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Western Oklahoma School Age Athletes Invited to SWOSU Summer Camp



SWOSU SUMMER CAMPS

June 6 • June 8-11 • July 6-8 • July 11 • July 13-18



Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

SWOSU is inviting students from across western Oklahoma to attend their annual Bulldog Summer Camps in Weatherford. To sign up for any of these camps, please scan the nearby QR code or visit their hub page at swosuathletics.com/sports/2022/3/29/2022-summer-camps.

Bulldog Football Camps

There will be two separate football camps hosted from July 13th - July 18th, each designed with a participant's age and level of experience in mind. They will be hosted at the Milam Stadium on SWOSU's Weatherford Campus. The price to register for either camp is \$49 total. Attendees are expected to bring athletic attire, including cleats, and water bottles.

The "Football Youth Camp" is available for students entering Grades 1 - 8. It will be hosted on July 13th - July 15th, from 8am - 11am. Campers will be given a no-contact rundown on the fundamentals of the game, both in groups and in one-on-one instruction from SWOSU staff and players alike. Younger players will be trained on basic skilled development, such as catching and throwing. Older players can expect more intermediate skills that will prepare them for actual games.

The "Football Prospect Camps" are for high school and college athletes to be coached and evaluated on a higher level than the Youth Camp. SWOSU coaches will spend two hours testing their ability in various drills and styles.

The Prospect Camps will be split into three major blocks, hosted one day each (July 14th, 16th, or 18th) from 1pm - 3pm.

Bulldog Soccer Camps

SWOSU will be hosting two camps for soccer players. They will be hosted on June 8th - June 11th at Rader Park's soccer fields. Both events will cost \$100 each.

For students ages 5-13, the "Soccer Youth Camp" will show attendees the fundamentals through both demonstrations and mini games. This includes rules and mechanics like dribbling, passing, and shooting, as well as developing skills like proper ball control. The Youth Camp will run in the mornings, from 9am - 12pm.

Students ages 14-18 are invited to attending "Soccer Striking Camp," focused entirely on driving the ball long distances for passing or scoring. This event will be held in the evenings, from 6pm - 8pm.

Bulldog Volleyball Camps

SWOSU will be hosting two separate camps at the Pioneer Event Center in Weatherford. Players are expected to arrive in athletic clothing and closed-toed shoes.

The "Lil' Dawgs Camp" (Volleyball Youth Camp) is available for students entering Grades 1 - 5. It will be hosted on July 6th - July 8th, from 9am - 12pm. SWOSU Volleyball players and coaches will oversee campers as they develop their setting, serving, passing, and hitting skills. They will also play games designed to put their skills to the test. The cost to attend is \$85 if you register before June 19th, and \$101 after.

The "Volleyball Elite Camp" is designed for high school students to experience college-level volleyball first-hand. Aside from evaluations on their performances in drills and live competitions, campers will also be guided on the process of becoming a collegiate-level athlete.

The Elite Camp will be broken up into two groups--one on June 6th, the other on July 11th. Both will run from 9am - 5pm, with a lunch break from 12pm - 1:30pm. A full itinerary is available at SWOSUvolleyballcamps.com and navigating to the "Elite Camps" section on the left.



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Jonathan Bartel

Jonathan Bartel, age 89, of Colony, Oklahoma, passed away on May 17, 2026, in Weatherford.



Jonathan was born on September 3, 1936, in Cordell, Oklahoma, to Henry J. and Irene Bartel. He grew up on the family farm southwest of Colony and attended Corn Mennonite Brethren Church. He graduated from Corn Bible Academy, where he met the love of his life, Elsie May Karber. While at CBA, Jonathan enjoyed playing trombone and participating in track and field. His 100-meter dash record has been tied but remains unbroken to this day.

Jonathan and Elsie both attended Tabor College in Kansas during their freshman year before marrying on March 29, 1956, at Fairview MB Church. The couple began their married life in a small farmhouse near Colony before moving to the Bartel family homestead, which had been in Jonathan's family for generations.

