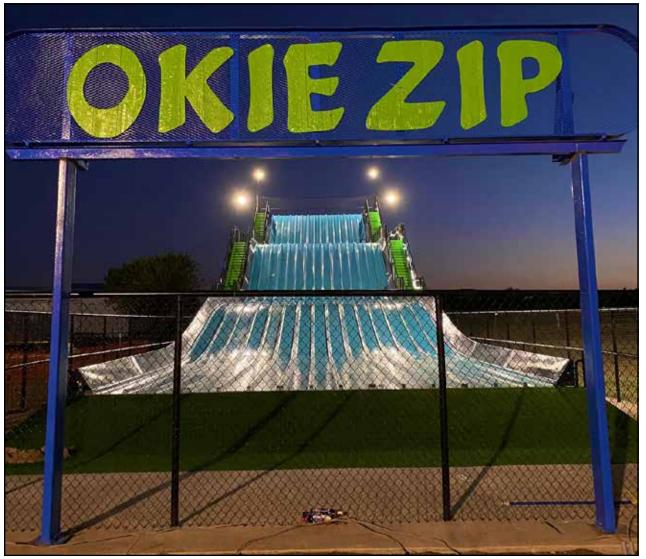
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# Hinton Free Fair Returns to Western Oklahoma August 21 - 23



Provided by Shelly Newton

After being fully refurbished in 2022, the Okie Zip slide is the star attraction among the Hinton Fair's many attractions.

Alexander Shook

With Oklahoma's county

fair season still in full swing, the Hinton Free Fair is one local event perfect for those looking for a wholesome, small town celebration. Located at the Hinton Fairgrounds (419 Karns Street), this annual festival will return on Thursday, August 21, and will run for three days starting at 7pm.

Rides, games, and concessions will open at 7pm nightly. This includes the return of the "Okie Zip" slide, newly refurbished back in 2022. Each evening's events will also feature a pair of two-hour performance blocks providing live entertainment for fairgoers.

Thursday night will feature traditional bluegrass band "Blue Tradition," followed by Yukon native folk singer Rachel Lynch. On Friday night, from 7pm - 9pm, will feature Western Swing Cowboy Jim Garling, performing alongside professional violinist Susanne Woolley. Their act will be followed by country music star Chancey Williams. Saturday will close out the fair with entertainment provided by the Southwest District Square Dance Association, followed by OKC singersongwriter Cody Russ.

4-H and FFA Livestock entries will be due at 8pm on Wednesday, August 20, one day prior to the fair's opening. The shows start on Saturday, August 23, at 8am in a set order: swine, sheep, goats, then cattle. Entries may be submitted via emailed to either jonathan.walden@hintonschools.org or nicki.walden@hintonschools.org. All other exhibit entries will be accepted on Thursday, August 21, from 9am - 1pm. There are a wide variety of categories looking for submissions, including Home Economics, Needle & Fancy Work, Art, and Photography. Various subdivisions exists for participants of all ages and mediums.

More information can be found on the Hinton Fair Facebook page at www.facebook.com/HintonFair.



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#### Susan LaFontaine

Susan Rebecca (Cash) LaFontaine was born February 18, 1928, to Russell D and Cordia (Hare) Cash, in Rison, AR. She passed away peacefully at Emeral Care SW in Oklahoma City, OK on Tuesday evening July 29, 2025.



After graduating from Rison (AR) High School, she attended nursing school at the Leo N. Levi Hospital School of Nursing in Hot Springs, AR. She worked at Charity Hospital in New Orleans, LA and then Crossett Hospital in Crossett, AR where she met her husband. She married Lorence R. ("Larry") LaFontaine on April 5, 1952, in her parents living room in Rison, AR and they moved throughout the Midwest with his seismograph job. In addition to having a license to practice nursing in multiple states, she faithfully renewed her AR nursing license continuously until she turned 90. She was still working parttime into her 80's at the Clinton Methodist Nursing Home after 24 years as night house supervisor for Clinton Regional Hospital.

Susan was a devout Catholic and active in the parish of St Mary's in Clinton. She became a resident of St Ann's Retirement Center in Oklahoma City 6 years ago where she continued to practice her faith daily.

Susan was a devoted mother to Sally Lane (husband Keith) of Kansas, Toney LaFontaine (wife Nadine) of Kentucky, and Cordia LaFontaine (husband Eldon) of Oklahoma City. She enjoyed being a grandmother to Rusty (wife Jamie) Lane of Kansas and Leslie LaFontaine of Kentucky as well as a great-grandmother to Caden and Tatum Lane in KS. She is survived by one sister, Peggy Roberts, of Arkansas and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Larry, and her grandson, David. Her brothers, David and John, and her sister, Lorene West, preceded her in death.

#### Roberta Mabry

Roberta (Rogers) Mabry, 92, of Elk City, OK was born on August 14, 1932 in Fort Cobb, OK to Alvin C. and Jewel (Addison) Rogers. Roberta looked upon the face of her Lord and Savior on Friday, July 25, 2025 at Baptist Village of Elk City, OK.



