AFR TODAY

THE PUBLICATION OF AFR INSURANCE
AN AFFILIATE OF OKLAHOMA FARMERS UNION
VOL. 104, NO. 3 | FALL 2023

AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS

Angel ON THE END OF THE LINE

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UPCOMING 2023 EVENTS

Sept. 4	Labor Day; Home Office Closed
Sept. 6-12	Ag & Historic Trip - Coastal Maine
Sept. 8-13	NFU Legislative Fly-In; Washington, D.C.
Sept. 28-Oct. 8	Tulsa State Fair, Tulsa
Oct. 19	AFR Golf Tournament
Nov. 6	AFR Central Speech Contest; Tecumseh
Nov. 7	AFR Northeast Speech Contest; Sapulpa
Nov. 9	AFR Southeast Speech Contest; EOSC
Nov. 13	AFR Southwest Speech Contest; Cache
Nov.16	AFR Northwest Speech Contest; Enid
Nov. 23-24	Thanksgiving; Home Office Closed
Dec. 1	Poster Contest Deadline
Dec. 2	AFR State Speech Contest; Stillwater
Dec. 7-9	Tulsa Farm Show; Tulsa Fairgrounds
Dec. 25-26	Christmas; Home Office Closed
Dec. 31- Jan. 2	New Year's Eve; Home Office Closed

VOL. 104, NO. 3 FALL 2023
www.afrcoop.org
First Published in 1920

AFR Today is published by
AFR Insurance
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ANNUAL MEETINGS & CONVENTION DEADLINES ANNOUNCED

By Paul Jackson, Secretary

All American Farmers & Ranchers (Farmers Union) county and local organizations and policyholders will hold annual meetings this fall to conduct business and elect a slate of delegates and alternates for the annual meetings of the American Farmers & Ranchers Mutual Insurance Company, Inc., and Oklahoma Farmers Union. Some local organizations will hold their meetings independent from county meetings, but also conduct business to elect delegates for the state annual membership and policyholder meetings.

If your county and local meeting is not listed in this issue of AFR Today, contact your local/county organization leadership to find out when they will be meeting to participate in the business meeting and local delegates election for the membership and policyholder state annual meetings.

The AFRMIC/OFU Bylaws require a candidate for a particular director or officer position to file in writing with the AFRMIC Secretary and OFU Secretary between one-hundred-and-twenty (120) calendar days and ninety (90) calendar days prior to the next annual meeting, thereby making the filing period thirty (30) calendar days.

October 25, 2023: Deadline for resignation notification of intent to file by current officer or director filing for any seat other than the current position held.

October 26-November 27, 2023: Board officer and director candidates filing period. (Filing is during normal business hours, Monday – Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.)

The following elected positions will be presented for a vote at the 2024 AFRMIC/OFU Annual Meetings and State Convention. All elected positions are three-year terms unless otherwise noted:

AFR State Vice President: Currently held by Ryan Plemmons, Broken Bow
District 1 Agent Director: Currently held by John Porter, Edmond
District 4 Agent Director: Currently held by Landon Jestis, Bokchito
District 2 Independent Director: Currently held by Brett Morris, Ninnekah

November 27, 2023: Deadline to file for an elected position. (Completed packet must be received by 4:45 p.m.) Background checks are required as part of the application process.

November 27, 2023: Deadline to submit changes to bylaws to be considered by the bylaws committee, 90 days before the first day of convention. (Must be received by 4:45 p.m.) Any proposed bylaws advanced by the committee and associated in-person and/or virtual educational sessions will be published on the AFRMIC and OFU websites.

December 15, 2023: Deadline to submit local and county resolutions to the AFRMIC/OFU State Office to be considered by the State Policy Committee.

January 8, 2024: Deadline for AFR/OFU Membership Memorial Roll submission.

January 31, 2024: Deadline to submit annual officers reports and financial statements to meet requirements for OFU to file IRS 990s and for locals and counties to be eligible to send delegates to the state convention.

February 23-25, 2024: AFR Convention (AFRMIC Annual Policyholder Meeting/ OFU Annual Membership Meeting)

AFR Welcomes Tarp to the Cooperative Team

Julie Tarp joined the American Farmers & Ranchers Cooperative team in early 2023 as the executive assistant to the state president. In this role, Tarp provides administrative support to both the president and the Cooperative as a whole. Additionally, she is responsible for a variety of projects requiring confidential and efficient problem solving.

Tarp attended Front Range Community College in Westminster, Colo. After returning home to Oklahoma, she worked as an AT&T sales representative for eight years, a Chesapeake Energy land technician for five years, and an administrative assistant at Love's Corporate headquarters for three years. Tarp and her daughter, Savannah, have lived in Edmond for 13 years. They enjoy shopping, bowling and spending time with their Geat Pyrenees rescue dogs, Gary and Buster.

OKLAHOMA LEGISLATIVE REVIEW 2023 Highlights

By Bray Haven
AFR Cooperative Lobbyist

The legislature wrapped regular session in June, then two extraordinary sessions in both July and August as the 2023 session came to a close contentiously as legislative leaders overrode several vetoes, while in severe disagreement with the Governor on several matters. But it did conclude with some agreement on education reform. The year also wrapped up well financially for the state as revenues set all-time records. AFR saw significant progress on some policy reforms and had high praises for legislators for their continued investment for the drought programs and historic investments into public education.

TOP ISSUES

EDUCATION REFORM MAIN FOCUS OF LEGISLATIVE LEADERS AND GOVERNOR IN 2023 SESSION

Governor and legislative Education Package summary: $785M in new funding for teacher raises, schools and other programs.

• HB2901 appropriates $500 million to the state aid formula and $125 million to the Redbud Fund, which distributes funds for school buildings to low-property tax districts and charter schools.

• HB2902 modifies the school funding formula by increasing the weight for low income students from 0.25 to 0.3, increasing the transportation supplement and redefining which schools qualify for the small school by increasing to 750 students.

• HB2903 establishes of a three-year pilot program to add police officers and security upgrades to schools.

• HB2904 appropriates $150 million for the school safety program in HB2903.

• SB1118 appropriates $10 million over three years for a new reading program beginning in the 2023-24 school year. It will fund literacy instructional teams placed regionally across the state to support school districts.

• SB1119 raises salaries for all certified employees, including teachers, principals, supervisors, counselors, librarians and nurses (but excluding superintendents and retired teachers.) The raises are $3,000 for less than four years experience, $4,000 for five to nine years, $5,000 for 10-15 years and $6,000 for more than 15 years.

• SB1120 increases the number of school districts eligible for Redbud funding, and changes the fund's revenue source from medical marijuana tax collections to state appropriations.

• SB1121 provides six weeks of paid maternity leave to full-time public school employees employed for at least one year.

A $155 million tax credit plan, set to grow to $255 million by 2026, is also in place. Families with children in private K-12 schools would receive refundable tax credits ranging from $5,000 to$7,500 per student, depending on household income, to offset costs of schooling. Home-school families would qualify for a $1,000 refundable tax credit per child.

JUNE LOFT REPORT MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLO

A recent report from the Legislative Office of Fiscal Transparency (LOFT) highlights operational inefficiencies within the Commissioners of the Land Office (CLO) and recommends divesting land holdings for increased revenue. Managed by a state board, the CLO oversees around $2.3 billion in state land assets to generate financial returns for education institutions. Despite its holdings, the CLO's impact on education funding is limited due to overall state funding. The report suggests that divesting land and making it taxable could boost annual distributions from $122 million to $175 million for public schools. Conflicts arise due to exempt property holdings, and recommendations include gradually divesting land, prohibiting non-public company investments, and providing transparent reports to taxing districts. The CLO defends its unique contribution to education funding and its conservative investment strategy.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 SEES ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR STATE GOV. REVENUE

Finally, as the fiscal year wrapped up in July, General Revenue Fund collections were higher than anticipated by more than 20 percent. The constitution requires a transfer of the funds, so more than $222.9 million has been transferred to the state's Rainy Day Fund. Following the record growth of the state's savings, Gov. Stitt said there has never been a better time to cut taxes.

PRIORITY BILLS

5 AFR SUPPORTED BILLS BECOME LAW

HB 2053
Establishes rules and standards for protests to groundwater rights applications, limiting interested parties and establishing relevant parties to file complaints with depending on the circumstances; EMERGENCY.

HB 2239
Creates the Terry Peach North Canadian Watershed Restoration Act which directs the Conservation Commission to establish a pilot program for removing harmful woody species in the North Canadian Watershed; EMERGENCY.

HB 1847
Adds one member each appointed by the leadership of the House and Senate to the Emergency Drought Commission; EMERGENCY.

HB 1962
Expands access to farm permits for minors operating Class D motor vehicles, details requirements, regulations, as well procedures for attaining and retaining said permit from Service OK.

2 MEDICAL MARIJUANA REFORM BILLS BECOME LAW

SB 475
Enhances and clarifies the authority of the Bureau of Narcotics to seize assets and issue orders for misconduct; EMERGENCY.

SB 913
Requires applicants for a medical marijuana business license to commercially grow file a bond with their application, deems it unlawful to operate without acquiring a bond; EMERGENCY.

If you'd like regular legislative and industry updates from the AFR Cooperative, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AmericanFarmersandRanchers. For more in-depth coverage, email Bray Haven at bray.l.haven@gmail.com.

Find us on *Social Media*

For the most up-to-date information on AFR activities, follow us on social media!

