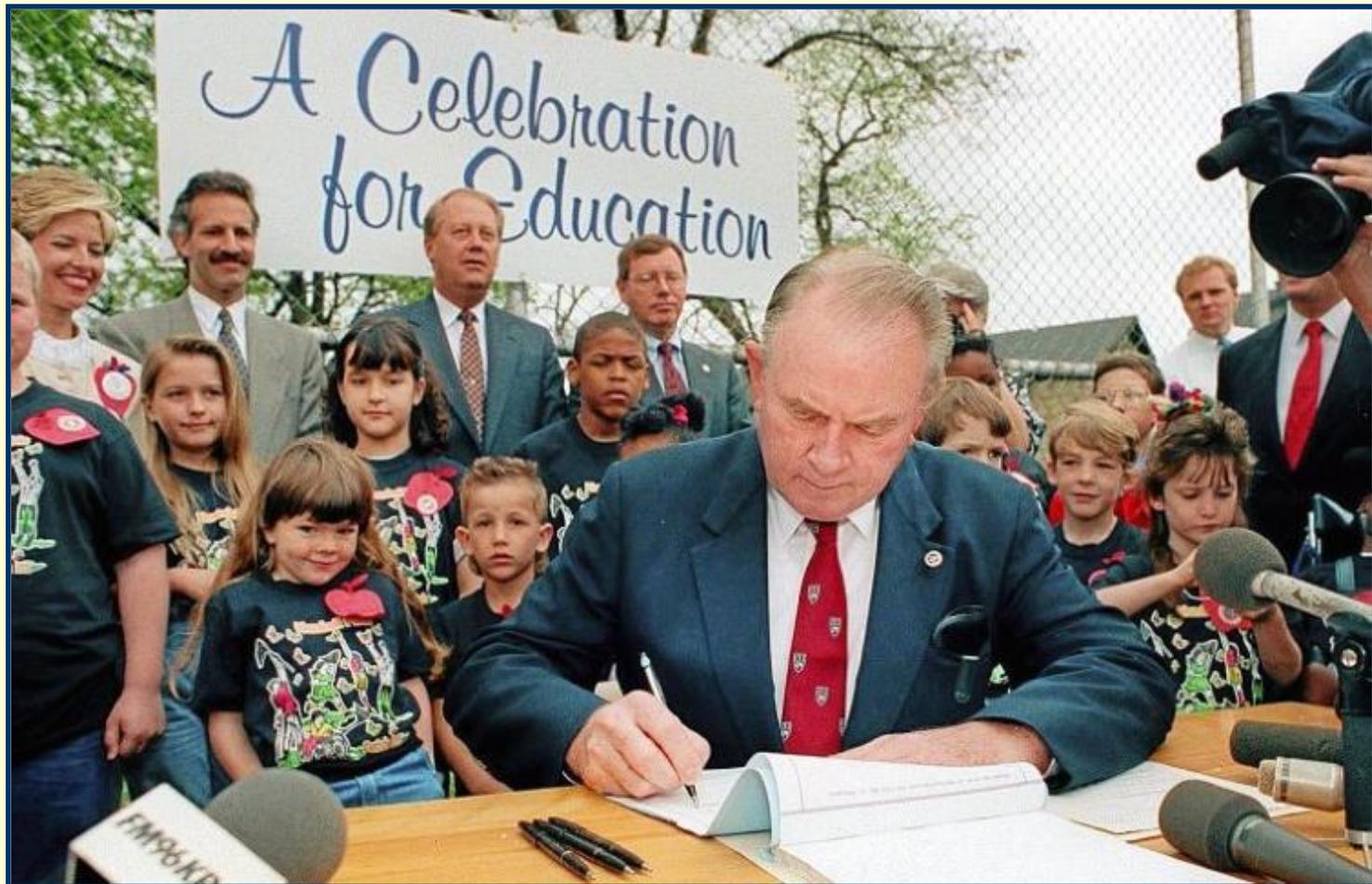
# The transformation of the old freight yards included building The Bricktown Canal.