Together they lived and worked on the family farm for 67 years. Farming was not only Jonathan's occupation, but one of his greatest passions. He diligently expanded the family operation, primarily raising wheat and cotton. He also participated in experimental wheat research with the OSU Extension Service and was inducted into the Oklahoma State University Agronomy Hall of Fame in 1975.

Jonathan was a devoted follower of Christ who faithfully served his church and community in many capacities. He served on the Corn MB trustee board and was a longtime board member at Corn Bible Academy.

Jonathan and Elsie worked side by side in countless acts of service, including the catering committee and the CBA German Supper. He also led congregational singing at Corn MB Church for a number of years.

Jonathan served on several community boards, including the Cowden Cotton Gin Board and the Kiwash Electric Board.

He traveled to Washington, D.C., several times to meet with senators on behalf of rural electric cooperatives.

He was an avid reader who especially enjoyed Tom Clancy, Max Lucado, and Reader's Digest Condensed Books. Music was another lifelong love. He enjoyed hymns, classical music, and musicals, especially Handel's Messiah and Fiddler on the Roof. College sports were another favorite - he remained a loyal supporter of his OSU Cowboys through every season.

Many will remember him reading Scripture with a hot cup of coffee in hand. He found great joy in his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and he loved helping Elsie host family and friends around their table.

Elsie was truly the love of his life. After she suffered a stroke, Jonathan faithfully took on additional responsibilities so they could continue living on the farm they loved for as long as possible. They shared more than 69 years of marriage before Elsie passed away in September 2025.

Jonathan was preceded in death by his parents, Henry J. and Irene Bartel; his wife, Elsie; and his sister, Joyce May. He is survived by his daughter, Janet Thiessen and husband Ed of Edmond, Oklahoma; son Howard Bartel and wife Cynthia of Weatherford, Oklahoma; and son Paul Bartel and wife Tomi of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He is also survived by two brothers-in-law, Reuben Ulrich and John May. Also surviving and celebrating his legacy are eight grandchildren — Kyle, Brandon, Krysten, Aaron, Emily, Katie, Ethan, and Grace — along with 14 great-grandchildren, plus number 15 on the way.

One of his grandsons recently expressed, "From you I learned the value and dignity of hard work, but also how to treat others with respect, kindness, and generosity. You showed me that strength lies not only in effort and determination, but also in a tender heart that appreciates beauty in the world - things like the King's Singers, and that strange and wonderful romance of wheat harvest."

Jonathan will be remembered for his deep faith, wisdom, love for his family, generosity, love of farming, dedication to service, remarkable work ethic, and selfless service.

His spirit and legacy will continue to live on in our hearts.

Rick Walker

Rick Allen Walker, 52, of Morrison, Oklahoma was born on April 21, 1974 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He is the son of Mack Allen and Edith Geraldine (Miller) Walker. He went to walk the golden streets of heaven on Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at Stillwater Medical Center after a long and courageous battle with cancer.



He attended and graduated from John Marshall High School Class of 1993.

Rick was an avid golfer and when not spending time at the Perry Golf and Country Club he could be found wetting his hook at his favorite fishing hole. He was an avid OU fan and enjoyed watching his nieces and nephews play sports.

A Celebration of Rick's Life was held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, May 30, 2026 at Trout Funeral Home, 1408 North 7th, Perry, Oklahoma, Ronnie Wilson officiated. The family requestd that guests wore OU Sports attire to the service. Services were entrusted to the care of Richard and Tammy Dugger and the staff of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Elk City, Oklahoma, with the assistance of Trout Funeral Home in Perry, Oklahoma.

