

Tax Increment Financing: What a TIF Really Means for Weatherford



The word “TIF” has stirred up strong opinions, and some confusion. The Weatherford Area Economic Development Foundation would like to offer a few plain facts.

TIF stands for Tax Increment Financing. Here is the idea in one sentence: the city uses the new tax money that the new development creates to pay for the pay for the site improvements (including roads, water lines, sewer lines, and drainage) that make the development possible. The key word is *new*; A TIF does not raise your taxes, it does not touch the taxes you already pay, and it does not take money away from the schools or the city. It only uses tax dollars that show up because the land got built on — dollars that do not exist today. Additionally, the TIF is performancebased, and the developer would be reimbursed only if it meets the requirements established by the Committee.

The 25 acres slated for this project sit mostly empty and pay very little in taxes right now. A developer has offered to invest \$50 million of their own money. Eleven retailers have already done market research and have indicated they will come if the TIF passes. These are real, named businesses — not wishful thinking. Together they would bring approximately 440 permanent jobs and \$11 to \$14 million in wages every year to Weatherford.

While the committee is still determining the parameters of the TIF, the long-term benefits are clear: the stores will pay the city’s sales tax, generating a substantial increase in City revenue to support police, fire, streets, and parks once the development is fully realized. The new buildings will also increase the property’s value, generating significantly more ad valorem (property) tax revenue for our schools, public library, career tech, and Custer County. None of these benefits exist while the land sits empty.

Some worry this will hurt our local shops. We understand that concern, but consider two things. Our local businesses already compete with these same retailers — the difference is those stores sit in Elk City, Yukon, and Oklahoma City, and our residents’ dollars follow them out of town. This project brings that money home.

About 50,000 cars pass Weatherford on Interstate 40 every day, and most never stop. This development gives them a reason to pull off — and once they do, they also visit the businesses we already have.

A TIF is simply a tool that lets new growth pay for itself. We encourage every citizen to learn the facts and ask questions. Please feel free to reach out to any WAEDF Board Members and attend the next TIF Committee Meeting on August 18th at noon, at City Hall.

Respectfully,
The WAEDF Board

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Nikki Pittman



Nikki was a beacon of light to all who knew her. Her life, though brief, was filled with warmth, kindness, and an undeniable spirit that touched everyone she encountered.

Nikki was born to Cary Nall and Christina Frazier and was lovingly adopted and raised by Timothy Nall and Monica Reicks, whose unwavering love, guidance, and support nurtured her creative spirit and encouraged her in every endeavor. She shared a beautiful life with her cherished husband, Sterling Pittman, whom she married on November 2, 2018, in Del City, Oklahoma. Together, they built a loving home and were blessed with two precious children, Aurora and Ezekiel Pittman, who were the greatest joy of her life.

Nikki's artistic talents were unmatched, and she expressed her creativity through various forms. Her passion for art was evident in every brushstroke, and her works will forever be a testament to her unique vision and imagination. Nikki's love for nature drew her to the lake, where she found solace in camping trips and the embrace of the great outdoors. Her nurturing spirit shone brightly in the time she spent with her siblings—brothers Leander and Roscoe Reicks, and sisters Joselyn Reicks, Michelle Garcia, and Lillian Frazier—creating bonds that will endure beyond her physical presence.

A dedicated retail clerk at Dollar General, Nikki was known for her giving heart, always ready to lend a helping hand, though she was known for her delightful stubbornness at times. Her personality was a beautiful blend of determination and compassion, endearing her to colleagues and customers alike.

At home, Nikki's greatest joy was found in the laughter and play of her children. She cherished moments spent playing video games with her son, Ezekiel, and loved the magic of dress-up and beauty sessions with her daughter, Aurora. Her love enveloped her family, and her legacy will continue to inspire them.

Nikki was preceded in death by her sister, Eryka Backus, whom she held close in her heart.

Nikki is survived by her beloved husband, Sterling Pittman, and their cherished children, Aurora and Ezekiel Pittman; her adoptive mother, Monica Reicks and her spouse, Johanna, of Lawton, Oklahoma; her adoptive father, Timothy Nall, of Pensacola, FL; her biological father, Cary Nall of Oklahoma City, OK; her biological mother, Christina Pierce-Frazier, and her husband, Robert, of Oklahoma City, OK; her maternal grandparents, Tim and Brenda Ruyle of Clinton, OK, and her paternal grandmother, Debra Ryans of Pensacola, FL; her paternal grandfather, Claude Glen Pierce of Conway, AR; her brothers, Leander Reicks and Roscoe Reicks; her sisters, Joselyn Reicks, Michelle Garcia, and Lillian Frazier; as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends who will forever cherish her memory.

Nikki's light will continue to shine brightly in the hearts of those she touched, and her memory will remain a source of comfort and inspiration for all. As we say goodbye, we hold dear the love and beauty she brought into our lives, knowing that she will forever be a cherished part of our hearts.

