

HOMECOMING 2022

Rowdy Rangers return



Homecoming parade participants throw candy to children and wave at the crowd along Flynn Street Saturday morning during Northwestern's annual Homecoming parade. The 2022 celebration included several events for Ranger students and alumni. For complete coverage, see pages 8, 9 and 10 in this edition of the News.

Photo by Colby Dalton

SHOP SMALL: HIGHLIGHTING CHALLENGES OF SMALL BUSINESSES: PART 1

At family businesses, customers still kings

By **JOSHUA HINTON**
Senior Reporter

Waking up to go to work before the sun rises. Spending the whole day helping customers. Stocking shelves with no break. Going home after the sun is down. This is the life of a local business owner.

If 10 local or small businesses open today, at least 50% will close within five years, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Even if a business makes it to the five-year mark, it still can be difficult to stay open, with only one out of three local or small businesses making it 10 years, according to Dr. Garret Lahr, chair of Northwestern's Division of Business.

"Ten years — if you hit that mark, you have done more than a lot of people," Lahr said.

Yet amid the challenges busi-



nesses face, some persevere. Two Alva businesses — Holder Drug, open for 71 years, and Alva's Market, open for 17 years — have adapted and overcome economic woes. The key to surviving turbulent times is to treat customers well, Lahr said.

"No. 1 in today's world, you have to become customer-oriented," he said. "With Amazon and all the online shopping, if a customer walks in the door and you are rude to them or you are not fulfilling the need that they have, they are going to walk back out

the door and get online to order that product from Amazon or Walmart."

The customer's wants and needs are going to change over time, and likewise, the business needs to change with the customer, Lahr said.

Shop \$mall



A Northwestern News series about how small businesses stay alive and thrive in rural Oklahoma.

Customers sit near the soda foundation at Holder Drug in Alva in this Sept. 21 photo. Family businesses like Holder Drug say quality customer service is the key to their success.

Photo by Joshua Hinton

"Customers 10 years ago aren't the same as customers today," he said. "You have to constantly be innovating and adaptable to the changing customer base and what their needs are going to shift to over that time period."

See **BUSINESSES**, Page 2

NEWS

BUSINESSES: Families keep up 'old-fashioned' service

Continued from Page 1

Local or small businesses also need to be open and available when their customers do most of their shopping. Being open on the weekends and after 5 p.m. is necessary, Lahr said.

"A lot of people go into business, and they don't open their store until 9 [a.m.] and close at 4 [p.m.]," he said. "All the working people who have money are at work 9 [a.m.] to 4 [p.m.]. When am I supposed to come into your store and shop if you're not open on Saturday or only a couple hours on the weekend? Just being open is a big thing when so many other small businesses are not."

BRINGING A STORE TO LIFE

Randy Hamilton, co-owner of Alva's Market, started working in grocery stores while in college during the 1970s. Years later, he opened his own.

"When they shut Homeland down here in town, I wanted a grocery store here to give the customers a second source to go to and shop," Hamilton said.

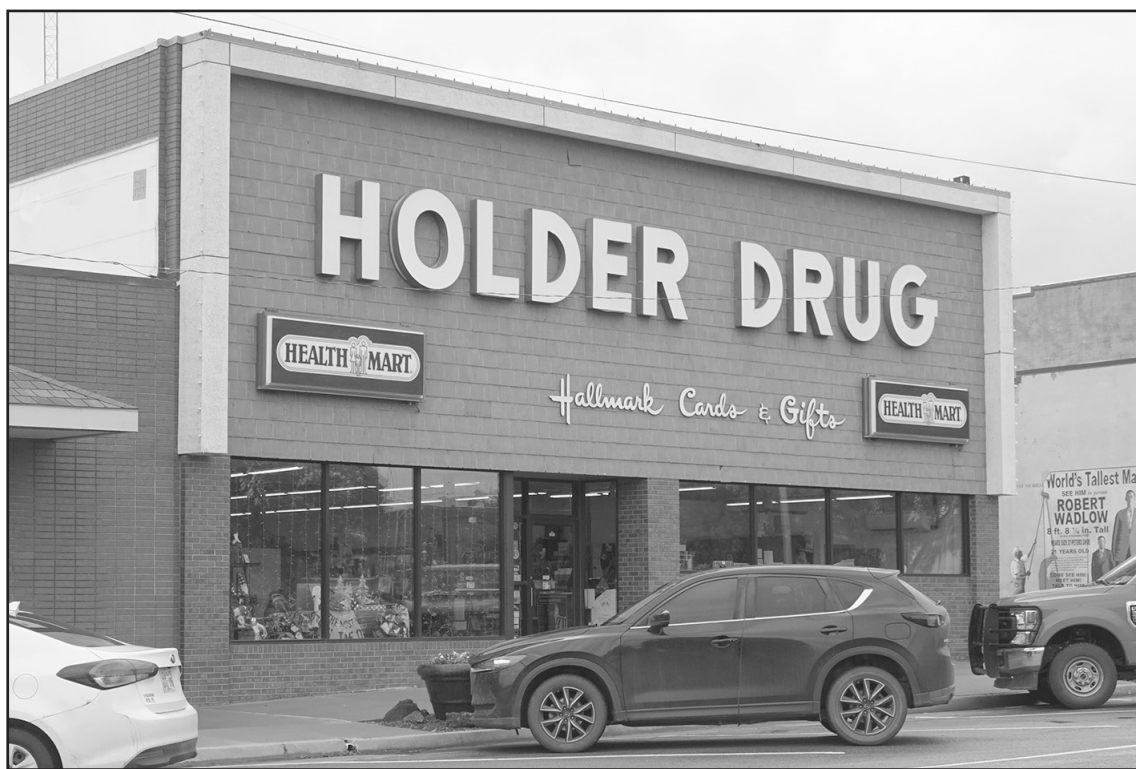
He talked to five independent stores and two chain stores to try to bring them into town, but none would come to Alva. That didn't deter him, though. He and his wife, Mary, and their children worked with investors to open the store. Mary Hamilton is a co-owner as well.

"If we see something on television and think, 'Hey, that is going to be a neat product,' then we try to come down and order that product."
— Mary Hamilton,
Alva's Market

"It took him three years once he started to open the front door," Mary Hamilton said. "During those three years, we traveled all over this part of the United States, looking for all the equipment. I knew it was going to be tough. I was teaching school at the time still, and I was going to have to come over here after school and work. But we have done it for 17, almost 18 years, and we love it."

The Hamiltons credit the success of Alva's Market to the citizens of Alva and their employees, whom they say provide friendly customer service.

"If you had to pick one word that Randy tells everybody, it's 'friendliness, friendliness, friendliness,'" Mary Hamilton said. "He wants everybody to walk in and feel like they are welcome here."



ABOVE: Alva's Market, 706 Flynn St., is shown Tuesday. Local business owners say they value giving customers quality products and service.

LEFT: Holder Drug, 513 Barnes St., is shown Tuesday. The business has been open for more than 70 years.

Photos by Jordan Green

The Hamiltons try to run the grocery store like an old-fashioned store.

"We try to carry out groceries and keep a smiling attitude here at the store," Randy Hamilton said.

Alva's Market has changed with the times, using iPhones to place orders and scan barcodes on the shelves. The Hamiltons try to keep their eyes out for what they think customers will want in the future.

"We watch for new products," Mary Hamilton said. "If we see something on television and think, 'Hey, that is going to be a neat product,' then we try to come down and order that product, to where we can offer our customers the same stuff they are seeing on television."

Randy Hamilton said they look for certain products if a customer comes in and asks for something

they saw or bought at another place. The Hamiltons said they are working to expand what they offer for lunch specials and catering for events in town.

CONSTANT CHANGE

A few blocks away at 513 Barnes St. is a business started 53 years before Alva's Market opened its doors: Holder Drug.

