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Weatherford Police Chief to Operate Free New Years Eve Shuttle for Sixth Year

Chad Gray
Staff Writer

Chief Louis Flowers of the Weatherford Police Department and his wife Beth Flowers will be operating a free shuttle for all Weatherford-area partygoers on New Years Eve. Chief Flowers said, "This is the 6th year my wife and I have operated this shuttle, and we love being able to give back to members of our community so they can go out for a night of fun without worrying about being arrested."

New Years Eve is notorious for being one of the heaviest drinking holidays in the nation, and an independent study from 2019 found that Oklahoma

had the second highest crash rate in the nation on New Years Eve. It's reasons like this that motivated Louis Flowers to start offering this public service.

"We couldn't do it without the help and approval of Mayor Mike Brown. Mayor Brown allows us to use the Pioneer Center Shuttle, and he challenges all of the City's Department Heads to perform a public service act each and every year. This is how I like to give back to the citizens of Weatherford," said Chief Flowers.

Chief Flowers and his wife will be operating the shuttle on New Years Eve from 9pm until around 2 am and will take riders anywhere within a two mile radius of the Weatherford City limits. To be picked up by the shuttle call 580-772-7791.



Provided

Weatherford Police Chief Louis Flowers stands with the Pioneer Center Shuttle which he and his wife will operate on New Years Eve.



Winter Reading 2022

JAN. 1ST THROUGH FEB. 28TH

This year's Winter Reading challenge encourages readers to explore diversity, empathy and action through literature! To complete the challenge you must earn 10 badges by February 28, 2022 to be entered to win the grand prize! Go to wplib.beanstack.com to start the challenge!

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Joseph Harvey Black

Joseph Harvey Black was born on February 13, 1927, in Charlotte, North Carolina, to Nellie J. (Beaty) and Hugh Grady Black and passed away on December 18, 2021, at Weatherford Regional Hospital.



Harvey was raised in Charlotte, North Carolina, and attended Sharon High School. After high school Harvey served in the US Navy. He was stationed at Houma, Louisiana, NAS-Blimp Base and Clinton Sherman AFB. He returned to North Carolina and married Neva Harrall on March 12, 1947. He soon returned to Oklahoma where he made his home in Weatherford. Harvey worked for Owl Photo for 37 years, developing film and retiring 1989. He was a faithful Christian and member of First United Methodist Church. Harvey enjoyed tinkering with and fixing mechanical items, reading westerns, and most of all going fishing.

Harvey is survived by one son Dean Black of Tulsa, OK; two brothers: Cliff Black of Fayetteville, NC, and Charles Black of Copperas Cove, TX; two grandchildren: Devin Black and his wife Katie of Hurst, TX, and Susie Howell and husband Lonnie of Spring, TX; and his companion Irene Adler, of Weatherford. He was preceded in death by his parents Hugh and Nellie; his wife Neva; one son Kenneth; five sisters; Margaret, Frankie, Nellie, Katherine, and Mittie; and four brothers: Jim, John, Thomas, and Hugh.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to the Teasley and Adler families and Harvey's morning coffee group.

Kathy Ann Severn

A Celebration of Life for Kathy Ann Severn, 66 year-old Hydro, OK resident, were held on Thursday, December 23, 2021, at 10:00 AM at First Baptist Church in Weatherford with Pastor Earl Stephenson officiating. Services are under the direction of Lockstone Funeral Home.



Kathy was born on June 30, 1955, in El Dorado, KS to Robert (Bob) Lee Vinson and M. Ellen (Harding) Vinson and passed away on Friday, December 17, 2021, in Hydro, OK. Kathy was raised in Checotah, OK where she attended school, graduating from Checotah High School with the Class of 1973.

