

GOPIONEER

May 2022

Welcome to the world of **COMPETITIVE GAMING**

Help! My kid wants to be a
**PROFESSIONAL
GAMER**

PG. 05

How
twitch

Changed the Gaming World

PG. 03

Why gaming *isn't*
pointless.

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PLUS!

An inside look at
esports in Rural OK

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**FOCUS
ON.**

*Knippelmier
Chevrolet*

PG. 09

Letters^{from} **LEADERS**

Blake Callaham - General Manager Designate

At Pioneer, one of our greatest accomplishments is providing entertainment for our cooperative members and subscribers. The original form of communication utilized a telephony service and allowed rural Oklahoma to connect families and friends throughout the United States of America. When we launched our video product in 2004, we thought we were at the pinnacle of entertainment by providing live television and movies to many of the cooperative members. Little did we know that the most interactive and impactful service that provides millions of Americans a way to communicate and even compete against one another would be via a broadband connection.

Broadband, also known as the internet, has been an educational avenue for our society to grow and stay in contact with our family and friends the past 20 years. However, high-speed broadband has paved a way to a new competitive experience through online gaming. No longer do we have to compete against stagnant computer programming in Tecmo Bowl or the same forest adventures in PitFall or even defeat Bowser in the same manner each and every time in Super Mario Bros. We can now compete on a LIVE basis against friends, family or even strangers across the globe to truly advance our skills in every game instance. Oh, and sometimes the dependability of your broadband connection can play a vital role in your success and this is where Pioneer Broadband Services becomes an essential service for your achievement. Whether you are utilizing a physical gaming platform or you're more comfortable in a "Ready Player One" world, we have just the connection you need to ensure your service can unlock your full online gaming potential.

Although our mission began as creating a communication platform known as a telephone in 1953, we have evolved as a leading Broadband provider in Oklahoma by "Connecting What Matters". Today that may be a streaming service, gaming platform or even a virtual reality product, but who knows what the future holds. We look forward to the opportunity of continually serving you with the most innovative and technological advanced service for the next 69 years as we have since 1953.



Welcome to GoPioneer!

Our mission is to help the communities of Pioneer learn, evolve and move forward in the ever-changing world of technology.

We welcome feedback, story ideas, or any questions relating to this magazine, previous articles, or even your personal inquiries.

Baffled by your teen's obsession with emojis? Confused about why you get Wi-Fi in the garage but not in your bedroom? Let us know! This magazine is just as much yours as ours, and we are excited to help you become more adept in the tech world.

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Topic of May 2022: Competitive Gaming

It isn't uncommon for video games to get a bad rap, especially from older generations. They're a "waste of time" or "bad for your health" but, like many things in the world today, they can be very good in moderation.

In this issue, we will explore the good behind competitive gaming. From one of the most prominent industries in the U.S., eSports to the personal take from a casual gamer, GoPioneer wants to shine a light on how games help many in the gaming community.

Play on! Dive deep! And enjoy the May issue of GoPioneer.

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More than 10,000 entrants attempted to set a record score for Space Invaders. The winner received a \$2,000 sit down arcade unit for Missile Commander. Today, that would be the equivalent of \$6,456.

1980

The Red Annihilation Tournament was one of the first major eSports events. There were over 2,000 that competed nationwide in one-on-one matches in ID Software's game, "Quake," via the internet. The top 16 players were flown to Atlanta, Georgia, to compete. The winner, Dennis "Thresh" Fong, took home \$5,000 (approximately \$8800 today) and the custom 1987 Ferrari 328 GTS of id Software Co-founder John Carmack.

Thresh is regarded as the first "professional gamer."

1997

THE WORLD OF ESPORT

1972

Five Stanford University students competed in an "Intergalactic Spacewar Olympics" for the game Spacewar. This was the first-ever game competition, and the winner received a year's subscription to *Rolling Stone*.

1990

The Nintendo World Championships debuted and toured. The champion won a trophy, \$250, and a trip for two to the World Finals at Universal Studios Hollywood.

The U.S. government officially recognizes eSports players as professional athletes. This was a vital move for the eSports industry in the U.S. because it allowed foreign players to enter the U.S. for events, tournaments and even join professional teams.

2013

The DotA 2 International tournament featured the largest prize pool in eSports history at \$33,330,069. Total eSports prize money surpassed \$200 million, according to Esports Earnings.

2019

If you haven't heard of eSports (electronic sports), there's no need to worry. We will get you up to speed on one of the world's coolest industries to date.