Holder Drug started when Jim Holder took over a bankrupt drug store in 1952 and started the business seen today. Jim and Mary Holder's three children — Todd Holder, Sally Eggleston and Susie Simpson — own equal shares of the company. Todd Holder said he remembers the long hours his parents put into the business through the years.

"Mom and Dad put their lives and soul into this business," he

said. "They were here seven days a week, from very early morning to late at night. Lots of time on Saturday during those years, they wouldn't close the store until midnight or one o'clock. They were here eight to nine hours on Sunday, only closing for church. My folks believed in honest, good, personal service, going above and beyond for this fabulous community."

In its 71 years, Holder Drug has kept pace with ever-evolving medical technology, Holder said.

"My dad was a very innovative thinker," he said. "They used to go to market twice a year in Dallas. [He] always kept himself addressed on new [medicinal] drugs and technology. He was one of the first pharmacies in the state of Oklahoma to have a computer system for a pharmacy, mainly because the filing

of third-party prescription drugs was very labor-intensive. He believed that we should be talking to customers, not filling out forms. That's when he made best use in '70s of a computer system. He kept changing to the latest and greatest of computer systems and technology."

As is tradition, the store is still open seven days week. The store added a drive-through window for convenience and a full soda fountain where customers can grab a drink and ice cream.

"We don't know for sure where [Holder Drug] is going to be," Holder said. "Insurance is such that it's very difficult to stay competitive because of the way industry and drug companies have controlled the market and big box stores. But we figure, as long as the good Lord wants us to be here, we'll be here."

NEWS

HELP WANTED: STRUGGLES OF HIRING IN RURAL OKLAHOMA: PART 3

Small hospitals face hiring woes

Rural areas can be less appetizing for physicians, families

By CONNOR GRAY
Senior Reporter

In rural communities, getting healthcare can be hard. Dr. Alan Hawxby, a native of Perkins, knows this well.

The town of 3,300 doesn't have any primary care clinics, and the closest one is about 30 minutes away. The closest hospital about the same distance away. The places that best suit the needs of Hawxby and other physicians are large cities, leaving rural areas with a shortage of medical professionals.

"There are few places to eat and activities to do when it comes to small towns," Hawxby, a surgical director in Denver, Colorado, said. "It's difficult to bring a doctor there, especially their family."

Rural communities across the United States have faced challenges hiring medical professionals, who often seek work in larger cities with more advanced medical facilities and more lifestyle options.

Around 20% of the U.S. population is in rural America, but only 11% of physicians work in rural areas. Three out of five physician shortages are in rural areas. Some parts of the country don't have a physician within 50 to 100 miles.

A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that an additional 14,858 health care providers are needed to eliminate the shortage across the country, urban and rural alike.

LACK OF SPECIALIZED FACILITIES

Many rural healthcare facilities can't provide some higher-level surgical procedures, leaving doctors with specialized care practices to seek work in areas with larger populations.

Share Medical Center in Alva is among America's rural hospitals with limited facilities and abilities to perform some procedures. The hospital offers cataract surgery and brings in cardiologists and other specialists, but some advanced procedures are unavailable. If Share doesn't have what patients need, they have to travel to towns like Enid, Oklahoma City or Tulsa — all at least an hour away.

Some hospitals have spent millions of dollars trying to improve their facilities, allowing them to perform procedures and thus recruit new providers.

Grady Memorial Hospital in Chickasha laid off employees in



Photos by Jordan Green

ABOVE: The emergency entrance at Share Medical Center in Alva is shown Tuesday. BELOW: A sign at the Share Medical Center clinic listing providers on staff is shown Tuesday. Rural hospitals like Share are grappling with a shortage of physicians, who increasingly move to larger cities.

2015 because the hospital couldn't keep funding general surgery operations. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services found some of the conditions unsuitable in that area, forcing the hospital to stop performing surgeries — a major source of revenue.

The only way for the hospital to remain financially viable was to upgrade the surgical facilities, said Dr. Luke Toho, a general surgeon in Chickasha. Similar situations occurred at hospitals near Oklahoma City, Anita and Antlers, with each facing temporary closures.

Grady Memorial found a solution. From 2016 through 2018, the hospital spent roughly \$17 million to upgrade the surgery wing so it could meet healthcare standards and keep the hospital open. Executives took pay cuts, and some staff worked reduced hours to help keep costs down.

A lack of facilities isn't the only problem some rural hospitals face when trying to recruit providers.

FEW LIFESTYLE OPTIONS

Some towns are too small or too remote to be viable for physicians, but other facets of small-town life play a part as well. Limited lifestyle options can be a turn-off when trying to hire a doctor, some say. Many physicians have families looking for communities with recreational, cultural and educational offerings.

"It's not really the doctor that



is hard [to bring into a community]," said Kandice Allen, CEO of Share Medical Center in Alva. "It's trying to sell it to the spouse on Alva, as they are usually the deal breaker."

When the doctor's spouse is also looking for job opportunities, a small community like Cherokee or Alva limits what they can do. So can religious differences, as some doctors of Jewish or Islamic faith may not have a synagogue or mosque to worship at in smaller places, said Dr. Kevin Johnson, a primary care provider in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Hawxby has worked for more than 20 years as a surgeon. Hailing from Perkins, a Payne County town, Hawxby said urban areas are best for his profession and his family.

The trend is shown widely across the nation, as the the number of medical school students from rural areas who go back to rural communities decreased by 28% from 2002 to 2017, according to a 2019 study.

Low pay and high time commitment pose additional hurdles, healthcare providers say. Doctors are more duty-bound and feel handcuffed in a smaller community, as some only have a few doctors.

In Alva, when Dr. Phil Self retired this year, Share Medical Center moved his patients to other doctors or had patients look elsewhere. The hospital does not plan to add another doctor, Allen said. Share has used temporary solutions, such as contracting with surgeons outside of Alva, for

specific in-demand procedures.

Some physicians face bureaucratic hurdles when obtaining a medical license in Oklahoma.

"Oklahoma makes it difficult to get a license," Hawxby said. "It takes some time to get it, and it's even worse for those outside the U.S. coming to Oklahoma."

Physicians from overseas may have to wait years before being approved for a license, Hawxby said.

"Most do not care where they are located as long as they can come to the U.S.," Hawxby said.

SOLVING THE SHORTAGE

An organization has made it their mission to get doctors back in rural areas.

The American Academy of Family Physicians aims to help bring doctors to rural America. The group specializes in training future primary care doctors to work in small communities.

The group has been around since 1947 and is one of the largest organizations in the U.S.

Johnson is a member of the group and said the organization has helped reverse the decline in rural physicians. Johnson has been training doctors for the last 15 years for the organization. He trains five trainee doctors on a rotation and has them on a monthly rotation. The rotation sends trainees to spend time getting to know a rural community and getting them used to rural healthcare practice.

NEWS

DRY AS DUST

Drought persists despite recent rains, raising concerns — and food prices

By **JACOB ERVIN**
Student Reporter

Rain makes corn, but no rain doesn't make wheat.

This is an issue many local farmers faced as they planted their winter wheat crops this autumn.

Western Oklahoma has endured exceptional drought conditions since the beginning of 2022 that are unlikely to end until at least March 2023, according to the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

Even though Woods County has had some precipitation in the last two weeks, it hasn't been enough. The Palmer Drought Severity Index still listed most of Woods County as experiencing moderate to severe drought as of Nov. 5. The Panhandle was still in the extreme drought category.

While drought may not seem like anything new to the average Oklahoman, the current drought is considered to be the worst since 2011. The severity of the drought could devastate wheat yields for local farmers when harvest begins next year, a repeat of this year.

But in spite of the dry forecast, many local farmers planted their fields regardless in order to qualify for crop insurance, allowing them to financially survive the economic strain that drought brings with it. State officials have allocated more than \$20 million for the Emergency Drought Relief Fund, which helps fund the drilling of water wells, among other drought response measures.

