

FREE PUBLICATION

RED DIRT ROOTS

FALL 2026

What's In This Issue?

BEATLES, AND CASTLES... BECAUSE WHY NOT?

VETERANS: TOUGHER THAN THE REST OF US

14 FALL DRIVES WORTH BURNING THE GAS

PUMPKIN SPICE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR DIGNITY

OKLAHOMA FINALLY REMEMBERED IT'S FALL

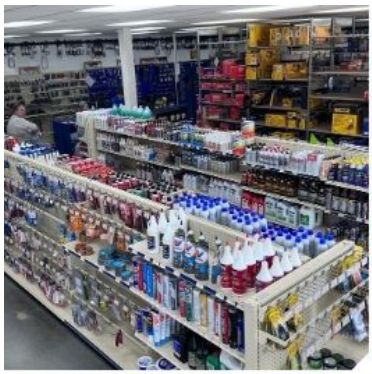
THE REUNION THAT ONLY TOOK 45 YEARS

FOOTBALL, TAILGATES & AN UNREASONABLE AMOUNT OF QUESO

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS: IT'S WAY MORE THAN COOL SKELETONS

All about Network

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AS THE SUN SETS ON *Red Dirt* ROOTS...



Red Dirt Roots has been a fun one for us. It gave us a reason to slow down, look around, and tell stories about people, places and things that we thought were worth knowing a little more about.

But as the sun sets on another issue of *Red Dirt Roots*, it's also time for us to close a chapter of our own. This will be the final issue of *Red Dirt Roots*. And that's a sentence we don't write lightly.

Along the way, we've met some incredible people, discovered places we might otherwise have passed by, and learned that there's usually a pretty good story if you take the time to ask.

But sometimes it's time to turn the page, even when you've really enjoyed the chapter. While the magazine is coming to an end, the storytelling certainly isn't.

The All About Network will continue creating, sharing your stories, and keeping you connected through AllAboutKingfisher.com and AllAboutHennessey.com, the weekly Kingfisher Kurrent newsletter, the All About Hennessey POST print and digital newspaper, and our Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

However if you like to follow along, we hope you'll continue to be part of the stories we share.

As we close *Red Dirt Roots*, we're incredibly thankful to everyone who let us tell their story, welcomed us through their doors, dug out old photographs, answered our questions, and took the time to share a little piece of their world with us.

And to everyone who picked up an issue or read digitally, read those stories, thank you.

Thank You

FOR BEING PART OF OUR STORY.

THE MAGAZINE MAY BE ENDING, BUT THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF PEOPLE TO MEET, PLACES TO DISCOVER AND STORIES WORTH TELLING. WE'LL SEE YOU OUT THERE.



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THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE STORIES

Amy Townsend — Business Development
No two days in my job are ever quite the same, and that may be one of my favorite things about it. But the coolest part is getting a front-row seat to so many different businesses. I get to learn about what people do, why they love it and a whole lot of things I probably never would have known otherwise.
I get to meet people who are really good at what they do and ask probably more questions than they expected. But that's how I figure out what makes their business different and what we can do to get people talking about it. Somewhere along the way, the wheels start turning and I'm already thinking about what we could do with it. Sometimes the ideas come right then. Other times they show up later while I'm driving down the road or at home in my comfies, working from the couch.
Some days I'm not entirely sure you can call this work.
But please don't tell my boss that.



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Our mission has always been simple:
to share real stories, celebrate our communities, and keep people connected.
Thank you for being a part of the journey.



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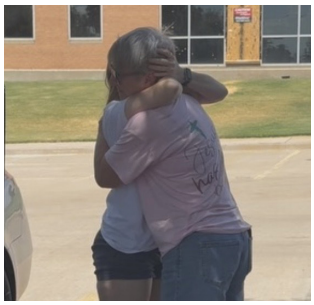


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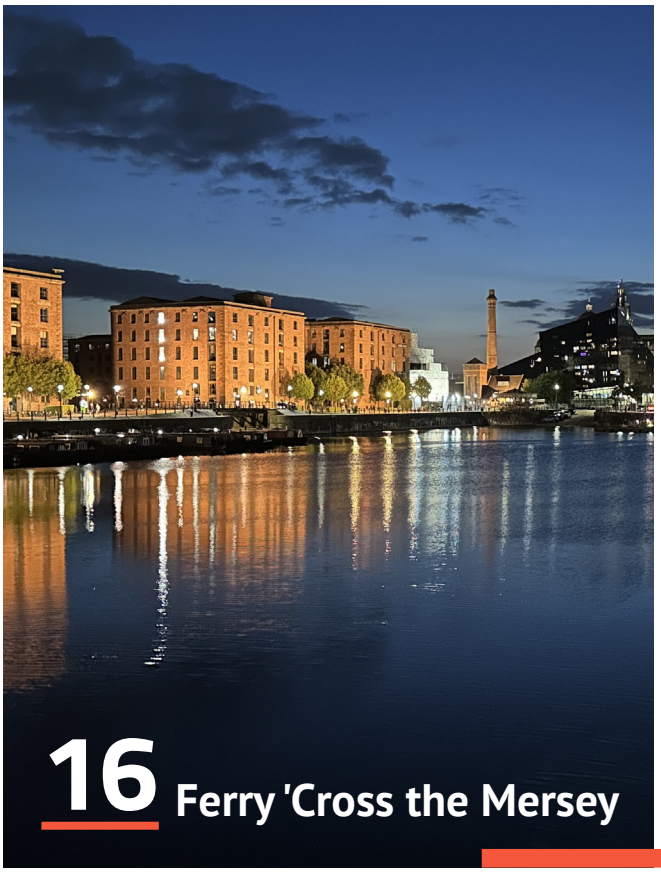
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ABOUT OUR COVER PHOTO

Publishing a seasonal magazine ahead of the actual season can be a little tricky. We wanted a great fall cover, but apparently Oklahoma didn't get the memo. It was still pushing 100 degrees, and fall colors were more than a month away.

So, we got creative.

We called on longtime friend and world-renowned photographer Mike Klemme and his incredible library of Oklahoma nature photography. After a little digging, we found the perfect shot.

Fall may not be here yet, but at least our cover got the look we were after.

Cindy Found Her Tuesday

A reunion 45 years in the making



"There's always been a missing piece of her heart."

By Bonny Flesher

Cindy Cochran of Okarche, Okla., and I have been friends for several years. Our friendship started during my time working at Pioneer Telephone. I depended on Cindy to answer your cellphone questions! She made me look like I knew what I was talking about.

We were probably a few years into our adventures when, one day, I remember driving home from Hobby Lobby. What Cindy confided in me, I will never forget. I felt like she thought I would judge her.

