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## SWOSU and GPRMC Launch Oklahoma Surgical Technology Program



Provided

GPRMC CEO Corey Lively and SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell recently signed an agreement to advance Oklahoma's healthcare education.

**J. Boone Clemmons**  
SWOSU News Release

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) and Great Plains Regional Medical Center (GPRMC) are pleased to announce an exciting new partnership aimed at advancing healthcare education in Western Oklahoma. This partnership, signed on September 16th, 2024, by SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell and GPRMC CEO Corey Lively, marks the establishment of a new Surgical Technology program set to begin in Fall 2024.

The signing ceremony featured a ribbon-cutting event hosted by the Elk City Chamber of Commerce. This event highlighted a strong partnership between GPRMC and SWOSU, demonstrating a commitment to advancing healthcare education in Elk City and the broader western Oklahoma community. The center will serve as a vital resource for training future healthcare professionals, enhancing local educational opportunities, and supporting growth in the region's healthcare sector.

Under this agreement, SWOSU students interested in pursuing a career in surgical technology will have the opportunity to enroll in a comprehensive two-year program hosted at the GPRMC Education Center in Elk City, OK. The program will prepare students to become surgical technologists, equipping them with both foundational knowledge and practical, hands-on clinical experience.

In addition to classroom instruction in the first year, students will gain invaluable real-world training in GPRMC's operating rooms during the second year of the program.

This partnership between SWOSU and GPRMC represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing need for skilled healthcare professionals in Western Oklahoma. By combining SWOSU's academic excellence with GPRMC's commitment to healthcare service, this program aims to produce a steady pipeline of qualified surgical technologists for the region.

"This partnership with SWOSU reflects our commitment to training the next generation of healthcare professionals. The Surgical Technology program will not only benefit our hospital but also strengthen the healthcare workforce in Western Oklahoma, ensuring that our community continues to receive top-tier medical care," stated Corey Lively, CEO of Great Plains Regional Medical Center.

Lively also acknowledged the generous contribution of the late Dr. L.V. Baker from Elk City, whose family donated the building that houses the new GPRMC Education Center, honoring his legacy and commitment to healthcare in the region.

"SWOSU is proud to collaborate with Great Plains Regional Medical Center to address critical workforce areas in healthcare," said Dr. Lovell. "This new Surgical Technology program reflects our dedication to meeting workplace demands and providing flexibility in filling Oklahoma's medical needs. By training skilled surgical technologists, we aim to support the healthcare system in Western Oklahoma and ensure our communities receive the highest standard of care."

### Program Overview

#### Program Start:

Fall 2024 for pre-requisites  
Fall 2025 for the first cohort.

#### Location:

GPRMC Education Center  
222 W. 3rd Street, Elk City, OK.

#### Degree Earned:

Associate's Degree in Applied Science.

#### Program Contact:

SWOSU Admissions & Recruitment  
580-774-3782

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**Janie Webb**

Linda Jane "Janie" (Nikkel) Webb was born at Alfalfa, Oklahoma, on December 11, 1932, and passed away on September 22, 2024, while living at Homestead of Weatherford.



Janie was the first of four children, born to John B. Nikkel and Agnes Heinrichs Nikkel. The young family bought farmland Southwest of Colony, OK, and Janie was raised in that area.

Money was tight during her early years, and the family had to survive on what they raised and grew on the farm.

She attended Corn, OK schools, graduating as Valedictorian of her class in 1949. After graduation, Janie moved to Cordell, OK where she worked as a waitress at Dodson's Café, then became a secretary at Bartel Parts.

While in Cordell, she met her future husband Gid Elvin Webb, who was working as a watchmaker at C.T. Akers Jewelry. The couple married in November 1953. To this union two children were born: John Elvin Webb and Judy Kathleen Webb (Haley).

Janie was raised in the Mennonite community and baptized in Corn Creek as a young woman. She and Elvin eventually joined the First Baptist Church in Cordell where they attended services for many years. Janie spent her early years raising her family. She was an excellent cook and baker and produced many dozens of cinnamon rolls and zwiebach much to the delight of her family.

During these years, Janie worked part time as a librarian in Cordell and also for a local paint store. Reading was one of her favorite hobbies, and it wasn't unusual for her to read several books in a week's time.

She learned to play the piano at a young age and enjoyed that skill her entire life. She was also an excellent seamstress.

Eventually, Janie took a job as a secretary and bookkeeper with Sewell Brothers Construction in Cordell where she proudly worked for 20 years and boasted that she kept their books balance to the penny. This was done before computers became common in the office.

Elvin passed in 1989, and she continued to work until 1995.

She moved to Corn in 1996 and suffered serious health issues in 2004-2005. This required her to move into the retirement apartments at Corn Heritage in Corn. She lived there 17 years.

In early 2023, dementia and other health issues related to diabetes forced her to be moved to Homestead Assisted Living Weatherford.