She attended Connors State College where she graduated with a degree in Medical Lab Science in 1975 and later Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. While in Weatherford, she met Gary Allen Severn through mutual friends, and they were married on February 14, 1979, at First Christian Church in Hydro. Her first job after college was working for Dr. Buller's office in Hydro. She worked for Dr. Buller for 30 years until his retirement and then worked for Dr. Stutzman until retirement in 2006. Kathy and Gary moved to Hydro in 1996. Between 1998 and 2002, Kathy served as a

foster parent, helping care for 48 children.

Kathy was a devoted Christian and enjoyed serving in her church—leading bible study and teaching Sunday School. Kathy enjoyed quilting, embroidery, sewing. She enjoyed going to her grandchildren's activities and events.

Kathy is survived by her husband Gary, of the home in Hydro; her parents Robert and Ellen Vinson of Checotah, OK; one son Cory Severn of Hydro, OK; one daughter Cindy and her husband, Jon Robinson of Cheyenne, OK; six grandchildren: Jake, Corbin, Shelby, Ana, Jett and Bear; two brothers; Richard Vinson and his wife Heather of Checotah, OK and Robert Vinson and his wife Nancy of Webber Falls, OK.

Irbie Findley

Irbie Findley was born March 11, 1933, in Hinton, Oklahoma, to Josephine Findley Howard. He passed away Thursday December 16, 2021, at his home in Hinton at the age of 88. Irbie attended school through the 8th grade at East Walnut Schools and worked at the grocery store. He served honorably in the United States Army during the Korean Conflict. He married Ellen Ruth Hemingway on November 7, 1951, at the First Baptist Church in Hinton. Irbie ran heavy equipment for his Uncle Ralph, hauled fuel for Williams, drove a truck for many years and farmed for Jim Murphy and Bob Ramming until he was 85 years old and was very proud to tell you he was able to work that long. Irbie also worked as an auctioneer, was an active member of VFW and Gilbert-Fossett American Legion Post 230. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Hinton, Oklahoma. Irbie enjoyed putting on his smell-good and going boot scooting; he enjoyed watching westerns; and sitting with the guys exchanging "stories"; but most of all he was a good Dad.



Irbie is survived by his two loving children Matt Findley and his wife Donna Kay of Prattville, Arkansas, and DeAnn Heger of Hinton, Oklahoma; two grandchildren: Kristen Peters and her husband Mathew of Hot Springs, Arkansas; and Michael Ryan Findley of Prattville, Arkansas.

He was preceded in death by his mother Josephine Howard; the love of his life wife Ellen Findley, Uncle Ralph Findley and Aunt Mildred Findley, Aunt Hazel Smith and his beloved dog Snoopy.

Sandy Moore

Sarah (Sandy) Moore was born to Harry and Sara Mildred (Robinson) Raymond, Jr. on August 27, 1941, in Yuma, AZ. and passed away on December 16, 2021, in Corn Heritage Village in Corn, OK having reached the age of 80 years, 2 months, 19 days.



She was raised in Phoenix, AZ and attended school. She married George Reed, and they raised

their family in Phoenix. Sandy worked as a waitress and sold Mary Kay Cosmetics. Later, she married Wayne Moore in Phoenix where they made their home. In December of 1999, they moved to Thomas, OK. Sandy loved to socialize, had a kind heart, a hot-headed red head but would give you the shirt off her back. She enjoyed her cats, dogs, horse and other animals.

Sandy is survived by her husband Wayne of the home in Thomas; two sons, George Reed of Phoenix, AZ; Arron and his wife Kayla Moore of Thomas, OK; two daughters: Sherry and her husband Dennis Epstein of Phoenix, AZ; Cindy and her husband Doug Milligan of Saegertown, PA; eight grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; three sisters: Kitty, Nellie, and Peggy Ann. She is preceded in death her parents, husband, George.

Karen Lea Hunter

Funeral Services for Karen Hunter, 72, Clinton resident were held 2:00 P.M., Thursday, December 16, 2021, in the First Baptist Church, officiated Keith Russell. Burial will conclude in the Clinton Cemetery under the direction of the Kiesau-Lee Funeral Home.



