

# What happened at the turn of the century?

Chapter

18

**What became known as the Oklahoma City Bombing?** On April 19, 1995, at 9:02 on a Wednesday morning, Linda Harmon waited to do business at Cashion’s Community State Bank, some twenty-two miles from downtown Oklahoma City. Suddenly, the bank she was in shook with a loud noise that sounded like thunder, but it was a clear day.

Brian Jester, co-owner of the Bricktown Brewery Restaurant, parked his car at the Galleria. He walked toward the Oklahoma County Courthouse where he planned to do business. As he crossed Harvey near Park Avenue, a “huge concussion” knocked him to the pavement. At the same moment he saw “the top fly off” the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, just a few blocks away. “That had to be a bomb,” he thought immediately.

Jester was right. A rented Ryder truck had parked in front of the Murrah. The truck carried a homemade bomb. When it exploded, it destroyed the front half of the building. It killed 168 people, including 19 children. It injured more than eight hundred.

The Murrah building housed most of the federal offices assigned to Oklahoma City. A day care center was there for the children of federal workers and others in the area. The building had been hit by a terrorist attack, something that people had thought would never happen in America’s *heartland*.

Within minutes, Oklahoma City went into action. Police, firefighters, and hospital staff used procedures they had practiced repeatedly. They were prepared for natural disasters and other large emergencies. Amid the dust, smoke and debris, volunteers located victims, stabilized them as much as possible, and sent them to waiting hospitals. They took care of immediate tasks swiftly and effectively in spite of strong emotions at the grisly scene.

Because of modern communications technology, the bombing story made it around the world in minutes. A few hours after the explosion, Linda Cavanaugh, a local TV news anchor, woke up in Vietnam, where she was on assignment. She tuned in to a morning news show. She was surprised to see her co-workers on Vietnam television. Thousands of miles away from home, she heard the story.



Brave men and women from around Oklahoma and all across the country came to help. Many of them picked their way through the remains of the shaky, dangerous structure, looking for survivors. A *volunteer* nurse from Moore was killed by falling debris as she searched for victims.

Injured victims were also brave. One was Daina Bradley, trapped in the basement of the building. She was pinned under hundreds of pounds of wreckage, which rescuers could not move. She suffered the amputation of her leg with primitive surgical tools and no anesthetic. The surgeon stood in water up to his waist while performing the operation. Rescuers were then able to remove Bradley. She survived.

In the next few days, a photograph snapped by Charles H. Porter IV, a downtown bank employee, became the international symbol of the tragedy. It showed fireman Chris Fields carrying the body of one-year-old Baylee Almon. The emotional pain on the man's face reflected the feelings of the world, and especially those of Oklahoma.

**Who was Timothy McVeigh?** At 10:30 a.m. on April 19, a highway patrolman named Charlie Hanger was on Interstate 35 near Billings. He noticed a car without a license tag and pulled it over. The car's driver was Timothy McVeigh. Then patrolman discovered

McVeigh was carrying a gun. Shortly thereafter, McVeigh was in the Noble County jail. Within days, he was charged in the bombing deaths of the eight federal officers who died in the attack.

An *extensive* investigation led to the arrest of Terry Nichols, a former army buddy of McVeigh. The state charged that the two men had conspired to blow up the building and purposely chose a time when a large number of people would be killed.

Attorney Stephen Jones of Enid agreed to represent McVeigh. The federal trial occurred in U. S. District Court in Denver, Colorado. On June 2, 1997, a jury found McVeigh guilty of the deaths of the eight



**Rescue workers stand in the crumbling ruins of the Murrah Federal Building. Getty Images**

federal officers who died in the bombing and three weapons or explosives counts. On June 13, a judge sentenced him to die by lethal injection. McVeigh was executed at Terre Haute, Indiana, on June 11, 2001.

Terry Nichols was also found guilty, but the jury could not agree on a sentence. Judge Richard Matsch sentenced Nichols to life in prison without parole. Appeals began for him. District Attorney Bob Macy of Oklahoma County vowed to bring Nichols back to Oklahoma to stand trial for killing those who were not federal agents. Eventually, Nichols was tried in McAlester, found guilty on 168 counts, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Oklahoma spent more than \$10 million on the controversial prosecution. Nichols received the same sentence he was already serving on federal charges.