Roberta married her best friend and sweetheart, Edward Donald Mabry on May 28, 1949 at their pastor's home in Carnegie, OK. They spent many wonderful years of life and marriage together.

Roberta enjoyed many hobbies including gardening and crocheting. She was a devoted Christian who loved singing hymns at church and playing the organ. Roberta treasured spending time with her family and friends and will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

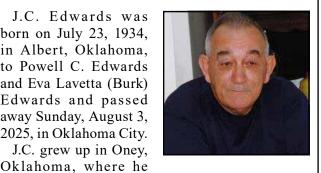
Cherishing her memory is her loving husband, Edward Donald Mabry of Elk City, OK; four nephews, Brian Gilley and his family of Cleburne, Texas, Billy Mabry and family of Monroe, Georgia, Dow Mabry of Catoosa, OK, Ernie Mabry of Oklahoma City, OK; six nieces, Krissy Cordell and family of Elk City, OK, Jackie Caldwell of Sayre, OK, Dawn Baines and family of Katie, Texas, Tracey Gilley and family of Joshua, Texas, Shelley Gilley and family of Cleburne, Texas, Lela Thompson and family of Tyler, Texas; one brother, Wayne Rogers of Corsicana, Texas; one sister, Sandie Russell of Boyd, Texas; and numerous other family members and friends.

Roberta was preceded in death by her parents, Alvin C. and Jewel Rogers; four sisters, Sue Gutzman, Lois Caldwell, Madeline Youngblood, and Carolyn Stepps.



#### J.C. Edwards

J.C. Edwards was born on July 23, 1934, in Albert, Oklahoma, to Powell C. Edwards and Eva Lavetta (Burk) Edwards and passed away Sunday, August 3, 2025, in Oklahoma City. J.C. grew up in Oney,



graduated high school with the class of 1952. After graduation, he attended Cameron University and the University of Oklahoma.

While he was working in Greensburg, Kansas, he met Lorene Thompson while she was working at a movie theatre. They were married on January 2, 1959, and made their home in Greensburg for a short time. As a young family, they moved often, following J.C.'s work in powerline construction. They finally settled in Weatherford in 1974, where they made their home and raised their three sons, Jim, Greg, and Brad.

It was there that J.C. began his custom harvesting career, a passion he continued to enjoy until the age of 89.

In his spare time, he enjoyed repairing his machinery, watching all sports and was an avid OU fan. J.C.'s greatest joys were his grandchildren's sporting events and cherishing his moments with his family.

He also found pleasure in solving puzzles, watching NASCAR, and being involved in harvest. As a family, we will always remember him for his quick intellect, remarkable knack for retaining information, exceptional math skills and never without his Dr. Pepper.

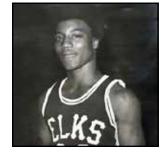
Cherishing his memories, J.C. is survived by his brother, Gary Edwards and wife Linda of Fort Cobb; sister in law, Arzella Ferguson of Kansas City; two brothers-in-law, Leslie Thompson of Idaho and Bobby Thomspon of Cordell; sister in law, Dot Thompson; three nieces, Misty Garling, Carol Yeamons and Lorrie Bare; nephew, Lee Thompson; as well as his three sons: Jim Edwards and wife Brenda of Weatherford, OK; Greg Edwards and wife Bonnie of Canton, OK; and Brad Edwards and wife Jamie of Shawnee, OK.

J.C. is also survived by 11 grandchildren: Syreeta Rodriquez of Weatherford, OK; Jayson Edwards of Weatherford, OK; Jeff Edwards and wife Emily of Hydro, OK; Nikki Hatch and wife DeAnn of Stillwater, OK; Seth Edwards and wife Ashley of Canton, OK; Josh Edwards of Canton, OK; Lizzie Edwards of Canton, OK; and Paisly, Emily, Lynlee and Everlee Edwards, all of Shawnee, OK; as well as seven great-grandchildren, Jayse Edwards and wife Jenna of Vega, TX; Braylon Gayer of Weatherford, OK; Jaylee Edwards of Thomas, OK; Kamdyn Edwards of Weatherford, OK; Lincoln and Landry Edwards of Hydro, OK; and Alex Hatch of Stillwater, OK;

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lorene and his parents.

#### **Charles Watkins**

Charles Vernon Watkins, 65, passed away in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of love, kindness, and quiet the strength.



Born on June 24, 1960, Charles was a proud

graduate of Elk City High School as part of the Class of 1978.

Charles was a man who truly loved helping others. He had a giving heart, always ready to lend a hand or a listening ear to those in need. He found his greatest joy in spending time with his grandchildren, who knew him as the most patient, loving, and devoted grandfather, truly the best a kid could ever ask for. His patience was unmatched and indescribable.

He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Inez Watkins; his mother, Lucene Watkins Edmondson; his brother, Clemmie Branch; and his granddaughters, Ko're'ona Winston and Joyis Jones.

