

FREE PUBLICATION

RED DIRT ROOTS

SUMMER 2026



What's In This Issue?

COOL HISTORY YOU NEVER LEARNED IN SCHOOL.

GOLF STORIES THAT INVOLVE INVENTING THINGS.

SUMMER SURVIVAL TIPS FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE CHILDREN.

SMALL-TOWN BUSINESSES DOING BIG THINGS.

TRAVEL STORIES THAT DON'T INVOLVE LOSING LUGGAGE.

FEEL-GOOD STORIES AND HAPPY TEARS.

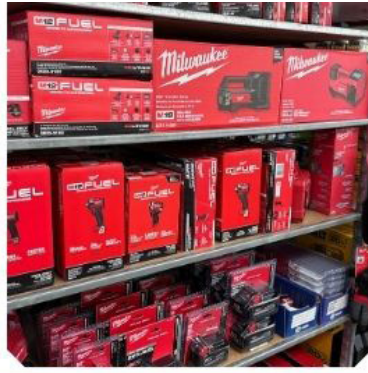
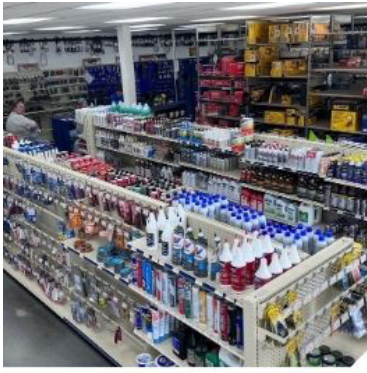
FARMERS MARKETS AND TOMATOES THAT ACTUALLY TASTE LIKE TOMATOES.

FIREWORKS, FREEDOM, AND A REALLY BIG BIRTHDAY PARTY.

THE KIND OF STORIES THAT MAKE YOU SAY, "I NEVER KNEW THAT!"



WARNING: THIS ISSUE MAY CAUSE UNEXPECTED PRIDE IN KINGFISHER COUNTY.



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JACK QUIRK

CEO & FOUNDER, THE ALL ABOUT NETWORK

He grew up around television news, learning the craft alongside his father, an NBC photojournalist. After relocating to Oklahoma, he founded KJ FilmWorks and contributed to national and regional coverage with KOCO 5, CNN, NBC, and The Weather Channel. Recognizing that small communities such as Hennessey and Kingfisher were often overlooked in traditional media coverage, he launched All About Hennessey in 2017 to focus on meaningful local stories. That initiative has since grown into The All About Network, now serving six north-central Oklahoma communities. As CEO and Founder, he leads an 11-member team dedicated to delivering consistent, community-centered news and storytelling year-round.



ANGELA BRUNER

ART DIRECTOR / EDITOR

With more than 30 years of experience in graphic design, Angela Bruner leads creative direction and communication strategy across all platforms for the All About Network. She designs and maintains the company's websites, produces all print materials including newspapers, newsletters, and event posters, and ensures a consistent brand voice across social media, email campaigns, and digital publications. Angela also plays an active role in coordinating local events, aligning visual branding with the network's community mission. She brings decades of hands-on experience across graphic design, web, and both print and digital publishing, bringing a depth of craft and intention to everything she creates.



IVAN CABRAL

OPERATIONS

Ivan is the engine that keeps the All About Network running smoothly. As head of operations, he's responsible for the behind-the-scenes logistics that make everything tick from managing production schedules and coordinating distribution to keeping equipment, systems, and people in sync. Ivan is detail-oriented, highly organized, and always ready to jump in wherever needed. Whether it's troubleshooting a last-minute issue or streamlining workflow across teams, he ensures deadlines are met and standards stay high.

The All About Network is a growing community-driven media platform focused on sharing real stories from real people. Built on local connection and trusted information, the network highlights the events, businesses, schools, churches, and everyday moments that make our towns special.

From breaking news and community celebrations to features, spotlights, and event coverage, the All About Network exists to keep people informed and involved. It's more than just posts and photos, it's a place where neighbors support neighbors.

Through partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community leaders, the All About Network works to shine a light on the good happening around us while also providing timely updates when it matters most.

At its heart, the mission is simple: tell the stories that bring communities together.



MAITLAND WOODY

MULTIMEDIA JOURNALIST

Maitland is a dynamic Multi-Media Journalist for All About Kingfisher, known for her sharp instincts, creative eye, and commitment to capturing the stories that matter most to the community. Whether she's behind the camera, reporting in the field, Maitland brings a versatile skill set and a storyteller's heart to every assignment. She's skilled in video production, photography, writing, and digital content creation often juggling all four to bring local news to life. Her ability to connect with people and deliver compelling, accurate coverage makes her an essential part of the All About Kingfisher team.



MICHAEL NOAK

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND SALES

Michael serves as our Director of Marketing and Sales, leading the efforts that connect our platforms with the businesses and organizations that support them. He works closely with advertisers to create effective marketing strategies across print, digital, and social media, helping them reach the right audience in meaningful ways. From building relationships to developing campaigns, he keeps a steady focus on growth and community partnership. His leadership, communication skills, and forward-thinking approach play a major role in strengthening our network and expanding our reach.



AMY TOWNSEND

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Amy is the friendly face of our sales team and the go-to for customers looking for real solutions with a personal touch. She has a natural talent for building relationships, understanding what clients truly need, and delivering results that hit the mark. With a solid grasp of our products and services, Amy communicates value clearly and confidently, whether she's chatting in person, over the phone, or online. She's organized, approachable, and always focused on making sure customers walk away happy and come back for more. Amy doesn't just sell, she connects, solves, and supports every step of the way.



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Farmers Markets & Summer Mornings



There's something about a farmers market that just feels like summer.

Maybe it's the rows of tomatoes that actually taste like tomatoes. Maybe it's the early morning air before the heat settles in, or maybe it's the way everyone seems to slow down just a little, even if they're only there for five minutes and a basket of squash.

Whatever it is, it works.



EARLY MORNINGS AND FOLDING TABLES

Long before most of us are awake, vendors are already setting up. Tents go up, tables unfold, and produce gets arranged just right. It's equal parts hard work and quiet pride.

Everything you see was grown, raised, or made by someone nearby, and they're usually more than happy to tell you about it.

MORE THAN JUST PRODUCE

Farmers markets aren't just about food. They're about people.

Kids wander with snacks in hand. Friends run into each other and stop to chat. Someone's always selling something homemade - bread, jam, candles, maybe even flowers wrapped in brown paper.

It's a little bit shopping, a little bit social hour.



WHAT'S IN SEASON

Summer is when things really show off. Tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, peppers, melons, this is their moment.

You'll find things you planned to buy and things you didn't. Somehow you always leave with at least one extra item you're not quite sure how to cook, but felt right buying anyway.

KEEPING IT LOCAL

Supporting a farmers market means supporting your neighbors. It keeps money in the community and helps small growers keep doing what they love.

Plus, it just tastes better. There's no scientific explanation needed.

ENDING NOTE

By mid-morning, the heat starts to creep in, and the tents slowly come down. What's left are empty tables, a few lingering conversations, and homes across town stocked with fresh food for the week.

It's simple. It's local. And it's one of those small things that makes summer feel like summer.

THE MAIN STREET FARMERS MARKET

Hennessey | Every 2nd Saturday
8 AM - 11 AM | May - October

THE KINGFISHER FARMERS MARKET

Every 1st & 3rd Saturday
8 AM - 12 PM

Before Flashlights and Phone Lights... There Was Coleman

When someone mentions Kingfisher, a few things usually come to mind. Some people think of Sam Walton. Others think- Yellowjackets.

