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Hinton Comets Sports 2026-27 Season to be Streamed on Wright.Media

Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

Wright Broadcasting Systems has officially partnered with Hinton Public Schools to broadcast the campus's 2026-27 sports season and special events on wright.media.

Hinton Superintendent Marcy Derryberry shared her enthusiasm about the upcoming school year. "I'm sure the community and the students' families are going to be excited. Our school will be saving money too, since we won't have to be hiring our own broadcasters for video commentary."

With livestreams being available for free online, anyone can check in on the Comets' football and basketball standings, including state runs, by visiting wright.media/nine.



Krystal Blackwell / WM

Wright Media Sports Director Luke Clement (left) and Hinton Public Schools Superintendent John Hancock (right) announce a livestreaming partnership for the 2026-27 school year.

Annual Weatherford "Birthday Bash" to Celebrate Rt. 66 Centennial

Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

The Weatherford Chamber of Commerce annual Route 66 Birthday Bash is returning to celebrate the Mother Road's 100 Year Anniversary. The festivities will be hosted at Centennial Park on the corner of Main and Broadway to celebrate. The event is slated for August 22, from 6pm - 8pm, and will feature live entertainment, various foods and other goodies for sale, and free birthday cake.

The fifth annual Ice Cream Contest, which returns as a fan favorite, will feature many contestants and their homemade ice cream creations. Register now by visiting the Weatherford Chamber's office at 210 W Main Street. Registration will also be accepted on the day of the event. Interested guests can pay \$10 for a wristband that will allow them to taste test every ice cream at the event as well as give them a chance to vote for the competition's winners.

As usual, the contest is broken into two categories: one for individuals and for-profit organizations; another for non-profit organizations. Winners in both categories will be awarded prizes, with the non-profit being awarded \$1,000 worth of advertising with Wright Media.

Several local vendors and food trucks will be in attendance for folks looking to see what these skilled locals have to offer.

For more information, call the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce at 580-772-7744.



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Linda Wray

Linda Sue Wray, 81 of Elk City, was born on November 26, 1944, in Elk City, OK, to AB and Norma Myretta (Hager) Lowry. Linda looked upon the face of her Lord and Savior on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at her residence in Elk City, surrounded by her loving family.



Linda married Wesley Shelton on October 26, 1962, to this union two daughters were born, Greta and Leslie. Later she married the love of her life and best friend, Patrick Johnson "Pat" Wray, March 1974 at Elk City. He preceded her in death on November 27, 2016. Their marriage was a true partnership filled with love and devotion. Together, they raised their family, building a life rich with memories, laughter, and love, to this union one daughter was born, Liberty.

Linda was a loving daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and friend. Linda owned and operated Susie's Corner on Randall and B Avenue in Elk City. She was a talented woodworker making beautiful southwest furniture, including tables, chairs, and hutches. She enjoyed bowling, softball and going to the casino. Linda found great joy watching her grandchildren play sports, and treasured spending time with her family, grandchildren, and friends. Her memory lives on in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Linda held many roles and served her community for over twenty years with the City of Elk City. She was a member of the First Baptist Church, Elk City, where she enjoyed the fellowship of her church family and also attended the Community Fellowship Church, Hammon, OK.

Funeral service were held at 2:00 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2026 at Martin-Dugger Funeral Home Chapel, Elk City. Dolan Ivey will officiate. Interment will be at Fairlawn Cemetery, Elk City. Services have been entrusted to the care of Richard and Tammy Dugger and the staff of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Elk City.

Linda is survived by three daughters, Greta Louis of Elk City, Leslie Denley of Elk City, Liberty Sizemore and her husband, Billy of Elk City; six grandchildren, Cassie McKeaigg and her husband, Jason of Hinton, OK, Justin Louis and his wife, Emily of Sayre, OK, Braxton Sizemore of Elk City, Braedon Sizemore of Elk City, Seth Denley of Elk City, Latrice Edwards of Elk City; six great grandchildren, Zeke Curtis of Sayre, OK, Paeten Louis of Elk City, Kada Louis of Hinton, OK, Hayden Louis of Sayre, OK, Diesen McKeaigg of Hinton, OK, Braeya McKeaigg of Hinton, OK; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Linda was preceded in death by her husband, Pat Wray; her parents, AB and Norma Myretta Lowry; two brothers, Steve Lowry, Kent Lowry; two sisters, Arletta Trout and Beth Gowdy; and one son-in-law, Jeff Louis.

