

## TSET Better Health Podcast Transcript

### Episode 22: 20 Years of a Healthier Oklahoma: TSET's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

December 30, 2021

Summary: The Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) was a ground-breaking agency upon its establishment in 2001. Unlike its counterparts in other states, the agency's operations and missions were dictated by Sand for the people of Oklahoma by statewide vote. As a result, the agency remains innovative and effective in saving countless lives and changing the course of our state's future. Take a look back at the last 20 years of TSET with former Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson and former State Representative Ray Vaughn, who were among the prominent bipartisan coauthors and advocates for TSET's creation. Executive Director Julie Bisbee explores how the mission has grown and what's in store for the future. Follow the journey from humble beginnings as a simple state question to Oklahoma's public health powerhouse as TSET celebrates its 20th anniversary.

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#### **[Theme music]**

James Tyree: Hello and welcome to the TSET Better Health Podcast. This is your host James Tyree, a health communication consultant at TSET.

Cate Howell: And this is Cate Howell, TSET podcast producer.

Today's episode is a special one. The story begins in the year 2000, two years after Oklahoma joined 45 other states in settling a huge lawsuit with the tobacco industry. Multiple state governments sued Big Tobacco agencies over the widespread damage, mortality rates, misleading marketing and hidden information that ruined the lives of their citizens. For decades, tobacco companies left state governments with the bill while they made massive profits from their products' devastating and deadly addiction.

J. Tyree: Oklahoma wasn't the only state to join this nationwide movement to hold the tobacco industry accountable, but our state's strategy on what to do with annual payments from tobacco companies as required by the Master Settlement Agreement was by far the most unique. In November 2000, Oklahoma voters approved a state question that directed most of the annual payments to go into an endowment. The endowment's earnings would fund a Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust – or TSET – that administers programs and research funding to reverse some of the damage caused by the tobacco industry and its products. What began as a small agency designed to manage the funds has blossomed into a public health powerhouse that changes lives and improves health outcomes for Oklahomans every day in big and small ways. Today at the end of our twentieth year, we celebrate and tell the story of TSET.

C. Howell: We have three special guests today who all provide a unique perspective on TSET's journey. First, we begin with a former reporter and state representative with an inside look at life before TSET.

**[02:08]**

**[Bluesy rock music ("[Rocky Mountain Drive](#)" by Marc Wolloch)]**

Ray Vaughn: My name is Ray Vaughn. I was the House of Representatives representative from District 81.

J. Tyree: Ray Vaughn worked at the state capitol during a time when smoking was ubiquitous, and his mission to make significant changes to that was personal.

R. Vaughn: I had friends and acquaintances that were suffering from tobacco addiction, and back then, it wasn't something you talked about. You know, it was routine, but I knew that it didn't have to be routine and there were things that could be done to help people recover from that kind of thing.

The second reason was that we allowed smoking – I've always hated cigarette smoke, but we allowed smoking in the capitol building. When I first went to the capitol, I was there as a reporter. And I was a news anchor at WKY television, but I was assigned also to cover the legislature. And so I would spend hours in smoke-filled committee rooms, and I would go home with my eyes burning and, you know, wheezing and my clothes smelling like cigarette smoke. And it just really infuriated me that that was allowed to occur.

So I've been from both sides, personally and professionally, as far as watching how things happen with the cigarettes, tobacco, and another tobacco products, just how devastating it can be to our population and to our families.

C. Howell: And the tobacco-friendly culture at the Capitol went beyond just allowing smoking indoors. Tobacco lobbyists were also friends with legislators, and they worked hard to keep the status quo in place.

R. Vaughn: We had three full-time tobacco lobbyists at the State Capitol, and honestly, all three of them were acquaintances, I would say acquaintances, and at least one of them was a friend. So I knew exactly what they were doing and why they were doing it. And it was the kind of thing that the tobacco industry was going to make sure that there wasn't any legislation passed that impaired their ability to sell tobacco products in Oklahoma, and as a result, make a number of our population seriously ill and kill a great number of them. So it was just a quest of mine to do what I could to turn that around.

So, you know, I wanted to do what I could to get rid of tobacco and the effects of tobacco in our population. And not only did it affect me individually, you know, as a reporter and even as a legislator sitting in those meetings after that. But every time I saw the statistics on how many deaths, how many people were under treatment, the

cost of treatment – Oklahoma was spending multi-millions of dollars treating people with cigarette addiction issues, and it was just money that we shouldn't have to be putting out.

