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Highlights for the “Class of 2025” High School Graduation Ceremonies



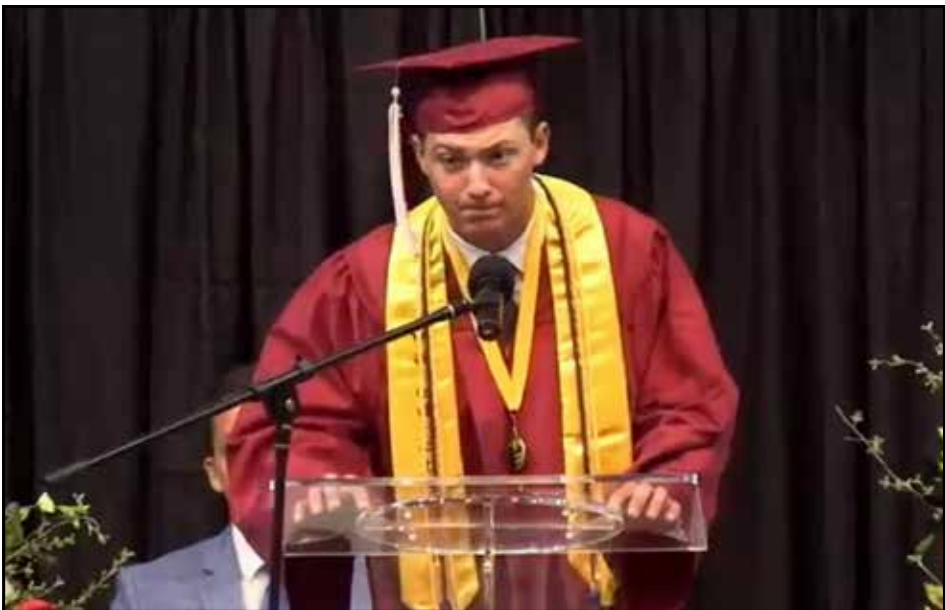
from Wright.Media
Like many schools, Clinton's graduation ceremony featured a performance from the High School Senior Choir. These students performed “Light of Grace” early on into the proceedings.



from Wright.Media
As Principal Jeremy Bussey (pictured, left) handed Hydro-Eakly graduates their diplomas, counselor Linda Berwinkle highlighted their goals for higher education and their occupational aspirations.



from Wright.Media
Unlike the other schools pictured, Thomas-Fay-Custer High School only recognized one Valedictorian. Rebecca Purvine gave a recollection of her high school career and her favorite memories.



from Wright.Media
Weatherford Valedictorian Wryland Recker gave the most succinct speeches for the class of 2025 - “To my family, friends, faculty, and staff: it's been a pretty good ride. Thank y'all.”



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Wednesday

Sunny

H: 77° L: 56°
Thursday

Partly Cloudy

H: 81° L: 66°
Friday

Partly Cloudy

H: 88° L: 67°
Saturday

AM Storms

H: 85° L: 62°
Sunday

Showers

H: 85° L: 62°
Monday

AM Storms

H: 78° L: 60°
Tuesday



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Clinton Regional Hospital to Host Golfing Event



Clinton Regional Hospital Presents

1ST ANNUAL CHARITY TOURNAMENT

May 24, 2025 * Riverside Golf Course

Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

Clinton Regional Hospital will host their First Annual Charity Golf Tournament this Saturday, May 24th at the Clinton Riverside Golf Course. The tournament will be played in a 4 man scramble format with tee times scheduled to start by 9am. Proceeds from the event will be donated to 3 local non-profits.

“The community has given a lot to us through support, and we really do appreciate that, and we want to just pay it forward,” said Brendan Price, Clinton Regional Hospital’s Chief Nursing Office who’s pitched in to coordinate the golf tournament. Opportunities, Inc., Action Associates, Inc., and Mission House of Clinton are the three local organizations to whom Clinton Regional Hospital has pledged the proceeds from the tournament.

Price also noted that team registrations are still open for the tournament which is looking for around 36 teams in total. The registration fee for the tournament is \$400 per team with the winning team set to receive \$800 and the runner-up set to receive \$400. To register in advance you can contact Brendan Price by email at brendan.price@crhaok.com or you can call him at the hospital at 580-547-5128.