Memorials can be made to Comforting Hands Hospice, Elk City, in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, OK 73648.

Susie Harting

Susan Irene Harting was born in Arlington, California on January 23, 1951, and passed away in Weatherford, Oklahoma on April 7, 2026, at the age of 75.



Susie was raised in Arlington, California by Irene (Owen) and Ike Sinclair. She met Fred Hoffman, who was a Marine, in Las Vegas and they were married in 1969. The couple made their home in Colorado, Utah and other states while Fred served in the military.

In 1977, Susie moved to Riverside, California and in 1980, she moved to St. Louis. She spent her days working and raising her 4 children Chris, Greg, Matt and Miranda as a single mother. She made her final move in 1991 to Weatherford.

Susie earned her CDL and began a career in long haul trucking for FedEx Ground in 2002. She took an early retirement in 2008.

Susie was an adrenaline junky and was not timid. She did her own thing and this included skydiving at the age of 65. Even though she was fiercely independent, she was always willing to help others.

Susie was preceded in death by her mother and step-father, Irene and Ike Sinclair; sons, Christopher and Matthew Harting; and sister, Joyce Smith.

She is survived by her son, Gregory Harting and his wife, Heidi; daughter, Miranda Smoot; grandchildren, Michael Harting and his wife, Haley, Casey Harting, Bayel Harting, Audrey Harting, Brock Harting, Hayeli Smoot, Alexsyes Smoot and Daltyn Smoot; and sisters, Sandy Thompson, Peggy Martinez and Jean Zacharko.

A memorial service for Susie was held on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 2:00 PM at the Chapel of Lockstone Funeral Home.

Shanicey Elwick

Shanicey Deshawn (Askins) Elwick was born on December 12, 1973, in Lubbock, Texas and passed away unexpectedly on May 5, 2026, in Yukon, Oklahoma.



Shanicey was raised by her mother, Glynda (Smith) Johnson, and step-father, Gary, in Shawnee and Elk City, Oklahoma. She graduated from Canute High School in 1992. Following high school, she married Mark McCown, and together they welcomed two daughters, Kylee and Morgan, while making their home in Canute.

In 1997, Shanicey moved to Weatherford and attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She had a passion for caring for children, working in childcare and later operating an in-home daycare. In 2005, she married Don Elwick, and together they welcomed twin daughters, Addison and McKinley.

In 2011, Shanicey experienced the heartbreaking loss of her oldest daughter, Kylee, who had Epilepsy and passed away unexpectedly. Through this tragedy, Shanicey became a passionate advocate for Epilepsy awareness and Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP).

Shanicey loved watching movies with her girls, caring for children and babies, and spending time with her family. She touched many families in Weatherford, helping care for their children like her own. She will be remembered for her kind and compassionate heart, and for always helping others - especially those who were struggling or in need. Her daughters were her world. The girls were the true loves of her life, and forever her absolute pride and joy.

She was preceded in death by step-father, Gary Johnson; daughter, Kylee Jordan McCown; and brothers, Kristopher Briscoe and Kevin Askins.

Shanicey is survived by daughter, Morgan Murray and husband, Matt and their daughter, Maelyn; daughter, Addison Elwick; daughter, McKinley Elwick; long time partner, Danny Brinkley; mother, Glynda Johnson; father, Frank Askins; brother, Trinity Johnson and wife, Emily and children, Tobias, Titus, Talek and Eisyl; sister, Shawn Askins and children, Seneca, Aeris and Ezra; sister, Michelle Askins and children, Delano and Bella.

Jane Taylor

Jane Earlene Taylor, 95, of Elk City, Oklahoma was born on December 8, 1930 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Earle Pruitt and Fern C. (Bruce) Johnson. She went to walk the golden streets of Heaven on Saturday, May 9, 2026 at Bell Ave Nursing Home, Elk City, Oklahoma surrounded by her loving family.



Earlene was a graduate of Classen High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Oklahoma A&M in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She married James "Jim" Cavaness Taylor on June 5, 1952 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He preceded her in death on September 16, 2011.

She worked as a school board secretary for the Berlin Public Schools and for the Elk City Public Schools most of her career. She loved her job. Earlene also enjoyed crafting of every kind, crocheting, knitting, cross stitch, painting, pottery, quilting, reading and working in her flower garden.

