SUMMER CAMPS ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO PURSUE THEIR PASSION

BE A CHAMP • GEAR UP • MASH • CAMP MD • ATHLETICS
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ABOUT THE COVERS
Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb spoke to students at McPeak's "Be a Champ" camp this summer.

More than 60 area students were introduced to the medical field during CSC's summer camps: MASH and Camp MD.

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Being the Vice Chair of the OSU A&M Board of Regents is a very time consuming job in and of itself, but Regent Rick Davis makes it look easy when compared to his other commitments.

Regent Davis was raised on a family farm in Guthrie, Okla., where he lived and breathed the country lifestyle. In his youth, he was a member of the 4-H and FFA organizations, and served as the 1979-80 Oklahoma FFA Secretary and the 1980-81 President.

“I wouldn’t be where I am right now if it weren’t for my involvement and experiences in 4-H and FFA,” Davis explained. “I always encourage youth to be a part of these programs that did so much for me.”

He graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1983 with his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics.

Regent Davis is the Managing General Partner for Davis Farms and Dimmit Hay. He and his brothers are very hands-on in the family business.

“We run a very diversified set of operations consisting of a stocker program, 2,500 acres of wheat, a dairy, and, of course, the hay operation.”

Regent Davis is very appreciative of the vision that his father had for the business.

“By being diversified, we can withstand small challenges that each program is faced with, and for that I am blessed. I’ve learned that it’s better to have multiple endeavors than to put all the eggs in one basket.”

If Regent Davis had to be described with one word, he would choose “family oriented.”

“In my head, family oriented doesn’t just mean my immediate family,” Davis said. “It includes my extended families, my employees, and all the people that give me the motivation to do what I do. I give credit to my father and mother for this quality, and I’m very blessed to have been raised in a farm environment and to have been able to raise my family in the same environment.”

In his free time, that “really isn’t all that free,” Regent Davis enjoys vacationing in Colorado with friends and family, being involved in his community, and cheering for the OSU Cowboys during his favorite season of the year – football season.

With his wife Pam, Regent Davis resides in Guthrie and lives on the family farm. They have a son and a daughter, both college graduates.

As the parent of two collegians, Regent Davis left some advice for CSC students.

“Expose yourself to all of your interests; don’t limit yourself to what you think you want to do. By exploring your options, you’ll discover your passion.”  ❯ By Katie Bullard

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**DR. MITCHELL SETS WORLD RECORD**

**EARN WORLD CHAMPION TITLE AND GOLD MEDAL**

During the 2013 USA Paralympic Track and Field National Championships and Team Trials, Dr. Cassie Mitchell set a new world record in the Women’s F52 (quadriplegic) Shot Put. A Connors State College alumna, Mitchell’s throw of 6.14 meters with the 2kg shot put bested the previous world record holder’s throw of 5.82 meters.

She took home two gold and three silver medals from the 2013 National Championships.

Mitchell was later named a member of the 2013 USA International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championship Team, competing in Lyon, France.

During the World Championship games, Mitchell won the gold medal in the women’s F52-53 (quadriplegic) shot put. Mitchell set a new Championship Record with her throw of 5.79 meters to become the 2013 Shot Put World Champion. Additionally, she won a silver medal in the women’s T52 (quadriplegic) 100m, and two bronze medals in the women’s T52 800m and 200m, respectively.

The IPC Athletics World Championships featured more than 1000 athletes from nearly 100 countries. The World Championships marked the first major international gathering of Paralympic Track & Field athletes since the London 2012 Paralympic Games.  ❯
Connors State College and Sodexo, the college’s primary food vendor, have partnered to offer enhanced dining services for CSC students, faculty and staff. The enhancements will be seen in the new Student Union, expected to break ground in 2014.

“It is a great partnership that will provide many upgrades to our new Student Union and kitchen,” said Connors VP for Fiscal Services, Shirley Twilley. “Sodexo has a long-standing commitment to providing quality dining options and I am excited to work with them on this project.”