Charles is survived by his son, Ko're Winston and wife (Eliza), and children: Gracie, Ko're Jr., Kira, Ki're, Josh, Faith, and Kobe. He is also survived by his daughter, Kimiko Eugene, and her children, Nykaia and Iyana Logan; and his daughter, Nichoa Sweeper, and her daughter, Chloe Allen, and grandson, Ja'Kylan Allen. He also leaves behind a host of cousins and close friends who will deeply miss his warm spirit, gentle soul, and unwavering love for his family.

Charles Vernon Watkins will forever be remembered for the love he gave, the lives he touched, and the family he cherished.

Memorials can be made to the charity of donor's choice in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

#### George Roper

George Edward Roper was born on February 22, 1941, in Amarillo, Texas to Monroe George Roper and Lissie Virginia Williams Roper. He died on August 2, 2025, at the age of 84 at Baylor Scott and White Medical Center in Grapevine, Texas, after



a fall and injury to his head.

His family moved to western Oklahoma in 1951 when he was 10 years old. He grew up in Clinton, Oklahoma, and graduated from Clinton High School in 1959. George worked at a number of local businesses throughout High School. He was a member of Boy Scout Troop 361 and became an Eagle Scout. He eventually was a Scout Leader for his sons' troops. George played football for the Clinton Red Tornados and appeared in drama productions.

George met his sweetheart, Sarah Jean McDonough, in junior high and they were married in 1959. They moved to Oklahoma City to run a home delivery milk route for Borden's Milk Company. Two years later they returned to Clinton where he was hired as a meat cutter at Puckett's Food Store. He also worked for United Supermarkets as a butcher in Clinton, Elk City and Sayre. In 1963, they bought the retail and wholesale Borden's Milk routes in Cordell. Eventually, he sold the route to his father, Monroe Roper, and became the Meat Market Manager for Hardin's Food Center in Clinton. He enjoyed this job very much as he was able to meet and converse with many citizens of Clinton. He told many Hardin's stories for the rest of his life. He also created some delicious recipes for chili and sausage.

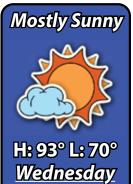
In 1973, he went to work for Tony's Pizza as a route salesman in Stroud, Oklahoma where his territory covered Central Oklahoma. Within two years, he earned numerous awards and was promoted to Sales Manager over the state of New Mexico and southern Colorado. He moved the family to Belen, New Mexico and served as Manager for depots in Belen and Alamogordo, NM and Pueblo, CO. where he supervised eight wholesale routes and three retail routes.

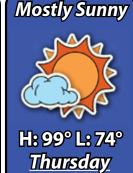
George and Sarah returned to Cordell, OK in 1982 where he became a Night Manager for Smith Oil Company Truck Stop. Sarah began working at the Sears Catalog Store and then Cordell Memorial Hospital in the Billing Department where she worked for 20 years until her death in 2009. In 1984, George was hired as Account Executive for KECO Radio in Elk City, OK. He was promoted to General Manager and was co-host on the morning show "Coffee Time" with Bill Coleman. KECO had \$750,000 in billings plus carried 60% of the listening audience during any hour. George left the station in 1993 when it was sold, and he became

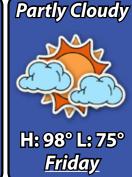
During "retirement," George served on the Cordell Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors (2 years as President), member of Cordell Rotary Club (1 year as President), Cordell Airport Manager (2 years) and then On-Site Project Manager for the remodel and restoration of the Washita Movie Theatre which he completed with great pride. He also worked as the Swimming Pool Manager and helped organize and work the Cordell Pumpkin Festival for many years which was one of his favorite events. For many years, he served as City Councilman for the City of Cordell and was involved with the Clinton High School Alumni Association (7 years as President) where they hosted two all-school reunions in 2003 and 2008. He took great pride in representing his school, the class of '59 and the Clinton Red Tornadoes. In 1997, he earned his Real Estate License and sold real estate until 2009.

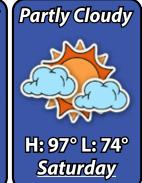
George and Sarah are the parents of George Anthony "Tony" and fiancée Janell Kinnamon, of Stroud, OK; Cheryl Denise Roper Padilla and husband, Paul, of Fort Worth, TX; Bradley Alan Roper and husband, Steven Carrell, of El Reno, OK and Scott Marshall Roper and wife, Ruby, of Amarillo, TX. They have 15 grandkids – Adrianne Roper Conley of Del City, OK; George Justin Roper of Clinton, OK; Lucy Roper and wife, Brittney, of Clinton, OK; Maggie Neu of Ada, OK; Christopher Padilla and wife, Dani, of The Colony, TX; Sarah Padilla Koziczkowski and husband, Brett, of Fort Worth, TX; David Roper and wife, Kellye, of Topeka, KS; Christian Roper and fiancée, Ashley Poff, of El Reno, OK; Taylor Roper of Denver, CO and Morgan Roper of Tulsa, OK. The legacy continues on with 15 great-grandchildren -Elliott Conley; George Chasen, Kingsley and Tinlee Roper; Chance Ridenbaugh; Rio and Baby Padilla; Sullivan Koziczkowski; Wyatt George, Weston and Waylynn Roper; Kirsten, Evangeline, Ayana and Marvin Roper. George has two brothers - Jerry Roper (wife Betty Kaye) of Townsend, TN and Stuart Roper (wife Meghan) of Cashion, OK; brother-inlaw - Bill McDonough (wife Sue) of Newcastle, OK; sister-in-law - Linda Teagarden (husband David) of Bloomington, IL. George has numerous nieces and nephews who he loved dearly and helped whenever he could.