Cherishing his memory are his sister, Linda Rose, and her husband, James, of Clinton, Oklahoma; his brother, Randy Poeling, and his wife, Allison, of Duncan, Oklahoma; nephews, Tyler Walker of Keota, Oklahoma, Jason Rose of Clinton, Oklahoma, Ryan Poeling of Duncan, Oklahoma, Rodney Poeling of Marlow, Oklahoma; nieces, Katelyn Walker of Perry, Oklahoma, Paige Poeling, Brooke Poeling, Julie Bradley, Jamie Harrelson all of Clinton, Oklahoma, Michele Johnson of Duncan, Oklahoma. Rick was truly blessed to have his Angels here on Earth who looked after him and cared for him during his battle with cancer. His Angels are Jennifer Brownlee, Joni Leigh and Dale Wayne Sloan.

Rick was preceded in death by his parents, Mack & Jerry Walker; three brothers, Ronald Poeling, Russell "Rusty" Walker, and Michael Poeling; and his sister-in-law, Marsha Poeling.

We invite you to leave a message of condolence, expression of sympathy or perhaps share a memory of Rick at www.martin-duggerfuneralhome.com.

The family would like to invite all who cannot attend to watch the service live on Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services website.

Joella Tabor-Hamm

Joella Kay Tabor-Hamm was born December 8, 1955, in Clinton, OK, to Lucille Tabor. She passed away in May of 2026 at the age of 70.



Joella was raised in the Greenfield area and attended Greenfield schools. Following high school, she lovingly helped care for her younger brothers and sisters, always placing family at the center of her life.

She later started her own family and made homes in Calumet, El Reno, and for a short time, Texas. Joella worked many years providing for her family. She worked for 10 years at Hobby Lobby, and also at Firestone Tires. She later retired from Lucky Star Casino after a 10 year stint, where she worked as a Players Club clerk.

Joella was a wonderful cook and a talented seamstress. She especially enjoyed sewing Halloween costumes for her children when they were young. Joella loved dancing, singing, and spending time in the comfort of her home surrounded by family. Her warm spirit and loving heart will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Joella is survived by her children, Michael Oscar Hamm of Oklahoma City, Micky Lee Sassano of Choctaw, Camille Alexis Martinez of El Reno, and Francisco Javier Martinez III of Oklahoma City; her grandchildren, Brayden Hamm of Oklahoma City, Payton Sassano of Ohio, Francisco Javier Martinez IV of Calumet, Milli Sassano of Choctaw, Amarah Morton of Calumet, Steven Warner of Lawton, Emma Warner of Lawton, Jocelyn Martinez-Morton of El Reno, Ialina Martinez of El Reno, Luca Martinez of El Reno, Ruby Morton of Calumet, and Levi Morton of Calumet; one brother, Joe Todd of Oklahoma City; and one aunt, Peggy Sue Tabor of Oklahoma City.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Lucille Tabor-Todd; one daughter, Vassilia Renee Tabor; and her husband, Francisco Javier Martinez Sr., siblings, David Todd, Robert Todd, Jaquita Todd Warner, Roger Todd, James Todd.

Services entrusted to Turner Funeral Home, Geary, OK, Condolences may be sent to the family at turnerfuneralhomes@gmail.com, turnerfh.net, or on Facebook at facebook.com/TurnerFuneralHomes.

Robin Mayfield

Robin LeAnn Crandall Mayfield, 54, of Sayre, OK was born on May 7, 1972 in Sayre, OK. She is the daughter of Bill and Diane Kathryn (Hall) Robinson. She went to hold the hand of her Lord and Savior on May 27, 2026 at her residence surrounded by her loving family.



She enjoyed riding horses, working on the farm with her husband and fishing. She also belonged to the Beulah Riding Club when she was young. Robin was a great mother and enjoyed being around her family and grandchildren. Robin will be remembered as the sweetest person you will meet and will be missed dearly by all those who knew her.

Graveside services were held at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 3, 2026 at Lone Oak Cemetery, Sayre, OK. Services were entrusted to the care of Richard and Tammy Dugger and the staff of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Elk City, OK.