*Water taxis stop at various restaurants, shops, and nightclubs.*



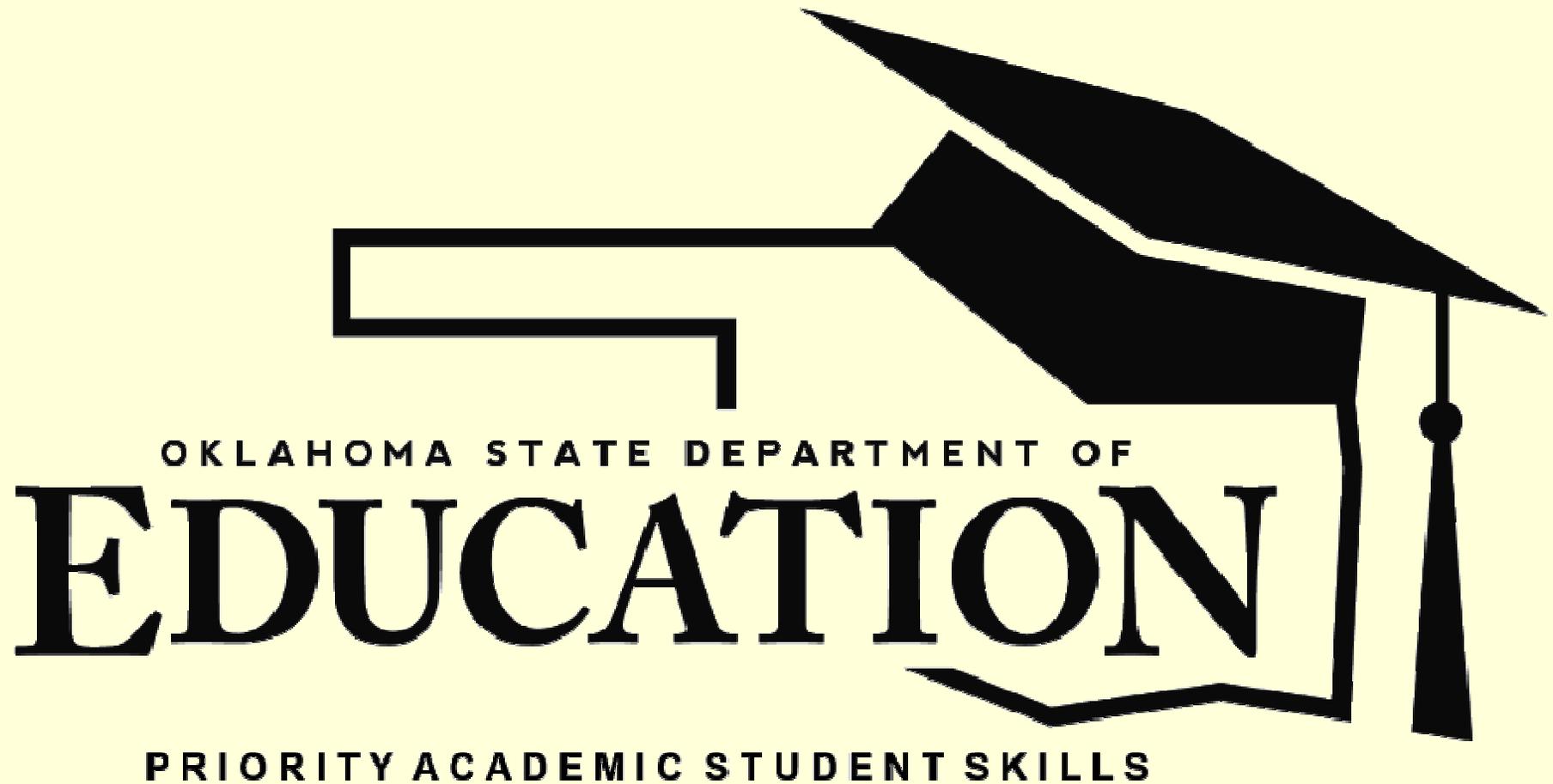
# In 1990, House Bill 1017 provided \$570 million to improve education in Oklahoma.

*It was passed with the encouragement of Governor Henry Bellmon.  
One of its main goals was to limit class sizes.*