In addition to McVeigh and Nichols, Michael Fortier of Kingman, Arizona, was convicted of a felony. A friend of McVeigh, he had previous knowledge of the attack but did not alert the police. Fortier received a twelve-year prison sentence. He was released in January 2006 after serving about 85 percent of it.

**What was the public response to the bombing?** Following the bombing, people around the world responded with money, gifts, and letters for the victims and their families. They set up college funds for children whose parents had been killed. They set up trust funds to help pay for individual costs of the tragedy.

Truckloads of equipment and supplies rolled in from other states. They were used in the search for victims. Some supplies went to victims' families. Local restaurants donated meals for workers and businesses gave materials.

Celebrities such as Troy Aikman, other Dallas Cowboys, and Oprah Winfrey came to give comfort personally to victims and their families. They encouraged rescuers and other volunteers. Reba McEntire, Vince Gill, and Garth Brooks, all native Oklahomans and country music stars, combined their efforts to raise money for those affected by the disaster. These and other celebrities contributed money to emerging causes and expressed sympathy and admiration for the people of Oklahoma.

Volunteers came from everywhere. Oklahoma became known for its *hospitality* and its spirit of appreciation. Even the crime rate went down markedly in Oklahoma City during the weeks after the bombing.

Seventy-five buildings in downtown Oklahoma City suffered damage from the blast. A fence was erected around the bombing site, and it became the medium by which the world expressed its grief. People left

flowers, toys, notes, pictures, clothing, and innumerable other items to mourn the dead.

The site is now called the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum. It has become a popular destination for visitors to the Oklahoma City area. The Symbolic Memorial opened on April 19, 2000. One year later, the Memorial Center Museum opened in the Journal-Record building. Also included in the memorial is the Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism.

The memorial included the “survivors’ tree.” Gnarled and heavily damaged by the blast, a lone tree across the street from the Murrah building found the strength to live. It seemed to reflect the spirit of the survivors in its will to live.

President Clinton met with family members of victims when he visited the state shortly after the bombing. He came back to see them on the first anniversary of the tragedy.

As a result of the *devastating* event, the federal government built barriers in front of its buildings and took other precautions to prevent such incidents.

Some Oklahomans are saddened by the fact that the event which brought Oklahoma to international attention was a deliberate, man-made tragedy in which 168 people died. Most are proud that Oklahomans showed courage and strength of character in dealing with the death and *devastation*.

**Who was Governor Frank Keating?** The governor at the time of the Murrah bombing, and from 1995 to 2003, was Frank Keating. He won two consecutive terms and was only the second Republican governor to do so.

He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1944. His family moved to Tulsa when he was six months old. He graduated from Cascia Hall School in 1962 and received a B.A. in history from Georgetown University in 1966. He earned a law degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1969 and became an FBI agent the same year. In 1972, he was an assistant district attorney in Tulsa.

Keating won a seat in the Oklahoma State Senate in 1974 and served seven years, rising to the level of Senate Minority Leader. He was appointed U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma in 1981. He was the highest ranking Oklahoman in the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations, when he worked in the Treasury, Justice, and Housing and Urban Development Departments. Keating returned to



**Governor Frank Keating**  
*Oklahoma Historical Society*

Oklahoma just prior to his run for governor. He won the 1994 and 1998 elections. In 2000, he was considered for U.S. Attorney-General.

Governor Keating's accomplishments included overseeing the largest road construction project in Oklahoma history: The legislature approved spending \$1 billion to fund highway repairs and improvements. Keating also made the first cut in the state income tax in fifty years. During his terms, there was a dramatic decline in the welfare rolls, and right-to-work became the law of the land in Oklahoma.

He raised more than \$20 million in private money to build a dome on the Oklahoma State Capitol. The building was originally designed for a dome, but state funding for it ran out during World War I.

The governor won national recognition for his leadership after the Murrah bombing. Because the attack left some children without any parents, one of his goals was to provide for them. He and First Lady Cathy Keating raised \$6 million for their college scholarships.