The idea of competitive video gaming began back in 1972. It started with just five Stanford University students competing in an "Intergalactic Spacewar Olympics" for the chance to win a year's subscription to *Rolling Stones* magazine. Though it would take a few decades before the term 'eSports' was coined, this first-ever game competition is regarded as the beginning of eSports. A little over 20 years later, we would have our first professional gamer, Dennis "Thresh" Fong, who would win the equivalent of \$8,800 USD today and the custom Ferrari 328 GTS of iD Software's John Carmack. Now, the eSports industry is showing no signs of slowing down and is worth billions.

Professional sports tournaments are filling giant stadiums worldwide and have millions of viewers tuned in at home to watch the best-of-the-best players battle it out in their favorite games. In fact, in 2019, the League of Legends World Championship boasted over 100 million viewers.... a record-breaker for eSports, but also coming in on the heels of the Super Bowl, which had 100.7 million viewers that year. Crazy, right? Maybe, maybe not.

With the rapid technology advancements, and the internet gaming has become normalized. Research by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) found that 75% of U.S. households contain at least one game, and it's not just kids, either. In fact, the average age group of a gamer is now in the 35-44-year-old group. The point is, gaming is literally for anyone, which is why eSports is facing such a rapid increase in popularity. ESports has an audience that traditional sports struggle to engage, not just from the entertainment side, but also for players.

Recently, I had the chance to attend the Oklahoma Scholastic ESports State Tournament that was hosted at SWOSU (see page 11). It was amazing to see the kids play. Though some of the high schoolers in attendance participated in traditional sports, it was easy to pick out the 'outcasts' (geeks, nerds, whatever you may call them) on the team. The arena energy was a constant buzz and, best of all, was packed full of family, friends, and eSports athletes alike. When their team scored, the fans cheered, and though I didn't have an interest in the games being played, I loved the genuine joy felt by players and fans alike.

After exploring some of the landmark moments in eSports history, turn the page to start diving deeper into the world of competitive gaming and how Twitch took it to a new level.

2011

The online streaming platform Twitch launched, and within a year, the platform had over 20 million unique visitors each month.

2018

Activision and Riot Games started franchise leagues around Overwatch and League of Legends, respectively.

HOW

twitch

CHANGED *THE GAME*

Twitch, if you haven't heard of it, is a live stream platform that focuses on video games. Twitch streamers broadcast themselves playing video games, and viewers can subscribe, support, and donate to their favorite Twitch streamers. Most Twitch streamers accompany their videos with ongoing commentary and connect with their viewers via a chatbox. This helps create a very interactive platform that makes fans feel seen and heard by people they idolize or respect. As it stands now, Twitch is the leading platform for viewing gaming video content, but it didn't start the massive streaming giant it is today.

The start of Twitch began with a site called 'Justin.tv', which hosted a single channel featuring Justin Kan. In 2007 Justin, Emmett Shear, Michael Seibel, and Kyle Vogt launched the site which featured a 24/7 stream of Kan's life. It was constant, ongoing stream done via a webcam attached to a baseball cap and a laptop-backpack system designed by Vogt. Mischief arose only a few weeks in as viewers lost interest in the uncut life of the young entrepreneur and began pulling pranks like calling in a stabbing that led to cops busting into Kan's home. Yikes.

It took them a few months, but the team figured out how to simplify the process and Justin.tv evolved to a platform where anyone could set up a live stream and chat with viewers. It was revolutionary. While there were many services like YouTube, where people would create niche content for users to view.

Allowing other 'channels' on their site was a great move. Justin.tv had 1 million users who Justin said "were much more interesting than" him and his friends eight months later. Though they had 1 million users, the team wasn't making any money. So after looking at Justin.tv's most popular streaming section, they found that most users were connecting with video game streamers. Justin.tv pivoted again, and in June 2011, Twitch was launched.

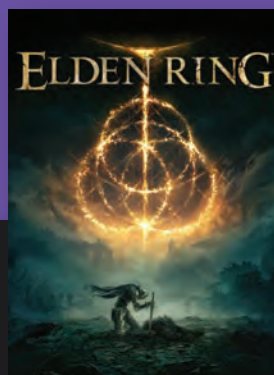
Users came in droves from day one. By the end of its first year, Twitch hit 3.2 million users per month and showed no signs of stopping. By 2013, Twitch had 45 million viewers and it's biggest competitor, Own3d.tv, shut down. This left Twitch with a near-monopoly on the market because other popular services like YouTube Live, Facebook Gaming, and DLive didn't exist yet. Their rapid growth got the attention of several companies like Google and Yahoo, but was Amazon that snagged the platform up in August 2014 for \$970 million cash. Wow. Pocket change, right?