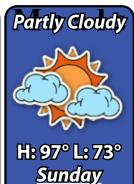
George is preceded in death by his lovely wife of 50 years, Sarah Jean McDonough Roper; parents Monroe Roper and Lissie Roper Allen; in-laws HB and Eva McDonough; daughter-in-law Pam Roper; brothersin-law Bill McDonough and David Teagarden; sisterin-law Betty Kaye Roper.



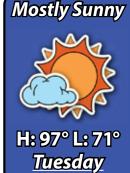












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"Food for Kids" Match: Double Your Donation in the Fight Against Childhood Hunger (RFBO)



**Austin Prickett** 

As childhood hunger continues to impact

thousands of Oklahoma children, the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is launching its annual Food for Kids Match campaign to ensure no child has to face the school day on an empty stomach. Through Sept. 30, every donation to the Regional Food Bank's Food for Kids Programs will be matched, up to \$290,455 thanks to the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma, Expand Energy, Mark and Beth Brewer, Dolese Bros, Energy Transfer and David and Lezlie Hudiburg.

"Freemasons support efforts to combat food insecurity for children because no child should have to struggle with hunger," said John Logan, executive director of the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma. "Supporting these efforts is a way to invest in stronger, healthier communities. It's not just about giving food — it's about giving children a fair chance to thrive."

A \$100 donation to the Food for Kids match will support two children in one of the Food for Kids Programs for an entire school year. Donations can be made at rfbo.org/kids or by texting "KidsOK" to 53-555.

"We are deeply grateful to all our donors whose generosity makes the Food for Kids Match campaign possible," said Stacy Dykstra, CEO of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. "We have the power to provide more nutritious meals to children facing mounting food insecurity."

KOCO 5 News returns as the official television sponsor of the Food for Kids Match and will highlight the impact of the Regional Food Bank's four Food for Kids Programs throughout the campaign. Through the Food for Kids Programs, the Regional Food Bank provided more than 2 million meals last school year.

The Food for Kids Programs are the School Pantry Program, the Summer Feeding Program, Kids Cafés and the Backpack Program. The School Pantry Program provides chronically hungry middle and high school students with food to sustain them after school and over weekends.

The Summer Feeding Program provides free meals and snacks to children up to the age of 18 and under throughout the summer months when school is not in session. Many children throughout the state of Oklahoma lack access to proper nutritious meals outside of school, so these programs are essential for their well-being.

"Together, we can ensure Oklahoma kids have the nourishment they need to learn, grow and thrive," expressed Dykstra.

Kids Cafés are after school and school break programs that provide meals and snacks as well as tutoring and mentor services to children. The Backpack Program provides kid-friendly, nutritious food to elementary school children who have been identified as being food insecure.

## A Teacher's Prayer



As we begin a new school year it is important that we stress the importance of developing a strong support system for those involved in the education of our children. Instead of finding fault let us find positive concerns and encouragement that might make a teacher's day a little brighter. Any teacher will tell you that the parental influence has a great

impact on the progress of the child's receptivity and desire to learn. Positive response to authority has declined in recent years. Respect and kindness, needs to be reinforced. I shared the following a few years ago but it is never out of date.

It is important that we pray for our school teachers. They have the potential to exert great influence on your children. Teachers, together with their parents, have the responsibility for setting in motion the desire to learn. Guy Dobb, former "Teacher of the Year" in speaking to a group of educators expressed this in a poem entitled "A Molder of Dreams" It is a poetic way of expressing the great influence a teacher can have on the young learner.

With gods in a lowercase "g," he said:

"You are the molder of their dreams, The gods who build their trust, their young beliefs of right and wrong, the spark that sets aflame the poets of the young, the very young. You are the guardian of a million dreams. Your every smile or frown can heal or pierce a heart. Yours' are a hundred lives, a thousand lives. Yours' is the pride of loving them and the sorrow too. Your patient work, your touch, make you the gods of hope who fills their song with dreams and make those dreams come true."

Marsha Wright has written "A Teacher's Prayer" that could be the expression of every teacher.

"Help me to be grateful For the students who like to learn And feel challenged by those who don't. Help me to be thankful For the students I love And understand those I'm learning to love. Help me to be motivated By the students who learn to think And be committed to those afraid to try. Help me to be inspired By the students who choose right over wrong And be patient with those who lack the courage. Help me to be gentle With the student s who make mistakes, And learn to forgive a difficult child.