Karen Lea Hunter was born August 12, 1949, to Eugene Leo Schneider and Virginia Mae (Cornelius) in Clinton, OK and passed away Monday, December 13, 2021, in the Specialty Hospital in Oklahoma City, OK.

Karen was raised in Clinton and graduated from Clinton High School in 1967. She attended Oklahoma School of Banking and Business in Oklahoma City, OK. She married Harold Hunter November 29, 1969, in Clinton. They made their first home in Plainview, TX where she was employed with Pioneer Feed Company. She moved back to Clinton in 1983 where she was soon employed with Clinton Integris Hospital. For the past ten years, she was employed with Clinton Public Schools as the Assistant Librarian at the Middle School.

She was a member of the First Baptist Church and P.E.O..

She is survived by her husband Harold, of the home; three sons: Jeff Hunter and wife Kim, Clinton; Chris Hunter and wife Amanda, Elk City; and Aaron Hunter and wife, Amy, Clinton; brother, Phil Schneider and wife Bennie Rue, Arlington, TX.

She is also survived by 8 grandchildren: Lynlea, Mitchell, Reagan, Maelee, Kit, Patrick, Blair and Craig and nieces and nephews.

The family has requested those wanting to give a memorial contribution please do so to the Clinton Middle School to used to buy books for the library.



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State Energy Task Force Find Strong Potential in Oklahoma

The Hydrogen Production, Transportation, and Infrastructure Task Force (OK H2 Task Force) released its report detailing Oklahoma's strong potential in the emerging form of energy.

The report lays out a vision of how to focus efforts for the economic development of hydrogen as a fuel source for transportation, industrial, commercial, and residential use, as well as for power generation and export.

"Oklahoma has a rich history of energy innovation and I am pleased this report provides opportunities for our state to continue leading the way as the global market explores new forms of energy," said Gov. Kevin Stitt. "Oklahoma's all-of-the-above energy strategy has positioned us well for the future as this industry continues to evolve."

Hydrogen has been identified globally as a viable solution for various energy applications focusing on a low-carbon future, and Oklahoma is uniquely positioned at the intersection of economical renewable energy, plentiful water resources, energy transportation infrastructure, and energy export capabilities. Additionally, Oklahoma has large quantities of dependable natural gas resources to assure around-the-clock hydrogen production, and extensive geological formations for underground hydrogen storage and carbon sequestration.

The OK H2 Task Force was created by Senate Bill 1021 to develop recommendations for Oklahoma's opportunities in the production, transportation, storage, and use of hydrogen, including recommended financial incentives, taxation considerations and fiscal impacts related to the creation of a hydrogen ecosystem in Oklahoma and across the region. Pursuant to statute,



Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt sits with the H2 task force whose report found strong potential in adding jobs to Oklahoma's emerging energy sector.

copies of the report were delivered to the Governor's Office, President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The task force is chaired by Secretary of Energy and Environment Kenneth Wagner and co-chaired by Sen. Kim David (R-Porter) and Rep. Mark McBride (R-Moore) and includes legislators, state agency officials and representatives from state universities.

"The financial impact and job creation associated with the development of the Oklahoma Hydrogen Economy has the potential to add 6,400 jobs to our state with financial impacts ranging from \$1.5 billion

to \$2.5 billion," said Wagner. "The task force received assistance from energy industry representatives, research institutions, manufacturers, policy makers, environmental groups, potential investors, and other interested parties throughout this process and the vast stakeholder insight has been incredibly valuable to our report."

Oklahoma's world class research universities, in partnership with industry, policy makers, national laboratories, and federal departments can lead the way in our nation's efforts to continue our long history of energy diversity, resilience and independence.



