

## SPOTLIGHT: WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS OF OKLAHOMA



# Driving Oklahoma's Prosperity

Canadian Valley Technology Center is powering workforce development through an others-first mindset.

**F**or Gayla Lutts, Ed.D., superintendent and CEO of Canadian Valley Technology Center (CV Tech), the personal and economic impact of skilled, empowered workers affects more than a business' bottom line.

"A skilled workforce is an economic driver for its area," Lutts said. "Workforce development positively benefits the individual, their family, and the community."

One of 29 technology centers in Oklahoma, CV Tech provides high school students and adults with hands-on learning to reskill, upskill, or gain certifications needed to succeed in today's workforce. Its affordability is certainly a draw (classes are just \$2.50 per course hour or free for in-district high school students), but the personalization of each program is what has students, as well as business and industry stakeholders, taking advantage of and appreciating everything the school has to offer.

"Our mission is to help students and businesses succeed. To do that, programs have to be customized," said Lutts. "We listen to industry needs and create programs that address the real and emerging business and economic demands in our area."

## Workforce Development 101

Listening to the evolving needs of Oklahoma's skilled workforce is one thing. Implementing changes that ensure students are fully equipped is another.

"Our business and industry partners sit on our advisory committees and provide insight on what's emerging in the industry and the in-demand skills for their workforce," said Lutts. "That partnership is critical to training and developing students for the careers they'll be stepping into."

From purchasing state-of-the-art equipment and innovative technology to combining skills with business training for entrepreneurial-minded students, CV Tech considers the entirety of a student's or partner's future. From Aviation to Welding, CV Tech offers 31 full time programs with dozens more short-term courses to empower their local workforce.

Through these partnerships, it's not uncommon for CV Tech to create a program from scratch based on projected industry growth. This was the case with the Industrial Automation and Robotics Technology track developed under Lutts, which has proven to be so popular with local industry that students are frequently hired before they even complete certification.

Similarly, with the Aerospace industry booming in Oklahoma, Lutts led the CV Tech adult aviation program to double in size in just 2 years and added a high school aviation program in response to the demand.

Student success is critical to CV Tech's mission, and this is evident in their commitment to coaching students to prepare for their first steps outside of the classroom, including work-based learning, apprenticeships, and fostering leadership skills through student organizations such as Business Professionals of America (BPA), HOSA – Future Health Professionals, and SkillsUSA\*. These efforts are reflected in CV Tech's 94% positive placement rate—the percentage of graduates who enter directly into the workforce or continue their education.

CV Tech's supportive and proactive approach points to a larger determination to see students and industries in Oklahoma thrive—personally and professionally.

## Leading by Example

CV Tech's others-first mindset starts at the top. Lutts' own passion for helping people has fueled her tenured career in educational administration. Moving up the ranks in CV Tech, Lutts overcame a near-fatal accident and led the El Reno campus through a 3-year recovery and rebuild after a devastating tornado destroyed its facilities.

The call to create economic and personal growth through skills training informs the strategic priorities she has established for CV Tech and influences every interaction instructors and administrators have with students and stakeholders.

"It's about creating a place where all people are set up to grow and be successful," said Lutts. "We care and will do everything we can to ensure students receive the skills and quality education needed for success. In turn, they are able to create better lives for themselves and their families while strengthening the workforce in our community."

## CV/TECH

**Chickasha Campus**  
1401 Michigan Avenue  
Chickasha, OK 73018  
405-224-7220

**Cowan Campus**  
1701 S Czech Hall Road  
Yukon, OK 73099  
405-345-3333

**El Reno Campus**  
6505 E Highway 66  
El Reno, OK 73036  
405-262-2629

[cvtech.edu](http://cvtech.edu)