She was a member of PEO, Berlin Belle's, Circle of the Sun, and the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. Earlene was a faithful member of the First Presbyterian Church here in Elk City.

Funeral services were held at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 16, 2026 at the First Presbyterian Church, Elk City, Oklahoma. Interment will be at Fairlawn Cemetery, Elk City, Oklahoma. Services have been entrusted to the care of Richard and Tammy Dugger and the staff of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Elk City, Oklahoma.

Cherishing her memory are her sons, Jimmy Taylor and his wife, Tracy of Cheyenne, Oklahoma, John Taylor and his wife, Guille of Ladera Ranch, California; daughter, Jane Taylor of Edmond, Oklahoma; six grandchildren, Jillian Taylor and her husband, Shiloh Roberts of Edmond, Oklahoma, Jason Taylor and his wife, Emily of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Matt Meyer of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Laura Hodges and her husband, Jayson, of Orange Park, Florida, Gil Castro and Armando Castro both of Los Angeles, California; thirteen great grandchildren.

Earlene was preceded in death by her husband, Jim Taylor; infant daughter, Katherine; granddaughter, Jamie Taylor; grandson, Joel Taylor; parents Earle and Fern Johnson; brother, Bruce Johnson.

Memorials can be made to the Berlin Fire Department in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

Debbie McCullock

Debbie Idamae McCullock was born on November 15, 1938 in Hurdland, Missouri to James Arvin and Susie Marie (Miller) Stewart. She passed away on May 10, 2026 in Hydro, Oklahoma at the age of 87.



Debbie was raised in Brashear, Missouri and attended school there. When she was 17, she moved to El Paso, Texas. She got a job at the first drive-in restaurant in El Paso, Tower Drive-In, and worked as a roller-skating carhop.

Debbie married John McCullock and the couple spent many years traveling and living in different states while he was working construction. In the late 80s, they moved to John's family farm South of Hydro. Debbie spent her time farming, caring for the animals and planting the wheat while John continued working in construction. She loved the farm, the animals and all the work that went into it. When John passed away in 2004, she continued her life at the farm until she was in her late 70s.

Debbie is survived by her son, Doug Daniel and wife, Cheryl; daughter, Susie (Daniel) Aguirre; grandchildren, Joshua Daniel, Amanda Daniel and Kimberly Daniel and husband, Chris Holmes, Chandel Cross and Chelsee Sherrill and husband, Tucker; great-grandchildren, Juniper, Caleb, Merric, Evelyn, Hannah, J.D. and Ben; and sister-in-law, Laurene "Renie" Carol. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, two sisters, Janet Lefier and Clea Rusher; and brother, James Stewart.

Funeral services for Debbie were held Monday, May 18, 2026, 10:00 A.M. at the First Christian Church in Hydro, with Rick Dyson officiating under the direction of Lockstone Funeral Home.

Eddie Raines

Eddie Max Raines was born on March 25, 1948, in Binger, Oklahoma, to Alfred and Lena (Glidewell) Raines. He passed away on Sunday, May 3, 2026, in Hinton, Oklahoma, at the age of 78.



Eddie was raised in Gracemont, Oklahoma, where he attended school and graduated from Gracemont High School in 1966. During his school years, he was active in both basketball and baseball. He married Janice Waldroup on September 2, 1967 in Hinton, OK.

He proudly served his country by enlisting in the United States Air Force. During his service, he was stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas; Altus Air Force Base in Altus, Oklahoma; Seferihisar Air Base in Turkey for a year and a half; and Castle Air Force Base in Merced, California. After completing his military service, Eddie returned to Binger, Oklahoma. He worked as a lineman for Caddo Electric and later spent many years driving a truck for various companies.

Eddie had a love for life and enjoyed many hobbies. He could often be found playing chicken foot dominoes, golfing, or spending time playing video games with his grandchildren. He was a devoted fan of OU softball and rarely missed an opportunity to cheer them on. Many who knew Eddie fondly remarked on his resemblance to Elvis Presley.