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Shirley Roop



Shirley Jean Roop, 85 of Dodge City, Kansas, was born on April 14, 1941, in Christiansburg, Virginia to Leonard Mason and Virgie Irene (Lafon) Martin. Shirley looked upon the face of her Lord and Savior on Sunday, July 26, 2026, at Wesley Medical Center, Wichita Kansas, surrounded by her loving family.

Shirley was about thirteen when she first met her future husband. She was walking a dog for her elderly neighbor when "Bud" peddled by "Showing off" on his bike. He got the dog all "stirred up" and Shirley was afraid he was going to hit the dog. That would have knocked her out of her 25 cent a day job! Eventually Bud and Shirley met again about two years later under a more favorable circumstance.

Shirley married, Claude G."Bud" Roop on July 5, 1958, in A Latter-Day Saints Chapel in Giles County, Pearisburg, Virginia. Together they began their married life in Elkton, Maryland, where they welcomed their first child, Sandra Jean. They later made their home in Vernal, Utah, for twenty-five years. The couple divorced in September 1961, but remarried on February 1, 1964, in Uintah County, Vernal, Utah. They were blessed with the birth of their son, Philip, and daughter, Kathy Lynn. In 1989, they returned to Floyd, Virginia, where they lived until relocating to Elk City in 1993, making it their home and raising their family. Bud preceded her in death on June 6, 2021.

Shirley dedicated many years of her life to teaching. She was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Clinton, where she enjoyed the fellowship of her church family.

Shirley is survived by two daughters, Sandra Hageman and her husband, Howard of Elk City; Kathy Wall and her husband, Jeff of Roy, Utah; one son, Phillip Dean Roop and his wife, Laura Foree of Elk City; six grandchildren; numerous great grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Claude G."Bud" Roop; her parents, Leonard Mason and Virgie Irene Martin.

Brock Gowdy



Brock Arland Gowdy, 44, of Elk City, OK, was born on July 18, 1982, in Elk City to Bobby Gene Gowdy and Myretta Beth (Lowry) Gowdy. Brock looked upon the face of his Lord and Savior on Thursday, July 30, 2026, at Great Plains Regional Medical Center, Elk City, surrounded by his loving family.

Brock was raised and grew up in Elk City and graduated from Elk City High School. Brock married his best-friend and love of his life, Michelle Marie VandeBrake on April 16, 2016, at the Elk City Motocross Track. 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.

Brock found joy in the simple, meaningful parts of life, meeting each day with a resilient and adventurous spirit. He was a skilled motorcycle and automotive mechanic who worked on dirt bikes and enjoyed rebuilding them. Brock was a true adventure seeker and loved riding dirt bikes and teaching his knowledge and passion with his children. Above all, he cherished spending time with his family and friends. His love for life and the people in it will be deeply missed, but the memories he created will continue to provide comfort and joy to those he leaves behind. Brock's legacy is one of love, friendship, and adventure, and it will live on in the hearts of everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

Cherishing his memory is his wife, Michelle Marie Gowdy of Elk City; two sons, Braden Gowdy of Burns Flat, Maddock VandeBrake of Elk City; one daughter, Kamryn Gowdy of Eufaula; one stepson, Marcus Baker of Elk City; his father, Bobby Gene Gowdy Jr of Elk City; and many other relatives and friends.

Brock is preceded in death by his mother, Myretta Beth Gowdy; two brothers, Bryce Aaron Gowdy and Richard Gowdy.

Shirley Frymire



Shirley Frymire, 88, of Abilene passed away August 2, 2026. She was born July 6, 1938 in Elizabethtown Pennsylvania, the daughter of Jacob and Fannie (Ginder) Heisey. She spent most of her early adult years as a nurse in Africa with the Brethren in Christ Church Mission Board. On October 3, 1987, she was united in marriage to Donald E. Frymire. Most of their married life was spent in Abilene. He preceded her in death February 24, 2017.

Shirley is survived by: Stepson Ken (Geniece) Frymire, Springfield, Missouri. Step Grandchildren, Stephanie Kurtz, (Stan), Kevin (Rachel) Frymire, and Keith (Megan) Frymire all of Newton, Kansas, and numerous Step Great-Grandchildren. Also survived by sister, Marilyn Byer (Eldon), Ontario, Canada, brother, Ray Heisey (Miriam) of Orrstown, Pennsylvania, brother, James Heisey (Gloria) Manheim, Pennsylvania, sister-in-law Nancy Heisey, Winchester, Virginia, sister-in-law Linda Heisey, Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania, brother-in law John White of Oak Harbor, Washington, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers, Craig and Richard, and sister Carol.

Bonnie Hicks



Bonnie Marie Hicks was born on September 8, 1944, in Hinton, Oklahoma, to James L. Murray and Trellis Georgia (Killman) Murray. She passed away at her home in Hydro, Oklahoma, at the age of 81.

