

POSTED ON [SEPTEMBER 13, 2016](#) BY [DURANT DEMOCRAT](#)

# Eagle Suspension receives a Governor's award.

LOCAL NEWS 1

## For Quality Jobs Program

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Richard Schwalbach, Quality Jobs Program Manager for the State of Oklahoma, spoke about how industries and businesses in Oklahoma participate in the program. He gave congratulations when awarding the Governor's award to Eagle Suspension for their completion of the program.



James R. Johnson, Regional Director of Business Development for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, gave a presentation explaining various aspects of the Quality Jobs Program in Oklahoma.



Cindy Ervin, Human Resources Manager at Eagle Suspension and Rick Roy, Operations Manager of Eagle Suspension, talk about how they appreciate Tommy Kramer and his fine work recruiting the company to Durant. He was also praised for his skills in recruiting many businesses to Durant as Executive Director of the Durant Industrial Authority.



Eagle Suspension family members were on hand to receive the award from the Governor for their ten-year completion of the Quality Jobs Program.



Dignitaries were on hand for the presentation of the Governor's award to Eagle Suspension for their ten-year participation and completion in the Quality Jobs Program. On the far left is James R. Johnson with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Greg Massey Chairman of the Durant Industrial Authority. Holding the plaque is Richard Schwalbach, Quality Jobs Program Manager for the State of Oklahoma, and on the far right is Durant Mayor Stewart Hoffman.

Eagle Suspension and Dayton Parts were awarded Monday in the Durant Economic Development Council meeting for their completion of the Quality Jobs Program.

It is an incentive to create jobs and it gives the company an incentive to create those jobs.

A portion of the payroll is rebated to the company for completing the requirements of the program.

Eagle Suspension is a large, viable company that employs local people and has for over 10 years, according to officials.

Dignitaries from the State of Oklahoma and various offices were on hand Monday.

Executive Director of the Durant Industrial Authority, Tommy Kramer conducted the meeting that resulted in the awarding of Eagle Suspension getting a plaque from the Governor.

Kramer said, "They are the third company in Durant, Bryan County who have achieved this. It's a tremendous honor. Big Lots and Cardinal Glass were the other two. It's prestigious as only 14% of the companies in Oklahoma have ever completed it. The majority of those are in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. We are the first community in rural Oklahoma to have three and that's outstanding."

James Johnson, Regional Director Business Development for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce gave a presentation to show how the program worked as well as give some statistics involved. During his presentation, Johnson told of the function of his office as well as the good things that come from being involved in this incentive program. He said, "I think it's tremendously important for a community like Durant that stands out and stands up. It shows the kind of support that takes place to the companies that are important to their growth and development. We are happy to have them and are happy to be a participant with them."

Richard Schwalbach, Quality Jobs Program Manager for the State of Oklahoma, opened the box containing the award and presented it to the owners of Eagle Suspension who were on hand.

Kramer had previously told of how he recruited the company to come to Durant.

He said he visited with the owner, his wife and their boys. During the ceremony, Kramer hugged each of those from Eagle Suspension.

Kramer said it's a family company that is rooted firmly in our community.

Schwalbach said, "It's very impressive what's been done. I work with a lot of companies and I wish the success rate was higher. I understand for a number of reasons that it can't be. It's really neat to see in this community, the local effort combined with the state effort to ensure these projects come to fruition. I don't see that in every community. There's a sense of spirit here, a sense of teamwork here that helps that, all the way to the point where you see this meeting begin with a prayer. I don't think that's a disconnect with the success this community has. I'm very pleased to come here and share this honor."

Schwalbach said about Kramer, "Tommy does a very good job. He has some keen insights from his own business aspects prior to this role as economic development director. Maybe his greatest asset is his ability to pull all the pieces and massage that together to come to a final piece of the project. You need skill to do that and keep everybody on an even board and time basis."

It was said at the meeting that Kramer is a "miracle worker."

Durant Mayor Stewart Hoffman said, "It's fantastic. It's always good to have success stories in Durant as in this meeting.

"We have three more in the pipeline who are going to be successful also so we are looking forward to those going down the road."



Fran Mickle was recognized at the meeting for her 16 years on the DIA.

Kramer recognized Fran Mickle for her 16-year service on the Durant Industrial Authority. She retired from the DIA but still serves on the EDC.

Rick Roy, Operations Manager with Eagle Suspension said, "It's testimony to the cooperation of the community and of the leadership in Durant. Being on Team Durant and being involved in the Economic Development Council as an active member has helped understand how relationships can assist a company in maintaining its foothold in the community.

"When you employ as many people as we do, they are not just employees, they are part of your work family and it continues to grow and prosper every year. We've been turned into second-generation employees, children of employees that we have on site. We are rooted and we appreciate all the efforts that everybody who's assisted, OG&E, Oklahoma Natural Gas, the City of Durant. The cooperation of everybody in the city keeps us rooted here."

Cindy Ervin, Human Resources Manager, said, "It's wonderful that the unemployment rate is low if you're a citizen. It makes it rough for employers so we just have to work on becoming more and more attractive. I think it's going to take employers getting involved in the schools to make that more known. We need to have more presence in high schools and middle schools to make it more attractive. Industrial jobs are what keep America running. We need to continue with that message to this generation. I don't know how well they know it like my generation did."

Commercial Metals Company will start operations next year after their facility is built. Several from CMC were at the meeting to share in the congratulations to Eagle Suspension. Kramer said of their participation in this program, "In ten years, we don't know how many of us will be here to see CMC get the award."

The DIA and Team Durant say they will continue to recruit companies and aid in growth of the community.

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