

DECEMBER 2022

Panhandle

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TEACHING AGGIES FROM
THE START



/ C A M P U S /

FIRST EVER PANHANDLE SHOWDOWN

The College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing held the first-ever Panhandle Showdown on November 18th and 19th at the Milton England Activity Center. The jackpot began Saturday morning with both market and breeding animals exhibited and followed by showmanship contests for each species.

Vice President of Advancement, Dr. Ryan Blanton shared, “There was outstanding community participation for the first-ever Panhandle Showdown. Hosting this event for the community is exactly what an agriculture university strives towards. We are excited to grow this event so that area youth can continue to develop their skills and confidence.”

Panhandle Showdown provided exhibitors the opportunity to participate in a Skill-A-Thon, which tests their knowledge of the sheep and goat industries, and a fitting contest where teams compete to showcase their skills in preparing animals for the show ring. There were a total of 76 entries combined from the multiple components of the showdown.

Dean of the College of Agriculture, Science and Nursing, Tracy Kincannon commented, “We are very excited to host this event and share our facilities with the community. The Panhandle Showdown is a great way for young people to learn about and promote the livestock industry.”

Beyond The Ring Junior Livestock Association sanctioned the event which gave the exhibitors in the area a chance to collect their level points with the multi-specie nationwide association for junior livestock exhibitors.

“We were excited to draw youth from a multiple state region to our facilities and get them excited and involved in our program here at OPSU.” said Dr. Crystal Tolle, Professor of Animal Science.

The Panhandle Showdown was able to host two very pristine livestock judges. Rylan Laudan, the judge for the goat divisions is an All-American Livestock Judger at the North American in Louisville for the National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest. The judge for the sheep portion, Kevin Kornele, is a commercial cattle and sheep rancher from Fort Supply, OK.

They plan to make the Panhandle Showdown an annual event as they move into the future. It provides the opportunity for the community to join Panhandle State at the farm facilities and teach future Aggies. **P**

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/ CAMPUS /


FFA INTERSCHOLASTICS INNOVATING NEW PRACTICES

Oklahoma Panhandle State University hosted the FFA Interscholastics on November 8th. The OPSU Interscholastics is a one-day event hosting Career Development Events (CDE's) and Leadership Development Events (LDE's) for the surrounding FFA Chapters. This has been an ongoing tradition for OPSU for many years and draws students from all around the region. These contests all vary and are specifically designed for students to explore areas of interest for a career in the future. The contests held in the morning were the Career Development Education (CDE's) and included contests like Livestock Judging, Meat Evaluation, Floriculture, and Rangeland Evaluation. Most of these were individual events in that they work independently, but they use all the scores of the team members to determine the winners. In the afternoon, the Leadership Development Education (LDE's) were held composed of speaking events and an individual contest, designed to improve student's leadership abilities by develop their skills in public speaking."

This year's contest included \$21,000 in scholarships awarded, online registration and results, new competitive events, and collaborations with the faculty and staff of the College of Business and Technology and area FFA Teachers.



Dean Tracy Kincannon and the faculty and staff of the College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing hosted a record 1,768 total entries from 59 schools across our 6-state region this year.

“Our annual Interscholastics was one of our proudest and memorable moments at OPSU. With more than 1,700 contest entries, 59 schools from six states, our campus was filled with energetic FFA students and agriculture educators. I applaud Dean Tracy Kincannon and his faculty at the College of Agriculture Science and Nursing for their effective organization and execution that provided a rich academic experience for high school students. Through Dean Kincannon’s strong leadership, his college has set an all-time highest-attended Interscholastics contest. We look forward to continuing this tradition that provides scholarships and interactive learning opportunities for high school students.” – Dr. Theresa Billiot, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs 

“I appreciate the faculty and Dean Kincannon’s leadership to make sure this event was a success. The Faculty of the College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing have set a new standard for excellence with this year’s Interscholastic competition.”

– Dr. Julie Dinger, University





/ CAMPUS /

CHILI COOKOFF KEEPS WITH TRADITION

Early Saturday morning on November 12th, 17 teams brought their best chili from around the Panhandle for the 16th Annual Chili Cook-Off.