She shared that in 1981, she was 17 years old and pregnant. Cindy spent her pregnancy at the Deaconess Home for unwed mothers. I noticed her voice changed, and the hurt ran deep! Cindy was missing a piece of her heart!

You see, Cindy gave her baby up for adoption. She knew she was doing what was best for her baby. She couldn't give the child the life she deserved. So Cindy crocheted her child some booties and wrote her a letter in hopes she would read it someday.

The day of signing the paperwork came. Cindy shared that was the hardest day of her life. Then the prayers came for 45 years!

The meaning of sacrificial love reads like this: an unconditional love and commitment to put the needs, well-being and happiness of another person ahead of your own.

On the other side, the adoptive parents were Rev. Roy and Paula Duff.

Cindy went on to be a mom to four children. I have seen firsthand the love she puts into her kids and grands! But there's always been a missing piece of her heart, named Tuesday to her. The world knew the baby as Julie Duff.

Let's fast-forward to 2026. With the help of Cindy's children, they found a match through DNA and Ancestry. After many conversations and tears, they all agreed to meet in the parking lot where it all started 45 years ago.

I told Cindy, 'Do not drive, and have someone else take pictures.' Cindy is not a photographer!

When I mentioned this would be a wonderful story, I got everyone's approval to share. I asked Julie, aka Tuesday, to share what she would like the world to know about her part of this journey.

She sent me a response. I felt like you needed to read it in her own words! I couldn't do her journey justice.

Grab a tissue!

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The Letter

Julie’s story, in her own words



“I believe you are my Tuesday!”

I have always known I was adopted. I can’t think of a time I didn’t know. There were many times when I would go to the doctor and they would ask about my medical history. Or I would hear other kids getting told they look like their mother or father. I never knew my medical history or who I looked like.

However, my adopted parents raised me with the belief that I had 2 sets of parents who loved me. One set who loved me enough to give me a better chance at life and another set who gave me the better chance at life. Even with all the love in the world, something was missing. I needed to know where I came from. I wanted to know who I looked like.

There were times in life that I started the process of looking for my biological mother, but something always stopped the progression. Whether it was finances or just me not being where I wanted to be in life, I would stop.

I went thru my trials and tribulations in life. I believed the time would come and I needed to be ready. The past 5 years I have really worked on getting back on the right path in life. I had to re-learn to love myself after some of the things I had gone thru.

Within the past year and a half I knew I was ready. My daughters are in great places now and so am I. I am in a loving relationship, have an amazing job, and I’m just exactly where I need to be. Everything has been falling into place for me.

A few months ago, my middle daughter had done Ancestry.com. I loved hearing of her results so I decided to do mine. On July 22, 2026 at 3am, my notification went off on my phone that my results had come in. I didn’t expect anything except to figure out my heritage.

Then I noticed a part that said ‘DNA matches’. I clicked on it and saw a match that said ‘Mother’! I was baffled! Was I looking at that correctly?!? I saw her picture and she has my face! I hadn’t wept that hard in years! I instantly wrote to her. I said something along the lines of, ‘I am sorry if this sounds weird, but I was adopted out of Oklahoma City and my biological mother named me Tuesday. I matched with you on Ancestry. Is that you by chance?’

I wept some more then went to sleep. I woke up to a message back that said, ‘I believe you are my Tuesday!’ I found my birth mother!! I have siblings! All of a sudden, my world felt complete.

The way we seamlessly communicated was so incredible! We set a date and I traveled to meet her and my siblings. I took my fiance and my 3 daughters with me. We talked for hours as if we’d known each other for life! We had, but we were still complete strangers.

Their family was so inviting! I have a letter that she wrote me when I was born and I wrote her a letter to give when I met her. The strength it took for her at such a young age to make the selfless decision to give me life and love is mind-blowing. And the ability for us to reconnect the way we did...

That’s God! All of this has been in God’s hands and in His timing. My adopted parents raised me with endless unconditional love and I am forever in debt to them. They chose life and love for me just like my birth mother chose love and life for me. My heart is so full! I am with my perfect partner, my daughters so perfect, and my life is so complete!

And Cindy found her Tuesday!

Día de los Muertos

More Than Skulls and Skeletons

By Ivan Cabral









NOVEMBER 1 & 2

If you've never experienced Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, it's easy to assume it's the Mexican version of Halloween. In reality, it's something completely different. It's one of the most meaningful traditions in Mexican culture. It is centered around remembering and celebrating loved ones who have passed away.

Día de los Muertos is celebrated every year on November 1 and 2, the same dates as All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Even though it's called "Day of the Dead," it's actually a two-day celebration. Many families think of it as taking place from around noon on November 1 until noon on November 2, when, according to tradition, loved ones are able to return and spend time with their families.

The roots of Día de los Muertos go back thousands of years to Indigenous cultures in Mexico, long before Spanish settlers arrived. Over time, those traditions blended with the Catholic observances of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, which is why the holiday is celebrated at the beginning of November. If you've ever seen pictures of Día de los Muertos, you've probably noticed all the bright colors and decorated skulls. At first glance, they can seem unusual if you don't know the tradition, but they're not meant to be scary. Instead, the colorful skulls remind us that death is simply a natural part of life, and they're used to honor and remember loved ones with joy rather than fear or sadness.

Families prepare for the visit by creating ofrendas, or altars, filled with photographs, candles, marigolds, favorite foods, drinks, and personal belongings of the loved ones they're remembering. They gather at homes and cemeteries to share stories, food, music, and memories. While it may sound like a sad occasion, it's actually meant to be joyful. The idea isn't to mourn those who are gone, but to celebrate the lives they lived and keep their memories alive.

If you've seen Disney and Pixar's COCO, you've already been introduced to many of the traditions of Día de los Muertos. While the story itself is fictional, the movie does an excellent job of explaining the heart of the holiday: remembering family, honoring those who came before us, and believing that as long as someone is remembered, they're never truly gone.

At its heart, Día de los Muertos reminds us that love doesn't end with death but it lives on through the memories we share.



A VETERAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON SERVICE, COMMUNITY & LEGACY

by Mark Bruner

As a Desert Storm Navy vet aboard the aircraft carrier USS America hull number CV66, I was asked to provide a short essay of what it means to be a Veteran (not veterinarian). In short, being a veteran has worthy benefits and rewards and no downsides that I am aware of. The only way to know ALL of the variables is to ask the US Department of Veteran Affairs.