Janie was preceded in death by her parents John B. Nikkel and Agnes Heinrichs Nikkel and her husband Gid "Elvin" Webb.

She is survived by her son John Webb and his wife Donna of Weatherford, Oklahoma; daughter Judy Haley and husband James of Canyon, Texas; three brothers: Monroe Nikkel and wife Barbara of Wichita, Kansas; Wes Nikkel and wife Karen of Dallas, Texas; and Harvey Nikkel and wife Linda of Jenison, Michigan.

Other survivors include two grandchildren: Miranda Bailey and husband Cody of Hydro, Oklahoma, and Michael Webb and wife Amber of Weatherford, Oklahoma.

She is also survived by five great-grandkids: Brooklyn, Carson, and Parker Bailey, all of Hydro, Oklahoma; and Gage and Rush Webb, both of Weatherford, Oklahoma.

**Barton Wherritt**

Barton Ray Wherritt, age 79, passed away peacefully in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on September 23, 2024, surrounded by his family. He was born in Elk City, OK, on November 22, 1944, to Edwin and Ina Wherritt of the Trail Flats west of Leedey, OK. He lived a life full of dedication to his family, career, and his church. He was a member of the Independence United Methodist Church until its closing this past February. Barton will be remembered for his passion for farming and his knowledge of cattle.



Barton graduated from Thomas High School in 1963 where he was active in FFA, including land judging. By age 15, Barton knew farming was what he wanted to do. From a young age of 10, he started investing in livestock and crops. He started with chickens and later began to raise rabbits, butchering them and selling the meat to people in town.

He picked up part-time jobs, washing dishes and carrying groceries at Vernie's IGA to support his livestock habit. At 14 years old, he had two or three calves and fed hogs everyday, making a daily circle in his pick up truck, picking up slop and scraps from the grocery store, the school and the town cafe to feed them.

He was always hauling something stinky in the bed of his truck. He began acquiring tiny plots of land all over town to plant corn, cotton and wheat. Barton would harvest the plots and take the produce to market to sell and reinvest in his agriculture operation. He saved every bit he made in order to buy the necessities, plant more crops and feed his livestock.

On April 23, 1965, Barton married the love of his life Karen Joyce Tharp, in Custer City, OK. They started out in the farmhouse at the Jabbok School where the rent was 30 bucks a month before eventually buying the family homestead in 1970, 10 miles west of Thomas, the base of his farming and cattle operation.

Barton began to work with order buyer Harley Hamar and only owned 150 cattle at the time; this number grew in his later years to 2000 head. In '73 Barton started his own order-buying business. Ever since then, buying and selling cattle has been his main source of revenue. Barton said, "In the order-buying business, people depend on me to spend their dollars well," and that's exactly what he has worked hard at for the last 50 years.

Barton and Karen were married for nearly 60 years. To this union they had four children: Rodney, Butch, Renae and Kristi. He was a devoted father, husband and loved being "Pop" to his grandchildren.

He taught his children the value of hard work and the art of being ornery, which showed the depth of their love for one another. He was dedicated to his country church where he taught Sunday School for adults and youth over the years. He loved the challenge of cards and dominoes and often triumphed in his matches, even against the most formidable opponents.

Barton is preceded in death by his parents Edwin and Ina (South) Wherritt, his in-laws Marie and Coval Tharp, and granddaughter Maci Wherritt.

He is survived by his wife Karen Joyce, his four children: Rodney and wife Roshelle, Butch and wife Kasey, Renae Haymaker and husband Drew, and Kristi Wherritt. One sister Wendi Brimmer and husband Bob, and one brother Phil Wherritt and wife Jane, six grandchildren: Kole and Taylor Wherritt, Regan and Hayden Lemieux, Kaleb Schrock, Rosalind and Kelby White, Rayne Wherritt, and Jesse Haymaker. Six great-grandchildren Tripp, Shea, Reece, Hazelle, Hillery and Walker, and a host of extended family and friends.

Contributions in Barton's honor may be made to the First Baptist Church of Thomas.

**Jolen Bell**

Jolen J. Bell was born August 8, 1948, in Weatherford, OK, to Clarence and Ada "Nelia" Cornelia (Galloway) Hoerman and passed away Sunday, September 22, 2024, at her home, surrounded by her family.



Jolen was raised and attended school in Weatherford and graduated with the Class of 1966. Jolen earned her bachelor's degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She started her teaching career in Calumet at Maple School; moved to Yukon in 1976 where she taught at Ranchwood Schools and retired in 1998. On June 9, 1966, she married Richard Harvey Bell, and they made their home in Weatherford and Hydro. They moved to Geary where she taught another 3 years.