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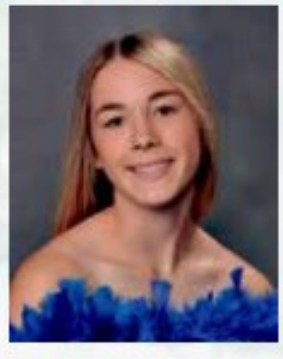
We love to see what you're doing in your communities. Don't forget to tag us in your pictures!

You can also visit us at www.afrcoop.org.

Graham Insurance/ Marlow AFR Local 70 Scholarship Recipients

Ean Hewitt, Kendall Kizarr, and Kennedy Kizarr



Congratulations! Good Luck to your higher studies and future career.

Well Represented

AFR Cooperative Names 2023 Legislative Advocates

AFR Cooperative has named two state legislators 2023 AFR Legislative Advocates. This year's AFR Legislative Advocate Awards recognize Sen. Roland Pederson, R-Burlington, and Rep. Anthony Moore, R-Clinton.

The AFR Legislative Advocate Award is presented to state leaders that advocate for AFR Cooperative policies and work hard on issues that are important to the AFR membership during each state legislative session. Pederson and Moore were recognized for their work during the 2023 legislative session.

"We applaud the leadership of all our legislators and their service to Oklahoma," said AFR Cooperative President Scott Blubaugh. But, Roland Pederson and Anthony Moore are two legislators who went above and beyond for rural Oklahoma in 2023 and we're pleased to honor them with this award."

Pederson represents Oklahoma Senate District 19. He has carried several pieces of legislation during his tenure to improve the lives of rural Oklahomans and the state's farmers and ranchers. He is a member of the Senate Rural Caucus and has served on the Agriculture Committee and other committees very important to the AFR membership.

Moore has been a staunch proponent of property and mineral owner rights during his relatively young career in the legislature. He authored AFR priority legislation that increased regulation on the medical marijuana industry by requiring a bond for new facilities in an attempt to reconcile abandoned properties already appearing in our rural communities. He is a strong supporter of AFR policies and will be an ally in the future on many issues important to AFR members.

FARM STRESS
National Suicide Hotline
988

AFR FARM STRESS TEAM
farmstress@afrmic.com

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE
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FREE FARM STRESS COURSE

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER, EMAIL FARMSTRESS@AFRMIC.COM.

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Giving Back?
Is your AFR county or local organization giving back to your community? Whether it's a small donation or a big project, we'd love to hear about it!
405-218-5593 afrcoop@afrmic.com

AFR Ranch Support

AFR Supports Ranchers' Access to Antibiotics

Federal legislation introduced by an Oklahoma congressman has many of the state's farmers and ranchers hopeful for a reprieve from a new antibiotic regulation.

The Stop Government Overreach in Ranching Act was introduced to Congress June 12 by Congressmen Josh Brecheen (R-OK) and Eric Burlison (R-MO). American Farmers & Ranchers (AFR) Cooperative is supportive of this legislation, which would reverse the Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) Guidance for Industry (GFI) #263.

Effective June 11, 2023, FDA GFI #263 requires farmers and ranchers to obtain a prescription to purchase commonly used livestock antibiotics, such as penicillin, oxytetracycline, gentamicin, sulfa-based antibiotics and many other antibiotics previously available over-the-counter. The proposed legislation would repeal GFI #263 and prohibit the FDA from issuing a similar restriction.

The new over-the-counter antibiotic restriction follows several years of frustration created by the FDA's Veterinary Feed Directive, a 2015 rule that requires farmers and ranchers to obtain a veterinary prescription to purchase medicated feed for livestock. As the population of large animal veterinarians continues to decrease, farmers and ranchers have found obtaining a feed prescription progressively more difficult. Many of the large animal veterinarians still practicing are hesitant to write the prescriptions for various reasons. Some farmers and ranchers are concerned the new over-the-counter antibiotic restrictions will lead to the same complications they've experienced with medicated feed. When they need the antibiotics most, they may not be able to get them.

"Our cattle producers have been shocked by the news that they would be unable to purchase over the counter the same antibiotics they have used safely for decades," said AFR Cooperative President Scott Blubaugh. "The sentiment from our farmers and ranchers has been clear and unanimous—It's an unnecessary added expense and will be an undue burden on producers. Our livestock producers have years of experience managing these antibiotics; they know what their animals need to thrive. We applaud Rep. Brecheen's trust in farmers and ranchers and his work to roll back this burden on American agriculture."

78TH ANNUAL SPEECH CONTEST:

CENTRAL DISTRICT- NOV. 6
NORTHEAST DISTRICT- NOV. 7
SOUTHEAST DISTRICT- NOV. 9
SOUTHWEST DISTRICT- NOV. 13
NORTHWEST DISTRICT- NOV. 16
STATE CONTEST- DEC. 2

Fairness for Farmers Update

AFR Comments on New Truth-in-Labeling Rule

At the 121st Convention of National Farmers Union (NFU), U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced a proposed rule regarding the voluntary "Product of USA" label for meat, poultry and egg products. The proposed rule is intended to close loopholes that allow meat from imported animals to be labeled as "Product of USA." AFR submitted the below letter in support of the new rule during the rulemaking comment period in June 2023.

Dear Under Secretary Esteban:

On behalf of AFR/OFU Cooperative's more than 60,000 members, I am pleased to submit comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regarding the proposed rule titled "Voluntary Labeling of Regulated Products with United States-Origin Claims." AFR/OFU believes that "Product of USA" and "Made in the USA" labeling has a history of gross misuse in the meat industry. We are therefore supportive of the proposed rule and believe its finalization is long overdue.

The AFR/OFU membership includes a diverse and bipartisan swath of Oklahoma's family farmers and ranchers. Our legislative policy is voted on first by a committee of farmers and ranchers, then our membership as a whole. The truth-in-labeling issue has been at the forefront of discussions for years. The opinion of our farmers and ranchers never waivers—the current use of "Product of USA" and "Made in the USA" misleads unsuspecting consumers and puts American farmers and ranchers at a disadvantage as they compete with cheaper and often inferior foreign products.

Our fully grassroots policy—written by our farmer and rancher members—unequivocally states: "We demand the USDA enforce truth in labeling. We oppose the use of food product labeling that misleads consumers. To qualify for 'Product of USA' labeling, livestock and poultry must be bred, born, fed, harvested and processed within the borders of the United States."

While the proposed rule is a voluntary approach, we are still supportive of its intended purpose. Misleading, unclear or inappropriate use of "Product of USA" and "Made in the USA" labeling confuses consumers and negatively impacts the farmers and ranchers who proudly produce truly American meat products. The proposed rule is a win-win for both parties and is a step toward a more fair and transparent marketplace. We wholeheartedly support the rule and its intended purpose.

AFR Strive

AFR Cooperative's newest education program, AFR Strive, hosted its first Oklahoma agriculture industry tour July 27-28 in southwest Oklahoma. The tour focused on the cotton industry and how the cooperative model of business makes that industry possible in Oklahoma.

Overnight industry tours, like the Strive Cotton Tour, are intended to educate participants about agriculture and industry systems in different parts of the state. The small-group format also allows for in-depth networking between participants and industry experts.

The Strive Cotton Tour began with a tour and discussion at the Farmers Cooperative Cotton Gin near Carnegie. The state-of-the-art gin was built in 2017 and has doubled the ginning capacity of the cooperative. AFR member and gin board president, Barry Squires, led the tour and discussed the efficiency and quality improvements the gin has provided area cotton farmers.

Following the gin tour, Squires—a cotton farmer himself—led field visits to nearby cotton and corn crops, where he talked about irrigation in Caddo County and yield comparisons between irrigated versus dryland acres.

The next morning, the Strive Cotton Tour traveled to Lake Altus-Lugert to meet Tom Buchanan, the general manager of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District. The district is a gravity-flow irrigation system that allows water to travel 300 miles without the use of pumps.

Beyond showcasing the Altus Dam and the irrigation district, Buchanan led a lively discussion about the future of water in Oklahoma, including what water means to different parts of the state.

From the lake, the Strive Cotton Tour moved on to the Plains Cotton Cooperative Association Cotton Warehouse in Altus. The warehouse is an enormous facility that is used to store, sort and ship cotton.

During the warehouse visit, Strive members learned from the regional warehouse manager, Tracy Springs; the warehouse sub-manager Joe Taylor; and Jeremy Gifford, a cotton buyer housed in the warehouse headquarters.

Gifford taught participants how to read cotton pricing charts and Springs and Taylor led participants on a facility tour that included cotton organization and packaging, and watching the oversized machine that loads shipping containers onto waiting train cars.

Overall, the Strive Cotton Tour was a success. Every stop was a showcase of the cooperative system at work and participants learned a substantial amount about the cotton industry in Oklahoma, including how the industry couldn't operate with farmers coming together to create the infrastructure needed to get cotton from the field to the train.

AFR Strive is intended for 25-40-year-old farmers, ranchers and agribusiness owners. The program focuses on business and personal development, industry involvement and networking. Funding for AFR Strive is provided by the AFR Cooperative, the AFR Foundation and educational grants. The Strive Cotton Tour was funded entirely by a generous donation from the CHS Foundation.

Angel ON THE END OF THE LINE

If you ask many of the farmers who lived through the 1980s Farm Crisis, they'll tell you there was once an angel who took their call—an Oklahoman named Mona Lee Brock.