And for the history lovers, the legendary Chisholm Trail, or the starting place of TG&Y, rings a bell.

But Kingfisher also holds a place in history that quite literally helped light the world.

If you dig a little deeper, you'll find that our story shines a little brighter than most people realize. Long before modern campsites were filled with coolers, folding chairs, and propane grills, a small-town idea born right here would go on to light campsites, farms, railroads, and military camps all across the world.

The Man Behind the Light

At the center of that story was a man named **William Coffin Coleman**, better known as **W.C. Coleman**.

In 1900, Coleman arrived in Kingfisher with little more than an opportunity and a willingness to take a chance on a new idea. Electricity had not yet reached much of rural Oklahoma Territory, and most homes and businesses relied on kerosene lamps for light. Those lamps were often dim, smoky, and unreliable. Coleman had some work to do with the locals if he was going to make it big. Convincing folks to trust a brand-new kind of lamp wasn't exactly a small task. After all, when something has worked "well enough" for years, people tend to stick with it.

Instead of giving up when sales were slow, Coleman adjusted his approach. If people weren't ready to buy the lamps, he would sell them the light itself. He began offering a lighting service, keeping ownership of the lamps while businesses paid for the light they produced. Once people experienced the difference firsthand, curiosity quickly turned into demand.

Coleman had recently encountered a new type of gasoline pressure lamp that promised something different, a brighter, cleaner light. While the early versions of the lamps were far from perfect, Coleman believed the idea had potential. Rather than simply selling the lamps as they were, he began repairing, modifying, and improving them. Soon, he was installing the lamps in businesses around Kingfisher to demonstrate just how much brighter they were than the kerosene lights people were used to.



Vintage Coleman meets modern Coleman

One demonstration in particular would become part of Coleman's early success.

According to early accounts, Coleman installed one of his lamps in the window of a local drugstore. When evening came and the lamp was lit, the store was suddenly illuminated with a bright white glow unlike anything most townspeople had seen before. Passersby reportedly stopped in the street, drawn by the brilliance of the light shining through the storefront windows.

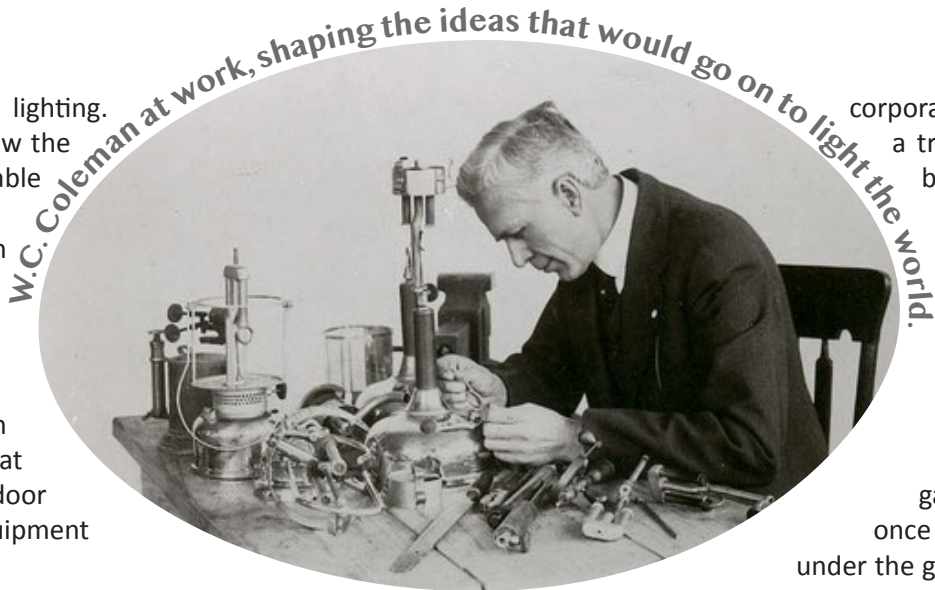
For people used to flickering kerosene lamps, the glow must have been hard to resist, drawing folks in like moths to a flame and leaving them wondering where they could get one of their own. And just like that, curiosity started doing the marketing.

A Business is Born

Encouraged by the success of his demonstrations, Coleman established the Hydro-Carbon Light Company in Kingfisher. His goal was simple: provide brighter, more reliable lighting to homes and businesses across the region. Little did he know how far the light would actually travel.

News didn't travel by social media back then; it traveled by front porch conversations, horseback, coffee breaks and reading the newspaper. Businesses that installed the lamps found customers lingering longer in their stores

thanks to the improved lighting. Farmers and ranchers saw the advantage of dependable light for evening work. Within a year, Coleman moved the business to Wichita, Kansas, where it expanded into what would eventually become The Coleman Company, a name that would soon define outdoor lighting and camping equipment around the world.



corporate office made a trip to Kingfisher because of those early roots. While he was here, he shared something that stuck, the idea that a baseball game may have once been played under the glow of Coleman lanterns, right here in town.

Lighting the World

photo provided by John Gooden

Over the following decades, Coleman engineers continued refining the design, eventually creating the portable pressure lantern that would become a staple of outdoor life.

By the early 1900s, Coleman lanterns were lighting farms, railroads, mines, oil fields, and construction sites across the country. Later, they would become essential equipment for campers, hunters, and soldiers in military camps. Their bright, steady light earned them a reputation for reliability, and the lantern quickly became one of the most recognizable outdoor products ever made.

There's one part of this story that's hard to ignore. Many years after Coleman got its start, a representative from their

Although there is no official record, honestly... it doesn't feel far-fetched. Before stadium lights, it wouldn't have taken much, just a handful of lanterns, a field, and a group of people willing to stay a little later. And just like that, an ordinary game turns into something a whole lot more memorable.

Today, more than a century later, Coleman lanterns continue to illuminate campsites and backyards around the world.

It's a reminder that sometimes the brightest ideas begin in the most unexpected places, even in a small Oklahoma town.



Downtown Kingfisher on 4th of July in the early 1900's from the Chisholm archives



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Sprinklers, Sunburns, and Late Bedtimes



by Libby Seiger

There's something a little chaotic about summer with kids in Oklahoma. The days are long, the snacks are endless, and at some point, everyone is a little sticky.

It starts off wholesome enough. You've got big plans. Library days, outdoor play, maybe even a Pinterest-level activity or two. Then it's 102 degrees by noon, your toddler is melting down (literally and emotionally), and you're handing out popsicles like you're running a one-woman concession stand. Still, somehow, it works.



EMBRACE THE SIMPLE STUFF

You don't need a packed schedule to make summer feel special. A sprinkler in the yard can buy you an hour of peace. Sidewalk chalk turns your driveway into an art gallery. A trip to the park counts as an outing, even if you only last 20 minutes before someone needs a snack. The bar is lower than you think. Kids are just happy to be outside, barefoot and a little wild.

PLAN AROUND THE HEAT

Oklahoma summers are not subtle. By mid-afternoon, it's less "fun in the sun" and more "why did we go outside at all?" Mornings and evenings are your best friends. Do the park early. Save walks and bike rides for after dinner when the sun starts to dip and the world feels a little softer. High noon heat? That's for inside time and survival.

SNACKS ARE A LIFESTYLE

You will make more snacks than you thought possible. Then you will make more. Keep it easy. Cut fruit, crackers, popsicles, whatever works. **Bonus points** if it can be eaten outside with minimal cleanup. Summer is not the season for complicated.