Help me to be wise With the students building character, And be unwavering

With those without conscience. Help me to be committed To the students who are responsible

And be persistent with those who value nothing. Help me to be calm In the midst of violence

And model self-control in the midst of anger. Help me to be faithful In the days of discouragement

And be dedicated to make one child smile."

"You are the molder of their dreams. The gods who build their trust, their young beliefs of right and wrong. You are the spark that sets aflame the poets hand, or lights the flame of some great singer's song. Ivy league campuses that the media will never report."

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# Recreational Soccer Opens for Fall in West OK



Erin Hinton

The Weatherford Soccer Club (WSC) has opened

registration for students ages 4-18 in the Western Oklahoma area who wish to join the "Recreational League." With this program, the WSC aims to provide an opportunity for all kids to experience the game of soccer by providing an organized, well structured, positive, and enjoyable experience.

Working with coaches, students will learn about character, sportsmanship, fair play, team work, winning with humility, losing with dignity, and the value of doing their best every time they get together.

Registration fees are \$65, plus \$30 for two team jerseys. Signups for recreational soccer are due August 22. Following this, the teams will be built prior to September 3, when coaches will receive their rosters at a meetup conference.

Kids ages 4-6 will meet up two night per week. Aside from games, they will spend most of their practice sessions developing their technical skills.

Kids ages 8-14 will have a much more involved season. Practices will be at the discretion of your child's coach, so stay in contact with them during the season.

FORT COBB / DEATH - A missing Oklahoma City man has been found dead near Fort Cobb Lake in Caddo County. The body of 60-year-old Kenneth Tillery was recently discovered by an Oklahoma game warden. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation processed the scene. The body of Tillery was transported to the Chief Medical Examiner, who will work to determine the cause and manner of death.

SWOSU / HIBLER - Former Southwestern
Oklahoma State University President Dr. Joe Anna
Hibler will soon be recognized with the Women in
American History Award by the Washita Chapter
of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The
event will be held on August 15th at the Al Harris
Library on the SWOSU campus beginning at 1 pm.

in Clinton 222nd event

Motel site.

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CLINTON / HOSPITAL FINANCES - The Clinton Hospital Authority recently met to discuss several items moving forward after the hospital sale did not transpire in July as projected to Rural Hospital Solutions, Inc. Hospital Authority Board Chair Ken Baker stated that the hospital is losing about \$750,000 a month and that expenses will need to be cut. The hospital reportedly has just over \$74,000 cash on hand. "We've got to deal with the facts: we don't have the cash flow and it's not available. That's where we're at as far as cash flow," expressed Baker. "We're burning 750,000 a month. It's not sustainable. We spent a lot of money [and] things didn't play out like we thought, as far as the transition. We're going to deal with cutting expenses and increasing the collection."

CLINTON / I-40 PROJECT - Bids have been approved by the State Transportation Commission for work on the long awaited I-40 project at Exits 65 and 65-A at Clinton. Director Tim Gatz revealed the project's price tag currently sits at \$76 million. The project is going to also replace four of those at-risk bridges on I-40, so it's not just about improving and enhancing access," explained Gatz. "The current interchanges feature ramps that are close together and can cause confusion for drivers not familiar with the area. Additionally, there's currently no access to eastbound I-40 from I-40B. That's been problematic for the long term and it's time for us to get in there and fix it." Construction is expected to begin in early 2026. The project is estimated to take about 3.5 years to complete.

Kids 8-14 will also play in the following festivals:

September 20.......Clinton
October 4......Weatherford
October 11......Clinton
October 25.....Weatherford
November 1.....Clinton

Expect two games per Saturday for Festivals, and possibly more games throughout the season. Additionally, there will be an end of season tournament on Sunday, November 2. Plans for kids ages 12-14 may differ from kids ages 8-10, depending on how many register to play.

The WSC will also host a variety of other soccer programs for the Fall 2025 season. These include "competitive" (Ages 12-19), "Futsal" (for all ages, including adults), as well as US Youth Soccer's TOPSoccer League (for individials with special needs of all ages).

If you would like more information regarding these programs (or if you are interested in being a coach for any of these age groups) please message us on Facebook contact us at WeatherfordOKsoccer.com. One of our volunteers will respond to you as soon as possible.

**BECKHAM CO/HAYS** - Jury selection for a Carter man charged in Beckham County District Court with first degree murder-malice aforethought is planned for September 25. 38-year-old Clayton Samson Hays allegedly shot and killed 42-year-old Colter Jake Vaught of Sayre outside an oilfield business in 2024.

CLINTON / GROUNDBREAKING - Clinton City Manager Robert Johnston says a groundbreaking event for the new Oklahoma Highway Patrol location in Clinton will be held later this month. The August 22nd event will begin at 9am at the former Glancy Motel site.

CUSTER CO / SPERLE - Hardy Sperle officially assumed his new role as Custer County's Emergency Management Director on Monday, August 4th. "I've grown up in Clinton my whole life. I love living here and [I love] all the people [here], so I'm excited to be able to give back to my community that I've grown up in and serve the people in the best way that I can, expressed Sperle. He added that his background, training, and education make him well suited for the position. "I graduated from high school there in 2021. I just graduated in December from SWOSU with degrees in Parks and Recreation Management and Wildland Firefighting," explained Sperle. "I'm coming in with my FT-2 and other trainings that are required for emergency managers." Sperle succeeds Mike Galloway, who retired in June.