Hunter (11) and Hayes (5) Hargis, and OU Freshman defensive end Ethan Downs. Nabors Shoe Center/ Next Door Nabors had a great turnout for their first ever exclusive Ethan Downs Autograph Session. Ethan had \$875.00 donated and Nabors Shoe Center/ Next Door Nabors will round it up for a \$2000.00 donation to the Connections Food and Resource Center. For every \$1 donated, 4 meals are provided to Oklahomans who struggle with hunger. We are thrilled that 8000 meals will be provided this Christmas Season.

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1939 Half Dollar fetches \$47,250

Trent Boesen

Recently a sale of Walking Liberty half dollars witnessed an unusual high price for a 1939 half dollar. The mintage total for 1939 half dollars at the Philadelphia mint is 6,812,000 coins.

The above half dollar was sold by Great Collections an online auction venue. It is certified by the Professional Coin Grading Service as a Mint State 68+ (this means it came close to being a MS 69). This is a very high grade for a common dated coin.

In 2017 the above half dollar sold for \$14,500. This time it sold for \$47,250.

Do you have a coin collection for sale but did not know who to ask for help? Call The Coin Guy at 580-890-8076 to make an appointment. Thanks for reading.

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News Director

SWOSU Begins Enrollment for Spring 2022 Semester

Enrollment continues for students who want to begin or continue their educational careers at Southwestern Oklahoma State University during the upcoming 2022 spring semester that starts January 10 on the Weatherford, Sayre and Yukon campuses.

Students can enroll at the Registrar's Office on the SWOSU campuses. Online enrollment is also available through the SWOSU website for students who have completed at least 60 hours and the prior semester at SWOSU. Students must already be fully admitted to the University and have no holds on their account. See the university website for a complete listing of courses.

Additional information is available by calling the Weatherford Registrar's office at (580) 774-3777 or the Sayre location at (580) 928-5533. Questions about enrollment for Yukon classes can be addressed to the Weatherford Registrar's office.



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Girls Ages 5-10 Invited to Participate in Miss SWOSU Little Stars



The Miss SWOSU's Little Stars program is an opportunity for young girls ages 5-10 to be mentored by the Miss SWOSU contestants and to be on stage with them during the evening wear competition at the Miss SWOSU Pageant coming up Saturday, January 29, at 7 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center on the Weatherford campus.

The registration fee is \$50 and deadline to register is January 3, 2022. Each girl receives a crown, t-shirt, group photo, one Miss SWOSU ticket and participates in a bowling party with the Miss SWOSU candidates.

Registration can be completed online. For additional information, email Kendra Brown at kendra.brown@swosu.edu or call 580.774.3785.



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COVID Vaccination Clinics to Resume in January at SWOSU

The SWOSU College of Pharmacy Rural Health Center will be hosting COVID vaccination clinics two days only in January on Friday, Jan. 14, and Friday, Jan. 21, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Pioneer Cellular Event Center.

The clinics are for all student and employees. Community members are also invited. Walk-ins are welcome so no appointment is needed.

The SWOSU Rural Health Center will have available Pfizer, Pediatric Pfizer, Moderna, J&J, and regular flu and high dose flu for seniors.



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CLINTON NEW BUSINESSES 2022-Clinton Mayor David Berrong outlines exciting new businesses coming to the city in early 2022 including the renovation of the Pop Hicks Restaurant and Glancy Motel and Sutherlands will be one of those new businesses and will be located in the old K-mart building.

ANTHONY MOORE UPCOMING SESSION- As the State House of Representatives is set to come back into session in early 2022 State Representative Anthony Moore of Clinton said medical marijuana will be a big topic during the session. The house session will begin February 7th.

BRETT RUSSELL/FIRE SAFETY- With the dry conditions in Custer County it poses a greater risk for fires. Clinton Fire Chief Brett Russell said that smoke detectors can make a huge difference. Russell said that if a fire starts at night it can alert those inside to alert the fire department sooner. The Clinton Fire Department recently installed 92 smoke detectors in Clinton in a partnership with the American Red Cross.