Though Twitch hasn't released official revenue figures, it's

**MOST WATCHED
GAMES ON**

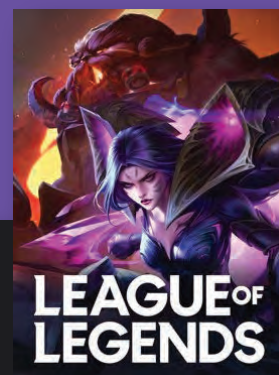
twitch

MARCH 2022



Elden Ring
TOTAL VIEWER HOURS
155,431,639

Avg. live channels	Avg. viewers
880	216,178



League of Legends
TOTAL VIEWER HOURS
129,202,482

Avg. live channels	Avg. viewers
508	179,656



ALTERNATIVES TO TWITCH

estimated that the platform brought in \$400 million in 2017 and has made a steady climb to \$2.3 billion in 2020. It was a great buy on Amazon's part, but the massive shift to the culture of gaming is the biggest win.

Twitch has been essential in helping independent games experience success. Many games that have experienced popularity in the last few years would have been lost under massive market studios like Microsoft or Sony, but thanks to the broadcasting by big-time streamers, they've reached bigger markets. Independent games are produced by small teams, typically less than 10, and are known for being more original or daring. Giving independent games this sort of chance forces bigger studios to think outside the box to capture the attention of their consumers. In other words, they have to compete. Streaming has also given 'second lives' to older games, helping to expand the lifespan of video games beyond the traditional expectations. This means games might hold their value longer, have more intense story lines, or even push the envelope to become something more unique.

With Twitch, viewers can interact with streamers in real-time, sharing comments and suggestions, help make in-game decisions or give donations. The most successful of streamers didn't start off as celebrities but rather created an interactive experience that mimics the experience of being a backseat gamer with their friends. This means the most entertaining and popular streamers gain a celebrity-like status that brings fame and even fortune. While this can be taxing for streamers, the world of Twitch has brought a dominantly a positive shift to the video game community. Thanks, Twitch, for changing the game.



YouTube Gaming

est. 2015

YouTube is the best alternative to Twitch. It shares similar capabilities to Twitch for streaming partners and fans. Streamers can earn revenue with ads, becoming a Partner, channel subscriptions, and super chat.



Facebook Gaming

est. 2018

Facebook gaming is functionally similar to Twitch and YouTube gaming. Streamers gain money from subscriptions, but viewers can donate stars to their streamers worth 1¢ each. Like other platforms, streamers can also earn money with sponsorships from brands.



DLive

est. 2017

DLive is a blockchain-based platform used by many crypto enthusiasts. Streamers make money via the platform's currency, Lino, worth 12¢ each. Streamers make money via donations, subscriptions, sponsorship, and interest earned by holding Lino.



Grand Theft Auto V

TOTAL VIEWER HOURS

126,760,867

Avg. live
channels

637

Avg.
viewers

176,261



Valorant

TOTAL VIEWER HOURS

95,796,872

Avg. live
channels

635

Avg.
viewers

133,205



Counter Strike

TOTAL VIEWER HOURS

60,646,746

Avg. live
channels

204

Avg.
viewers

84,329



Apex Legends

TOTAL VIEWER HOURS

57,127,170

Avg. live
channels

471

Avg.
viewers

79,435

“MOM, DAD, I WANT TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL GAMER.”

Can my kid really make it big?

The world of professional video gaming is a hard one, not just because it's difficult to break into, but because it's also extremely competitive. The world of eSports looks more and more glamorous each year. With packed arenas, fame, and big jackpots like 'The International 2021' pool of over 40 million, many kids dream of becoming an eSport's athlete or even a streamer, but neither promise glory. Much like traditional sports, gaming relies a lot on your body's youth.

Research has found that gamers struggle to maintain their dexterous abilities past 30 and many retire before then. If you don't have a plan or a hefty savings, that can lead to major career anxiety and eventually a rapid down fall. Many professional gamers aren't even guaranteed a paycheck. Most rely on tournament income, which is dependent on how well they perform. While some may have sponsorships or be a part of one of the limited eSports teams that offer a salary, most go through the harsh training regimes and tense competitions and hope they're the best. If they're not? Well, they risk it all. Leagues are not required to keep players on after their contract expires, and the same is said for their brand sponsorships.