Bonnie grew up in the Hinton, Lookeba, and Sickles communities. She married the love of her life, Tommy Hicks, on June 2, 1962, in Geary, Oklahoma. Together they made their home in Hydro, where they lovingly raised their family. Bonnie's children often said there was nothing their mother couldn't do. She was an exceptional cook, talented seamstress, and skilled homemaker. She canned food, made clothing for her children—including their winter coats—and took great pride in caring for her family.

Blessed with a beautiful singing voice, Bonnie enjoyed singing in church with her brother. Together they earned first-place honors at the Hinton Fair. She also had a passion for collecting rocks from her travels, using them to create a beautiful rock garden. Bonnie loved keeping fish and enjoyed both her custom-built aquarium beneath the stairs, lovingly built by Tommy, and the koi pond he created outside for her. Bonnie and Tommy shared a deep love for their family and opened their hearts and home to foster children throughout the years. She will be remembered for her many talents, her loving heart, and the unwavering devotion she showed to everyone she cared for.

She is survived by her devoted husband of 64 years, Tommy Hicks; her children, Sheila Kimble and husband Clint; Tommy "Boy" Hicks and wife Kim; Lisa Unruh and husband Marlin; Linda Hicks, Ronnie Hicks and wife Marcia of Claremore, and Dominic Hicks and wife Jade of Geary, all of Hydro.

She is also survived by her grandchildren: Chris Kimble and wife Jessica; Randy Kimble and wife Ashley; Ashley Walker and husband Chris; Katy Kimble; Teddy Joe Hicks; Jody Don Hicks and wife Shay; Cody Don Hicks and wife Chansey of Carlsbad, New Mexico; Alex Strickland Hicks and wife Ashton; Scott Unruh and wife Kerri; Shawn Unruh; Stacia Whitmer and husband Brian of Stewartsville, Missouri; Kelsie Marie Adams(who was named after her grandmother) and husband Cade; Izzy Hicks; Ember Hicks; Mia Hicks; and Adeline Hicks. Her cherished great-grandchildren include Ally Kimble, Wesley Kimble, Brooklynn Kimble, Hayden Kimble, Grayson Kimble, Cohen Kimble, Peyton Walker, Oliver Walker, Addison Hicks, Aspen Hicks, Hurley Hicks, Kisstons Hicks, Cooper Unruh, Jack Unruh, Nathan Unruh, Harley Unruh, Mason Unruh, Kyper Whitmer, Kylar Adams, Conner Adams, and Camryn Adams, and her sister-in-law, Louise Murray of Hydro; along with many other beloved relatives and friends.

Bonnie was preceded in death by her parents, James L. and Trellis Georgia Murray; her brothers, William "Bill" Murray, Melvin Murray, George Murray, James Murray Jr., and Eddie Murray; and her sister, Charlotte Langley.

Bonnie's legacy of love, faith, hard work, and selfless devotion to her family will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her. Services entrusted to Turner Funeral Home, Hinton, Oklahoma. Condolences may be sent to the family at turnerfuneralhomes@gmail.com, turnerfh.net, or find us on Facebook (Turner Funeral Homes).

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Oklahoma History: Mexican Free-Tailed Bat, Earth’s Fastest Mammal



Michael Durhman / Minden Pictures

The Mexican Free-Tailed Bat, retrieved from the “Bat Conservation International” database.



Michael Durhman / Minden Pictures

A colony of Mexican free-tailed bats from Selman Living Laboratory (SLL), the official biological field station of UCO.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

The Mexican free-tailed bat has become a symbol of our state’s wildlife heritage. Known scientifically as *Tadarida brasiliensis*, the Mexican free-tailed bat earned its place among Oklahoma’s official symbols in 2006 when the state legislature designated it as the state’s flying mammal. The decision recognized a creature that had already become part of Oklahoma’s natural identity through its annual migration, its role in the prairie ecosystem, and the unforgettable spectacle it creates each summer at places like the Selman Bat Cave Wildlife Management Area.

The story begins thousands of feet beneath the surface. Each spring, pregnant female bats travel north from Mexico and southern Texas toward Oklahoma’s gypsum caves. These caves provide the shelter needed to raise their young during the warmer months. Oklahoma is home to four known maternity colonies, including the famous Selman Bat Cave near Freedom in Woodward County.

The arrival of the bats has always been a seasonal event. By evening, the landscape around the cave changes as the first bats emerge. They spiral upward in enormous groups before spreading across the countryside in search of insects. Some travel miles from the cave while hunting, consuming moths, beetles, and other insects that would otherwise affect crops and vegetation.

The sheer scale of these gatherings is difficult to imagine. Visitors who attend organized bat watches through the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation can witness hundreds of thousands

of bats leaving the cave at dusk. Throughout the summer, two to three million bats migrate to Oklahoma. The flight lasts more than an hour, turning an ordinary summer evening into one true wildlife experience.

