

BARTLESVILLE — Gov. Mary Fallin brought her platform of education and the workforce to Bartlesville on Tuesday, making stops at Phillips 66 and a Bartlesville Chamber of Commerce forum to talk about the link between classroom training and jobs. It is a topic that has received a lot of air time from Fallin this week; she spent Monday in New Mexico hosting a summit of the National Governors Association, of which she is the chairwoman. The yearlong initiative on which the governors are focusing is "America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs." "It's about putting Americans back to work in jobs in America," Fallin said at Tuesday's chamber forum. "I think education is the key to success, not only for our students, but for our economy, our businesses and our workforces." Technology is changing the needs of industry, requiring workers to have more training, she said. Fifty years ago, 79 percent of jobs in the U.S. required only a high school degree. Today, only 40 percent of the jobs can be accomplished without additional training or education, the governor noted. The top-paying industries in Oklahoma are looking for employees who have more education, Fallin said. Workers in the energy, aerospace, agriculture, defense, biosciences and information technology sectors are all expected to have more classroom training. Oklahoma and other states need to focus on graduating more students with two-year and four-year college degrees and beyond to keep pace with industry needs, she said. "I certainly hear from our industries that they can't find workers — especially in the energy sector, especially in the aerospace sector," the governor said. "Then I hear from people who say their kids can't find jobs. I started working on a proposal to do what I call closing the skills gap in Oklahoma in our education." Fallin visited with 400 workers who have already made the grade, securing jobs in the energy sector at Phillips 66 offices in Bartlesville, where she discussed growth in U.S. energy production. Energy consultants announced in October that the U.S. has surpassed Saudi Arabia as the world's largest energy producer. The governor described this era as an "energy renaissance" for the nation, which translates to

good news for Oklahoma's economy. Fallin said one publication recently rated the Sooner State as the "best place in the world for energy development" and added that Forbes Magazine recognizes Oklahoma as one of the top five states in the nation for business climate.