Cherishing her memory is her husband, Walter Mayfield of Sayre, OK; two daughters, Traci Mayfield of Sayre, OK, Betty Jean Mayfield of Leedey, OK; sister, Lisa Rhea of Weatherford, OK; niece, Ashley Rhea of Oklahoma City, OK; and her seven loving grandchildren.

Robin was preceded in death by her parents, Bill and Diane Robinson, one sister, DeAnn Crandall.

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

We invite you to leave a message of condolence, expression of sympathy or perhaps share a memory of Robin at www.martin-duggerfuneralhome.com.

Joan Patterson

Joan Elizabeth Patterson was born at home five miles North of Carnegie on November 15, 1934, to Herman E. and Wilma (Merritt) Millwee. She passed away, Thursday, May 21, 2026, at River Oaks Nursing Home in El Reno, OK at the age of 91.



Joan grew up in Carnegie, OK, spending the first 8 years of school at a two Room County School (Prairie Lone) where not only her siblings and she attended, but her parents and their siblings attended, and graduated from Carnegie High School with the Class of 1952.

She was united in marriage to Billy Don Patterson on April 18, 1953, at the United Methodist Church in Carnegie, OK. He preceded her in death on April 15, 2015, in Yukon, OK.

Joan and Billy lived a short time in Chickasha before making their home in Carnegie. In 1980, they moved to Corn, OK, where they lived until 1986 when they moved to Hinton. Joan continued living in the same home they purchased at that time.

Joan worked for the United States Postal Service for 31 years, serving the communities of Carnegie, Corn and Hinton before retiring in 1993. She enjoyed working Sudoku puzzles and after retiring, helped with grandchildren Alicia and Kyle and going to school events and rodeos.

She devoted much of her life to caring for her husband, Billy, serving as his full-time go-fer and caregiver for 62 years. Joan was a member of the Carnegie Mother's Club, NARFE, United Methodist Women, and the First United Methodist Church of Hinton.

She is survived by two children, Rick Patterson of Altus, OK, and Diana Patterson-Smith and husband Terry of Hinton, OK; two grandchildren, Alicia Pool and husband Chris of Yukon, OK, and Kyle Patterson and wife Kelsey of Springer, OK; two great-grandchildren, Kole and Kash Patterson; siblings, Doris Knauss and husband Karl of Falcrest, OK, Ivan Millwee of Claiborne, Texas, and Carl Millwee of The Woodlands, Texas; and nephew Dale Hancock of Edmond, OK, and many other nieces and nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Billy Don Patterson; brothers, Roy and Don Millwee; sister, Erlene Hancock; and brother, Billy Millwee.

Memorial donations may be made to: Carnegie Memorial Building Fund, PO BOX 1061, Carnegie, OK 73015, or Hinton Fire & Rescue, Hinton, 115 S Broadway, Hinton, OK 73047, or Hinton First United Methodist Women, 222 W Market St, Hinton, OK 73047

Services were held at the First United Methodist Church Tuesday, 10:30 am, May 26, 2026 in Hinton, OK, with Rev. Gary Haynes officiating. Burial followed at Carnegie Cemetery at 2:00 pm on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, in Carnegie, OK.



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2026 Clinton Chamber Banquet Set for July 31



Mike Smith
News Director

Clinton Chamber of Commerce President Julie Caldwell recently spoke on the upcoming Annual Chamber Banquet, slated for July 31st at the Frisco Conference Center.

"We're going to go ahead and do our banquet on a Friday night, right before August when all the things get going," Caldwell said. "We will mail invitations in June."

This year's theme is centered on the Mother Road's Centennial Anniversary, advertised with the tagline *Honoring the Past, Driving the Future*. "We're doing all the decades of Route 66, so we're telling people to wear their favorite decade," Caldwell added.