The bat’s name comes from its unusual anatomy. Unlike many other bats, the Mexican free-tailed bat has a tail that extends beyond the membrane connecting its wings. Despite its body only being around 4 inches big, its long, narrow wings have wingspans between 11-14 inches across. The power it generates has made it one of the quickest animals, considered to have the fastest horizontal speed of any animal with the ability to reach 99 mph. It also flies the highest among bats with recordings of groups traveling at altitudes above 10,000 ft.

Long before it became a state symbol, the bat played an important role in Oklahoma’s natural history. Farmers and ranchers benefited from the insect control provided by these nighttime hunters. A single colony can consume enormous quantities of insects, estimated at 250 tons of insects every night, making bats one of nature’s most effective forms of pest management.

The effort to protect Oklahoma’s bats gained momentum in the 1990s. In 1995, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation acquired Selman Bat Cave and surrounding land to preserve one of the state’s important maternity colonies. The area was carefully managed because even small disturbances could affect the bats during the sensitive period when mothers raise their pups. When lawmakers considered officially recognizing

the bat in 2006, supporters pointed to both conservation and tourism. Senator Owen Laughlin, who sponsored the legislation, called attention to the attraction created by the annual bat emergence. The bill passed, giving Oklahoma a flying mammal that represented both the state’s natural resources and its growing appreciation for wildlife conservation.

The designation also gave more people a reason to learn about bats. For many, the word “bat” once carried associations with darkness and mystery. The annual gatherings at Selman Bat Cave have helped replace those old ideas with a deeper understanding of the animal’s importance. The bats have become ambassadors for Oklahoma’s caves, grasslands, and ecosystems.

Scientists from the University of Oklahoma and other institutions have studied the movements of Mexican free tailed bats to better understand their migration patterns. Researchers have attached tiny tracking devices to bats, allowing them to follow movements across state lines and learn more about where these animals travel throughout the year.

That research matters because bats face challenges across North America. Habitat loss, declining insect populations, and diseases affecting cave dwelling bats have made conservation efforts increasingly important. Oklahoma has participated in monitoring programs for white nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has affected many bat species across the United States.

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BECKHAM CO / GREELEY - A Weatherford teen charged as a youthful offender with shooting with intent to kill that was due back in Beckham County District Court July 30th for a preliminary hearing, now won't have that hearing until September 1st. 16-year-old Cameron Greeley allegedly fired a weapon at an occupied vehicle during a party in the 100 Block of Panel in Elk City on May 30th.

THOMAS / WATER CONSERVATION - The Thomas Public Works Authority is reminding all city water customers to limit water use to household needs only. Officials ask residents to not fill pools, no sprinkling or irrigating lawns, and no other non-essential water use. The Public Works Authority is currently in the process of replacing water wells, and conserving water is critical to maintaining reliable service for everyone in the community. Officials expect to have the project completed before August 18th.

CLINTON / CRH STABILITY - Clinton Mayor David Berrong recently spoke about the Clinton Regional Hospital, saying the facility is stable. "Our Emergency Room setting is par excellence, [but] the challenge is that it's a 100,000 square foot facility," shared Berrong. "Under our 'Rural Emergency' designation, we have to rethink surgeries and whatnot where people could stay for lengths of time." Berrong added that he believes the Hospital can be profitable in the future, floating the idea of "leasing different sections of the hospital out like memory care or physical therapy" for extra income. The new accounting format at the facility is beneficial for officials as they can closely monitor finances.

CUSTER CO / FREE FAIR PERFORMER To celebrate 100 years of the Custer County Fair, a booking contract has been approved for musical artist Jordan Rainer to perform at the fair this fall. Custer County Commissioners approved the contract during a recent meeting. District 2 Commissioner Bruce Walker discussed the contract cost, which also has a deposit of about \$2,800. Additionally, an anonymous donation of \$5,000 was presented during the meeting, which will go towards the cost of the concert. The concert itself, according to Bruce Walker, will be paying the performers as well as a separate company that will manage sound and lighting. The Custer County Fair will be held September 9-12.

CUSTER CO / HEALTH DEPT CLOSURE - The Custer County Health Department in Weatherford will be moving to a new location later this month. The new site will be in the Jerry and Margaret Hodge Center for Pharmacy and Rural Health, located on the Weatherford SWOSU Campus. In preparation for the move, the health department will be closed August 24-26 and will begin seeing clients at the new location on August 27. The facility is located at the intersection of Davis Avenue and Caddo Street. Entry doors for the health department will be on the east side of the building.

SWOSU / 2026 ENROLLMENT INCREASE Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) has seen an increase in enrollment for the upcoming 2026-27 school year. "I think our residence halls numbers, especially among first-time, full-time freshmen, are going to be the strongest they've been in many years," says President Dr. Joel Kendall. "Kids on campus...are the ones who stay in town. They go to the football games, they go downtown, [and] that just brings the college atmosphere more and more to Weatherford." Enrollment increases are also shown in various areas of study, including pharmacy, allied health, and nursing.