J. Tyree: So the financial and health effects of cigarette smoking were devastating, but the legislature had no great desire to do anything about it in a significant way. At least not until the legislature faced a surprise expense that happened to endanger part of Oklahoma's cultural heritage.

R. Vaughn: [laughs] Well, it's really a little funny as to what actually got everyone's attention. There are some large paintings in the south end of the rotunda at the State Capitol building, large paintings depicting our men and women that fought in the first and second World Wars, a memorial basically to them. They're beautiful paintings. I don't know what the state paid for them. But at one point, the people that maintain our facilities out there determined that those paintings were being basically destroyed by cigarette smoke, because everybody was able to smoke in the capitol building, and that was quite common. So the paintings were being discolored and coated with cigarette smoke.

And at one point they came to the legislature and said, "We need \$50,000. We've gotten a bid on what it's going to take to clean those paintings. And we've got to do it because this is our heritage, this is our capitol building, and we've got to preserve those paintings for posterity." So we had to come up with \$50,000 to clean the cigarette smoke off of those paintings. And to me, that was a signal that there may be an opportunity to pass some legislation that at least limited cigarette smoking in the capitol building.

And so we ran a bill with that goal and it passed. And as far as I know, it was the first bill that was ever passed that limited anything regarding smoking anywhere in the state. And of course, as it passed, then that opened other opportunities because people in other buildings that were state buildings began to say, "Well, hey, why can't we get smoking out of our buildings? You know, it's doing damage over here as well, not only to mention the facilities, but the individuals exposed to it as well." And so we were able to build on that initial bill that passed and extend our ban on smoking in other state buildings and ultimately to all other buildings in which people worked with some limited exceptions.

C. Howell: So what began as an effort to preserve paintings in the Capitol building snowballed into other smoking legislation that hadn't been heard of. But it was going to take some serious, national movement to make the sweeping changes that needed to be made.

R. Vaughn: Well, I think it was the key to moving on from that point where we had achieved some degree of remedy, but the Master Settlement Agreement was paramount, and Drew Edmondson certainly was at the heart of that as our Attorney General.

[08:27]

[Funky rock music ("[Like We Do It](#)" by Grace Mesa)]

Drew Edmondson: This is Drew Edmondson, and I was the Attorney General of Oklahoma from 1995 to 2011, which included the time of the tobacco litigation and the time of the state question involving establishing the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust.

J. Tyree: As Oklahoma's Attorney General, Drew Edmondson spearheaded Oklahoma's lawsuit of the tobacco industry in the late 1990s. All prior attempts to hold the industry accountable had failed, and the tobacco companies were experts at both legal and public relations manipulation.

D. Edmondson: People don't realize today that when we started this in the 1990s – the litigation – that nobody had ever been successful in a lawsuit against the tobacco industry – no grieving widow, no family without a provider who died of lung cancer, nobody had been successful against the tobacco industry. One of the reasons for that – in the 1950s, the Surgeon General came out with a statement that there was a link between smoking and cancer, which nobody had ever thought of. In World War II, the tobacco companies gave away cigarettes to our soldiers and sailors and people at war, and it was just accepted. Some of the advertisements had doctors in them saying, "This what I smoke and it's good for you."

So when the Surgeon General said there might be a link between smoking and cancer, the tobacco industry formed what was called the Tobacco Institute. They ran full page ads in newspapers all across the United States saying, "We're going to tell the truth about smoking and illnesses. We're going to hire the best researchers in the world, and we're going to get to the bottom of this question." And they did that. They hired excellent researchers and they did all kinds of studies.

The problem is when any of those studies started going south on them and started indicating that there was a link between smoking and cancer, they would send that project to one of their law firms. They had three major law firms across the United States that handled the lion's share of all the tobacco industry business, and they would label those as "special projects." And nobody who sued in the sixties or seventies or eighties got access to that data from the tobacco industry itself showing links between smoking and cancer because they were protected under attorney-client privilege.

C. Howell: It took smart legal strategy to uncover the insidious tactics the industry used to hide their findings, and Oklahoma was uniquely adept at this.

D. Edmondson: We were perhaps the only state, certainly one of very few and I think the only – we sued the law firms along with the public relations companies that set up that promise in the fifties that they breached in the sixties, seventies and eighties by not coming clean with the American people. And our theory was, you know, if someone comes into a lawyer and says, "I just robbed First National Bank and I need you to defend me," nothing that that person says can be repeated by the lawyer. It's all sacred – it's attorney-client privilege.