Jolen loved spending time outdoors, taking care of her chickens, working in her garden, going fishing with her husband, and cooking for her family. She loved volunteering at Angel's Attic in Geary and was very active with United Methodist Church and their women's group, attending PEO meetings, and going to Meet and Eat Bridge Club.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband and her brother John Hoerman. She is survived by her three sons: Todd Bell of Calumet, OK, Tadd Bell and Jeff Bell of Yukon, OK; and five grandchildren.

**Mary Ann Roof**

Mary Ann was born April 8, 1947, in El Paso, TX, to James David "J.D." and Mary Alice (Board) Skaggs. She passed away on Saturday, September 21, 2024, at her homestead in Yukon, OK.



Mary Ann was born in El Paso and her family soon moved to Pampa, TX where she was raised and attended school. She graduated from Pampa High School with the Class of 1965. After high school, she moved to Weatherford, OK where she attended college at Southwestern State College.

She married Michael Roof on April 6, 1968, in Clinton, OK, in the United Methodist Church. They made their home in Weatherford while Mike completed college and soon moved to Arlington, VA while Mike served in the military. They returned home to Oklahoma and lived many places over the years before settling in Woodward, OK. Before long, their daughter Mary Jean was born and son Marshall, and in 1987 their family grew with the addition of Mark. Mary Ann worked as a herbalist representative with Nature Sunshine. The family returned to Oklahoma, living several places in western Oklahoma before settling in Yukon, OK.

Mary Ann accepted Jesus into her heart and was baptized as a young girl in the First Christian Church in Pampa. She was strong in Faith and loved the Lord. The joy of her life was her grandchildren and giving them each the special attention they needed. She also enjoyed sewing, being a homemaker, and loving people how they needed to be loved.

Mary is survived by her husband Michael Roof; sons: Marshall Roof, of Martinsburg, WV and Mark Hansink, of Fayetteville, AR; daughter Mary Jean Roof, of Oklahoma City, OK; sister Alice Jean Wright, of Richardson, TX; fourteen grandchildren and nineteen great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents James David "J.D." and Mary Alice Skaggs; her brother William "Bill" David Skaggs; daughter-in-law Crystal Roof; and great-grandson Rylon "R.J." Roof.

**Cordell Chamber of Commerce**  
 37TH ANNUAL  
**PUMPKIN FESTIVAL**

**9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**Saturday Oct. 12, 2024**

For More Information:  
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## Local "Amateur Strongman" Crowned Arnold Champ Two Years Straight



# ELIJAH YODER

## 2024 National Strongman Champ

Elijah Yoder, from Thomas, Oklahoma, recently competed at Strongman Corporation's National Competition held in Greenville, South Carolina. This year, Elijah won 1st place in the Mens 265 lb Heavyweight class.

Day one events included a 550 lb Conan's wheel, 55 lb sand bag toss and a 785 lb mammoth bar deadlift. Day two events included a press medley for time of a 255 lb axle, 275 lb log, then a 295 lb axle and last a 315 lb log.

The second event for Day 2 was a farmer's carry of 320 lbs in each hand for a total of 80 feet and to finish the day,

Elijah completed a sandbag steeple chase with a 275 lb and 300 lb sandbag carried 40 feet loaded over a 56 inch bar. This is Elijah's second time to place 1st for Strongman Corporation Nationals. He will continue on, in March, to The Arnold's Amateur Strongman Competition, where he will compete against other countries for the Strongest 265 Heavyweight in the world.

Elijah is a two-time Arnold Champ and holds seven Oklahoma state strength records. Elijah is also the United States Strongman representative for Oklahoma and holds a sanctioned strongman meet annually in western Oklahoma.

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**October 25**

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6:00-8:00 PM- Jerry's, Weatherford

**October 26**

**HOMECOMING PARADE**  
10:00 AM- Main Street, Downtown Weatherford

**BRUNCH & TAILGATE**  
10:00 AM-2:00 PM- Timothy T. Day BEC

**50-YEAR ALUMNI RECOGNITION**  
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# HIGHER GROUND

## Unified in Truth and Purpose



As I rang the bell for the Mission House in Clinton, I often wondered what a Syrian refugee, struggling to survive in Lebanon or Turkey would think if he saw shoppers streaming by with their carts brimming with their purchases. I don't mean to lay a guilt trip on anyone enjoying their prosperity or taking delight in gifting their family. But in the midst of the joyful season, in an area that has a low level of unemployment, (no longer true) we need to pause in reflection. We have been blessed to be a blessing.

I recently read an interview of a refugee named Aman. Formerly a banker in Syria, he now washes dishes 10 hours a day to feed his starving family. Don Alan, a Christian worker says three million Syrian refugees have flooded surrounding countries

He said, "Think back to a day when you missed a meal, or a night when you weren't sure you were ever going to get home," Alan said. "Multiply that by 100 or 1000, and that is a portion of what the Syrian refugees feel."

Around the world, persecution of Christians is growing. India, China, North Korea, Southeast Asia, Nigeria, and Iraq, are the leading perpetrators of crimes against those trying to exercise their freedom to worship. Even in the West there is increasing harassment, ridicule and limitations placed on those daring to stand firm in their Biblical faith.