CLINTON SCHOOL BOARD BOND ISSUE- Early next year Clinton Public Schools is planning to put a bond issue out to vote. Clinton Mayor David Berrong said the impact this bond vote could have on Clinton is important. Berrong said some of the plans include a new middle school and repurposing Washington

Elementary for opportunities with SWOSU and the Vo-tech.

CUSTER COUNTY BRIDGE PROJECT AGREEMENT- The Custer County Commissioners approved a resolution for a project agreement with ODOT. Custer County District One Commissioner Wade Anders said the project will be a bridge project in his district. Anders said the project won't start until 2023.

CUSTER COUNTY FATALITY- One man was pronounced dead in a three vehicle accident on I-40 nine miles west of Clinton in Custer County. Thirty-two year old Kim C. Gardner of Santaquin, Utah was pronounced dead at the scene. Gardner was driving west on I-40 when a semi in front of him stopped for construction. Gardner failed to yield to stopped traffic ahead of him, striking another semi in the rear. He departed the roadway and was ejected from the vehicle.

CUSTER COUNTY REVENUE/ANDERS-Custer County District One Commissioner Wade Anders said Custer County is fortunate for the revenue it has after the COVID-19 pandemic. Anders said that the county revenue was down during COVID, but not as much as other counties that shut down. The commissioners recently passed a resolution for a special pay for essential workers in the county that worked through the early days of the pandemic.



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WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

HAPPY Day TO YOU!

Have a birthday, anniversary, or other special event? Email us at sales@westokweekly.com to announce it here for **FREE!**

Happy Birthday Wishes for December 29th- Rebecca Baugher, Addison Blackwell, Mason Hawthorne, Harvey Kliewer, Nick Merle, Travis Ratcliffe; **December 30th**- Peggy Brittenham, Natalie Bryson, Mary Crane, Cody Kreizenbeck, Lauren Ledford, Bruce Peoples; **December 31st**- Kyle Buckner, Clara Clift, Amanda Carrier, Linda Henley, Terry Jordan, Jackie Lindsey, Jeff Mary, Lenard Natseway, Megan Page, Candice Rushing, Alan Wedel, Brock Whitson, Malachi Yellow Eyes; **January 1st**- Todd Anderson, Freddie & Lena Cardenas, Tyler Colwell, Sheryl Dungan, Paula Evans, Tommy Horton, Roy Kliewer, Jerry Lee, Kay Pitt, Danyal Rollins, Chris & Stacy Sadler, Bill Seitter, Ryan Turney, Iva Walters, Luke Woods ; **January 2nd**- Angela Duff, Travis Greening, Chelsie Lister, Steven McLaughlin, Tim Ray, Alana Robinson, Journi Sterken, Margrate Washington, Chance Williams, Felicia Yellow Eyes; **January 3rd**- Charlene Ashcraft, Roberta Cheadle, Ben Gooch, Samantha Hamburger, Chelsey Harmon, Mike Janning, Rene Lopez, Sue Lawrence, Gracie Mooney, Elisabeth Rivera, Candy Rogers, Becky Storm, Colleen Vance, Betty Weichel, Sean Williams, Sean Todd Williams; **January 4th**- Mandy Case, Carol Ann Janning, Beatriz Martinez, David Nickels, Bo Anna Popich, Yolanda Soto

SPORTS *Presented by:*



CONGRATS TO THE 2021 BULLDOGS OF THE WEEK



Thornton's Career High Earns GAC Player of the Week Nod



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Assistant AD/Media Relations

Damion Thornton of SWOSU Men's Basketball has earned his first GAC Player of the Week honor of the season following his career game against East Central.

Thornton has now been a conference player of the week once in each season he's been a Bulldog – this being the third of his career.