But if somebody comes into a lawyer and says, "I'm getting ready to rob the First National Bank, and I need to stow my gun and my mask here until the day of the

robbery, and I need you to hold the cash when we get done until it cools off,” that lawyer ceases to be a lawyer and has become a bank robber. It's an exception to the attorney-client privilege. If the attorney is participating in a crime, the conversations and the discourse back and forth are not privilege. So we sued the law firm saying that this was a conspiracy to withhold information from the American public and therefore those studies, those documents should be public record.

J. Tyree: This paved the way for Oklahoma to enter into litigation against the tobacco industry, but we weren't the first. The Attorney General of Mississippi, Mike Moore, was the first to file a lawsuit in May of 1994. His approach was influential in setting an example for other states to follow in overcoming the legal gymnastics of Big Tobacco.

D. Edmondson: The theory that was used by Mike Moore in Mississippi was, okay, there are warnings on the packages of cigarettes that this may be hazardous to the health of the smoker, and so the smokers don't have a lawsuit. They were warned; they should have known better; they smoked anyway. The tobacco industry is making billions of dollars, billions of dollars off the sale of cigarettes, and the State of Mississippi is stuck in the middle paying the medical bill. And so they proceeded on a course of action called Unjust Enrichment, where the tobacco industry was making money at the expense of the State of Mississippi, the State of Oklahoma, the State of Massachusetts and the other states that got in line.

I first learned of this litigation at the first AG meeting I went to, before I was sworn in. It was in December of 1994 in San Diego, and I started hearing about this tobacco lawsuit and became very interested on behalf of the State of Oklahoma, particularly when I started getting wind at subsequent meetings of the kind of material that was being obtained in discovery from the tobacco industry.

In their own memoranda, they referred to young people who were too young to legally purchase the product, as “replacement market.” And, you know, I had to get my arms around that. What does that mean – replacement market? Well, their customers were dying as they grew older of heart disease, cancer, emphysema, and they needed to replace them, and so they marketed it to our kids.

I became interested in 1996. Oklahoma became the 13th state to file a lawsuit against the tobacco industry.

C. Howell: And, against all odds, we won – or, at least, we agreed to a settlement. In November of 1998, the state Attorneys General of 46 states, five U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and the four largest cigarette manufacturers in America reached an accord called the Master Settlement Agreement.

J. Tyree: The agreement not only required those tobacco companies to pay an annual sum to those state and territorial governments, along with D.C., it also placed a lot of restrictions on tobacco advertising, sponsorships, and product placement, which was a huge win. But now the lawmakers were faced with a new challenge: what should they do with the settlement payments?

C. Howell: With each state suddenly guaranteed a substantial influx of money, there were myriad ways proposed and enacted to handle that money. But Drew Edmondson and the people of Oklahoma decided to take a different approach.

D. Edmondson: The idea came about simply by observing what was happening in other states, what they chose to do with their settlement. Obviously the lawsuit was about health. It was about the health of our citizens, the health of our children and the expense borne by the State of Oklahoma in providing for the increased cost of that health due to smoking. But we watched state after state that were dealing with this issue immediately cutting taxes because they had this amount of money coming into the state, or some states did what was called securitized their payment, which meant basically they sold their judgment to Wall Street to get a lump sum up front, which they could then spend on bridges and highways or whatever they wanted to spend it on. That's particularly popular with governors, having a bunch of money that they can spend on projects around the state so they can point with pride at what they'd done. Governor Keating was one who wanted the money up front.

And it occurred to me that while other states had created endowments, they created statutory endowments, and what the legislature can give the legislature can take away. So it occurred to me that what we needed to do was protect that settlement in a constitutional trust, which would require a vote of the people, not just an act of the legislature. Legislature could submit it but it would take a vote of the people to amend the constitution of the state to provide for that.

J. Tyree: And that innovative thinking was a spark that would change public health in Oklahoma for the next two decades and the future. But there wasn't exactly a consensus on how the trust would be divided.

D. Edmondson: We negotiated with a Democratic legislature and a Republican governor to try to get this done, and the negotiation revolved around what percent was going into a trust and what percent was going to be available to the legislature to spend. And we finally reached an agreement primarily with Stratton Taylor, who was then President of the Senate, that we would start out 50-50, and then the amount going to the Tobacco Settlement Trust would go up five percentage points a year for the next five years, capping out at 75, and the amount going to the state would bottom out at 25%, and it would go into a revolving fund at the State Treasury called the Tobacco Settlement Revolving Fund. The rest of it, up to 75% after five years, would go into the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust.