**It also created achievement standards called the  
Priority Academic Student Skills, or PASS.**

*PASS identified the basic knowledge/skill levels for Oklahoma students.*

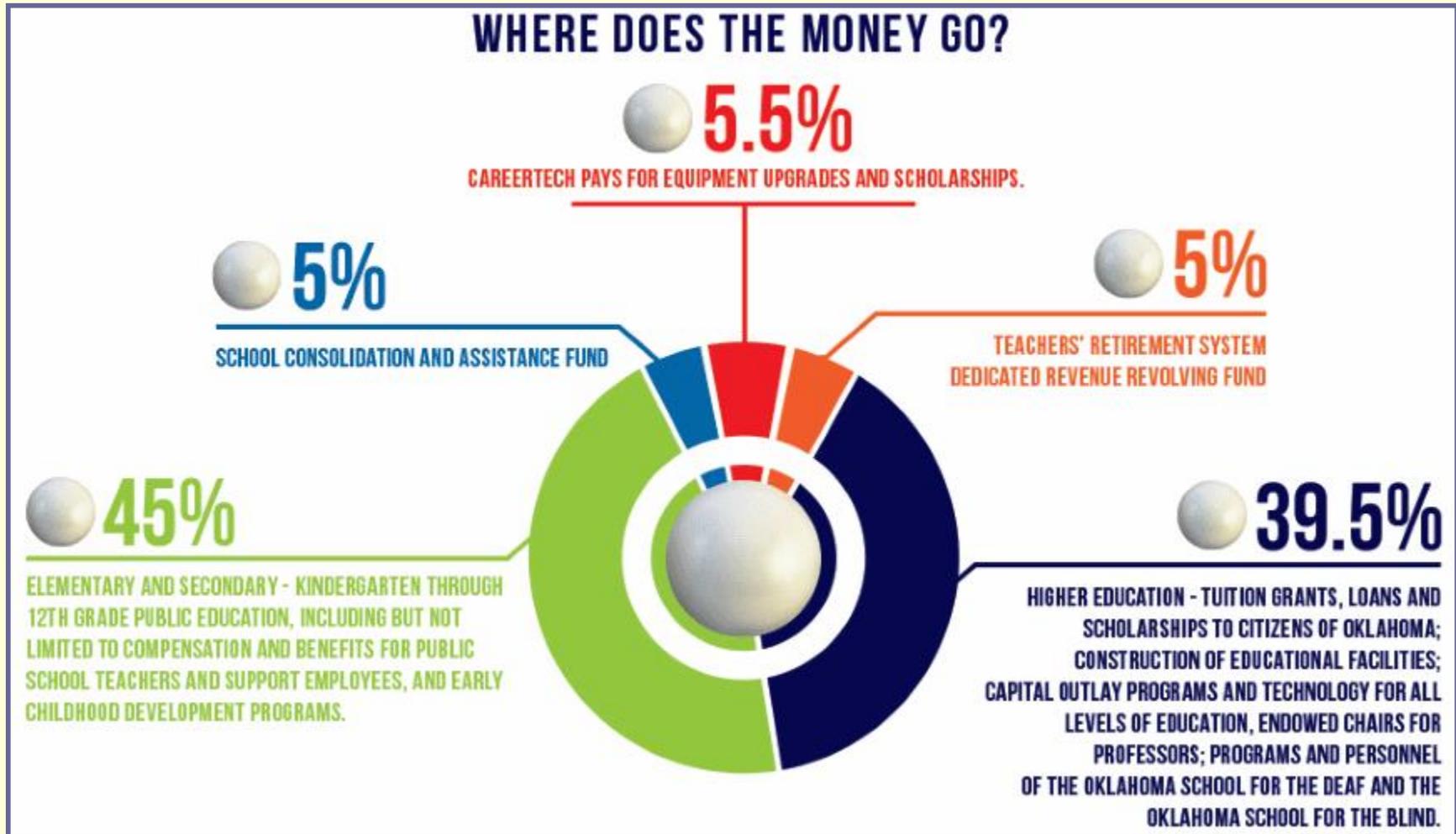


# In 1991, Sandy Garrett became Oklahoma's first female Superintendent of Public Instruction.



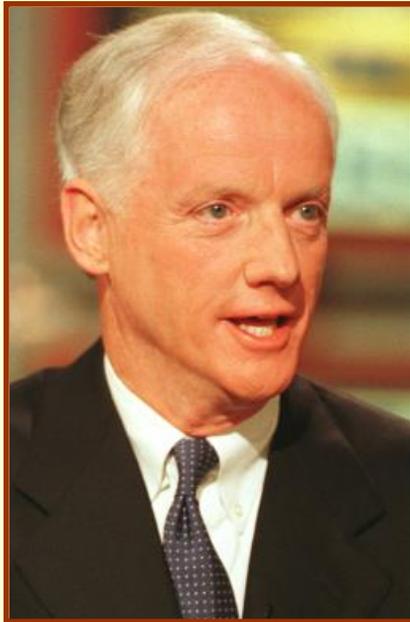
- *Garrett was an outspoken advocate for children and an active participant in education reform.*
- *During her administration, the state's Pre-K programs were nationally recognized as among the best.*
- *In the wake of school violence across the country, she also initiated the nation's first statewide school safety hotline.*
- *She held the Superintendent's office for five terms (20 years), retiring in 2011.*

*The state voted overwhelmingly for a lottery in 2004, and earmarked revenues for education.*



# The Governors in the 1990s were Democrat David Walters and Republican Frank Keating.

*Walters served as Governor from 1990-1994.  
His term was marred by a controversy that led him  
to plead guilty to a misdemeanor election violation.  
He did not seek a second term.*



*Keating served as Governor from 1994-2002.  
During his administration, he helped enact  
welfare reform and lowered taxes.  
He faced a great challenge right after taking office.*

**On April 19, 1995, a truck bomb exploded outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.**

*168 people were killed, including 19 pre-school children.*



**Within hours, the FBI released a sketch of the man who had rented the truck in Kansas.**



*The suspect, known only as "John Doe No. 1," had rigged a homemade bomb from fertilizer and fuel oil that equaled 4,800 pounds of dynamite.*

*His name was Timothy McVeigh, and he was arrested for a routine traffic violation on Interstate 35. He was convicted in 1997 and executed in 2001.*



**Amid the devastation, a new image of our state emerged: that of caring, strong, courageous people who responded to a crisis with determination. It became known as the “Oklahoma Standard.”**

*The Oklahoma City National Memorial was dedicated on the fifth anniversary of the bombing.*



# 36 people were killed and 800+ were injured during the May 3, 1999, F5 tornado in Moore.

*3,000 buildings were destroyed by 300-mile-an-hour winds, and another 5,000 were damaged. Losses exceeded \$1 billion. Five others died later of their injuries.*



# **An early warning system is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.**



- *Five government organizations under the NOAA partnership are involved in severe weather research and forecasting:*
- *The National Severe Storms Laboratory*
- *The National Weather Service*
- *The NexRad Radar Operations Center*
- *The Storm Prediction Center*
- *The Warning Decision Training Center.*

*In addition, the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, the OU School of Meteorology, and the Oklahoma Mesonet make our state internationally known as the leader in weather research.*

# Section 3: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century



**Climate change continued to be a problem for Oklahomans in the early 2000s.**



*A statewide ice storm in 2002 downed power lines, leaving thousands without electricity for a month.*



*A severe drought that started in 2000 led to multiple wildfires in western Oklahoma five years later.*



**Oklahoma is a hub for the development, use, and impact of advanced medicine.**



**The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation  
is a biomedical facility dedicated to  
understanding and curing human diseases.**

*OMRF has a worldwide reputation for its research on Alzheimer's and Lupus.*



**Oklahoma's universities are helping to develop nanotechnology, or the ability to work inside the body with microscopic machines.**