He is survived by his three daughters: Stacy Huckaby and husband Weldon of Hinton, OK, Joli Buckley and husband Kenny of Yukon, OK, and Whitney Rector and husband Jason of Hinton, OK; his grandchildren: Cassidy McLemore and wife Kayla of Perkins, OK; Afton Jones and husband Keenan of Weatherford, OK; Weston Baker and wife Valerie of El Reno, OK; Easton Lierle and Dominic Nuncio, and Hesston Lierle and wife Shelsea, all of El Reno, OK; Carson Jackson of Chandler, OK, Cruz Jackson of Chandler, OK, and Letty Toho and Zeplyn Toho of Hinton, OK; Nate and Mercedes Buckley of Hydro and Wyatt Rector of Hinton as well as 19 great grandchildren. Additional survivors include his brother, Jackie Raines and wife Mary Kay of Gracemont, OK; his sister-in-law, Kathleen Raines of Gracemont, OK; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; three sisters; and one brother.



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Senate Review by Senator Darcy Jech (5/8/26)

Sen. Darcy Jech
R-Kingfisher, District 26

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The 2026 legislative session will soon conclude as the Legislature has fulfilled our primary function and constitutional requirement of passing a balanced budget. The Fiscal Year '27 budget was agreed upon by both the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as the governor. The \$12.79 billion Appropriations package makes strategic investments in education through teacher pay raises, school security measures, and transformative literacy and math initiatives. These investments resulted in a nearly five percent increase in education funding over last year, furthering efforts to move our state forward and enhance educational outcomes. Further, the budget also directs funds to other key state agencies for public safety enhancements and health care advancements.

I look forward to seeing this comprehensive package at work in Oklahoma, while maintaining state savings for economic downturns that are sure to come at some point in the future.

Though we finished our work on the budget early this year, we remained in session to continue working on legislative business, including policy measures. Among the notable legislation advanced this year are proposals to permanently prohibit cell phones in the classroom, extend recess time for students, enhance access to affordable insulin, support youth transitioning out of foster care, and slow the growth of property taxes.

These bills cover a wide range of policy areas, but share one thing in common, which is that they will make improvements in the daily lives of Oklahomans. At this point in the process, some bills have been signed by the governor, while others still await final consideration. Some have also been vetoed, and we will have the opportunity in our final week of session to consider which bills to override the vetoes on.

Through the eventful days at the Capitol, it has been a pleasure to welcome constituents from Senate District 26 and groups from across the state to the Senate for recognition. On April 22, we celebrated the 27th Annual 4-H Day at the Capitol and highlighted members' community service, agriculture, and STEM projects. I also had the honor of hosting Leadership Weatherford, and I extend my appreciation to the local leaders who made the trip to highlight the Weatherford community at the Capitol.

As the session winds down and I near the end of my final term in office, I also had the honor of participating in the legislative tradition of giving a retirement address. I was pleased to see many family members, friends, and colleagues in attendance as I reflected on my 12 years of service in the Senate.

Feel free to contact my office at 405-521-5545 or Darcy.Jech@oksenate.gov. We would also love to welcome you to our state Capitol and invite you to visit our office in Room 234.

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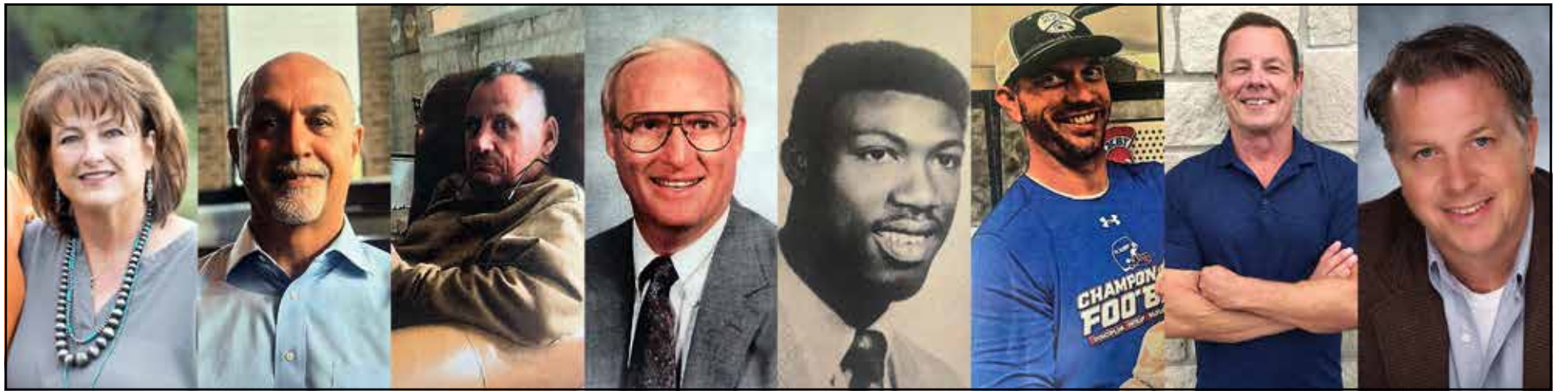
LOCAL AND AREA NEWS

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Mike Smith
News Director

2026 Weatherford Athletic Hall of Fame to Celebrate Eight New Inductees



Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

The Weatherford Athletic Hall of Fame will be celebrating eight new inductees this Friday, May 22.