Most veterans fly the US flag in their front yard and they wear 'covers' (ball caps) denoting their branch of service and their UIC (Unit in Command). We can wear them anywhere we feel appropriate. Every November we get special attention on Veterans Day. Sometimes at other gatherings when we are asked to stand up for special recognition followed by a nice round of applause…which is nice. The Star Spangled Banner puts a lump in your throat, flyovers at sporting events have more meaning (especially if you are an 'airdale' like me).

A great benefit happened in 1993 when I was making $5.50 an hour back in the oilfields after my tour. My new wife and I wanted to buy our first home priced at $25,000 ($60K equivalent in 2026). I contacted the VA for an approval - but they valued the house at $23K so, we came up with 2K in cash and mortgaged the house thru Bank of Oklahoma with VA approval…very cool and quick.

The Veteran's Preference Act of 1944 ensures the Honorably Discharged Veterans are given a 'first look' in many applications for Federal Jobs. Is that fair? Congress thought so. What is taught and enforced in every branch of the service is:
Show up for work on time, no excuse for missing work - a REASON for not showing up shall be accompanied by a doctor's note or other verifiable paperwork.

A good veteran WILL be dependable to an employer because it's the military way.

Most veterans are 'duty bound to a given task' … also known as discipline.

Active duty personnel have gone through an exhaustive 'back ground' check so an employer is more inclined to trust a vet.
OJT (On the Job Training) is the most valuable trait of a veteran. YOU will learn a lifetime of skills in a few short years in the service and they translate to the civilian world more than you realize. I used my Naval Avionic Technician skills at Vance AFB for 30 years and my retirement plaque says "Aircraft Radio Specialist Extra-Ordinaire".

If while on active duty you sign up for the Post 9/11 Montgomery GI Bill and decide to attend college … All of the aforementioned benefits of active duty plus tuition fees, housing allowance and book/supply stipends is a game changer for higher education.
You will be one of those "Been there, done that" types and you won't take any abuse from those who just recently graduated high school.

Your grown up mentality will immensely aid you in and outside class.

In the early 1990's the Hennessey Schools sanctioned a Veterans Day salute to all those veterans who could attend. I would estimate around 80 to 90 veterans showed up back in those days. After the program was over, the High School Student Council treated us all with cookies and cakes along with hot coffee. The first few programs were held in the very cold, echo-chambered basketball court before the much warmer new auditorium was built. I used to show up with my Dad and my older brother who were both in the Army. My oldest brother did not live close by and he could not attend. He is a Navy vet.

The Hennessey school still carries on the Veterans Day Salute to this day. Surviving veterans and their family members along with the general public are encouraged to attend and I consider this to be a Top Notch program. Sadly my Dad and older brother are both gone and along with that passage of time, most of those 80/90 vets have also passed away and they now grace the Hennessey Cemetery. Two of the most recognizable veterans who have recently passed are Jack Funderburg in 2018 and Paul Babiak in 2023.

I encourage all to visit Hennessey Cemetery on Memorial Day and see the U.S. flags placed at the graves by our local 4-H Club for local veterans who served our country. It is amazing how many Veterans the little town of Hennessey has produced and WE should ALL be proud of those who have served in passing and those who are still with us. Hopefully someday, those who are currently serving from Hennessey can attend the Hennessey School Veterans Day Program.

Mark Bruner
US Navy 1987-1991



Tailgate Time:
Oklahoma's Favorite Season

by Michael Noak

There is a season for everything. A time to plant, a time to harvest, a time to complain about the heat, and a time to wonder why the wind is blowing 40 miles an hour for no apparent reason.

But here in Oklahoma, there's one season that matters most...Football season.

It arrives just as the summer heat begins to loosen its grip, and suddenly weekends have purpose again. Friday nights belong to the hometown teams under the lights. Saturdays are reserved for heated debates over crimson and cream or orange and black—sometimes at the very same family reunion. And Sundays? Well... they're mostly for naps, leftovers and pretending to care about your fantasy football lineup.

Of course, football isn't just about the game. Sometimes it's just as much about the tailgate.

Long before kickoff, parking lots begin transforming into outdoor kitchens and neighborhood reunions. The smell of charcoal and smoked brisket fills the air. Someone is setting up a television that somehow has better reception than the one at home. Folding chairs appear from nowhere. Cornhole tournaments become more competitive than the game itself. And every group has that one person who insists they're "just bringing a few things," then unloads enough food to feed half the county.

Every great tailgate has a few essentials. A cooler full of ice. Burgers, hot dogs, smoked sausage, queso, chips, cookies and enough bottled water to convince everyone you're at least trying to be responsible. Add a grill, folding table, plenty of chairs, paper plates, napkins and trash bags, and you've got the makings of a pretty respectable pregame headquarters.

Then come the extras—the canopy for shade, a football to toss around, cornhole boards, a generator, maybe a flat screen (or two), portable speakers, and enough team colors to make it absolutely clear where your loyalties stand.

And don't wait until Saturday morning to discover you're out of charcoal, propane, ice or hamburger buns. Whether you're loading up at your local grocery store, hardware store, sporting goods shop or favorite hometown retailer, the best tailgaters know preparation is almost as important as the playbook. Almost.

Whether you're making the trip south to Norman, heading over to Stillwater, cheering from the hometown bleachers on Friday night or setting up in the driveway, tailgating doesn't have to be complicated. Good food, good friends, something cold in the cooler and a football game nearby will usually do the trick.

Because in Oklahoma, football season isn't measured in weeks. It's measured in cookouts, laughter, heated rivalries, stories you'll tell... and how much queso is left by halftime.



THE GAME WITHIN A GAME

By Libby Seiger



There is a certain kind of excitement that arrives with fall. It is found in the first cool morning after a long Oklahoma summer. It is found under the glow of Friday night stadium lights and in the sound of a marching band warming up before kickoff. It is found in crowded living rooms on Sunday afternoons, where conversations, snacks, and football games all seem to blend.

For some, football is about the team they have cheered for their entire lives. For others, there's another game happening quietly alongside it.

The game within the game.

Fantasy football has become one of fall's favorite traditions. It turns ordinary Sundays into something a little more competitive, a little more personal, and a whole lot more interesting.

DRAFT DAY TRADITIONS

Before the first game of the season is played, teams are built. Draft day brings its own kind of excitement. Friends gather around tables or log into virtual rooms, armed with rankings, opinions, and just enough confidence to believe this might finally be the year they win it all.

Some people spend weeks studying statistics and analyzing matchups. Others choose players because they like the name, recognize the jersey, or have a feeling that this is their year.

EVERY PLAYER HAS A STORY

Fantasy football has a way of making every game feel a little more important.

