

Panhandle

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The Power of Partnership

Wind Energy and Education Majors to Benefit from Enel Green Power Goodwell Wind Farm Investment

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications



Oklahoma Panhandle State University is pleased to announce new scholarship opportunities made possible by the generous donation of Enel Green Power (EGP) in the amount of \$150,000 for students majoring in Wind Energy or Education. The gift, paid over three years, is the largest donation by a single wind energy company in Panhandle State history.

This partnership will make it possible for a regional transformation to continue to take shape as Panhandle State seeks to meet local workforce needs through the implementation of new programs and opportunities for students. Two initiatives have been approved this year that will see students benefit from the scholarship, Pathways to Success and Panhandle's Future.

The majority of Enel Green Power's investment will fund the Pathways to Success Wind Energy Scholarship. The scholarship is unique because it assists students at Panhandle State as well as High Plains Technology Center pursuing wind technology degrees through the Pathways to Success program.

The Pathways to Success program is designed to set those interested in wind energy on a degree program that sees them through high school graduation to a bachelor's degree. In partnership with High Plains Technology Center, students can earn their Wind Energy Technician Certificate at HPTC, then transfer to Panhandle State to earn their Associates and Bachelor's Degrees.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn said, "This program changes the game for the wind energy workforce. Anyone who wants a career in wind energy can get their wind technician certificate and enter the workforce immediately. When they are ready to move up, they can come to OPSU and we can give them the skills and education to become supervisors and managers and further their career. What better place to do that than in the most productive wind farms in America."

Superintendent/CEO Dwight R. Hughes at High Plains Technology Center in Woodward, Okla. commented, "Wind Technician is the second-fastest growing occupation in the United States and it just makes sense that our students in NW Oklahoma take advantage of this tremendous opportunity. HPTC is very excited to partner our world class Wind Tech training program with OPSU's Wind Associate & Bachelor degree programs and the ENEL scholarships fit perfectly with our combined vision for the future."

Enel Green Power's investment also funds the Panhandle's Future Scholarship, a program that will provide funding for education majors committed to teach for a minimum of two-years in the panhandle area following graduation.

"Our region suffers from a lack of qualified teachers," says Faltyn. "Through this program, we are giving local students the opportunity and the incentive to build a career educating the youth of our region. Enel's support is not just an investment in their industry, but an investment in our communities and our way of life. It is truly appreciated."

Enel Green Power is the largest producer of wind power in Oklahoma operating 10 wind power plants across the state. Enel is a global company that operates in the renewable energy sector in Europe, Americas, Asia, Australia and Africa producing solar, wind, hydro and geothermal energy.

"We are thrilled to be able to help grow and sustain the Panhandle's future workforce through this scholarship program," said Mark Howell, Goodwell Wind Farm site supervisor. "This commitment will open pathways to provide Oklahoma's future educators and wind power technicians with access to financial support to ensure their educational success. We consider this partnership a great example of creating shared value for the wind industry and for the Panhandle. I thank Oklahoma Panhandle State University, High Plains Technology Center and the Panhandle State Foundation for working with us to fill this critical need and we are honored to support the transformation of the Oklahoma Panhandle region." **P**



President Dr. Tim Faltyn (middle) and Casey Murdock (right) speak about wind energy during separate interviews at a recent conference discussing a generous donation by Enel Green Power.



OKLAHOMA
PANHANDLE STATE
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 430 Goodwell, OK 73939
Tel: 580-349-2611
Toll Free: 1-800-664-OPSU
Fax: 580-349-2302

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ADMINISTRATION

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VICE PRESIDENT FOR
FISCAL AFFAIRS
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VICE PRESIDENT FOR
OUTREACH
Dr. Ryan Blanton

PANHANDLE MAGAZINE
EDITOR & DIRECTOR OF
CAMPUS COMMUNICATIONS
Danae Moore

LAYOUT & SPORTS
INFORMATION DIRECTOR
Justine Gaskamp

CONTRIBUTORS
Erika Chartrand
Annawynn Drury
Alyssa Fox

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Alexis Faris
Maxine Henderson
Rylee Higgins
Beverly Hintergardt
Taylor Jacobson
Sydney Dougherty

Wind Catcher Energy Connection

Invenergy

Wind Catcher Energy Connection project partners Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), Invenergy and GE Renewable Energy today announced a partnership with High Plains Technology Center (HPTC) and Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) that, pending regulatory approval of the proposed Wind Catcher Energy Connection, will equip students for jobs in the wind energy sector. The partnership is set to provide \$200,000 in total scholarships as well as state-of-the-art training equipment and programming for students.