The only hammer that we had at negotiation was the threat that if we didn't reach an agreement on the percentage split that I would personally mount a campaign with citizen petitions to get it on the ballot, and if we had to do that, we would go after a hundred percent of the money.

C. Howell: And that's where Ray Vaughn came in. See, before it could be sent to a vote of the people, it had to be drafted and approved in the House and the Senate. At that time, it was a Democratic legislature and a Republican governor, so it took a big bipartisan

collaboration to bring it all together, and especially to agree to the 75-25 split. Vaughn, a Republican, helped make that happen.

R. Vaughn: When the legislation – I had carried legislation myself – I had initiated legislation myself to implement the settlement and some of the details with regard to how and what happened in that settlement throughout years, years of legislation. But when it came down to the actual approval of the legislation to settle the lawsuit, that was going to be handled, and everyone knew that was going to be handled by the Democrat Party, because they were the ones in power.

So I understood that. And so when that bill finally came to the House floor, I was prepared to listen to Speaker Adair who carried the bill – Larry Adair from Eastern Oklahoma – he was at the forefront of the authorship of that bill. And when it came up on the floor, to my surprise, he stood at the Speaker's desk and asked me, a Republican, to explain the bill to the legislature. That was a great honor to me. I was unaware that he was going to do that, but I had talked about it enough, it wasn't a problem. But I was able to get up and explain the details of the bill and what it would mean. And, of course, the bill did pass. I was just pleased to have even a small part of its passage and the creation ultimately of the TSET.

**[21:26]**

**[Uplifting strings music (“[Luminous Idea](#)” by Tiny Music)]**

J. Tyree: And then came the big moment. On November 7, 2000, State Question 692 appeared before Oklahoma voters. As Edmondson explains:

D. Edmondson: It was approved overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly by the voters of the State of Oklahoma.

C. Howell: And the rest is history. Vaughn and Edmondson have different perspectives but share the same pride on what was accomplished with the establishment of TSET.

R. Vaughn: Looking back, the thing I am most proud of is the fact that we captured those dollars in the settlement and placed them into trust with the state treasurer, where they cannot be spent by new legislatures in the future without a vote of the people. We owe that to the people, because that's what we said we were going to do with the money, and that's what we want to do. And, you know, recently, the legislature tried to take some of that money and spend it elsewhere. It went to a vote of the people. The people said, “No, we're going to leave that money where it is because we like what we're doing with it, it's effective, and people are being helped.” So, I mean, that is – that is one of the proudest things that I can think of.

D. Edmondson: What I envisioned from the trust was a gap filler to do the kinds of things that the legislature was either unwilling or unable to do with its funding. To fund high grade research into cancer and other smoking related illnesses and to work on prevention, to counter advertising, programs that would help kids decide not to start smoking. It's hard

to quit. It's easier not to start and if we can convince them not to start, it's a better part of the deal. And on both at those scores, the research that's been done by TSET, the support they've given to the Stephenson Cancer Treatment Center, the amount that they have spent on adult stem cell research, the programs that they funded through OSU Tulsa – all of these things fit right into what I hoped that the Tobacco Settlement Trust would do, and that is give us cutting edge research, let us be a leader in finding the causes and cures of cancer and the work that they've done on prevention, both counter-marketing and healthy lifestyle advocacy has filled the other half of my hopes and expectations for the Tobacco Settlement Fund. It's been a good thing for Oklahoma, a good thing for the health of our citizens and particularly good for the health of our children.

[24:21]

[Inspirational strings music ("[Today Will Be Great](#)" by Emmett Cooke)]

J. Tyree: With the Master Settlement Agreement made and legislation passed, the idea had come to fruition, but the work had just begun. TSET began its journey as a state agency on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. A small staff with a Board of Directors and Board of Investors came together to implement the vision of the voters and legislators behind the agency's creation. But how were those goals actualized? How did the journey take shape?

Julie Bisbee: My name is Julie Bisbee, and I'm the Executive Director of TSET.

C. Howell: Julie Bisbee has been the executive director since 2019, but she was a part of the TSET family long before that. With a background in journalism and both personal and professional experience with advocacy and health, when she saw the work TSET was doing, Bisbee became excited to be a part of it.