A team that normally would not have mattered suddenly becomes the game everyone is watching. A player on the other side of the country becomes someone you cheer for every Sunday. A single catch, touchdown, or last-minute field goal can change an entire week. There are moments of celebration, moments of frustration, and plenty of moments spent staring at a scoreboard hoping for just a few more points.

It is a game built on numbers, but the memories are what people remember.

MORE THAN WINNING

The best part of fantasy football has never really been the trophy at the end of the season.

It is the group chat that stays busy all weekend. It is the friendly arguments between friends. It is coworkers comparing lineups on Monday morning and families finding one more reason to talk during a busy season.
Some leagues last for years. Some become traditions passed down between generations. The players may change, but the competition and the connection remain.

Because sometimes the best traditions are the ones that start almost by accident.

ANOTHER PIECE OF FALL

Football has a way of bringing people together. Friday nights belong to high school stadiums filled with familiar faces. Saturdays belong to college rivalries and traditions passed down through generations. Sundays belong to living rooms, slow mornings, and one more reason to gather around the television.
Fantasy football simply adds another layer to the season. It gives people another team to cheer for, another reason to laugh, and another story to tell when the season comes to an end.

Because football has always been more than a game. And fantasy football?

It is the game within the game.



The Morning The Air Changed

BY LIBBY SEIGER

There is a moment during every Oklahoma summer when it feels like the heat might never leave. The days stretch on, the sun feels relentless, and stepping outside becomes something you have to prepare for instead of something you simply do.

Then one morning, something changes.

You walk outside expecting the same heavy air that has settled over the state for months, but instead, there is a breeze that feels different. The temperature is not necessarily cold, but it is comfortable enough to make you pause. For the first time in a long time, you do not immediately look for the nearest air conditioner.

It is the first hint that fall is on its way.

THE RETURN OF OPEN WINDOWS

After months of closed doors and running air conditioners, that first cool morning feels like an invitation. Windows open. Curtains move with the breeze. Homes that have been sealed away from the heat suddenly feel connected to the outside again.

There is something refreshing about letting fresh air move through the house after a long Oklahoma summer. It reminds you that there are seasons beyond the hottest months of the year and that cooler days are finally within reach.

A SEASON THAT ARRIVES SLOWLY

Fall does not always arrive all at once in Oklahoma. One day may feel like the beginning of sweater weather, and the next may send everyone searching for shorts again. The afternoons can still be warm, and summer often refuses to leave without a final appearance. Oklahoma weather has never been known for making things simple.

Still, the mornings begin to tell a different story. The air feels lighter. The sunlight feels softer. The breeze carries a little more coolness than it did the day before. Small changes appear before the season fully settles in.

WHEN LIFE MOVES OUTSIDE AGAIN

The cooler weather brings people back outdoors. Children spend more time riding bikes and playing in the yard. Neighbors linger on porches a little longer in the evenings. Walks become enjoyable again, and outdoor activities no longer require planning around the hottest part of the day.

After spending months finding ways to escape the heat, everyone seems ready to enjoy the simple things again.

THE START OF FALL TRADITIONS

That first change in the air signals the return of everything people love about autumn. Football fields begin glowing under Friday night lights. Families make plans for pumpkin patches and fall festivals. Kitchens fill with the smells of soups, baked goods, and recipes that only seem right when the weather cools down.

The season brings a familiar rhythm back to everyday life.

A CHANGE WORTH WAITING FOR

Oklahoma summers are beautiful, but they ask a lot from us. They ask for patience through the hottest afternoons and flexibility when the weather refuses to cooperate. That is why the first cool morning feels so special. It is a reminder that every season has its time. The heat will eventually fade, the evenings will become cooler, and the familiar traditions of fall will return once again.

Sometimes all it takes is one morning, one breeze, and one moment outside to know that something has changed.

The air feels different.

Fall has arrived.

HONEST FLOORS. HONEST PEOPLE.

By Amy Townsend



Greyson and Amanda Russell stand outside the family business they're helping carry into its next chapter.



There is plenty to browse inside H&M Russell Carpet Center.



A look inside H&M Russell Carpet Center, with a wide range of styles, colors and finishes.



Nell answering phones and taking care of customers.

The flooring business wasn't part of Greyson Russell's original plan. Born and raised in Hennessey, Greyson grew up playing football and baseball before graduating from Hennessey High School in 2011. He went on to Oklahoma State University, where he earned a degree in accounting. After college, he spent 13 years at Garrison Lumber, a job that gave him a strong construction background and an appreciation for working with people.

Then an opportunity came along that was hard to pass up.

Greyson's aunt, who had owned H&M Russell Carpet for 25 years, was ready to retire. The conversation about taking over the business began in 2025. Today, Greyson and his wife, Amanda, are carrying that legacy forward as the new owners.

The H&M name has been around since the 1970s and originally stood for Harold and Mike. For more than 50 years, the business was known as H&M Carpet Center, with "Russell" added to the name this year. These days, though, Greyson and Amanda have their own meaning for it. "We like to joke that now it stands for 'Hers and Mine.'"

The experience Greyson gains from every new client is something he doesn't take lightly. "No two people are alike; everyone has different styles and different needs, so I take a little bit away from every job."

When asked what sets H&M Russell Carpet apart, Greyson didn't start by talking about products or brands. Instead, he talked about honesty.



"I personally attend every measuring and try to be at every job site. If I make an error, I own it."

The price he quotes is the price customers pay, with no additional surprises unless extra work is requested. He also emphasizes that customers are involved throughout the process and will be asked plenty of questions along the way. The goal is to guide decisions without taking control of them, making sure the final result reflects what the homeowner actually wants and will be happy with.

His favorite part of the job isn't installing the new flooring. It's tearing out the old. "We'll see floors that are 50 years old and in desperate need of updating. Once they're removed, seeing the bones of the house is almost cathartic. It's the beginning of the healing process." Greyson said.

H&M Russell Carpet offers a variety of carpet, luxury vinyl, hardwood, laminate, tile, backsplashes, artificial turf, and even heated flooring systems. Greyson says garage epoxy flooring is another service they hope to add in the future.

His advice for homeowners is simple.

"Never skimp on the quality of something that separates you from the ground." He also recommends having carpets professionally steam cleaned every couple of years to help them last longer and continue looking their best.

Away from the showroom, Greyson and Amanda have been married for a little more than two years. When they're not working, they enjoy traveling whenever they can. During football season, you'll probably find Greyson on the field as an official. In the spring, he trades the whistle for a mask as a baseball umpire. He's even officiated games back home in Hennessey.

"So if you've ever yelled at an official for being blind, it was probably me," he jokes.

As Greyson and Amanda begin this new chapter, their goal is a simple one: give clients honest advice, help them find flooring they'll love, and make the process as smooth as possible from the first measurement to the final installation.