Patrick Arney, part of WHS's Class of 1983, has been given this year's "Exceptional Eagle" Hall of Fame Award. For several years, Pat participated in the Special Olympics. He won 3rd Place for swimming at the International Special Olympics held in Brockport, NY. After graduating, Pat was invited to be an honorary Manager for the SWOSU Bulldogs Basketball team by Head Coach George Hauser.

Cindy Kaiser Broadbent graduated from WHS in 1981. She lettered in basketball and track during her sophomore, junior, and senior years. She was a defensive starter in basketball for all three years. During her high school basketball career, Cindy earned a spot on the WAC All-Conference Team (1979-1981); the Noble All-Tournament Team (1979); the Northwestern All-Tournament team in (1980-1981); and the All-Area team (1980-1981).

Marvin Jones graduated from WHS in 1969. As an athlete, he played two seasons of basketball/wrestling, and four years of football/track. In 1968, the Eagles track team was named State Champions for Class B. That year, Marvin set an individual Long Jump score of 9.00 ft.

Jim Ritz was the Head Football and Track coach for WHS from 1976-1985. During his tenure in Weatherford, he helped the Eagles earn the title of 1981 District Co-Champions, and reach the State Playoffs from 1979-1981. Jim was also named "District Coach of the Year" in 1981.

Tyler Schneider established himself as a three-sport athlete before graduating in 2004. Schneider was a 2002 Football State Runner-Up, a 2003 Baseball State Champion, and a 2004 Basketball State Tournament Participant. After graduating from SNU, Tyler transitioned from the field to the sidelines as a premier football coach, most notably during his tenure at Bixby, OK. His coaching career features 12 consecutive State Championship appearances and 11 State Titles, eight of which were won consecutively.

Frank Sikes was part of WHS's Class of 1970, playing football, basketball, and baseball for the Eagles. He was listed on the 1970 All-State Baseball Roster, as well as the All-District Football Roster. After graduating, Frank played football for the University of Hawaii. He currently resides in Frisco, TX.

Barry Toma graduated from WHS in 1983. He made his mark as a true three-sport standout, excelling in football, baseball, and wrestling, and earning recognition for his talent, versatility, and leadership. During his senior year, Barry was named the school's Outstanding Male Athlete. For the past 38 years, Barry has devoted his career to education and coaching, mentoring students in wrestling, tennis, golf, and track.

Steve Wheeler was a 1982 graduate of WHS. He made it to state in almost every sport--not as an athlete, but as a photographer. Now the owner of Steve Wheeler Photography in Weatherford, he has been showered with accolades throughout his career from the likes of Kodak, Fuji, ESPN, and Sports Illustrated.



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BECKHAM CO / ARSON FIRES - A man, identified as Phillip Lain Janes of Dierks, Arkansas, has been charged with seven counts of third-degree arson in Beckham County District Court. Janes allegedly set several fires half a mile north of the State Highway 6 and State Highway 283 intersection in Beckham County. Court records show witnesses had spotted Janes near the location of the fires. Investigators also found red spray paint in or around the fire locations, which was allegedly used as an accelerant to start the fires. Bereta Pero of Idabel, who was identified as Janes' girlfriend, is charged with conspiracy to commit a felony for allegedly buying the spray paint found on the scene.

ELLIS/EMBEZZLEMENT - A former office manager for a pressure pumping company has turned herself into the Beckham County Jail on charges of embezzlement. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation said 46-year-old Angie Ellis allegedly embezzled money through payroll and false reimbursement claims for company bills that were purported to be paid for with Ellis' personal credit cards. During an audit, it was found that, from 2023 to 2024, Ellis wrote unauthorized checks for reimbursement towards company bills and other expenses. Authorities say the total amount for all unauthorized checks was estimated to be over \$138,000.

