

On November 22nd, Oklahoma Panhandle State University and High Plains Technology Center formally announced a joint \$1.5 million grant, and held a groundbreaking to build a new welding technology training center in the Guymon Industrial Park. The grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, will be matched with \$389,504 in local investment and is expected to help create 30 jobs.

The project is designed to set those interested in a career in welding on a degree program that sees them through high school graduation to a bachelor's degree. Students can earn their Welding Certificate at HPTC while also taking classes at OPSU to earn their Associates and Bachelor's Degrees.

OPSU President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, stated, "This is transformative for the region. As a university that continues to grow, we are excited to be a part of this amazing partnership to strengthen both education and our workforce in the panhandle region."

"This opportunity would not have been possible without the assistance of Mr. Cornell Wesley," added Faltyn. "He has been a true champion of our region." Wesley serves as the Economic Development Representative of Oklahoma and North Texas for the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

Dwight R. Hughes, Superintendent/CEO of HPTC, stated, "High Plains Technology Center is dedicated to serving the workforce needs of NW Oklahoma and doing our part to make Oklahoma a top ten state. This grant will give us the ability to enhance our already existing partnership with OPSU by providing us with a joint facility we both can utilize to bring the best of both worlds together."

Michael Ray, President of the Guymon Public School Board said, "Guymon Public School is proud to be a part of this effort that shows the power of working together to further the

education possibilities and opportunities for our kids. We are excited about working with OPSU, High Plains Technology Center and the EDA in bringing this welding technology center to help the entire Panhandle area.”

“This facility will not only serve the students of the Tri-State region with high level technical certification programs, but will also provide a seamless pathway for students wanting more education to roll their certifications into a degree plan,” said Hughes.

“The new welding technology training center in Guymon is a great example of what can be achieved when matching the passion of local leadership with the resources of the federal government,” said Congressman Frank Lucas. “Oklahoma Panhandle State University has been a cornerstone of western Oklahoma for over a century and this new facility demonstrates their continued dedication to education and workforce development. The welding technology training center will prepare students for the high-quality jobs needed in Oklahoma’s growing and diversifying economy.”

OPSU Vice President of Outreach, Dr. Ryan Blanton commented, “This project addresses the direct need for a highly-skilled, technical workforce in our region and this will have a direct impact on our region’s economic development and our industries ability to expand their operations.”

“This \$1.5 million grant from the Economic Development Administration to build a new welding technology training center in the Guymon Industrial Park is welcome news,” said Senator Inhofe. “I am proud of the continued success we are seeing under the Trump Administration and these new jobs are just one more testament to our combined efforts. Congratulations to Oklahoma Panhandle State University on this win—it is well deserved.”

“We are all better together than we are by ourselves apart. The fact that the EDA is investing in this collaborative partnership is proof that we are headed in the right direction,” Dr. Faltyn stated.

This project is funded under the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 \(PL 115-123\) \(PDF\)](#), in which Congress appropriated to EDA \$600 million in additional [Economic Adjustment Assistance \(EAA\) Program \(PDF\)](#) funds for disaster relief and recovery as a result of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, wildfires, and other calendar year 2017 natural disasters under the [Stafford Act](#).