SAY YES (WHEN YOU CAN)

Yes to messy play. Yes to staying up a little too late. Yes to one more trip down the slide. Summer has a way of slipping by faster than you expect, and sometimes the best memories come from the moments that weren't planned at all.

WHEN THE PORCH LIGHTS COME ON

By the time the porch lights come on and the sky turns that soft Oklahoma pink, everyone is tired, a little dirty, and ready for bed. It's not always picture-perfect, but it's full, and loud, and fleeting in the best kind of way.



Maybe that's what raising Oklahoma kids in the summer really is - less about keeping things neat and more about letting them live a little louder than you planned. The sticky floors, sunburned noses, and muddy footprints don't last forever, but somehow they're the things you'll miss the most when the heat finally breaks and fall starts to creep in.



KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON: 81 ELECTRIC

by Amy Townsend

For 25 years, Dale's 81 Electric has been keeping the lights on in Kingfisher and not just the ones overhead.

Since opening in 2000, the business has grown from a local supply store into a full-service operation built on experience, reliability, and a strong commitment to the community. Whether it's a homeowner tackling a weekend project, a contractor on a large build, or a business needing dependable service, 81 Electric brings the tools, parts, and know-how to get the job done right.

But around here, it's more than just electrical work. It's about helping customers

find solutions, answering questions, and being a trusted resource people can count on.

As a Generac Authorized Dealer, 81 Electric also helps customers stay prepared with backup power because when outages hit, having a local team you trust makes all the difference.

Located at 1009 S. Main Street in Kingfisher, 81 Electric can be reached at (405) 375-4207. After 25 years, 81 Electric isn't slowing down they're still powering the community every day.




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Alyson Burrow
Community Engagement Leader

WHEN FAMILIES NEED A HAND, SAFE FAMILIES IS THERE

by Maitland Woody

Safe Families Oklahoma is building a movement of compassion across our state, creating a community that helps keep kids safe and families together.

It is part of a nationwide movement that relies on an innovative collaboration of area churches, volunteers, non-profit organizations, business leaders, and government partners, all working together to ensure families have support when they face temporary challenges. Volunteers from local churches are professionally supported as they open their homes to children whose parents are experiencing emergencies such as illness, job loss, or housing instability.

Children are cared for by Host Families in safe, loving homes while parents retain custody and remain actively involved in their children’s lives. The goal is strengthening the family unit while Family Coaches and Family Friends provide meals, transportation, and encouragement, giving parents time to work through challenges and achieve short-term goals.

Safe Families focuses on relationships and community. Volunteers walk alongside families without judgment, helping those in their community, supporting neighbors, and keeping families together during difficult times, making a real, lasting difference in the lives of children and parents.

Safe Families is preparing to begin serving families in Kingfisher, but there is an urgent need for volunteers. More Host Families, Family Coaches, and Family Friends are needed



Laney Anderson
Family Support Specialist

now to help provide temporary care, support parents, and help establish a circle of support for local families.

Since its introduction in Oklahoma, Safe Families has supported hundreds of families, showing that even short periods of care and encouragement can have lasting impacts. By connecting families with volunteers, churches, and community resources, the program provides hope, stability, and a path toward a brighter future for children and parents alike.

Visit www.safefamiliesok.org to learn more and volunteer today.

You can also find Safe Families OK on Facebook and Instagram, and explore opportunities and resources through their Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/SafeFamiliesOK>



A Family Tradition of Plumbing in Kingfisher

By Amy Townsend

Some trades are learned in classrooms. Others are passed down through years of hands-on work, long days on job sites, and knowledge shared from one generation to the next.

For the Clayton family, plumbing is exactly that, a tradition that has quite literally run through the family for decades.

The story dates back to 1975, when **Glenn Clayton** began learning the trade alongside **L.J. Montgomery**, with roots connected to longtime Kingfisher plumbing business **Crandall and Sanders**. From there, the knowledge didn't just stick; it continued to flow through the family

Today, **Warren Clayton** carries on that tradition alongside his son and daughters-in-law, **Chayden and Emily**, as well as his brothers, **Glenn Jr. and John**. In 2017, Warren's nephew **Rhen** joined the team, continuing a family connection that now spans generations.

Altogether, their experience adds up to more than 210 years in the plumbing industry now that's a whole lot of time keeping things flowing in the right direction.

Serving roughly a 30-mile radius, **Clayton's Plumbing** handles residential and commercial plumbing, septic repair, propane services, and even offers parts for the DIY crowd. They also provide sewer camera inspections to help catch problems before they become bigger (and messier).

Plumbing may not always be glamorous, but it's work that matters and the Claytons know when something goes wrong, people need help fast. What sets them apart is simple: they take pride in doing the job right, even the parts you'll never see behind a wall or underground.

Because around here, they don't cut corners... and they definitely don't leave a job half-flushed.



One generation teaching the next the value of hard work and hometown service.

“ THEY TAKE PRIDE IN DOING THE JOB RIGHT, EVEN THE PARTS YOU'LL NEVER SEE BEHIND A WALL OR UNDERGROUND.



3 generations of Clayton's, Warren, Glenn, and Chayden

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RINGING HOPE:

FROM TWO BATTLES TO ONE BEAUTIFUL SOUND

by Angela Bruner

Pancreatic cancer doesn't give you much time to prepare. One day you're going about life, juggling work, family, and everything in between, and the next you're sitting in a doctor's office hearing words that stop you in your tracks. That's how it was for me in June 2025, when my husband Mark was diagnosed.

It didn't come at an easy time either. Our son Brent was already in the middle of his own medical battle, going through multiple major surgeries. We were already living in a world of hospital rooms, recovery days, and doing our best to keep everything moving forward. Then came Mark's diagnosis, and I remember thinking, "Alright... what next?" Not really joking, just trying to wrap my head around how we were going to handle one more big thing.

In August, Mark had the Whipple procedure at MD Anderson in Houston. I learned quickly that it's one of the most complex surgeries out there. Long hours, a lot of waiting, and a whole lot of praying. You sit there and realize how little control you really have, and how much you have to trust, not just the doctors, but God.

“That's what carried us. Our faith.

After that came the routine we didn't ask for but learned to live with. Chemotherapy treatments in Enid. Trips back to Houston every three months for testing. Some days felt normal, others didn't come close. All the while, Brent was still recovering too, so it often felt like we were managing two full-time health journeys at once.

Somehow, we made it work.

I kept working, because that's just what you do. And as a family, we found a rhythm, not an easy one, but one that carried us through. There were hard days, no doubt about it, but there were also small moments of laughter and normalcy that meant more than ever. And then, after all the appointments, the treatments, the miles back and forth, and the days that seemed to stretch longer than they should...

“There was the bell.



If you've never seen it, it's just a simple bell hanging on the wall at the cancer center. Nothing fancy. But when Mark walked up to it after his final chemo treatment, it felt like the biggest thing in the world. That moment held every bit of the journey, the diagnosis, the surgery, the waiting, the strength it took to keep showing up.

When he rang it, it wasn't just a sound.

It was relief.

It was gratitude.

It was a quiet kind of victory.

We stood there together, taking it in. There were smiles, a few tears, and yes, a little bit of laughter too. Because after everything, you almost don't know what to do with a moment like that except enjoy it.

And sure enough, not long after, I found myself saying it again, this time with a whole different tone. "Well... what next?"

But this time, it didn't feel heavy.