Keating wrote a children's book about humorist Will Rogers and another book about Theodore Roosevelt.

**What was the MAPS project?** The Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) plan led the country in renewal projects of its kind. It began in December 1993, when voters approved a special five-year, one-cent sales tax. MAPS proposed construction or *renovation* of nine urban projects:

- a Triple-A baseball park
- the Civic Center Music Hall
- the convention center
- a sports arena
- the downtown canal
- riverfront areas
- a trolley system
- the library
- the fairgrounds.

The canal, patterned after San Antonio's Riverwalk, opened for traffic in 1999. Despite the fact that one of the excursion boats sank the first day, the canal quickly became a popular attraction. It flows through Bricktown, a former industrial area that was refurbished with fine restaurants and unusual shops. Clever landscaping and updated warehouses make interesting and attractive sights for passengers on the canal.

The new AT&T Bricktown Ball Park was originally named after Southwestern Bell. It is the home field for the Oklahoma City Red-

## Do You Know?

The Oklahoma state seal shows a pioneer and an Indian shaking hands beneath the Scales of Justice, centered in a star. The star's five rays each contain symbols of the Five Civilized Tribes.

hawks, formerly the Oklahoma City Eighty-Niners, a farm-level baseball team for the Texas Rangers. The ballpark opened for the 1998 season, replacing All-Sports Stadium near the fairgrounds.

In December, 1999, voters *extended* the five-year sales tax to cover a 3 percent cost overrun on the project. In 2001, voters also approved the MAPS for Kids proposal. A temporary tax, it aimed to improve student achievement in Oklahoma City School District, build seven new schools, and renovate sixty-five others there.

**What was the Tulsa Redevelopment Program?** In 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was planning to grant thirty cities special grants for “re-vitalizing” properties. Tulsa Mayor M. Susan Savage urged The Tulsa Industrial Authority to apply for an EPA grant. The next year, the EPA awarded Tulsa a \$200,000 Brownfields Assessment Pilot Grant.

Urban properties that have never been developed (built on) are called “greenfields.” “Brownfields” are abandoned or under-used industrial and commercial properties. The grants are especially important where environmental hazards might exist. Tulsa was Oklahoma’s brownfields pilot city. It began by choosing forty-six locations to bring back to life.

Real estate agents and developers were the key to getting this project on its way. They found people interested in moving into the finished projects, thereby giving incentives to owners to refurbish the lands and buildings.

The need to rebuild parts of Tulsa came out of industrial expansion in the 1970s and 1980s. Companies left downtown and built factories and buildings on what had been farmland. This left several properties with environmental problems. The area was described as an eyesore, and Mayor Savage said it began to look more like the “rustbelt instead of the sunbelt.”

One Chamber of Commerce official said that rebuilding Tulsa would not be easy or inexpensive. It would be easier and cheaper, though, than dealing with declining property values, displaced residents and businesses, urban blight, and other problems that come with brownfields. The city considers this program central to its economic development.

**What was agriculture like in Oklahoma as the twentieth century came to a close?** Some 84,000 farmers and ranchers operated in the state. The agriculture industry dealt with ups and downs, but it was

still a major contributor to the state economy. Agriculture provided \$6.1 billion to the economy annually.

Wheat was still the Number One cash crop in the state, although production declined because of weak prices. Drought, or the reverse — too much rain — affects prices, too. Wheat production affects the cattle industry because it can provide winter pasture for cattle, and after harvest, the straw is sometimes baled for feed. Most Oklahoma wheat farmers grow hard red winter wheat. Planted in the fall, it grows during the winter and is harvested in the summer.

Forestry and its related industries continue to grow in southeastern Oklahoma. The continuing *demand* for lumber and paper has greatly increased the importance of forestry products. Weyerhaeuser Corp. has become the major corporation involved in the lumber industry and in tree farming.

Other cash crops also provide *revenue* for Oklahomans. Peanuts, cotton, soybeans, and even flowers go from farm to market in the state. Cannas are the primary flower crop, but Dream Valley Farms near Cache supplies many poinsettias for the Christmas season.