The drought has not only harmed farmers, but will likely affect the local economy and consumers across the country.

"The price of wheat has gone from very low to quite high over the past year," said Dr. Tracy Beedy, assistant professor of agriculture at Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

Beedy said the increase in wheat prices also will raise the price of wheat products such as bread across the country. Drought will affect the price of beef for consumers, too.

"As our water on the landscape dries up, farmers begin having to move cattle around ... and farmers will start selling off cattle," Beedy said.

This influx of beef may bring prices down for consumers in the short term, but as cattle herds are thinned, the price will see even further inflation in the long run.

A primary cause of the current drought conditions is the result of the La Niña weather cycle. During La Niña, equatorial waters are cooler than usual and force the jet stream more northward, which leads to the South and Southwest being much drier than normal.

The equatorial water temperatures are likely to stay cool for a third straight year, causing what is known as a Triple Dip, according to the Climate Prediction Center. If this occurs, it will be the first Triple Dip since 2001 and will likely cause further drought in the Great Plains and High Plains regions.

One of the few bright spots for Oklahomans may be that the drought is unlikely to lead to Dust Bowl conditions seen in the 1930s thanks to new and improved farming techniques.

"We are not having half the population moving back east to live with relatives," Beedy said, as happened in the 1930s. "We are not dying of dust pneumonia."



She points to practices such as better farm equipment, no-till farming and the Conservation Reserve Program. These practices help reduce the amount of dirt that is exposed to the wind as the land dries up.

However, Beedy warned that if extreme levels of drought were to carry on for another year or longer, Dust Bowl conditions could occur. While this may be unlikely, the risk of a Triple Dip La Niña makes an extended drought not outside the realm of possibility and something many meteorologists, economists and farmers alike will be keeping their eyes on, Beedy said.

The drought has eased in the last two weeks, however, thanks to rainfall across the region. According to the Mesonet rainfall table, as of Nov. 7, Alva had received .78 of an inch of rain in the last two weeks.

TOP: Dust blows as a tractor tills a field southeast of Alva on Oct. 20. Farmers across Woods County and Oklahoma have endured drought conditions for months, and most have planted winter wheat despite the drought.

ABOVE: Cattle graze in a pasture southwest of Alva on Oct. 20. Ponds across the region have dried up, and cattle have overgrazed available grass in pastures, forcing some producers to sell their herds.

Photos by Jordan Green

NEWS



Photos by Jordan Green

Newly renovated rooms in South Hall are shown Oct. 25. Students said they are enjoying South Hall's new improvements. Some of the renovations included movable furniture in each room and new flooring.

With South Hall renovations complete, residents are adapting to new building

By TARA OWEN
Student Reporter

As South Hall's renovations have ended, residents said they are enjoying the new improvements made to the dorm.

The three-story dormitory for female students has been around since 1966. Some of the renovations included movable furniture in each room, new flooring and a new HVAC system.

Throughout the time South Hall was under renovation, the female residents stayed in Coronado Hall, a dorm for males.

Coronado and South Hall residents assistants had to adapt during that time, students said.

"It was actually nice to have

both a male and female resident assistant on duty at the same time," said Shayna Miller, one of the South Hall resident assistants.

Before the residents could move back into South Hall, there was a lot of work that the resident assistants did to prepare the dorm.

"I couldn't have done it without the help of my RAs," said Head Resident Kaylea Brown.

The resident assistants moved in a week before the residents and began to prepare the dorms. Along with moving themselves into the dorm, the resident assistants decorated the dorms to make the residents feel welcome.

Many of the female residents are freshmen who have never lived in South Hall before. Some said they were excited for their

new home. As for the returning residents, some said they were amazed with the updates.

"It looks so much more modern while still keeping that cozy, homey atmosphere that South Hall had before," Brown said.

Residents say they're happy to have more laundry rooms and their own space. This is the first time for some of the residents to even have their own dorm room.

"I like having my own room," Miller said. "When we were in Coronado, I didn't know how long we would be there, so I didn't decorate. Now, I am able to make the space my own."

South Hall will soon be re-named Cunningham Hall in honor of retired Northwestern President Janet Cunningham.



Decorated and undecorated rooms in South Hall are shown Oct. 25. Students said they are enjoying South Hall's new improvements. Some of the renovations included movable furniture in each room, new flooring and a new HVAC system.

What's up?

THURSDAY

Northwestern's Esports Team will host a high school and middle school Esports tournament in the Esports arena in Shockley Hall Room No. 125. The tournament will occur from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Northwestern Medical Sciences Club will meet Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m. in the Science Amphitheater. The club is meant to provide Northwestern students who are interested in the medical field an opportunity to become better informed, promote activities related to the medical field and secure intellectual stimulation in the field.

SATURDAY

Northwestern will host the annual Ranger Preview event for high school seniors. The event will occur Saturday starting at 9 a.m. in Percefull Fieldhouse. Any high school senior who attends Ranger Preview, is admitted to Northwestern as a full-time student at the Alva campus and lives in Alva will receive a \$600 scholarship.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY

Student Support Services is having a study group from 5 to 10 p.m. in the Student Center commons area Tuesday and Wednesday. Coffee, printing and supplies will be provided, and anyone interested can attend.

NOV. 17

Norwestern is hosting a First Generation Student College Day Celebration. This annual November event supports students who are the first ones in their families to attend college. Hear stories that involve happy moments as well as struggles/hardships that sometimes come with being a first-generation student. The event will occur in the mall area near the J.W. library from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

NOV. 17 — NOV. 19

The annual children's musical production will occur from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Nov. 17 and 18 and starting at 2 p.m. on Nov. 19.