Through this commitment, HPTC will expand and modernize its existing wind technician training program in Woodward, including doubling student enrollment. OPSU and HPTC also intend to work together so that OPSU students can earn credit hours towards their associate degree by completing the wind technician certification program at HPTC.

PSO and Invenergy are jointly contributing the \$200,000 in scholarship funding, which will cover half of all tuition costs for individual students to complete the HPTC wind certification program. GE Renewable Energy will donate and install equipment at HPTC's training facility, including a GE turbine hub and machine head, to prepare future wind energy technicians through hands-on lab experience. Additionally, GE's Renewable Energy Learning Center (RELC) will partner with HPTC to provide additional training sessions for local instructors to deepen their knowledge base.

"The Wind Catcher project isn't just about harnessing Oklahoma's rich energy resources, it's about creating family-sustaining job opportunities for Oklahomans," said Stuart Solomon, President of PSO. "This partnership with High Plains Technology Center and Oklahoma Panhandle State University will create a jobs-ready workforce to continue Oklahoma's energy leadership long into the future."

Wind technician is the second-fastest growing occupation in the United States, and local students and veterans certified as wind technicians through the program will be eligible for hiring opportunities at the Wind Catcher wind farm, which is currently under construction. This program will enhance HPTC's role as part of Oklahoma's CareerTech system of career and technology education centers that contribute to economic development across the state.

"This announcement demonstrates one of the many opportunities Wind Catcher and the wind industry in general create for our region," said Oklahoma State Representative Casey Murdock. "The training and scholarship program will strengthen our work force and

prepare students for high quality jobs close to home. I'm proud to see the Wind Catcher partners, HPTC and OPSU working together to make this happen."

"I graduated from the HPTC wind program, and I am extremely grateful for what the people and training at High Plains brought me," said Ike McVicker, HPTC graduate and Site Manager at NRG's Sleeping Bear/ Buffalo Wind facility. "From troubleshooting complex electrical issues, to hands-on mechanical and hydraulic systems, their training covers it all. It's amazing to have a job in an industry I love, and to be in a position now where I'm the one hiring technicians!"

Dwight R. Hughes, Superintendent/CEO of HPTC said, "Wind energy is the second-fastest growing employment sector in the United States, and this is a tremendous opportunity for students in northwest Oklahoma to be able to train to be a part of it. With the known skills gap within the state and the opportunity the Wind Catcher project represents, this partnership demonstrates CareerTech's agility in responding to industry workforce needs when we are at the table."

Tim Faltyn, President of OPSU said, "The Wind Catcher investment will provide world-class opportunities for our students to get the technical training they need to enter the rapidly growing wind energy field. This is what the model of the future looks like; CareerTech's and Universities working together to equip students for the jobs of the future." **P**



Panhandle State is excited for the future of wind energy and the educational opportunities that are being made possible through a partnership with High Plains Technology Center.

Pathway to Success

HIGH PLAINS TECHNOLOGY CENTER

OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

* Did you know that the average salary in America for a **Wind Energy Technician** is \$51,050 per year? With opportunities to earn \$71,820 for the top ten percent?



The Pathways to Success program is designed to set those interested in wind energy on a degree program that sees them through high school graduation to a bachelor's degree. In partnership with High Plains Technology Center (HPTC), students can earn their Wind Energy Technician Certificate at HPTC, then transfer to Panhandle State to earn their Associates and Bachelor's Degrees.

President Dr. Tim Faltyn said, "This is a historic partnership. Our goal is to become the premier wind training center and our location in the wind corridor is perfect for that."

Dwight R. Hughes, Superintendent/CEO of HPTC said, "Wind energy is the second-fastest growing employment sector in the United States, and this is a tremendous opportunity for students in northwest Oklahoma to be able to train to be a part of it. With the known skills gap within the state and the opportunity the Wind Catcher project represents, this partnership demonstrates CareerTech's agility in responding to industry workforce needs when we are at the table."

Invest in
OUR FUTURE

RestoreHigherEd

A group of Panhandle State students got the opportunity to gather at the State Capitol on Tuesday, February 13th with fellow college students as well as faculty and representatives from Oklahoma's public colleges and universities to promote the value and importance of higher education in Oklahoma. Over 300 students attended the event.

Bernice Jimenez said, "Higher Education is such an important aspect in my life and I feel honored to have been invited to attend Higher Education Day at the Capitol."



Aggie Family



Staff
Danny Smith

The Fall 2017 Employee of the Semester comes to us from Wichita, Kan. Danny Smith is the Resident Life and Housing Coordinator. He strives to make certain the campus residents are not only safe and comfortable but also enjoying their time at Panhandle State.

“It was a true honor. I didn’t see it coming at all. I am a firm believer of just doing what is right, going above and beyond for the students, and putting other’s needs first. I feel this is truly a team award. We all work together.”