Each year, families, friends, and businesses from near and far enter the competition to see who has the most favorable chili. This year the cook-off was once again an extremely successful event on campus.

The chilly morning atmosphere was filled with excitement and eagerness as teams set up their spirited tents and tables in preparation for the rush of people who came to sample chili that stemmed from some of the most creative recipes. The recipes ranged from simple combinations of meats and sauces to more complex combinations of various meats and ingredients. With the new tailgating system in place this year, the Chili Cook-Off had a unique advantage to be surrounded by so many Aggie fans.



“Chili Cook-Off holds a special place in my heart, and I love being a part of the team that gets to put it on every year! We have great community support, and it’s an event that shows we are Panhandle Proud.”

— Calandra Rose, Administrative Assistant to the President



Some of the teams included Phi Beta Lambda (PBL), Goodwell EMS, Financial Aid, Anchor D Bank and various other members of the community.

With 17 teams entered, the competition was bound to be tough. Ultimately, several teams made their mark on top. The People's Choice Award went to Anchor D Bank and Best Presentation went to Goodwell EMS. Best Chili was awarded to Financial Aid in 1st place, while Zeta Psi came in 2nd place and Seaboard came in 3rd place.

Each year this competition provides food and a friendly environment for everyone involved. The university is already looking forward to next year's cook-off! **P**



“Aggie Alums are a big part of the Chili Cook-Off. Many of them took part in the competition and had a great time. The tailgate area was full of Aggie Alums.”

— Shawn Joy, Director of Alumni Relations





/ STAFF /

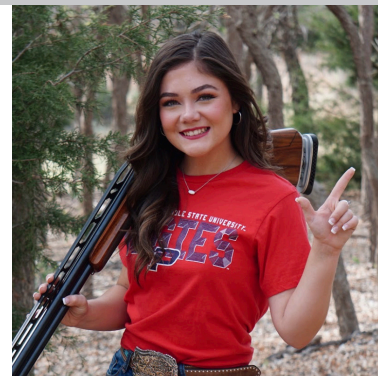
JARED MAYEDA

Jared Mayeda first came to OPSU in the Spring of 2017 and is originally from Cypress, California. The welcomeness of the campus, the family environment, and meeting people helped him choose to attend OPSU. Mayeda graduated from OPSU, obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education.

When asked what his favorite thing about OPSU is, Mayeda states, “The people. My teammates, coworkers, professors, friends, and everyone involved here at OPSU. Everyone is accommodating and does a beautiful job of keeping this great institution running. With the smaller environment and smaller town, you also get a personal touch in every class and all over campus. This is one thing that made my college experience great.”

As a student at OPSU, Mayeda played baseball and was a captain for two years. He also was a part of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. He is currently working on finishing his master’s program at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. Some of his hobbies include spending time with friends and family and golfing when the weather is nice. He has a younger brother named AJ, who is a semiprofessional kickboxer. His parents, Patti and Roger, have their own tax business back home in Southern California.

Coaching has always been his passion, and he aspires to climb the coaching ladder. Coaching at the professional level would be any coach’s dream opportunity, but he believes he can make a more significant impact at the collegiate level. He loves helping young adults find their way in life and uses baseball as a platform to cultivate success in athletes. **P**



/ STUDENT /

EMILY ROBERTSON

Emily Robertson found herself at Panhandle State through a Shooting Sports scholarship and will graduate in 2026 with a major in Nursing. Robertson commented, “This place has felt like a second home since the second I got here. Everyone is so supportive and truly wants to see you succeed. I was so amazed by how friendly everyone here is. I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else.”

As Emily grew up, she was known as the helper. Whether it be working on her animals or cleaning up scratches that her family would get while working, Emily was the first to be there in a time of aid. At the end of her high school career, Emily was a certified phlebotomist that was sure of her chosen career path in Nursing.

Besides being on the Shooting Sports team, Robertson is also on the OPSU cheerleading team. Shooting Sports coach Tell Dixon mentions that, “She has been doing very well this season with shooting sports and works very hard to represent the school well and shoot her best. She has shown growth and potential the more she keeps shooting and competing at Panhandle. I look forward to seeing more of her success in the years to come in our shooting sports program.”