The $6 million plan to renovate and expand the Student Union includes 31,000 square feet to be used as dining space, a ballroom, meeting space and gathering space for students.

“We are proud of the service Sodexo has provided on our campus,” said CSC President, Dr. Tim Faltyn. “Their commitment to education can be seen through the $200 thousand donation they have made to improve the dining experience for our students.”

In September 2013, the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical Colleges approved the renovation project which will add 7,600 square feet to the current 23,950 square-foot facility. In addition to spaces for students, the large ballroom and meeting rooms will be available to the public.

“It is important for Connors State College to be a resource for our community,” said Faltyn. “Offering space for public functions is one way we can achieve this goal.”

Sodexo is one of the largest food services companies in the World with 34,000 sites in 80 countries. The company is widely known for their commitment to providing healthy and enjoyable dining services on college campuses worldwide.

By Aimi Maddocks
ALLEN INTERNS AT KIAMICHI LINK RANCH

While students her age often spend the summer months relaxing or visiting family, Hannah Allen of Nowata, Okla., gained agricultural industry experience. Allen interned at the 15,000-acre KiamichiLink Ranch in Finley, Okla., owned by OSU A&M Regent Tucker Link and wife Vickie.

During her internship, Allen organized online registration data and completed breeding season tasks, such as: inserting CIDR’s and ultra-sounding cows, and halter breaking and grooming sale heifers.

“This internship was one that I greatly enjoyed,” said Allen. “It gave me the chance to see the side of a purebred operation that I had not seen before, while being very hands on.”

A sophomore at Connors State College, Allen is a member of the Beef Show Team and the Connors Collegian staff, was named to the 2013 Vice President’s Honor Roll, serves as Aggie Club President and works as a marketing assistant for the CSC Office of Creative Services.

“Not many students seek out the chance to experience a potential career,” said Dale Pitchford, CSC Beef Show Team coach. “To gain knowledge at such a highly respected and advanced ranch like KiamichiLink will be beneficial in Hannah’s future.”

Her experience in the agriculture industry includes raising and showing cattle, working on her family-owned preconditioning ranch, along with the feed store that her family has owned for nearly 100 years.

“I was so grateful to have her with us this summer,” said Cindy Fitzgerald, accounting manager for KLR Angus, LLC and KLR Genetics, LLC. “Hannah has a great attitude, is hardworking, and shows such maturity and experience for her age.”

Upon graduation from Connors, Allen plans to obtain a bachelor’s degree in agricultural communications from Oklahoma State University. She hopes to pursue a career in the agricultural industry.

By Hannah Allen

GOLDEN WINS OKLAHOMA FFA PROFICIENCY AWARD

EARN S BERTH FOR NATIONAL COMPETITION

Kendall Golden of the Morris FFA Chapter and a recent graduate of Connors State College, earned first-place honors in the Oklahoma FFA Diversified Horticulture Proficiency Award area during the 87th Oklahoma FFA Convention. As the state winner, her application has been submitted for national competition in Louisville, Ky., in October.

Golden worked for the grounds department in crop production at Connors State College for her supervised agricultural experience project. She regulated watering as well as mixed and applied fertilizer and chemicals. Golden was involved in landscape management in campus mowing, installed and maintained flower beds, and planted trees and shrubs. She also was named the state winner in specialty crop production and second in the state in floriculture proficiency in previous years.

“Kendall Golden has been an outstanding worker in the department,” said Daniel Edmonds, CSC grounds supervisor. “Her work ethic is second-to-none.”

The diversified horticulture proficiency award is designed to recognize students who are involved in a supervised agricultural experience related to managing two or more of the following proficiency areas: floriculture, landscape management, nursery operations or turf grass management.

Golden graduated in July 2013 with an Associate of Science in Agriculture with a horticulture option. She transferred to Oklahoma State University and will pursue a degree in landscape architecture.

