

Youth helping keep Tulsa dreaming

By A. GALE SULLENBERGER

What a great city we live in. A place where opportunity exists for those with passion and drive. A place where the "American dream" is lived every day and a place where a love for the community is seen and felt throughout countless efforts and dollars collected to help those less fortunate.

For the first time in many years Tulsa's economic makeup is in the headlines. All of the research, surveys and studies conducted across the U.S. agree that Tulsa is a hot spot for business development. A recent Tulsa Metro Chamber report cited Bob Ball, economist and economic research manager at the chamber, as saying, "Tulsa's cost of doing business is 15 percent below the U.S. average, making Tulsa the

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third least expensive of the 150 largest metropolitan areas in the country and a prime location for industry prospects looking to expand or relocate."

Our low cost of doing business, low cost of living and above average income combine to make us a breeding ground for new and expanding business ventures. And while all is not perfect in the city, our future can be bright if we embrace the opportunities before us.

Among our first steps should be to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit, support independent efforts and recognize those who continue making Tulsa a great place to live through their contributions to the health of our economy.



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At the University of Tulsa, we've established a program in the College of Business Administration that prepares students for entrepreneurial career paths with the potential to develop and lead great organizations.

Being the home town university and carrying that mantle in a city with as hospitable a business envi-

ronment as Tulsa, only makes TU's Innovative Institute program that much more powerful. Created in 2000, the program puts students, practitioners and faculty in constant communication about the issues and trials surrounding the start, growth and development of a business.

But it's not just equipping them with educational tools and skills to go forth after graduation and put to use if they so choose — it's the first step to actually conceptualizing their idea, putting it on paper in the form of a business plan and opening the door to possible investors.

The best part of this program is having the chance to meet and educate many of the young men and women who will drive this city to a place of equitable strength and prosperity, continuing to pave the way for those taking their seats in to-

morrow's classrooms. Their optimistic attitudes are inspirational and make my role of possibility ignited in each of them even more rewarding.

I recommend that each of us take the time to meet and listen to the ideas of Tulsa's young men and women. Yes, we all lead busy lives filled with the worries and concerns of our careers, our families and our nation. But that's exactly why we owe it to ourselves to serve as mentors and, in the process, be exposed to the endless energy and positive outlook of tomorrow's corporate and civic leaders. And you never know, you may be meeting, and hopefully inspiring, the next Bill Gates or Sam Walton.

A. Gale Sullenberger is dean of the College of Business Administration at the University of Tulsa.



STEPHEN HOLMAN / Tulsa World file

An Oklahoma State University running back takes on the University of Tulsa defense at Boone Pickens Stadium in Stillwater on Sept. 11, 2004.

Some things are more stupid than others!

By R. HENRY MIGLIORE

"That's stupid." I am introducing this phrase for inclusion in the American Heritage Dictionary. Wish I could take credit for it. "That's stupid," bellowed Bishop Michael Reid time and time again as host and speaker at a two-day church/nonprofit and business conference in London. I was a speaker and seminar presenter at the same conference hosted by Bishop Reid of Peniel Churches International.

As the bishop presented material and examples, he would repeatedly bellow out "that's stupid." I began to see this phrase as part of an intellectual exchange. Another phrase he liked to use was, "the Shepherd gets up every day trying to take care of sheep that by their very nature have 10 ways to kill themselves daily."

My observations at this stage of life of what I see is really, really stupid here in Oklahoma. Listed, but not necessarily in this order of priority, are the following: the Oklahoma Lottery, the Great Plains Airlines episode, years of stalling on the Convention Center, and the Oklahoma State University/Tulsa University football series.

Mark your calendar for the year 2010 and compare the present Oklahoma education budget to the budget this year. Yes, the funds allocated from the lottery will go exclusively to education. Guess what? The actual budgeted expenditures will be a fraction of the lottery contributions. Beneficial to education? Hardly! We can already see the social cost.

Here we are in Oklahoma with the distinction of having the most casinos outside of Nevada. I was a visiting professor in Guadalajara, Mexico. Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, where I taught, had a raffle on a fleet of cars and made millions. My guess is that 95 percent went straight into the university coffers. Oklahomans, we have been sold down the river with the lottery. That's stupid!

The Great Plains Airline fiasco should never have gotten off the ground. Great Plains was doomed to a crash landing before it ever got off the runway. If the city of Tulsa wants to subsidize a business, I'd invite them to expand my consulting company, Managing for Success. My company made more money than Great Plains over the same time period. What were they thinking? That's stupid!

Why did it take so long to get Vision 2025 going and the Convention Center started? My Northeastern State University and Langston students in 1989 worked on a project for the Tulsa Sports Commission and the Fast Breaker Basketball team. Among other things they concluded the need for the new center. They did



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the analysis with help from volunteer professionals in the community and determined among other things the need for the new center. They looked at various locations and suggested almost exactly where it is located today.

