



## THE PONCA CITY NEWS

PONCA CITY, OKLAHOMA

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### OSU-UML Employment Projection Increases

Dr. Web Keogh, Lab Director for the Oklahoma State University Multispectral Lab, said that the projections for employment at the lab would grow past the 90 positions earlier than projected to 120 or possible more over the next five years.

That would create an impact of over \$200 million to Ponca City over the next ten years. According to Keogh, the average salary of UML personnel is currently \$90,000 per year.

Keogh made his remarks during a tour of the facility by Gov. Brad Henry last Friday. During a presentation made prior to the tour, Keogh and Dr. Steve McKeever, the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer for Oklahoma State University, described the role of the lab and partnerships it had already developed. The Lab, Keogh said, has a backlog of \$9.6 million in contracts in addition to the work they are already performing.

The UML operations were launched through a donation of the 70,000 square foot Research East building by ConocoPhillips in 2006. The Ponca City Development Authority invested \$2 million into the project with an additional ConocoPhillips donation of \$2 million to help refurbish the building. The State of Oklahoma has contributed over \$5 million to the project. Sen. David Myers and Rep. Ken Luttrell, two principal architects of the state support, joined Henry during the briefing.

The University Multispectral Lab, or UML, is designed to conduct testing and evaluation of sensors. Keogh said the primary customer at this stage is the Department of Homeland Security although he did describe a medical sensor under development. The lab has been operating since 2006, although it did not move into its present headquarters in the former Research East building on the ConocoPhillips campus until last May. Thirty people are currently employed by the lab.

The potential for companies coming to Ponca City has a result of the lab's presence here is strong, according to UML personnel. McKeever discussed a Massachusetts based company involved in Nanotechnology that has already decided to locate in Ponca City while Keogh

mentioned a company in Idaho that is currently going through trials that could result in a Ponca City facility with high paying jobs. A strong potential exists to build a base of small subcontractors in the defense field by developing and managing a support system between the federal government, the government contractors and the small business.

The presentation to the Governor included several specific examples of the work currently being performed by the UML. Keogh further defined the partnerships of the lab with other universities such as the Johns Hopkins Applied Research Lab and several other institutions.

Oklahoma State University owns the facility and contracts with Triton Scientific to operate the UML.

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