**STAFFORD MUSEUM IED -** Following a meeting of the Stafford Air & Space Museum Foundation, Julie Lenius has been named Interim Executive Director after the recent resignation of Colton Parkinson. "There's a big process that comes to identifying [our] next Executive Director, said Lenius. "Our board works closely with the City of Weatherford, and so they've established a search committee that will be reviewing the job description." Once the board approves the duties for the position, applications will then be accepted for the position. "[The Board] is going to be reviewing the current responsibilities, projects, and everything that we have coming to completion out here at the Stafford Air & Space Museum to see if there's some added responsibilities that aren't in the current job description," explained Lenius. "Then, [they'll be] looking...to make sure it's got an appropriate pay grade, or if it's [a position] that justifies two employees. A lot of discussions are going to be had on where we go from here."



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 August 6 - Billy Byrum, Ray Harris, Rick Koch, Lyndall Switzer; August 7 - Virginia Davila, Concepcion Gomez, Ruben Hammil, Alan Hull, Randy Jenkins, Cheryl Mauldin, Frank Parks, Janelle Wheeler Collins; August 8 - Taylor Arriaga, Katie Franklin, Maria Gonzeles, Madison Gooch, Mike Hall, Tricia Jordan, Scott Kelly, Alfonso Martinez, Brianna Mussellman, Glen Sinclair, Evan Walton; August 9 - Chris Buckner, Warren Goldman, Eddie Pigg, Natalie Simpson, Larry Thiessen; August 10 - Savanna Jo Collins, Whitney Carder, Kim Cooper, Debi Duff, Justin Elder, Michelle Furhmann, Mary Graham, Wade Haugen, Jack Walton; August 11 - Shawn Barrera, Robert Cagg, Casi Cornell, Lucille Janer, Austin Jrogdon, Shane King, Austin Kissler, G.W. Lowry, Jerri Sheperd, Hunter Staggs, Anthony Walter; August 12 - Tana Kerr, Ethan O'Neale, Marsha Pigg, Kent Walters;

#### **Advertising Deadline: Every Friday at 3pm**

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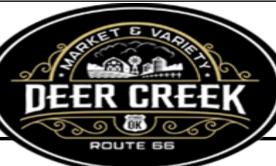
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# Western Oklahoma Christian School Prepares for First Day of Class



Jena Skarda / WOCS

WOCS recently hosted a "Meet the Teacher" night. WOCS Fifth Grade students Hannah Mitchell and Kambree Palmer talks to teacher Abigayle Reimer (left) about the upcoming school year.



Jena Skarda / WOCS

Food Trucks

Mom and son duo Kourtney and Liam Schmidt lend helping hands at campus clean-up day at WOCS in Clinton. Applications are still being accepted by applying at www.wocs.org.

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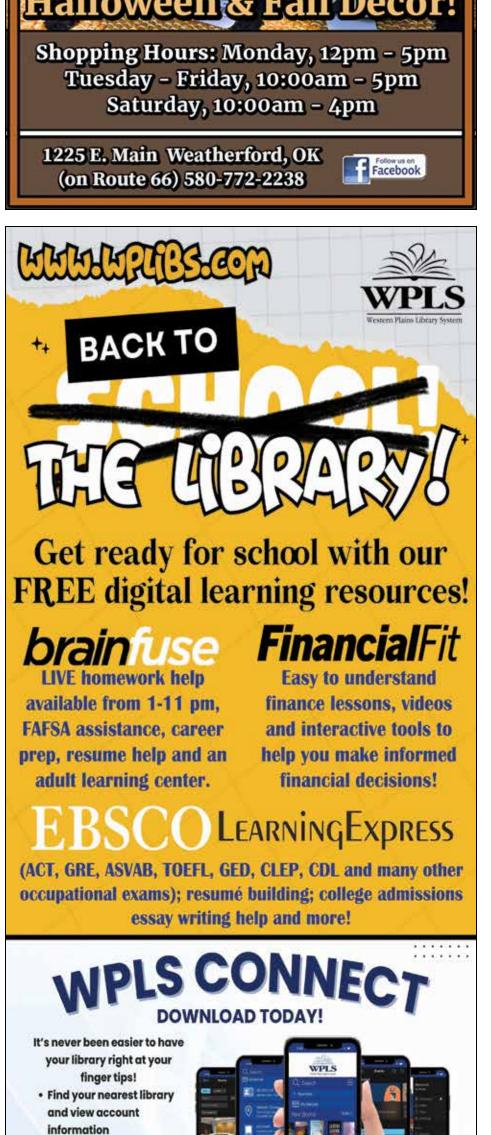
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# Oklahoma History: Rise of the Electric Guitar



Provided by Wichita Photo Archives

Group leader Gage Brewer (seated) in the early years of his career as a musician, songwriter, and dance orchestra leader. His group began performing on radio in Wichita, KS, then traveled in and out of the U.S., and ultimately Brewer established the Shadowlands Dance Club in Wichita in 1937.