That was the resounding message when American Farmers & Ranchers (AFR) Cooperative gathered farmers at the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF) May 15 to recognize Mona Lee Brock's contributions to the farming community, both in Oklahoma and across the country. The AFR event included an unveiling of memorabilia and a bronze relief in the likeness of Brock, but it was the farmer testimonies that truly honored her.

"What a great day to celebrate the life of an individual who made the difference in the lives of so many farm families. She was a bulldog when it came to helping farmers and ranchers," said AFR Cooperative Secretary Paul Jackson, who emceed the event. "Today, we look back at the 1980s—what created the crisis, the people that were impacted, the people that are still impacted today, and how they were helped by Mona Lee Brock."

As one of the first farm stress advocates, Brock's contributions can be counted in the number of lives she saved during the 1980s Farm Crisis and beyond. As the suicide rate among farmers soared, Brock took it upon herself to answer phone calls—first from fellow Oklahomans, then from distressed farmers across the country—all dealing with low product prices and high interest rates. Many of those who called faced foreclosure. Brock became a de facto farm stress counselor, doing everything she could to keep farmers on the line and connected—to keep them from committing suicide.

"Mona Lee related to the farmers she talked with," said AFR Cooperative President Scott Blubaugh. "She and her husband had recently lost their farm and she could give the farmers who called something no one else could—the listening ear of someone who truly understood. Someone who understood what farming means to farmers. Mona Lee understood that farming is in you,

1970S FARM CRISIS

In the 1970s, farmers had been called to plant "fencerow to fencerow" and "get big or get out." In response, farmers nationwide over-produced. With high yields and high prices, farmers borrowed, and banks lent. But as the decade came to a close, lending rates soared. Soon, farmers couldn't afford their interest payments.

By the 1980s, a bushel of wheat sold for the same dollar amount it had in 1919. And, interest rates were in double digits—a record 21.5 percent in 1981. Foreclosure loomed for farmers across the country. As farm after farm went under, suicide rates began to rise. Most farmers were not equipped to handle the incredible stress and ultimate heartbreak.

that it is the core of who you are as a person. And that the loss of a farm is not just the loss of land, but really a loss of identity."

Brock was recognized within Oklahoma and across the nation for her work. She worked closely with the farm relief organization Farm Aid and became close friends with the organization's co-founder Willie Nelson, who called her the "Angel on the End of the Line."

"When you think about the lives that were positively impacted and changed by one person, it makes you marvel at how unique Mona Lee Brock was to all of us in agriculture," said Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur. "She gave everything she had just to make a difference. It's a fabulous story to tell."

Through the creation of a national hotline, Brock and only a handful of other volunteers ultimately saved not only thousands of farms, but also thousands of families. As the years went by, the hotline was needed less frequently and was eventually shelved. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the work related to farm stress management and farmer suicide prevention as suicide rates among farmers are once again increasing.

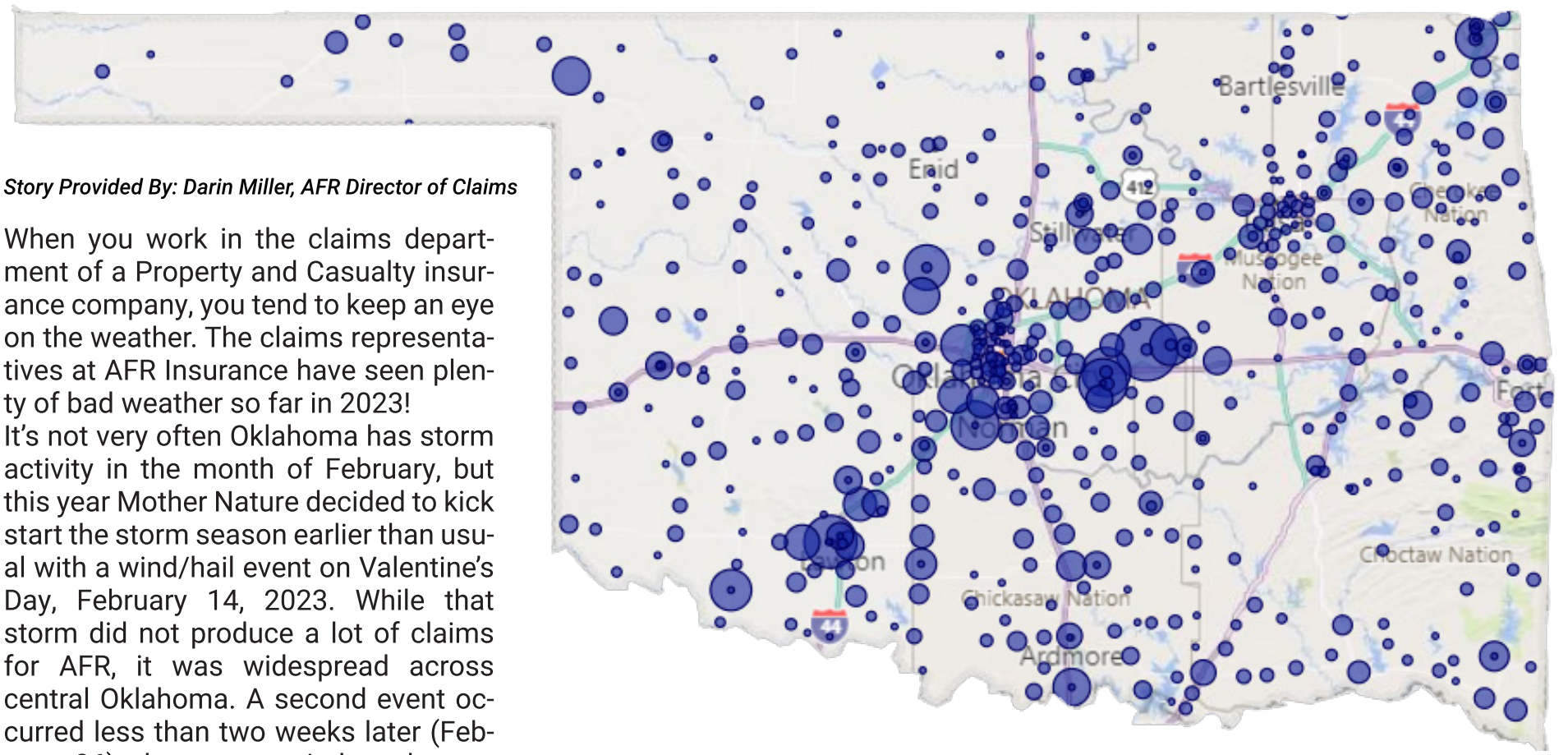
"Oklahoma Farmers Union was proud to house the suicide hotline all those years ago and today we are once again proud to champion the cause of farmer and rancher mental health," said Blubaugh. "The farmer suicide rate has once again increased over the last decade, but I'm proud to say—thanks to Mona Lee's original efforts—we are more prepared this time. And, there are so many more people ready to answer the call."

The bronze bas relief in the likeness of Mona Lee Brock was sculpted by Pat Lane, Konowa, Okla. Lane is a longtime agent and agency owner for AFR Insurance. The display cabinet and sculpture were generously sponsored by Farm Aid.

Oklahoma Secretary Commissioner of Agriculture Blayne Arthur spoke about the importance of Mona Lee Brock to the farming community during the 1980s Farm Crisis. Scott Blubaugh, President, and Paul Jackson, Secretary, both of Oklahoma Farmers Union/ American Farmers & Ranchers Cooperative, also spoke about the contributions Brock made to the effort to save family farms and farmers in the 1980s.

Several farmers who were personally assisted by Mona Lee Brock gave their testimonies at the event, including Jim Esbenshade, Colbert, Okla., and Scott Blubaugh on behalf of Cletus Blubaugh, Tonkawa, Okla. Additional testimonies were given by Wayne Allen, American Agriculture Movement Oklahoma Chapter, and Ronnie Brock, son of Mona Lee Brock, Caddo, Okla.

A Year for the Record Books



Story Provided By: Darin Miller, AFR Director of Claims

When you work in the claims department of a Property and Casualty insurance company, you tend to keep an eye on the weather. The claims representatives at AFR Insurance have seen plenty of bad weather so far in 2023!

It's not very often Oklahoma has storm activity in the month of February, but this year Mother Nature decided to kick start the storm season earlier than usual with a wind/hail event on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2023. While that storm did not produce a lot of claims for AFR, it was widespread across central Oklahoma. A second event occurred less than two weeks later (February 26) when strong winds and tornadoes struck various parts of the state, with Cheyenne and Norman being hit the hardest.

Efforts to clear claims from the second event were just getting started when a third event occurred on March 2. This time eastern Oklahoma was affected with most claims concentrated in the Miami area. Two weeks later, we experienced a fourth event on March 16 that primarily affected Frederick, Sulphur and Davis. We didn't quite get out of March without having one more wind/hail event. On March 31, storms ran across the state. For that storm alone, AFR handled claims out of 54 different counties. In total over the course of a month and a half, AFR recognized five storm events that produced more than 1,100 claims.

Turns out, we were just getting started! April presented two more events: One on April 10 and the other on April 19, with the latter producing more than 1,500 claims. A cluster of severe storms moved across central Oklahoma on April 19, forcing thousands of people to take cover. An EF3 tornado impacted the community of Cole and an EF2 caused significant damage in Shawnee. According to a Fox Weather article , those tornadoes featured two meteorological phenomena: A "deviant tornado motion" and a Fujiwhara Effect. Most tornadoes travel in a southwest to northeast pattern, but these tornadoes turned to the north, leading to the term "deviant tornado motion." When multiple circulations rotate around each other "like two figure skaters going in for a hug," this is known as the Fujiwhara Effect.