Some could and should give financially through reputable church or charitable organizations to provide food and shelter, especially during the winter season.

However, we often give lip service to prayer which we all could do, indeed are challenged to do by all those involved in front line ministry. The Voice of the Martyrs shared some suggestions on some ways to pray thoughtfully and with insight.

### WAYS TO PRAY FOR OUR FAMILY.

1. Pray that persecuted believers will sense God's presence. (Heb. 13:5)
2. Pray that they will feel connected to the greater Body of Christ (Cor.12:20, 26)
3. Pray that they will experience God's comfort when their family members are killed, injured or imprisoned for their witness (2 Cor. 1:3-5)
4. Pray that they will have more opportunities to share the gospel. (Col.4:3)
5. Pray for their boldness to make Christ known (Phil. 1:14)

6. Pray that they will forgive and love their persecutors (Matt. 5:44)

7. Pray that their ministry activities will remain undetected by authorities or others who wish to silence them. Acts 9:45

8. Pray that they will rejoice in suffering (Acts 5:41)

9. Pray that they will be refreshed through God's word and grow in their faith. (Eph. 6:17)

10. Pray that they will be strengthened through the prayers of fellow believers (Jude 20-25)

Would you cut this list out and place it where you would be reminded to stop for a moment and pray?

"Holy Father, we praise your name for who you are and we thank you for the many blessings we enjoy. Now I pray from my Christian brothers and sisters who are suffering at the hands of those who do not know you. Show yourself to them in a way that they can understand. Give them courage to stand firm in your will. By the strength of their testimony may they bear witness to your power, grace, and love. Give them wisdom to act in a way that would exalt you and give glory. Bless the children left behind that they will be strengthened to know you and grow to be valiant champions for you. Amen."

To comment: Jnm77@att.net



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# LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



**Mike Smith**  
News Director

## Renowned Author James Patterson is Coming to WPLS October 22

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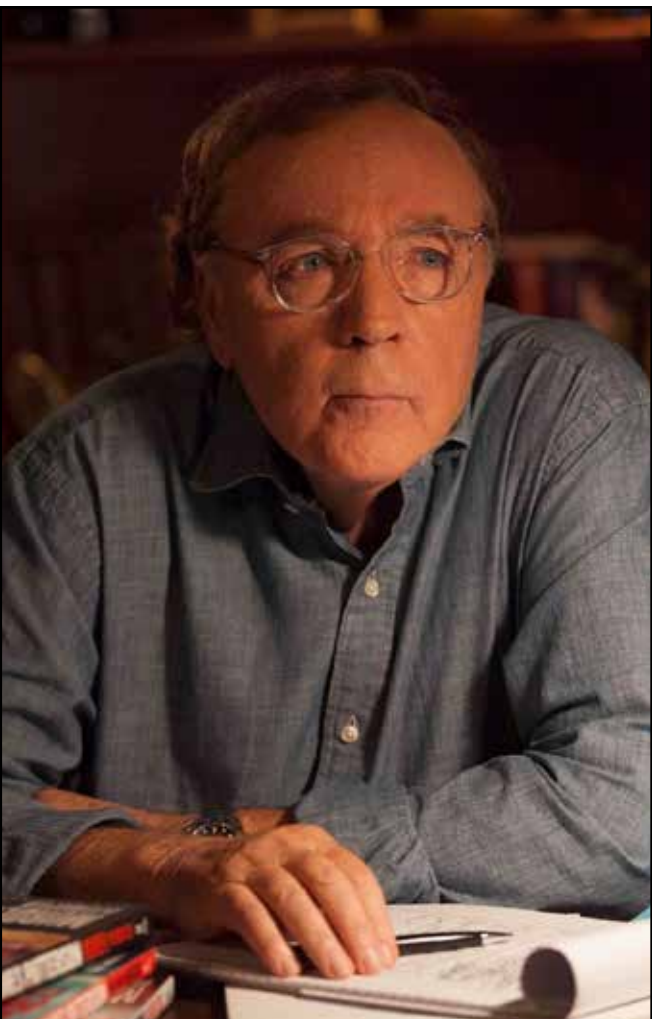
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 SWOSU Fine Arts Center  
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**WPLS** Western Plains Library System



**Micaela Marquez** WPLS Staff  
 Western Plains Library System and Southwestern Oklahoma State University are excited to welcome James Patterson to western Oklahoma for one day only!  
 Patterson, the most popular storyteller of our time, is the creator of unforgettable characters and series, including Alex Cross, the Women's Murder Club, Jane Effing Smith, and Maximum Ride, and of breathtaking true stories about the Kennedys, John Lennon, and Princess Diana, as well as our military

heroes, police officers, and ER nurses.  
 He has co-authored #1 bestselling novels with Bill Clinton and Dolly Parton; told the story of his own life in James Patterson by James Patterson, and has received an Edgar Award; nine Emmy Awards; the Literarian Award from the National Book Foundation; and the National Humanities Medal.  
 WPLS and SWOSU are looking forward to hosting an evening featuring Mr. Patterson on October 22, 2024 at the SWOSU Fine Arts Center. Tickets are available at wplibs.com or stubwire.com