**How were the pork and poultry industries changed in the late 1990s?** Oklahoma agriculture underwent dramatic changes during the last five years of the century. Perhaps the most notable change was the rapid increase in the production of hogs. Previously, the highest number of hogs produced was 1.6 million in 1911. Then production dropped significantly. In 1998, production began to exceed the 1911 record.

Hog farms are both farmer-operated and company-operated, and they are located all across the state. However, northwest Oklahoma has



**Downtown Tulsa**  
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most of the largest operations. Although the farms have provided many jobs, nearby residents complain of noxious odors that they say make living in the area very unpleasant.

Raising chickens is also a major cash industry for farmers in Oklahoma, particularly in the eastern part of the state. Travelers in the area easily recognize the long, low chicken houses there. The state raises about 245 million USDA broilers every year.

**What are pollution issues in Oklahoma?** Properly managing the waste of these corporate farms has an impact on public health. In 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that Seaboard Foods was not meeting regulations for hazardous waste. The EPA fined the company for violating both the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. Seaboard agreed to deal promptly with leaks in pipes and storage ponds and to fertilize with manure in ways that will avoid contaminating soil and water. The estimated cost of this clean-up was more than \$5 million.

The EPA watches the poultry industry, too, for pollution. Based on a citizen's complaint, the agency inspected a poultry farm in Garvin County in 2007. The EPA found "numerous violations" of the Clean Water Act and demanded immediate action from the owner. The following year, Oklahoma's Attorney General, Drew Edmondson, filed suit against several poultry farms in Arkansas. He charged that their waste in the Illinois River polluted Oklahoma's



**Oklahoma's major crop each year is hard red winter wheat. Much of the crop is sold to other countries.**  
Getty Images

water.

**Why did the corrections business "go private?"** Major changes in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) occurred in the last five years of the century. The DOC had experienced lawsuits based on overcrowding, at times bringing about the early release of some convicts. These early releases were not popular with the people or lawmakers. One suggestion to relieve the problem was to allow private businesses, not only the state, to run prisons.

Governor Frank Keating faced some *controversy* over this idea. The DOC had estimated that it could build and operate a 1,000-bed prison more cheaply than paying private prisons to do it. Keating disputed the

DOC figures. He was one of the strongest boosters of the private enterprises. Officials signed the first contract for a private prison in January 1996. This contract provided for the construction of the Great Plains Correctional Facility. Space may be leased by any state but primarily, it is leased to house Oklahoma inmates.

Since the first private prison was built at Hinton, others have been built in Watonga, Lawton, Sayre, Cushing, Holdenville, and McCloud. In December 1999, the Tulsa World reported that 26 percent of the state's prison population was housed in private prisons, costing almost \$100 million a year. Much of the cost was in payroll.

Why did Tulsans vote to fund a new corrections system? In 1998, Tulsa citizens voted to fund a privately operated Tulsa City/County Jail. The issue created a conflict, particularly between County Sheriff Stanley Glanz and Mayor Susan Savage.

The sheriff said private companies cut costs and took risks for profit. He said that a private facility would not provide adequate protection for those people housed in the jail. But Mayor Savage supported the private industry. The Tulsa World endorsed it and the Tulsa Criminal Justice Authority approved it.

Unlike private long-term prisons, the Tulsa facility would be owned by the county and run by a private corporation. The operation could be redeemed and run by the county, if necessary.

The Tulsa County Criminal Justice Authority signed a contract with Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) to operate the jail. In 1999, Tulsa County's new jail began accepting inmates at the 1,400-bed David L. Moss Criminal Justice Center.

Three lawsuits were filed in an attempt to stop privatization of the jail, but none succeeded. When the CCA contract expired in 2005 and the Authority considered other bids, Sheriff Glanz won the competition. The Moss Center is now owned and operated by the county.

### **What happened May 3, 1999, in Oklahoma's Tornado Alley?**

Many people were reminded of the popular disaster movie *Twister* on May 3, 1999. That day a Category Six tornado and a host of smaller tornadoes struck central Oklahoma. The big funnel reached at least 318 miles per hour in strength. Scenes in the movie, which had previously been labeled as ridiculous or impossible by some people who lived in Oklahoma's "Tornado Alley," became fact in the May 3 aftermath.