AFR adjusters thought they were getting a break with all of May and the first half of June relatively quiet, but the week of June 12-18 there was widespread damage that generated another 1,800 claims. Of that total, 418 of those claims originated in Comanche County, 290 in Grady County, and 100 in Payne County. The remaining claims came out of 67 different counties.

There has been very little storm activity since the middle of June, but overall from the first of the year through August 7, AFR has seen a record number of storm claims relative to the same time frame in previous years—5,642 claims. The map below gives perspective on where these claims were located across the state. Each blue dot represents the location of an auto claim or property claim. The larger the blue dot, the more concentration of claims in that area.

Knock on wood, but no more storms for the rest of 2023 will be welcome!

AFR Insures World Champion Pickup

AFR insures thousands of vehicles, but there's one pickup on the road that's very special to a 12-year-old young man from Wewoka. Blaze Carter is the proud owner of a 2022 Dodge Ram 3500, insured by AFR and wrapped with a graphic announcing "Vegas Tuffest Junior World Champion."

Blaze has good reason to be proud of his pickup. He won it last December in Las Vegas when he competed in the tie-down roping event at the Mike and Sherrylynn Johnson's Vegas Tuffest Junior World Championship. Blaze tied his calf in 11.3 seconds.

When asked how it felt to win, Blaze remembers the pre-run emotions the most: "I was excited and pretty nervous, especially because I was the first to compete."

For the Carter family, rodeo is a way of life. Blaze's dad, Brian, calf ropes competitively; Blaze's mom, Tera Carter, films for the family; and both parents have coaching backgrounds they've put to good use with their own children.

"It's family-oriented," said Brian. "Whoever's not roping is studying some aspect of the performance to benefit who competes next."

All three Carter children—Blake, Timber and Blaze—began competing in early elementary school and have found success.

The oldest, Blake, is on the rodeo team at Murray State College. He competed at the national level in breakaway roping as an eighth grader and in tie-down as a senior. The middle Carter child, Timber, is a senior at Wewoka High School. She made nationals in eighth-grade in a youth event called ribbon roping.

Blaze, the youngest, started his rodeo career as young as five in an event called ribbon goats. He made it to nationals in ribbons and breakaway as a fifth grader and in tie-down this year as a seventh grader.

Despite their success, the Carters are in many ways just a normal family. They don't have special connections or a legacy of rodeo in their history.

"I was the first in my family to compete," said Brian. "You can be a first-generation cowboy and have some pretty quick success if you put your mind to it. I hope whoever reads this is inspired. If we can do it, anyone can do it."

Having said that, a lot of effort has gone into the Carters' success. In fact, Blaze says his favorite part of rodeo is not only winning, but also learning how to work hard.

"You have to put out the effort to do good," said Blaze. "You have to practice at it and work at it. I practice five to six days a week for a couple hours a day. Taking care of the animals adds about an extra hour on top of that."

Taking care of the animals is a big commitment. "Rodeo teaches you life lessons," said Tera. "The kids understand they have to get up and go take care of the animals because the animals can't take care of themselves."

That life lesson has been instilled in Blaze. "There's a bunch of things that go into it. You've got to feed, brush and saddle your horses. You have to feed them on time. If they're sick, you've got to give them medicine. You've got to give them what they deserve."

Brian sees a lot of life lessons in the rodeo lifestyle. When asked what's the value his family gets out of rodeo, Brian is quick to answer: "The discipline, the respect, the consistency, and the humbleness the rodeo way of life requires you to have. You work very hard to get something accomplished and you succeed once or twice, but then you have to keep working to maintain that level of ability."

This "support from family, but reliance on self" is a key value for the Carter family.

"The events we compete in are not team events, so there's no one to blame failure on," said Brian. "It's you and your horse as your partner. It brings a level of self-respect that you control your own destiny."

That's a lesson the Carter children have learned over and over again. One of Brian's favorite moments is when one of his kids leaves the stage after a big win.

"I see my kids win on the biggest of stages, but when we walk away, they blink and realize that moment is gone. For them to do that again, they have to go back to the drawing board. You can be at the highest of high in an event, but tomorrow you've got to go back and work at it."

All these life lessons have helped Blaze get to the top of his event, but on the day of competition, he's not thinking about what rodeo means to him. He's just focused on the task at hand: "I think about winning and making the run, and doing what I know how to do."

Blaze plans to continue his rodeo career. He wants to be a professional calf roper and hopes to make it to the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) someday.

As for the pickup, the Carters are currently driving it to rodeos and will have the chance to purchase it at the end of the year. Blaze wants to keep his truck. He'll turn 13 soon and will be one year closer to driving it himself.

Giving Back

Cherokee County AFR Local #489 provided funding for wound kits for the Cherokee County Sheriff's Departmant. Pictured are representatives of Cherokee County AFR Local #489, Vanessa McInnes and Brandi Bryant with Cherokee County Sheriff Jason Chennault and Undersheriff James Brown.

AFR Local #310 donated $500 to the Binger-Oney FFA Chapter. Pictured is Caddo County AFR Local #310 President Lance Coffey (center right) with members of the Binger-Oney FFA Chapter and their advisor.

The Delaware County donated $2,000 to agricultural education efforts in Delaware County. Through the total amount donated, $500 was given to the Delaware County 4-H and $300 each was given to the Grove, Jay, Colcord, Kansas and Oaks FFA chapters.

The Canadian County AFR Local #17 donated $1,500 to the Oklahoma Kids Korral, a project of the Toby Keith Foundation. OK Kids Korral is a haven for the entire family as a child with cancer receives treatment. Pictured are representatives of Canadian County Local #17, Shanna Preble Foster and Ed Preble with AFR CFO Bernadette Autrey, AFR State Secretary Paul Jackson and AFR Youth Coordinator Tailor Atkinson.

Are you a member of a county or local AFR organization that's doing great things in your corner of Oklahoma?

Let us know!

We'd love to showcase your contributions. Email details and photos to afrcoop@afrmic.com.

County and Local Organizations are Committed to Their Communities!

Creek County AFR hosted an end-of-school-year cookout for Lonestar School in Sapulpa, May 22. Pictured are representatives of Lone Star School faculty, Justin Whitehouse, Tracie Hale and Jacob Cason with Johnie Brown of Brown Insurance and AFR Field Rep. Jim Pilkington.

EAGLE PAINTING FINDS New Roost

Adapted from a story written by Bob Melton, county editor at the Seminole Producer. Story first appeared in the Seminole Producer.

Butner Public Schools, located in Cromwell in Seminole County, received a generous art donation on June 20. Former Butner student and Seminole County Farmers Union President Dan Houser donated the painting of an eagle, the school's mascot, painted by well-known Oklahoma artist Dr. Bob E. Palmer. Houser acquired the painting at the 2018 AFRPAC auction.

Houser is a proud 1962 Butner School graduate. He originally attended the "old" Butner School in Butner for ten years before moving into the "new" school for his last two years of high school. His son is Butner School Superintendent Dan "Butch" Houser.

Houser knows much about Butner School's history. He believes the first Butner school opened in 1896. It was originally located in the old town of Butner, located just across the county line in Hughes County. Butner, Cromwell and Excelsior consolidated their schools in 1960, which is when the current Butner School in Cromwell was built.

The eagle painting Houser purchased at auction has hung in the office of Houser's daughter, Kerri (Houser) Newman, for several years. Newman is the Wewoka AFR Insurance agent. When she attended the 2018 AFR State Convention in Norman, the AFRPAC fundraising auction included the eagle painting. Newman expressed her wish to buy the painting but didn't think she would be able to afford it.

However, her dad, Dan Houser, placed the winning bid on the painting. Newman had just purchased the building where her Wewoka office is now located, and Dan wanted her to use the painting to decorate her new office. However, he made it clear that when she was through with it, the painting was to go to Butner school. Newman has finally decided she could give the painting up so the school can enjoy it.

Although Newman attended school in Wewoka, her oldest son graduated from Butner and her youngest son attended Butner until transferring to Wewoka to play football. Her brother, Butch Houser, is the Butner School superintendent and her granddaughters attend Butner School. The family obviously has a rich history with Butner School.

Picture are (front row, left to right) Dan Houser, Seminole County Farmers Union president and painting donator; Brylan Maylen, Houser's great-granddaughter and fifth-grade Butner student; Kerri (Houser) Newman, AFR Insurance agent; Arenea Maylen, Houser's great-granddaughter and fourth-grade Butner student; Jensen Bare, second-grade Butner student; (back row, left to right) Riley Maylen, Houser's grandson; Dan (Butch) Houser, Butner superintendent; Josh Henry, Butner Elementary principal; Alisha Bare, Butner School counselor; and Kari Weaver, Butner School secretary. (Photo by Bob Melton)

The eagle painting that will soon be displayed in Butner School was created by Dr. Bob E. Palmer. Palmer has been an educator for more than 40 years. He has taught K-12, university-level classes and older adults. He is probably best known for his more than 1,800 large murals that can be found across the state of Oklahoma, Canada, Mexico and Eastern Europe. These murals have been the backdrop for television commercials, major movies and television series filmed in Oklahoma.

In 2012, Palmer was recognized by Gov. Mary Fallin with the "Governor's Art Award in Community Service."