Danny got his start in housing as a student at Panhandle State when he worked as a Resident Assistant (RA) first in the dorms at Holter Hall and then at the Aggie Apartments. During his time as a student, Danny played for the Aggie Football team and was named an Academic All-American for two years. He was very active in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and during his time as a member he saw it grow from three students to over 75 students. Danny graduated in December of 2011 with a degree in Health and Physical Education.

The impact the time as a Panhandle State student had on Danny is undeniable. “Once I left, I knew I wanted to come back here.” Danny spent some time working as a graduate assistant for football before returning to Goodwell and the family atmosphere that he loves. He began working at Panhandle State full time in July of 2016. Amongst his responsibilities, he oversees all student living and faculty housing on campus. In addition, Danny assists with events and helps and is a mentor for students.

He is joined by his fiancé, Mariah Bays, who is the current Administrative Assistant for the Vice President of Outreach. Danny and Mariah recently welcomed a baby boy named Noah to their family. The couple is planning a summer wedding.

Amongst plans for the future, Danny enjoys seeing the continual facility upgrades across campus and he is current assisting with the plans for renovations at Holter Hall. Additionally, he is looking forward to the completion of his master’s degree in higher education.

Although free time is scarce, Danny said “hunting, fishing, and loving every minute” are among his hobbies. He and Mariah can often be seen at any of the Aggie Athletic events and it is no surprise he is especially fond of football.

A great asset to the Aggie family, one would be hard pressed to catch this fun-loving guy without a smile. **P**



Student
Dustin Martinez

Despite being in the heart of No Man’s Land, Oklahoma Panhandle State University has never failed to provide an array of activities for every college student. No better student emulates that message than local born and raised Dustin Martinez, son of Mike and Kelly Ritter.

Dustin is a sophomore from Guymon, Okla. Despite living more rurally throughout his life, Dustin finds himself involved in almost every corner of the campus. He is pursuing a degree in Fine Arts. He specializes in incredible sculpture and ceramic works that have been recognized at the Art Jubilee Award Ceremony sponsored by the Oklahoma Arts Council. In 2013, Martinez was recognized with the Ceramic Potter’s Wheel Merit Award for his craftsmanship. Aside from the incredible pieces he creates, he is minoring in marketing.

His love for the arts has already advanced Dustin on campus as he currently serves as the President of Images Art Club. Images Art Club is well known on campus for their involvement with student activities like the Zombie 5K and the Angel Tree Project in the fall semester. This spring, the Images Art Club will host the Paul Farrell Memorial Scholarship Art Auction to raise money and commemorate Artist Paul Farrell. The proceeds will go to two different scholarships; the Endangered Student Scholarship and the Endowed Student Scholarship.

In addition to his creative abilities, Martinez is a bull riding and member of the Panhandle State Rodeo Team.

During the early weeks of February, Dustin was recognized by his peers as he was nominated by Images Art Club to represent them as a Winter Homecoming Candidate.

Martinez relayed he was honored, “Images has been a large part of my life at OPSU and I want to say thank you to my family in Hesper Hall for not only nominating me, but giving me their vote along with any of my fellow peers who helped me in the voting. I never really got into the Homecoming stuff in high school much, or any ‘extra’ activities within the school for that matter, let alone run for something like that, so being nominated itself was pretty cool, but I never expected I’d get picked!”

Dustin Martinez was crowned homecoming king alongside Melody Ethley at the Winter Homecoming Coronation Ceremony, Saturday, February 10th. A tremendous honor for a local student that constantly illustrates how far hard work and perseverance will take you. **P**



Faculty
Davin Winger

With a passion for having a life changing impact on each student he gets to work with, Dean of Business and Technology Mr. Davin Winger approaches each day with intention and purpose. He is known around campus for his infectious laugh and infamous jokes.

“I don’t know exactly when it happened, but at some point the verse in Colossians ‘And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him’ became where I get my passion for the job. Everything I do, I try to do for God’s Glory.” He smiles and adds, “Now I mess up, but I always try.”

This semester, he has taken on the Interim Dean of Agriculture position along with his current responsibilities. Among the daily administrative tasks, a great deal of his time is focused on recruitment and retention. From writing letters to potential students, visiting area high schools, and hosting visitors on campus to working with current students on scholarship and internship opportunities, and informing Alumni of job opportunities.

“One of the biggest responsibilities is to communicate between the faculty and the administration and keep everyone in the loop.”

Winger is currently teaching Finance I and Finance II as well as an online course called Special Topics. He team teaches a capstone course called Small Business Management. Also, he serves as a faculty advisor to the Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) club.