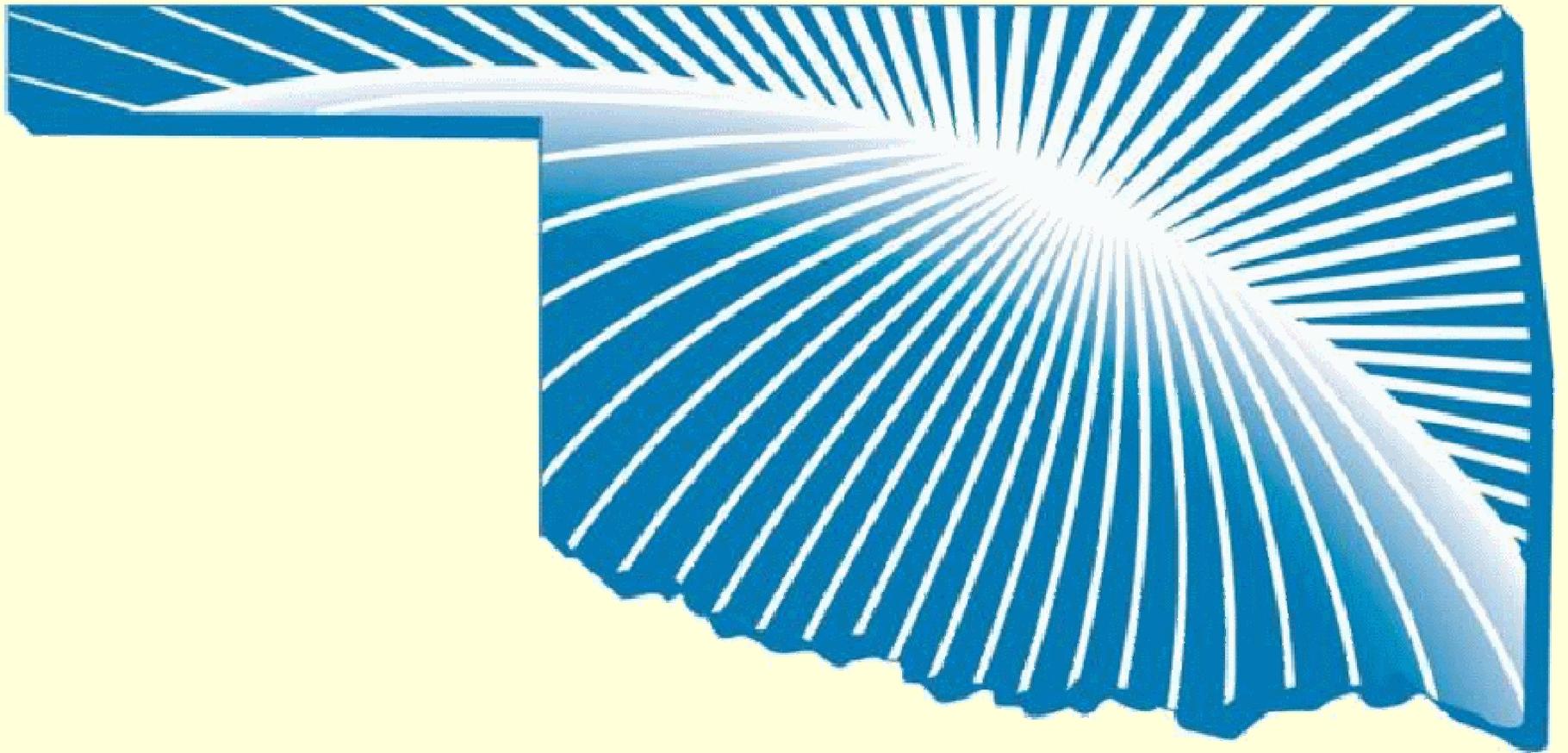


**Integris Cancer Institute is one of only ten centers in the U.S. offering proton therapy.**



*Oklahoma's economy is more diversified now  
than at any previous time in its history.*

*As a 1957 advertisement read, the state has gone from "Arrows to Atoms."*

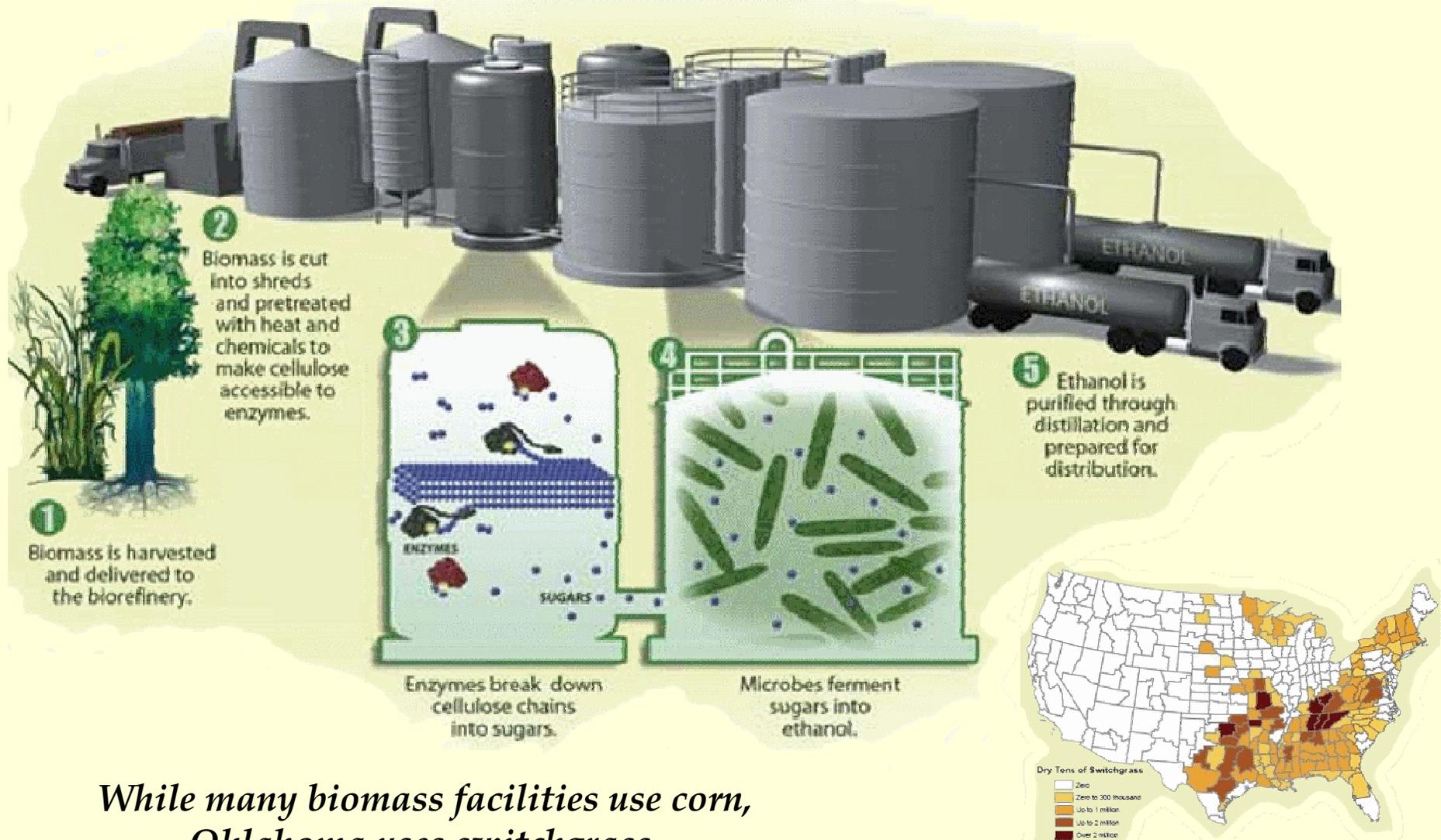


**Compressed Natural Gas  
is an environmentally  
cleaner fuel than other  
fossil fuels, and costs  
less for consumers.**