AFR YOUTH

OSU BIG 3 CO-SPONSOR

AFR Cooperative is a proud co-sponsor of OSU Big 3 Field Days which was held on July 18-20 at Totusek Arena in Stillwater, Okla. During the three day event, OSU hosted over 1,500 contestants from around the country evaluating cattle, swine, sheep and goats. (Photo above: Overall Sweepstakes Senior Team, Keys FFA. Team members include Madison Hood, Savannah Crittenden, Martha Haggard, Chloee Barnes pictured with AFR Field Rep. Jim Pilkington.) Photos taken by Kate Jackson, Oklahoma Pork Council Intern.

2023 Poster Contest

- POSTERS MUST SOLELY BE THE WORK OF THE STUDENT. STUDENTS MAY USE CRAYONS, MARKERS, PENS, PENCILS, ETC.
- POSTERS WILL BE JUDGED ON ORIGINALITY, CREATIVITY, NEATNESS, SUBJECTIVITY AND OVERALL EFFECT.
- THERE ARE TWO AGE DIVISIONS. DIVISION I: GRADES 1 & 2 DIVISION II: GRADES 3 & 4
- GIFT CARDS WILL BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS IN EACH DIVISION: FIRST PLACE, $50; SECOND PLACE, $25; THIRD, FOURTH & FIFTH PLACE, $10.
- THE TOP 50 POSTERS FROM EACH DIVISION WILL BE ON DISPLAY DURING THE AFR CONVENTION IN FEBRUARY 2023 AT THE EMBASSY SUITES AND CONFERENCE CENTER IN NORMAN.
- POSTERS MUST BE TURNED IN TO YOUR LOCAL AFR INSURANCE AGENT OR MAILED TO THE AFR COOPERATIVE.
- ALL POSTERS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE AFR COOPERATIVE BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2023.
- FOR ORDER FORM VISIT WWW.AFRCOOP.ORG

Farm Fresh

County Match Scholarship Recipients

Sadie Foster
Arkansas Tech University
Cherokee County

Grace VanWagoner
Bethany College
Pawnee County

Martin Hare
Carl Albert University
Haskell County

Maggie Yarbrough
East Central University
Hughes County

Katie Richmond
Eastern Oklahoma State College
Latimer County

Hannah Morphis
Heartland Baptist College
Choctaw County

Peyton Higgins
Murray State College
Johnston County

Braden Lankford
Murray State College
Wagoner County

Libby Gibe
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M
Delaware County

Sadie Andrews
Murray State College
Mayes County

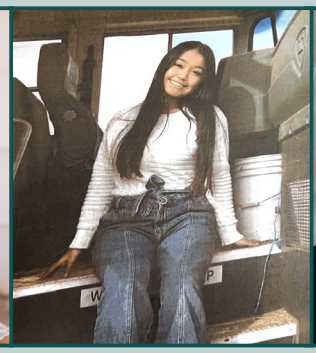
Kambry Johnson
Northern Oklahoma College
Major County

Willow VanHaren
Southeast Missouri State University
Hughes County

Evan Weaver
Northeastern State University
Mayes County

Benton Blasi
Northeastern State University
Nowata County

Kyanne Randolph
Northwestern Okla. State University
Major County



Laura Rawlins
Northwestern Okla. State University
Texas County

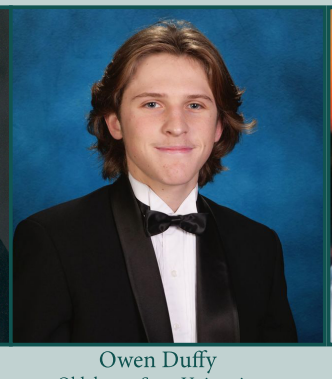
Connor Schaffer
Carl Albert University
McCurtain County

Brayden Stovall
Carl Albert University
McCuratin County

Adison Steeley
Oklahoma State University
Cherokee County

Zachary Mefford
Oklahoma State University
Harmon County

Bailey Boyd
Oklahoma State University
Harper County



Owen Duffy
Oklahoma State University
Kingfisher County

Brice Jackson
Oklahoma State University
Caddo County

Luke Schneberger
Oklahoma State University
Beckham County

County Match Scholarship Recipients

Allison Themer
Oklahoma State University
Kingfisher County

Zachary Griffeth
Oklahoma State University
Love County

Jose Rojas
Oklahoma State University
Major County

Gracie Chandler
Kiamichi Technology
McCurtain County

Krysha Green
Oklahoma State University
Marshall County

Abigail Warner
Oklahoma State University
Wagoner County

Mary Horton
University of Oklahoma
Kiowa County

Josie Glasgow
Southern Baptist University
Delaware County

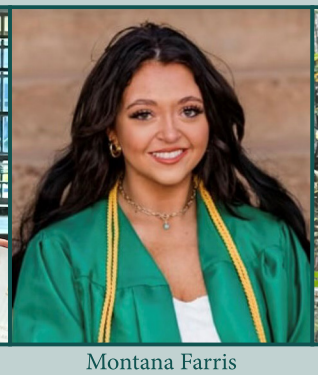
Caleb Philips
Southeastern Okla. State University
Johnston County

Riley Gore
Southwestern Okla. State University
Dewey County

Noah Heldermon
Southwestern Okla. State University
Dewey County

Lawson Lynch
University of Central Oklahoma
Texas County

Tarah Weise
Southwestern Okla. State University
Marshall County

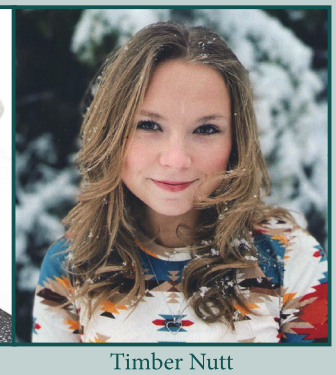


Montana Farris
West Texas A&M
Dewey County

Katelin Long
Tabor College
Harper County

Emma Maxwell
Texas Christian University
Cherokee County

Leniel Heredia
University of Central Oklahoma
Texas County



Timber Nutt
Seminole State College
Okfuskee County

Rainee Tonika
Eastern Okla. State College
McCurtain County

NOT PICTURED:

Christian Hill, ECU
Greyc'n Anderson, NOC
Trenten Rippy, OCCC
Logan Palmer, OSU
Emily Lake, OSU
Elizabeth Friend, OSU
Blaine Brown, OSU-IT
Eyan Williams, OU
Ethan Matt, RCC
Cale Poole, SCU
Leonel Lora, SWOSU
Colby Keller, USAO

78TH ANNUAL SPEECH CONTEST:

CENTRAL DISTRICT- NOV. 6
NORTHEAST DISTRICT- NOV. 7
SOUTHEAST DISTRICT- NOV. 9
SOUTHWEST DISTRICT- NOV. 13
NORTHWEST DISTRICT- NOV. 16
STATE CONTEST- DEC. 2

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The 2023 AFR Leadership Summit hosted a total of 90 teen and 160 senior campers from 40 different Oklahoma counties at the Heartland Conference Center near Midwest City. This year's Summit theme was "mission; I'M possible." Campers learned how there is no mission that is impossible when they are faced with adversity. Campers were challenged with establishing their own mission statements and were reminded of the importance of connection, service, citizenship, leadership and agriculture. They attended team-building workshops that enhanced their leadership skills and heard from Sweet Briar Creative about her story of becoming an entrepreneur.Throughout the week, teen and senior campers collectively packed 500 care packages that were sent to active military men and women overseas. Each package had 35 items, including two handwritten notes provided by individual campers. Campers showcased their talents during the Leadership Summit Pre-Session Talent Show. This year's talents covered a wide range, including singing, poetry and instrumentals. Aaron Chestnut, Marlow, won this year's talent competition and performed during the Leadership Summit Reception on Friday evening.

ANOTHER RECORD YEAR!

90 TEENS
160 SENIORS
40 COUNTIES

2023-2024 Youth Advisory Council

Kennedy Clark, Minco

"During my time on the AFR Youth Advisory Counil, I hope to be a light to everyone around me and help others find a passion and love for the industry that raised me."

Jamison McNiel, Bristow

"I've waited for this opportunity for along time, and now I hope to encourage the younger kids to dream big."

Ruby Bell, Bristow

"This year, I am most excited to serve alongside four other amazing council members. I hope to leave an impact on the AFR youth members as they have left such an amazing one on me."

Titus Montgomery, Red Oak

"This year, while I serve as a Youth Advisory council member, I hope to lead and serve just as Christ did, with love and a servants heart."

Cooper Kline, North Rock Creek

"I am very excited to serve on the AFR Youth Advisory Council, so I can continue to promote agriculture as well as help fellow students develop and strenghten their own leadership abilites."

THE VOICE OF FAMILY AGRICULTURE Visit afrcoop.org to learn more.

The Farmer's Share

Did you know that farmers and ranchers receive only 14.3 cents of every food dollar that consumers spend? According to the USDA, off-farm costs including marketing, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for more than 80 cents of every food dollar spent in the United States.*

Bacon
1 lb.

Retail: $4.99
Farmer: $0.90

Top Sirloin Steak
1 lb.

Retail: $9.99
Farmer: $2.91

Bread
Wheat Loaf

Retail: $4.49
Farmer: $0.18

Fresh Carrots
5 lbs.