As far as his favorite thing about the job, “I would say honestly when you see the student’s gain self-confidence and see that they realize they can do things. It may be when they pass a class, get their first job, or win a competition.”

Winger and his wife Teague live in Gruver, Texas where he farmed and ranched prior to accepting his position at Panhandle State. They have three children.

He holds a bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics from Texas Tech University, a master’s degree in Business Administration from West Texas A&M University, and a Master of Arts in Theology from Catholic Distance University.

Winger serves as a Permanent Deacon in the Diocese of Amarillo, Texas which amongst numerous responsibilities involves him teaching courses once a month in Amarillo. **P**



Alumni
Jana Wallace

Panhandle State graduate Jana Wallace is the Chief Operations Officer (COO) at Panhandle Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (PTCI) in Guymon, Okla. Jana oversees the daily operations of the company which include accounting and finance, customer service and marketing, plant management, and Information Technology.

For Jana, the customers and the brilliant people she gets to work with are her favorite things about the job and her passion for the job lies in serving them. “Our days revolve around what our customers need and every day is something different. Our top priorities at PTCI across every department are customer service and the safety of our customers and employees. This is our focus every day when we come to work.”

In the last couple of years, Jana has had an active part in the complete overbuild of the company’s cellular networks as well as the fiber to the premise (FTTP) project, both of which are key to the level of service PTCI provides.

This September marked Jana’s 24th year at PTCI; beginning with part-time responsibilities when she was still in high school. She continued to work at PTCI while she was taking college courses which gave her the chance to see the real-life application of what she was learning.

“Panhandle State was a really good fit for me with the classes and flexibility to still be able to work, as well as, be close to home and my family. I think it really helped prepare me for my future and it was so nice that the professors cared about me as a person.”

Jana earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Panhandle State. She was born and raised in Guymon not far from where her great-grandparents homesteaded and comes from a long line of Aggies as her grandparents and parents both graduated from Panhandle State as well as extended family. Her husband, Monte, is also a graduate. They have three children.

“We are blessed to live in a great community and raise our family here. I feel very fortunate to have started my career with PTCI and I hope to finish it with PTCI.” In addition to her COO responsibilities, Jana actively serves on a number of boards and organizations.

Jana is excited for the future of Panhandle State. “The leadership is amazing and it has been fun to watch the transitions taking place on campus. There are so many opportunities over there now, and PTCI is glad to be a partner of the University.” **P**

Samples of Success at Perfect Pairings

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

It's called Perfect Pairings and that's exactly what it is—an event that pairs Oklahoma Panhandle State University's two business clubs, AITP (the Association of Information Technology Professionals) and PBL (Phi Beta Lambda, the collegiate association of Future Business Leaders of America). The two organizations teamed up to orchestrate a wonderful fundraising event on Wednesday, February 7 at the newly remodeled University House on campus.

It was the second year for the two groups to host this event, which showcases wine, chocolate, and cheese pairings as well as both highly successful clubs. Ten stations were available at this year's event, with each featuring an exquisite pairing, such as Station 3, which had raspberry topped cheesecake bites, blue cheese puff pastry twists, and Donelli Lambrusco Grasparossa. Upon arrival, guests had the opportunity to browse all stations to sample the different pairings.

After trying as many stations as they wanted, guests participated in an auction of 10 baskets, with each basket containing its respective station's pairing. Also included in the baskets were custom-made canvas blocks, wine glasses, and a wine stopper with the university logo designed by Panhandle State's own Nick Tuttle. The auction concluded with a grand prize basket featuring a gift certificate for flowers from Golden Crown, two blankets embroidered with the university logo, champagne, his and hers champagne glasses, a granite cheese slab, and a Calley's Custom Creations nail art heart. Auctioneer Joel Wilson, Panhandle State Alumnus, conducted the evening's auction.

Organizers are quick to point to their local partners who made it possible to increase the number of pairing stations this year: Golden Crown, Urban Bru, Dancer's Fine Wine and Liquor, and Zak's Cheese. Calley Sassin of Calley's Custom Creations was also added as a partner this year, and her willingness to create the customized canvas blocks provided a wonderful contribution to the auction baskets. Similarly, the expertise of Virgil Gibson and the cheese creations of Panhandle State Associate Professor Steve Martin were invaluable to this year's event.

Although the pairings were delicious and the company was great, one of the highlights of the night came right before the auction during a short program featuring brief testimonials from current students and graduates, representing both of the organizations. PBL member Selina Gaucin and AITP member Jorge Rosas both commented on how being involved in their respective organizations has truly challenged them to be better not only changing their lives but also their entire college experience.