SWOSU / MICROGRANT - The Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) Rural Health Center within the College of Pharmacy has received a community-led wellness microgrant through the Oklahoma Rural Health Transformation Program. The nearly \$200,000 award will support a mobile resource van and community resource kits that will bring health education, screenings, and essential supplies to Roger Mills and Washita Counties. The project will help expand access to preventive health education, early intervention services, medical equipment, safety supplies and health-related resources in rural western Oklahoma.

BECKHAM CO / SMUGGLERS CAPTURED Following a rapidly unfolding investigation by the Beckham County Sheriff's Office, two wanted individuals, Cole Hinkle and Beverly Binion, were taken into custody by Los Angeles Police Officers at a bus station in California. Hinkle and Binion were wanted on warrants for trafficking in methamphetamine with bonds of \$200,000 each. They have been on the run since mid-July after fleeing from a hideout on the bank of the Northfork of the Red River south of Sayre.

WASHITA CO / BURNS FLAT OFFICER - Burns Flat Police Chief Keith Smith recently made an initial court appearance on Monday, August 3rd, on two misdemeanor charges of unlawful detention and assault & battery. An arrest affidavit showed Smith, while off duty and not in uniform, driving his police unit. He allegedly followed a woman who he claimed did not give him the right of way and caused him to hit a curb. Smith then yelled at the woman and approached her without using his police lights or siren, or identifying himself as law enforcement, which prompted her to call police because she did not recognize him. Investigators say Smith grabbed the woman by the wrist when she unlocked her car door for a passenger. After letting go of her, Smith told her he was the police chief and wrote her a traffic citation. Smith was terminated from his job following the court appearance.

WEATHERFORD / MUSEUM ATTENDANCE During a recent community coffee in Weatherford, Stafford Air and Space Museum Director Julie Lenius shared that museum attendance continues to increase. "Last month was a record month and we're on track to blow that out of the water again, so it'll be 3 record months that we've broken our record every month," Lenius said. "It's an exciting time and we have visitors coming from all over. You guys are our frontline people that help them be welcome, help them know what's going on in our community, and we can't thank you guys enough for what you do for us too." Additionally, construction of Shooting Star Park was recently completed and is now open to the public.

WEATHERFORD / ROADWORK - With recent overlay work along Broadway Street in Weatherford, Mayor Mike Brown shared some upcoming roadwork projects in the city. "We have been doing a lot this summer. [The contractors] have to leave town for a while, but...We may end up going ahead and do the on north on Lyle Road through Rader Park [without them]," expressed Brown. "We've had a schedule for this year but we're getting ready to get the new sidewalk out there too. It's over \$2 million project so we're kind of trying to coordinate that." Brown added that the city budget is up to \$2 million annually for overlay work on city streets.

CUSTER CO / BRYAN PLEA - A former actor on the sitcom "Home Improvement" recently appeared in Custer County District Court by video and pleaded guilty to driving a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and driving with a cancelled/suspended or revoked license. 44-year-old Zachery Bryan was sentenced to 10 years with the Department of Corrections with 5 years suspended. Officials say that sentence will run concurrently with his California and Oregon cases. Bryan was found sleeping in his vehicle by an Oklahoma Highway Patrol trooper in October 2024 after pulling off the side of a Custer County Road. After the trooper left the scene, Bryan then got behind the wheel and drove north away from the trooper, who then conducted a traffic stop and arrested Bryan for Driving Under the Influence (DUI).

WEATHERFORD / AMAZON UPDATE - Construction progress for the new Amazon last-mile delivery station in Weatherford remains on schedule. According to Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown, the facility will open in September 2025, bringing an estimated 100 jobs to the city. "[We're] excited about that. Hopefully it brings some new people to town," expressed Brown. "You'll be seeing those [delivery trucks] going in and out of there." Brown added that there is potential for the company to expand its area in the Industrial Park in the future. "They only bought 11 acres, but there's 55 acres available out there."

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Happy Birthday Wishes for August 12 - Tana Kerr, Ethan O'Neale, Marsha Pigg, Kent Walters; **August 13** - Tim Galloway, Camille Goerend, John Kliever, Warren Miller, Michael Visnieshi, Gene Whitfield; **August 14** - Allen Bryson, Richard Clift, Jr., Stefan Guthrie, Annie Kimble, Chris Kisinger, Rance Moore, Nancy Rhodes, Deven Steffes, Charlotte Young. **August 15** - Bobby Ervin, Madison Guthrie, Arin Henderson, Melissa Henderson, Bobbie Jo Smith, Jason Moore, Bobby Schantz, Elizabeth Scruggs, Destry Smith, Jamie Trotter, Marshal Wright; **August 16** - Janie Amaya, Kendall Broadbent, Mollie Brown, Geneva Copps, Katie Cornell, Mollie Damani, Kaysee Deffenbaugh, Amanda DiLocker, Jade Fraxier, Larena Guthrie, Karen Igo, Matt Janning, Launa Kimble, Bobby Mendez, David Palmer, Michelle Taylor, Louise Thompson; **August 17** - Jy Bass, Scott Cannon, dalton Hawkins, Jennifer Holliman, Bill McMahon, Karl Meigs, Jonetta Reimer, Michelle Taylor; **August 18** - Lyman Bear, Katie Cornell, Darci Gonzalez, Logan Lasley, Troy Lee, Curtis McCoy, Lilly Ann McCoy, Coletta McKay, Dale Nickels, Anthony Perez, Jacy Steele, Richard Sweetnet, Marsha Taylor, Ray Weichel, Keith Woods.