Besides the golf tournament there will also be 2 food trucks in attendance, Pacific Brim and Crab Sensation, along with door-prize giveaways, and everyone in Western Oklahoma is invited to join regardless of their golfing prowess. “You know, I struggle to shoot under 100. So we're all from different walks of life and we're gonna be out there, so don't be embarrassed. Have fun. That's what it's about,” said Price.

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HIGHER GROUND

A New World and the Real World



Jim Morrison

Two periods stand out in my mind; 1955 and 1959. Yes, those are the dates that I graduated from Sweetwater High School and Southwestern Oklahoma State University. (as it is now known) I remember the feelings of both excitement and anticipation, coupled with not a little fear and trembling. I was about to enter two new worlds, and I felt unprepared. Thousands of young people are about to experience much of the same feelings.

For high school seniors, many if not most will be leaving home, away from the watch-care of parents who have nurtured them since birth. Many will be furthering their education, preparing for a vocation and perhaps meeting someone special to enrich their lives. Having spent a lifetime watching new freshmen enter the new halls of learning, I venture to say that these 4-5 years will shape their lives in ways that they had never dreamed. Others will be entering the work force, and still others the military. In all these cases they will be faced with challenges, financially, morally, emotionally, spiritually, etc.

While they may think they are grown-up, time will reveal that they have need of guidance, patience, and courage. College graduates will face a different level of concerns. Although they may not have recognized it, they have been protected from a lot of adult responsibilities. While, in most cases mom and dad will still be around, they will be expected to make most decisions on their own. For parents of High School students there will be that period of launching and letting them go. That is never easy but so necessary.

A word for H.S. youth workers: you have a major role to play. I was always impressed when a youth pastor brought some of his seniors to the campus for Campus ministry event. They need special attention and guidance. While many will not listen, some will and for those it could make all the difference. Those first three weeks on the campus could set the course for the next four years; the friends they make, the decisions they face, and the values they form.

Now for a word to the churches that they have been a part of. You have a great opportunity and responsibility. Recognize them when they come home. Perhaps, have them in for a personal chat. But most importantly develop a prayer ministry in their behalf. (I’m speaking here mostly of those who are graduating High School) Ask them about prayer requests. Every High School graduate deserves to have someone besides their parents praying for them. Think about the new challenges they will face, the temptations they will encounter, the decisions they will make. If they are Christ-followers pray that their lives will reflect Christ, seizing their mission on campus to grow into the image of Christ. I found that while there were abundant opportunities for Satan to do damage in a student’s life, there were more opportunities to grow spiritually, and become mature disciples then in any other period of their lives. I was always looking for FAT freshmen; not physically so, but Faithfull, Available and teachable.

For pastors or youth workers reading this, encourage a small group, praying people, or the church at large to specifically and intentionally pray by name for those entering college or the military. Let these students know that a certain group is praying for them.

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Weatherford Athletic Director Kyle Null has released a list of items up for grabs at the WPS Golf Tournament and Athletic Auction, scheduled for Friday, May 23 at 7:00 p.m. Listed below are some of the largest items up for grabs:

- Various SWOSU Scholarships, \$3,000 each
- A weekend stay at a Grand Lake House, provided by Gail Glassey, valued at \$2,000
- Great Plains Driving School classes, valued at \$455
- A "Stay & Play" package courtesy of Lucky Star Casino in Watonga
- One butchered pig provided by Market 54, with the winner picking their own selection, valued at \$200
- A 50 minute massage courtesy of the Oklahoma College of Massage Therapy
- A two night stay at the Lakeview Suites
- Day passes to OKANA Resort and Indoor Waterpark
- Photo sessions provided by Horton Studios, Steve Wheeler, and Kelley Schmidt

As to be expected from an Athletic Auction, many items up for bids are sports-related. These include:

- OKC Comets baseball tickets (June 20) and a night out in Bricktown
- Floor seats for an undisclosed OKC Thunder game
- Four OU football tickets against Illinois (August 30) with a \$100 Visa gift card for dinner
- A WHS signed State Championship basketball
- Shoes signed by WHS Alum C.J. Nixon
- A WHS Football helmet signed by CJ Nixon
- An OU football helmet signed by Ethan Downs
- A round of Golf for four at Shangri-La Resort
- A round of Golf for four at the Oaktree Resort
- Weatherford Softball State Champions picture
- Weatherford Basketball State Champions picture
- A guided fishing trip with Whitson, valued at \$500
- Access to an undisclosed SWOSU Men's basketball game in the Skyview Suite

For more information regarding items up for grabs, contact the Weatherford Athletic Department.

