



OKLAHOMA
Tourism & Recreation

123 Robert S Kerr Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

September 26, 2024

Governor J. Kevin Stitt
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 212 Oklahoma
City, OK 73015

Governor Stitt,

It is with pride and deep gratitude that I inform you of my retirement as Executive Director of Oklahoma Department of Recreation & Tourism to pursue opportunities in the private sector. I will continue to serve as Executive Director of the agency and help with the transition and training for the person who will be the next leader of the agency until my final day in the office on October 11th.

I've spent over a quarter of my life serving our state and that service has shaped my life in ways I will forever be grateful for. I started my career with the state in an entry level position and have gone on to lead two remarkable state agencies through times of crisis.

During my time at the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission amid the global pandemic, we distributed over \$5 billion in unemployment benefits to support Oklahomans in one of the most critical times of need in recent history. When I took the position to lead OESC I knew I'd never get another chance to help that many people, and it's been the absolute honor of a lifetime to have stood with so many Oklahomans in a time of such great need.

My time at OTRD leading an extraordinary team of over 750 individuals has been an amazing bookend to my state career. Together we have worked tirelessly to elevate tourism in Oklahoma to unprecedented heights, welcoming more than 18 million visitors and contributing \$11.8 billion to the state economy. Our collective efforts have resulted in the agency receiving a Heartland Emmy for the "Imagine That" campaign, being recognized by US Travel as the best travel guide in the nation in 2024, Oklahoma Today being named Magazine of the Year for 2024 as well as many other recognitions that helped to elevate tourism as our state's third largest industry.

I will always look back on my time in service with a deep appreciation and admiration for the dedicated employees I have had the privilege to work alongside over my time with the State of Oklahoma. To wake up each day and roll up your sleeves for something you believe in is a beautiful thing. It's been a great honor to serve the citizens of Oklahoma.

Shelley Zumwalt

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