So, what's the point? Why play at all if the risk is so high? Great question. Why do artists pursue art? Why do high school athletes aim for the MBA or NHL? Life is full of surprises, and while your kid might not make it big, it wouldn't be a waste to try, so long as they know the risks. The stress and uncertainty coupled with the constant competition of being a professional gamer isn't for everyone. If they don't think the risk is worth it, there are plenty of ways to get involved in the video game industry without throwing yourself into the arena.

Many young video gamers automatically think of becoming a professional streamer when eSports is tossed out. Still, this field is just as competitive as eSports, and most of the time, it isn't possible to make a full living off streaming. Most streamers we see online actually stream when they aren't working a full-time job, which isn't easy. However, many full-time occupations deal with video games if you think outside the box a little. Check out the list to the right for some job ideas that might spark the interest of your possible eSports athlete!

OCCUPATIONS THAT DEAL WITH VIDEO GAMES

- **Gaming Podcast or YouTube Host**
Most that host a podcast or YouTube channel about gaming started as hobbyists and happened to make it big. Unless you make it on a channel that's already established in the industry, this one will take work.
- **(Gaming) Journalist**
The role exists, many game journalists are underpaid. This role is predominately web-based and requires many fledgling journalists to volunteer on hobbyist websites or take on internships to establish relationships to break into the field.
- **Game Designer**
This is a dream job for gamers. Game designers come up with the concepts that eventually become video games. Competition is stiff, and most have to begin by working in other roles on the gaming development teams.
- **Animator**
Animators and artists help bring video games to life. Animators create characters, backgrounds, and scenes for games using computer software. They also design the game packaging that make games stand out on shelves.
- **Audio Engineers**
Audio engineers are responsible for everything you hear when playing a game. They give the voices to characters, create sound effects, and even record background music.



Want to learn more about the challenges and sacrifices of eSports athletes? Check out Valve's "Free to Play" documentary. It's an oldie but a goodie that's free to watch on YouTube.

WHY STREAMERS DESERVE MORE ESTEEM

STREAMERS ARE...



SKILLED.

STREAMERS SPEND TIME
DEVELOPING A SPECIFIC SKILL SET.

Typical streamers average of 4-6 hours three to five days a week. That doesn't include any time they spend practicing, editing, or even networking.



PROFESSIONALS.
THEY AREN'T JUST
"PLAYING GAMES".

This is a job. While streamers may enjoy it, they have many roles they must fill. They're celebrities, marketers, experts in their fields and much more.



ENTERTAINERS.
IT'S HARDER THAN
WE THINK.

Streamers are huge multi-taskers. They don't just play games. Streamers entertain, interact with their fans, and typically have an ongoing commentary. They work hard in the beginning to develop a brand and are expected to keep consistent.

COMPETITIVE.

IT TAKES DEDICATION,
SKILL, AND A LITTLE LUCK.



It isn't easy to become a professional streamer. It's very competitive, and the larger your fan base, the more your subscribers expect from you.

top two

THE TOP 2021 GAME STREAMERS

summit1g



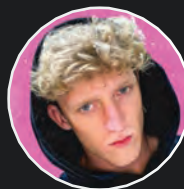
REAL NAME: Jaryd Russell Lazar
AGE: 34
NATIONALITY: American
HOURS STREAMED: 18,019
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 6.1M
TOP STREAMED GAME: GTA V

EARNED AN ESTIMATED

\$5.8 Million

ON TWITCH IN 2021

Tfue



REAL NAME: Turner Ellis Tenney
AGE: 24
NATIONALITY: American
HOURS STREAMED: 11,364
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 11M
TOP STREAMED GAME: Fortnite

EARNED AN ESTIMATED

\$5.3 Million

ON TWITCH IN 2022

DON'T HATE THE

PLAYER

OR THE

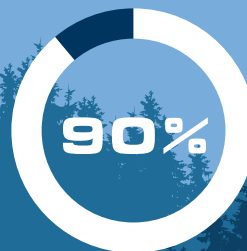
GAME



Video games have always been an integral part of my life. I remember being woken up in the middle of the night by my dad telling us that he had finally defeated Bowser and rescued Princess Peach in the original *Super Mario Bros.* on the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System). I remember always being Player 2 to my brother and given the controller that didn't work properly. If I couldn't beat a level, I would have my big brother beat it. If he couldn't beat it, we would call in the big guns and have my dad beat the level. As you can guess, I'm still in love with video games to this day. It's not just a waste of time. It's a way to wind

down after a long day. It's a way to socialize with my friends that don't live in the same town, state, or even country. It's a way of competing at something without risking physical injury to my frail 30-year-old millennial body. I feel that video games are demonized by the media and some see them as pointless or childish. Let me shed some light on the other side of the story and give you insight on why so many people still play video games.