WEST OK / SALES TAX - The city of Weatherford is back on the positive side when it comes to sales tax receipts for the month of March. The city was up less than 1%, collecting \$1,043,000. Elk City was up by 7.7%, collecting \$1.269 million. Meanwhile, the city of Clinton was down 5.7%, collecting just over \$542,000.

HINTON / PRISON LAWSUIT - A lawsuit over conditions at the Great Plains Correction Center in Hinton can move forward following a federal judge's ruling. It's alleged that inmates were housed for days in small showers, and did not have bathroom breaks and failed to be provided with sufficient food or water.

WEATHERFORD / BOZARTH - The Weatherford School Board of Education has accepted the resignation of Middle School Principal Gayla Bozarth. "Thank you for your support through my journey here in Weatherford," expressed Bozarth at the end of her speech to the board. "Starting as a teacher, I've been so blessed with the people that I have working alongside me and [the school board] supporting me. I'm going to miss it here." The board approved the hire of Mark Whalen as Middle School Principal to succeed Bozarth. Additionally, the board also hired Grant Williams as Head Wrestling Coach.


CLINTON / MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE - Clinton Public Schools Superintendent Tyler Bridges shared an update on the new middle school during a recent school board meeting. According to Bridges, the middle school's brickwork and exterior glasswork have been completed. Bridges estimated that the decorative millwork, cabinetry, and other furnishing work is "approximately 30% complete." Currently, construction is focused on interior glass, sheetrock, and ceiling installation. Bridges' goal for completion is still set for November 2025.

WEATHERFORD / YMCA PRICE REVEAL - Details were released during a recent economic development meeting in Weatherford surrounding construction of the future community center in Rader Park. President and Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City, Kelly Kay, revealed the current budget for the project, which sits at around \$46 million. "Yolanda is already working really hard on some federal [grant] opportunities, but we will be launching a capital campaign soon," said Kay. Kay showed off the detailed floor plan which includes, among other things: an indoor/outdoor aquatics space, a childcare facility, a youth wing, a full gymnasium, and an outside playground. "Once we get to about 80% of our funding, then we will start hiring our local architects that will take the schematics," explained Kay. "Then, we'll turn those [schematics] over to the architects to build the construction document."

WPLS / NEW APP - A new app is on the way for Western Plains Library System (WPLS), one that Director of Customer Experience Conner Kirk says will bring multiple features offered by the library together on a single, easy-to-use platform. The app, titled "WPLS Connect," will be completely free and is expected to launch in early June. "This is the one Western Plains app where you can borrow from Libby, Hoopla, Canopy, or our physical collection," expressed Kirk. "You can access Beanstack, check the events calendar, get reading recommendations, [and] book a meeting room at your local libraries."

WEATHERFORD / CUSTER ST BRIDGE - Weatherford Economic Development Director Yolanda Creswell says the Custer Street Bridge will close for repairs beginning June 9th. According to Creswell, the city's economic department was "waiting on a federal permit" that was finally approved. Remaining ARPA monies are helping fund the repair of the bridge.

WEEKLY
SHOUTOUTS!



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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! **May 21** - Bradley Burger, Jamie Carrizales, Kathie Conner, Jeremy Hammonds, Allison Hayes, Alissa Lynch, Myles Madden, Kaylee Maddox, Jessica Phillips, Audrina Thompson; **May 22** - Zander Austin, Sarah Friesen, Alli Goldsten, Shaun Guthrie, Ladonna Haynes, Conner Jewell, Darci Kreizenbeck, Lana McKinsey, Andy Newman, Kyle Nonast, Roger Van Houten, Stephanie Wade, Laura Watson, Burl Wise; **May 23** - Jacob Hart, Tammy Hughes, Kenzi Kimble, Cody "CJ" Moore, Letha Rowland, Eric Short, Andrea Threadgill, Kelly Wilson; **May 24** - Teresa Barnhill, Kendra Brown, Megan Coit, Shaquanda Conway, Aubrey Denton, Kiana Friesen, Vivian McDough, Kelsie Stephens, Hadden Thompson; **May 25th** - Ciara Arriaga, Melinda Christensen, Sid Griffith, Ashlyn Maddox, Jay Richardson; **May 26th** - Greg Kissler, Ethan Newman, Travis Pugh, Linda Punneo, Dwayne Ricks, Alex Shook, Emmazetta Sutton; **May 27th** - Greg Bickle, Nancy Crissman, Virginia George, Jim Hardin, Roy Hoch, Angie Odom, Logan Roles, Marla Russ, Chase Stutzman; **May 28th** - Leo Boling, Randy Hacker, William Jeffers, April Marley, Bobby McGregor, Ashley Schones, Donna Taylor, Kasha Thomason, Sarah Ynguanzo.