The 19-year-old is the daughter of Bill and Debby Golden. By Jamie Trissel

CONNORS CONNECTION | 5
DR. TABATHA HIBBS TO BE PUBLISHED in *Drury Journal*

For Connors State College English Professor, Dr. Tabatha Hibbs, writing is more than a hobby. It’s a passion. A passion that is quickly gaining recognition as her short story will be featured in the next edition of “Gingko Tree Review,” a literary magazine produced and published by Drury University in Springfield, Mo.

“This is the first short story I’ve had published,” said Hibbs. “I have had poetry and essays published, and even some research articles when I was in biology, but I am excited to have my short story accepted.”

The story is about a woman who is married to an emotionally needy man who is sucking the life out of her. Though she loves her husband she struggles to find an inner space that is her own. As the owner of an antique shop, she becomes intrigued with a shawl she found wrapped around an old lamp. In the shawl she finds a place that is her own.

“The story essentially acknowledges that we, particularly women, need those interior spaces that belong to just us,” said Hibbs. “I think women have trouble being ok with that because we have husbands, children, students and such, and we tend to create spaces that are not ours.”

Thanks to digital media, more online sources are becoming available in which to be published, but that doesn’t make the process any easier.

“It’s extremely hard to be published,” said Hibbs. “There are more and more writers competing for the space and there are many very good writers out there. It does get easier though. Once you’ve been published and can submit your list of publications, editors tend to take a more serious look at your work.”

Of course, time, patience and practice are essential to entering the world of a writer.

“Realistically, writing is a compulsion. I’m always writing something,” said Hibbs. “I keep a journal, I’ve started a blog, I’m working on a textbook and I do academic writing as well.”

Hibbs’ blog, called Tablequah Homestead, encourages others to become more self-sustaining.

“My husband and I are gardeners and do-it-yourselfers,” explains Hibbs. “My blog explores the idea of living and buying locally and removing our purchasing dollars from corporate America and, instead, supporting our neighbors.”

With her plethora of writing experience, one might think being published is “old-hat” for Hibbs. Not so, she says.

“Being published is an affirmation that what I have to say strikes a chord with someone else,” she said. “That my ideas and thinking resonates with other people, and can speak to other people. That’s really cool.”  

By Ami Maddocks

BASEBALL PLAYERS EARN NJCAA ACADEMIC AWARDS

Connors State baseball players Caleb Banks and Dalton Daniels received NJCAA Academic Student-Athlete Awards for Superior Academic Achievement and Exemplary Academic Achievement for the 2012-13 school year, it was announced by the NJCAA office in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The two student-athlete awards were previously known at NJCAA Academic All-American honors.

Both Banks and Daniels were members of the Cowboys baseball team that reached the NJCAA College World Series in May at Grand Junction, Colo.

Banks, a pitcher and infielder from Verdigris, Okla., received a superior Academic Award for obtaining a 3.95 grade point average.

Daniels, infielder from Salina, Okla., received the Exemplary Academic Achievement award for obtaining a 3.60 grade point average.

More than 1,600 NJCAA student-athletes met the requirements for individual academic honors, including 592 that earned the Superior Academic
Connors State College President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, was recently accepted to the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education Program. The prestigious program accepted only 30 professionals nationally.

“Lifelong learning is no longer an option, it is a necessity,” said Faltyn, referring to a quote used by Kennedy. “I couldn’t agree more.”

As a college president, Faltyn often stresses the importance of continuing one’s education. However, this is not just the party line used to increase enrollment. Faltyn “walks the walk” as they say, with four graduate and undergraduate degrees.

“As an educator I believe that it’s important to always push yourself to learn more, do more and be of service to others,” he said. “This opportunity will allow me to set a positive example for my son as well as our students.”