Their story was reported locally on television and in these Tulsa World articles, "UCT Students Research Fast-Breakers Market" (May 13, 1989) and "Sports Complex needed, UCT Report Says" (May 13, 1989). If a group of students in a senior level course could figure this out as a class project, where was everyone else? Sorry, friends, all of us in Tulsa were stupid.

Second-year football Coach Mike Gundy's comment, "I thought the OSU/Tulsa games were good for the state," opens the door to get things moving again for an OSU series with TU (Tulsa World, Feb. 9, 2005).

Why is the Oklahoma State football team opening the season in 2006 against Missouri State? Oklahoma State should open Labor Day against the University of Tulsa. Talk about fan interest and a certain full house! Why not open the season every year Labor Day weekend against Tulsa University? Dave Sittler, in his well-written Tulsa World article "OSU's decision: Is it champion or is it chicken?" (Sept. 8, 2004) asked the following good questions:

"When OSU completes the marvelous renovation it has planned for Pickens Stadium, the Cowboys are going to want to showcase a sold-out facility to potential recruits who are on recruiting visits or watching on TV. You think the Cowboys will sell out \$73 tickets to an OSU-Arkansas State game, which is on future schedules, as easily as it attracts buyers for the TU game? . . . Of course, OSU could champion the fans' cause and give them what they want.

So that old hardball is back in your court, Cowboys. What's it going to be? Champion or chicken?"

This OSU/TU football series just makes sense. Like it or not, these programs are in the entertainment business. Fans have many entertainment options. Both stadiums will be full for decades. Two games in Stillwater for one in Tulsa: that's stupid.

R. Henry Migliore is a Tulsa management consultant.

Let's put children first in Oklahoma

By MICHAEL F. STRATTON

What is the most fruitful commodity Oklahomans possess? Most people would respond that the state's oil and natural gas reserves, or wheat crops would top the list; but they would be tragically mistaken. Our state's most important asset is our children and they must be cared for and nurtured so that one day they can truly blossom into the leaders and protectors of our great state.

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We must recognize that children in the state of Oklahoma are facing a serious problem; they are receiving inadequate health care. Many of them are insufficiently prepared to manage their own lives, and as consequence, left to wither on the vine. Oklahoma's elected overseers continue to pass new legislation without keeping their own children in mind.

Oklahoma Medicaid continues to have problems with access to care. Currently, there are many clinics funded with capitated funds that do not provide timely appointments during office hours nor do they provide overnight coverage. These clinics have been paid by the state and are contracted to provide these services, but the Oklahoma Health Care Authority refuses to enforce these contracts. This leaves their patients with the emergency room as the only option.

The patients are forced to go to ERs for their care and be put in hospitals where these capitated providers may not even have privileges. Usually, these clinicians or practitioners do not have privileges at any hospital at all. This must be stopped. To effectively care for Medicaid patients, they must have a medical home that can take care of their needs 24 hours a day. Also, let's pass meaningful Medicaid funding through a provider fee by the hospitals. This will ensure we can get more funds to fund rural health care and keep our regional rural hospitals open.

Immunization rates in Oklahoma are some of the lowest in the nation. According to the united health foundation (www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/shr2005/states/Oklahoma.html), Oklahoma ranks 48th in terms of immunized children age 19-35 months. This is an invitation to a preventable infectious disease outbreak and it must be addressed immediately with increased publicity and community initiative.

We contend that one of the major causes of poor immunization rates is that many Medicaid providers are not available to the children the OHCA has assigned them to and taxpayers have paid for.



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The state is in a void of qualified caregivers. The OHCA needs to pursue an aggressive approach to recruit physicians to Oklahoma, particularly pediatricians and pediatric sub-specialists. Fortunately, the Medicaid reimbursement rates are the highest ever in Oklahoma, leading the nation. The doctors in this state need to realize that their reimbursement rates are increased significantly and this should be used to attract needed practitioners to our area. However, despite the good reimbursement rates for providers, the OHCA has done virtually nothing to promote its new rates among physicians.

Oklahoma's legislators also need to pursue tort reform as well as efforts to reduce premiums paid by care providers for malpractice insurance. Doctors will not come to a state where they are under constant threat from frivolous lawsuits, and hence have to pay huge premiums to protect themselves. These related issues must be addressed with much fervor if the quality of care our children are to receive is a priority.

We need to pass the Oklahoma all terrain vehicle bill that would restrict children under 12 from operating them, and would require helmets for riders. It would also be in the interest of the health of our children to see a bill restricting them from riding in the back of pick-up trucks.

We are one of the worst states in the nation for child abuse and neglect. The Department of Human Services system has to be overhauled, remodeled and become accountable. Its workers and supervisors must be subject to quality assurance and improvement practices. DHS must be able to communicate with physicians and law enforcement to defend and protect the children of Oklahoma. Perpetrators must be prosecuted and have sentences that are appropriate for the atrocities they commit against children.

The governor and legislators should put children first on any laws passed.

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STEPHEN PINGRY / Tulsa World file

Newborn babies at St. John Medical Center.