H&M Russell Carpet is located at 811 S. Division Street in Guthrie. You can find them on Facebook and Instagram or call (405) 282-3464. If Greyson is out on a job, Nell will likely be the first friendly voice you hear when you call.

Oklahoma's FALL FOLIAGE DRIVES

Explore every region of our beautiful state.

From the rolling hills of the east to the red rock canyons of the west, Oklahoma comes alive in the fall. Take a scenic drive, find a cozy cabin, and discover breathtaking views, outdoor adventures and a whole lot of small-town charm.

BEST TIME TO VIEW FALL COLORS: LATE OCTOBER TO EARLY NOVEM

Peak colors vary each year depending on weather conditions, but most areas are at their best from late October through early N

1 Boiling Springs State Park

Plan a fall getaway at Boiling Springs State Park, a virtual oasis on the plains, where tall hardwoods surround a spring-fed lake and scenic trails. Marvel at the glow of fall color from the North Canadian River bluffs, and stay in cozy cabins or set up camp for a peaceful retreat.

2 Chickasaw National Recreational Area

The Arbuckles and Lake of the Arbuckles dazzle with color. Explore the nature center, scenic hiking trails, and nearby Turner Falls, just south of Davis.

3 Salt Plains State Park

Hardwoods, cottonwoods, post oak, hackberry and willows light up the Salt Plains with brilliant reds, golds and oranges. Visit the wildlife refuge observation tower to see ducks, geese and other waterfowl, or hike scenic trails to enjoy the foliage and fall weather.

4 Lake Murray State Park

Oklahoma's largest state park shines in the fall along Hickory Creek. Stay in a cabin or camp, and relax in peaceful scenery. Activities include horseback riding, golfing, fishing, hiking and wildlife watching—perfect for a weekend getaway.

5 Oologah Reservoir

Wooded hills around Lake Oologah glow with autumn color. Hike the Skull Hollow Nature Trail through oak and hickory forest, enjoy boating, fishing, horseback riding and wildlife viewing, and visit the Dog Iron Ranch, birthplace of Will Rogers.

6 Osage Hills State Park

Autumn comes alive in the Osage Hills' dense hardwoods where Sand Creek meets the forest. Enjoy hiking, biking, fishing and camping, or rent a historic cabin and cozy up by the fireplace. Visit Woolaroc Ranch near Bartlesville and Birch Lake near Barnsdall for a true Western experience.

7 Red Rock Canyon Adventure Park

Fall color arrives early here. Native maple trees in the bottomlands peak in vivid reds before upland trees. Dramatic sandstone canyon walls provide a stunning backdrop. Enjoy hiking, rappelling and camping in this unique western Oklahoma landscape.





MBER
November.



8 Robbers Cave State Park

Hardwoods and pines cover the Sans Bois Mountains in a spectacular show of reds, oranges and yellows. Drive scenic State Highway 2 for amazing views, stay in cozy cabins or the lodge, and hike trails with overlooks of radiant valleys.

9 Roman Nose State Park

Rushing springs and red buttes create a stunning autumn scene full of Native American history. Stay in cabins or the lodge, play golf or enjoy hiking and horseback riding.

10 Miami to Tahlequah

Scenic Highway 10 winds past lakes, rivers and rolling hills. Cross Grand Lake, stop at Honey Creek State Park or in Grove, follow Lake Eucha and the Illinois River bluffs, or extend south to Lake Tenkiller for even more brilliant fall color.

11 Tahlequah to Sallisaw

A journey rich in Cherekee history and fall beauty. Visit the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah, drive U.S. 59 through Stilwell, and stop at Sequoyah's Cabin in Sallisaw. Extend your drive to Robert S. Kerr Reservoir and Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge.

12 Talimena National Scenic Byway

Oklahoma's most famous fall foliage drive! Travel Highway 1 across the Ouachita Mountains for 54 miles of breathtaking views and scenic turnouts. Hike Talimena State Park or camp nearby at Lake Wister State Park.

13 Kiamichi Trace

Mountains and clear rivers burst with fall color. Beavers Bend State Park on Broken Bow Lake offers camping. cabins, trout fishing, float trips and more—perfect for cozy campfires and crisp mountain mornings.

14 Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

Granite peaks and roaming bison and elk make this drive unforgettable. Hike, climb rocks, explore nature trails and visit the Visitor Center. Continue to Meers ghost town, Medicine Park and historic Fort Sill.



FERRY 'CROSS THE MERSEY

by Maitland Woody

If you read my last honeymoon recap, you know we packed just about everything we could into six days in London. This time, we're picking up right where we left off as we traded the hustle of London for a much slower pace in Liverpool and North Wales.

Before leaving London, we made one final stop at the infamous Abbey Road. Of course, we had to walk across the crosswalk just like John, Paul, George, and Ringo did. I don't know if that road has always been that busy, if it got busier because of The Beatles, or if it was just because it was a Friday afternoon, but trying to get a good picture while dodging cars, cyclists, and other tourists doing the exact same thing was almost impossible. Still, we got the pictures and headed north.



We took the train to Liverpool, a city known for two things we happen to love: The Beatles and Liverpool Football Club. Fun fact: Liverpool is also often called the Irish capital of England because of its deep Irish roots. Neither of us had ever been to Liverpool or Wales, so unlike London, we didn't have a mile-long list of things we felt like we had to see. We had some plans, but we also figured things out as we went, which was a nice change of pace.



We arrived that evening, walked around the city center, ate at Lime Street Central Pub & Kitchen while watching football on the telly, and made our way down to the Royal Albert Dock before calling it a night.

The next morning, we dove head first into Beatles history. I was a massive Beatles fan growing up (and still am), so visiting The Beatles Story museum was one of the things I was most looking forward to. My dad was always more of a John Lennon fan than a Beatles fan, and one of my brothers is an even bigger Beatles fan than I am, so it felt pretty full circle to finally experience it in Liverpool.



The museum takes you through basically the entire history of the band, from before they became The Beatles through their different albums, eras, and impact around the world. Admission includes an audio guide, and everything is numbered so you can go at your own pace. There is a TON of information, almost an overwhelming amount, but it's organized really well. If you're a Beatles fan, I definitely recommend it.

Afterward, we stopped by the Eleanor Rigby statue, walked through Liverpool's Chinatown, and visited Liverpool Cathedral. The cathedral was impressive, but the last thing I expected to find inside was an EDM setup. Apparently, they were getting ready for some kind of event that night. We didn't stick around for that part.