*Oklahoma ranks  
third in the nation for  
production of CNG.*



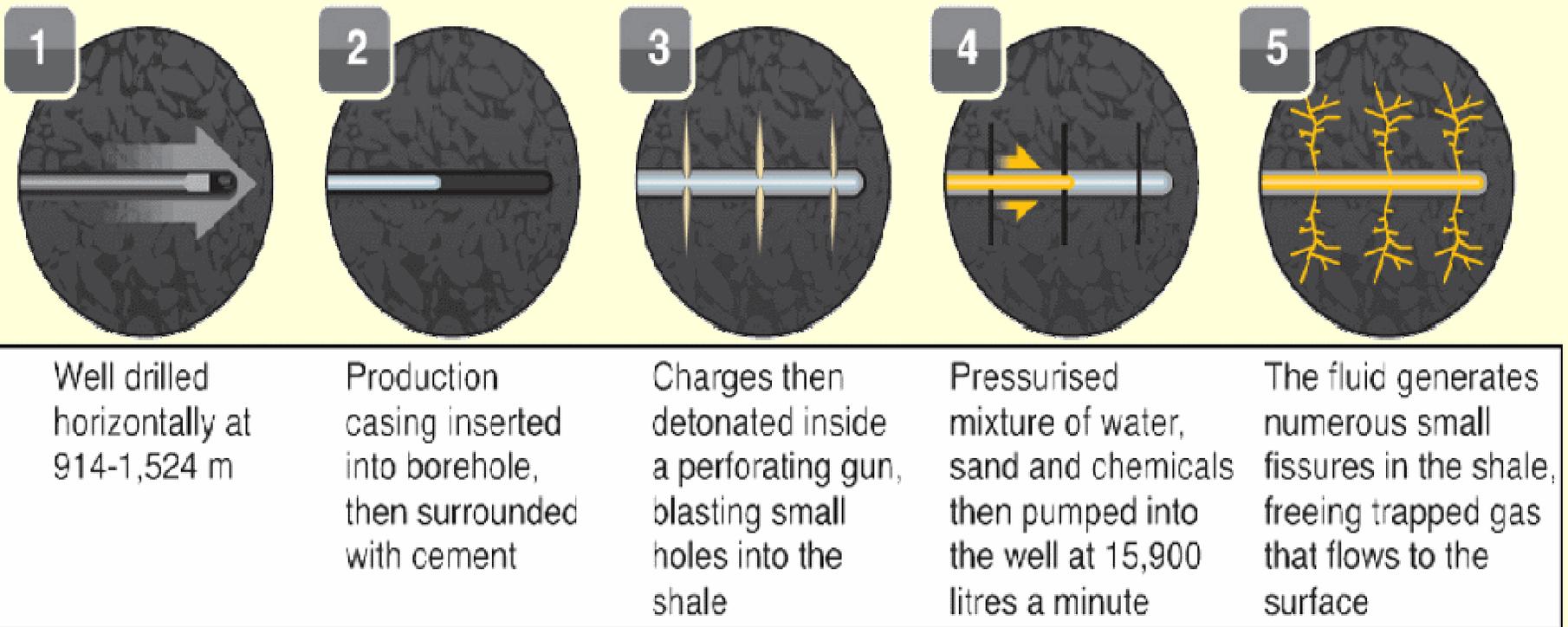
# We are also developing biomass, or renewable plants that can be made into ethanol gasoline.



*While many biomass facilities use corn, Oklahoma uses switchgrass.*

# One of the most controversial subjects today is hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.”

*Although it allows the state to access more oil and natural gas, it has also been linked to increased earthquake activity.*



**Tinker AFB is home to the Airborne Warning and Control System, which monitors threats to the U.S. with long-distance radar-equipped aircraft.**