Tickets for the event will go on sale in June. More information can be found by visiting their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/clinton.commerce

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Lori Flansburg Malson recently donated all proceeds from the DINO DIG to the Connections Food & Resource Center. Hosted at Eakly's recent Tamale Taste-Off, the event raised \$185 for food insecure residents across Western Oklahoma.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS

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Mike Smith
News Director

WPLS Summer Reading Program Kicks Off with “Mad Science” Exhibit



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Kavon Taghizadeh with Central Oklahoma's Mad Science organization paid a visit to WPLS to inspire kids with his science experiments.



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Kids work together to set up a model volcano, activated through a combination of baking soda and vinegar.



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Kids and parents wait patiently as WPLS staff members inspect their finished model volcanoes.

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WEST OK / RUSS CAMPAIGN - State Treasurer Todd Ross of Cordell highlighted his experience during his campaign for re-election. “I come with a pedigree from the finance world and has spent 30 years working a job for the private sector, creating payroll,” Ross said of his qualifications. [I have experience with] managing a commercial loan portfolio, managing an investment portfolio, sitting on a bank board, dealing with regulators, dealing with all kinds of compliance issues, setting vision and all those things for 30 years.” Russ and his opponent Cindy Byrd will appear on the June 16 primary election ballot.

BURNS FLAT / AMBULANCE - As of June 1, Sinor EMS has begun providing emergency medical coverage for Burns Flat, Dill City, Foss, and Sentinel following the closure of Burns Flat EMS operations. “It’s not just us; we are one of three agencies pitching in to use the month of June to study the needs of the area because it’s not clear [to us] what all those folks out there truly need in terms of coverage,” shared Johnny Redd, the Vice President and Chair of Operations for Sinor EMS. “Elk City has agreed to move their coverage east a few miles. [Also,] the service out of Hobart, which we also operate, has allowed them to extend into the town of Sentinel.” Officials in Washita County are actively working to determine a long-term solution for EMS coverage in burns flat moving forward.

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SWODA / OVERDOSE DEATHS - The number of drug overdoses are trending upward locally, according to officials with the Southwestern Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA) located in Burns Flat. “We wanted to make folks aware that while overdose deaths are down and that’s an awesome thing, people still are taking too much and putting their lives at risk,” said Steve Berry, the Division Director for Substance Use, Prevention, And Treatment for SWODA. “We suspect there’s some new substances being added to the illicit drug supplies.” Berry added that prescription drugs are trustworthy, but he encourages testing of substances obtained elsewhere.

STAFFORD / EVENT CENTER - The new Event Center at the Stafford Air & Space Museum will be closed for an extended period. “[Throughout] the very last week of July [and] the whole month of August, we do have the Event Center closed because the Apollo Soyuz is arriving,” shared Executive Director Julie Lenius. “It will be here in August [to be] reassembled on-site. It will take them about three weeks.” A dedication for the Apollo Soyuz exhibit is planned for September.

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BURNS FLAT / WTC RETIREMENT - Outgoing Western Technology Center (WTC) Superintendent Kathe Corning recently reflected on her time working for the institution, highlighting the growth of WTC throughout the years. “I’m excited about the progress that Western Technology Center has made,” Corning expressed. “From the time I started, we were one campus and now we’re five. We’ve made such progress in our facilities and our offerings, and I’m really proud of that.” Corning will be succeeded by current Arapaho-Butler Public Schools Superintendent Jay Edelen.

BECKHAM CO / SIMPSON - A Cheyenne man charged in Beckham County District Court with buying/possessing or procuring child sexual abuse material will be back in court June 3rd. That's the formal arraignment date for 34-year-old Trentity Khane Simpson, who allegedly had a total of 13 sexually explicit photos of a 17-year-old female which were stored and saved within Simpson’s snapchat account.