Rosas, a CIS junior from Felt, Okla., said, "Honestly

without AITP, I would not be the person I am today. Being a part of this club has set me on a path to success, and my time at OPSU has been greatly improved as a result."

Alumni Seth Jones and Clancy Green had the room in laughter with memories from competitions they attended as students, and they, too, talked about the benefits students gain from being a part of these great organizations.

Jones, a 2013 Panhandle State graduate and current attorney in Elkhart, Kan., represented PBL. He commented, "One of the underrated aspects of PBL/AITP is the networking opportunities it provides to students. Club members network with fellow students as well as industry representatives at the state and national levels through the competitions. Also, and perhaps more importantly, students have the opportunity to engage with members of the local community while participating in the club's fundraising and charitable events."

At the end of the night, the event had raised over \$11000, with over 70 guests and 30 club members in attendance. The money raised will go to help offset the costs for the groups to attend their regional and/or state and national competitions. Donations toward this effort can still be made at <http://www.opsu.edu/Academics/BusinessTech/Support/Perfect-Pairings/>.

With the continued success of the event and the positive reviews from participants, organizers are already making plans for the Third Annual Perfect Pairings to be held in early February 2019. If you would like to be added to the invitation list for this one-of-a-kind event, please contact Sara Hitch at sahitch@opsu.edu or Kim Tuttle at kimberly.tuttle@opsu.edu. **P**



Members of the campus organizations AITP and PBL along with their faculty advisors and President Dr. Tim Faltyn gather for a photo before the second annual Perfect Pairings hosted at the University House.



Left to right: Luis Morales, Maxine Henderson, Kacie Johnson, Carlie Murley, and Dr. Traficante

Students Selected for Honor Band

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

The 2018 Oklahoma Intercollegiate Honor Band Concert was Thursday, January 18 in Tulsa, Okla. and four Oklahoma Panhandle State University band members were among the group selected from 18 colleges and universities across Oklahoma to play.

Students representing Panhandle State included Maxine Henderson and Kacie Johnson, clarinet; Carlie Murley, trumpet; and Luis Morales, tuba. Panhandle State Director of Instrumental Music, Music Department Chair, Director of Music Education Charla Lewis was the group's advisor.

The students arrived on Wednesday afternoon and immediately auditioned for chair seating. The auditions were followed by rehearsal for the remainder of the evening and the following morning totaling nearly 10 hours of rehearsal for the concert. The event was a great experience for the students.

Maxine Henderson commented, "My first impression of the convention was that it was built on hard work. When we arrived, the instrumentalists were practicing in the auditorium and very prepared for their auditions. The conductor, Dr. Traficante, was direct and on-task the entire time but still managed to sneak in funny stories and anecdotes about her teaching career and trip back to Oklahoma to make the 10 hours of rehearsal easier. The entire time she spoke, the band was quiet and respectful and when she suggested a change in dynamics or a correction of rhythm, they changed what they were doing immediately. As a freshman who's never performed with a professional band before, the entire

experience was completely surreal. The amount of talent and education in the room was astronomical.

After we performed, we went to the convention center where there were dozens of booths showcasing their schools, instruments, arts, fundraising methods, sheet music and memorabilia. I met an old friend and made several new ones. I saw how beneficial it is to make connections, especially in fields where reputation can make or break a good job opportunity. As an education major, this exposed me to examples of what a good teacher is supposed to be. The people there (the majority of them music teachers) were committed to the betterment of their profession and it was apparent each was willing to put in the hard work necessary to be an effective teacher. The entire convention was extremely beneficial. Not only did I see what experts (like Dr. Traficante) in their field knew, I saw how well they communicated it to others, which, as a future teacher, is what I aspire to do."

Murley added, "It was an honor to be selected to play with the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Honor Band (OIHB). In my 10 years of playing music, this trip was by far the best trip I have ever been on and I have been on a lot. It is a rush to be able to play with other musicians that share the same love for music as you do and to play with some of the best musicians from colleges in the state. The OIHB left a huge impact on me. It not only motivated me to be a better player, but it also motivated me to be a better person. I would do it all over in a heartbeat."

Dr. Debra Traficante was the clinician and conductor. Dr. Traficante serves as Kennesaw State University's (KSU) Associate Director of Bands/Director of Athletic Bands, and Associate Professor of Music. Prior to KSU, Dr. Traficante served as Assistant Professor of Music/Assistant Director of University Bands at the University of Oklahoma where she conducted the Symphony Band, assisted in directing the "Pride of Oklahoma" Marching Band, taught conducting lessons to graduate and undergraduate students, taught graduate wind literature courses, served as the lead teacher for the undergraduate conducting and methods course, and oversaw music education students. She earned her Bachelor of Music in Music Education, cum laude, from the University of Florida, a Master of Music degree in Wind Band Conducting from the University of Florida, and earned a Fellowship to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts in Wind Band Conducting degree from the University of Oklahoma. She served as Director of Bands for five years at New Smyrna Beach High School, Florida and Assistant Director of Bands for two years at Buchholz High School, Florida.