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BURNS FLAT/FINANCIAL UPDATE - The financial situation of Burns Flat-Dill City Public Schools is improving. "With our ad valorem that has been coming in over the last few months, we're actually looking a lot better," shared Superintendent Jamie Matuszewski. "The expectation or speculation that we had was that we would be [around \$800K], but actually, our ad valorem come in at [over \$1 million], which has really been a boost for our school for sure." Matuszewski doesn't expect a reduction in force for current employees, but the district is seeking to fill a couple of vacant coaching positions. "Actually, with some retirements that we've had and some resignations, people taking jobs elsewhere, looks like through attrition, we should be okay," explained Matuszewski. "We should be able to move forward with the staff we have in place."

BECKHAM CO / RALLS - A former nurse at Great Plains Regional Medical Center in Elk City has been charged with three counts of sexual battery in Beckham County District Court. 57-year-old Michael Todd Ralls of Crawfordville, IA, allegedly held a position of authority over three employees who all reported among other things, inappropriate touching by Ralls. One of the victims reported that Ralls inappropriately touched her 50 or 60 times while in the process of tying her surgical gown.


CLINTON / SCHOOL PRESS BOX - Clinton Public Schools Superintendent Nathan Meget recently updated the board of education about a new press box at the Tornado Bowl, explaining that the price per square foot has increased from \$300 to \$400. "To me, that sounds like we can probably estimate that thing's going to be 25% more than we thought, so we're going to try to have that ready to go out and bid in June." Another project planned for the Tornado Bowl is to add another ticket booth in the front. Additionally, Meget added that storage for various sports will be added to the track, as well as a potential concession stand between the track and weight room.

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WASHITA CO / MEMORIAL - Washita County Sheriff Kevin Rozell says Deputy David Claude Hines and Detention Officer Steven Rozell were honored for their service at the 58th Annual Oklahoma Law Enforcement Memorial. "It really reminds you of what price you meant to pay for doing this job, especially when you see all the families and mothers and the children there of the fallen law enforcement officers that gave their life doing this job," Sheriff Rozell said on the impact of the ceremony. "I took a couple of my officers, and we pinned the roses on the wall for our family and for Deputy Heinz's family. It was really impactful for my two deputies to see who all was impacted by their job on a day-to-day basis." Deputy Hines died in 1932 after becoming involved in a physical struggle with a mental patient inside the County Jail and collapsed from exertion. He died the following day. Both Deputy Hines and Detention Officer Rozell will also be added to the National Law Enforcement Wall in Washington D.C. this year during Police Week.

CUSTER CO / TERRELL - Court proceedings have been stayed in Custer County District Court against a former Custer City Firefighter pending a competency report due in July. Skyler Dean Terrell of Custer City is facing eight counts of third-degree arson and one count of pattern of criminal offenses. Terrell was investigated after reportedly being on or near the scene of several suspicious fires within Custer and Dewey Counties. Court records show Terrell later admitted to setting the fires, saying he missed being a firefighter after being terminated. He also claimed to be obsessed with fire. Terrell is due back in court July 17th for a preliminary hearing conference.



WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!
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"When Christ Comes Again" – current series theme, 11am Sundays, Christ Community Church, E Main & Lera (1/4 mile east of The Point), Weatherford. **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 May 20 - Jeremy Biswell, Marlen Lehman, Addison Miller, Garrett Payne, LuCretia Schapansky, Chris Tackitt, Alexis Talamante, Elsie Thomason; **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.

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Western Oklahoma High Schools Celebrate Graduating Class of 2026



Provided by Wright.Media

The Thomas-Fay-Custer Senior Ensemble performed "Landslide" by Stevie Nicks following the Valedictorian/Salutatorian addresses.



Provided by Wright.Media

Hydro-Eakly High School Principal Terri Kimble addressed students prior to the presentation of their diplomas.



Provided by Kelley Schmidt

Weatherford Valedictorian Ruby Wright gives an address to the audience.



Provided by Kelley Schmidt

The Weatherford High School Choir performs a rendition of Michael Bolton's "Go the Distance" from Disney's Hercules.



Provided by Wright.Media

Watonga Seniors lined up on the school's new gymnasium, as friends and family cheer for them at the end of the graduation ceremony.



Provided by Wright.Media

Clinton High School Principal Michelle Sorter closes the ceremony by instructing students to move their tassels to the left side of their cap.

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Oklahoma History - The Coleman Theater on Route 66 (Miami, OK)



Provided by the Oklahoma Historical Society

The front box office of the Coleman Theatre. Photograph taken on February 16, 1964.



