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Oklahoma Department of Commerce Announces New Program to Address Ardmore Community Needs

OKLAHOMA CITY – In response to the recent announcement by Michelin North America, Inc. to close its Ardmore tire plant in 2025, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce), in partnership with the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority (ODFA) and Ardmore Development Authority, announced today the creation of the Rapid Community Response Program. This program utilizes withholding taxes collected from Michelin and allows Commerce to administer these funds to assist Ardmore and surrounding communities to retain as many employees in the region as possible while also assisting known Oklahoman Michelin supply chain companies in diversifying or expanding to offset potential future declines.

“I am optimistic about the creation of the Rapid Community Response Program and I’m proud of the work the Department of Commerce is doing to make sure the people of Ardmore land on their feet,” said Governor Stitt. “It was tough to lose a key economic contributor that brought commercial activity to Ardmore for over 50 years, but we’re looking to the future and ensuring that Oklahoma doesn’t miss a beat. We will continue to work to make our state the best place to do business.”

While the announcement of the closure is an unfortunate event for the community of Ardmore and the state, the generous lead time provided by Michelin has allowed Commerce and state partners to react swiftly and work with the company and Ardmore to develop a plan to minimize negative outcomes for employees and the effected surrounding region.

“Oklahoma is committed to providing effective workforce and supply chain solutions,” said Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Workforce and Economic Development, Matt Pinnell. “With a multimillion-dollar manufacturing plant, a prime trade location, and 1,400+ skilled-and-ready workers, Ardmore is an attractive location for companies looking to move or expand. We’re confident in a bright future for Ardmore and committed to helping them succeed.”

The Rapid Community Response Program is modeled largely after existing Commerce-led business retention programs such as the Oklahoma Innovation Expansion Program (OIEP) and the Business Expansion Incentive Program (BEIP) which were designed to assist qualified existing companies with funds to make high-impact new capital investments. Through the Rapid Community Response Program, Commerce will administer funds collected from Michelin's employee state of Oklahoma withholding taxes to assist businesses in the area to employ Michelin employees adversely effected by the closure, find solutions for known Oklahoma Michelin supply chain companies in finding alternative markets, provide effected employees with job training and upskilling for future employment in the region, and ensure that the physical building and infrastructure remain an asset for future business looking to relocate or expand.

“Commerce wishes to thank Michelin for its corporate partnership with the state and local community for over 50 years,” said Hopper Smith, Brigadier General, ARNG (ret.), Interim Executive Director of Commerce. “With the approval of Michelin and the Finance Authority, we can mobilize the Rapid Community Response Program which will pour much-needed resources into Ardmore and the surrounding communities and ultimately usher in new and innovative entrepreneurial and workforce opportunities.”

“Ardmore is a resilient community. We have a very skilled and talented workforce that we care very much about. I am proud of the way we are all working together to find solutions on this path forward,” said Senator Jerry Alvord. “I want to acknowledge the team at Michelin for the jobs they've provided in the area for decades and the way they've come alongside us to find solutions that will help our community going forward.”

“The Rapid Community Response Program will bring support to Ardmore during this difficult time,” said Rep. Tammy Townley.” I applaud the work done by Commerce and various state and local entities to make this possible. This program once again proves Oklahoma's resilience and collaboration in times of difficulties. I will continue to work with the community of Ardmore and the surrounding region to ensure that we are new career avenues for the displaced workforce.”

“The Ardmore Development Authority and City of Ardmore appreciate the quick work by the Department of Commerce to deploy the Rapid Community Response program,” said Bill Murphy, president of the Ardmore Development Authority. “We appreciate the support we received from our local representatives and the collaborative response we received from local, tribal, state and federal stakeholders to this community challenge.”

The Rapid Community Response Program was presented and approved at a special meeting of the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority on November 16, 2023.

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