BUILDING MOMENTUM
ERDA'S ONE WORD FOR 2026 – THRIVE

By Marcie Mack, Ed.D., Executive Director, Enid Regional Development Alliance

*As we step into 2026, the Enid region has one focus — to **thrive**.*

Each new year gives us an opportunity to reflect on where we've been and where we're headed. For Enid, the story is one of growth, recognition, and readiness. It's about the partnerships that make our progress possible and the shared vision that drives our community forward. Our One Word of intention for 2026 captures that spirit perfectly. **Thrive** — because our businesses, economy, and community are all rising together.





Partnerships that Reflect Our Strength

In 2025, Enid was selected as one of only two cities in Oklahoma to partner with the non-profit *Think-and-Do Tank* Heartland Forward. This designation signals a major step forward for Enid's efforts to build a thriving local economy, nurture talent, improve health & well-being, and strengthen the city's competitiveness across the broader region. Enid's selection reflects its strong civic leadership, its strategic positioning in northwest Oklahoma, and its momentum in workforce development, economic diversification, and community health initiatives. Partnering with Heartland Forward gives Enid the opportunity to:

- Access cutting-edge research, policy insights, and best practices from across the region.
- Tap into networks, funding streams, and collaborative partnerships that can amplify local efforts.
- Focus on actionable programs in talent development, entrepreneur support, health and wellness, and competitive regional growth.
- Elevate Enid's profile as a community that is poised for growth, innovation, and quality of life for its residents.

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Heartland Forward's focus on "doing, not just studying" fits us perfectly — because Enid doesn't wait for opportunity; we create it.

Investing in the Future: Grants and Growth

This past year, the Enid Regional Development Alliance (ERDA) and our partners secured state and federal grants that will help strengthen infrastructure, expand workforce training, and prepare for future growth. These investments are critical — they ensure that as our community grows, we have the resources and readiness to support it.

From downtown revitalization efforts to industrial expansion projects, these grants are laying the groundwork for a stronger, more connected Enid. They demonstrate that when we plan together and act with purpose, we can build the kind of community where both businesses and families flourish.

Industrial Park Readiness: A Gateway for Opportunity

One of the most exciting areas of focus for 2026 is industrial park readiness. Enid's industrial parks are not only open for business — they are *ready* for the future.

With strategic infrastructure planning, improved site certification, and transportation access that connects us to major highways and rail systems, Enid is positioned to attract new industries and support expansion for those already here.

This readiness translates directly into new jobs, stronger supply chains, and long-term economic stability. It's another way our region continues to thrive — through preparation, persistence, and partnership.

Quality of Life: The Heart of It All

Economic success means little without a community people are proud to call home. That's why quality of life remains a part of our mission. Enid continues to offer the perfect balance — affordability, short commutes, excellent schools, and a vibrant arts and cultural scene.

From First Friday events and local theater and symphony performances to new dining and entertainment options, our city is growing not just in opportunity, but in experience. Every new project contributes to a sense of place and pride that defines the Enid region.

A Year to Thrive

As 2026 begins, we do so with gratitude for the progress behind us and excitement for the possibilities ahead. Our One Word challenge — *Thrive* — is more than a theme. It's a commitment to growth, collaboration, and community excellence.

Together, we'll continue to build a region where people want to work, grow and live. A region recognized not just for what it produces, but for how it prospers.

Enid's story has always been one of heartland values and forward momentum — and this year, that story is only getting stronger.

Because here in Enid, we don't just hope for a better tomorrow — we build it.

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