Presented by The Oklahoma Music Educators Association and The Oklahoma Membership of the College Band Directors National Association, the event was at the International Ballroom in the Downtown Doubletree Hotel in Tulsa, Okla.

In addition to rehearsals and the concert, the students shared information about Panhandle State during a booth browsing session Thursday afternoon and they enjoyed a series of concerts that evening. **P**



Members of the Panhandle State Crops Judging pause for a photo with faculty and administration members following the Regional Crops Judging Contest hosted in Goodwell. The team earned a fourth place finish at the contest. Top right: John Paul Kain. Bottom right: Dr. Curtis Bensch addresses the students in attendance.



Strong Finish at Home-Hosted Crops Judging Contest

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

The School of Agriculture at Oklahoma Panhandle State University had the opportunity to host the Regional Crops Judging Contest on campus on Saturday, February 10th in the Science and Agriculture Building. The contest saw 14 schools in attendance with over 100 students vying for the title.

The crops judging competition is an intensive examination of agronomic skills and knowledge designed around the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) program. The contest consists of four sections: laboratory practical, agronomic exam, math practical and plant and seed identification. In the laboratory practical, competitors identify insects, diseases, equipment, and crop products, plus determine crop growth stages, interpret pesticide labels or seed tags, name plant structures, identify nutrient deficiencies, and evaluate various crop production problems. The agronomic exam evaluated knowledge of crop production and management, crop physiology and breeding, soil properties, soil fertility, tillage, crop harvesting and storage, weeds, insects and diseases. The math practical included equipment calibration, pesticide application and other mathematical calculations. Seed and plant identification requires contestants to identify over 150 plant and seed specimens.

Two-year colleges and four-year universities traveled to participate with the University of Wisconsin in River

Falls winning recognition for traveling the farthest.

In the four-year division Kansas State University was first and Iowa State University was second. The University of Nebraska in Lincoln finished third and Panhandle State was close behind in fourth.

Panhandle State Agronomy Department Head and Crops Judging Coach Dr. Curtis Bensch said, "It was a great start to the crops judging season. The students now have a better appreciation of what all is involved and just how intense the competition actually is. Panhandle State was selected as the host site for the contest this year and I feel that we put on a good contest for all involved."

In the two-year division the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture earned the first place plaque with a commanding lead placing their four individual team members in the top five individual placings overall. Hutchinson Community College and Northeast Nebraska Community College placed second and third.

In the four-year individual standings, John Paul Kain of McCook, Neb. finished in the top ten overall for Panhandle State. John Paul said, "I thought the contest was very well organized. It was challenging and thoroughly tested each competitor's agronomic knowledge."

Rounding out the four-person competitive team for Panhandle State was Mary Kate McCall, Kierra Smart, and Allison Jones. Coleman Sintas, Spencer Durler, Ross Brown, and Jordan Jones also represented the Aggies getting some valuable experience under their belts.

Big thank you to Hunny's for providing a delicious lunch. Also very special thanks to the contest's generous sponsors including Servi-Tech, CropQuest, Crop Production Services, Hitch Enterprises, and Skyland Grain Company. **P**



Hispanic Serving Institute

Combined university efforts have led to Panhandle State being recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) making it the only school of higher education in Oklahoma with this distinction. In order to be named an HSI, an institution must have Latino enrollments of 25% or more full-time equivalent students. HSIs may be public or private two- and four-year colleges and universities. Panhandle State President Dr. Tim Faltyn said, “I am proud to announce Panhandle State is a Title V eligible Hispanic Serving Institution! We are pleased to achieve this goal and we want to do all we can to serve this population as Oklahoma’s first and only official Hispanic serving university according to the Department of Education.” **P**



Hispanic Student Services Director Teri Mora (second from left) works with current students on internship applications.



Spring Credit Hours See First Increase Since 2011

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

Preliminary enrollment reports for the 2018 Spring semester at Oklahoma Panhandle State University show the first Spring credit hour enrollment increase since 2011.

Reports show 13,205 total credit hours which is a 3% increase from Spring of 2017. The last Spring increase in credit hours in 2011 was 0.2%.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, “I am so proud. Our faculty, staff, coaches, and High School and Community Relations team have worked so hard to make this happen. Credit hour production is the generator of revenue for the University, so it is key to be up in this area. Panhandle State has an important role in the continual change of lives.”

Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Julie Dinger added, “Student retention is critical to our sustainability and helping students graduate. I’m happy to see so many students returning.”

Sophomore Erika Chartrand is from Quebec, Canada and came to Panhandle State to study Elementary Education. “The Elementary Education program at PSU has been a blessing to me. The small campus gives me the opportunity to get to know my teachers. They are always willing to help and want to see you succeed. We are all like a big family!”

Sequoia Smith is a junior from Boyd, Texas and he is majoring in both Agribusiness and Animal Science. “Things are changing here, and for the better! It shows here on campus and I am proud to be an Aggie.” **P**



Aggie Basketball Assists in Special Fundraiser during Winter Homecoming

Released by Panhandle State Sports Information

Anchor D Arena was not only filled with basketball fans on Saturday, Feb. 10, but was brimming with supportive members of the Panhandle State Family who were there for an extra-special Pink Out with a purpose.

In early January, four year-old Monson Wilkins was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). Monson is the son of Panhandle State's Director of Vocal Music, Dr. Dee Wilkins and his wife Leisel. With Monson currently undergoing weekly treatments in Oklahoma City, the coaches, players and staff of Aggie Athletics decided to turn their Winter Homecoming and scheduled Pink Out game into an opportunity to help the Wilkins Family with travel costs and medical expenses.

The women's basketball team held a silent auction during both games, with all proceeds collected going directly to the Wilkins Family. Pink Out t-shirts were sold and pink basketball jerseys from previous years were auctioned off, along with several pieces of art and pottery from local Panhandle State artists. The Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) also sold special #MONSONSTRONG wristbands during the games and throughout the week leading up to the event. Over \$1000



was raised for the family in addition to funds raised by the Goodwell Fire Department, who sold special t-shirts for Monson at the games as well.

Dr. Wilkins was truly humbled by the strong show of support for little Monson and their entire family. Panhandle State also started a Go Fund Me page to help continue to raise money for the family as they embark on Monson's road to recovery. The public link is called "Monson Wilkins-Leukemia" at the GoFundMe.com website. Wristbands are also still available for purchase through the Aggie SAAC group.

Monson was in attendance for the women's matchup against Central Christian that day, and got to sit on the bench with the players as the game's Honorary Captain. In addition to the special treatment for Monson, the women's basketball team invited all those in attendance who had battled cancer or are currently undergoing treatment to join them on the court for a special halftime recognition. During halftime of the men's game, 2018 Winter Homecoming royalty was announced, with Dustin Murphy crowned King and Melody Ethley winning the title of Queen. It was definitely a great day to be an Aggie! **P**

Top Hand Auction Has A Record-Breaking Year

By Erika Chartrand

Once again the annual Top Hand Auction hosted by the Panhandle State Rodeo Team was a huge success. There was a record breaking amount of people last Saturday night at the Pickle Creek Event Center in Guymon, Okla. Friends, family and the whole community came together once again to support the rodeo team.

The top selling item this year was 130 small square bales of horse-quality alfalfa, which brought \$1380. A customized Louis Vuitton purse, Calf-Roping and Breakaway clinics donated by Brent Lewis, a coffee table made by Shade Etbauer, pictures printed on metal taken by Sadie Latham, and many amazing pieces of artwork made this night a success. Along with these items, and many more, the Panhandle State Rodeo team members were auctioned off in pairs of two for eight hours of work each. The top selling top-hand pair was Bridget Merrigan and Sierra Robinson for a total of \$600. On top of the generous bids on the team members, coaches Robert Etbauer and Shelbie Weeder were sold for a grand total of \$3900.

The Top Hand Sponsor of the Year was given out to Lanny Wilson and Mike Branson. Not only are they big supporters during the annual auction, but they also planned out and welded the new return alley at the college arena, making the facility even more practical. They also worked very hard welding on the covered stalls, which were split in two, so that the team could have access to twice as many stalls this year. The rodeo team would like to thank them once again, as well as all of the other sponsors that allow the team so many opportunities.

Clay Myers of Texhoma Livestock Auction did an outstanding job once again keeping the crowd entertained and the auction rolling. Tate Cobb and Derek Barton assisted him.

As always, Hunny's did not disappoint. The room was as packed as ever and our incredible sponsor was ready to supply everyone with a plateful of their delicious buffet.

To end a great night, Ken Stonecipher and The Wooden Nickle Band provided musical entertainment that got everyone out of their seats and out on the dance floor. The event keeps getting bigger and bigger and we look forward to the years to come.

The team is proud to announce that the evening brought a total profit of \$32,725. All proceeds from the Top Hand Auction are put towards the Panhandle State Rodeo Team. These funds will go towards scholarships, practice stock, facility upkeep and the professional rodeo schools. **P**



The Panhandle State Rodeo Team saw great support once again at the Annual Top Hand Auction.

