

# Office of Governor Brad Henry

State of Oklahoma  
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## Governor Brad Henry

Brad Henry was officially sworn in as Oklahoma's 26th governor on January 13, 2003.

A third generation Oklahoman, he was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, where he attended public schools and graduated from Shawnee High School. The governor attended the University of Oklahoma as a President's Leadership Scholar and earned a bachelor's degree in economics in 1985. In 1988, Governor Henry was awarded his law degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law, where he served as managing editor of the Law Review.

Governor Henry returned to Shawnee to practice law with his father, Charles, and start a family. He married the former Kim Blain, a Shawnee school teacher, and they have three lovely daughters, Leah, Laynie and Baylee.

Before his election as governor, Brad Henry served ten years in the Oklahoma State Senate, chairing the Senate Judiciary Committee and serving as vice-chair of the Senate Economic Development Committee. As a gubernatorial candidate in 2002, his campaign themes focused on strengthening education, providing quality health care, and ensuring greater economic opportunities. His refreshing approach connected with voters. Brad Henry surprised many political pundits, winning the election in November, 2002.

Governor Henry took office in the midst of the worst budget crisis in state history, but forged a historic bipartisan agreement among legislative leaders that shielded education and health care from massive cuts. He also successfully fought to let voters decide whether to establish an education lottery to benefit the state's classrooms; voters overwhelmingly passed the lottery in November, 2004.

Other highlights of his first year in office include augmenting early childhood education, medical malpractice tort reform, sensible restrictions on public smoking, zero-based budgeting, and a funding solution to retain the state's only level-one trauma center.

Governor Henry's second-year agenda proved to be even more ambitious. Bolstering public education, he crafted a five-year strategy to raise the pay of Oklahoma teachers to at least match the regional average. Additionally, the governor successfully fought for a statewide vote in which Oklahomans approved a tribal gaming regulation act that will pump millions of dollars into state classrooms while helping revive the beleaguered horserace industry.

Governor Henry also secured a state vote to fund several vital healthcare initiatives through a modest increase in the tobacco tax. Approved by voters in November of 2004, the measure included targeted tax cuts, particularly an elimination of the capital gains tax on all Oklahoma property held for five years or more.

Other highlights of his second year in office included: additional tort reform, Medicaid screening for breast and cervical cancer, voluntary relocation assistance for the troubled Tar Creek region and expansion of preschool programs. A landmark anti-methamphetamine measure advanced by Gov. Henry resulted in a dramatic decline of meth lab seizures and has become a model for the rest of the nation.

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In his third year, Gov. Henry continued his pro-economic growth agenda with tax relief, tax rebates and a workers' compensation reform package that business groups hailed as the most substantive in Oklahoma history. He strengthened education through comprehensive school accountability, increased teacher pay and an initiative upgrading college campuses across the state. In addition, Gov. Henry worked successfully to provide access for more affordable prescription drugs, bolster funding for road and bridge repair and ensure much-needed assistance Oklahoma National Guard members and their families.

Despite the demands of office, Brad Henry remains a committed family man. The Henrys have long been active members of the Shawnee community, participating in a number of civic organizations and local causes. They are also members of the First Baptist Church of Shawnee where both have served as Sunday school teachers. The Governor has also served as an ordained deacon at that church.

Governor Henry is working to build a better Oklahoma by strengthening the state public education system and making health care more accessible and affordable to the citizenry. In his inaugural address, he urged citizens to celebrate Oklahoma's many accomplishments, put aside their differences and rally together for the good of their beloved state. As he often likes to say, "We are all Oklahomans first."

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