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**CANADIAN CO / FATALITY** - The Oklahoma Highway Patrol has released details, surrounding a recent crash involving two semi-trucks and a motorcycle on Interstate 40 in Canadian County at El Reno. Troopers say the driver of the motorcycle, 51-year-old Patrick Cronk of Weatherford, has died at OU Medical Center. OHP says no other injuries were reported and the cause of the accident remains under investigation.

**CRH / FINANCIALS** - The Chief Executive Officer of Clinton Regional Hospital, Lyn Lacefield, provides an update on finances at the hospital. "About four weeks ago or less, we dropped over 21 million in claims that they had not dropped yet," Lacefield explained. "We [recently] brought on a new company [for billing]. They had to build 7,000 patient records by hand. We're on top of the game now. We anticipate to be cash flow positive in October." Lacefield says he has been on the job for a year as CEO to reopen the hospital and meet the needs of the area.

**CUSTER CITY / SCAM** - Officials with the Custer City Police Department say there is a scam that is fraudulently posing as the Custer City PD and calling people, saying they are with a law enforcement agency, and the person has missed jury duty. The scam caller says the person must pay money over the phone or meet the officer to avoid having a warrant issued for their arrest. Legitimate law enforcement anywhere around Custer County will never ask for money over the phone.

**WASHITA CO / SWARTZ** - Formal sentencing for a Sulphur, OK man has been deferred to September of 2028, following his plea of guilty in Washita County District Court to trafficking illegal drugs. Thirty-nine-year-old Andrew Craig Swartz pleaded guilty to being found in possession of 46 pounds of packaged marijuana during a routine traffic stop in January 2023.

**ELK CITY / PD HONORS** - Two Elk City police officers were recently presented with the award of commendation from the Oklahoma Association Chiefs of Police. The Award of Commendation is for outstanding service, performance and contribution to the department or community that is beyond the scope of normal services and duties to the agency. Captain Detective Sammy Weygand and Lieutenant Detective Raymond Chatham were nominated and selected to receive the Award of Commendation for a high priority criminal investigation that was conducted involving child victims.

**HINTON / SB PLANNING** - The Hinton School Board of Education held discussion but took no action on the recent defeat of a bond for improvements in the district. "I think we need to take a rest, and we need time to focus on [the school year] and the people in our community," expressed Hinton Superintendent Marci Derryberry while sharing her thought on the bond. "We don't want any distractions. Hopefully, everyone can get past [this]." The consensus was to revisit the issue at a later date.

**WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!**  
 or **HAPPY Day TO YOU!**  
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**Alcohol causing problems?** Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information.  
**Christian Free Store** - Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875.  
**Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public.  
**OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org.  
**Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

**Happy Birthday Wishes for October 2nd** - Cody Barrera, Mandi Bozarth, Lyla Bridgeman, Doris Brittain, Gage Butcher, Jolena Elisondo, Megan Hanna, Jeanna Hines, Grant Lee, Karen Melton, Harold Miller, Rose Millsbaugh, Kenneth Teek, Barbara Walker;  
**October 3rd** - Lynn Broadbent, Leon Evans, Rodney LaGrange, Steve Millsbaugh, Jimmy idgeway, Dustin Rose, Jordan Stark, Kim Suter, Jeffery Thomas, Nell Walker, Linda Young;  
**October 4th** - Kennedy Aispuro, Sharon Beach, Kenli Brooks, Christy Freeman, Trevin Gilliam, Kortney Hawthorn, Vicki Isaak, Oliver Lackey, Ranae Martinez, Gavin Nailon, Ryan Sandlin;  
**October 5th** - Eric Hoffman, Candice Weems, Valerie Whiteneck, Carol Wichert;  
**October 6th** - Sierra Duncan, Miranda Cardenas, Cheryl Justice, Casey King, Ginger Manning, Lyle Miller, Dana Ratcliffe, Rick Reel, Doyle Warren, Kori White;  
**October 7th** - Kim Baldwin, Bradley Brittain, Virginia Caler, Destry Duke Christensen, Marlee Farrow, Roger Isaak, Roger Lanier, Ricky Leatherbury, Ruth Lee, Sandra Maddox, Evelyn Malheim, Sabrina Miller, Evelyn Mulherin, Koby Sutton, Colby Sutton, Brenda Webber, Quintin Westrick;  
**October 8th** - Peggy Constein, Sarah Ferrero, Lisa French, Danielle Goodall, Tamarus Hardy, Laura Hopper.