“My plan is to focus on Leadership Decision Making, Crisis Leadership and the Senior Executive program,” he said, “but I have arranged my schedule in such a way that I can continue to devote my attention to the students, faculty and staff at Connors State College.”

Faltyn’s attention to detail has lead Connors State College to receive numerous awards and accolades in his two-year presidency. In 2011 the college was listed as one of the “Top 50 Fastest-Growing Public Two-Year Colleges” by Community College Week. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, the same publication listed Connors as one of the “Top 100 Associate Degree Producers.”

While the time commitment to the Harvard Leadership Program is intense, it is one Faltyn feels is well worth the challenge.

“I don’t expect my students to give more than I am willing to give,” he said, “Continuing your education, in or out of the classroom, should be a life-time goal. I hope my participation in this program makes me a better leader and example to those around me.”

By Ami Maddocks

Achievement (3.8+ GPA) honors and more than 900 met the standard for Exemplary Academic Achievement (3.6+ GPA).

This season, close to 60,000 student-athletes competed in the NJCAA across 3,500 teams in 28 different sports.

The 2012-2013 academic year marks the 30th consecutive season the NJCAA has recognized the success of its student-athletes in the classroom. With minimal changes, the NJCAA academic awards program has been in place since 1983. By Wayne Bunch
StateUniversity.com ranked Connors State College the #2 Safest Campus in Oklahoma for the 2013 year. The ranking was determined from data compiled between January 1 – December 31, 2012, from crime reports submitted by college and university law enforcement statewide.

Learn more by visiting: www.stateuniversity.com

The Connors State College Office of Campus Life hosted a “Week of Welcome” (WOW) full of exciting, fun and educational activities for incoming students at all three campuses. Each event aimed to unite the students and faculty in a way that couldn’t quite be reached through tests and lectures. The two weeks of events were a great release from the stress of back-to-school and allowed students to enjoy their last glimpse of summer.

WOW began with a cookout and pool party at the Warner campus Miller’s Crossing, where Dr. Tim Falyakin, CSC President, welcomed the students to campus. Students at the Port and West campuses also enjoyed social cookouts during the WOW activities.

DUI GO-KART EXPERIENCE

This year, the Office of Campus Life introduced a “DUI Go-Kart Experience” event, sponsored by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, to the students in Warner. The students were given a set of specially designed goggles that emulated the effects of delayed motor skills, similar to driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Drivers wearing the goggles have reduced motor skills that result in the same dangerous driving conditions that happen when
a drunk driver gets behind a wheel. Students then attempted to drive through an obstacle course or walk a line with the aid of CSC Chief of Police James Mendenhall.

For the Office of Campus Life, student safety is a top priority. Through awareness events, administrators hope to educate students on making responsible decisions. By introducing the dangers of drinking and driving, the college is taking proper safety measures to keep students off the road.

Future safety awareness programming offered by the Office of Campus Life include: self-defense training, rape awareness seminars, and texting and driving education.

HYPNOTIST

During another WOW event, Hypnotist Chris Jones performed at the Warner Fine Arts Auditorium. More than 20 students succumbed to Jones’ spell, providing great entertainment for the audience.

“The hypnotist was amazing and hilarious,” said freshman cheerleader Blake Koch. “After a few tricks I knew it was all real, and it definitely made me laugh.”

RIVER RUMBA REGATTA

All students were welcomed to the Muskogee Exchange Club’s River Rumba Regatta cardboard boat race at the Port of Muskogee.

Nursing students and faculty spent a week constructing their vessel -- the CSC Nautical Nurse -- while others competed in the Connors’ Challenge, constructing boats from cardboard and duct tape the day of the event. Of those, only one entry made it across the bay.

FUN FOR EVERYONE

The Office of Campus Life – Student Activities also hosted a Grocery Bingo during lunch at the Cafeteria, a Local Business Fair at Miller’s Crossing, free bowling at Green Country Lanes in Muskogee, and a free sundae bar at the Warner BCM. Other events included a Spirit Day as well as a volleyball tournament and late night Movie on the Lawn, a Red Cross Blood Drive, and an evening dance at Melvin Self Fieldhouse.