Robertson has been in shooting sports since she was nine through her local 4-H club. After two years of club shooting, she then pursued shooting sports in a more competitive nature through high school and into college.

She loves animals and working cattle. She also loves cooking, shopping, and spending time with friends and family. After graduation, she plans to continue her shooting career to hopefully make it to the Olympics while also working as a travel nurse, helping people all around the world. **P**



/ FACULTY /

TRACY CURTIS

Tracy Curtis, an Oklahoma panhandle native, has been a faculty member for many years. Curtis has a big heart for her hometown of Texhoma. She has lived in Guymon for 18 years with her husband Matt and three children, Tyler, Tatum, and Joshua.

Curtis earned her Bachelor of Business Administration in Computer Information Systems from Panhandle State in 1999. She then obtained a Master’s degree in Instructional Design and Technology from West Texas A&M University. Both Tracy and her husband are OPSU graduates.

Dr. Karen Goosen, Dean of the College of Business and Technology, shared, “Tracy has been such an asset to the Business Administration department since coming on full-time this semester. She has brought an exciting new level of experiential learning to the classroom that has already impacted the success of our students. Tracy strives for excellence in all she does, and I am excited to have her on board and part of our team.”

Curtis loved her time as a student at OPSU and continues to enjoy being a faculty member. “During my time as an undergraduate, several of us with computer majors would study until 4:00 AM during finals week. This memory of great comradery and a feeling of accomplishment reminds me of the “grit” and determination our University is known for! The students have been outstanding. I always enjoy getting to know new people and hearing about their backgrounds!” stated Curtis.

Curtis shared that her hobby has been chasing her children around for the past 20 years. Tyler is attending Oklahoma State University a sophomore majoring in Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering. Tatum will graduate from high school in the spring of 2023, and Joshua loves to compete in whatever sport he is involved in. **P**



/ ALUMNI /

SHAWN STRAIN

Shawn Strain grew up in Goodwell, Oklahoma, and graduated from Oklahoma Panhandle State University in December 1994. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. Strain studied at OPSU to keep their family tradition of attending OPSU going. His parents, grandmother, and many cousins are graduates of OPSU. Shawn is married to Winna Strain and has two daughters, Michelle Guess and Maecee Strain, who is a Sophomore at Goodwell High School

The small school atmosphere allowed him to know everyone due to the class sizes being small enough to get to know the professors and classmates. The relationships that OPSU has with Goodwell High School are appreciated, and Strain believes that they do an excellent job of providing our kids with opportunities to use the athletic facilities at the University. He thanks Coach Laird and the Aggie Men’s basketball team for their support of the Goodwell High School Eagle basketball team.

When asked to share his favorite memory of his time on campus, he reminisces, “My greatest memories of OPSU are the people I met and the relationships formed. I still keep in touch through social media with several friends from OPSU.”

Strain also still enjoys the Tailgating before home football games. He tries to attend as many home basketball and football games as possible, as well as the homecoming parade and barbecue every year.

He is currently the Athletic Director and Head High School Boys’ Basketball coach at Goodwell High School. He has been a head high school basketball coach for 22 seasons.

Strain enjoys team roping and was a member of the OPSU rodeo team for a couple of years while in college. **P**



/ EDUCATION /

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT DAY AT PANHANDLE STATE

Oklahoma Panhandle State University recognizes First Generation College Student Day every year on November 8th. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni are celebrated over this outstanding achievement. Being a first generation college student means that a student is the first in their immediate family to attend college. Panhandle State is proud to have over 200 students and 30 staff and faculty identify as first generation college students.

Vice President of Advancement, Dr. Ryan Blanton, and Alumni, Chief Gustavo Ramirez, of Goodwell Police presented heartfelt speeches over the importance of being first generational college students and graduates.

Dr. Julie Dinger, University President, commented, “One of the things that makes OPSU great is our commitment to serving first generation college students. I appreciate the OPSU team, the speakers who shared inspiring stories of their First Gen journeys, and our excellent students.”