Retail: $3.99
Farmer: $2.33

Beer
12-pack cans

Retail: $14.99
Farmer: $0.07

Corn Cereal
18 oz. box

Retail: $5.99
Farmer: $0.09

Tomatoes
1 lb.

Retail: $2.00
Farmer: $0.67

Eggs
1 dozen

Retail: $2.29
Farmer: $1.51

Flour
All Purpose, 5 lbs.

Retail: $6.89
Farmer: $0.64

Boneless Ham
1 lb.

Retail: $12.98
Farmer: $0.90

Lettuce
1 lb.

Retail: $2.29
Farmer: $0.21

Milk
1 gallon, fat free

Retail: $4.39
Farmer: $1.54

Fresh Apples
1 lb.

Retail: $1.24
Farmer: $0.83

Fresh Potatos
Russet, 5 lbs.

Retail: $5.99
Farmer: $2.47

Soda
2 liters

Retail: $0.99
Farmer: $0.09

AFR AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS

/AmericanFarmersandRanchers /AFRFarmOrg

AMERICAN FARMERS & RANCHERS | 4400 WILL ROGERS PARKWAY | OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73108
(405) 218-5400 | WWW.AFRCOOP.ORG

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

ADAIR COUNTY
Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, 5 P.M.
RSVP: Peoples Ins., 918-696-7191
Extra Info: Local #756 will also meet. Place to be determind.

ALFALFA COUNTY
Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, 11:30 A.M.
Where: Helena Senior Citizens Center 223 N. Main St
RSVP: By Oct. 12 to Brooks Agency, 580-596-3321; Nichols Agency, 580-883-5969
Extra Info: Lunch will start at noon. We ask all officers and board members to attend if possible. There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers for the coming year and presentation of resolutions and Bylaw Changes. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Locals #164 and #167 will meet afterward.

ATOKA COUNTY
Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

BECKHAM COUNTY
Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Hutton Farm which is 6.5 miles west on Hwy 6 from Business 40 & Merrit Rd intersection, the south into.
From Hutches West Side, take Hwy 6 west towards Sweetwater, go 6.5 miles, south into.
RSVP: Please RSVP with the Crow Agency (580) 225-3645 Or Ann Reeves Agency (580) 486-3372
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting to elect officers and take care of any necessary business. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Meal will be provided. Local #14 and #112 will meet afterward.

BLAINE CO. LOCAL #504
Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: First Baptist Church, Watonga

BRYAN COUNTY
Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Jestis Insurance Agency, 912 W. Evergreen, Durant
Extra Info: Local will meet afterward.

CADDO COUNTY
Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Kiowa Technology Center Cafeteria Bldg. 400, Fort Cobb

CADDO CO. LOCAL 310
Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Coffey Insurance Office, 125 W Main, Hinton

CADDO CO. LOCAL 346
Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, Noon
Where: 103 W Main, Fort Cobb

CADDO CO. LOCAL 356
Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: 301 E Central, Anadarko

CADDO CO. LOCAL 386
Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Swanda Insurance Agency, 110 E. Evans Ave, Apache

CANADIAN COUNTY
Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Redlands Community College, Between RCC and Bible Baptist Church
RSVP: By Oct. 18 @ 4 p.m. to Joe Halley Insurance, 405-262-5388, Wiedemann Agency, 405-354-7920, or Pfaff Insurance Agency, 405-263-7935. Family members only; single members may bring one guest.
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with election of officers for the coming year. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual convention. Locals #4, #17, #43 and #328 will meet afterward. Drawings for turkeys and hams.

CANADIAN CO. LOCAL #17
Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, 1 P.M.
Where: 136 W Hwy 152 A, Mustang
Extra Info: Short business meeting, no refreshments.

CARTER COUNTY
CONTACT: James Barrett, 580-668-2389 for details
Extra Info: Local #614 will meet also.

CARTER CO. LOCAL 9
Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Rackley Insurance 312 S Commerce St.

CHEROKEE COUNTY
Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 6 P.M.
RSVP: Contact office, 918-456-0559 for location and details.
Extra Info: Vice President, Ryan Plemmons will be speaking. Local #489 will also meet.

CHOCTAW COUNTY
Thursday, Oct.12, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: KTC VoTech, 107 S 15th St
Extra Info: Food will be ready at 5:30; the meeting starts at 6:20. Locals #460 and #684 will meet also.

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

CIMARRON COUNTY

Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Keyes Community Center; Keyes School Cafeteria
RSVP: By Tuesday, October 10 to Aim Agency, Keyes, 580-205-7959 or Aim Agency, Boise City, 580-544-2479.
Extra Info: There will be a business meeting with election of county officers and presentation of resolutions. Please bring any proposed resolutions to the meeting you would like to have considered by the OFU State Resolutions Committee. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delgates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Dinner will be catered.

CLEVELAND COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Les Chandler Senior Center
131 West Main Street, Lexington, OK 73051
RSVP: Ed Preble, Norman, 405-321-2348, Hazel Ille, Lexington, 405-527-3883
Extra Info: Locals 341 and 762 will also meet.

CLEVELAND CO. & LOCAL 530

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, NOON
Where: Summit Insurance Services
2001 S. Broadway, Ste B, Moore, OK 73160

COMANCHE COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Maloy Park
6th Street & West B Avenue
Extra Info: This will be a short business meeting to elect officers and take care of any necessary business. Locals 898, 138, 276 and 799 will hold a short meeting to elect officers, board members, delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC.

COTTON COUNTY

Monday, Nov. 13, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Scherler Insurance Agency
202 W. Missouri, Walters
Extra Info: Local will also meet.

CRAIG CO. & LOCAL 86

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Craig County Community Center
RSVP: By Monday, November 6, 2023 to Secondline Insurance Agency, 918-256-6682.
Extra Info: There will be short buisness meeting with the election of officers and board members for the coming year. A light meal will be served. We will also be selecting delegates to the 2024 annual meeting of OFU and AFRMIC.

CREEK COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, 7 P.M.
Where: Creek County Fairgrounds
RSVP: By Friday, October 6, 2023 to Brown Ins. Agency, 918-512-8380, or Dowdy Ins. Agency, 918-367-9950
Extra Info: There will be short buisness meeting with the election of officers and board members for the coming year. A light meal will be served. We will have Ryan Plemmons as the guest speaker. We will also be selecting delegates to the 2024 annual meeting of OFU and AFRMIC. Locals #111, #288, and #480 will meet after.

CUSTER COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Lucilles Roadhouse Diner
RSVP: Weatherford Agency, 580-772-8500; Newsome Agency,580-323-0444; Sandy Land Ins. Agency, 580-661-3171
Extra Info: Scott Blubaugh will our guest speaker and a business meeting with election of officers. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for state convention. Bring canned goods for a food drive. Locals #109, #312 and #804 will meet afterward.

DELAWARE COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023
RSVP: For time and location -- Teel-Lane Insurance, 918-786-2155.
Extra Info: Locals #527 and #609 will also meet.

DEWEY COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Leedey Community Center
RSVP: To your agent by Tuesday, Oct. 17.
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers and board members for the coming year. A light meal will be served. We will also be selecting delegates to the 2024 annual meeting of OFU and AFRMIC. Dinner will be provided.

ELLIS COUNTY

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, 4 P.M.
RSVP; Stuart, Keffer & Schoenhals Agency, 580-938-2326
Extra Info: Local #286 will meet also.

GARFIELD COUNTY

Friday, Oct. 13, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Enid Moose Lodge, 1740 Chapel Room, 302 E. Purdue Ave. Enid, OK 73701
RSVP: By Oct. 1 @ 5 p.m. to Bolenbaugh Agency, 580-242-2818; Detrick Agency, 580-796-2100
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a business meeting with election of officers and presentation of resolutions. A business

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. We will be collecting diapers, wipes, formula and other necessities for infants. Locals #152, and #668 will meet afterward

GARVIN COUNTY

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Garvin County Show Barn
Extra Info: Locals #32, #176, #278, #340 and #670 will meet afterward.

GRADY COUNTY

Monday, Oct.16, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Canadian Valley Vo-Tech, Chickasha
RSVP: By Oct. 6 to Ratterman Agency, 405-352-5200; Taylor Shebester Agency, 405-224-4450; Community Ins. Agency 580-476-3289; Jack McLane, 405-453-7801
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a guest speaker and a short business meeting with election of officers for the coming year, election of a delegate to the state convention, and presentation of resolutions.

GRADY CO. & LOCAL 223

Monday, Oct. 16, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Canadian Valley Vo-tech, Chickasha

GRADY CO. & LOCAL 246

Monday, Oct. 2, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Minco Senior Center, 221 Main St, Minco, OK 73059

GRADY CO. & LOCAL 551

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Community Ins. Agency, 309 W. Blakely, Rush Springs

GREER COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, 8 A.M.
Where: OSU Extension Office, Mangum
RSVP: By October 10 to Wichita Insurance, 580-301-6352.
Extra Info: Local #44 will meet afterward.

HARMON COUNTY

Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, NOON
Where: 202 E Broadway "Old Ford Building" Hollis, OK 73550

HARPER COUNTY

Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Laverne Insurance Agency, 224 South Broadway, Laverne
Extra Info: Local #8 will also meet.

HASKELL COUNTY

Monday, Nov. 6, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Stigler High School Auditorium, NW 7th St, Stigler
Extra Info: There will be a business meeting with election of officers. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Resolutions will also be presented. Locals #52 and #141 will meet afterward.