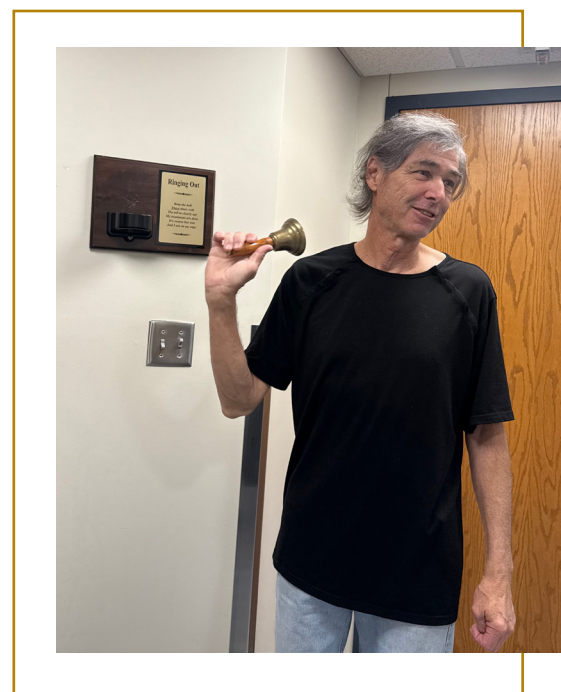
Now it feels like a question we actually get to answer.

More time together.

More healing.

More days that feel a little more like life again.

The bell didn't mean the journey never happened. It meant we made it through it. And sometimes, that's more than enough.



MIND THE MEMORIES LONDON



THE BEGINNING OF OUR ADVENTURE
A HONEYMOON TO REMEMBER

by Maitland Woody

Summer is here, and I've been feeling a little nostalgic thinking about past summers. I keep coming back to last summer in particular because I never really got to tell the full story. I'm still sitting here almost a year later uploading photos from our honeymoon, and every time I do, I end up reliving it all over again. London especially still feels like a blur I keep revisiting in pieces.

My husband, Talon, and I got married last July and left a couple days later to head to London for our honeymoon. We flew out on August 2nd and landed at Heathrow on the 3rd, starting two weeks of traveling through England, Wales, and Scotland. I'm a talker and a writer, so I'll just start with London. If it's somewhere you've thought about visiting, hopefully this gives you a little push to finally book the trip.

From Heathrow, we took a train to Kensington and settled into the Hilton Olympia. The room was small, but we were only there to sleep and shower, and it worked perfectly for that. Breakfast was included each morning, so we started our days there before heading out. Most of England doesn't have air conditioning because of the climate, which took some adjusting, but it became part of the experience in its own way. Staying just outside central London turned out to be a great decision since we could get into the city easily without dealing with the nonstop chaos of staying right in the middle.



Catfish & the Bottlemen at Tottenham Hotspur on the 3rd



Went for a stroll on Tower Bridge on the 6th

That first night, we went to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium to see Catfish and the Bottlemen,

one of my favorite bands since eighth grade. DMA's, an Australian band, opened, followed by a middle act, before Catfish came on. Being there felt surreal in a way I didn't really expect it to.

There's something strange about seeing a band you've followed for years in a different country, especially one that has had such a rocky history of breaking up and reuniting. We had even tried to see them at Austin City Limits once, only for them to cancel two weeks before the show after another breakup. So standing there in London, watching it actually happen, felt like something that almost didn't make it to real life. It ended up shaping part of our travel plans in the best way.

On August 4th, we spent the day exploring London at a slower pace. We went through the British Museum, where I kept catching myself dozing off every so often, then made our way

RED DIRT ROOTS

to the National Gallery. From there, we saw the Elizabeth Tower, the Houses of Parliament, and Westminster Abbey from the outside. For context, the tower most people call Big Ben is actually the Elizabeth Tower. Big Ben is the name of the great bell inside.

One of the most memorable stops that day was a graffiti tunnel filled with small businesses, including an American bar called Passyunk Avenue. It was covered in Philadelphia Eagles memorabilia and packed with American comfort food, darts, games, and even a batting cage. It felt like a strange little pocket of home tucked into the middle of London, the kind of place you don't expect to find but somehow makes perfect sense when you do.

On August 5th, we joined a bus tour outside the city, which ended up being one of the easiest ways to see multiple places without worrying about logistics. We visited Warwick Castle first, then Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, where we had lunch at a small French restaurant called Food of Love right across from his family home. From there, we drove through the Cotswolds, before arriving in Oxford. Oxford is one of those places where the university isn't a single campus but spread across the entire city, with different colleges woven into everyday streets, making it feel like the whole town is part of one living academic world.

On the way back, we stopped at a small Iraqi restaurant near one of our usual tube stations. We had walked past it multiple times during the trip and finally decided to go in. It wasn't planned, but it ended up being one of those quiet travel moments that sticks with you more than the big landmarks sometimes do.



Inside view of the British Museum from our visit on the 4th

On August 6th, we toured Westminster Abbey with an audio guide that walked us through centuries of history as we explored. It's massive, filled with kings, queens, poets, scientists, and major historical figures memorialized in floors, walls, and elaborate monuments. It's the kind of place you can lose track of time without realizing it.

One moment that stuck with me was finding a headstone with the name

FW Maitland appearing unexpectedly in such a historic place.

After that, we went to Borough Market and ate at El Pastor before stopping at Turnips, which is known for their chocolate-covered strawberries. Even with a long line, it moved incredibly

fast. From there, we walked to the Tower of London and then over to Tower Bridge, ending the day with dinner along the Thames as the city started to wind down.

On August 7th, we took another bus tour out to Windsor, Bath, and Wiltshire. Our first stop was Windsor Castle. While Buckingham Palace is what most people picture as the royal residence, Queen Elizabeth II and her family preferred Windsor Castle, which feels much more like an active home than a museum.

We learned about the flags on the castle and what they mean depending on whether the royal family is in residence. Unfortunately, when we visited, they were not home. Our guide, Nicholas, ended up being one of the highlights of the day. He was from Liverpool, full of humor and stories, and Talon hit it off with him immediately over football, which made the whole tour even better.

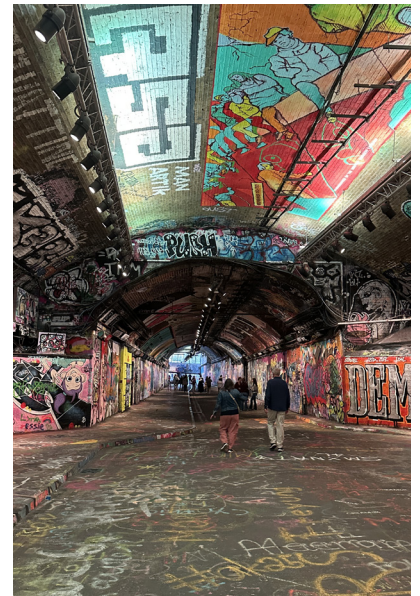
After the tour, we headed back into London and wrapped up the day near Kensington before returning to the hotel.

On August 8th, our final day in London, we visited Madame Tussauds, a four-story wax museum filled with celebrities, musicians, athletes, and historical figures. After that, we stopped by Buckingham Palace to watch the changing of the guards before heading over to Abbey Road, where we got to walk across the famous crosswalk just like The Beatles did. It's one of those tourist things that seems like a good idea until you're actually out there dodging traffic and realizing you might get run over.

And just like that, our time in London was over before we made our way to Liverpool.

Looking back, London felt like the perfect start to our honeymoon. It had everything: concerts, history, museums, castles, countryside, and those small unexpected moments that end up meaning more than the big planned ones. If London is somewhere you've thought about visiting, I would absolutely encourage you to go. There is so much packed into such a small area, and it's surprisingly easy to see a lot without feeling rushed.