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Ragu Pasta Sauce, 16-24oz. (All Varieties)	2 for \$5.00
American Beauty Pasta, 16oz. (All Varieties)	2 for \$3.00
Kelloggs Cereals (Asst. Varieties)	\$4.99
Kraft Marshmallows, 16oz.	\$2.39
Cravn Honey Grahams, 14.4oz.	\$1.79

Cantaloupe	2 for \$4.00
Red Cherries	\$4.99lb.
Dole Classic Coleslaw, 14oz	2 for \$3.00
Vidalia Sweet Yellow Onions	\$0.99lb.
Strawberries, 16oz	2 for \$5.00
Yellow or Zucchini Squash, 2lbs.	\$3.00
Blueberries, pint	\$2.99

Frozen

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PicTsweet Vegetables (Asst. Varieties)	2 for \$5.00
Food Club Whipped Topping, 8oz.	\$0.99
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Opas Smoked Sausages, 16oz. (All Varieties)	\$6.29
Boneless New York Strip Steak	\$12.99lb.
Baby Back Ribs	\$4.39lb.
Wrights Sliced Bacon	\$6.99lb
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Daisy Sour Cream, 16oz.	\$2.19
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Parental Consent Requirement Raised to Age 16



A new law strengthening parental involvement in insurance decisions will take effect later this year.

Rep. Chris Banning, R-Bixby, authored House Bill 1516, which requires signed parental or guardian consent before a minor can enter into a life, accident or health insurance contract. The bill also raises the minimum age from 15 to 16 for minors to contract for such insurance and provides legal protections for insurance agents acting in good faith.

"The Oklahoma legislative branch encompasses numerous intricate components, and it is concerning that minors have been able to enter into legally binding agreements with insurance companies," Banning said. "I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow legislators for their support in advancing HB1516 which is a sensible adjustment to current law no longer allowing minors to enter into such agreements."

Previously, Oklahoma law allowed 15-year-olds to enter into certain insurance agreements on their own. HB1516 revises that by requiring parental or guardian consent and ensuring that unemancipated minors cannot be held to premium payment agreements such as promissory notes, without oversight.

Additionally, the law expands regulation to include other forms of insurance contracts beyond life, accident and health, ensuring a broader layer of protection for minors and their families. The intent is to prevent minors from entering into legally and financially binding agreements without the maturity, understanding or supervision necessary for such commitments.

HB1516 passed both chambers and became law without the governor's signature. It takes effect November 1.



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Oklahoma History: A Millionaire Oilman’s Tribute to Pioneer Women



Photo by Billy D. Wagner

The 17-foot tall “Pioneer Woman” Statue in Ponca City, OK. The metal plaque on its brick base details what the statue stands for. There’s also a metal plaque in the grass below that denotes it as part of the United States’ “National Register of Historic Places.”



Wikimedia Commons (based on the work of Wheeler Williams)

A rejected piece pitched for the monument, a breastfeeding pioneer mother, still lives on as a fully realized statue in Liberty, Kansas.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

In the late 1920s, Oklahoma oilman and future governor E.W. Marland envisioned a monument to honor the frontier women who helped shape the state. Inspired by his mother and grandmother, Marland launched a nationwide search for a sculpture that would capture the grit and resolve of those who settled the Oklahoma prairie.

In October 1926, Marland invited twelve prominent sculptors to submit models for a proposed statue. Each was given a written brief, a small advance, and a piece of historical inspiration: a real 19th-century sunbonnet.

The artists included Bryant Baker, A. Stirling Calder, James Earle Fraser, Hermon Atkins MacNeil, and Jo Davidson. Each created a small model, or maquette, of their vision of a “Pioneer Woman.”

The twelve entries went on a national tour in 1927, stopping in major cities where the public was invited to vote for their favorite. Around 750,000 ballots were cast.