J. Bisbee: [00:47] You know, I started my career with training in journalism, and it has always been a strong value to me to do public service. There's a Muhammad Ali quote, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth," and that is something that I have always taken to heart, whether that was through doing journalism, telling people's stories, providing information, or working in state government.

What attracted me to TSET is really that society should be investing in health, and we should care about the health of our neighbors, and we should be striving to create a healthy state, and that is really hard. I have family members that have battled tobacco addiction. I have family members that struggle to have good health habits, and so that's something that I have been passionate about over the years. And also, I'm curious, so when I see a problem, I'm thinking, "Why is this happening, how is this happening, and what can we do further upstream to prevent these things from happening?" And so all of those forces came together to make the job at TSET really attractive to me because we get to think about those things every day and we are mindful of our role to help improve health for the people of this state.

J. Tyree: Bisbee joined the TSET staff in January 2012, years before becoming our executive director. As the agency grew, so did her passion for the work.

J. Bisbee: I joined TSET as their first public information officer. TSET is a relatively young agency. As earnings grew and as programs grew, they added staff. We started out modest. It was, "We know that there are a lot of people in Oklahoma who are addicted to tobacco who smoke and we've got to help them stop." The board at the time, the founding executive director really looked at the playbook from the Centers for Disease Control, looked at what leaders in health improvement were doing, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and said, "What does the blueprint need to be?" And they laid out a very specific vision.

C. Howell: A gradual process of executing this vision began with a simple phone service and grew to become one of the largest public health grant funders in the state.

J. Bisbee: We started with the helpline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW. We know that people are going to be nudged to quit. How do we create a pathway for them to do that easily and on their terms, but also with assistance? So we created 1-800-QUIT-NOW, and that's been in operation – that was our very first program. We have one of the top helplines in the country in that we are serving anywhere from 25 to 30,000 people a year, where some other states are serving 4 or 5,000. And so that to me is really a key infrastructure piece to creating a tobacco-free future.

And then we looked at that blueprint again and said, "Okay, what else do we need to add?" We added our health communication efforts. Those health-promoting messages out in media, things like that. Not only to promote the helpline, but to educate Oklahomans on the fact that secondhand smoke is not safe. And then looking again, what's the blueprint, what have other states done to attack this problem? We added in our community-based programs because we knew that if we were going to change our environment, we had to bring local partners to the table, and we've seen that happen.

Since that time we've added grants for Health Systems Initiatives. Talking to your doctor about quitting smoking or changing other health behaviors is really vital, so we have that. We have added research grants. Part of our constitutional framework requires us to fund cancer research. We're doing that with Stephenson Cancer Center. We're also doing that, looking at the risks for cancer and looking for ways to help people reduce those risks or avoid them altogether with the TSET Health Promotion Research Center. And then we're also looking at regenerative medicine. We know that tobacco use often kills lung tissue, damages other parts of the body, and so we have a research grant with the Oklahoma Center for Adult Stem Cell Research, and they look at the cellular level. How can we turn certain markers on and off to either regrow tissue, help heal, help understand diseases so that we can have more effective treatments?

J. Tyree: That persistent goal of not only encouraging healthy behaviors but finding effective treatments for tobacco-related diseases has transformed the state's largest cancer treatment center in a nationally recognized leader in the field.

J. Bisbee: I think another contribution that TSET has been uniquely involved in is the Stephenson Cancer Center. In Oklahoma, we now have a National Cancer Institute designated cancer center that provides cutting edge treatment in our state. A decade ago, maybe 15 years ago, if someone had a cancer that was rare or unique or their body was not responding to traditional therapy, they might have to go to Houston, they might have to travel, they might have to leave their home. And that's a hardship – we know that. Because TSET has been at the table as sort of a legacy funder for Stephenson Cancer Center, they have been able to attract other funding to the table and build a world class center here in our state, really in the region. I mean, there's not a lot of places within 200 miles where you can get that type of care. I think that's another area where because of TSET we have this.

C. Howell: And that's not the only area where this agency has made a lasting impact. In fact, thanks to our relationships with grantees and local community leaders, TSET has helped change the landscape of public health in Oklahoma forever.