“The determination to become the first person in one’s family to pursue a college degree is not an easy path. This journey lays out a foundation that will shape one’s professional development and personal identity. We were excited to celebrate First-Gen Day because we are so fortunate to have them part of our OPSU family.”, shared Dr. Theresa Billiot, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Dr. Billiot is a first generation college student herself. **P**



/ CAMPUS /

3RD ANNUAL AGGIE SHOOTOUT SUCCESS

The weekend of November 12th and 13th, OPSU Shooting Sports Team hosted the Third-Annual collegiate competition known as the Aggie Shootout, inviting many colleges to come to the Shooting Sports Complex and compete. This year saw Western Oklahoma State College, Fort Hays State University, Connors State University, Hastings College, Kansas State University, and Southern Arkansas, compete against OPSU. During the Shootout, there were 3 different events: Skeet, Trap, and Sporting Clays.

A total of 66 competitors were joined by community, family, and friends that came out to help and support the teams.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger noted, "I am so proud of Coach Dixon and the team. The shooting sports team consistently sets the standard for excellence in collegiate competition."

This was Coach Tell Dixon's first competition to host at Panhandle State, "We had a great turn out and our team did an excellent job. It was a great opportunity for the team as well since this was the first competition our entire team got to compete in together. Overall, it was a successful weekend, and I am looking forward to the next Aggie Shootout.", said Dixon. The Panhandle State Shooting Team competed well, and freshman Emily Robertson was the High Overall Female. This meant a lot to Emily since this was her first home competition. "Getting HOA Female was super exciting. This shoot brought a lot of different emotions into play, considering the weather, it being a home competition, and it being the last shoot of the semester! I know I definitely could've shot better but overall it was an honor to win HOA female!"

Among all the events of this weekend, Dr. Julie Dinger found her way to the Shooting Sports complex and got to cheer on our team. Panhandle State is not only proud of the Aggie Shootout success, but it will also be exciting to watch this team continue to grow and see what other success they bring back home. **P**



PANHANDLE STATE FOUNDATION

GIVING CHALLENGE

“Aggie Nation rose above and beyond the Giving Challenge bringing in over \$25,000 in 17 days!! We couldn’t be more proud of everyone that helped us achieve this goal. Our campus, alumni, and community continue to show us what it means to be Panhandle Proud!”

— Dr. Julie Dinger, University President

/ FOUNDATION /

GIVING CHALLENGE SUCCESS FOR PANHANDLE STATE

OPSU Foundation exceeds the \$20,000 challenge in 17 days! They kicked off their first Giving Challenge on October 18th, 2022, and in less than a month, there was over \$45,000 raised designated to the Giving Challenge.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger, said, “Aggie Nation rose above and beyond the Giving Challenge bringing in over \$25,000 in 17 days!! We couldn’t be more proud of everyone that helped us achieve this goal. Our campus, alumni, and community continue to show us what it means to be Panhandle Proud!”

Executive Director of the Foundation, Chyanna Black, was contacted by Dr. Joe Gieck with the opportunity to have up to \$20,000 in donations matched into the General Scholarship Fund. As part of the Advancement team at OPSU, Black developed a campaign that everyone could get behind. The Giving Challenge was set up so that donations made to any activity or scholarship account would be matched by the donor to the General Scholarship fund of up to \$20,000.

The Foundation partnered with club advisors, coaches, and other leaders on campus before launching the campaign to benefit areas all across campus.

Black stated, “It was great to see the excitement across campus with the chance to raise funds for not only what they devote personal time to, but also have it matched to the scholarship fund which benefits so many students altogether.”

Dr. Gieck was pleased with the success of the campaign and pledged he would like to do it next year as well. His commitment to OPSU comes from his grandparents that homesteaded in the panhandle area, and his grandfather graduated from PAMC later becoming the foreman of the school farm. Dr. Gieck’s parents both graduated from Panhandle State and valued their education immensely. The Gieck legacy for OPSU ranges from the school farm to athletics as his father played three sports throughout his college career, It was through the Giving Challenge that he was able to honor the different passions of previous generations all over campus as well as the scholarship fund.