#### **Gage Kelso Brewer's Steel Guitar**

On a Halloween night in 1932, the Shadowland Dance Hall on Wichita's outskirts witnessed a musical spectacle. The club's owner, Gage Kelso Brewer – a stout, sandy-haired bandleader born in Gage, Oklahoma - stepped onto the bandstand cradling a peculiar new guitar. It was a small lap steel with a circular metal body and a long neck, resembling a cast-iron skillet with strings. As Brewer strummed across the steel, a piercing amplified chord boomed from the speakers. Dancers stopped in their tracks. The electric guitar had just made its public debut, and it howled across the Kansas prairie for the very first time.

Brewer had tirelessly hyped this moment for weeks. Upon returning from California with two of the world's first electric guitars in hand, he gave newspaper interviews teasing a "revolutionary musical instrument" unlike any ever heard. The Wichita Beacon marveled at the strange device, raving that Brewer's "electro steel guitar" had "the same quality, fullness and harmony of a pipe organ".

Audiences were mystified – was there a phonograph hidden inside, or some kind of trick? Brewer assured them it was real, even bragging that he was only the "third musician in the world" to play one of these electrified guitars. Ever the showman, he touted it as "the most wonderful instrument [he] had ever played." During the performance some onlookers were so startled they worried Brewer might electrocute himself on stage. Others peppered him with baffled questions: "How many songs does that electric guitar play?" quipped one patron, as if it were a player piano or magical jukebox. Over the following weeks, Brewer continued capitalizing on the buzz, staging follow-up "electric guitar" showcases each Halloween season. Word spread across the Midwest: a new era of amplified music was dawning, thanks in part to this Oklahoma-born troubadour with his futuristic frying-pan guitar.

#### **Bob Dunn's Amplified Strings**

While Gage Brewer was electrifying Wichita's dance hall crowds, another Oklahoma musician was independently conducting his own bold experiments with amplified strings. Robert Lee "Bob" Dunn, born in Braggs (some say Fort Gibson), Oklahoma in 1908, grew up enthralled by the slide guitars of Hawaiian music and the hot horns of jazz. By the early 1930s, Dunn was a gigging steel guitarist who, like many, felt frustrated that his gentle lap steel couldn't compete with the blare of trumpets and fiddles in noisy nightclubs. Determined to be heard, Dunn built his own electric steel guitar from scratch, juryrigging a pickup device to amplify its sound. In the days before commercially made electric guitars were widely available, this Oklahoma tinkerer essentially invented his own solution – a homemade amplified guitar – right in the middle of the Dust Bowl era.

Legend has it that Dunn's inspiration came from a chance encounter with a street musician on Coney Island. The story goes that Dunn saw an itinerant African-American guitarist playing a "Rube Goldberg-like" electrified guitar contraption for tips on the boardwalk. The sound enchanted Dunn. He was so determined to learn the man's amplification secrets that he followed him all the way to New Orleans, studying the makeshift rig along the way.

By 1934, he had perfected a workable electric steel setup of his own. That year, Dunn's quest carried him down to Fort Worth, Texas, where he joined Milton Brown's Musical Brownies, one of the hottest Western swing bands of the day. Night after night in the smoky dance halls of Texas, this quiet Oklahoman amazed audiences with the sight of a steel guitar plugged into an amplifier – a sound no one in country music had heard before.

If the Shadowland show was the electric guitar's public birth, Bob Dunn gave it its first hit record. In January 1935, Dunn traveled with Milton Brown's band to Chicago for a Decca recording session. There, on January 27, 1935, he became one of the very first musicians ever to record an electrically amplified guitar. The breakout track was aptly titled "Taking Off," a sprinting instrumental that featured Dunn's steel guitar front and center. As the tapes rolled, Dunn unleashed a solo that all but rewrote the rules of country music. Gone was the gentle acoustic strumming of old – in its place came sizzling single-note runs and jazzy slides, amplified to a bold volume.Contemporary observers were stunned.

Bob Dunn had transformed the steel guitar from a background rhythm instrument into a lead voice, blasting through the band like a trumpet. In Western swing parlance, he became the "take-off man" - the lead soloist – proving that an electric guitar could go toe-to-toe with any fiddle or horn.

Dunn's playing in those years sounded like nothing that had come before. Having once been a trombone player, he approached the guitar as if it were a brass horn, bending and slurring notes into "raw trombonelike swoops and smears". He often pushed his amp to its limits, drawing out whining overtones and occasional feedback squeals that made listeners' eyes go wide. One musician later recalled that Dunn's steel would "lurch" into solos with a "cascade of bent, broken tones" – not the pretty, sentimental sob of a Hawaiian guitar, but something grittier, hotter, more experimental On record, he toggled his guitar's crude volume knobs on the fly (no fancy foot pedals yet), swelling from a quiet rhythm comping behind the band into a searing, overdriven lead tone for his short bursts of solo magic.