J. Bisbee: One of my favorite things, and when you talk about lasting impact for prevention, we talk about policy. Policy shapes the environment. Policy helps people make decisions, but it also outlives all of us, right? And so one of the things that we have in Oklahoma that other states are envious of is our 24/7 tobacco-free schools law. So that's a really interesting story because when we first started our community-based work, some school districts may have had a policy. State law required that you could not smoke during school hours. Grantees across the state got to know those local decision-makers, educated them, talked with them about, "How do we create a bright path for our kiddos to thrive in Oklahoma?" And they would go school board to school board, have those conversations, and those elected school board members would make the decision to adopt a 24/7 tobacco-free policy. After, you know, kind of a critical mass of them – the majority of school districts had those in place – the legislature then enacted that as a law. And so I think that that's really a great example of how local work, local conversations create that tipping point so that all public school children now are protected from tobacco use 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

J. Tyree: Twenty years of TSET have been transformative for the state, but there is so much more to come. As obesity rates, vaping, and other new health challenges arise in Oklahoma, TSET is already working behind the scenes to address these issues head-on.

J. Bisbee: We're going to continue to help fund that prevention infrastructure with tobacco cessation. That is our core mission, and we are going to stick true to that. I think vaping has changed the landscape. We had significant strides in reducing youth tobacco use and we are seeing that vaping is eclipsing a lot of that progress. The tobacco industry has pulled us back in time, resorting to old tactics. You see them marketing directly to children on social media. You are seeing them use influencers to say, this is something that important and smart people do. We have a new challenge on the landscape, and I think it's going to take all of us talking about what has worked in tobacco cessation and prevention policy and of course parents having those conversations.

At the same time though, we know that obesity in the United States and Oklahoma is on the rise. Thankfully over the last couple of years in Oklahoma, it's held steady, but we

know that the obesity-related health costs are going to eclipse tobacco-related. And so, that's a place where, again, we can go back to our local communities, we can look across our systems and say, "Are we doing everything that we can to help create nudges for healthy choices?" So you're likely to see us making targeted investments in obesity prevention and reduction. So maybe that looks like helping communities create safe places for physical activity, making sure there are no barriers to fresh fruits and vegetables. And then of course, educating on the benefits of being healthy, you feel better.

Those are some of the things on the horizon. I think we also have to be looking at what is happening in communities across our state. Is there access to healthy choices in our rural areas, in our underserved areas, and what can we be doing to promote those choices or to remove barriers?

Over the years we've seen the endowment grow and with that means that the earnings grow. We are seeing that we have additional earnings available to us, and the board has made a targeted three-year-plan going forward where we are going to look for targeted enhancements to our core mission.

**[35:39]**

**[Inspiring cinematic music ("[I'll Be There For You](#)" by Beza)]**

C. Howell: As we enter into 2022 and begin our third decade of public health work in Oklahoma, TSET is excited to forge ahead with new, innovative, long-term goals to address health-related issues in the state, but we will never forget our roots. We were created with a specific goal in mind and through a bipartisan, statewide collaboration between legislators and nearly 800,000 Oklahoma voters, and the agency holds that allegiance paramount to everything we do.

J. Bisbee: You know, when I think about what Oklahoma created with TSET, with the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust – voters created this in 2000 by passing a state question on the promise that dollars would be set aside in an endowment and those earnings would be spent to improve health. And then, of course, in 2020, they had the opportunity to be asked that question again and affirm TSET's existence. When I look across states, when I look about how other states handled their funding from the Master Settlement Agreement, it's truly miraculous what Oklahomans have done. They have a vision for the future. We work really hard to try to stay true to that vision. We are very mindful of that. We're big on accountability and transparency, and we understand that we are part of that system, but when I look at that, it's just so amazing to me, and I'm just really honored to be at the helm of something that people want and continue to support that does good in the state. And I think as Oklahomans, we should be really thankful that folks had the foresight to put this in place.

**[37:35]**

J. Tyree: TSET is unique in so many ways. As Julie said, we're all honored to dedicate our lives to executing that forward-thinking vision for our state. Here's to twenty years of TSET.

C. Howell: And here's to twenty more! If you'd like more information on the work we do, programs we create, and partners we bring together, you can listen to other episodes of the TSET Better Health Podcast on our website at [tset.ok.gov/podcast](http://tset.ok.gov/podcast) or your preferred podcast streaming platform.

J. Tyree: We want to thank you, our listeners, for celebrating our anniversary with us, and we hope you have a happy and healthy New Year. Until next time, this is James Tyree –

C. Howell: And Cate Howell –

J. Tyree: Wishing you peace –

C. Howell: – and Better Health.

**[Theme music]**

**[38:40]**