Dr. Gieck commented, “My wife and I are happy to be able to enhance the direction of PSU. Our philanthropy focuses around helping people to help themselves and the PSU experience does that for the students and thus enriches the panhandle area of Oklahoma. We will always be grateful and



“We are excited to watch Beau rope at the NFBR, and are very proud of all her accomplishments so far. She was a leader for us for 4 years, and it is awesome to see her continue to be as an alum. Beau has always been a winner, and we can’t wait to see all she accomplishes this year and the years to come.”

— Shelbie Rose, Head Women’s Rodeo Coach

/ALUMNI/

BEAU PETERSON MAKES NFR HISTORY FOR OPSU WOMEN’S RODEO

Beau Peterson makes history for the OPSU Women’s Rodeo alumni community. She is the first woman to make the National Finals Breakaway roping (NFBR) from Panhandle State. Peterson also is only the second woman from OPSU to ever make it to the National Finals.

It has been over 15 years since a woman from Panhandle State competed in Las Vegas for a world title at the National Finals Rodeo. Tana Poppino was the first and only before this year when she competed in Barrel Racing at the 2006 NFR.

OPSU Head Women’s Rodeo Coach, Shelbie Rose, stated, “We are excited to watch Beau rope at the NFBR, and are very proud of all her accomplishments so far. She was a leader for us for 4 years, and it is awesome to see her continue to be as an alum. Beau has always been a winner, and we can’t wait to see all she accomplishes this year and the years to come.”

She competed with and against the best in the industry to be in the Top 15 in the World Standings. The official rodeo season started on October 1st, 2021 and it came down to the last day on September 30th, 2022 to see who would make the cut. Peterson started her journey to make the NFBR after graduating in May from OPSU. She loaded up her horses and headed down the rodeo road with hopes to compete under the Vegas lights at the end of the year.

In the short amount of time between May and the end of September, Peterson competed at the College National Finals Rodeo in the Breakaway Roping for OPSU as well as the pro rodeos. In 5 months, she cashed in over \$56,000 which earned her spot ranked 11th in the World Standings.

Beau commented, “My 2022 season started right after I graduated which meant I was unable to compete at the winter rodeos, so I felt somewhat behind! In between graduation and the CNFR, I went to a few rodeos, but it was a super busy summer! I had some great weeks of rodeo and some fairly rough weeks too! I had some big wins towards the end of the season right when I needed them to ensure that I was going to be making my first trip to Vegas! I’m super grateful for all the support I have received from everyone and the encouraging words! I’m very excited to be competing in Vegas and have high hopes for my first NFBR!”

Peterson will compete at the South Point Arena on November 29th & 30th in 10 rounds with rounds 1-5 taking place on the 29th and rounds 6-10 finishing out on the 30th. She along with the other top 14 professional breakaway ropers in the world will be competing for \$250,000 in prize money. At the end of the tenth round, we will see who is crowned the World Champion. With the prize money on the table and her record of success, Peterson has a chance to wear that crown.

She won’t be the only alumni competing in Las Vegas at the NFR. Peterson will be joined by NFR veterans Josh Frost, Dawson Hay, and Orin Larsen as well as NFR rookie, Logan Hay. Frost currently sits second in the world standings at his 3rd NFR in the Bull Riding with hopes of his first World Championship title. The Hay brothers will compete in the Saddle Bronc Riding. Dawson is making his third NFR trip sitting 14th while his little brother, Logan, makes his first trip sitting 7th. Orin Larsen, a million-dollar career earnings cowboy, makes his eighth trip to the NFR in the Bareback Riding sitting 12th in the standings. These cowboys will compete at the Thomas & Mack Center from December 1st through the 10th. They will have a round each night to see who takes home the Gold Buckle in their respective events as well as a piece of the \$10.257 million total NFR purse.

Be sure to tune into the Cowboy Channel to watch our cowgirl and cowboys keep the winning tradition alive in Las Vegas at the National Finals Rodeo. **P**



/ATHLETICS/

MEN'S BASKETBALL STARTS THE SEASON AT HOME

The Aggies men's basketball team hosted Our Lady of the Lake Friday night, November 11.