Experts said no one expected that a Category Six tornado would ever occur. Category Six had been created "in theory" — to define the

### **Do You Know?**

**A man and his wife were carried aloft in their house by a tornado in Ponca City. The walls and roof were blown away. But the floor remained intact and eventually glided downward, setting the couple safely back on the ground.**

strength of a Category Five tornado.

The May 3 tornado was the most powerful one in recorded history. Nearly four dozen people died, nearly a thousand were injured, and 5,200 homes were destroyed or damaged. Thirteen thousand people moved temporarily into hotels and motels because their own homes were no longer livable.

Dozens of tornadoes touched down, wreaking havoc and *devastation*. The Category Six cut a path of destruction more than a half-mile wide and stayed on the ground for ninety minutes. No previous storm had ever traveled at ground level for so long.

The town of Bridge Creek, southwest of Oklahoma City, all but disappeared. Part of the school survived. Every business in the Tanger Factory Outlet Mall in Stroud was damaged or destroyed, and the mall never reopened. The funnel carried away or pummeled 10,000 cars, many of them brand-new and on dealership lots.

President Bill Clinton visited the area on Saturday, May 8, and named sixteen counties disaster areas. He expressed admiration for the “Oklahoma standard,” as he noted American flags flying over piles of rubble that had once been homes or businesses. He congratulated the people on their spirit of survival and community. He praised the hundreds of volunteers who came immediately following the tornado to help search for missing people and to prevent further disaster.

The 1995 bombing had prepared the state for handling different kinds of disasters. The American Red Cross kept a long list of people who were experienced in search and rescue and willing to be called. Jon Hansen, assistant Oklahoma City fire chief, pointed to “an incident management system” that had come out of the earlier tragedy. He said that because of that experience, emergency teams responded more smoothly and methodically than ever before.

### **How did the Bombing help people survive the May 3 tornado?**

Many of those injured or killed had done everything that they had been told to do. They huddled in closets or in bathtubs, covered by pillows or mattresses. Nevertheless, a lot of people lost everything they had.

Most people found at least a few useful or sentimental items. At the Edward Evett home in Del City, President Clinton found a 1976 copy of *Movie Mirror Magazine* with a picture of Elvis Presley on the cover. “I’m glad you saved Elvis,” he wrote on the cover, returning it to Sherill Evett. It was one of very few items the Evetts salvaged from the rubble.

James and Beverly Grove lost all their house except one room. The only room left fully intact was the room that the Grove children had called “Mom’s museum.” Beverly had kept the family photographs, heirlooms, and other memorabilia in that room. The storm had spared the family all of those things that other people mourned as irreplaceable.

After May, 1999, the “safe room,” a type of storm shelter that is built inside the house, became popular among homeowners. Memories of the overwhelming fear and the heartbreaking losses left citizens not wanting to repeat their experience.

People from Oklahoma and around the country donated time and effort in the clean-up as well as food, clothing, furniture and money. At one point there were more donations than could be given away or stored. Just a few years later, the survivors shared this spirit with *refugees* from Hurricane Katrina. In the new century, Oklahomans continued to respond generously in the face of other natural disasters such as ice storms and floods.

**What is “Indian Gaming?”** Casinos and other gaming centers have been very successful in the state and have expanded since 2004. That year, voters legalized lotteries, certain types of electronic casino machines, and games of skill (such as Blackjack). By 2007, Indian tribes were operating more than 100 gambling facilities in Oklahoma. Today there are 111. They range from very small set-ups to very large ones, such as the Cherokee Nation’s casino in Catoosa. The state has thirty-nine federally recognized tribes and thirty-one of them use gaming to generate income. A percentage of their income goes to the state for education purposes.

The *Tulsa World* newspaper ran an article in 2006 about the increase of Indian gaming. It said one result is that the economic power of tribal governments has grown enormously. According to reporter S.E. Ruckman, “The state’s tribes together have become the largest employer in the state. Their budgets combined exceed the state’s budget.”