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY:
BLAKE BAKER



90% of players say video
games bring joy through play

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Things were different a few years ago. Zoom and Skype were used sparingly. Virtual conversations were far less common than in-person ones. This changed dramatically during the pandemic. Meetings, events, and even parties were all held virtually. This is something that the gaming community has already been doing for years. People are starting to realize that meaningful relationships can happen online. Apps like Discord or TeamSpeak have been around for years as a way for gamers to chat online with one another. Many of my high school and college friends no longer live in the same town or even the same state as me. With these apps, I can talk to them multiple times a week while we play games together. Most games that come out have some multiplayer aspect to them. Almost every game now can be played with friends. Sometimes it is less about the game we are playing and more about spending time together and keeping up those relationships that would be difficult to stay connected otherwise. Video games help me keep connections with the friends I grew up with, but they also bring about new relationships. I have friends I've met in-game that are from all over the world. Friends I would never have made if not for video games. Games also improve social skills. Research has shown that those who play video games were more likely to have good social skills, perform better academically, and to have built better relationships with other people

because of the social and collaborative component to some types of games. So, the stereotype of an introverted or shy person who uses video games as a way of escape is not what the average gamer really looks like.

KEEP SHARP

There are plenty of other benefits to playing video games than just the social aspect. Controller-based games can be really good for your hands. Studies have found that those who play video games were faster at performing small delicate maneuvers with their hands. Video games are also a great workout for your mind. Many times, the workout is disguised as fun. Studies have also shown that playing video games boosts brain connectivity. They teach you to problem solve effectively. Open world, mission-based, and multi-leveled games are complex puzzles designed to take several hours to solve. Learning to think on your feet and strategize quickly is a skill that can translate effectively into the real world. With the future of Virtual Reality gaming and games like *Ring Fit Adventures* for the Nintendo Switch, big changes are being made to get people out of their chairs and start moving. These games and consoles bring a fitness aspect and physicality to video games that haven't been seen that often in the past.

GET A LIFE

Video games have become very popular in the last few years, and there is good reason for that. It is a hobby that many people can enjoy together. The cost of entry is relatively low compared to other hobbies. Many new multiplayer games that are released are free. There is, however, a limit to all good things. Moderation is definitely key with video games as with anything. Video games can become a problem when done in excess. It can become a larger problem when you start to play video games instead of doing things that matter more. Schoolwork should come first, of course, as should your family. I think this is what people imagine when you tell them you play video games. They picture a lazy man-child who still lives in his parents' basement wasting the day away. In reality, it's no different from watching an hour or two of TV when they get home. I would even argue that it is more engaging than many other activities people do to pass the time. Just keep in mind that as some people watch TV or play sports, others play video games to relax and spend their free time.

There are nearly

227 million

video game players across the U.S.



The Blanchard Dealership that Promises **More.**

The Knippelmier legacy is based on quality service and honesty

THE BEGINNING

It all started in 1959 when Ray Knippelmier bought a small dealership in downtown Blanchard. His son, Larry, would work in the parts department through high school, where he would meet his wife, before going to mechanic school and then working for his father.

Larry would work as a mechanic for years even as he began to buy his dad out of the dealership. The first 25% came in 1981 after his brother-in-law decided to go into the oil business.

"From there, I went from full-time mechanic, parts man, everything and moved up to the front store selling cars," Larry said. "My dad said, 'what the hell makes you think you can sell cars?'. And I had an old military desk, so I drug it up and put it in the middle of the showroom floor. And, well, now we're finally here."

The dealership was a well-loved staple in downtown Blanchard, but when Larry and Peggy considered growing, Ray said he was 'too old' and the two pooled together to buy his father out. The young couple then poured all they had left into a building a new dealership on the outskirts of Blanchard.

"Everyone in town helped us," Larry said. "I mean, we ran all over the country picking up cars, getting cars, all the old people in town drove cars for us. I mean,

they'd go anywhere we needed them to to go pick up a car and bring it back. The community is what I loved most."

The couple was "young, dumb, and working hard," and pulling 16-hour days to keep the dealership open.

"We had put every dime into the store that we had," Peggy said. "We had to make it or we were broke. For the first two years we opened the store and we closed the store every single day."



KNIPPELMIER

Despite their entire livelihood resting on the dealership, the Knippelmier's never wavered in their promise: quality customer service and fair prices.

"All the Metro stores hated us. They said we were going to go broke because we were selling too cheap, but we just kept growing and growing," Larry said. "Then after we got the new store everyone in Blanchard helped us move and get everything going. The community supported us 100%."