The Saints would lead in the first five minutes into the contest 16-7. At the 14:43 mark, Senior Rayquan Elliott would cash in with a three-pointer making it 16-10. The saints would take a 15-point lead to push their lead to 35-20 at the 6:55 mark. The Aggies pulled down 21 rebounds, and Sophomore Woody Therenciel had a big night with four block shots. Senior Rayquan Elliot had a fantastic night with 51 points, including two steals. Final score of 94-112 with Aggies down.

After the game, coach Laird shared, "We are still struggling to execute our game plans. Our inexperience is slowing us down, but we have the two most important things, good character and connectedness. Once we get to full strength, we will be a much better and tougher team to beat," Laird commented on Ray's performance and said, "Ray is a special kid who is giving an incredible effort right now! Scoring 51 points at any level of basketball is amazing. We need to have other guys step up and help us turn the corner." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL BATTLES FOR HOME GAME WIN

The Aggies women's basketball team continued to play on the road as they traveled to Columbia, MO and faced Columbia College.

Before the game, the Cougars received a top-25 vote. The Cougars took a 12-2 lead early in the first period. The Aggies would hit four three-pointers, tying the game with 2:38 left in the first period. Cougars would score five straight points to go up 21-16 at the end of the first period.

Each of the teams would trade buckets in the second period of the game. Junior Jamiya Eaddy would hit a jump shot in the second period, scoring 36-37, fighting back the Cougars before the half. Coming out of the break, the Aggies and the Cougars contained each other with one possession score. Cougars would get a lead up to six, and the Aggies responded with a three-point play from Junior Chloe Andrew, making the score 46-49 Cougars.

In the final period Senior, Tateum Jones would hit a jump shot giving the Aggies a four-point lead. The cougars would claw out an 8-0 run, giving them the lead and the game with a final score of 67-77. The Aggies will continue on the road as they have two upcoming exhibition games.. **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

AGGIES FINISH OUT FOOTBALL SEASON WITH AWARDS

The Aggies football team concluded their season at home when Ottawa University Arizona came to town.

The Sooner Athletics Conference released their All-Sooner Athletic Conference football awards Monday, November 28th. Panhandle State Aggies received notice that four players were on the SAC Awards list for second-team offense and defense.

The only offensive player named on the list was senior, Jaishone Brown. On the defensive, three Aggies made the second team, Defense Linebackers D’Quan Charles and Kameron Dickerson, and Defensive back Ja’Quavion Daniels. Also to receive recognition were Tyriek Kimble, Khavia Reese, and Brandon Stephens that received Honorable Mention in the Conference. The football program has already begun to work towards next season with their recruiting schedule. **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

OPSU VOLLEYBALL PRODUCES FOUR ALL-CONFERENCE AWARDS

Oklahoma Panhandle State Volleyball team received four All-Conference awards from the Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC), Essence West, Lesly Galarza, Gracie Soza, and Joelle LaForce.

Senior Essence West received 1st Team All-Conference. West ended the season with 308 kills at 3.67 kills per set, 309 total digs at 3.25 per set, and 21 aces. West from Dallas, Texas, recently received an offensive attacker award from the Sooner Athletic Conference after reaching her fifth match, where she attained over 20+ kills. West had 24 kills, hitting .409 against John Brown University.

Senior Lesly Galarza received 2nd Team All-Conference. Galarza averages 6.53 sets per assist and 618 assists, 241 total digs at 2.51 per set, and 29 aces for Aggie Volleyball. Galarza from El Paso, Texas, attained eight double-doubles of assists and digs this season, with a high of 19 digs and 27 set assists against Oklahoma City University. In addition, Galarza was awarded setter of the week one time this season.

Junior Gracie Soza received 2nd Team All-Conference. This season Soza led the SAC conference with 47 aces at 0.59 aces per set and 475 digs with an average of 5.48 digs per set. Soza, from Nevada, Texas, reached 20+ digs eight times this season, with a high of 30 digs against Southwestern Christian University.

Junior Joelle LaForce received an honorable mention. LaForce produced 1.97 kills per set and 0.51 blocks per set. LaForce from Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, recently had 15 kills and 0 errors, hitting .556 against Central Christian, and received attacker of the week from the conference. **P**

AGGIE WONDERLAND

NOVEMBER 18TH - DECEMBER 30TH