CLINTON / RT 66 INTERLOCAL PROJECT Improvements continue along the historic Route 66 as part of an interlocal road project between Custer County and the city of Clinton. “We’re almost done with our [part of the road], it’s the two miles just west going out of Clinton,” District 1 Commissioner Wade Anders explained regarding the project during a recent County Commission meeting. “We’ve cleaned the ditches and worked on them and fixed them where that drains better, took out trees and fixed some holes that had washed out around there. The guys stayed hooked up and we had good weather, so we could do a bunch of that work.” Clinton city officials say 28th Street to N 2230 Road are currently closed to traffic as part of the project. The closure is planned until June 4, with drivers encouraged to use alternate routes until then.

SWOSU / OHS GRANT - The Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) announced that the Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) Foundation has been awarded nearly \$25,000 through the Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Program. The grant will fund the digitization of 130 7 in. film reels of SWOSU Athletic Competitions from the 1960s to the present, preserving them with archival materials and making them freely accessible online via the SWOSU Digital Commons.

RUSO / CARPENTER - A Western Oklahoma native and Senior Vice President at Bank of Western Oklahoma has been named Chair of the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) Board of Regents. Lake Carpenter is looking forward to elevating the work of RUSO’s six institutions and highlighting their critical role in preparing graduates for Oklahoma’s workforce. RUSO governs a half dozen universities including Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

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 June 3rd - Barret Cloninger, Kylee Crawley, Rachel Fast, Dr. Wes Levy, Justin Maguire, Stacy Strong, Belinda Thacker, Mavis Wilks, Becky Wood; **June 4th** - Jordan Nel, Hayden Boone, Jeff Brown, Ken Keeton, Bo Lovelace, Deb Mooney, Elizabeth Olguin, Larry Parker, Kendra Parkhurst, Heather Randy, Janice Smith, Laura Lynn Trent, Charmaine Yellow Eyes; **June 5th** - Leonard Abrahams, Caren Edwards, Richard Ratcliffe, Sue Ringle, Luke Sewell, Blake Shaddon, Alisyn Shellhorse, Micahel Shipman; **June 6th** - Kaci Axtell, Raymond Cole, Daryl Jones, Jasmine Lamp, Janet Little, Donna Poeling, Janet Roulet, Dwight Slagell, Brittany Theis, Bo Thomason; **June 7th** - Deon Basler, Angeline Evans, Ryan Fox, Tommy Klein, Nickie Lee, Ashley Oliver, Denise Slagell, Denis Slagell, Raymond Vermillion; **June 8th**- Kathy Barkholtz, Clare Blakeslee, Evelyn Bouma, Kathy Hanson, Lillie Peach, Melissa Reeves, Dawnellen Settles, Grant Sheperd, Elizabeth Sikes; **June 9th** - Savannah Jo Collins, Whitney Carder, Kim Cooper, Debi Duff, Justin Edler, Michelle Fuhmann, Mary Graham, Wade Haugan, Jack Walton.

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Blue Bass Pro Boat - Pick up at Mike's Pickup Auto in Weatherford. 125HP Mercury Engine. 580-887-3349.

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2004 4x4 Trailblazer - \$2,000. **2003 2WD Trailblazer** - \$3,000. 405-639-9667.

2000 Infinity QX56 2012 - 165K miles. \$16,000. 405-638-1773.

Rail dune buggy frame - 924 Porsche. good engine. \$400. 405-639-9667.

4-Michelin used passenger tires - 20 inch. 580-393-1444.