# CLASSIFIEDS

**Advertising Deadline:**  
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# Follow the Road Map to Ready: Disasters and Speaking with Regulators



September is National Preparedness Month! Established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), this initiative empowers Americans to plan for disasters.

Preparing for emergencies can help you weather any storm, so this month, I want to share our Road Map to Ready, a simple blueprint you can follow to get ready.

### Step 1: Emergency Communication Planning

Your emergency communication plan should contain three sets of contacts: emergency contacts, key contacts and out-of-state contacts.

Your emergency contacts should include family members or close friends with whom you must remain in contact during and after a disaster. Medical facilities, doctors and other critical service providers are key contacts.

Lastly, you need at least one out-of-state contact who can provide information in case of local communication disruptions. Make copies of this list for everyone in your household.

### Step 2: Build an Emergency Kit

You need to have essentials available during and after disasters, so having a go-bag on standby is essential. This is a bag that you can quickly grab on your way to safety.

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) has a list of items you might want to include.

To summarize, you should plan to pack nonperishable food, water, medication, and important documents, including identification, social security card, and insurance information. It's also advisable that you pack a change of clothes or two.

### Step 3: Make an Evacuation and Shelter Plan

Knowing evacuation routes or where to take shelter can be lifesaving in a disaster. Make an evacuation or shelter plan for different scenarios. Ensure your household knows where and how to take shelter.

In case of evacuation, plan multiple ways to leave your home quickly and choose a place to meet up. Locate nearby places for safety, like a friend's house or a community center.

### Step 4: Address Unique or Special Needs

Be mindful of special or unique needs you must address in the aftermath of a disaster. For example, if you or a family member relies on medication or medical equipment, you will want to include these items in your plans. If you have pets, add their supplies to your go-bag and have their carriers ready to go in case of evacuation or seeking shelter.

### Step 5: Stay Informed

Updates will help you remain safe and know when to act. Monitoring emergency alerts through radio, TV or smartphone apps is a good starting point, but you should also consider enable emergency notifications on your cell phone. That way, you won't need to hunt down information yourself.

Receiving weather updates is especially important in Oklahoma, so consider downloading a weather forecast app, visiting weather.gov or keeping a battery-powered radio handy.

### Step 6: Practice and Review

Conduct emergency drills to practice your plan. Remember to review and update your plans as needs change. This way, you and your family will always be ready for emergencies.

Don't wait for the next disaster to have a plan. Prepare today! To find our Road Map to Ready and other preparedness resources, visit the website [www.oid.ok.gov/getready](http://www.oid.ok.gov/getready).

If you can make the drive, the Oklahoma Insurance Department (OID) is working to host the second annual Oklahoma Insurance Day on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at the Embassy Suites Oklahoma City Downtown Medical Center. This event aims to bring together key players in the insurance sector to discuss important topics and issues affecting Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Insurance Day is an opportunity for regulators, business leaders, industry professionals and beyond to connect, learn, and collaborate. The event will feature informative sessions, panel discussions and networking opportunities.

We're proud to bring together regulators and industry professionals for another Oklahoma Insurance Day. This event reflects our commitment to fostering an environment that promotes innovation, consumer protection and a robust insurance market, and we look forward to the valuable insights and connections that will emerge from this event.

In 2023, the inaugural Oklahoma Insurance Day attracted 125 attendees from across the Oklahoma insurance sector and focused on current risks, resilience and captive insurance.

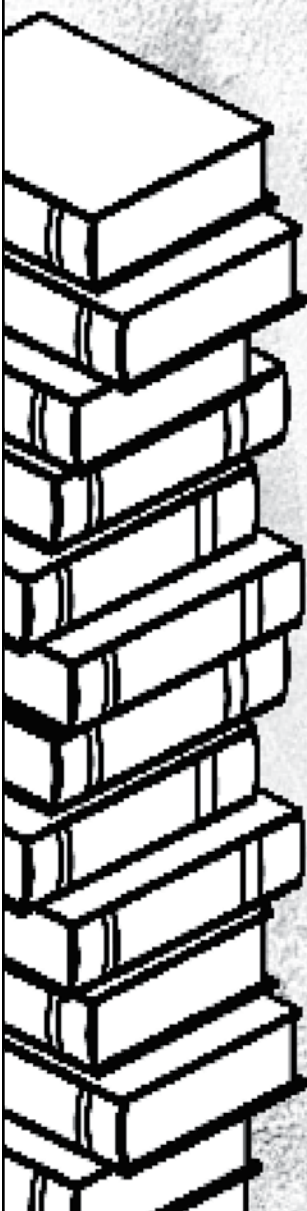
Registration for Oklahoma Insurance Day 2024 is now open. Those who register before Nov. 4 will receive a special early bird rate.