THEIR STAFF, THEIR FAMILY.

The Knippelmier promise is that anyone



at a glance

Q+A

If you could share a meal with any four individuals living or dead, who would they be?

Ahhh... living or dead? Probably a parent.
- Larry

I was sitting here thinking our moms and dads. All four of them. - Peggy

What is something you've never been good at doing?

Lying. - Larry

[Peggy laughs]

Well, he can tell you I cannot lie. If I tell you a lie, you're going to know it. - Peggy

I'm not a good athlete, that's what I'm going to say. - Larry

What is your favorite thing about being an owner?

Taking orders from my wife - Larry

That's funny, I was going to say taking orders from you! Haha. I think just coming into work and seeing what was going to happen that day. - Peggy



FOCUS ON.

Knippelmier
Chevrolet

One Big Family. A large number of Knippelmier Chevrolet employees gather in the lobby for a 'family photo'.



Pictured from left to right: Larry and Peggy Knippelmier and Jeff Lister.

with Larry and Peggy

If you were going to be anything besides a business owner, what would it be?

If I had the money, I would have been a race car driver. I can assure you. I would have won the Indianapolis 500 because I like going fast. - Larry

I think I might have been a travel agent because I always liked to travel. -Peggy

Where is the one place you want to travel the most?

We've been very fortunate. GM used to give away a trip to the dealers that achieved the highest sales, so we won a trip nearly every year and we would take the trip when offered. But I'll tell you what we'd like to do now is we'd like to get in the car and drive. We've seen overseas, but we haven't really seen here. - Peggy

who comes onto their lot will leave with a positive experience, whether they buy a car or not.

"We have wonderful employees. They're like our family. We've tried to be very careful, very, very selective in hiring our employees," Peggy said. "We want a family atmosphere and I think the community appreciates that."

According to Automotive news, the average sales associate stays at a dealership for two years. The Knippelmier's have had several employees retire with 20-25 years employed by the dealership.

// Most of all, we can be honest with you. We want to take care of you and we want you to come back. //

"Everyone that walks in is family. We can help you pick the car that suits you the best. We can help you with your financing. We can direct you in a certain direction as to where would be the best place for you to borrow," Peggy said. "Most of all, we can be honest with you. We're not going to cheat you. We want to take care of you, and we want you to come back."

Knippelmier is based in Blanchard, but their customers come from all of Oklahoma. It's important that they give back as much as they can to the communities that support them, big and small.

"We do a lot in Dibble. They don't have a city income so we provide a lot of help to organizations, fundraisers, and schools," Peggy said. "Dibble just seems near and dear to our heart, because we have so many good customers down there, so we try to give Dibble a little extra boost once in a while."

LOOKING FORWARD

Larry and Peggy have been officially retired for two years. While they may come

in occasionally, they leave day-to-day operations to General Manager Jeff Lister.

They met Jeff at a country and western dance class, but the man they met isn't the same person running the dealership today. Back then he was shy and "so quiet."

"I started picking on him. Second lesson I go over and said 'come on, we're gonna go eat'. He said 'no sir,' and so I basically just threw him in the car and had him go eat with us," Larry said. "The second time I met him I said 'quit school and come work for me'."

Jeff was attending college for Sports Medicine at the time and despite the offer, he continued to pursue his education.

"I had this goal in mind that I was going to finish college, so I finished. I graduated on Saturday and the following Monday I started working for him."

Jeff gives credit for who he is today to his job at the dealership and the Knippelmiers.

"I was shy, very shy. I didn't hardly say anything even though I love people," Jeff said. "They've really helped me come out of my shell. I mean, I'll talk to anybody now. It's helped me with my relationships with our guests, our family."

Jeff thinks fondly of the legacy Larry and Peggy left behind for him.

"I mean, what they have here is first class. I can't think of anything I would rewrite or change because it doesn't get any better than this."

Larry and Peggy both describe Jeff as a hard worker. They are confident in leaving him to continue leading the dealership and their team forward as they enjoy retirement.

"We thought about selling the dealership a few years ago, but the one thing that we put in the contract was 'you cannot keep our name'. But with Jeff, I would trust the name. That's how much we believe in Jeff."

Who should we
FOCUS ON
next?

Visit GoPioneer.com/FocusOn
and fill out a nomination form!



Diving Deep Into Oklahoma's ESports Community

It's hard to hear over the roar of the crowd and the **boom** of Weatherford High School scoring another goal in the Oklahoma Scholastic eSports (OKSE) State Tournament semi-finals, hosted on April 1, 2022.

