



Oklahoma energy industry partners with education sector to develop energy's next generation workforce

Governor Stitt declares Oct. 19 – 23 Oklahoma Careers in Energy Week

OKLAHOMA CITY – (Oct. 19, 2020) The Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium (OEWFC) is launching a new energy career cluster to promote the benefits of pursuing careers in energy. Energy is the highest-paying industry in the state, averaging more than \$100,000 annually.

Leaders within the energy industry initiated the OEWFC to address a looming shortage of skilled workers that is expected nationwide by 2025. With the help of educational leaders, the group aims to engage the next generation by adding a new career cluster to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education's instructional framework.

"Energy plays a vital role in the lives of Oklahomans, and we want to provide a focused, comprehensive and engaging framework for students to learn more about the high-wage and rewarding careers available in the energy industry," said Sean Trauschke, chairman, president and chief executive officer of OGE Energy Corp. "We are proud to join with partners throughout Oklahoma's energy sector to demonstrate the wide variety of occupations, from careers in power generation to renewable energies to new technologies in oil and gas and more."

In anticipation of the new career cluster's introduction, Gov. Kevin Stitt issued a state [proclamation](#) recognizing Oct. 19-23, 2020 as Oklahoma Careers in Energy Week.

"The energy sector is a key element of Oklahoma's economic growth, and it is more diverse and modern than many realize," said Gov. Kevin Stitt. "The next generation of bright minds and aspiring leaders will continue this work. These students represent the future of our state, and the unity within this career cluster, encompassing some of our largest industries including utilities, renewable energy, and oil and gas, shows the ever-increasing diversity and complexity of Oklahoma's energy sector."

In addition to industry leaders, the consortium includes representatives from CareerTech, common education, higher education and government focused on creating a pipeline of talented, diverse individuals to meet future needs within the state's energy sector.

"Providing opportunities for students to learn about the important industries in their own communities through partnerships like this one is a long-valued pillar at CareerTech," said Dr. Marcie Mack, state director of CareerTech. "The Energy Career Cluster is the most recent example of CareerTech's ability to partner with employers and all levels of education within Oklahoma and equip students with tools and skills they need to thrive within our state's diverse workforce."

The Energy Career Cluster will be one of 17 career clusters in Oklahoma, and will be added to the [list of industry-specific sectors](#) that comprise CareerTech's instructional framework.

"So many rewarding careers exist within the energy sector," said PSO President and Chief Operating Officer Peggy Simmons. "We rely on highly-skilled workers to serve our customers and drive innovation to shape the future. Students interested in earning competitive wages in a field with unlimited potential should consider a career in energy – we'd love to have bright and creative minds join our team."

The OEWFC cites the impending workforce shortage as a major driver for its formation. Most schools have or are implementing STEM programs and curriculum, which is an important component of energy jobs. STEM-related



skills are also very transferable across many jobs and many other industries, providing students with many more options when it comes time to choose a career or pursue a college degree in a high-wage, high demand STEM field.

“Increasing awareness of educational pathways for Oklahoma’s critical occupations is a key element of the state system of higher education’s ongoing efforts to advance educational attainment in our state,” said Chancellor Glen D. Johnson. “Our state system colleges and Universities offer numerous degree options to prepare graduates for employment in the energy sector.”

“The Workforce Development mission is to drive success by connecting industries and education to build a workforce for today and a talent pipeline for tomorrow,” said Don Morris, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development. “Key partnerships such as this make a true difference for job seekers, businesses, and all of Oklahoma. This type of teamwork and camaraderie are what make Oklahoma the place people want to live and work.”

“I’m proud to partner with Oklahoma CareerTech, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and the Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium to support a new career cluster for energy,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister. “Oklahoma’s future depends on students who are prepared today for a highly specialized workforce of tomorrow. This career cluster will help develop a talent pipeline to meet the demands in our state for qualified energy careers.”

“This partnership is a great opportunity to showcase what a career in energy really looks like and show the positive benefits of working in one of the largest industries in Oklahoma,” said Brook A. Simmons, president of the Petroleum Alliance of Oklahoma. “We are able to carry out our association’s mission to build a better Oklahoma through capital investments and investing in the future of the oil and natural gas industry through students.”

“We are challenged with meeting our energy needs reliably, affordably and in environmentally-responsible ways,” said Chris Meyers, General Manager and CEO of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. “There’s never been a more exciting time to be a part of this industry.”

OEWFC, initiated by industry leaders and endorsed by state education leaders, is planning to celebrate Careers in Energy Week by highlighting the importance of energy, the benefits of the industry and how students can get involved in the field. On Oct. 21 at 2 p.m., CareerTech will host a virtual discussion on zoom about the career cluster’s launch. The group has long-term plans to work closely with educators, career counselors and parents to raise awareness about the energy industry.

For more information about the Energy Career Cluster, Careers in Energy Week and the Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium, visit okcareertech.org, OKcollegestart.org or Oklahoma.getintoenergy.com.

About Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium (OEWFC)

Oklahoma Energy Workforce Consortium is a partnership between Oklahoma energy companies and organizations with a mission to raise awareness about the energy industry and career pathways available to Oklahoma students. The consortium represents the energy industry, education, government and community leaders united to build a talent pipeline for Oklahoma’s energy sector. The full list of consortium members can be viewed at Oklahoma.getintoenergy.com.