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NEWS

ELECTION 2022

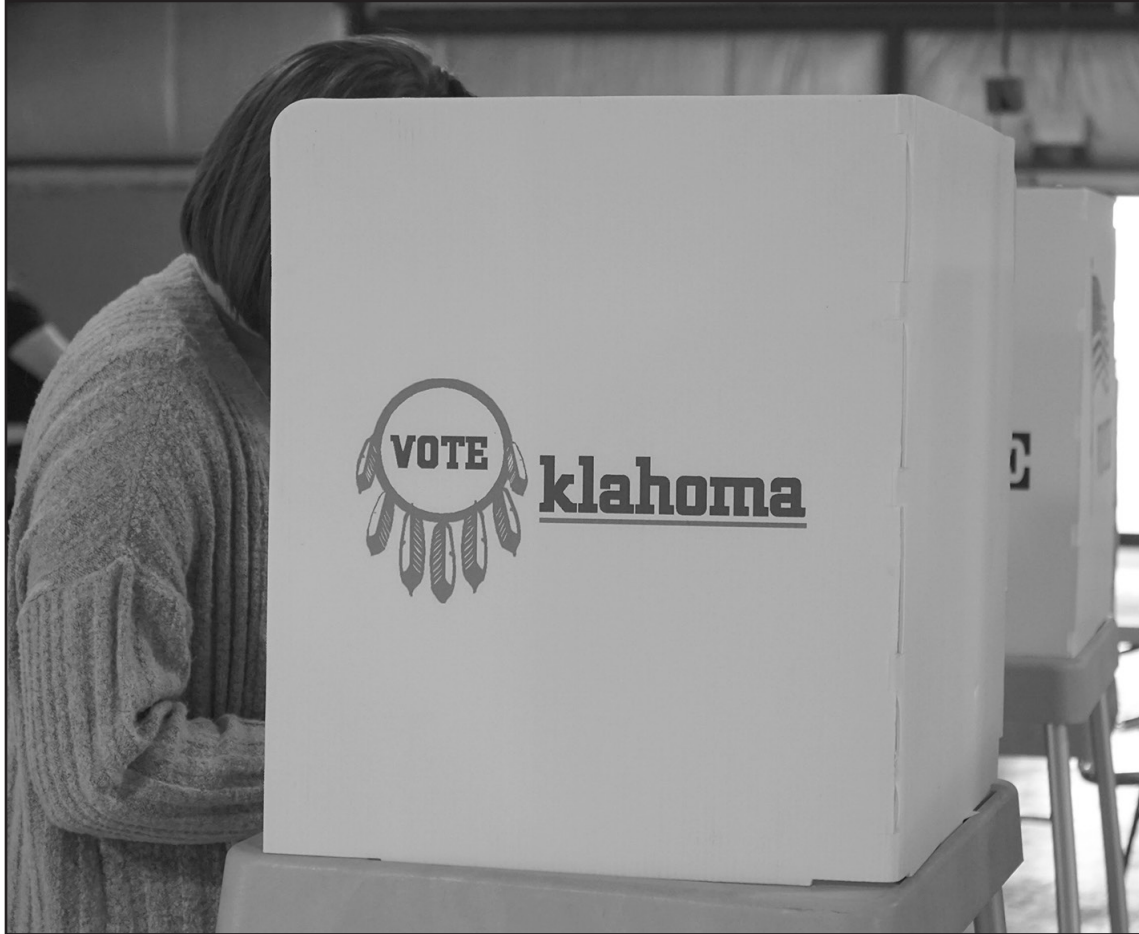


Photo by Jordan Green

LEFT AND ABOVE: People vote at the Woods County Fairgrounds on Tuesday afternoon. Midterm elections were underway across the nation Tuesday, with Oklahomans voting in numerous local, state and federal races.

BELOW: Voting booths are shown at the Woods County Fairgrounds.

Stitt wins second term

Pinnell remains lieutenant governor; Mullin wins Inhofe's U.S. Senate seat

By **JORDAN GREEN**
Editor-in-Chief

Oklahoma voters overwhelmingly elected Republicans to statewide and federal offices during Tuesday's midterm elections. Here's a breakdown of how the races went. All vote totals are unofficial results from the Oklahoma State Election Board, with 95% of precincts reporting as of 10 p.m. Tuesday. More than 1 million residents voted.

GOVERNOR

Incumbent Republican Kevin Stitt retained his seat amid opposition from Democrat Joy Hofmeister, the state's superintendent of public instruction.

Stitt had 55.99% of the vote, or 613,492 votes, while Hofmeister had 41.26%, or 452,082 votes. Libertarian Natalie Bruno had 1.41%, and Independent Ervin Yen had 1.35%.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Matt Pinnell, the Republican officeholder, won a second term of office against Democratic challenger Melinda L. Alizadeh-Fard. Pinnell won 65.45%, or 713,306 votes, while Alizadeh-Fard won 30.47%, or 332,067.

Libertarian Chris Powell won 4.09%, or 44,552 votes.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Republican Gentner Drummond won 74.58% of the vote,

or 759,100 votes, while Libertarian Lynda Steele won 25.72%, or 262,902 votes.

STATE TREASURER

Republican Todd Russ won 65.34%, or 708,066, while Democrat Charles De Coune won 30.13%, or 326,510. Libertarian Gregory J. Sadler won 4.53%, or 49,056.

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Republican Ryan Walters won 57.3%, or 623,598, while Democrat Jena Nelson won 42.7%, or 464,758.

LABOR COMMISSIONER

Republican Leslie Osborn won 66.12% of the vote, or 714,933 votes, while Democrat Jack Henderson won 28.89%, or 312,399. Libertarian Will Daugherty won 4.99%, or 53,965.

CORPORATION COMMISSIONER

Republican Kim David won 64.03%, or 692,007 votes, while Democrat Margaret Warigia Bowman won 30.36%, or 328,120. Independent Don Underwood won 5.61%, or 60,653.

U.S. SENATOR

Republican incumbent James Lankford won another term to the U.S. Senate, beating Democratic challenger Madison Horn handily. Lankford won 64.86% of the vote, or 709,211 votes, while

Horn won 31.55%, or 344,929. Libertarian Kenneth Blevins won 1.78%, or 19,468, while Independent Michael Delaney won 1.81%, or 19,840.

U.S. SENATOR, UNEXPIRED TERM

Republican Congressman Markwayne Mullin, a member of the U.S. House, won the race to succeed longtime U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe, who is retiring. Mullin will complete the rest of the senior senator's term.

Mullin bested Democratic challenger Kendra Horn, a former Oklahoma representative in the U.S. House. Mullin had 62.39% of the vote, or 682,067, while Horn had 34.62%, or 378,523. Independent Ray Woods won 1.48%, or 16,182, and Libertarian Robert Murphy won 1.5%, or 16,440.

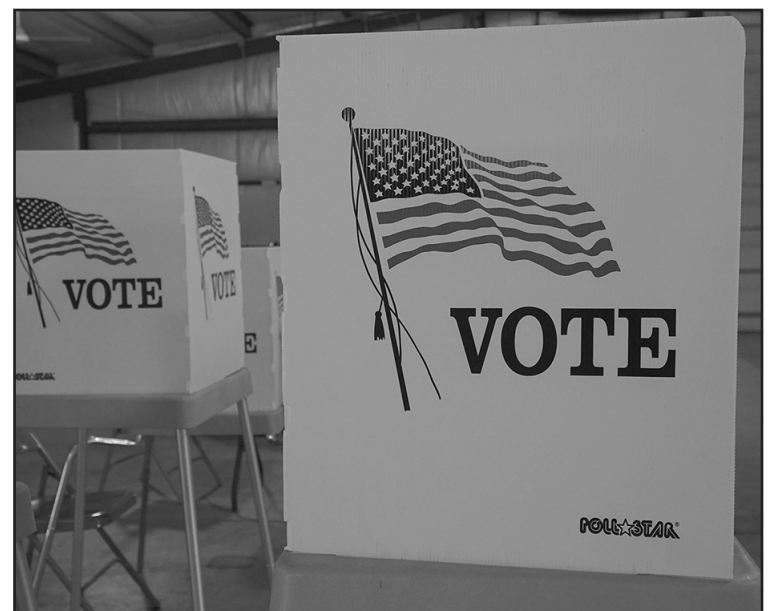
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 3

Republican incumbent Frank Lucas secured another term of office, beating Democratic challenger Jeremiah Ross by a wide margin.

Lucas won 75.55%, or 144,253 votes, while Ross won 24.45%, or 46,694. District Three includes Woods County.

JUDICIAL OFFICES

All state Supreme Court justice and judges on the Court of Civil Appeals were retained by a vote of at least 60% or more.



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NEWS

VETERANS DAY: SALUTING THOSE WHO SERVE

Teaching, serving coincide for Rogers

Professor, airman keeps class moving while in Air Guard

By **DYLAN WHITELY**
Senior Reporter

He not only serves the students of Northwestern. He also serves to protect his town and his country.

Criminal justice professor Kirk Rogers keeps a busy schedule. When he isn't teaching his courses at Northwestern, he might be serving in the Air National Guard. When he has free time from that, he works one or two shifts for the Harper County Emergency Medical Services. To top it all off, he works eight-hour shifts on Saturdays and Sundays as a police officer.

Friday marks Veteran's Day, which began in 1919 as a way to celebrate the end of World War I.

"I have been very blessed so far," Rogers said. "Northwestern has worked with me, and the military has been good working with me, too. I don't know if that would be the case if it was any other branch other than the Air Force."

Rogers' military career began in January 1992 when he was 17 years old. Rogers signed up as a medical specialist for the Kansas National Guard, later transferring to the Oklahoma National Guard when he was attending Northwestern.

Rogers got out of the service in 2000 and focused on his law enforcement career. He started teaching for Northwestern in 2008 but still worked as a police officer and in EMS part-time.

A few years ago, when Rogers' son was 17 years old, several military recruiters were coming to the family's home. After one visit, a National Guard recruiter and Rogers began talking about their time serving. A few days later, the recruiter gave Rogers a call and asked if he was interested in coming back into the military.