London felt like a blur in the best way, but also like a collection of moments we'll probably talk about for the rest of our lives.



The living art that is the graffiti tunnel



America TURNS 250, *Somebody Light the Fuse*

by Jack Quirk



Kenneth and Janie Davis, daughter Katie Ward, and granddaughter Willow pose with their patriotic replica Model A Roadster, featuring a custom American flag paint scheme.

This Fourth of July, the United States turns 250 years old. That's right, 250. It's called the Semiquincentennial, which sounds less like a birthday and more like something your doctor checks during a physical.

However you say it, it marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when a group of determined colonists decided they'd had just about enough and struck out on their own.

Now, I grew up on the upper East Coast, where "old" doesn't mean 1950s charm, it means really old. I'm talking houses with plaques proudly announcing they were built in the

1600s, back when indoor plumbing was more of a suggestion than a guarantee. Places like Rhode Island, founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, where history isn't something you read about, it's something you trip over on your way to get coffee.

I still remember celebrating the Bicentennial back in 1976. Two hundred years felt like a big deal, and it was. There were parades, fireworks, flags everywhere, and a whole lot of patriotic energy that lasted more than just a weekend.

Then I moved to Oklahoma.

Not long after, folks here were celebrating 75 years of statehood in 1982. Seventy-five. I remember thinking, "Well... that's nice," but quietly comparing it to those 300-year-old buildings back east. Around here, a building from the 1920s gets labeled "historic," and honestly, folks take just as much pride in it, maybe more.

And that's when it hit me. "Old" is all about perspective.

If you zoom out far enough, 250 years is barely a blip. Most of our ancestors came from Europe, where human history stretches back thousands upon thousands of years. In the grand timeline of civilization, the United States is still the new kid on the block, figuring out where it fits in the neighborhood.



Which brings me to a realization that stopped me in my tracks the other day.

I just turned 70 years old. That makes me about 28% as old as the United States.

Think about that for a second.

Somewhere along the line, I went from being part of the “next generation” to being a pretty decent chunk of the country’s timeline. And as a third-generation American, my family’s story here is just a small slice of that 250-year journey.

Maybe that’s what makes this anniversary special.

It’s not just about how old the country is, it’s about how many stories have stacked up along the way. From colonial towns on the East Coast to wide-open Oklahoma skies, from wooden houses built in the 1600s to small-town main streets still writing their story today.

Two hundred fifty years in, we’re still a work in progress.

Still growing, still learning, still arguing a little more than we probably should, and still showing up on the Fourth of July to celebrate the idea that started it all.

Semiquincentennial or not, that’s something worth lighting a few fireworks over.



Willow Ward posing in the rumble seat of her grandfather’s replica Model A roadster.

OK PRO: AN IDEA THAT MADE ITS MARK ON THE GREEN



by Amy Townsend

Long before I understood patents or product development, I just knew my dad and uncle had created something. It was one of those stories that lived in the background growing up, something you heard about, saw pieces of, but didn't fully realize the weight of until years later.

Golf is a game of patience, precision, and the kind of frustration that keeps you coming back anyway. But every golfer knows, there's one small moment of satisfaction that follows a decent shot... reaching into your pocket for your divot tool.

In the early 1990s, **Ross and Randy Hardin** spent time on the golf course, enjoying the game together, all the while they were taking pokes to the thigh, a jab to the palm, and occasionally coming home to a wife holding up another pair of pants with a hole in the pocket.

That's when they begin to wonder: What if the divot tool didn't stay exposed? What if it could retract, tucked safely away, and solve a problem golfers had simply learned to live with?

The idea stuck with them not just on the course, but off of it too. It followed them home, lingered in conversations, and eventually pushed them to ask the bigger question: had anyone else already

done it?

But with a sport played nationwide... surely someone had. So they went looking.

A trip to Florida turned into a deep dive into patent research, determined to find out if their idea already existed. And when they didn't find it, they knew they had something.

In 1995, Ross and Randy secured the original patent for the retractable divot repair tool. Their own kind of hole-in-one. They called it OK Pro.

Wanting to keep the product American-made, they partnered with PT Coupling out of Enid, making this a true made-in-Oklahoma product. Together, they worked through prototypes and design details until they landed on exactly what they had envisioned: a switchblade-style divot tool that extended with a simple spring-loaded button push and retracted safely back into place once released. Each tool also featured a dime-sized ball marker on the end, adding just a little extra function to something already thoughtfully designed. No flashlight, no bottle opener; this was purely built for golfers. From there, the OK Pro became more than just a tool; it became a marketing piece. Businesses could customize them with their logos, hand them out to customers,

“ SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS THAT TOOL IN YOUR POCKET STARTED WITH A QUESTION: HOW CAN WE MAKE THIS BETTER?



or put them into tournament goodie bags. It was a simple, effective way to get a name out there, long before digital ads and social media took over.

Marketing in the 90's looked a little different. Some marketing strategies were well-planned... and some were a little more creative. I can still remember my mom and dad tossing a baggie full of OK Pros onto the stage at a George Strait concert, just hoping, maybe, that one might make its way into the hands of the King of Country himself. And honestly... it still makes me wonder.

Behind the scenes, the numbers were just as practical as the design. Each tool cost around \$1.00 to manufacture and sold for \$3.00, a price point that made them accessible for both businesses and everyday golfers. Today, similar tools can run \$10 or more, a small nod to just how ahead of their time the OK Pro really was.

Years later, the story came full circle. When the game found me, it was only then that I truly understood what this small but mighty invention held. And now, I proudly carry one with me... just waiting for a decent enough shot to actually use it. But like many great ideas, the journey eventually found its next chapter.

In the early 2000s, the Hardin brothers made the decision to sell the OK Pro patent, passing it on with the hope that someone else could take it even further than they had. It wasn't about giving up... it was about recognizing the potential for something bigger.

And for Randy, the ideas didn't stop there. He would go on to secure another patent, this time transforming a simple cat toy into a Christmas light spool. But timing, as it sometimes does, had other plans. The very year he set out on that mission was the same year icicle lights seemed to take over every house on the block.

So the next time you're out on the golf course, fixing a divot or smoothing over a pitch mark, just remember, something as simple as that tool in your pocket started with a question:

Pictured above:
Amy Hardin Townsend
and Ross Hardin showcase
the original OK Pro tool
collection.



90 MINUTES THAT UNITE THE WORLD

by Maitland Woody

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be one of the most significant tournaments in soccer history, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It will be the first edition staged across three countries and the first to expand to 48 teams and 104 matches.

From June 11 to July 19, 2026, games will be played across 16 cities in North America, with the United States hosting the majority of matches, including the final, while Canada hosts games in Toronto and Vancouver, and Mexico hosts matches in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey. Mexico City's Estadio Azteca will also make history as the first stadium to host matches in three different World Cups, linking decades of football heritage to the modern era. Overall, the scale of the tournament reflects the sport's unmatched global reach.

Soccer, known as football in most of the world, is the most popular sport on the planet and continues to grow in the United States alongside American football and basketball. Its global appeal lies in its simplicity, often requiring little more than a ball and open space.

The modern game was formalized in England in 1863, when The Football Association standardized the rules, and the term "soccer" originated as a shortened form of "association football." Since 1930, FIFA has organized the World Cup, which has grown into the most-watched sporting event in the world, uniting nations through a shared language of sport.



photo by Chris Simon Photography

breakthroughs and unexpected runs on the world's biggest stage.