HUGHES COUNTY

Thursday, Oct.19, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: First United Bank, Holdenville
Extra Info: Dinner will be served and Paul Jackson will be guest speaker. Local #16 will meet also.

JACKSON COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Friendship Inn Restaurant, 1800 N. Main St, Altus
RSVP: To Storehouse Services, Altus, 580-480-0049 or Our Hometown Agency, 580-633-2400.
Extra Info: Local #241 will also meet.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Waurika Grade School Cafeteria, Waurika
Extra Info: Dinner will be served. Door prizes; members only. There will be a business meeting with election of officers for the coming year and presentation of resolutions. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Locals #53 and #533 will meet afterward.

JOHNSTON COUNTY

Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Chickasaw Nation Comm. Center, 818 East 6th St, Tishomingo
Extra Info: Dinner will be served. Door Prizes. Members only. There will be a business meeting with election of officers for the coming year. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Locals #157, #195 and #540 will meet afterward.

KAY COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Methodist Church Family Center 103 N 4th St., Tonkawa
RSVP: By Oct. 2 to Janice Gaddis, 580-762-1414 or Lisa Blubaugh, 580-628-3660
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers for the coming year and presentation of resolutions. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Locals #5 and #306 will meet immediately following the county meeting. Scott Blubaugh will be the guest

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

speaker and a catered meal will be served.

KINGFISHER COUNTY

Monday, Oct. 24, 2023, 7 P.M.
Where: Interbank Community Room 320 N. Main St., Kingfisher
Extra Info: Local will also meet.

KIOWA COUNTY

Monday, Sept. 25, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Western Tech Center, Hobart, OK.
Extra Info: Dinner will be provided. Locals will also meet.

LATIMER CO. & LOCAL

Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

LEFLORE COUNTY

Monday, Nov. 6, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Cavanal Room at Donald W. Reynolds Center
Extra Info: Business meeting only; no meal provided. Locals #6, #515, #619 and #671 will meet afterward.

LINCOLN COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Agri-Center, Chandler
RSVP: By Oct. 10 to your agents.
Extra Info: Dinner provided. We will be having a food drive so please bring non-perishable food items or cash donations for our food bank. There will be a short business meeting with election of officers for the coming year. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Nominations for County Officers will be conducted from the floor. We will also have resolutions presented for a vote of the membership.

LOGAN CO. & LOCAL

Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

LOVE COUNTY

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Marietta School Cafeteria
RSVP: H.C. Rackley Ins. Agency, 580-319-7938 or Harper Ins. Agency, 580-276-5129
Extra Info: Bring your resolutions. Resolutions committee meets at 5 P.M. There will be a short membership and policyholder meeting and dinner. Locals #300 and #741 will meet immediately following the county meeting to conduct business. Please bring canned goods for the Love County Food Bank. Dinner will be provided.

MAJOR COUNTY

Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, Registration at 5:30 P.M., Dinner at 6 P.M.
Where: Ringwood Community Fair Building, 310 N. Main St, Ringwood
RSVP: By Oct. 26 to Nichols Agency, Ringwood - 580-883-5969 or Fairview - 580-227-3623; Detrick Agency, 580-796-2100 or 580-753-4280
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a business meeting with election of officers, speakers and presentation of resolutions and by-law changes. Bring resolutions to have them considered by the state policy committee. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Locals #272, #392 and #709 will meet afterward.

MAYES COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: OSU Extension Office, Mayes County Fairgrounds
Extra Info: We will have refreshments. Locals #29, #34 and #220 will also meet.

MARSHALL COUNTY

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023
Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

MCCLAIN COUNTY

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Multi-Purpose Center, 1400 Chandler Rd, Purcell, Ok
RSVP: By Friday, Nov. 3 to Mize Ins. Agency, 405-485-9400; Harryman Agency, 405-387-4416; Heart of Oklahoma, 405-527-2153
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a business meeting with election of officers for the coming year. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Locals #39, #129 and #372 will meet afterward.

MCCURTAIN COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Plemmons Insurance Agency, 109 N. Park Dr, Broken Bow

MCCURTAIN CO. & LO. 284

Wednesday, Oct.11, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Tuck Insurance, 302 E Wilson St, Valliant.

MCCURTAIN CO. & LO. 295

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Plemmons Insurance Agency, 109 N. Park Dr, Broken Bow

MCCURTAIN CO. & LO. 591

Tuesday, Oct.10, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: Sooner Insurance Agency 919 E. Washington, Idabel

MCINTOSH COUNTY

Friday, Nov. 3, 2023, 6 P.M.

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

Where: Westside Free Will Baptist Church
RSVP: Donna Ramsey, 918-473-5561 or 918-689-1589.
Extra Info: There will be a business meeting to elect officers and take care of necessary business. A membership and policholder meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC.

MURRAY COUNTY & LOCAL

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023, 6 P.M.
Extra Info: Contact Allbritten Agency, 580-622-2035; Davis Tag & Insurance Agency, 580-369-2783 for details.

MUSKOGEE COUNTY

Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, 6 P.M.
RSVP: For location, contact your agent by Oct. 12 @ 5 p.m.
Extra Info: Local 410 will also meet.

MUSKOGEE CO. LOC. 236

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Haskell Insurance Agency
105A S Broadway, Haskell

NOBLE COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Schieffer Agency Office
Extra Info: Refreshments will be provided. Local #131 will also meet.

NOWATA COUNTY

Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Swan Insurance Agency,
4033 Nowata Rd, Bartlesville
Extra Info: Local # 717 will also meet.

OKFUSKEE COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 5, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Free Will Baptist Church, Paden, OK
Extra Info: There will be light refreshments. Locals #419 and #462 will meet beforehand at 5:30 p.m.

OKLAHOMA COUNTY

Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: St. Teresa's Catholic Hall
RSVP: With your agent by October 24.
Extra Info: Locals #150, #166, #327, #695, #789 and #928 will meet at 5:30 P.M.

OKMULGEE COUNTY

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, 1 P.M.
Where: Bradley Womack Agency
914 E. 8th St, Suite A, Okmulgee
RSVP: By Nov. 30, 918-756-5100
Extra Info: Business meeting only.

OSAGE COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Methodist Church Family Center
103 N 4th St., Tonkawa
RSVP: By Oct. 2 to Jamie Case, 580-628-3660 or John Hibdon, 918-847-2516
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers for the coming year and presentation of resolutions. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Locals #140 and #260 will meet immediately following the county meeting. Scott Blubaugh will be the guest speaker and a catered meal will be served.

OTTAWA COUNTY

Monday, Dec. 4, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Ottawa County Courthouse Annex, 123 E. Central, Miami
RSVP: By Dec. 1 @ 918-542-9677
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a short business meeting to elect officers and take care of necessary business. A membership and policholder meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meetin for OFU and AFRMIC. Locals #60 and #79 will meet afterward.

PAWNEE COUNTY

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, 9 A.M.
Where: Cleveland Insurance Agency
RSVP: 918-358-5221
Extra Info: Food and drinks provided. Annual Meeting. Local meet will follow.

PAWNEE CO. LOCAL 184

RSVP: For details -- Mitchell Insurance at 918-762-3603

PAYNE COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 5, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Payne County Expo Center, Stillwate
RSVP: By Sept. 21 @ noon to Bullock Agency, 405-372-4169; Perkins Agency, 405-547-2971; Cushing Agency, 918-225-1751
Extra Info: Dinner and entertainment provided. There will be a business meeting with election of officers and directors for the coming year. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention, election of a delegate to the state convention and presentation of resolutions. Locals #20, #37, #99 will mee afterward.

PITTSBURG COUNTY

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Southeast Expo Center,
4500 W. Hwy 270, McAlester
RSVP: By Oct. 25 to Aliene Bristow, 918-423-7926; Vinzetta Agency, 918-469-2360; or Ada Ricks & James Agency, 918-423-7926.

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

Extra Info: Dinner provided; members only. There will be a business meeting with an election of officers for the coming year. Bring resolutions for approval.

POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Firelake Arena, 18145 Old Rangeline Rd, Shawnee
RSVP: Call your agent by Oct. 20 w/ no. attending -- Stanford, 273-7095; Williamson, 567-4959; Gilbert, 598-2590; Mize, 997-5760.
Extra Info: Dinner provided. Bring canned goods for the food bank. There will be a business meeting and election of officers for the coming year. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention.

POTT. CO. LOCAL 200

Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Firelake Arena, 18145 Old Rangeline Rd, Shawnee

POTT. CO. LOCAL 522

Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Gilbert Insurance Agency, 514 N. Broadway, Tecumseh, OK 74873

PONTOTOC COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Chickasaw Nation Community Center, 700 N Mississippi
RSVP: By Tuesday, Oct. 10 by calling 332-6025.
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a business meeting with election of officers. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention.

PUSHMATAHA CO. & LOCAL

Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

ROGERS COUNTY

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023, 4:30 P.M.
Where: Dorsey Insurance Agency, 512 E Will Rogers Blvd, Claremore
RSVP: Contact Kendall Dorsey for details.

ROGER MILLS CO. & LOCAL

Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Monday, Nov. 13, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Rudy Alan Steak House, Intsct. of Hwys 56 and 270, Wewoka
RSVP: By Nov. 9 @ 5 p.m. to Your Hometown Insurance, 405-257-2100; Lane Insurance, 580-925-3785
Extra Info: There will be a guest speaker and a business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Locals #128 and #209 will meet afterward.