The junior scored 36 points against the Tigers and helped lift the Dawgs to a 76-73 victory for their first league win of the season. With the clock ticking down in overtime and the score tied, Thornton knocked down the game winning three-point shot to put SWOSU on top one final time. He also finished with five rebounds and three steals.



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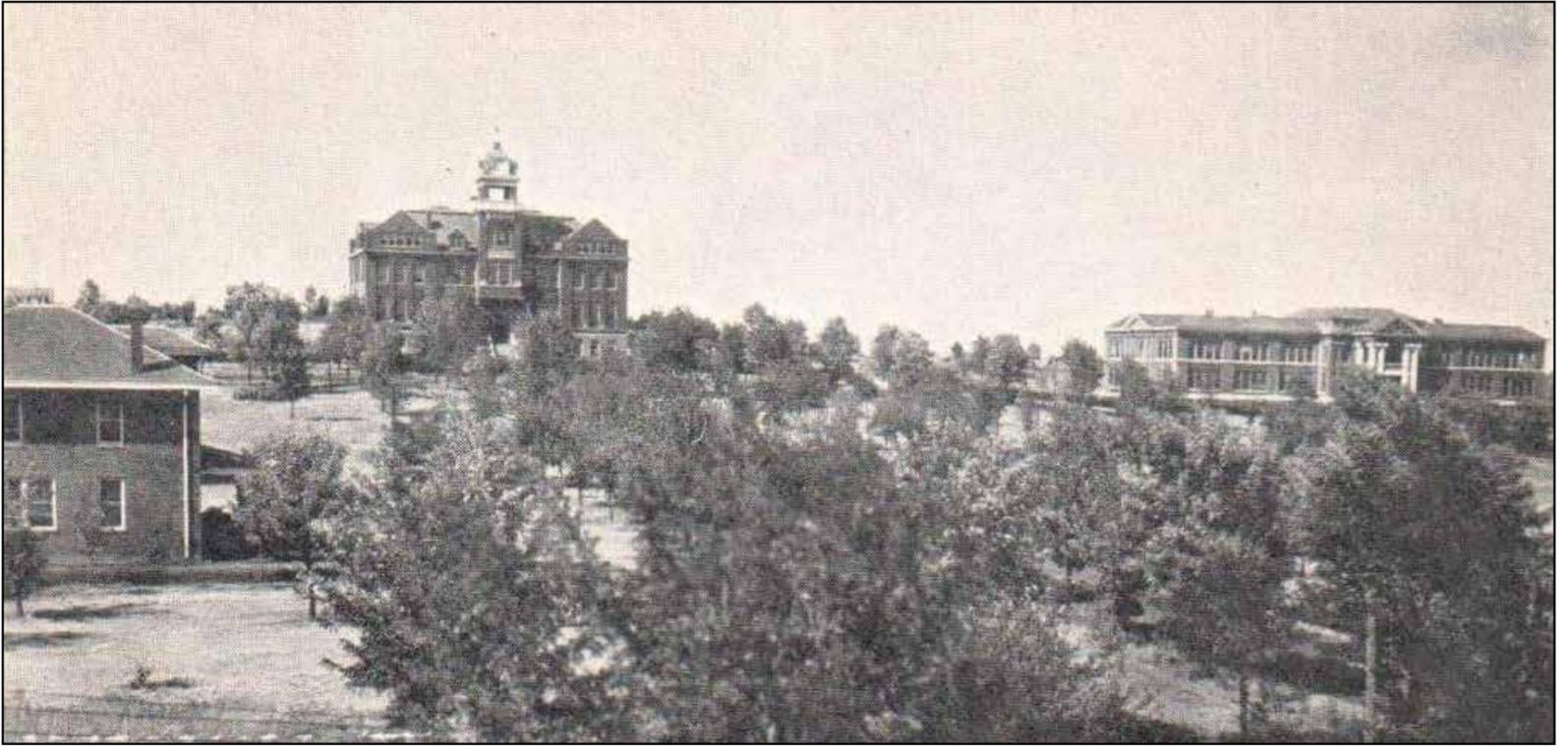
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Oklahoma History: Collegiate and Secondary Education



Provided

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University's campus, circa 1910. The SWOSU campus was one of two teacher training schools, established to educate potential teachers for Oklahoma's collegiate schools at the turn of the twentieth century.