For many fans, the World Cup is more than a global event; it is deeply personal. I have played soccer my entire life and grown up surrounded by the game through family members who played at various levels, including uncles, cousins, stepfathers, and stepbrothers. My mother, a collegiate player and NAIA All-American, played a major role in shaping my love for the sport. Soccer has been a constant throughout my life, influencing my education, friendships, and even how I met my husband. It has never been just a game, but a defining thread in my personal story.

That connection continues this summer in real time. My husband and I will attend the Argentina vs. Algeria World Cup match in Kansas City this June, followed by the Liverpool vs. Sunderland match in Nashville in July. These moments bring the global game into a personal setting, bridging everyday life with the sport's biggest stage.

Ultimately, the 2026 World Cup represents both history and transition. It unites legendary players, emerging nations, and a larger field than ever before, all on one stage. More than a tournament, it reflects how far the sport has come and how much larger its future is poised to become.



Beyond logistics and records, the 2026 tournament carries significant emotional weight. It may mark the final World Cup appearance for some of soccer's greatest figures, including Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Luka Modrić, and Neymar Jr. At the same time, traditional powerhouses such as Argentina, France, Spain, Brazil, and Portugal will enter as favorites, while the expanded format opens the door for more underdog

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A Look Inside Wild Fern Mercantile - Okarche

By Amy Townsend

Sometimes the story behind a small shop is far more meaningful than what first meets the eye.

For Paxton Flatt, **Wild Fern Mercantile** began not with a business plan but with a personal health journey that changed how she viewed food, ingredients, and the products brought into her home.

At just 26 years old, Paxton learned she had positive rheumatoid arthritis markers after experiencing severe body aches and unexplained symptoms. Instead of immediately turning to medication, she began researching nutrition and everyday ingredients, searching for answers through intentional living and cleaner choices.

What started as personal curiosity soon became a passion. Paxton completed nutrition schooling and earned certification as a nutrition coach, deepening her understanding of the products she now carefully curates for her shop.



Located inside Nixsen Rayne and Co. in Okarche, Wild Fern Mercantile offers a thoughtful mix of goods, including fresh bread, locally raised meats, pantry staples, candles, clothing, and home décor. The collaborative vendor space creates a welcoming small-town shopping experience centered around community and connection.



The name "Wild Fern" reflects growth, sincerity, and thriving naturally in untamed places a fitting symbol for both Paxton's journey and the store she has built.

Today, Wild Fern Mercantile stands as a reflection of simple, intentional living curated with care from the very beginning.



101 N Main Street - Okarche

Store Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10 AM - 6 PM Saturday 10 AM - 3 PM Closed Sunday & Monday



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Hi! We're Summer and Autumn the duo behind **OKSEASONEDSISTERS**. Whether you've been following our journey for years or this is your first introduction, we're so glad you're here. People often ask about the name. It's a mix of local pride and a little bit of overthinking (mostly on Autumn's part):

OK: Because we're proud Okies through and through.

SEASONED: Sure, it's a nod to our names, but it's also about the "seasons" of life we all navigate. The Bible tells us we're to be the salt of the earth - we like to think maybe a little bit of the spice, too.

SISTERS: The easiest part! We're family by blood and best friends by choice.

Homesteads ~ Motherhood

This little "happy-accident"-of-a-dream started taking shape back in 2020. While the world felt like it was standing still, we were taking several leaps of faith. Summer was diving head-first into her homesteading era, and Autumn was entering the wildest "hood" of them all: motherhood.

Our formats have changed and we've definitely evolved, but our "why" remains the same: creating a space where being your true, messy self isn't just okay it's encouraged.

Want to know what's on the Metaphorical Menu?

Our articles are a highlight reel (and sometimes a blooper reel) of daily life. If it happens in our homes/has happened in our lives, it very well could end up on the page.

You can expect a little bit of everything:

- **The Food:** From-scratch sourdough and garden-fresh meals to "oops-I-forgot-dinner" quick recipes that save the day.
- **The Chaos_oops, autocorrect_ we definitely typed "Family":** One of us (Summer) has a son getting married this

summer and a daughter going into her senior year of high school! The other (Autumn) has Irish twins that are currently both two and a five year old... all boys! Veryyy different stages of motherhood but we do both have fur-babies we consider family. Actually, Summer has fur-babies and feathered-babies, her chickens are lovingly referred to as her girls.

- **The Soul/Faith:** Books we're loving, gardening wins, and some inspiration/wisdom shared that keeps us going when life gets "not-so-fun."

Easiest, Yummy Fruit Dip

INGREDIENTS

- Big tub Vanilla Greek Yogurt (48oz)
- Big tub Cool Whip (16oz)

Stir together in a medium-large bowl. Use a medium bowl if you just want to dip – a large bowl if you plan to add fruit into it like a salad kinda thing. You can also use a large bowl then fluff it up with a hand mixer...

Keep in the refrigerator! FYI: it will start to break down if you dip your fruit directly into it. Best to spoon out servings as you go.

This is the absolute easiest and so, so good. But, it's also a great baseline/jumping off point for so many tasty treats perfect for summertime.



We aren't professionals and we don't have all the answers. Most days, we're just "doing the thing" and figuring it out as we go. But if you're looking for a community that values connection over perfection (and easy recipes that actually taste good), you're in the right place.

Speaking of easy... check out this fruit dip. It's the ultimate "level-up" for any occasion!



CARE THAT COMES HOME

A MOMENT TO BREATHE

Somewhere between the busy schedules, the constant notifications, and the never-ending to-do lists, it's easy to forget what it feels like to truly slow down.

Not just sit still but actually rest.

The kind of rest where your shoulders drop without you realizing it. Where your mind finally quiets. Where, for a moment, nothing is being asked of you.

That's what intentional self-care is meant to be.

An afternoon at a place like Meraki SkinSpa isn't just about a facial or a massage; it's about stepping away from the noise long enough to reconnect with yourself. Soft music, calming scents, and the simple act of someone taking care of you for a change it all add up to something we don't experience nearly enough.

☞ Time slows down.

☞ Breathing deepens.

Stress begins to melt away in ways you didn't realize you needed.

Whether it's a customized facial, a full-body massage, or a combination of both, these moments aren't indulgent, they're necessary. Because when your body is constantly running on empty, it eventually asks you to pause... one way or another.

Choosing to step away, even for just an hour, can reset more than your day. It can shift your mindset, your energy, and how you show up for everything else in your life.

And maybe that's the reminder we all need: You don't have to wait until you're overwhelmed to take care of yourself.

