



News

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Southwest Intermediary Finance Team & SWOSU Honored for Partnership

Photo Caption: Southwest Intermediary Finance Team, Inc. (SWIFT), was among 27 business and higher education partnerships throughout Oklahoma that were recently recognized as innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma's workforce. Accepting for SWIFT were (far left) Dr. Trey Thomason and wife Melissa Thomason and (third through fifth from the right) Board Member Dennis Krueger and United States Department of Agriculture representatives Kenny Quigley and Amy Cowely. With them are (from left) Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) Chancellor Glen D. Johnson, Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell, SWOSU Business Enterprise Center (BEC) Director Doug Misak, OSRHE Regent Ann Holloway and BEC Research Analyst Christina Darras.

Southwest Intermediary Finance Team, Inc. (SWIFT), was among 27 business and higher education partnerships throughout Oklahoma that were recently recognized as innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma's workforce.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University and SWIFT officials attended the Edmond luncheon to honor the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's (OSRHE) Business Partnership Excellence Award winners.

SWIFT is a private, not-for-profit U.S. Department of Agriculture lending intermediary. SWIFT's impact has benefitted SWOSU and the 14 counties it serves in southwest Oklahoma, according to Doug Misak, director of the SWOSU Business Enterprise Center.

One of the results of SWIFT's work is Dr. Trey Thomason. After completing medical school, Thomason returned to his hometown, Hinton, to establish his practice with the benefit from a SWIFT grant. With the nearest hospital 22 miles away, this clinic provides access to essential health care that some rural patients otherwise would not receive.

SWIFT is housed at the Timothy T. Day Business Enterprise Center on the SWOSU campus. SWOSU President Randy Beutler serves on the SWIFT board and former SWOSU President John Hays is the SWIFT board chairman. SWIFT borrowers benefit not only from the financing they receive for their businesses but also from expert technical assistance provided by the organization. SWIFT has had a positive impact on the economy of southwest Oklahoma, contributing to nearly \$17 million in earnings and the creation of 319 jobs.

Misak said the university is proud to collaborate with SWIFT in strengthening the state's workforce.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants.

Institutions involved in these partnerships provide \$500 for tuition waivers to employees of the partnering businesses; internships that enable current students to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents provide a \$500 match to the waivers.

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