"Otherworldly" - that's how many described Bob Dunn's amplified sound. It was so far ahead of its time that years later historians suggested early jazz and blues electric guitarists may have taken cues from Dunn's 1930s innovations. Indeed, in the Southwestern music scene, Dunn opened the floodgates: within a year or two, other guitarists from Texas and Oklahoma were cobbling together their own electric rigs, eager to capture a slice of that loud, singing tone.

#### **Charlie Christian's Swing and Jazz**

By the late '30s, the ripple effects of Bob Dunn's and Gage Brewer's experiments were transforming American music. In Oklahoma City, a young man named Charlie Christian had grown up hearing the electrified Western-swing sounds on regional radio and in local clubs. Christian took up the guitar and, like Dunn, plugged it in – but he applied the electric instrument to the sophisticated realm of jazz. Discovered in an Oklahoma City club and whisked off to Hollywood, Charlie Christian joined Benny Goodman's famous orchestra in 1939 and proceeded to dazzle the world with his amplified solos. Night after night, Christian's fleet-fingered runs on his Gibson electric guitar became centerpieces of Goodman's swing music, essentially elevating the guitar to a marquee jazz instrument for the first time. As music historian Hugh Foley notes, before this wave of innovation, the guitar had "primarily played a backup role," simply strumming chords in the rhythm section. But thanks to pioneers like Dunn in country and Christian in jazz, the guitar was now a front-line star, trading solos with trumpets and saxophones as an equal.

#### **George Beauchamp's Legacy**

While Oklahoma musicians pioneered electric guitar performances on stage and record, the invention of the electric guitar itself was brewing out west. The man behind Gage Brewer's miraculous instruments was George Beauchamp, a Texas-born guitarist-turnedinventor working in Los Angele. Beauchamp had long been searching for a way to make guitars louder. In the late 1920s he helped create the resonator guitar (the steel "National" guitar that mechanically amplified sound), but by 1931 he envisioned a purely electrical solution. Teaming up with industrialist Adolph Rickenbacker, Beauchamp founded a small company called Ro-Pat-In and got to work. The result, unveiled in 1932, was a flattish cast-aluminum lap steel guitar with a pickup that used electromagnetic coils to turn string vibrations into electric signals.

#### Oklahoma's Legacy

By the 1940s, nearly every major guitar manufacturer was producing electric models, and the amplified guitar was filtering into Honky Tonk country, big-band jazz, and down-home blues. In the 1950s, the electric guitar became the backbone of rock 'n' roll, fueling a musical revolution that owed much to those early trailblazers. It's a straight line from Bob Dunn's daring steel solos and Gage Brewer's first electrified strums to the electrifying sound of a young Chuck Berry or Buddy Holly a generation later. Each time a rock guitarist steps forward to take a screaming solo, or a country band kicks into a twangy Telecaster riff, they are echoing that moment when Oklahoma's musicians first plugged

in and turned the volume up.











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# Presented by: (NAPA)

# Cheyenne Mahy Has Been Named SWOSU's New Head Softball Coach



Jon Chidester SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Athletic Director Todd Helton has announced the hiring of Cheyenne Mahy as the new head softball coach at Southwestern Oklahoma

State University. "Coach Mahy brings a competitive spirit, a genuine passion for the game, and a strong understanding of the Great American Conference landscape," said Helton. "We believe her leadership will continue the upward momentum that's been established in SWOSU Softball, and we look forward to watching her grow and develop alongside the program."

Mahy becomes the sixth head coach in school history and is no stranger to success in the GAC. Her versatility as both a hitter and pitcher earned her three First Team All-GAC utility selections and the title of 2021 GAC Newcomer of the Year while playing at Southeastern Oklahoma State.

She was also recognized as SOSU's Female Athlete of the Year for three consecutive seasons (2021-2023).

In 2023, she helped lead the Savage Storm to a GAC Tournament Championship and earned multiple All-Region honors throughout her career, including First Team selections from both the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) and the Division II Conference Commissioners Association (D2CCA) in 2021.

"I'm incredibly honored to be named the head coach of the SWOSU softball program and to represent the university," said Mahy. "I want to thank Coach Helton and the entire hiring committee for entrusting me with this opportunity. It's a privilege to return to the Great American Conference—a league I know well—and I'm eager to embrace the challenge of elevating this program to new heights."

Following her decorated playing career, Mahy earned a master's degree in Sports Management from Southeastern in 2024.

She has remained actively involved in player development through her work at D-BAT in Lawton, where she has led hundreds of hours of softball instruction for players of all ages and skill levels through camps, clinics, and private lessons. Additionally, she gained valuable experience in collegiate athletics administration as a graduate assistant at Southeastern.

Mahy also holds a bachelor's degree in Health and Human Performance from Southeastern and earned a pair of associate degrees from Western Oklahoma State College, where she began her collegiate playing career.

Coach Mahy will be officially introduced on the SWOSU campus at a date and time to be announced.



















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