Rogers thought about it and decided to go back in. But he found out that he had been out too long and would have to go to boot camp. When a recruiter for the Air National Guard came by his house, Rogers told him about the situation, and the recruiter informed him that he would not



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Kirk Rogers, a professor at Northwestern, poses for a portrait at the 134th Air Refueling Wing dining facility Aug. 30 at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in East Tennessee. Rogers served in the Air National Guard for part of the semester while teaching Northwestern classes remotely.

Photos by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrea Posey/via DVIDS



Senior Airman Kirk Rogers, right, shakes the hand of Col. Roxanne Toy, I. G. Brown Training and Education Center commander, on Sept. 2 at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in East Tennessee. Rogers was recognized for volunteering more than 150 hours on the base.

have to go back to basic training with them. So, Rogers joined the Air National Guard.

After joining two and a half years ago and waiting for a medical position to open up, Rogers served as a cook. Now he works in fitness and assessment. This summer, Rogers was at McGhee-Tyson Air Force Base in Knoxville, Tennessee, for mandatory training. He was there for the first few weeks of the fall semester and had to use Zoom to teach his classes at Northwestern.

While he was at training, Rogers had some downtime, so he started helping out around the base by volunteering about 150 hours for other duties. His service did not go unrecognized. Rogers received six challenge coins

during a six-week period. Coins are presented in the military by those with a leadership role as a way to show appreciation for acts of service.

Rogers received coins from multiple officers, including a colonel, a lieutenant colonel and command chief master sergeants.

But Rogers said he saw the acts of service as doing the job he was paid to do.

"I'm a firm believer that when you got to go to work, you go to work," Rogers said. "I think that's why I balance everything so well, because when I have a task to do, I'll do it."

Rogers said he keeps teaching at Northwestern, despite his schedule, because he loves to do it. The secret to staying on top



Senior Airman and Northwestern professor Kirk Rogers poses for a portrait at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in East Tennessee.

of things is to be a meticulous scheduler. He said he has daily schedule planned almost down to the hour.

Rogers spent the past weekend at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas. When he had time in the evenings, he was busy communicating with his students

and helping them out with any questions they might have.

"My plan was to teach after I retired," Rogers said. "But they were looking for someone to teach in criminal justice, and the opportunity presented itself. I'm glad I did it because I love the kids, and I love the campus."

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Feelin' that Ranger Spirit



Photo by Jordan Green

Northwestern's marching band was one of the bands that played in the Homecoming parade Saturday. The band was led by drum major Caleb Kaiser, followed by the color guard and band. The band was followed by numerous vehicles and floats.

2022 Homecoming marked by pep rally, pomp and parade



Photo by Jordan Green

Rowdy Ranger walked the parade route, taking photos with visitors.



Photo by Jordan Green

Students gathered in Percefull Fieldhouse when the "Rally 'Round the Ranger" event was moved inside Friday.



Photo provided

Ranger Queen Carli Seabolt and Ranger King Fernando Nunez pose for a photo on the Ranger football field during the halftime of the game Saturday.



Photo by Jordan Green

Honorary Parade Marshal Dr. Mike Knedler led the parade festivities. Knedler taught at Northwestern for 32 years in various positions, mainly the band.



Photo by Jordan Green

Northwestern's cheer team pumped up the crowd at the "Rally 'Round the Ranger" event in Percefull Fieldhouse on Friday.



Photo by Colby Dalton

A variety of floats and vehicles drove in the Saturday parade, including vintage cars, trucks and farm tractors.



Photo by Jordan Green

The Northwestern football team waved and greeted parade viewers along parade route.

NEWS



Photos by Colby Dalton

Contestants pose on stage during the 70th annual Miss Cinderella pageant Friday. Contestants competed in interview, onstage question, talent, social impact and more.

Miss Cinderella pageant kicks off Homecoming



LEFT: Miss Cinderella contestants perform their opening number at the 2022 Miss Cinderella pageant on Friday night in Herod Hall.

RIGHT: A contestant plays the flute during the annual pageant.

BELOW: Alondra Salas (front left), past Miss Cinderella, stands next to Presley Pruett (front right), this year's Miss Cinderella winner.

BELOW RIGHT: Emcee Miss Oklahoma Megan Gold speaks to contestant Jazzmin Binning, Miss South Barber, Kansas.

Miss Woodward Presley Pruett won the competition.



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Letters must be turned in by noon on Monday to the News office in JDA232. Letters via e-mail are acceptable as long as they follow the rules stated above and can be sent to nwnews@nwosu.edu. Please limit submissions to no more than 250 words. The editors reserve the right to condense or edit any letter for grammar, libel and space limitations. All letters submitted may not be used.

All letters represent the views of the author.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yearly subscriptions to the News are \$20.

OPINION



Photos by J.D. Eddy

ABOVE: Thomas Beiswanger hits a double during game four of the Red versus Black World Series. The author believes that leadership is the most important aspect of a collegiate team. BELOW: Nehemia Lewis is shown during the Ranger football game against Arkansas Tech on Saturday.

Lead your team to victory — or don't

By J.D. EDDY
Editorial Editor

Leadership on a collegiate team is as important for the team's morale as the decisions the coaching staff makes.

When I played football, there were many players who led by example. Sometimes, they were vocal about their concerns, whether it be during workouts, practices, team events and things that happened off campus.

When the leaders who lead by action call you out, you're in trouble.

When I played football in the spring of 2021, we had a workout at 6 a.m. I was sluggish, not finishing through the line during conditioning. We had to keep re-starting.

After two of these restarts, Diquan Bradford, also known as "Thump," called me out on it. This is not to say it was a bad thing; when he called me out, it showed the leadership. He told me to take responsibility and finish through the line.

Thump was more of a quiet person normally, never really talking during workouts. He consistently outworked people. This is something most collegiate teams need; vocal leadership is good most of the time. Thump was never one to talk a lot during workouts, when he needed to he made his voice heard.

I wanted to pull experiences from other teams on campus on leadership.

Gavin Mendoza, a junior catcher on the baseball team, had this to say about teammate Thomas Beiswanger, a senior second baseman: "Last year, he strug-



gled with injury problems in the fall and in the spring. But despite that, he was leading by example, showing that being a good role model on and off the field has an impact on a team. He was working his tail end off despite the injury. Even with a broken bone in his hand, he stayed positive . . . Thomas put in the work, whether it be in the cages or on the field, for hours at a time. For me being a younger guy, he showed me the dedication that it takes to come back from an injury and be productive on the field."

If you want to be productive and efficient, this is what you

need: someone to show you that, no matter the hardships you endure, hard work is what can bring you through these obstacles.

Now let's discuss the seniors on the team. These are people that have been with this team for all four years of their collegiate careers or who transferred in from junior colleges. They matter the most for the leadership role not just because they are older. They've put in the time and know what needs to be done to win games. If they are starters, they are held to an even higher standard.

This standard means they

consistently work hard, hit their weight goals, beat everyone in sprints, out-hit everyone or just keep being the best people on the field effort-wise. I say "effort-wise" because there are seniors who have never played, maybe because they are not as talented. But the effort is there. These players want to be on the field and try hard every single day. It may not ever happen, but they've shown that hard work

"If you want to be productive and efficient, this is what you need: someone to show you that, no matter the hardships you endure, hard work is what can bring you through these obstacles."
— J.D. Eddy

pushes you forward even if you don't play.

None of this is to say that most teams don't have leadership — they do. The point is to tell you the importance of having leadership on a team. It all relates to their actions on and off the field of play.

Their example is what inspires younger players, showing them the standard that is set forth by the program. This all starts at the coaching level as well, if your coaches can't inspire leadership. Then it is up to the players.

OPINION

VETERANS DAY: SALUTING THOSE WHO SERVE

Let's say more than 'Thank you'

JORDAN GREEN SAYS



JORDAN GREEN

Friday is Veterans Day, a time to honor the men and women who have bravely fought for our nation's freedoms. But should the respect we pay them stop with the phrase

"Thank you for your service?"