“Numbers were very high in attendance this week for WOW and I was very pleased with the overall turnout,” said Cody Clovis, Coordinator of Student Activities.

Pictures from WOW have been posted at: www.connorsstate.edu/sa and www.facebook.com/ConnorsSA.

By Sean Friend
Learning hands-only CPR, measuring lung volume. Touring a medical helicopter and hearing about the adrenaline-filled reality of being a flight nurse or paramedic. Making fake poop. Understanding how to identify venomous snakes and spiders and knowing what to do in case of a bite.

Sound like fun?

Sixty-four area 7th – 12th grade students who participated in MASH (Muskogee Area Science and Health) Camp and Camp MD (Medical Detective) this summer thought so.

Through a strategic partnership with the Eastern Oklahoma Health Care Coalition, Connors State College helped sponsor and support the three summer camps, two in Muskogee and one in Sallisaw, designed to educate and excite middle and high school students about the many health care education and career opportunities available locally.

Currently, of the 20 fastest growing careers in Oklahoma, more than half are in health care. As the Muskogee area grows as a rural health care hub, the demand for quality health care professionals continues to outpace the supply.

The fun, hands-on summer camps are designed to inspire students to consider local health care education and career options in order to build a pipeline of future health students and professionals.

Ultimately, these are the students who in coming years may pursue their dreams with the help of the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship and commit to work in health care in Muskogee County for at least two years upon graduation.

In addition to learning about systems of the body, basic first aid and life-saving skills, the campers also heard from a wide variety of health care professionals and visited health care facilities like the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center, Eastar Health System and the 911 Center to see health professionals in action. They also visited the CSC West and Port campuses and learned from college staff and faculty how to prepare now to succeed in health care education and in college, in general.

CSC President Dr. Tim Faltyn inspired the high school students to move forward in their lives with passion and integrity as they reach for their goals. When asked to share their favorite part of the camp, one high school participant said, “I really liked Dr. Tim Faltyn’s speech. He was very interesting, and gave you a real idea about thinking towards the future.”

In post-camp surveys, the participants highlighted the diversity of experiences and the field trips and tours that added to their knowledge and understanding of health care training and education programs and careers.

• 96.8% of camp participants said that the camp “enhanced their knowledge of health careers.
• 98.4% of camp participants said the camp “enhanced their knowledge of available health education programs in the area.”
• 89% of campers indicated that they would be interested in having a health
careers club at their school.
- 87.5% of campers said they plan to pursue health care education and/or career.

The camps were made possible thanks to the generous funding support of the City of Muskogee Foundation, the Kirschner Trusts and Global Health. Indian Capital Technology Center served as home base for the camps and the lead camp instructors were ICTC health careers certification instructors.

In addition to CSC and ICTC staff and faculty, other partners in the camps included AirEvac, Muskogee County EMS, Cherokee Nation Three Rivers Clinic, Northeastern State University, Bacone College, Sequoyah Memorial Hospital, Sequoyah County Sheriff and 911 Center, Eastern Workforce Investment Board, City of Muskogee Wellness Initiative, Muskogee County Health Department, Oklahoma Healthy Aging Initiative, Cherokee Nation W.W. Hastings Hospital, Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center, Easter Health System, and People, Inc.

The Eastern Oklahoma Health Care Coalition is a nonprofit organization created to address the regional health care workforce shortage by working collaboratively with educational institutions, health care providers and community groups to recruit, educate, train and retain health care professionals in a seven county region. EOK Health’s base of operation is on the CSC West campus in Muskogee.

By Lisa Wade

Below Left: MASH Camp students build systems of the body using clay and plastic manikins.

Below Center: MASH Camp students listen to the breathing and heartbeat of an ailing simulation manikin at the Muskogee VA Medical Center.