Nelson Johnson is gaming commissioner for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. He has twenty-five years of gaming management experience. When he spoke with the *Tulsa World* in 2006, he remarked, “I think it’s near saturation... Growth here is limited. What we’re going to see is more of an emphasis on management and services.”

Critics claim the state is not making the amount of money it expected to. They also say the increase in gaming causes an increase in bankruptcies and gambling addictions. As Oklahomans spend more at

casinos, other parts of the economy may suffer. People chose to spend their time and money on gambling, for example, instead of on movies or concerts.

**What happened in the 2000 U.S. Presidential election?** Republican George H.W. Bush was vice-president during Ronald Reagan's two terms. Then Bush himself was President from 1988 till 1992. A Democrat, Bill Clinton, served as President from 1992 till 2000. Clinton's vice-president, Al Gore, was the Democratic candidate in 2000.

Republican George W. Bush, a son of the first Bush, won that election. There were problems in the counting of the ballots and accusations of fraud. The results were disputed for a month. Although Gore had won the popular vote, Bush was declared the winner by votes from the Electoral College. The second President Bush was re-elected in 2004, when he won Oklahoma with 65 percent of the vote.

**What happened on September 11, 2001?** During the 1980s and 1990s, the United States was relatively peaceful and the economy was strong. However, there were threats against the United States and other countries. America dealt with bombings of its military ships and air-

planes, but they were always outside of the country. The 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building was actually done by Americans, and did not seem to be part of any larger plan.

The worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil occurred on September 11, 2001. That day, nineteen men involved with a Middle Eastern group of extremists hijacked four American airliners.

Two of the four planes crashed into the two World



***The World Trade Center in New York City burns after a terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.***

*Getty Images*

Trade Center towers in New York City. Both buildings collapsed. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. Defense Department, in Virginia. The fourth plane crashed in a field in western Pennsylvania. In that case, some of the plane's passengers

fought to stop the hijackers from reaching Washington, D.C., and gave their lives to save other citizens.

Official records show that nearly 3,000 citizens died as a result of the attacks that day. The rest of the world was very sympathetic to the United States right after the attacks. These events changed the way Americans looked at the world. They caused great difficulties here and overseas. They disrupted the economy and made the U.S. government realize that America's security was in jeopardy.

Also, these attacks were not like the beginnings of other wars, where two or more armies went to war against each other. There was no other army. There was just a group of nineteen terrorists who wanted to attack the United States. These people had been guided by a man named Osama bin Laden. He was a member of a very wealthy Saudi Arabian family and headed an organization called al-Qaeda.

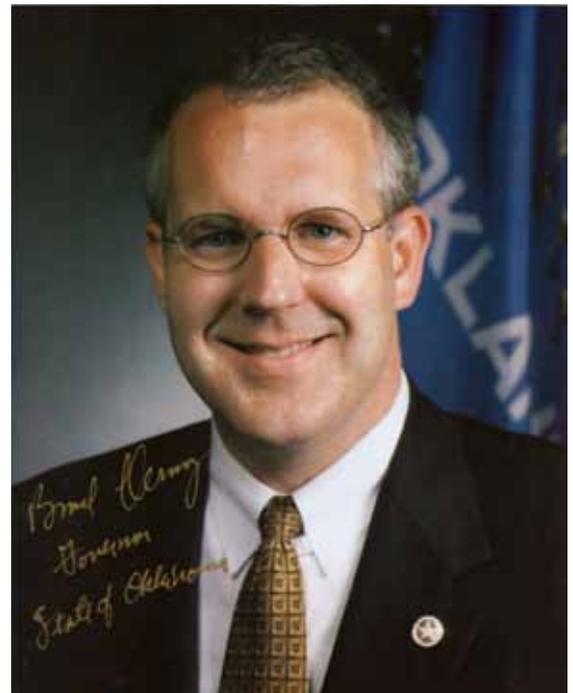
In response, the U.S. conducted bombing raids in Afghanistan, where they believed that bin Laden and his followers were hiding. American troops caught and punished a number of al-Qaeda members but did not catch bin Laden. Meanwhile, there were Americans at home ready to wage all-out war.