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.

The sheer number of schools opened by the first legislature was quite unorthodox, not for the number of universities available but for the number of schools that existed in the public sector. Oklahoma's push to immediately establish a statewide system left the state trying to balance public school funding with a baseline and limited tax base. Oklahoma would toe the line for another 50 years before legislature would create a new institution. However, many of the already established schools would begin opening up additional branches and supporting vocational schools. Eventually, new community colleges and university extensions were opened. Today, Oklahoma is working on finding the financial and practical balance that would actively increase the amount of people who hold some form of a degree. Currently, the site of Education Data, ranks Oklahoma as 48th out of 50 in public education spending, and other resources like the National Center for Education Statistics have recorded that only 25% of Oklahoma people over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's Degree.

Hill Encourages Students to Apply for House Page Program

The Oklahoma House of Representatives is encouraging high school juniors and seniors to apply for the High School Page Program

Every year, hundreds of students from across the state have the opportunity to take part in the House High School Page Program at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City. Students participating in the program have the chance to view the legislative process up close and gain experience working in state government.

Rep. Brian Hill, R-Mustang, serves as director of the High School Page Program for the 58th Legislature.

"It's an honor to guide these students through their time at the State Capitol," Hill said. "It's always fun to watch their excitement and interest in state government grow as a result of their experience in the page program. This is truly a fantastic learning opportunity for students and a wonderful way to become civically engaged."

Pages accepted to the program are assigned for one week, arriving on Sunday and working Monday through Thursday afternoon, during the legislative session, which runs from the first Monday in February through the last Friday in May.

The students meet members of the House and other elected officials, work in the House Chamber during daily session, take part in the House Page Mock Legislature on the floor of the House Chamber and experience behind-



Provided

The Chambers of the Oklahoma State House of Representatives at the State Capital Building.

the-scenes tours of areas of the Capitol and other agencies.

Hotel accommodations and chaperones are provided for all students and pages are transported to and from the Capitol daily. They are closely supervised at all times and are not permitted to leave the hotel or the Capitol.

Interested high school juniors and seniors may visit <https://okhouse.gov/Pages/Index.aspx> to learn more information and to submit an application.

A tutorial on the application process may be viewed at <https://youtu.be/y5ZfSpmq55U>.

Hofmeister's Pursuit of \$9.1 Million in Epic Funds Approved by State Board of Education



The Oklahoma State Board of Education voted to withhold \$9.1 million from Epic Charter Schools for exceeding the allowable amount on school administrative costs. The vote came in the wake of an extensive yearlong review by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) of Epic's spending

to determine the dollar figure.

"The road to today has been long, challenging and frustrating. State education dollars should support student learning, not corporate profits. The state board's vote is a huge step forward for the students and families of Epic, as well as all Oklahoma taxpayers," said State

Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister.

An investigative audit by the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector's Office concluded in 2020 that Epic owed millions for exceeding state caps on administrative spending. The State Board of Education demanded repayment. The following month, Hofmeister recommended probation for Epic, but the Board rejected it. Epic disputed the auditor's figures and offered to repay a little more than \$300,000. OSDE then conducted a 10-month secondary review of Epic's administrative costs between 2015 and 2019, examining more than 30,000 documents of evidence. Beyond the amount identified on the state audit, Hofmeister assessed a separate \$10 million penalty to Epic for additional misreporting of administrative costs in 2020.

The State Board voted unanimously to claw back the money from Epic's state funding payments. That money, in turn, will be redistributed through the state school funding formula to other districts.

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