We ended the afternoon with an early dinner at Almost Famous, home to some of the best wings we had on the entire trip. We sat out on the rooftop terrace, and when it started raining, we just claimed a table with an umbrella and carried on. It honestly felt like the most British way to end the day.

The next morning belonged to Talon.

Talon has been a Liverpool supporter for years, so touring Anfield was a big deal for him. We wore our Liverpool gear and spent the morning touring the stadium with an audio guide and videos about the history of the club.

We also happened to visit right after Liverpool won the 2024-25 Premier League title, which made the timing pretty great. We toured the locker rooms, saw the trophy collection, went down to the pitch, and walked through the same tunnel the players use. Talon even got to touch the famous "This Is Anfield" sign on the way out.

Right outside the stadium was the memorial for Diogo Jota and his brother, André Silva, who had passed away only a couple of weeks before our trip. There were flowers, scarves, jerseys, notes, and all kinds of things left by fans. It was really sad to see, especially knowing how recent it was.

After leaving Anfield, we walked farther into the neighborhood to see murals dedicated to Liverpool players and club legends painted onto the sides of houses and apartment buildings.





We had hoped to catch a Liverpool match while we were there, but the timing didn't work out. So, obviously, we're going to have to go back. Touring Anfield was great, but I know Talon would absolutely love to experience a matchday and hear "You'll Never Walk Alone" with a stadium full of Liverpool fans.

After Anfield, we headed into North Wales and made our way to Conwy, which ended up being one of our favorite places from the entire trip.

Conwy is a small seaside town surrounded by medieval walls. There's Old Conwy inside the walls and the newer parts outside them. A lot of the walls are still standing, with openings that allow cars to get in and out.

We toured Conwy Castle and walked along the town walls. The castle is hundreds of years old, so quite a few rooms and floors don't exist anymore, and you have to use your imagination a little. They had renderings showing what different areas would have looked like, and you can still see things like the holes where the floor joists once sat. We also climbed just about every tower we could.

After the castle, we ate at Dylan's, where Talon got his seafood fix while I ordered something that was definitely not seafood. Then we stopped at Parisella's for ice cream and walked around Old Conwy and down by the beach before heading back to Liverpool.

We were only in Conwy for a few hours, but we absolutely loved it. We left already knowing we wanted to come back. We definitely want to spend more time in North Wales someday, and I wouldn't be surprised if we end up back in Conwy specifically.

Honestly, the same can be said for Liverpool. A day and a half wasn't nearly enough. There's more Beatles history I want to see, plenty more of the city we didn't get to explore, and we still have to get Talon to a Liverpool match at Anfield.

Liverpool and Wales were a much-needed slower couple of days after our nonstop week in London, but our honeymoon wasn't slowing down for long.

Next stop: Scotland.

More Than A Meal

BY LIBBY SEIGER



There is something about Thanksgiving that makes ordinary moments feel a little more special. It is found in the smell of cinnamon and freshly baked rolls filling the kitchen. It is found in crowded dining rooms, extra chairs pulled up to the table, and conversations that continue long after everyone has finished eating.

The holiday may be centered around one big meal, but the heart of Thanksgiving has always been found in the smaller moments leading up to it.



THE PREPARATION

Thanksgiving begins long before anyone sits down at the table. It starts with grocery lists written on whatever paper is nearby. It is found in crowded stores, family recipes pulled from the back of a drawer, and the familiar debate over who is bringing which dish this year.

It is peeling potatoes beside someone you love. It is passing down a recipe that has been made so many times that no one needs to measure anymore. It is the little traditions that happen so naturally we sometimes forget they are traditions at all.

MORE THAN A PERFECT TABLE

There is a lot of pressure to make Thanksgiving perfect. The turkey should come out just right. The decorations should look beautiful. The meal should come together exactly as planned, but the moments people remember are rarely the perfect ones.

They are the mismatched plates and extra folding chairs. They are the toddler running through the kitchen while everyone tries not to laugh. They are the stories grandparents have told a hundred times but somehow never get old. Thanksgiving is not made special because everything goes according to plan. It is special because the people we love are there.





CREATING NEW TRADITIONS

For some families, Thanksgiving is a celebration of traditions that have been passed down for generations. It may look like the same recipes every year, the same place at the table, or the same stories shared between family members.

For others, the holiday is a chance to create something new. It may be a walk after dinner, a gathering with friends, a new recipe added to the menu, or a tradition that begins simply because it feels right.

There is no single way to celebrate Thanksgiving. The meaning comes from the people who gather and the memories they create together.

THE HEART OF THE HOLIDAY

As the season gets busier and the year begins to wind down, Thanksgiving offers a chance to slow down. It reminds us that gratitude is not found only in the food on the table or the size of the gathering around it.

It is found in the conversations, the laughter, and the people who continue to show up year after year.

The feast may bring everyone together, but it is the love surrounding it that makes the day memorable, and sometimes, the smallest moments are the ones we are most thankful for.



Homegrown Hospitality

4T'S CARVED OUT ITS PLACE IN TOWN

By Ruth Ann Replogle



4T's Family Market founder John Taylor discovered he liked being a grocer while working for Bill's IGA in Kingfisher. So, when one of the grocery stores in downtown Hennessey two doors down from the post office went up for sale in 1963, he bought it and set up 4T's IGA.

He, wife Bonnie, and their four young children, the 4T's: Tammy, Tim, Terry, and Tracy, relocated that summer to Hennessey. Not only did John butcher meat and stock shelves, but he mopped floors too.

Twenty years in, 4T's strategically relocated to its current location on the eastern edge of town. At that time, it was the busiest intersection in the state: Oklahoma 51 and U.S. 81.

A shopping center was proposed across the highway where Hennessey Public Schools' ball fields are today; that plan never came to fruition. Instead, in 1986, ODOT repositioned the intersection farther west to where it is now, leaving 4T's off the beaten path.





HENNESSEY, OKLAHOMA

Rooted here since 1963

Nevertheless, Hennessey has supported 4T's for more than six decades. Tim and Terry have tirelessly worked, much like their father before them, to maintain the quality of customer service and food their customers have come to expect.

The brothers have co-owned 4T's since 1998 when John retired and moved to Oklahoma City. Shortly after assuming the reins, the Taylor boys changed wholesalers and dropped IGA from the store name, rebranding as 4T's Discount Foods.

"Being in my hometown is the best reward," Tim said. "We've always lived here, graduated from here, invested our lives here."

His open-air office is located right next the checkout stands. Many patrons will stop and talk with him, wave at him, or haggle with him about products they want to see in the store.

"They know us and they trust us," Tim said. "They've known me all my life and are genuinely glad we're still here."

John returned to Hennessey in 2013, and while technically retired, he helps his sons with the weekly ads.