Provided by Green County Tourism

Lobby interior of the Coleman Theatre, featuring the grand staircase and various wall art designs, along with other art pieces.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The story of the Coleman Theatre is one of how a mining boomtown decided to spend its confidence in brick, plaster, light, music, and showmanship. Financed by George L. Coleman Sr. and opened on April 18, 1929, the theatre fused vaudeville, talking pictures, a resident orchestra, storefront rentals, mechanical cooling, and a Wurlitzer organ into one downtown landmark. Nearly a century later, it still works as a rare piece of living evidence from Oklahoma's age of movie palaces, and it remains one of the strongest single artifacts for telling how leisure, commerce, and civic pride came together in early twentieth century northeastern Oklahoma.

On the evening of April 18, 1929, in Miami, OK, the theater opened. The opening night clipping promised that only "a few good \$1 seats" remained, and what audiences got for that dollar was a package built for a changing entertainment world: senior Orpheum vaudeville, the talking picture *The Dummy*, Fox Movietone News, an *Our Gang* comedy, and organ music by Owen James on the Mighty Wurlitzer. The next day's schedule advertised continuous shows from afternoon to late evening, which tells you just how eager the town was to keep the doors moving.

The theatre is registered on many destination tours and is listed among the National Park Service Register, which records it held a capacity crowd of 1,600 people, and local stewards of the house still emphasize the same figure because it captured the scale of the moment. Miami had built one of the grandest entertainment buildings in the region at exactly the point when vaudeville was fading, "talkies" were rising, and many older theatres were scrambling to adapt.

The theatre only makes sense once the mining story comes into view. Miami's boom was rooted in lead and zinc.

The Oklahoma Historical Society's encyclopedia notes that development of the Picher mining field enriched George and Alfred Coleman, along with Charles M. Harvey and James F. Robinson, and helped drive Miami's population from 1,893 at statehood in 1907 to 6,802 by 1920. A local Miami history account adds that the 1905 mineral discovery north of town made mining the city's main economic engine for decades.

George Coleman used that wealth in a way that was both personal and civic. He decided Miami needed an elegant theatre. That choice matters. He could have built another strictly practical block, another office, another industrial facility. Instead, he financed a leisure palace, which suggests that by the late 1920s Miami's leaders wanted more than profit.

The theatre also landed on loaded ground, on the site of the old Mining Exchange Building, which had served as a courthouse stopgap before burning in 1917. That detail gives the Coleman Theatre an added layer of symbolism. A site once tied to the machinery of business and county administration became a palace of public amusement. Even Coleman's own house survived as a reminder of the same fortune; the George L. Coleman Sr. House at 1001 Rockdale, built in 1918, still stands in Miami.

The theatre itself was engineered as a full entertainment machine. Described as a Spanish Colonial Revival exterior with twin bell towers, curvilinear gables, hand carved terra cotta, wrought iron balconies, and topped with a red tiled roof over the western half. Within, were commercial shops on the first floor and a Masonic lodge hall in the eastern half. Inside, the effect changed from Spanish street theatre to French fantasy. Local and federal sources of the time describe a "Louis XV interior" with a chandelier, carved staircases, decorative plaster, and the kind of ornamental excess that movie palaces used to make an ordinary ticket feel ceremonial.

Among those intricacies, the theatre had another especially unique feature: the Mighty Wurlitzer, a grand organ built in 1928 and delivered for installation on February 21, 1929. At a sale price of \$35,000 in 1929 it was, and continues to be, a beautiful icon into the past. It is one of the only Wurlitzer's built in 1928 that is still in its original home. With all of the beauty and amenities, Miami was also among the earliest Oklahoma cities to have a theatre with refrigeration for stable temperatures all year, another clue that the building sold comfort as aggressively as spectacle.

The Coleman was handling three entertainment eras at once. It booked vaudeville on the Orpheum circuit, it showed talking motion pictures from the beginning, and it maintained a ten member resident orchestra along with organ accompaniment. At the time, only Tulsa and Oklahoma City had other theatres on the Orpheum circuit. For Miami to join that company was a declaration of regional importance.