For as long as I can remember, I've been taught to say that to veterans whom I meet. Yes, veterans deserve to know we are grateful for their selfless sacrifices. But without actions, do those words ring hollow?

A 2019 poll by the Cohen Veterans Network found that about 49% of veterans don't want to be told "thank you for your service."

The reasons why veterans said they were uncomfortable with the phrase varied. Some said they just don't know how to reply, while others said they'd rather see people express their support meaningfully.

Dave Gowel, CEO of RallyPoint Networks, told Newsweek for a story about the survey: "We challenge you to show appreciation in additional ways for those who have repeatedly stepped in harm's way on your behalf; think about why you are saying thanks and realize you need to do more than check the block with a simple phrase."

The ways you can thank a veteran besides just saying "thank you" are numerous. The president of the Cohen Veterans Network suggested having substantive conversations with veterans is one way to show genuine appreciation.

"Taking an interest in a veteran's story about their time in the military is one way to engage beyond just saying thank you for



File photo

An American flag, shown through the trees, waves at the Alva cemetery in this 2019 file photo. Veterans Day is Friday this year.

your service," CVN CEO and president Dr. Anthony Hassan said in the Newsweek story.

That's just a starting point. According to the survey, some veterans hope people will show their support in a more palpable way.

A veteran who took part in the survey, who was not named in the Newsweek story, said: "Instead of hearing 'thank you for your service,' I would like to see civilians in our community give back to military families. Either by coaching a sport, giving a class, or going to a veterans home and just sitting and listening to the stories of our older generations."

Military.com writer Amy Bushatz discussed 10 different ways people can honor veterans in their communities. She suggests volunteering at local veterans' organizations, mailing letters to soldiers overseas and flying American flags outdoors.

Along with several other writers, Bushatz also talks about the importance of listening to veterans' stories – especially veterans within a person's family.

"Ask a loved one for stories about their time in the service – and listen patiently," Bushatz wrote. "While some may not want to talk about their war ex-

perience, for others service was the best time of their lives. Take a few minutes to listen to stories of service from someone in your extended family."

To that end, I'd add this: If you have family members who served and are willing to talk about their experiences, record what they have to say and write it down. Their service is meritorious, and the tales of their sacrifices not only deserve to be passed down through generations, but need to be passed on. Freedom is not free, and we need to permanently memorialize the contributions our loved ones made to the cause of

liberty.

My grandfather served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. His stories – some shocking, and some a little on the lighter side – are one-of-a-kind. No matter what jobs your loved ones might have had in the service, they probably made a difference. Why not learn about that?

So, if you're looking for a way to really thank a veteran this year, consider what you can do to show your gratitude besides just saying "thank you."

Yes, saying "thank you" to veterans is nice. But what are words without actions?

Be aware of fentanyl, amphetamine dangers

By **CHLOE KUNNEMANN**
Guest Columnist

The increase in counterfeit fentanyl tablets and the new "fake rainbow fentanyl pills" being trafficked across the border has led to an increase in the number of deaths across the United States.

These identical-looking pills have been confiscated in 26 states and are suspected to be aimed towards children and young adults. Many of these pills are brightly colored and resemble popular candies; they also come in a variety of shapes.

The DEA has seized counterfeit rainbow fentanyl that resembles sidewalk chalk in the form of tablets, powder and

blocks.

The counterfeit fentanyl pills being trafficked across the border are not tested in a laboratory, preventing dosage regulation. Individuals are hence susceptible to ingesting deadly doses of fentanyl.

Amphetamines are a commonly prescribed medication for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy.

Amphetamines should only be taken by individuals that have been prescribed the medication by their physician. Unfortunately, this is the most commonly misused medication among college students seeking something to help them concentrate on their studies.

Amphetamine misuse may lead to dependency, which could result in addic-

tion and other health issues.

Those who become addicted to Amphetamine may experience financial difficulties, family concerns, failure to achieve academic standards, and the need to take the medicine to function normally.

If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone, dial 988, a helpline for immediate crisis and non-emergency assistance for mental health and substance use issues.

For serious medical problems or any imminent, life-threatening situation, dial 911.

Northwestern student Chloe Kunnemann wrote this column on behalf of the Northwestern Counseling and Career Services office.

If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone, dial 988, a helpline for immediate crisis and non-emergency assistance for mental health and substance use issues.

ENTERTAINMENT

‘Gotham Knights’ player rates game average

By **CONNOR GRAY**
Senior Reporter

Batman is dead, and it is up to Nightwing, Robin, Batgirl and Red Hood to uncover a mystery that he was working on before his death.

Gotham Knights is the first game in more than nine years for game studio “WB Montreal” that made a prequel game called “Batman Arkham Origins” in 2013. Some influence of the Batman Arkham series is in the game, but not as much as I would’ve liked for it to have.

Right out the gate, the game shows what happens to Batman as he is in a fight for his life against Ra’s al Ghul in the bat cave. They both meet their end after Batman blows up the cave.

The four heroes mourn the loss of Batman but know they need to finish the case that he was working on. They will have to work together as a team if they wish to save Gotham from those that wish to control or destroy it.

The game’s main story is surrounded by the secret society, the Court of Owls. They are a group of powerful elite families that have controlled Gotham from shadows for centuries, except when Batman was around.

With Batman dead, they believe it is their time to be more hands on and our heroes make the effort to thwart their plans.

As Nightwing, Robin, Batgirl and Red Hood, each character has abilities the others don’t. Nightwing is a more balanced character but is more agile because he grew up as an acrobat. Robin is

smaller and has stealth advantages that other characters don’t have. Batgirl is a better one-on-one brawler, especially against bigger enemies. Red Hood is a better long-range fighter but is also the strongest. However, he is not the best for stealth, as his guns are too loud.

You can only play one hero per night, and you can only change characters in the hideout called the Belfry.

The game also has a leveling system, and all heroes level up at the same time, even if you don’t play as them. You can craft new suits, melee and range weapons, which will increase your power level. The game will also have you deal with different factions of gangs in Gotham. There are the Freaks, which are a bunch of crazy punks who like heavy metal music.

The Regulators, which are a tech-savvy gang, split into two groups with some working with Mr. Freeze, but are essentially the same type of enemies, just with ice or electric powers.

The Court of Owls have regular people and special enemy types known as Talons. Then you have the League of Shadows, who worked under Ra’s al Ghul, who will come into the story just over halfway through.

Each faction will have some form of brawler, gunner, heavy and an expert on explosives, though some can also be hybrids of two. The game also introduced other major villains like Harley Quinn, Mr. Freeze and Clayface into the main story for a mission, but they will be relegated to side missions to play outside of the

main story.

The positives of the game are strong. The story, while it can be predictable, is an enjoyable ride as all of our heroes and Alfred, Batman’s Butler, have amazing chemistry. That is where the writing was best emphasized on.

Enemy variety is also good, as most of the gangs do feel unique from each other. Combat, while frustrating at first, will get better as you continue to play it.

Gotham City is put together well, as each of the three islands are different in their landscapes.

Major villains, overall, were good and created well.

I’m not really big on the game’s skill system. Though it wasn’t a big deal for me, for some, it might be confusing.

I am not the biggest fan of the combat system — mainly because, instead of a counter button like in the Arkham game series, it’s just a dodge button. It’s not terrible, but disappointing.

The story is predictable, and that’s a negative on the writing.

The dialogue at times is bad, mainly when it comes to the gangs. This is especially true for the Freaks, who have over-the-top voice lines that make me cringe.

There were instances where the main protagonists were not immune to bad dialogue or poor line delivery, though the voice acting is still good throughout the game. There are many good things about the game, but its negatives do affect the positives a bit.

I’d give Gotham Knights a B- on its own because it’s a solid game that could have been much better. It’s a beautiful mess of a game.



