



Heartland Forward has named Oklahoma City as a Secret Sauce Community. FILE PHOTO/EMILY GREGG, THE JOURNAL RECORD

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oklahoma City named a Secret Sauce Community at Heartland Summit

Oklahoma City is one of three cities honored as Secret Sauce Communities at the 2026 Heartland Summit, recognized for its approach to economic growth, community development and cultural vitality.

Heartland Forward, a Bentonville, Arkansas-based think-and-do tank, announced the honors Thursday, also selecting Huntsville, Alabama, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. Huntsville was recognized for its aerospace and defense economy, and Grand Rapids for its public-private collaboration.

Heartland Forward pointed to Oklahoma City's growth into the nation's 21st-largest city, with a diversified economy anchored by Tinker Air Force Base and a strong energy sector. Since 1993, city voters have approved 15 consecutive tax initiatives, investing roughly \$10 billion in infrastructure and quality of life without a single measure failing.

The group also cited the Oklahoma City Thunder's 2025 NBA championship and the city's role hosting 2028 Los Angeles Olympics events.

Mayor David Holt credited the city's political culture and the partnership between City Hall and the business community.

"That ability to work together, that unity, that consensus building that we seem so good at has allowed us to pass all these initiatives, which has allowed us to invest in our city to an unbelievable degree," Holt said.

-Staff report