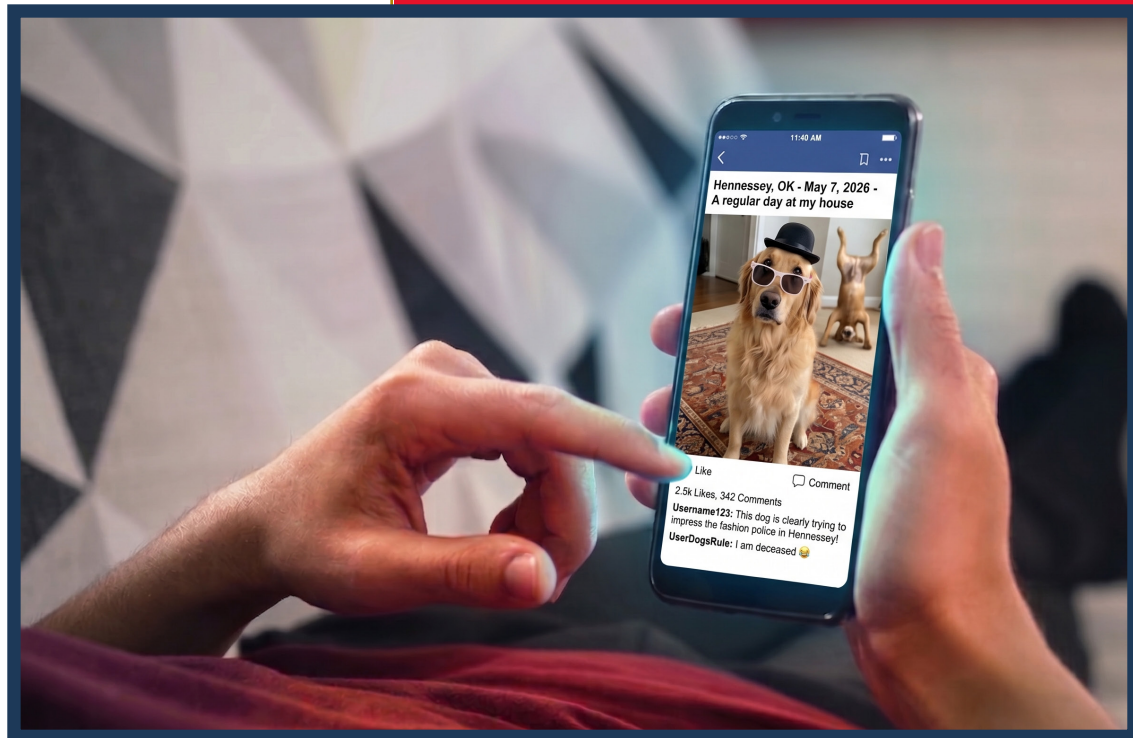
Sometimes, the best thing you can do... is simply pause.



Blink and It's Gone: Creating Content That Holds Attention

By Ivan Cabral

Understanding how social media algorithms work is one thing. Creating content that actually performs within them is another. The difference often comes down to how your content looks, feels, and captures attention in the first few seconds. You are competing with everything from day-in-the-life videos and funny dog clips to attention-grabbing AI content, so the bar for attention is high.



“ Overusing AI-generated content can lead to content that feels generic and easy to scroll past.

Today, people scroll quickly. Attention spans are short, and the thumb is even faster. Stop-worthy content does not have to be overly designed or complicated. It needs a strong opening, clear visuals, and a format that is easy to consume. Movement, whether through video, transitions, or simple animation, plays a big role in holding attention. If it feels static, it usually gets treated that way.

The barrier to creating good content is lower than it has ever been. The difference now is how you use what is available. Tools like Canva and Adobe Express make it easy to build clean graphics and simple videos without advanced design experience. For video content, platforms like CapCut, Instagram Edits, iMovie, and TikTok's built-in editor allow you to quickly add captions, trim clips, and follow styles audiences are already engaging with. For more control, tools like Adobe Creative Cloud, DaVinci Resolve,

or Final Cut Pro offer deeper customization. AI-powered tools can also help generate ideas and speed up production, but they work best as support. Overusing AI-generated content can lead to content that feels generic and easy to scroll past.

Simple, clear content will often outperform something overproduced. Speed and consistency matter just as much as creativity. The brands that win are the ones that keep showing up.

At the end of the day, content is competing for attention. Most people are not expecting a Super Bowl commercial. They are deciding in seconds what is worth their time. The goal is to create something worth stopping for.

A Legacy of Legal Guidance



Founded in 1987, the firm's attorneys bring more than 150 years of combined legal experience under one roof.

In a small town, trust matters. For nearly four decades, **Harrison & Mecklenburg, Inc.** has quietly and confidently served Oklahoma families, landowners, and business owners with legal counsel rooted in both experience and integrity.

Founded in 1987, the firm's attorneys bring more than 150 years of combined legal experience under one roof. But what truly sets them apart isn't just the number of years; it's the steady approach they bring to every client relationship.

From estate planning and probate to real estate, oil and gas, business formation, and commercial matters, Harrison & Mecklenburg is built to help handle life's important decisions, the kind that affect families for generations.

Its attorneys understand rural Oklahoma because they live here. They work here. They raise their families here. That local understanding shapes the way they practice law, practical, thorough, and personal. Clients aren't just case numbers. They're neighbors.

Whether you are protecting mineral rights, starting a new business, preparing a will, or navigating a complex legal issue, the goal remains the same: provide clear guidance, protect what matters, and help you move forward with confidence. For over 35 years, Harrison & Mecklenburg has been a steady presence in Kingfisher and the surrounding communities. And in a world that's constantly changing, there's something reassuring about a law firm built on experience, community, and doing things the right way.

ABIDING

HOME HEALTH



CARE THAT COMES *Home*

At some point, every family faces it...

A moment when care looks different than it used to. Maybe it's recovery after surgery. Maybe it's needing a little extra help day to day. Or maybe it's helping someone in life's final chapter.

There are teams dedicated to walking alongside families through different stages of life, whether that's healing, recovery, or providing comfort in life's final chapter. While each type of care may look a little different, the goal remains the same: to meet people where they are and support them with compassion, dignity, and respect. For many, leaving home for care isn't always easy. That's where home health steps in.

Abiding Home Health provides skilled medical care and rehabilitation services right in the comfort of home, allowing patients to receive the support they need without the added stress of travel. Directed by a physician and delivered by licensed professionals, their care is designed for those who may find it difficult to leave home but still require nursing or therapy services.

At its core, home health is about more than treatment. It's about helping patients maintain their independence, build confidence, and continue living safely in the place they know best.

At **Choice Health at Home**, that same mission is carried out with a deep connection to the Kingfisher and surrounding communities. Since 2007, their team has provided skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and wound care, all delivered with a personal touch.

Many of their team members have served locally for over a decade, creating relationships that go beyond care. They are neighbors, familiar faces, and trusted support systems for families navigating recovery. Their goal is not only to help patients heal, but to help them feel confident, supported, and at home every step of the way.

For many families, one of the most surprising things to learn is just how accessible home health care can be. In many cases, services are covered through



insurance or Medicare when qualifications are met, making this level of care both practical and impactful. There comes a time when care looks different. When the goal is no longer curing, but comforting. That's where hospice care steps in.

At **Valir Hospice**, care is centered on dignity, compassion, and walking alongside families during one of life's most emotional seasons. Their team focuses on helping patients live as comfortably and meaningfully as possible in

the time that remains, while also supporting the loved ones around them.

From expert pain management to emotional and spiritual care, hospice is not defined by a place; it's an approach. One that ensures no one walks this road alone.

Valir Hospice serves families across the region, from Edmond to Enid, Fairview, Billings, Stillwater, and the many communities in between, bringing compassionate care directly into the home.

For those who have served our country, that care carries even deeper meaning. As a national partner of the We Honor Veterans campaign, Valir Hospice helps ensure veterans receive care that honors their service and sacrifices.

More Than Care, It's Connection

While home health and hospice serve different purposes, they share something powerful in common. They meet people in real moments. In real homes. During real life. Whether it's helping someone regain strength... or helping a family find comfort and peace... These services remind us that care isn't just about medicine. It's about people.

For More Information

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Where Others See the End, He Sees the Beginning

By Amy Townsend

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When a tree comes down, most people see the end of something.

Justin Steckman sees the beginning.

In 2020, when the world slowed down, Justin found purpose in the quiet work of his shop, shaping raw slabs into something solid and lasting. At the same time, he was stepping into another role, serving as a firefighter, built on trust, grit, and showing up when it matters most.