The winner, by a wide margin, was Bryant Baker’s design, titled “Confidence.” His sculpture depicted a pioneer mother striding forward with her son at her side, her face calm and resolute, her posture unwavering.

Baker, an English-born sculptor, received a \$100,000 commission and began work on the full-scale statue. Over the next two years, the figure was cast in bronze and mounted on a stone base in Ponca City. Standing 17 feet tall and weighing over six tons, the finished work became known simply as the Pioneer Woman. In one arm, she carries a bundle of belongings; in the other, a Bible. Every detail reflects the challenges and hope of frontier life—faith, burden, and perseverance.

Baker described her as “the abstract, ideal woman of the spirit of great faith and hope.” Her name, Confidence, was no accident. It reflected the optimism and forward motion Marland wanted to immortalize. The statue was unveiled on April 22, 1930, the 41st anniversary of the Oklahoma Land Run.

Over 40,000 people gathered for the event—one of the largest public celebrations in state history at the time. Will Rogers, beloved humorist and Oklahoma’s favorite son, delivered the keynote address. In his speech, he praised the women who, “had to endure more than anyone” on the frontier.

President Herbert Hoover couldn’t attend, but he spoke to the crowd live via radio from Washington, D.C.—a technological novelty in 1930. NBC Radio broadcast the dedication nationwide. Hoover called the statue “a tribute to the pioneer woman’s place in American history.” Secretary of War Patrick Hurley, an Oklahoman himself, also delivered remarks by radio.

As the bronze figure was unveiled, applause rippled through the crowd. Some cried. Marland gifted the statue and its land to the State of Oklahoma. A plaque at the base read: “In appreciation of the heroic character of the women who braved the dangers and endured the hardships incident to the daily life of the pioneer and homesteader in this country.”



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Dodgion and Sala Named All-Region by WGCA



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Senior Drew Dodgion and junior Freya Sala earned All-Central Region honors from the Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA) on Thursday night, following the NCAA Division II Championship stroke play.

This marks the first time both golfers have received all-region accolades in their careers.

SWOSU senior women's golfer Drew Dodgion made a significant climb up the leaderboard in the final round of the NCAA Championships and of her collegiate career, carding a third round 66 (-6) to finish tied for 13th place in the tournament.

Sala concluded her junior season as the Great American Conference individual champion. She earned unanimous First Team All-GAC honors and was named GAC Women's Golfer of the Week twice. Sala carried a 73.6 scoring average, ranking second in the region.

Her notable achievements in 2024-25 included winning two tournaments – the GAC Tournament and the MSU Women's Invitational – and finishing no worse than 14th in 11 stroke play events, with

six top-five placements.

The remaining WGCA All-American Teams, Golf Pride Regional Coaches of the Year, Kim Moore Spirit Award, Golf Pride WGCA Assistant Coach of the Year, and the Jackie Steinmann WGCA National Coach of the Year Presented by Golf Pride will be announced following the NCAA Championships.

Please visit www.wgcagolf.com for further information regarding these awards including selection criteria,

About the Women's Golf Coaches Association

The Women's Golf Coaches Association, founded in 1983, is a non-profit organization representing women's collegiate golf coaches. The WGCA was formed to encourage the playing of college golf for women in correlation with a general objective of education and in accordance with the highest tradition of intercollegiate competition. Today, the WGCA represents over 750 coaches throughout the U.S. and is dedicated to educating, promoting and recognizing both its members and the student-athletes they represent.

SWOSU Student Jack Phillips Has Concluded First Season at NCAA Regional Tournament



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU men's golfer Jack Phillips wrapped up his final round at the NCAA Central/Midwest Super Region Tournament on Saturday, finishing tied for 88th overall as an individual competitor.

Phillips showed steady improvement throughout the tournament, culminating in a final round 72 (+1) on Saturday. He played two-under on the back nine, including birdies on two of his last three holes. His score improved significantly from his opening round 80 and second-round 76.

Phillips excelled on par 5s, posting a collective -4

score across 15 holes in the tournament. He also consistently finished rounds strong throughout the week. He eagled hole 17 in Thursday's opening round, then birdied the same hole and 18 in Friday's second round. On Saturday, he again finished strong, birdying 16 and 18. Phillips carded eight birdies total in the tournament.

Phillips' appearance in the regional tournament capped off an impressive freshman campaign that saw him earn First Team All-GAC honors, place 12th or better in three tournaments, and collect a two-stroke win at the Tulsa Cup last fall.

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