They try to source local, like buying Hansen's Eggs out of Hitchcock and stocking Hennessey's own Turner Me On wines. 4T's also carries Certified Hereford Beef, an alliance of local Hereford ranchers including fourth-generation Hennessey rancher Cindy Pribil.

Beginning in 2019, 4T's began partnering with the Hennessey Public Library to provide the pumpkins for the library's annual fall fundraising pumpkin patch.

"Our personal touch is what sets us apart," Tim said.

MEET THE
OKSEASONED Sisters
• HOMESTEADS, MOTHERHOOD, FAITH, • FAMILY, AND EASY RECIPES THAT • ACTUALLY TASTE GOOD.



FALLELUJAH!

It's time to bust out the flannels and all things pumpkin and spice! (You'll see what we did there when ya check out these recipes.) Two simple, shortcut cake mix recipes are sure to satisfy your fall cravings.

Cinnamon Chip Pumpkin Muffins

1 box yellow cake mix
1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin (not pie filling)
1/2 cup water
1/2 to 1 bag cinnamon chips or mini chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine all ingredients. Spoon into a mini muffin pan. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.

Spiced Banana Bread

1 box spice cake mix
4 overripe bananas
1/4 to 1/2 cup water (just enough to smooth out the consistency)
1/2 bag white chocolate chips or dark chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mash bananas, then combine all ingredients. Pour into a loaf pan. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, or until done.

We listed our two favorite chips in each recipe but, y'all, the possibilities are endless! You can use practically any combination of cake mix and add-ins. You can also experiment with different cake, bread, and muffin pans. Just be sure to adjust the baking times accordingly. These are definitely worth remembering as a dessert-for-breakfast option!

So good with coffee!

If you're looking to make an actual cake that, yes, still includes a box cake mix but is really on another level, we have one more recipe for you!

Pumpkin Spice Dump Cake

1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin purée
1 can evaporated milk
1 cup brown sugar
3 eggs
3 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 box yellow cake mix
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, melted
1 cup coarsely crushed graham crackers (or pecans)
1/2 cup toffee bits (optional)
Whipped topping for serving

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Lightly spray a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, combine the pumpkin, evaporated milk, brown sugar, eggs, and pumpkin pie spice. Stir until well blended. Pour into the prepared baking dish.

Sprinkle the dry cake mix evenly over the pumpkin mixture. Top with the graham crackers (or pecans) and toffee bits. Pour the melted butter evenly over the top.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until the center is set and the edges are lightly browned.

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped topping.

Enjoy!

The only thing better than the taste of these fall goodies is how wonderful your house will smell while they bake! And, of course, the time spent with whoever is lucky enough to share them with you.

HAPPY FALL, Y'ALL!!!!!

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PULL UP A CHAIR







There's something about a table at a local restaurant.

It's where the morning coffee crowd catches up, families gather after ballgames, friends meet for lunch and somebody usually ends up saying, "Well, I probably better get going," only to sit there another 30 minutes.

Some tables are filled with regulars who have been sitting in the same spot for years. Other times, it's someone just passing through who happens to stop for a bite.

Some stay awhile. Some come and go. But there's usually a story somewhere around the table.

So pull up a chair. Maybe your next story starts at one of our local restaurant partners.



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MORE THAN A DONATION

by Maitland Woody.

When most people think about donating blood, they picture a simple act of kindness: rolling up a sleeve, spending a few minutes in a donor chair, and helping save someone's life. What many don't realize is that behind every blood donation is an organization working around the clock to ensure hospitals have the blood products patients need. For much of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas, that organization is Our Blood Institute (OBI).

Founded in 1976 as the **Oklahoma Blood Institute,** OBI was created by local physicians who recognized the need for a community-based blood center that could provide a safe, reliable blood supply for local hospitals. The organization officially began operations in 1977, serving just 35 hospitals across Oklahoma. Over the decades, it expanded into Arkansas and Texas, growing into one of the nation's largest independent blood centers. Today, OBI operates 17 donor centers across three states and provides blood products to more than 280 hospitals, medical facilities, and air ambulance services.



Because blood donation is often associated with the American Red Cross, many people assume the two organizations are connected. In reality, they are separate nonprofit organizations that share the same purpose but operate independently. While both collect blood from volunteer donors and supply hospitals, Our Blood Institute focuses on serving the communities throughout its region and keeping locally donated blood available for local patients whenever possible.

Over nearly five decades, OBI has grown into much more than a blood center. In addition to maintaining the region's blood supply, the organization recruits bone marrow donors, advances medical research, educates communities, and develops programs that strengthen healthcare both locally and internationally. Two of those programs, Donable Cares and Global Blood Fund, demonstrate how OBI's work extends far beyond the donor chair.

Donable Cares was created to benefit both the blood supply and the nonprofit organizations that serve local communities. Through the program, OBI partners with nonprofits to encourage blood donation while helping raise funds for their missions. When supporters register to donate through a nonprofit's unique Donable Cares link and complete an eligible donation, OBI makes a financial contribution to that organization. A single donation can have a dual impact by helping hospitals meet patient needs while supporting causes such as education, healthcare, veterans' services, animal welfare, and other community initiatives.

OBI's impact also reaches beyond the United States through Global Blood Fund (GBF), an international nonprofit founded in 2008. GBF works with healthcare professionals in countries where access to safe blood is limited by providing training, technical assistance, equipment, and other resources needed to build sustainable blood systems. Rather than offering temporary aid, the organization focuses on long-term partnerships that strengthen local blood collection and transfusion practices.



Account Consultant, Jami Read

Donors can support Global Blood Fund during their own donation experience. After giving blood, they are often offered a commemorative T-shirt as a thank-you gift. Those who choose not to receive the shirt can instead direct its value to GBF. That simple choice helps provide medical equipment, blood collection supplies, laboratory resources, and professional training in underserved countries, extending the impact of a single donation far beyond the local community.

Community members interested in hosting a blood drive or partnering with Our Blood Institute can contact Jami Read, an account consultant who serves Kingfisher, Grant, Garfield, Blaine, Major, and Woodward counties. Read is one of five account consultants serving northwest Oklahoma, including communities from Woodward to Stillwater, Ponca City, and Bartlesville. She works with schools, businesses, churches, civic groups, and nonprofit organizations to coordinate blood drives and build community partnerships. For more information, contact **Jami Read at 580-370-8919.**

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WORTH THE DRIVE-IN

by Maitland Woody







There are certain things that make sense at certain times of the year: pool parties in the summer, planting in the spring, snow in December, and drive-in movies in the fall. I know drive-ins are traditionally considered a summer activity, but whoever decided that clearly never spent an August night in Oklahoma. Fall is better. The sun sets earlier, the air finally cools down, and piling into the back of a vehicle with every pillow and comforter you own sounds cozy instead of medically irresponsible.