The event was held in SWOSU's state-of-the-art eSports facility which didn't stand just a few months ago. In fact, this was the first tournament ever held in the arena.

"I'm the one who started this program and helped get a jump start on the arena to get this whole thing built," Dr. Hayden Harrington, director of SWOSU eSports, said. "We started in 2019, but it took us a while because COVID hit. We're excited to have these high school students come out for the state tourney."

The arena seats were packed, forcing some fans to line the walls of the arena or overflow to a nearby gym to watch the stream. Many parents were amazed at the energy, which will only continue as eSports continues to grow in Oklahoma.

Gayla Bozarth's son, Brett, plays for the Weatherford team. Her son is involved in many sports, but she doesn't discredit what eSports brings to his life.

"It gives him chance to have another avenue to compete and to make new friends," Gayla said. "I'm also a teacher, so I think for a lot of students, this is a great avenue for them to get involved in something when they're not involved in a physical sport. It still gives them that camaraderie of sports and gives them a chance to have teammates and to make connections with other schools. It's a great, it's a great sport."

Brett joined the team because his friends were joining. He fell in love with the sport.

"Honestly, my favorite thing about eSports, especially after today, is seeing the energy that the fans and everybody involved can bring to a team," Brett said. "It really does kind of take on the same effect as traditional sports in that you have the fans cheering you on and you have your teammates cheering you on giving you fist bumps and all that in between games."

Dr. Hayden has enjoyed seeing his students come together and bond over video games.

"It's another way to have student engagement. The biggest thing about college, high school and all that is making sure those kids don't feel alone."

Winners of the OKSE tournament were awarded scholarship money which came from sponsorships the organization received.

Though SWOSU and many other Oklahoma eSport organizations can't offer scholarships, many parents and coaches hope this changes as eSports gain more interest in the state.



Gayla and Brett Bozarth.

Q&A WITH THE SWOSU ESPORT CAPTAINS

Brandon Bardwell

Year Junior **Major** Computer Science

Favorite Game
Rocket League

I've been playing video games for:
About 12 years

How I got into gaming:
As a kid I loved facing challenges. Video games were constantly evolving and introducing new challenges and tasks that were fun to me.

Do you think there are any benefits to playing video games?

There are tons of benefits that video games can provide even if you have no intention of going professional. Video games help with certain mental hurdles like lack of focus or coordination. They are also a great social platform. I met three of my best friends playing video games, and since then, all of us drove across the country to hangout. If you don't want to play competitively then, you don't have to; just have fun. That's the beauty of video games.



Gamer ID: Baco

Brandon Owens

Year Graduate Student **Major** Pharmacy

Favorite Game
Overwatch/World of Warcraft

I've been playing video games for:
Close to 20 years.

How I got into gaming:
I was raised on games by my dad and older brothers.

What do you plan on doing when you graduate? If the answer isn't "go pro", why compete on the eSports team?

I am planning on becoming a pharmacist after graduation, and competing on the eSports team allows me to get more exposure to a team environment. It has helped with communication and seeing different perspectives from my teammates' point-of-view that will help in the workplace. Each player has different responsibilities, and we try to form a cohesive unit where hopefully, I can translate some of my experiences to a pharmacy setting.



Gamer ID: Rizz

Logan Palomino

Year Junior **Major** Nursing

Favorite Game
Call of Duty

I've been playing video games for:
Since 2010

How I got into gaming:
My dad pre-ordered Call of Duty: Black Ops and I probably played it more than he did.

What do video games mean to you?

Video games are a getaway from the real world. Sometimes things in the real world are scary, and when you put on that headset, you just don't have to worry about anything that's not going on in your headset or on the screen.



Gamer ID: Hush

Tanner McMullin

Year Junior **Major** Computer Forensics

Favorite Game
Elden Ring

I've been playing video games for:
Since I was about seven.