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Groceries, Meats, and More Open Mon. - Sat., 7AM - 7PM 109 West Main Hydro, Ok. 73048 405-663-2354		  August 3rd-15th Salad Bar: Monday - Friday 10am-2pm or sold out!	
Grocery		Produce	
Post Cereals (Asst. Varieties)	2 for \$6.00	Red or Green Seedless Grapes	\$1.99 lb.
American Beauty Pasta, 16oz. (All Varieties)	2 for \$3.00	Red-Yellow-Orange Bell Peppers	\$0.99 each
Hunt's Spaghetti Sauce, 24oz. (All Varieties)	2 for \$3.00	Blackberries or Blueberries, 6oz.	2 for \$6.00
Chicken-Of-The-Sea Light Chunk Tuna, 5oz. Can	5 for \$5.00	Hass Large Avocados	\$0.99 each
Food Club Sugar, 4 lb. Bag	2 for \$6.00	U.S. #1 Russet Potatoes, 10 lb. Bag	\$3.99
Capri Sun Drinks, 10 pack (All Varieties)	2 for \$8.00	Red or Black Plums	\$2.69 lb.
Chef Boy-Ar-De Entrees (All Varieties)	5 for \$5.00	Navel Oranges	\$1.99 lb.
Food Club Wheat Sandwich Bread	2 for \$3.00	Frozen	
Jif To-Go, 8 count	2 for \$5.00	Blue Bunny Ice Cream, 46-48oz.	2 for \$7.00
Hostess Multi-Pack Snacks	2 for \$6.00	Food Club Waffles, 10 count (All Varieties)	2 for \$4.00
Folgers Coffee, 22.6-25.9oz. (All Varieties)	\$15.00	Viola Skillet Meals (All Varieties)	2 for \$9.00
Folgers K-Cup Coffee, 10 count (All Varieties)	2 for \$12.00	Chung's Egg Rolls (All Varieties)	2 for \$9.00
Dole Fruit Cups, 4 pack (All Varieties)	2 for \$6.00	Jimmy Dean Breakfast Bowls	2 for \$6.00
Green Giant Corn, 11oz. (Mexicorn or Shoepeg)	2 for \$3.00	Meat	
Maruchan Ramen, 3oz. (All Varieties)	5 for \$2.00	Boneless Ribeye Steak	\$19.99 lb.
Hamburger Helper (All Varieties)	3 for \$5.00	Trimmed Brisket	\$6.99 lb.
Betty Crocker Suddenly Salad (All Varieties)	\$2.99	Pilgrims Pride Boneless Chicken Beast	\$3.39 lb.
Starkist Tuna Pouches (All Varieties)	4 for \$5.00	Boneless Pork Loin Roast	\$2.89 lb.
Jif Peanut Butter, 16oz. (All Varieties)	2 for \$5.00	Baby Back Ribs	\$3.99 lb.
Dairy		Wrights Sliced Bacon	\$5.99 lb.
Food Club Chunk or Shredded Cheese, 8oz.	2 for \$4.00	Colby Jack Cheese Deli Sliced	\$5.99 lb.
Plains Chocolate Snack Attack, quart	2 for \$4.00	Dry Grocery	
Rana Torterllini or Ravioli, 20oz.	2 for \$9.00	Clorox Disinfectant Wipes, 75 count	\$5.00
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Food Club Sour Cream, 8oz.	2 for \$3.00	Angel Soft Bath Tissue, 8 Roll	\$8.99
Borden Cheese Melts (All Varieties)	2 for \$6.00		
Food Club Heavy Whipping Cream, 32oz.	2 for \$5.00		

The Hydro Free Fair Returns to Oklahoma Next Weekend, August 20 - 22

Welcome to the Hydro Free Fair

August 20, 21, & 22, 2026

FAIR PROGRAM

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Entry Day

7:30 a.m. Livestock Judging Books Open
8:00 a.m. Livestock Judging Contest Begins
8:00 a.m. Entries open for community building
12:00 p.m. All baked goods entries close.
4:15 p.m. Horse Show Books Open
4:30 p.m. Flower entries close
5:00 p.m. Exhibit building books close. Judging begins.
5:30 p.m. Horse Show Starts.
6:00 p.m. All Livestock Entries Due
6:30 p.m. Opening Ceremony
7:00 p.m. All midway rides and concessions open
7:30 p.m. Free entertainment program

Friday, August 21, 2026

Livestock will be judged this day in the following order:
Swine, Goats, Sheep, Cattle. (Without break between species)

7:30 a.m. Swine Show
Goat Show
Sheep Show
Cattle Show

9:00 a.m. Kids races and stunts
7:00 p.m. All midway rides and concessions open
7:30 p.m. Free entertainment program
8:00 p.m. 3-in-1 - Ranch Rodeo

Saturday, August 22, 2026

8:00 a.m. Premium money to be paid on exhibits. Money forfeited after 10 a.m.