Dad Joke of the Week:

Why does Donkey Kong wear a tie?

He has monkey business to do later.

GOT NEWS?

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‘NBA 2K23’ adds new options for players

By **ELY NOBLE**
Student Reporter

NBA 2K23 comes with a big dose of nostalgia, available now on PC, Ps4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch for the current-gen version, and Ps5 and Xbox series X for the next-gen version.

A lot of new game modes are added to the game that bank on players’ appetite for historic NBA moments.

The big one is the Jordan challenge. This is a game mode where you can go relive some of the NBA’s most-remembered and exciting moments in history and even see it the way people did in that time. However, the biggest addition this year just may be the My NBA Era game mode.

In the past, players had to customize their leagues to replicate leagues from the past. However, My NBA Eras allows players to just choose an era, pick a team and play Association of My NBA

with that league, with that time’s rules, rosters and TV presentations.

With all these nostalgic offerings, NBA 2K23 is all about authenticity. Last year, we saw a major graphical leap.

The graphical improvements this year are minuscule, if not entirely absent. But that is only because the focus this year is different. Many players will judge NBA 2K23 based on how well it delivers on its promise of authenticity, which includes improvements in the W as well.

Of course, we will take that into consideration in our NBA 2K23 review, but at the end of the day, we will still be focusing more on the entire package on how well it delivers on all fronts.

Another big part of NBA 2K23 is the MyCareer and My Player. This year’s MyCareer brings your player with a rival named Shem Owens. This gives the story a splash of personality.

In the beginning, your play-

er gets drafted in the first round, but the media and fans think your rival would have been the better choice to go with.

“Many players will judge NBA 2K23 based on how well it delivers on its promise of authenticity.”
— *Ely Noble*

Both players get picked right after each other, with the My Player MP going just ahead of Shem. Shem is upset and feels disrespected that you were drafted first and calls out MP multiple times.

This gives the player MP a path to prove everyone wrong and show why he was selected before his rival was

SPORTS

FOOTBALL



Photos by J.D. Eddy

Members of the Ranger football team sit on a bench during Northwestern's game against Arkansas Tech Saturday at Ranger Field. The Rangers lost to the Wonder Boys, 45-20, to put Northwestern's record at 1-9 on the season. Northwestern travels to Weatherford for the final game of the regular season, as they take on Southwestern Saturday at 3 p.m.

Wonder Boys squash Rangers

By CADE KENNEDY
Sports Editor

The Northwestern football team lost to the Arkansas Tech Wonder Boys on Saturday, 45-20, at Ranger Field.

The loss moved Northwestern's record to 1-9, making it the second straight season the Rangers had a 1-9 record after 10 weeks. The Rangers went 0-5 at home this season, which is the first time the Rangers won zero home games since joining the NCAA in 2012.

The Wonder Boys won the toss and wanted the ball to start the game, with the strategy being to test Northwestern's rushing defense. Arkansas Tech kept pounding the ball right at the Rangers, and Jordan Eddington eventually surged into the endzone to give the Wonder Boys a 7-0 lead.

The first five possessions of the game resulted in a score, but the main difference was in how each side put points on the board. Northwestern had 14 points in only six plays, as quarterback Ethan Everson connected with both Kobe Washington and Torrence Stevens on touchdowns. Arkansas Tech opted for longer drives to wear down the North-

western defense, as the Wonder Boys scored 17 points in 29 plays and continued to focus on running the ball.

The Rangers found themselves trailing 17-14 early in the second quarter and did not take the lead or tie the game. The Rangers faced a fourth down and needed two yards to keep the drive alive at the Wonder Boy 17-yard line, but Jacob Reed only got a yard.

With momentum on their side, the Wonder Boys struck again with only a minute left in the first half to give Arkansas Tech a 24-14 lead at halftime.

Turnovers became a problem in the second half for Northwestern, as the Rangers had two fumbles in the third quarter that killed any progress they made.

At the end of the third quarter, Arkansas Tech increased the lead to 11 with 31-20 being the score with 15 minutes left in the game.

The Ranger offense continued to struggle, while the Wonder Boys scored two more touchdowns to ice the game away. The Rangers lost to Arkansas Tech, 45-20.

The final game of the season for the Rangers is on Saturday, as Northwestern travels to Weatherford to take on Southwestern at 3 p.m. at Milam Stadium.



Members of the Ranger defensive line get set for a play during Northwestern's game against Arkansas Tech Saturday at Ranger Field. The Rangers lost to the Wonder Boys, 45-20, to put Northwestern's record at 1-9.

SPORTS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Rangers ready for start of season

By CONNOR GRAY
Senior Reporter

The Northwestern men's basketball team will start its season Friday in North Dakota and looks to continue the success from last season.

The Rangers finished 20-9 last season under Vinay Patel, but the team is now under a new head coach, Robbie Harman.

Harman was an assistant coach at Davenport University for five years where he was the defensive coordinator along with being in charge of recruiting, scouting opponents, academic assistance, the team's social media and the alumni/fan newsletter.

Harman also played at Central Michigan University during his college years.

"You're kind of a jack-of-all-trades as an assistant," Harman said. "It helped me prepare to be head coach doing all of that."

Having control of the defense at Davenport has helped shape his coaching philosophy, Harman said.

"We rely on our defense to help fuel our offense, and I want to play fast," Harman said. "You can't play fast if you are not playing hard defensively."

Defense is important to Harman, and he wants fans and opponents to know that defense is

in the Rangers' wheelhouse, he said. He also talked about how the team is getting better and better, and he said he is proud of the effort to adapt to his philosophy.

Last season, the Rangers lost in the first round of the Great American Conference tournament to Southern Arkansas.

The Rangers lost Bubba Furlong, Ravel Moody and Anthony Jones to graduation, while some players left the team. The team was able to keep some of the roster this season.

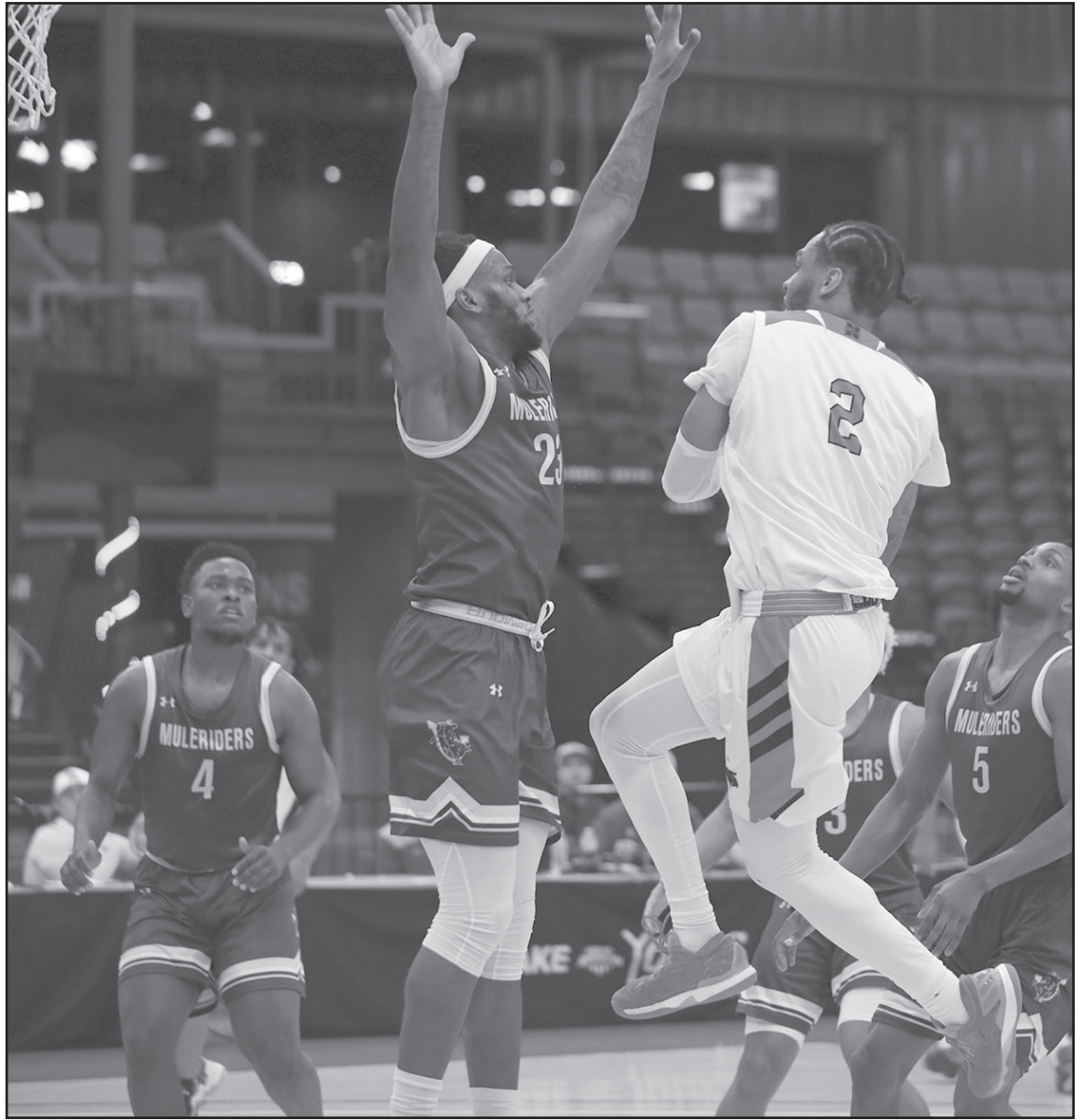
Larry White, Malik Parsons, Brian Free, Eric Hancik, Chance Love and Thomas Douglas-Stanley all return from last season.