FCA Game Day Brings Together Sports and Service

By Alyssa Fox

On Saturday, Jan. 27 the Panhandle State men's basketball team, in partnership with local Fellowship of Christian Athletes groups, hosted a public event game day filled with fellowship and basketball.

FCA groups from around the Panhandle area gathered at the Hughes Strong Auditorium on the OPSU campus to take part in a worship and praise session prior to the Aggies' home basketball games later that day. The Aggies were proud to have Panhandle State BCM Director, David Coffey, give the pre-game sermon along with Panhandle State FCA representatives who offered testimonies and information on other campus ministries to the group.

Those who pre-registered for the event received a special FCA Game Day T-shirt and free admission into both Aggie basketball games against Southwestern Christian that afternoon. The special FCA guests were treated to free popcorn from the concession stand and took part in fun halftime contests during each game. A special group recognition took place on the court at halftime of the men's game.

The Aggies hope to make this an annual event to help increase awareness and participation in local and campus FCA groups. **P**



Aggie Baseball SAC First Pitch Banquet a Success

By Alyssa Fox

The Panhandle State Baseball team hosted the SAC First Pitch Banquet and Silent Auction on Sunday, Feb. 18 in conjunction with their Sooner Athletic Conference season-opener series, played at home that weekend.

The event took place at Hunny's BBQ in Guymon where guests were treated to a meet and greet with the coaching staff and players followed by a private dinner provided by Hunny's. A ticket raffle and a silent auction took place throughout the night, including pro-signed memorabilia, original print and hand-painted photos, valuable antique collectables, team apparel, and dinner with the coaching staff.

Head Baseball Coach Jason LaRocque was pleased with the turnout of support from the community and is eager to see the event build from year to year. Over 100 were in attendance and the team raised close to \$2500 in this inaugural fundraiser which they plan to make an annual event. **P**

AGGIE ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Panhandle State Football Welcomes New Coaches

Released by Panhandle State Sports Information

As the Aggies gear up to start spring training at the end of February, Head Coach Russell Gaskamp is pleased to have five new additions to the football coaching staff.

Success often comes at a price, as Gaskamp witnessed after the team's winning 7-3 season ended and several of his valued coaches were hand-picked to further their careers at other colleges. Gaskamp did not hesitate in his promotion of LeMarcus Gibson into the Defensive Coordinator and Assistant Head Coach position, stating, "He is a talented young coach that the players really respect for his intensity, work ethic and energy."

In addition to Gibson returning with a new title, the Aggies welcome back defensive line coach Aaron Jackson and offensive assistant Riley Cole, who each served with the team last year.

Five new faces join the group including defensive assistant Kevin King, who will take over the defensive backs position group. King hails from Jacksonville, Fla. and comes to Panhandle from Southern University. Also on the defensive side of the ball, Kendall Walker will lead the Aggie linebackers; Walker is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio and started his coaching career at Indiana State where he also played for the Sycamores.

The offense receives three top-notch newcomers in coaches Kerry Sloan (running backs), Christian Escobar (quarterbacks) and Austin Gillmore (wide receivers). Sloan is a native of Killeen, Texas and was a standout running back at Hardin Simmons. Escobar most recently served as an assistant coach at Sul Ross State and hails from El Paso. Gaskamp is thrilled to add Gillmore to his crew, for his first-hand knowledge of the area, having played his high school career at Bushland High School near Amarillo. A former player at Colorado State, he gained coaching experience in the Lone Star Conference at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Gillmore will also serve as the Special Teams Coordinator for the Aggies.

Ending the 2017 season as the No. 24-ranked team in the nation, serves as motivation to break the barrier and finish 2018 at the top of the Sooner Athletic Conference. This young and eager group of coaches are all up to meet that challenge and exceed expectations. **P**



ADDISON MUNSCH
WEEKS 13 & 16: Basketball



JACE KERR
WEEK 18: Basketball



MONTI REGIER
WEEKS 15 & 18: Basketball



JAEDON WHITFIELD
WEEKS 13 & 15: Basketball



MADISON DEARMIN
WEEK 14: Basketball



DK SUMO
WEEK 14: Basketball



JESSLIN LAMONT
WEEK 17: Equestrian



NATE KELLY
WEEK 16: Baseball



COREY LEY
WEEK 17: Baseball

A complete listing of Athlete of the Week recipients can be found at opsuaggies.com



PANHANDLE STATE
FOUNDATION



SAVE *the* DATE

April **13**,
2018

**Grand
Opening**

10a.m.- 12 p.m.