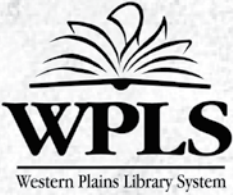
The Oklahoma Insurance Department (OID) is responsible for the education and protection of the insurance-buying public and for oversight of the insurance industry in the state. If you have insurance questions or concerns, please contact OID at 800-522-0071 or visit [www.oid.ok.gov](http://www.oid.ok.gov).

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# Oklahoma History: 1931's Texas-Oklahoma Red River Bridge War



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Governor William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (pictured, fourth from left) and the Oklahoma National Guard block traffic on the Red River bridge. Photo taken July 16, 1931.



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

Texas Rangers stand guard with a sign stating: "This bridge closed by order of United States' distaste of the eastern district of Texas, on the suit of the Red River Bridge Co. of Texas, and its receivers."

**Chase Wright**  
Staff Writer

With the Red River Rivalry football game upcoming, let's revisit another Red River showdown.

The Red River Bridge War was a tense but bloodless conflict between Oklahoma and Texas over control of two bridges on U.S. Route 69 and U.S. Route 75 between Colbert, Oklahoma, and Denison, Texas.

The dispute began in the summer of 1931 when a new, free bridge was built by both states to replace the old toll bridge, owned by the Red River Bridge Company, a private firm founded by Benjamin Colbert.

The Red River Bridge Company, unhappy with the construction of the free bridge, filed an injunction on July 10, 1931, against the Texas Highway Commission to stop the opening of the new bridge. The company claimed that the commission had agreed the previous year to purchase the toll bridge for \$60,000.

Unfortunately, they had failed to fulfill their contract. As a result, the company demanded \$10,000 monthly payments for fourteen months, based on the unexpired contract.

In response, Texas Governor Ross S. Sterling ordered barricades erected on the Texas side of the free bridge to prevent its use.

On July 16, Oklahoma Governor William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, citing historical boundary claims from the Louisiana Purchase, argued that the Red River—where both bridges crossed—belonged entirely to Oklahoma. Therefore, he contended that Oklahoma was exempt from any agreements Texas made regarding the bridges. Acting on this belief, Murray issued an executive order to open the free bridge and sent workers to dismantle the barricades erected by Texas.

Governor Sterling retaliated by dispatching Texas Rangers to guard the workers as they rebuilt the barricades. In response, Murray ordered the Oklahoma approach to the toll bridge demolished, bringing all traffic across the river to a halt.

As tensions escalated, the Texas Legislature passed a bill on July 23 allowing the Red River Bridge Company to sue the state. The bridge company quickly joined Texas in dissolving the injunction, and by July 25, the Texas Rangers were withdrawn, and the free bridge was opened.

Meanwhile, Governor Murray declared martial law at the bridge site and sent Oklahoma National Guard troops to enforce his orders. He even made a personal appearance.

Armed with an antique revolver, which local newspapers eagerly reported, Murray joined the fray. Though an Oklahoma court soon ruled that Murray could not block access to the bridges, he maintained that his declaration of martial law placed him above federal court jurisdiction.

When Murray received word that the free bridge might be permanently closed, he extended martial law to both ends of the free bridge, causing Texas newspapers to report an "invasion." However, the dispute soon wound down. By August 6, the injunction had been fully dissolved, and martial law was lifted shortly after.

The free bridge officially opened on September 7, 1931. The Red River Bridge War made national and international headlines for its colorful standoff between two neighboring states. In 1995, the free bridge was demolished and replaced, but a portion of it was preserved as a historical monument in a park in Colbert, Oklahoma.



Courtesy Steve Wheeler

The Weatherford Eagles won the 100th annual Custer County Conflict and were awarded a Gator, courtesy of Wright.Media and their sponsors..