Those two paths didn't just run side by side; they built the foundation for something bigger.

While working with wood, Justin couldn't ignore what he was seeing. Massive trees, full of history and strength, were being cut, hauled off, and discarded like they had no value left. But he saw it differently. To him, that wasn't waste, it was potential.

That belief is what built Axe & Honor Tree Co. The name says it all.

The axe represents the work, hands-on, physical, and rooted in fire and forestry. Honor represents how it's done, with integrity, respect, and a deep sense of responsibility to the people and property he serves.

Axe & Honor serves communities across Oklahoma with tree removal, trimming, stump grinding, land clearing, and more. Each job starts with a plan, but no two days look the same. Flexibility, safety, and experience guide the work, especially in storm or emergency situations where quick response matters.

And when the work is finished, the story doesn't have to end there. Trees can be milled on-site and turned into something meaningful, a table, a memory, a piece that lasts. It's not just about taking something down. It's about seeing what it can become and building it back with purpose.





by Michael Noak

There's something oddly fitting about this summer. The country is celebrating 250 years. Route 66 is turning 100. Gas prices are doing whatever they want. And air travel? Between TSA lines, delays, and the occasional "is everything actually open today?" feeling, it doesn't actually scream with the anticipation of a relaxing holiday. Which is exactly why a staycation, with no airports, delays, or explaining your carry-on, is sounding better than ever.

If you're looking for a summer trip that feels like a getaway without actually going far, a Route 66 trip across Oklahoma might be the most underrated option on



the map. More miles of the Mother Road run through Oklahoma than anywhere else in the country, and it shows.

The best part is that it doesn't even have to be a full trip. Whether it's a full staycation or just a quick daycation, Route 66 is built for both. Jump on for a couple hours, hit a few stops, grab something good to eat, and head back home like you planned it all along.

Maybe you've hit a few of these spots over the years. Maybe you've driven past others and said, "we should stop there sometime." This summer is that sometime.

You don't ease into Route 66. You commit to it. Starting in the eastern side of the state, the Blue Whale in Catoosa is your first sign that this trip isn't going to be normal. It's a giant whale in Oklahoma, on purpose. Somehow, it works. Other towns like Miami, Vinita, and Tulsa carry that same energy. Historic buildings, neon signs, and just enough modern touches to keep things interesting. It's not polished. That's kind of the point.

Hitting the central part of the state around Arcadia and OKC is where your timeline may possibly start to fall apart in the best way. You'll see the giant soda bottle at Pops and immediately pull over. Inside are hundreds of soda options and just enough chaos to make it memorable. A few minutes later, someone will say, "We should stop at that barn." They're right. The Round Barn is worth it. Then comes the Milk Bottle Grocery. It is a tiny building on North Classen in Oklahoma City with an oversized Braum's bottle on top. No explanation needed.

El Reno has always been a staple stop on Route 66, but right now it's evolving. A brand-new concept from Andrew Black, Sonny's Kitchen & Bar, is opening this spring along Route 66 at 1515 S Rock Island Ave. Built inside a restored VFW near a historic WWII aircraft, the restaurant blends elevated comfort food with a story rooted in local hero Sonny Kegelman. It is the kind of place that makes you plan your stop instead of just stumbling into it. Balance is important. You still need to hit Sid's Diner. If you leave El Reno without an onion burger, someone should probably check on your mental stability.

In the western part of the state is where the road opens up. The Pony Bridge gives you that classic "this is the drive" feeling. Then it's on to places like Lucille's Service Station near Hydro and the Route 66 Museum in Clinton, if you're in the mood for additional nostalgia. Or just simply drive.

Route 66 isn't about the fastest route. It's about the stops you didn't plan, or the ones you've been meaning to make for years. Whether it's a staycation or just a quick daycation, sometimes the best move is simple. Get in the car, follow the road, and see what you've been driving past all these years.



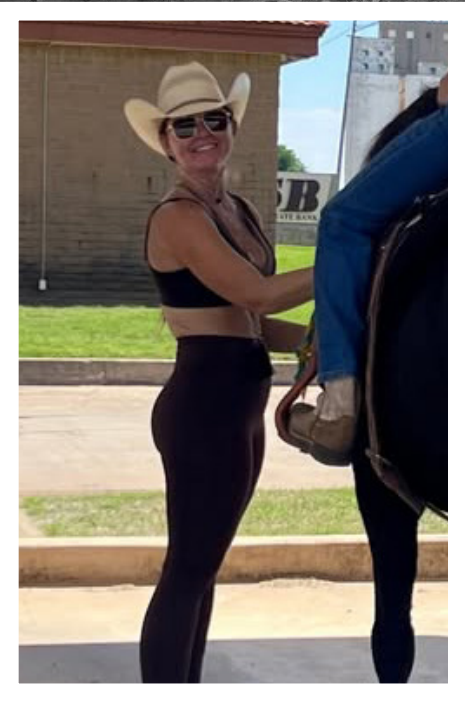
Ahhh... summertime! It's the season of lemonade stands, park picnics, baseball games, and family road trips. But with rising costs for gas, hotels, food, tickets, and souvenirs, big vacations aren't always realistic. That's where the "staycation" comes in.

Start with a real map and look for destinations within 200–250 miles of home. Pick a few spots that sound fun to your family, whether it's a historical site, hiking trail, museum, lake, or nearby city. A short one- or two-day trip can be affordable, easy to plan, and just enough to break up the routine.

Check out your state's travel website, like travelok.com, for ideas, brochures, and local attractions. Build a simple itinerary with routes, costs, and stops along the way. Cities like Tulsa, OKC, Wichita, Bartlesville, Lawton, and Durant all offer plenty to explore.

Along the way, enjoy festivals, restaurants, art, zoos, wineries, museums, lakes, parks, and hidden gems close to home. The goal isn't spending the most money or traveling the farthest. It's about making memories, spending time with family, relaxing, learning something new, and enjoying the journey.

This summer, take a few long weekends, hit the road close to home, and make the most of your own backyard.







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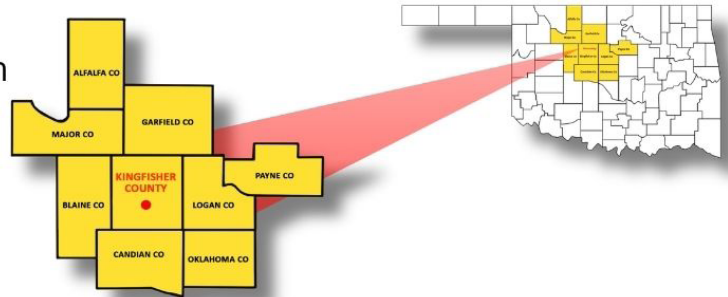


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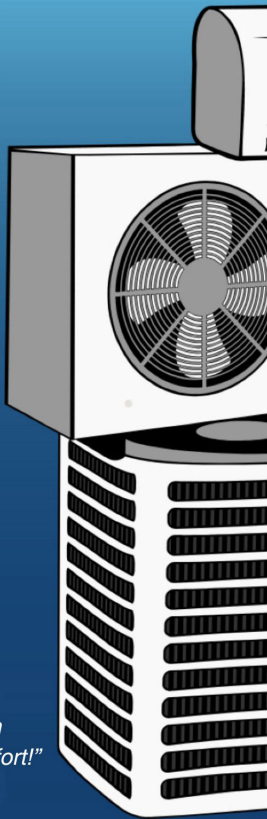
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