**Who is Governor Brad Henry?** Charles Bradford Henry finished second in the Democratic primary of 2002. Since the first-place winner had less than 50 percent of the vote, he and Henry ran again in a "runoff" election. Even though it is unusual for a candidate to come back from second place in the primary, Henry won the runoff as well as the general election.

He ran against the favorite, a Republican named Steve Largent, for governor. Many thought Largent was unbeatable. He had served in the U.S. House of Representatives after a football career and holds a place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Henry was officially sworn in as Oklahoma's 26th governor on January 13, 2003. At age 39, he was the youngest governor in the country at the time. He had served ten years in the state Senate and been chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

The governor's goals were "strengthening the state public education system and making health care more accessible and affordable to the



**Governor  
Brad Henry**

citizenry.” But during his first year in office, the state budget was cut 5.1 percent. This meant that budgets were cut \$235 million. The areas hit the hardest were education, health and prisons.

One of Henry’s most important campaign promises was a lottery to benefit education. Voters approved the lottery in November 2004, and the first tickets were sold on October 12, 2005. A “Pick 3” game was introduced the next month and the multi-state Powerball game was added in January 2006.

In May 2006, the state’s budget was more than \$7 billion, which included \$1.1 billion in new revenues. The economy was strong because oil and natural gas prices were at an all-time high. Republicans wanted large cuts in state tax rates, and the Democrats wanted funding increases in education, health care, roads and bridges. A special session was required to complete the budget. Henry was re-elected in November, 2006.



**Governor  
Mary Fallin**  
*Governor's Office*

**How did Oklahoma celebrate its one-hundredth birthday?** Oklahomans celebrated one hundred years of statehood in 2007. They enjoyed musical events and museum exhibits. They held special book discussions in libraries. The Centennial Clock & Bell Project installed street clocks in towns all across the state. In the fall, Guthrie re-enacted Teddy Roosevelt’s announcement. The capital city hosted a large parade featuring high school and college bands, Indian fancy dancers, and celebrities. The citizens of the 46th state looked back with pride and ahead with great hope.

**Who was elected president in 2008?** Barack Obama was elected the 44th and current President of the United States on November 4, 2008. He defeated Arizona Senator John McCain. He was re-elected on November 6, 2012 defeating Mitt Romney, a business man and former governor of Massachusetts. He is the first African-American to hold the office. Obama served as a U.S. Senator representing Illinois from January 2005 to November 2008. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he was the president of the Harvard Law Review. He was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree. He worked as a civil rights attorney in Chicago and taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School from 1992 to 2004. He served three terms representing the 13th District

in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004.

**Who is Governor Mary Fallin?** Governor Mary Fallin was elected November 2, 2010, during a historic election in which she became the first-ever female governor of Oklahoma. She was inaugurated as the state's 27th governor on January 10, 2011.

She was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1990 which began her career of public service.

In 1994, Fallin would made history by becoming the first woman and first Republican to be elected lieutenant governor of Oklahoma. She held that office for 12 years.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was the bombing of the Murrah Building important to the nation?
2. Identify:
  - Timothy McVeigh
  - Terry Nichols
  - Michael Fortier
3. Why do you think the crime rate in Oklahoma City dropped immediately following the bombing?
4. Describe the tragedy that occurred on May 3, 1999, and its effects.
5. Describe the major change in corrections at the turn of the century.
6. Give examples of public funding for urban renewal projects.
7. List cash crops that thrive in the state. How do they relate to the economy?
8. List animals raised as an industry in the state. How do they cause health concerns?
9. What are the pros and cons of the large number of tribal gaming facilities?
10. Discuss the long-term effects of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

## Do You Know?

Born in 1879 on a large ranch in the Cherokee Nation near what later would become Oologah, Oklahoma, Will Rogers was first an Indian, a cowboy, then a national figure. Will Rogers was a star of Broadway and 71 movies of the 1920s and 1930s, a popular broadcaster and a columnist who wrote more than 4,000 syndicated newspaper columns.