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For Immediate Release

CLEVELAND COUNTY BACKS LOCAL INNOVATORS

Global Entrepreneurship Week brings attention to the importance of Oklahoma’s start-up community

NORMAN, Okla. — Recognizing the importance entrepreneurs play as an emerging economic driver in Cleveland County, the Board of County Commissioners affirmed Nov. 13-19, 2023, as Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) on Monday, Nov. 6 with a formal resolution.

The determination to support local entrepreneurship and help grow an enriched local economy has already been backed by action. On April 3, 2023, commissioners allocated \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to the Norman Economic Development Coalition (NEDC) for the expansion of their Startup 405 program — a significant move in support of entrepreneurship and economic development in the region.

Startup 405, certified by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce as a business incubator, plays a vital role in assisting startup companies to thrive and flourish within the state. By providing a nurturing and supportive environment along with access to essential tools, resources, and technical assistance through customized programming, Startup 405 empowers businesses to achieve long-term success.

“Despite the negative impact of COVID on jobs and businesses, we’ve seen an increase in start-up activity in our community,” Commissioner Rod Cleveland said. “When we learned that Startup 405 was at capacity in their current building and had a waiting list of new startups, we wanted to support that expansion.”

This additional space allows the NEDC to significantly increase their capacity, ultimately improving the quality of life for all Cleveland County residents through the creation and retention of jobs.

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“When we approved and signed this resolution recognizing Global Entrepreneurship Week, we did it with a true spirit of forward-thinking determination to support local entrepreneurs,” Cleveland said. “We’ve already shown that through our actions, especially the recent ARPA allocation to Start-Up 405.”

Additionally, Cleveland County is exploring further entrepreneurial programs countywide.

“As the owner of a small local business, I understand the importance of supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs,” Commissioner Rusty Grissom said. “If we are going to grow and move forward, we have to support innovation and small business. These are the people who built America and who continue to be the backbone of our economic prosperity and growth.”

The ARPA allocation to Startup 405 and NEDC was a clear example of local government initiatives actively supporting and nurturing entrepreneurship, ultimately driving economic growth and creating opportunities for the people of Cleveland County. The additional action of Monday’s resolution sends the message that our county leaders understand the importance of small businesses and start-ups to the local, state and national economies.

“A resilient and diverse workforce for critical occupations and industries allows our county and our state to achieve and maintain a strong economy,” Commissioner Jacob McHughes said. “By affirming our commitment to our local entrepreneurs, we are affirming our commitment to a better future for Cleveland County where our residents have the opportunity to thrive.”

Global Entrepreneurship Week celebrates the empowerment of entrepreneurs in every country and community around the world.

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Media Attachment: Resolution