*AWACS planes are part of the 552<sup>nd</sup> Air Control Wing.*



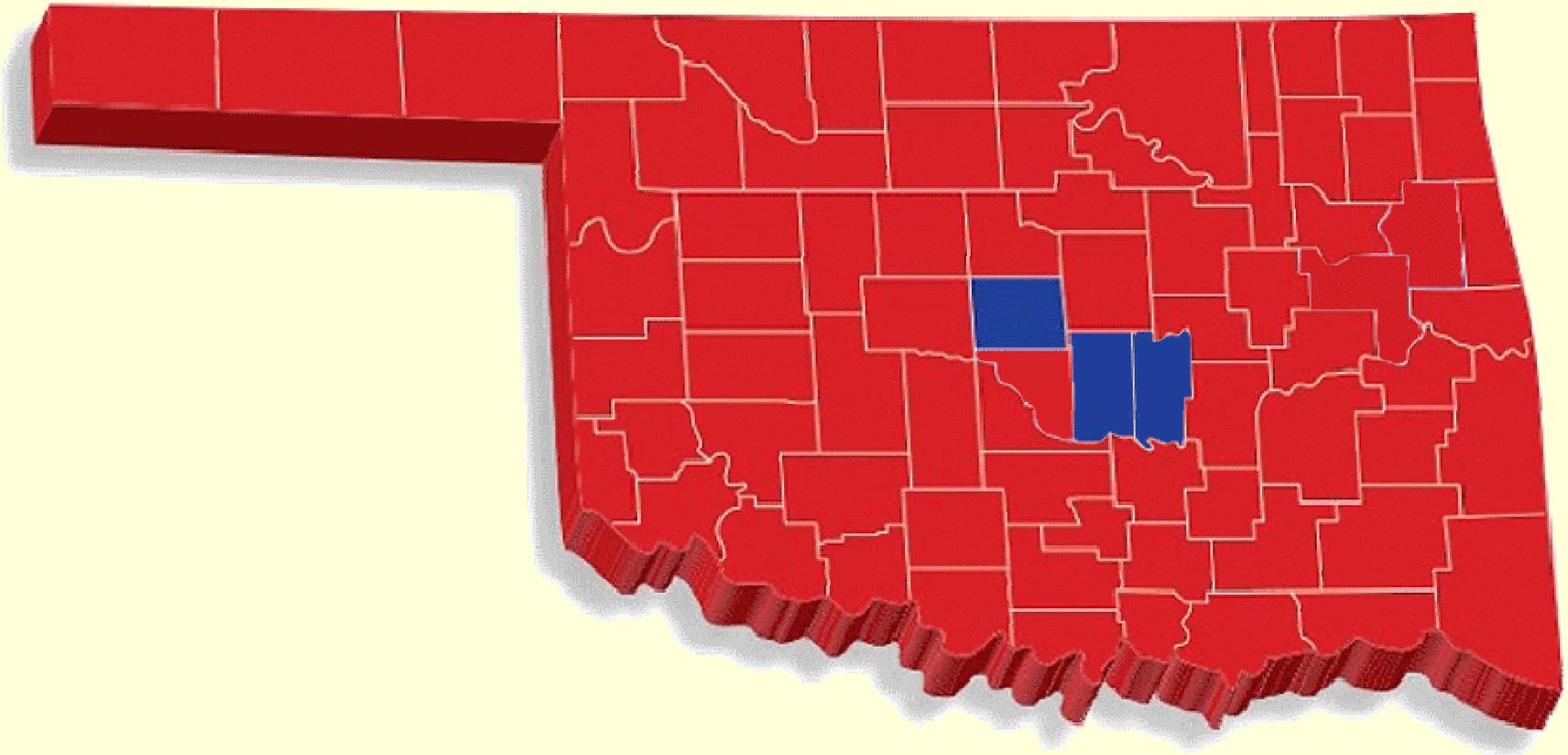
# **The Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center provides training, logistics, and safety-related services as part of the Federal Aviation Administration.**

*The FAA Academy here is the principal training facility for air traffic controllers.*

*Located near Will Rogers World Airport, it is home to the largest number of U.S. Department of Transportation employees outside of Washington, D.C.*



*State politics are increasingly divided along rural (Republican) and urban (Democratic) lines.*



*In the 2018 elections, Oklahoma County elected a Democratic Congresswoman, the first time a Republican had not won the 5<sup>th</sup> District seat in 43 years. Cleveland, Muskogee, and Cherokee counties also voted Democratic, but other counties in their districts prevailed.*

## Brad Henry of Shawnee was elected governor in 2002 by “barnstorming” the state in an RV.

- *He campaigned on increasing salaries for teachers, state employees, and Highway Patrol troopers, as well as increasing funding for colleges by instituting the state lottery to raise money.*
- *He signed legislation to limit the sale of the ingredients used to make methamphetamines.*
- *He was re-elected in 2006 with 66% of the vote, the widest margin in 50 years.*



**In 2010, Mary Fallin became the state's 27<sup>th</sup>  
- but first female - governor.**



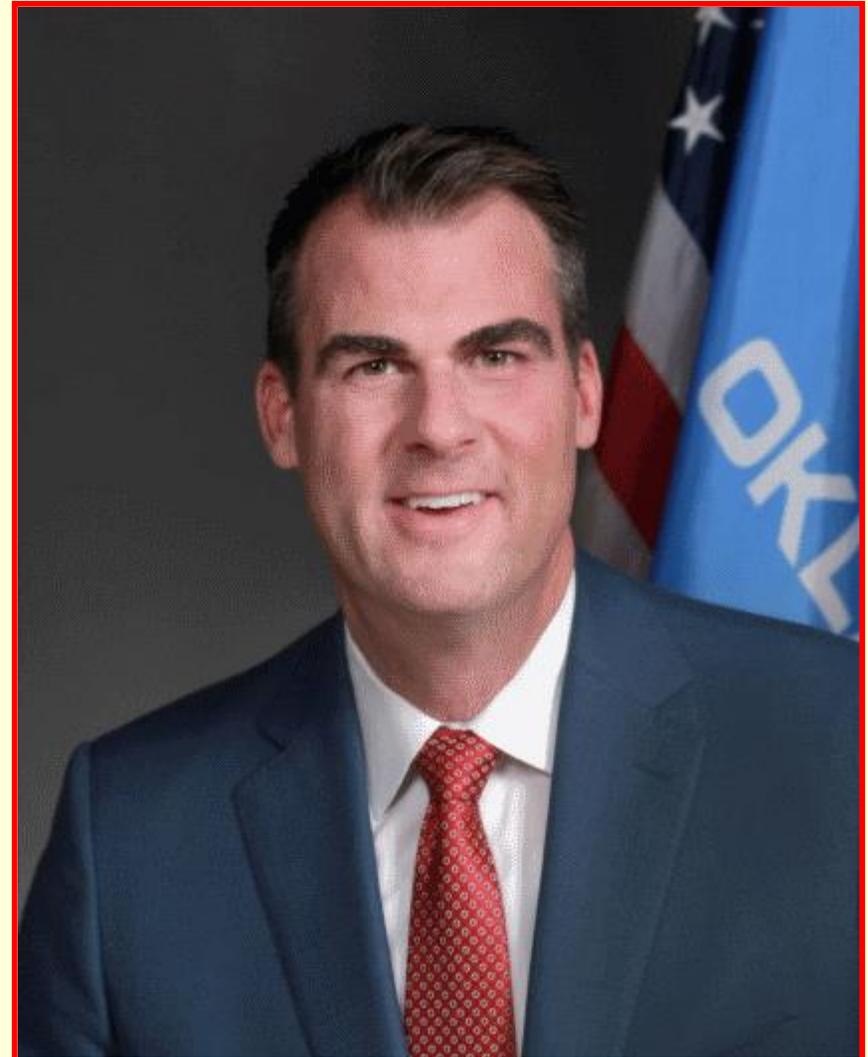
*She had previously served 12 years as Lieutenant Governor and four years in the U.S. Congress.*