Below Right: Camp MD students put on Personal Protective Equipment as they learn how to keep themselves safe when working with patients.

The Muskogee-based AirEvac team was a highlight of all three camps, landing the helicopter on-site to encourage students to consider becoming a helicopter-based paramedic or flight nurse.
Agriculture is a proud tradition in Green Country and Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb reminded the attendees at the “Be a Champ” camp of just how important a role agriculture plays in our great state.

“Because of what you do, I will be able to eat in the future,” Lamb told the campers. “Take away agriculture and you have no Oklahoma.”

The agriculture industry accounts for more than a $6 billion impact in the state and roughly 10 percent of the state’s gross product. Oklahoma is the No. 5 leading source of beef in the country and the No. 8 leading source of hogs. There are more than 86,000 farms in the state.

“When you are back at school... what you have done at this camp will be the groundwork... for success,” Lamb reminded the campers. “I have never met anyone in agriculture who was not respectful, does not know how to look someone in the eye, and has a work ethic that is second to none.”

Lamb, who grew up raising cattle near Enid, Okla., said working with livestock “lays the foundation and the groundwork for a work ethic.”

The four-day camp, which teaches kids, ages nine to 18, how to work with cattle and sheep, was founded by State Rep. Jerry McPeak, and is hosted on the Connors State College campus. In attendance at this particular camp were more than 100 students – 53 with sheep and more than 50 with cattle.

Lamb explained that “Connors wants this camp here” while relaying to students that as they “make college decisions, heavily consider Connors State College.”

CSC President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, spoke to a similar tune.

“Going to college is an honor and privilege,” said Faltyn. “We are so honored to have you at Connors State College and hope you pursue your degree here.”

According to McPeak, this camp is important to Oklahoma’s future. It doesn’t just teach the fundamentals of being a showman, “Be a Champ” camp “has turned into teaching kids to be the best in their everyday life,” said McPeak.

Camps like this will ensure the agriculture industry in Oklahoma will thrive for years to come.

At the conclusion of all speakers, camp staff and campers presented Lt. Gov. Lamb with a spray-paint emblazoned ewe lamb – a fitting gesture for the support he’s shown to “Be a Champ” camp.
OPEN HOUSE
ANSWERS QUESTIONS FOR
Adult Students

The second annual Connors State College Open House, held at the Muskogee West Campus, hosted more than 200 potential students, faculty and staff. Organized by the recruiting department, the college offered free ice cream and pizza amid giveaways like iPods and Connors apparel.

For non-traditional students with kids in tow, the family-friendly festivities included inflatables and face painting.

“We consider this year’s Open House to have been a success,” said Logan Knapper, Director of Recruitment. “This event showcases our commitment to meeting the needs of adult students. We want them to feel comfortable in their pursuit of higher education, knowing it’s difficult with the demands of everyday life.”

Attendees visited with faculty and staff, and learned about opportunities for involvement in organizations like Phi Theta Kappa and free tutoring from the Connors Success Center.

“We look forward to growing this event in the years to come,” Knapper said. By Stacy Pearce

CONNORS AWARDED $25K ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Connors State College, in partnership with Armstrong Bank, has been awarded a $25,000 economic development grant to assist with the cost of building the Nursing and Allied Health Building on the Muskogee Port Campus.

FHLBank, a wholesale financial institution of which Armstrong Bank is a member, awarded the grant through its Joint Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) program. JOBS helps financial institutions throughout Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma promote jobs and economic growth in their communities.

There is a very large demand for nursing and allied health professionals in Muskogee County and Connors State College wants to provide that talent for the labor pool. The healthcare industry needs to fulfill current labor demands as well as provide for expected growth in the future.

“The Oklahoma Department of Commerce is expecting the healthcare industry to increase by 11% over 10 years, so we need to be prepared,” said Ryan Blanton, CSC Development Foundation Director.