2002 Monterey 180 Edge - 18 1/2 ft. Volvo Penta Engine. 4.3 Chevy. 190 HP. \$7000. 580-819-2047

300 Honda Trax 4x4 - Will trade. 405-639-9667.

2003 Trailblazer - Good shape. \$3,000. 580-886-2980.

2009 Mercury Grand Marquis LS - \$3,750 OBO. 580-330-3489.

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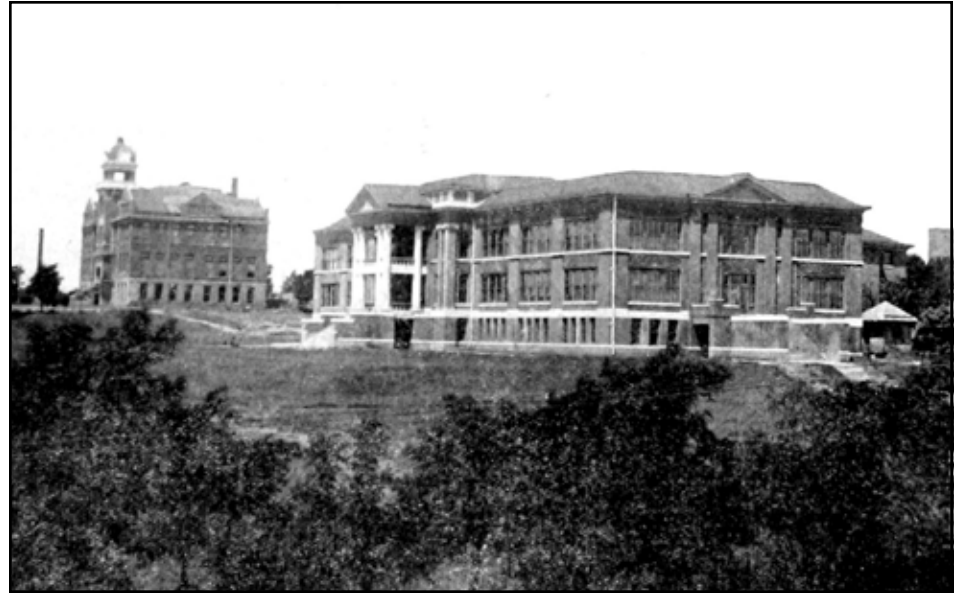
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Oklahoma History: The Origins of Higher Education in Oklahoma



Courtesy SWOSU Digital Commons

The John Hays Administration Building was the first structure built on the SWOSU campus in 1901.



Courtesy SWOSU Digital Commons

The SWOSU campus (circa 1913), featuring the Old Administration Building (left) and the Old Science Building (right).

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

After the Organic Act established the Oklahoma Territory, a legislative staff formed to help create a more systematic governing body. President Benjamin Harrison appointed George W. Steele as the new governor of the Oklahoma Territory, which would see tremendous advances in available public works/systems. The territory, with many fresh faces from the Land Run of 1889, was in dire need of schools and forms of higher education.

Governor Steele worked for seventeen months. During his time, he was a major advocate for public schools and universities. By his urging, the First Oklahoma Territorial legislature set up three collegiate schools in December of 1890. The three universities were the Norman Territorial University (which would later become the University of Oklahoma), the Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College (that would go on to form Oklahoma State University), and the Central State Normal School in Edmond (University of Central Oklahoma).

For these collegiate level schools to be at the same level of the rest of the country, they would need knowledgeable and well-trained teachers. So, two additional “teacher training” schools were

opened a few years later; these normal schools were dubbed Northwestern State Normal (Northwestern Oklahoma State University) in Alva which opened in 1897 and Southwestern State Normal (Southwestern Oklahoma State University) in Weatherford in 1901.

The legislation also established a college in Langston in 1897 for African Americans: Colored Agricultural and Normal University (Langston University).

As part of the push for “equal” opportunity, a secondary institution, the University Preparatory School at Tonkawa, was created in 1901 to prep high school graduates for entry to the University of Oklahoma.

Quickly after the establishment of these colleges and secondary schools, Oklahoma Territory found itself preparing for statehood. Part of the proposed entry as a state to the United States would see the territory combine with the remaining portion of Indian Territory.

Early discussions between the territories were heated due to the feeling of an educational imbalance as most of the college and university locations would be on the western side. As part of a compromise, “Oklahoma Territory offered to duplicate in the eastern part of the new state the

number and types of institutions that existed in the west side” (Oklahoma History Society).