*By the end of her second term, however, she was described as the "Most Unpopular Governor in the United States," with only 19% of Oklahoma's voters approving of her performance.*

**Tulsa businessman Kevin Stitt was elected  
as the 28<sup>th</sup> governor in 2018.**

*He was the founder  
and CEO of  
Gateway  
Mortgage Group  
when he decided  
to run for governor.*

*His agenda  
is focused on  
changing the structure  
of state government.*



**As tribes searched for funding sources, the American Indian gaming industry took shape.**

*Casinos like WinStar were built on tribal lands and have spurred tourism.*



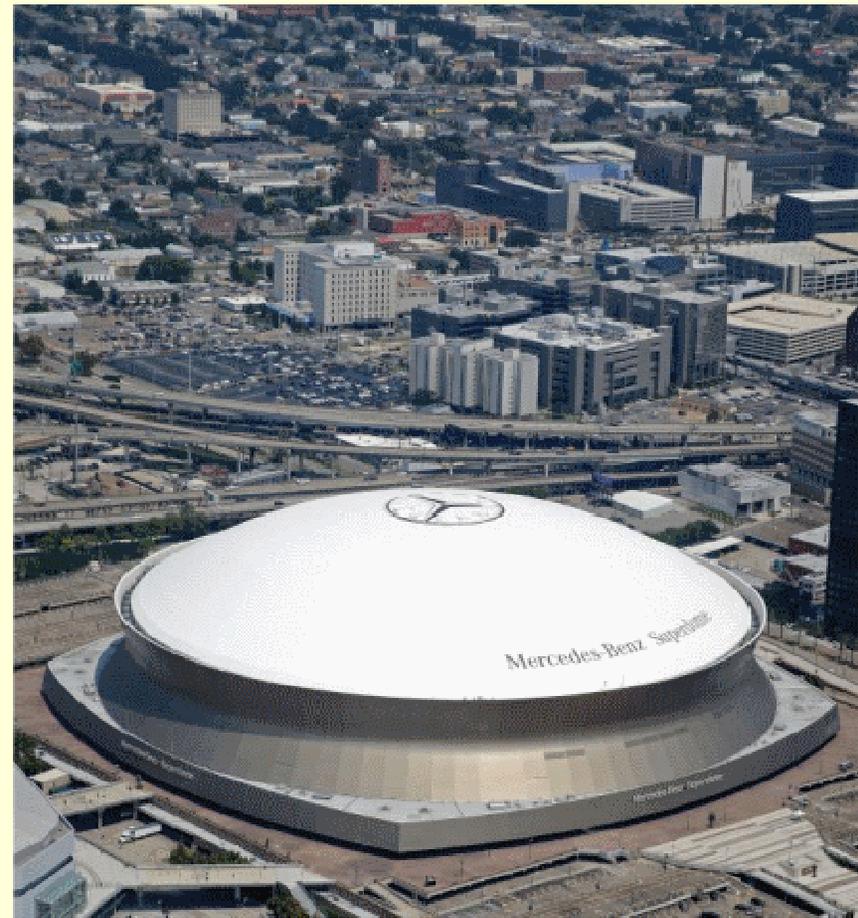
# Construction is underway for the world-class First Americans Museum.

*Native heritage is also on display at the Chickasaw Cultural Center near Sulphur,  
the Tsa-La-Gi Ancient Village at the Cherokee Heritage Center near Tahlequah,  
and the annual Red Earth American Indian Cultural Festival.*



*In 2005, Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans, forcing the National Basketball Association to temporarily relocate the Hornets to Oklahoma City.*

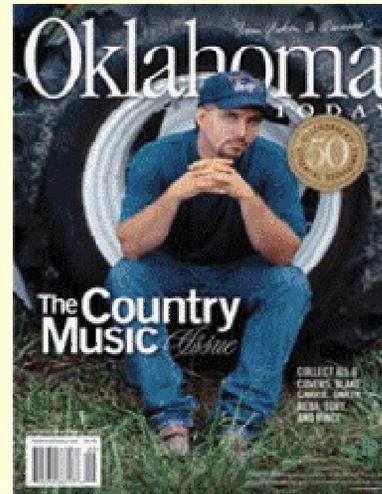
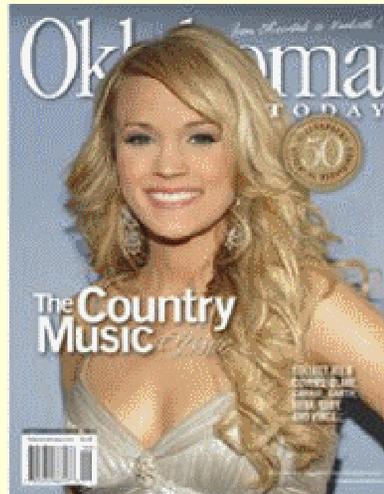
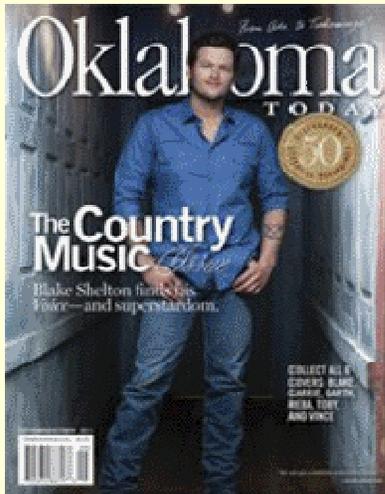
*Their reception led the league to consider a franchise here.*