FHLBank Topeka is one of 12 wholesale banks nationwide that provide liquidity and various programs that help community financial institutions meet the residential housing finance and economic development needs of their communities. FHLBank Topeka serves nearly 830 financial institution members in its district of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.
LIVESTOCK JUDGING CAMP
Each summer, hundreds of kids look forward to visiting Warner for a weekend that they will talk about for the rest of their life. Each year, two sessions of the Connors State College Tradition of Excellence Livestock Judging Camp are held in June and July. During this time, kids from across the United States travel to learn the fundamentals of livestock evaluation.

Each morning the CSC livestock judging team and coaches discuss the basics of evaluating specific species. Students then put their learning to the test with classes of four animals to be placed from first to last.

The students were split into groups by experience and age to learn to present a set of reasons, explaining their placings like they would in an actual contest.

The art of livestock evaluation is not just learning to be a stockman and to know a good animal from a bad one, it is much more than that. Students who are on judging teams learn to present ideas to complete strangers and to sell it well enough that it convinces the listener of their opinion. It also teaches students that mastering a skill takes hard work. Dedication, responsibility, and integrity are all things that a person can take away from judging, if they put in the time and effort to be one of the best.

“The Tradition of Excellence judging camp grew out of a demand for intense training of this nature for 4-H and FFA members, particularly on the reasons side,” said Blake Nelson, CSC livestock judging coach. “Not only does it sharpen the skills of attending 4-H and FFA members, but also it is a great recruiting tool for the college.”

The Tradition of Excellence Livestock Judging Camp allows attendees to learn and gain knowledge from one of the most respected junior college judging teams in the country – an experience they will never forget.

By Whitney Andras

BASKETBALL CAMPS
Connors State men’s and women’s basketball coaches Bill Muse and Eddie Kite held their summer camps for area youth in July at Melvin Self Fieldhouse on the Warner campus. Both coaches were pleased with the participation.

Approximately 80 local boys and girls from elementary age through high school took part in the camps.

The boys’ camp placed an emphasis on developing the basic fundamentals of basketball including shooting, dribbling, rebounding, passing and defense.

The camp also concentrated on the mechanics of shooting, from the layup to the jump shot, including free throw shooting. A video session was shot of each individual camper. Each camper also was taught the skills of dribbling, rebounding, passing and defense.

“The campers all had a good time and showed improvement during the week,” said Muse. “It gave the young kids an opportunity to develop their skills of basketball.”

Kite’s girls also were taught the mechanics of shooting. A video was shot of each player for their instruction. An emphasis was placed on dribbling, passing and rebounding.

Kite said, “Our young girls did an outstanding job. They all worked hard and improved on the court each day. It was a fun time.”

By Wayne Bunch

GEAR UP SUMMER INSTITUTE
This summer, numerous high school students participated in the Wilderness Adventure: Science = Education and Careers Summer Institute, held at CSC campuses. The institute, provided by Oklahoma GEAR UP, gave students an opportunity to improve math and science skills while using exciting exploratory technologies.

During the free, weeklong institute, students lived on campus and worked alongside a college professor as they researched Oklahoma’s fish, aquatic insects, reptiles, birds and amphibians.

“GEAR UP summer institutes are a great opportunity for students to participate in ongoing scientific research through hands-on, real-life experiments with college faculty and students,” said Oklahoma Higher Education Chancellor Glen D. Johnson. “Students work outside in the natural environment and explore science, technology, engineering and math, STEM career opportunities.”

Administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, GEAR UP — Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs — is a federal grant program offered through the U.S. Department of Education to provide opportunities for middle and high school students to acquire academic skills, planning information, financial assistance and support they need to succeed in college.
$50K GRANT WILL PROMOTE FINANCIAL LITERACY

Connors State College has received a $50,000 grant to enhance the financial literacy of its students with the aim of increasing graduation and student loan repayment rates.