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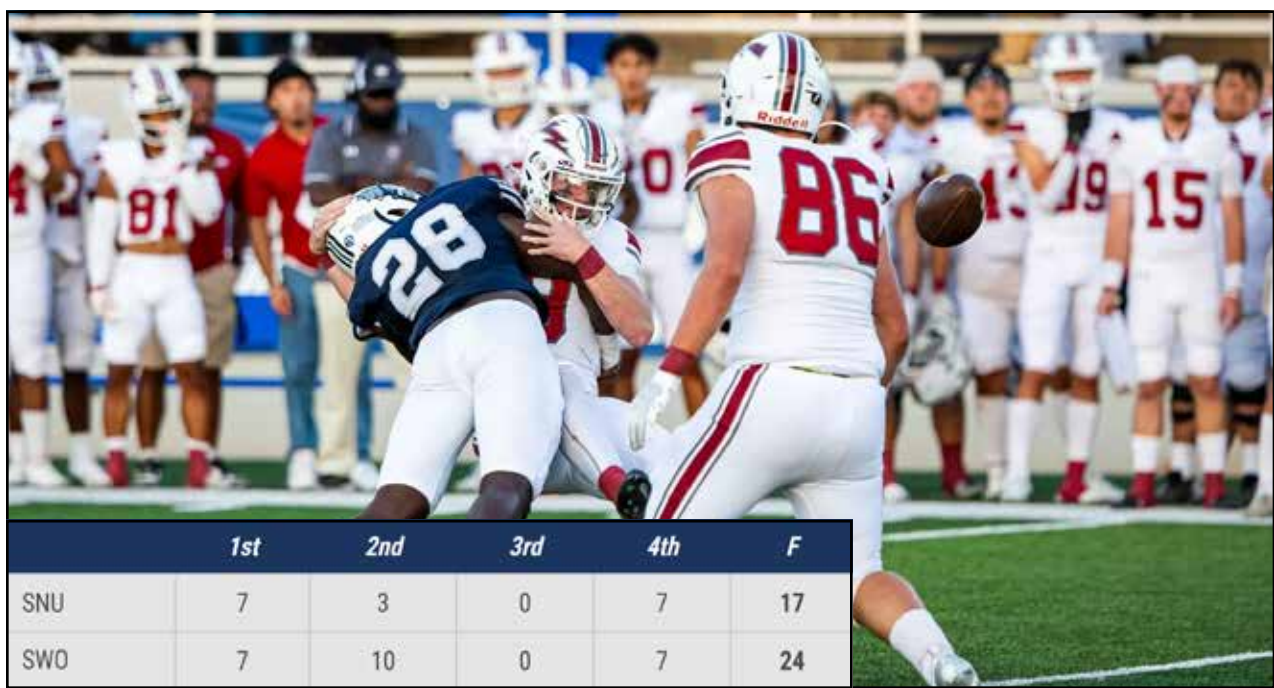




# SPORTS

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## Turnovers, Run Game Pushes Dawgs Past Crimson Storm on Family Day



**Jon Chidester**  
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Football scored the go-ahead touchdown midway through the fourth quarter and beat Southern Nazarene 24-17 on Family Day, collecting a second consecutive win in the process.

The Bulldogs (2-2) produced another four turnovers on defense and leaned on the run game all night – finishing with 233 yards on 47 attempts. Five different ball carriers logged at least seven carries in the contest.

SWOSU trailed early after the Crimson Storm opened the game with an 11-play touchdown scoring drive. That score was immediately answered with a sustained drive by the Dawgs, who marched 74 yards down the field with 10 plays.

A Desmond Greene interception on fourth down of the following SNU possession put SWOSU right back in business after he returned it 56 yards the other way into the red zone. That flip of momentum was nullified after a fumble in the end zone gave SNU the ball back four plays later.

With game momentum still up for grabs and the score tied 7-7, the defense came away with a three-and-out which allowed the Dawgs to get the ball back and gain chunk yardage all the way down the field for another score. Rushes of 12 and 19 yards by Michael Arceneaux II got the ball across midfield before a 36-yard completion to Jax Smith had SWOSU knocking on the door. Kunz punched it in shortly thereafter.

A second straight three-and-out on defense had SWOSU ready to return a punt, but the return team surrounded the SNU punter before he could get a kick away. The special teams play setup SWOSU in plus territory and the offense cashed in with more points courtesy of an Ethan McBee 22-yard field goal. An SNU field goal just before halftime put score at 17-10 heading into the locker room.

SNU could have had the score tied, but James Thomas had a sack fumble in the quarter that fell into the hands of Keshaun Jackson which spoiled SNU's red zone threat. SWOSU recovered another fumble just after halftime when a hit by Felipe Tristan forced the ball loose and allowed Cadynce Hall to fall on it.

Following a scoreless third quarter, Southern Nazarene tied the game at 17-17 with their first possession of the final quarter. SWOSU responded just like they had done prior with a touchdown of their own. Kunz capped off his night with a 37-yard touchdown run with 7:21 to play. 24-17 good guys, where the score remained the rest of the way.

Wyatt Rohmer picked off an SNU pass in the fourth quarter to eliminate one drive, and the defense came away with two other stops in the quarter to earn the win.

Neither team eclipsed the 300-yard mark on offense. SWOSU ended with 290, topping SNU's 256. The two teams combined to run the ball 102 times in the game. Kunz racked up 93 yards on the ground. Arceneaux had 76 rushing yards, averaging greater than 10 yards per carry. For a third straight game, the Dawgs won the turnover battle but did commit three of their own.

Next week, the Bulldogs will be back at home with a matchup against the defending national champions on tap. Harding come to Weatherford for the first afternoon contest of the season.

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	@ Weatherford	L 10-21
	vs. Hooker	L 20-50
	vs. Carnegie	W 42-0
	@ Fairview	L 34-75
	vs. Southern Nazarene	W 24-17

Tune in to the Chuck Edward's Sportscast on The Coyote 95.5 at 7:50am and 5:30pm and NewsTalk 99.3 at 7:40am and 5:30pm for more information. Tune in to the Zoo Sportscast on the Zoo 101.7 at 8:40am & 5:40pm.

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