



City of Durant, Oklahoma

Durant Industrial Authority

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Tommy Kramer
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 8, 2009

RE: City of Durant, OK

To the TIGER Grant Review Team:

As the economic development arm of the City of Durant, the Durant Industrial Authority has seen dramatic changes within the City over the past eight years. These changes have resulted in an increase in industry, workforce and population, which require the City to focus heavily on the roadways, bridges, water and sewer infrastructure to ensure safety and future growth.

Durant has seen a significant population increase. According to the U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, Durant saw a 9.8 percentage increase between 2000 and 2008. Steady sales tax increases began in 2001 and when compared to 2009, shows an increase of 8.0% for the past eight years.

During the past five years, the Durant Industrial Authority has helped to create over 5,400 jobs. The current unemployment rate for Bryan County (Durant) is 5.3%, which is lower than the current Oklahoma unemployment rate of 6.5% and the United States at 9.7%. However, the region has seen a loss of jobs over the past several years as well. Ethan Allen manufacturing in Atoka, OK closed its doors and as a result over 185 employees lost their jobs. Sundowner Trailers in Coleman, OK also saw a reduction in workforce of 145 and Stahl's recently laid off 38 employees, as well as over 25 employees at the local Goody's clothing store. In addition, many seasonal employers and natural gas pipeline companies have reduced their workforce as well. Although Bryan County is below the national unemployment rate, TEAM DURANT must work tirelessly to make sure the community has continued growth for the future.

Durant has many new structural developments in the pipeline and the 21st Street extension and 9th Street improvements are crucial to development and growth. New developments include a new Durant high school, new public library media center, two fire stations, the new Choctaw Resort, and new police station. Also, affordable housing construction is set to begin on south 9th Street in the near future, as well as a new airport terminal building.

Without funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act TIGER Program, the City of Durant will not be able to move forward with many of the projects identified, resulting in stalled growth and progress for the City. In 2008, Durant was the fastest growing rural city in



Oklahoma from a population point of view. Southeastern Oklahoma State University has the largest student enrollment in 23 years at 4,200 and the Durant Independent School District has the largest student enrollment in history with over 3,300 students this fall. The City of Durant must receive reinvestment grant funds to support our growth and business investments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tommy Kramer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tommy Kramer, Executive Director
Durant Industrial Authority

TK/tb