SEQUOYAH COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 6 P.M.
Where: Catfish Hole, Sallisaw
RSVP: By Oct. 10 to Oberste Agency, 918-775-6233 or 918-427-3276
Extra Info: There will be a business meeting to elect officers and take care of necessary business. There will be a meeting of Locals #519 and #520 to elect officers, board members and delegates and alternates for the state convention.

STEPHENS COUNTY

Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023, 5 P.M.
Where: 928 W. Willow, Duncan, OK 73533
Extra Info: Local #669 to follow county.

STEPHENS CO. LOCAL 264

Monday, Oct. 23, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Miller Insurance Agency, 205 Oak Main St, Comanche

STEPHENS CO. LOCAL 70

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023, 9:30 A.M.
Where: Graham Insurance Agency
Extra Info: Pastries and coffee will be served.

TEXAS COUNTY

Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2023, NOON
Where: Thurman Wilson Insurance, 116 E. Glaydas St. Hooker, OK 73945
Extra Info: Locals will meet afterward.

TILLMAN COUNTY

Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Tillman County Food Bank, 901 N. 15th, Frederick, Ok 73542
RSVP: By Oct. 27 to Carrs Ins. Agency, 580-335-2590
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers and presentation of resolutions.
A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC.

TULSA COUNTY

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: John & Shirely Firey's House, 20412 W 61 St South, Sand Springs
RSVP: John Firey, 918-637-7243
Extra Info: There will be a business meeting with election of officers. A business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the state convention. Resolutions will also be presented. Locals #423, #430 and #543 will meet afterward.

COUNTY MEETING NOTICES

TULSA CO LOCAL #423

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Haskell Insurance Agency, 105A S Broadway, Haskell

WAGONER COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Wagoner Civic Center, 301 S. Grant Ave, Wagoner
RSVP: Rowe Ins. Agency, 918-485-2405
Extra Info: Dinner provided. There will be a business meeting with election expiring term board members. A business meeting will be held for each local to read the 2021 annual meeting minutes and financial reports for OFU and AFRMIC.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Where: Swan Insurance Agency 4033 Nowata Rd, Bartlesville
Extra Info: Local #716 will meet afterward.

WASHITA COUNTY

Friday, Nov. 10, 2023, 11:30 A.M.
Where: Sperle Agency, 1211 N Glenn English, Cordell, OK 73632
Extra Info: Local #244 will also meet.

WOODS COUNTY

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Blue Building next to Brooks Agency, 419 7th St. Suite A
RSVP: 580-327-5353
Extra Info: There will be a short business meeting with the election of officers. A membership and policyholder business meeting will be held for each local to elect delegates and alternates for the annual state meeting for OFU and AFRMIC. Resolutions for the State Convention will be requested from the membership attending. Dinner will be provided. Local #512 will meet afterward.

WOODWARD CO. & LOCAL

Extra Info: Members will receive post cards with the details.

Oklahoma Agriculture Leadership Program Graduates Class XX

Participants included Maggie Adcock, Stillwater; Joy Alspach, Stillwater; Rosslyn Biggs, Stillwater; Alexandria Cox, Stillwater; Caleb Cunningham, Tonkawa; Robbie Gilbert, Canute; Claudia Humphreys, Stillwater; Grant Mason, Enid; Brandon Miller, Bison; Shelley Mitchell, Stillwater; Courtney Moyers, Miami; Robert Parrish, Hunter; Aaron Schantz, Hydro; Emily Shuping, Pawhuska; Meg Stangl, Okrache; and Thomas Walraven, Coyle.

One of the top leadership programs in the nation, Oklahoma Agricultural Leadership Program (OALP) encourages potential leaders to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and of other people. The program includes personal and group study and interaction, which help improve communication skills and develop a commitment to future leadership roles in Oklahoma agriculture.

Selected pre-COVID, Class XX pivoted from in-person sessions to connecting with leaders of the agriculture community in a virtual setting. They were eventually permitted to hold in-person seminars again, which pushed them into a third year of class activities. During the three years, participants were exposed to a wide variety of enterprises that make up Oklahoma Agriculture and interacted with some of the sharpest minds in the state and national agricultural industries. In February 2023, they took their capstone international trip to Israel; they graduated in late March.

In Memoriam

Charles Babst

Charles Robert Babst was born on a ranch southwest of Fairland on May 6, 1938, to Theodore Otto Babst and Charlotte "Lottie" (Schnarre) Babst. On May 8, 2023, he passed away peacefully at home, still on the ranch where he was born.

Charles graduated from Fairland Public Schools, where he was active in the marching band, a member of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and played in the FFA National Band in Kansas City.

Charles proudly served in a U.S. Army Reserve artillery unit. He was employed in many interesting endeavors: hauling and bailing hay, the Buffalo Ranch photo booth, Burlington garment factory, Gibson's Department Store, B. F. Goodrich, auctioneering, and real estate. He was a lifelong rancher with his brother, Don, and a second-generation Farmers Union insurance agent.

He was a lifelong member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fairland, serving as an elder for almost 60 years. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and collecting early 20th Century Americana.

In March 1960, he met his future wife JoNell Chamberlain at a Fairland basketball game. She had recently been hired to teach Home Economics at Fairland High School. They married on Dec. 30, 1960, and had two children. Charles R. "Chuck" Babst, Jr. and LaDonna Lea Babst.

Charles was preceded in death by JoNell. In addition to his two children, he is survived by two grandchildren: Annika Hunter "Cory" Babst and Logan Charles Babst.

Oklahoma Certified Beef Association: 4C Ag Service LLC

Established in 2017, 4C Ag Service is owned and operated by Chris and Vicki Cook in Jones, Okla. Their operation comprises grass-fed and grain-finished beef, which they sell on and off the farm. You may see them at various farmers markets around the Oklahoma City metro, restaurants and other marketing hubs.

Vicki retired from teaching to work on the farm full-time and her husband works on and off the farm.

The Cooks are passionate about educating their customers and the general public about the agriculture industry through classes and camps. They hope people will gain the knowledge of where their food comes from and know it's a safe product. Throughout June, 4C Ag Service hosts farm camps for kids ages of 4 to 13 and offers several different classes for adults year-round and other events.

For more information about 4C Ag Service, including how to purchase products and about farms or classes they offer, visit www.4Cagservice.com.

The Oklahoma Certified Beef Association (OCBA) currently has more than 50 producers who sell beef products that are bred, born, raised and processed in Oklahoma. For more information about the OCBA program, contact ocba@afrmic.com or www.oklahomacertifiedbeefassociation.com.

4C AG SERVICE, LLC

Oklahoma STRONG

From the Desk of Scott Blubaugh

Happy fall, AFR members! I'm sure that sounds a bit early. The falling leaves and cooler temperatures haven't arrived yet. But in the AFR Cooperative, we have our own signals of fall—speech contests, county meetings and National Farmers Union Fly-In.

In our Youth Program, we're currently planning for the AFR Speech Contest, a fall tradition of 78 years. We host hundreds of kids from across the state in five regional contests and a final state contest.

The ability of these students is something to behold. If you're interested at all in experiencing this AFR tradition, contact our youth department to sign up to be a judge. (405-218-5566)

The next sign of fall's arrival for the Cooperative—AFR county meetings! County meetings are your opportunity to exercise your vote as a policyholder and participate in the policy process. If you haven't yet, it's time to get to your county meeting!

October through December, AFR Cooperative officers and staff will attend county meetings all over the state. We try to make as many county meetings as humanly possible. It's an exhausting, but very fulfilling season!

The final showing of fall in the Cooperative—NFU Fly-In—is the culmination of that policy process I mentioned above. Each year, we take a delegation of AFR members to Washington, D.C., to lobby on your behalf. The members who attend Fly-In, and the policy they carry to the Capitol, start with county meetings and service on the AFR Policy Committee. If you're curious about this process, contact our policy department. (405-218-5593)

During this year's Fly-In, we'll tackle the big policy concern on the horizon for farmers and ranchers—the Farm Bill. It's never a good idea to predict the future, but I'll try to explain where I think the upcoming Farm Bill is headed.

At this time, I believe there's zero chance of getting a Farm Bill completed by the October 1 deadline, which is when the Farm Bill expires. There's also only a very small chance we'll get a Farm Bill passed in December when the legislature comes back into session. After the first of the year, I think it will be impossible to get consensus on a bill in the middle of a presidential election.

Frankly, I don't think we'll get a Farm Bill passed until after the next presidential and congressional elections. The two sides of the aisle are very divided on their priorities and, in this political environment, I don't see them coming together.

This grim outlook doesn't mean our upcoming lobbying efforts are not important. In fact, now is the best time to have our voices heard. Lawmakers have been gathering recommendations for months already and will continue to do so through the beginning of negotiations. What we say now could have a big impact tomorrow.

In the meantime, we will work hard to obtain an extension of the current Farm Bill. I think this is our best bet for functioning legislation and it will give our farmers and ranchers and the public, especially school children, something to work with now.

Two other items deserve a mention before I close.

The new AFR Strive program hosted its first industry tours last month (Pg 9). Appropriately, the tours focused on the cooperative systems in Oklahoma's cotton industry.

Finally, I want to highlight the AFR Claims Department for their hard work this year (Pg 12). It's been a bad year for storms. AFR has cleared a tremendous number of claims and paid out a lot to insureds. These things happen, but I think I speak for everyone when I say I hope the skies are calm for a few months.

Until next time, look out for one another and be kind. This world needs more kindness. God bless!

-Scott