**The Oklahoma City Thunder was established in 2008 and have made the playoffs ten times.**



# Our state is also home to some of country music's greatest stars.



*Top left:  
Blake Shelton*

*Top center:  
Carrie Underwood*

*Top right:  
Garth Brooks*



*Bottom left:  
Reba McEntire*

*Bottom center:  
Moore's  
Toby Keith*

*Bottom right:  
Vince Gill*

# Garth Brooks, of Yukon, is the best-selling Country Music artist in the United States.

*As of 2020, he has sold more than 156 million albums and singles.*



# Ree Drummond hosts The Pioneer Woman, a Food Network program, from Pawhuska.

*In 2016, she opened The Mercantile restaurant and retail store.*



**The 50-story Devon Tower, completed in 2012,  
is the tallest building in the state.**



*The SkyDance Bridge has spanned the 10-lane Interstate 40 / Crosstown Expressway since 2012.*



# The Made In Oklahoma Coalition features more than 40 state food manufacturers.



## *Brands include:*

- *Bar S Foods lunchmeats and hot dogs*
- *Fast Fixin's frozen entrees*
- *Field's Pies*
- *Garden Club Jellies and Jams*
- *Griffin Foods*
- *Head Country BBQ Sauce*
- *Hiland Dairy*
- *J.C. Potter Sausage*
- *Shawnee Mills*

*Oklahoma's Centennial was memorialized with the 45 sculptures of the Land Run Monument.*



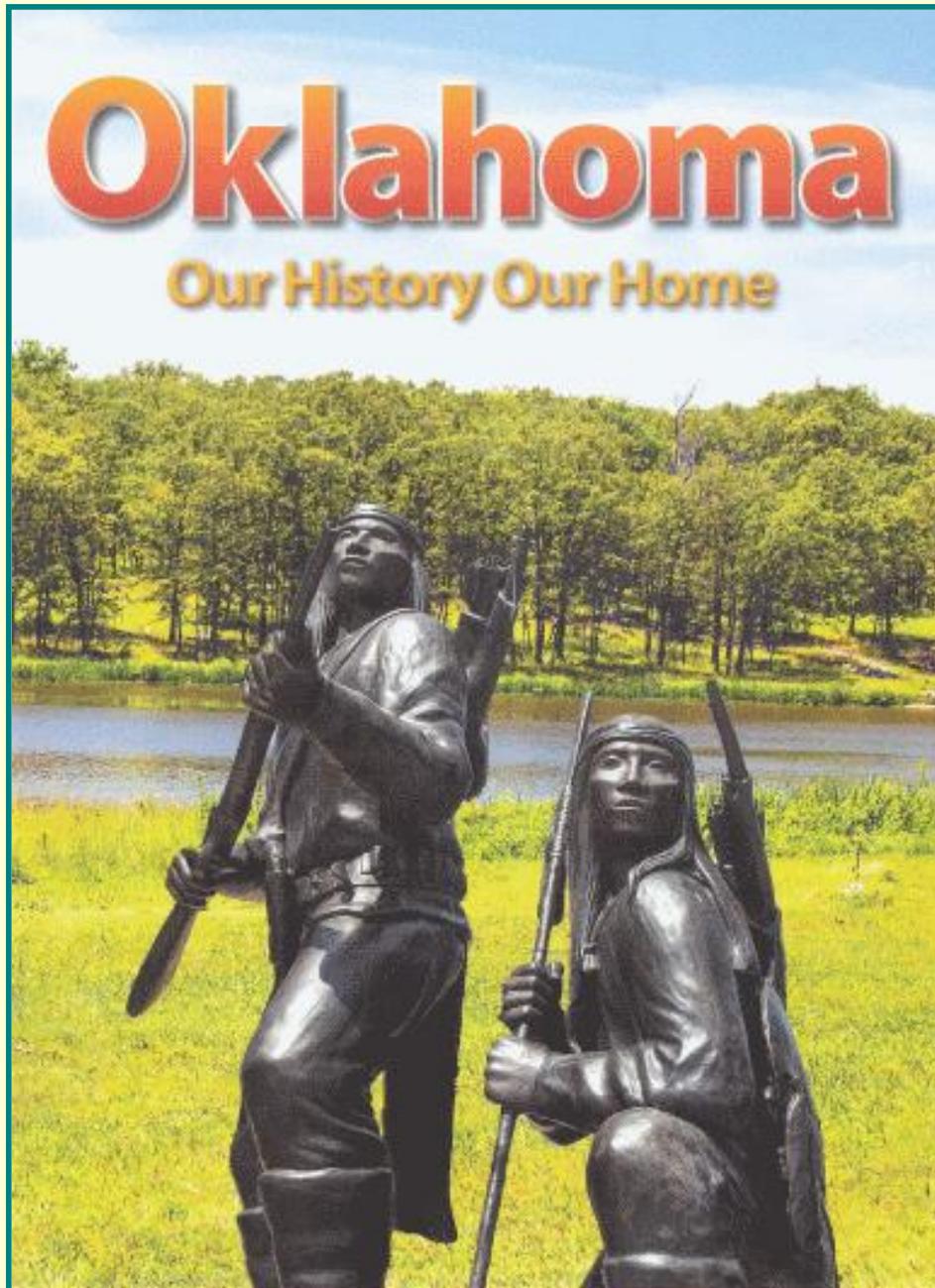
**In 2002,  
“The Guardian,”  
by Seminole artist  
Enoch Kelly Haney  
was added to the  
State Capitol Dome.**

*At the dedication, Haney,  
speaking for the warrior, said,  
“And I will stand guard here,  
over our great state, over our  
majestic land, over our values.*

*My lance pierces my legging  
and is planted in the ground.*

*I will not be moved  
from my duty,  
from my love of Oklahoma  
and all of its people.”*





*For more  
information  
about Oklahoma  
in the last decade,  
please read  
Chapters  
18 and 19  
in the textbook.*