10:00 a.m. Parade
11:00 a.m. Kid Tractor Pull
1:00 p.m. Mud Volleyball
4:00 p.m. Washers & Watermelons
5:00 p.m. Entry Deadline for Cake Auction
7:00 p.m. All midway rides and concessions open.
7:30 p.m. Cake Auction
8:00 p.m. 3-in-1 - Ranch Rodeo
9:00 p.m. Free Entertainment

We're going to the Fair!

Click here for full Schedule of Events!

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

Grab your friends and family and get ready for a great time as The Hydro Free Fair, Oklahoma’s longest running free fair, is scheduled to return to the Hydro Fairgrounds August 20th, 21st and 22nd for the 119th time. The Hydro Free Fair began in 1907 when it “started up on Main Street as a mule show” before moving “down to the park,” said Charlie Wieland, Hydro Free Fair President. The fair has only been canceled once since WWII during the COVID pandemic in 2020.

The Hydro Free Fair which features a mix of livestock shows, community exhibitions, as well as fair entertainment is most certainly highly regarded in Western Oklahoma for it’s iconic fair rides and games which the fair has independently owned and operated since the 1960’s. “Now in 1960, they got tired of messing with carnivals coming into town, so they began collecting their own rides. They’ve been owning and operating their own rides since 1963,” said Wieland. Names such as the Green Machine and the Octopus hold a special place in many Western Oklahomans’ hearts, but the recently renovated carousel has also helped cement the

legacy of the fair as a Western Oklahoma classic and brought enthusiasts from all over the country.

The fun starts on Thursday, August 14th. At 7:30am, livestock will be accepted for the 8am Livestock Judging Contest. Entries for baked goods, flowers, and other community building exhibits will also be accepted at 8am. Baked goods are due by 12pm, flowers are due by 4:30pm, and community building exhibits are due by 5pm. Separate from these events, Horse Show bookings will open at 4:15pm and close at 5pm when the show begins.

The Opening Ceremony for the Free Fair begins at 6:30pm. All midway rides and concessions will open at 7pm and the free entertainment program kicks off at 7:30pm.

Friday, August 15th, will feature several livestock shows in the morning—featuring swine, goat, sheep, and cattle—as well as some kids races and stunts beginning at 9am. A 3-in-1 Ranch Rodeo is also scheduled for 8pm and will feature roping, pinning, as well as a limited amount of mutton busting for the kiddos. Rides and concessions will again open on Friday at 7pm with free musical performances beginning at 7:30pm by local musicians.

Saturday, August 16th begins with payouts for exhibition winners being doled out at 8am. As with every year, the main event of the day will be a parade beginning at 10am. It will start on Main Street and finish at the fairgrounds. Registration and line-up begins at 9am in front of the Masonic Lodge Building. Early registration is also available at Deer Creek Market, located at 109 W Main Street in Hydro.

A kid tractor pull begins at 11am with mud volleyball happening at the fairgrounds at 1pm followed by washers and watermelons at 4pm. The deadline for Cake auctions is also set for 5pm that evening with the auction beginning at 7:30pm. Just like Friday nights, rides and concessions will open at 7pm and the 3-in-1 Ranch Rodeo will begin at 8pm.

The Hydro Free Fair is also selling T-shirts for this year’s Free Fair at Main Street Clothing Company (133 W Main Street) and Hydro’s Bank of Hydro (146 W Main Street).

For more information about the 116th annual Hydro Free Fair, visit [HydroFair.org](https://hydrofair.org). There, you’ll find a detailed schedule, FAQs, a breakdown of the fair’s history, and more.

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"WestOK Weekly"

Hope is Alive’s “Run For Hope” Helps Western Oklahoma Communities Address Addiction



Hope is Alive, an organization supporting recovering addicts and their families, will be hosting their annual Run for Hope on Saturday, August 29 at First Baptist Church in Weatherford, OK. Run for Hope features a Memorial Mile honoring those who have lost their lives to addiction which will begin at 8:30am, a 5K Run/Walk that will begin at 9:30am, and a Virtual Race for those who can’t attend the event, but would still like to support Hope is Alive’s cause.

Run For Hope is a family friendly event and in conjunction with the running/walking events will also feature food trucks, a bouncy house and face painters for children as well as a DJ.

Interested participants or supporters can register up to 30 minutes before each event is scheduled to begin. Registration fees cost \$25 per person for the Memorial Mile, \$40 per person for the 5K Run/Walk and \$40 per person for the Virtual Race. Register for the event by scanning the QR code above or visiting www.hopeisalive.net/runforhope and navigating to the Weatherford thumbnail.