The agreement was signed, and the First Oklahoma Legislature established a list of schools for the east. The colleges created were the Oklahoma Industrial Institute and College for Girls (University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) in Chickasha and the Oklahoma School for Mines and Metallurgy (Eastern Oklahoma State College) in Wilburton. Then, three normal institutes were opened: East Central State Normal (East Central University) in Ada, Northeastern State Normal (Northeastern State University) in Tahlequah, and Southeastern State Normal (Southeastern Oklahoma State University) in Durant. To match the preparatory school for OU, the secondary Eastern University Preparatory School was established in Claremore.

With the addition of these higher education schools, the legislation wanted to ensure more students had access to adequate preparation to any of the normal secondary or university options. So, the formation of six additional district schools were created in 1909 to get students ready for entry to Stillwater’s Oklahoma A&M and the other normal colleges. These six district schools were split evenly between the western and eastern halves of the state.

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College & VoTech Scholarships Being Offered by Lookeba-Sickles Alumni



*Friends and Alumni
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Continuing Education Scholarship Application



Alexander Shook
WOK Contributor

A \$1,000.00 "Continuing Education Scholarship" is available for all Lookeba-Sickles graduates (Class of 2025 and earlier) looking to pursue a higher education. This opportunity is made possible by the Friends and Alumni of Lookeba-Sickles Schools, Inc. (FAALSS)

The purpose of this scholarship is to cover any tech, trade, or college expenses incurred between August 1, 2026 and July 31, 2027. Application forms and instructions are available online by scanning the QR code on the left. Applications must be emailed by July 1, 2026, to the organization at friendsandalumni@lookeba.k12.ok.us.

Alongside the completed application, those looking to apply will also be expected to provide a cover letter, outlining their goals with the scholarship money. Applicants will also need to include their resume, as well as two letters of recommendation from a peer or higher-up who can speak on their character. Recommendation letters *cannot* be from a relative.

About FAALSS

The Friends and Alumni of Lookeba-Sickles (FAALSS) began in 2006 at the biennial school reunion, providing alumni with a means to pay something back for the great education they received at the school over the years.

Their intent was to foster pride in education and civil service through programs that benefit Lookeba-Sickles schools. Making grants available for post-secondary scholarships is an objective of the FAALSS.

Teachers and staff are also supported during the school year by various programs offered by the group. Their mission statement is, "Continuing the legacy...providing excellent educational opportunities for Lookeba-Sickles students."

Visit lookeba.k12.ok.us/page/ls-friends-and-alumni for more information regarding the Foundation, as well as a hub page for the various opportunities the group provides.

Custer County Health Department Plans Move to SWOSU Hodge Center in Mid-Summer 2026



Mike Smith
News Director

The Custer County Health Department will be moving into the Jerry and Margaret Hodge Center for Pharmacy and Rural Health, located on the Weatherford campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU).

Ashley Ferguson, the Oklahoma State Department of Health Regional Administrative Director for District 1, recently presented plans to Custer County Commissioners regarding the upcoming move to the Weatherford location.

"We feel like moving into this building will create an opportunity to have a new and welcoming environment for the citizens of Weatherford and Custer County, but we [can] also serve other

counties that don't have health departments," Ferguson shared regarding the move.

Currently, there is no definite move-in date for the department, but technology for the new location is planned to be set up in the final week of July. There will be a brief period when the department will not see clients due to the transition. Ferguson is hopeful to begin seeing patients in the Hodge Center at the beginning of August.

"We feel like the move will increase access, we'll have more visibility in the community, and we feel like we'll probably begin to see our numbers increase in the number of individuals that we serve," said Ferguson. "Right now, my goal is just to get us up there."

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Steve Wheeler Photography

Mila Schlegel, playing for Weatherford Galaxy, takes some practice swings at home plate.



Steve Wheeler Photography

Cody Silman, age 6, steps up to the plate for Weatherford Black in their first baseball game of the Summer season.

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