I'm a huge movie lover, but I was late to drive-ins. I didn't start going until my senior year of high school and have only been a handful of times since. Maybe that's part of the appeal. Drive-ins have been around since 1933 and flourished after World War II, so going to one feels like participating in a piece of movie history. You pack the vehicle like you're leaving town for a week, park backwards, arrange a questionable amount of bedding, tune the radio, and wait for darkness.

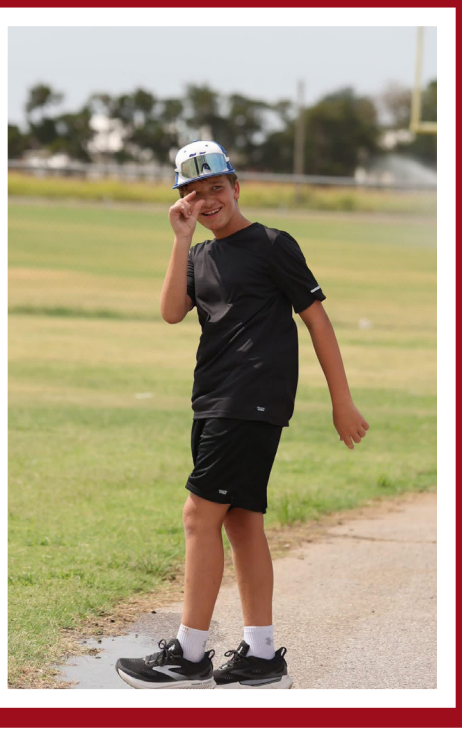
Oklahoma has been lucky to keep several drive-ins, including the Winchester in Oklahoma City, the Chief near Chickasha, the Admiral Twin in Tulsa, and others around the state. I always preferred the Beacon in Guthrie. It was closer, quieter, and didn't require fighting Oklahoma City crowds just to watch a movie.

The Beacon opened in 1950, operated for more than 70 years, and even appeared in Twister, which is about the most Oklahoma distinction a drive-in could earn. I once saw a double feature there that included Back to the Future. I can't remember the second movie, which is unfortunate for a self-proclaimed movie connoisseur, but I remember the night.

That's what made seeing the Beacon disappear so disappointing. After its final season in 2024, the property was sold, and its massive white screen came down in 2026. For decades, that lot held first dates, family outings, great movies, bad movies, and ordinary nights that probably became important only in hindsight. I've always thought owning and operating a drive-in would be incredibly cool. There aren't many businesses where keeping the lights on also means keeping a piece of history alive.

Another drive-in memory came in 2022, when I saw Elvis while visiting my cousin Mark and his family in Idaho. I grew up loving the King, so I enjoyed the movie, but it was difficult watching his story unfold when I already knew where it was headed.

There are certainly easier ways to watch a movie now, but ease isn't what makes a night memorable. Sometimes it's the cool fall air, a pile of blankets, good company, and a movie playing under the stars.





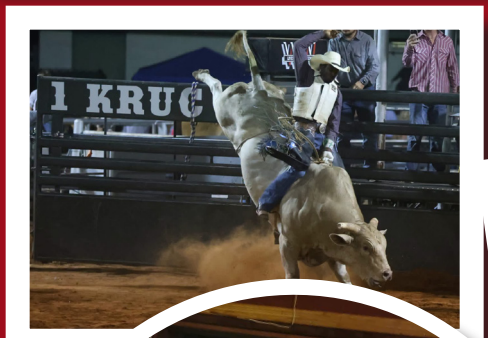







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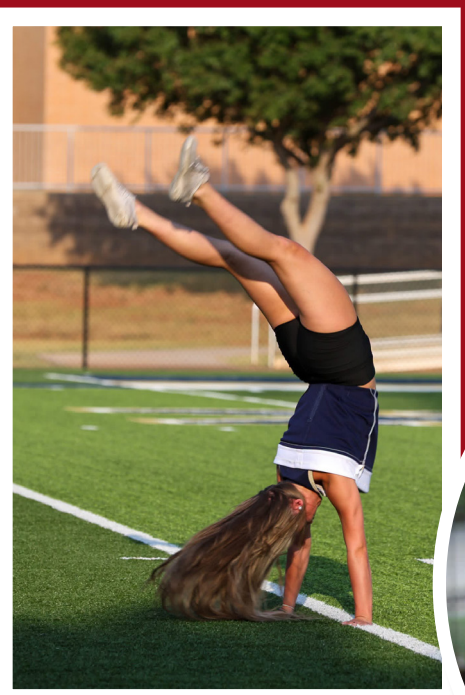





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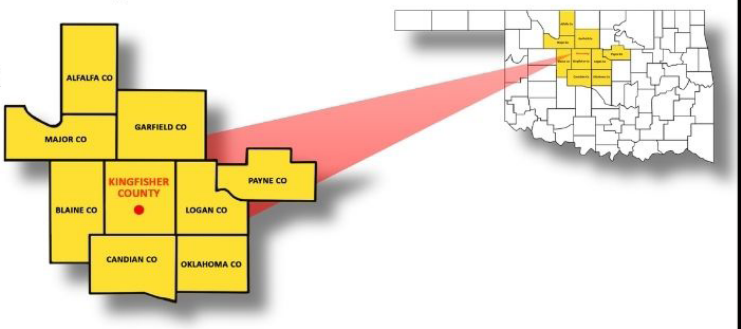
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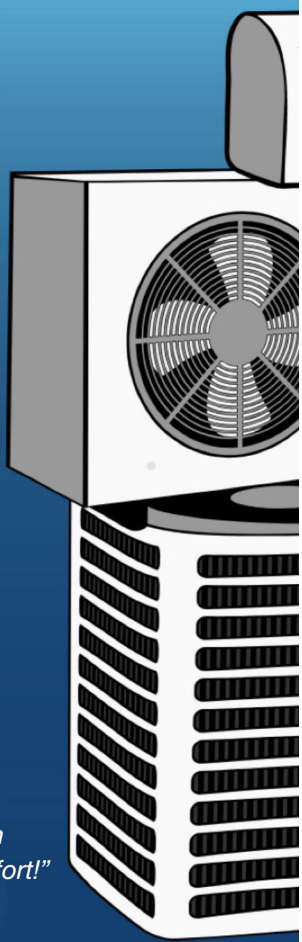
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"We are a local employee-owned and operated company. Offering specialty in custom home design systems and comfort!"