It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, and in 1989, the Coleman family donated the building to the city, and restoration began in earnest with public support, federal assistance, and volunteer labor. Hundreds of volunteers gave countless hours, with work that included returning the Mighty Wurlitzer organ to its original home, restoring the chandelier, and reviving the ballroom. Today the theatre still operates and remains a major stop for travelers on Route 66. The building preserves the texture of the 1920s in a way a biography or a statistic cannot. You can see the terracotta on the facade, trace the mining wealth behind it, point to the surviving house of its builder, and even hold up documentary scraps from opening night and the huge seat shipment that made the gallery room possible. A moment still captured in time where we can take a look back into Oklahoma's boom years.



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Women Take 9th at NCAA Golf Championship



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

After three days of golfing, the Lady Bulldogs came up just short of qualifying for match play. SWOSU returns from Palm Beach Gardens, FL, finishing tied for ninth and two strokes outside of the cutoff.

SWOSU closes the 2025-26 season after capturing the second NCAA Central Region Championship in program history and producing the program's first NCAA Regional individual champion in Sala. The Lady Bulldogs won three stroke-play tournaments this season, retained the Perkins Cup against Northwestern Oklahoma State in head-to-head match play, and recorded the second-best national finish in program history.

Day 1 - Tuesday, May 12

SWOSU Women's Golf wrapped up the opening round of stroke play at the 2026 NCAA Division II Women's Golf Championships on Tuesday, as one of just three teams in the field to complete their round before rain soaked the area causing tournament delays.

Freya Sala (74; +2) carded five birdies during her round and finished one-over on both the front and back nine. A quad bogey on the back side offset an otherwise strong stretch that included three birdies and four pars.

Maria Velilla (75; +3) finished one shot behind Sala at three-over par, followed closely by Daniela Espinoza (76; +4) at four-over. Velilla shot even par on her back nine with two birdies, while Espinoza birdied holes nine and 13 and played seven holes under par from holes 11-17.

London Wilson (84; +12) and Nerea Anton (89; +17) rounded out the SWOSU lineup.

Day 2 - Wednesday, May 13

SWOSU Women's Golf completed the second round of the 2026 NCAA Division II Women's Golf Championships on Wednesday, ending the day tied for 11th overall.

The Lady Bulldogs entered round two tied for ninth after the remaining teams in the field completed suspended first rounds Wednesday morning following Tuesday's weather delays.

SWOSU added five strokes to its team total between rounds one and two. Daniela Espinoza paced the Lady Bulldogs in round two, carding a one-over 73 with four birdies to move into a tie for 13th individually.

Freya Sala, who led SWOSU with a 74 in the opening round, followed with a 76 (+4) on Wednesday.

Maria Velilla shot a 78 (+6) in round two, while London Wilson (87) and Nerea Anton (91) rounded out the lineup.

Day 3 - Thursday, May 14

SWOSU Women's Golf posted its lowest team score of the tournament in Thursday's final round at the 2026 NCAA Division II Women's Golf Championships.

The Lady Bulldogs fired a final-round 304, their best team score of the week, as they attempted to erase a seven-stroke deficit entering the day.

No. 1-ranked Wingate won the stroke play portion of the championship by 20 strokes and also claimed the individual medalist honors, as Amely Bochaton was the only player in the field to finish under par at 13-under, winning the individual title by 13 strokes.

SWOSU also finished ahead of the other three Central Region representatives in the field, fellow Great American Conference member Arkansas Tech and MIAA teams Rogers State and Nebraska Kearney.

Freya Sala and Maria Velilla each carded rounds of 74 (+2) on Thursday to lead the Lady Bulldogs. The score matched Sala's best round of the tournament, while Velilla recorded her lowest round of the week.

Sala finished tied for 10th overall after totaling 10 birdies across the tournament, tied for the fifth-most in the field. Her 4.07 scoring average on par-4 holes also ranked tied for fifth among competitors. A late double bogey on hole 17 interrupted an otherwise strong closing stretch in which she birdied twice and played five other holes at even par over her final eight holes.

Velilla finished tied for 22nd and posted a third consecutive round with two birdies. She played both the front and back nine at one-over par during her final round.

Daniela Espinoza, who posted SWOSU's lowest round of the tournament with a one-over 73 on Wednesday, finished tied for 28th overall after an 80 in the final round. Espinoza also excelled on par 3s throughout the tournament, tying for second in the field with a 2.83 scoring average on par-3 holes.

London Wilson (T-84) and Nerea Anton (92nd) both improved significantly in the final round. Wilson matched Espinoza's 80, while Anton carded a four-over 76 after recording pars on 14 holes.

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