“Every dollar goes towards families affected by addiction to help get the support and resources they need through our Finding Hope Support Groups and Hope After Loss groups,” said Katie Ramirez, Community Development Coordinator for HIA.

“You don't have to have a loved one in the HIA program... If you need support, you can go there,” added Ramirez.

First Baptist Church of Weatherford hosts a Finding Hope support group that meets the first and third Thursday of every month, so proceeds from the Weatherford event will most definitely go towards supporting Western Oklahoma families and communities in need.

“No community is untouched by addiction,” said Ramirez “we all are affected by it in some ways, even if it's indirectly... [Finding Hope] is just a time to come together, share stories, and break down the stigma of addiction.”

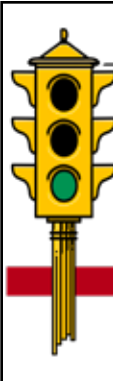
The event also helps residents of the Hope is Alive house in Weatherford build rapport and camaraderie within their community.

“The residents from the Hope is Alive house in Weatherford will be there if you want to come and just get to know them. That really encourages them because they feel like outsiders in the community. So when they’re in the community and people are surrounding them and saying ‘you’re one of us,’ it really affects their lives,” said Ramirez.

To find out more about Hope is Alive, their mission or their support groups, feel free to visit www.hopeisalive.net.



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Rouben Tourian receives the SWOSU President’s Award of Merit in recognition of his outstanding contributions and service to the university. Pictured (from left): Rick Koch, Rouben Tourian, Joel Kendall, and Dikran Tourian.



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Former Bulldog Torin Justice Rewrites Liga de Fútbol Americano (LFA) Professional History



Provided by SWOSU

Torin Justice, former wide receiver for SWOSU, catches a ball in a 2021 home games against Oklahoma Baptist University.

Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Former SWOSU wide receiver Torin Justice, who concluded his collegiate career with the Bulldogs in 2021, has turned perseverance into a record-setting professional football career, becoming the most prolific receiver in the history of Mexico's Liga de Fútbol Americano Profesional.

Justice finished the 2026 LFA season as the league's career leader with 196 receptions, 2,660 receiving yards, 29 touchdown catches and 295 targets.

"It's a blessing to still be playing the game at a high level," Justice said. "Accomplishing things like this is something that keeps me going."

The Katy, Texas, native began his professional career with Fundidores de Monterrey in 2022 and helped the franchise win Tazón México V during his first season. Fundidores later became Osos de Monterrey, where Justice continued adding to his career totals and helped the franchise reach the league championship game in 2025 and 2026.

Before rewriting the LFA record book, Justice arrived at SWOSU following previous stops at Trinity Valley Community College and Abilene Christian. In his season with the Bulldogs, Justice caught 39 passes for a team-leading 688 yards and eight touchdowns. His 17.6 yards per reception ranked fourth in the Great American Conference,

and he finished among the league's top eight in receiving yards and touchdowns. Justice earned All-GAC recognition and was the only Bulldog to receive all-conference honors that season.

"Losing every game during my senior season could have been a reason for most people to give up, but I continued to believe in myself," Justice said. "When something you love is threatened with being taken away from you, you fight harder to give yourself a chance. I'll never stop fighting."

Justice has also taken his career to Europe. He played six games for the Hamburg Sea Devils in 2024 before returning to Mexico. Shortly after helping Osos reach Tazón México IX in 2026, he joined the Paris Musketeers of the European Football Alliance, where he currently plays.

Justice was named the EFA Week 12 Player of the Week after recording seven receptions for 130 yards and two touchdowns against the Munich Ravens. He plans to continue building his résumé in hopes of earning additional opportunities in Europe and Canada. Along the way, he hopes his journey demonstrates what is possible for other Division II student-athletes.

"Enjoy your time as a Bulldog," Justice said. "Soak up as much as you can from your coaches and teammates to make yourself better. Maximize your time because it goes fast."

Men's Golf Earns GCAA President Recognition



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Men's Golf earned President's Special Recognition from the Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA) after posting a team grade-point average of 3.62 during the 2025-26 academic year.

The distinction was announced Wednesday as part of the GCAA's PLATFORM Golf Team Academic Awards. While programs with a team GPA of 3.0 or better received the Team Academic Award, SWOSU qualified for the additional President's Special Recognition by surpassing the 3.5 GPA benchmark.

The Bulldogs were one of 26 NCAA Division II programs to receive President's Special Recognition and one of 155 teams across all divisions to reach the

3.5 threshold. A GCAA-record 331 programs across six collegiate divisions earned team academic honors in 2025-26.

The team award adds to a strong week of academic recognition for SWOSU Men's Golf. Ryan Carlisle was also named a GCAA All-America Scholar this week, honoring his achievements both in the classroom and on the course.

Established in 1958, the GCAA is the professional organization for men's collegiate golf coaches. The organization supports coaches from the NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA while recognizing the academic, athletic and civic accomplishments of collegiate golfers.

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