USA Funds, a nonprofit organization that helps American families benefit from postsecondary education, is providing the funds to the college under its endowment for student success. The endowment supports funding and in-kind services to colleges and universities to help them promote the success of their students.

Jennifer Watkins, CSC Financial Aid Director and staff members have been working with USA Funds Consultant Bonnie Weaver to develop a student loan default prevention plan and carry on outreach to its student loan borrowers to counsel them as they pay back their loans.

“The USA Funds grant gives Connors the opportunity to actively prepare more students to enroll and succeed in college-level courses, while also educating them on financial responsibility,” said Dr. Tim Falty, CSC President. “We’re excited about the opportunity to better educate our students on their financial responsibilities and student loan debt management.”

CSC will use the grant funds to provide financial literacy information to students and former students when they initially request a student loan, as they prepare to graduate, or if they encounter problems paying back their student loans. The college will use members of its President’s Leadership Class to serve as trained peer mentors, delivering personal finance information to their classmates.

In addition, the grant will fund training of CSC Financial Aid staff to better assist students with the repayment of their loans, as well as an analysis of the characteristics of former students who fail to repay their loans. The analysis will help the staff tailor programs to prevent student loan defaults.

“Helping our students more effectively manage their time and money prepares them for the repayment of the loans that helped pay for their education and increases their prospects for completing their academic programs,” said Watkins. “Financial problems are among the leading reasons why students drop out and fail to earn their degrees.”

The activities were recommended in a default prevention plan that Watkins and the financial aid staff completed in February. The college also conducts a program of regular contact with former students to assist those having trouble paying off their student loans. CSC also plans to implement an online personal finance curriculum, dealing with budgeting, saving and spending, goal setting and achievement, and managing credit.

For more information on USA Funds, visit www.usafunds.org.

HOLE -IN -ONE FOR CSC ATHLETICS

The team of Bill Fisher, Jamie Fisher, Bradley Fisher and Ron Creason won the Second Annual Connors State College Athletic Department Golf Scramble at Cobblestone Golf Course in Muskogee.

The team fired a 54, defeating the second place team of Team Lewis by two strokes with a 56, with Team Armstrong placing third with a 57 in a four-hole playoff.

It was the second consecutive year for the Fisher team to win the scramble which raised approximately $4,500 for the athletic department.

“We had very good participation in the tournament this year and it has grown each year,” said CSC Athletic Director Bill Muse. “We appreciate everyone who participated in the tournament.”

A total of 12 teams comprised of four-players each competed in the tournament. By Wayne Bunch
Teresa Huggins, the Chief Executive Officer of Stigler Health and Wellness, Inc., knows a thing or two about healthcare.

Under her leadership, Stigler Health and Wellness has grown from one clinic in 2005 into six Federally Qualified Health Centers that currently provide medical, dental, mental health, optometry, and pharmacy services to rural Oklahoma. While other healthcare providers have struggled in the past five years, Stigler Health and Wellness has flourished, providing services in Stigler, Eufaula, Sallisaw, Poteau, Checotah, and Warner.

Last month, Huggins graduated from the prestigious Healthcare Executive Certification Program at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Given her achievements in the field of healthcare, it might be a surprise that Huggins studied Agricultural Economics at Connors State College and Oklahoma State University.

“They were surprised at UCLA when I told them my bachelor’s was in Ag. Econ., but in the end, it is all still economics,” said Huggins, who also holds a Masters of Business Administration from Northeastern State University.

More importantly, it is leadership, and Huggins has a proven track record of leading an organization during an uncertain time in healthcare.

In rural areas, quality healthcare can be difficult to find and small clinics are often viewed as a provider of last resort.

“We do not want to be the provider of last resort, we want to be the provider of choice,” said Huggins. “That’s the challenge before us, and the one we work toward.”

Leadership, commitment, and community prosperity are values learned in the agriculture program at Connors State College, and ones that Teresa Huggins has put to good use.

By Ryan Blanton