Northwestern's first two games will be in Bismark, North Dakota, for the MIAA/GAC challenge against Northeastern State and Central Oklahoma.

"Both are experienced teams as they have many returning players," Harman said. "But it's more about what we do, not so much about what they do."

Harman also said he wants teams to adjust to his players, not the other way around, and wants his players to take care of what they can do.

Northwestern will play Northeastern State Friday at 3 p.m. and then Central Oklahoma on Saturday at 3 p.m. Northwestern's first home game is Nov. 22 at 7 p.m. against Manhattan Christian.



File photo

Larry White attempts a layup during Northwestern's game against Southern Arkansas March 14 at FireLake Arena in Shawnee. The Rangers lost to the Muleriders, 72-63, in the first round of the GAC tournament.

Soccer season ends for Lady Rangers

By CONNOR GRAY
Senior Reporter

The Lady Rangers' soccer season is over, with the team having made it to its second straight postseason appearance.

The Lady Rangers played their last game of the season Thursday in Weatherford against Southwestern, which was the first seed of the four-team playoff.

The Ranger defense and goalkeeper Rachel Brown worked to keep the Bulldogs out of the net.

Brown saved five shots and allowed one in the first half, 36 minutes into the match, before Southwestern struck with the first goal of the game, finding the back of the net.

This kept the Bulldogs at 1-0 going into half time after Brown made multiple saves late in the half.

In the second half, the Rangers did not find the back of the net but did manage to get two shots on the Bulldogs. Brown saved an additional five shots

from the Bulldogs in the second half.

Northwestern strung a couple chances together in the second half but were unable to take advantage. This kept the score at 1-0 until the final blow of the whistle as the Rangers dropped the conference playoff opener.

The Rangers' third season under head coach Alex Piekarski has ended, with his team going 7-5-7 on the season.

"We're disappointed to have lost in the first round," Piekarski said. "But I don't want it to diminish what we were able to do."

Piekarski had seven seniors on the team, with five of them graduating.

"For some of them, I was their third coach," Piekarski said. "I told them that I was proud of them and that they left the program in a better spot than where it was."

Piekarski also talked about how proud he is of the team and how players continued to persevere despite the setbacks that have happened. Several received GAC honors this year.

Let's keep this attendance up, Rangers

CADE'S CALLS



CADE KENNEDY

As the fall sports season ends at Northwestern, I begin to wonder about how much can change in one season.

That thought brings me back to a column earlier

this year I wrote about how we need to support our teams. Based on the results that I have seen, it seems that you agree as well.

The largest improvement came with attendance for volleyball games, as an average of 272 fans showed up to watch games at Percell Fieldhouse. While our attendance is nowhere near the top of the conference, the fact that we had 126 more people watching volleyball games shows that we can make improvements and create a better atmosphere.

Volleyball is not the only sport that saw improvements, as the soccer team had an average of 91 people watching their games. One of those games stood out to me, as 157 people watched the Lady Rangers play Harding on Oct. 1. If we can get that kind of support

for every single game, then we could have a chance to lead the GAC in attendance.

While that may not seem like an accomplishment for some people, the idea that we potentially could fill a stadium could entice some athletes to come to Northwestern and help improve our program. You need an advantage in every aspect of your program, and having a great atmosphere starts with filling a stadium.

While volleyball and soccer have shown improvements in attendance, football has seen the exact opposite. Only 2,275 people attended football games this year, which is a stark decline

from last season. In 2021, 2,917 people showed up to Ranger Field to watch games, meaning that an average of 642 people decided to not show up to games this year.

I understand that not everyone can attend games, but when that many people decide not to show up, it can become a problem.

What does that say about our programs when seemingly no one wants to watch them?

We must do better when it comes to promoting our teams. Think about how many people show up to our games with little promotion. If we had more energy towards getting people to games, our programs would be better off.

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VOLLEYBALL**Lady Rangers head to GAC tourney**

By **JACOB ERVIN**
Student Reporter

Northwestern volleyball is gearing up to play in the Great American Conference championship tournament Thursday in Shawnee.

Northwestern is currently ranked seventh in the conference with a record of 7-9 in conference play and a record of 16-14 overall for the season.

The Lady Rangers started conference play 2-0 for the first time since joining the GAC but have struggled with injuries as the season progressed.

One of the players injured was the team's starting middle, Ravyn Burns, who is seventh in the conference for blocks per set and a fifth year player on the team. She will miss the remainder of her final season.

Addison Wimmer, a sophomore on the team, said the team has lost four starters over the course of the season.

"We've kind of been on a rollercoaster this season," Winner said. "We've had to switch up our lineup so many times, and then we got people sick all the time and people are hurt all the time, so our roster is dropping like flies."

Wimmer has helped with the volleyball team's fortitude in the face of adversity.

Wimmer, who was named

Freshman of the GAC last season, leads the conference in both points and kills for the entirety of the season.

Another contributing factor to the team's success is the new coaching staff, players said. Jon Bingesser took over as the head coach of Northwestern volleyball in the spring, and Carmae Jones, a junior on the team, said he has brought intensity with him.

"He definitely brings a fiery energy to both practices and games," Jones said.

Jones, who is the starting middle hitter for the team, also praised their graduate assistant, Leslie Polanco.

This is Polanco's first year on the coaching staff and her first season coaching. She formerly played in the GAC and is from the Dominican Republic.

"She transformed our team a lot this year," Jones said. "She's really been able to help us mentally throughout the season, especially with our losses that have really stuck with us."

The GAC Championships are at FireLake Arena in Shawnee, Oklahoma on Nov. 10 through Nov. 12.

Northwestern will play in the quarterfinals against Oklahoma Baptist at 5 p.m. Thursday to determine if they will move on to the next round and have a chance at the GAC volleyball championship.



Photo by J.D. Eddy

Cameron Lobb hits the ball in the air during Northwestern's game against Southwestern on Nov. 1 at Percefull Fieldhouse. The Lady Rangers lost to the Bulldogs, 3-1. Northwestern finished seventh in the GAC standings.