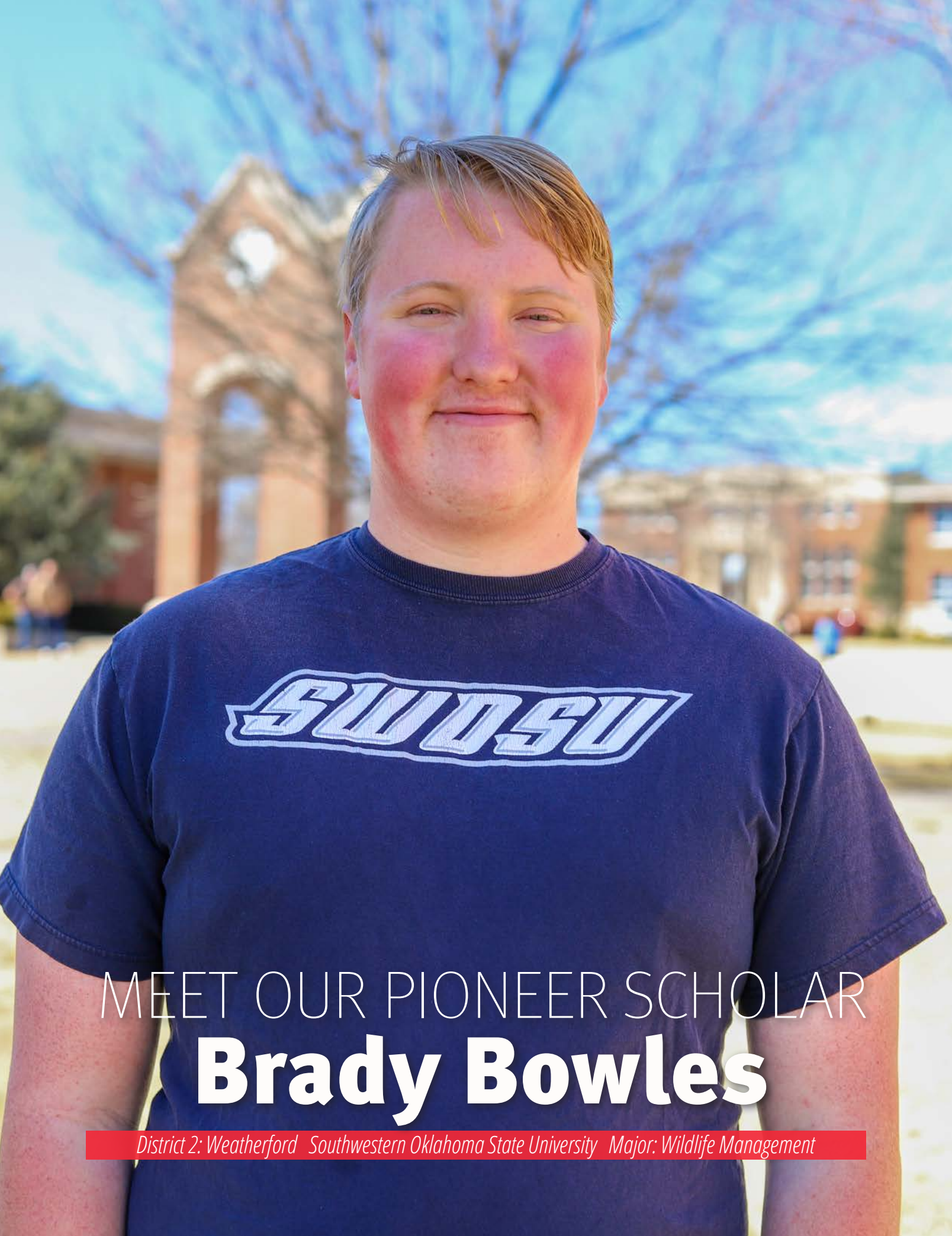
How I got into gaming:
As a kid, I loved facing challenges. Video games were constantly evolving and introducing new challenges and tasks that were fun to me.

Do you think there are any benefits to playing video games?

Oh, for sure. Video games are a great way to relax and a very popular form of entertainment. There are many communities around certain games that can be a great avenue to make friends, just like how it was for me in my childhood. Games can also help with hand eye coordination. It isn't uncommon for particular games to be used for some form of therapy.



Gamer ID: Not_Epic



MEET OUR PIONEER SCHOLAR
Brady Bowles

District 2: Weatherford Southwestern Oklahoma State University Major: Wildlife Management

The call of the wild brought junior Trevor to SWOSU, where he's majoring in Wildlife Management.

"We call it different things, like Parks and Rec, but most people just say 'oh, you're in that game warden class, right?'," Trevor laughs. "It's a gray area because you can go into the police academy-type stuff for the big warden or you could sit behind a desk and write up paperwork."

Trevor wants to go into the 'game work' side of Wildlife Management. His current plans involve moving to California where his girlfriend lives.

"Take all the politics away. I'm talking about the state itself. California is beautiful. It's got the ocean. It's got mountains and giant forests. I mean, literally giant forests with big redwoods that are 200 feet tall."

It's the diversity of the state that attracts Trevor's attention.

Then I had an epiphany: what am I gaining from being inside all day doing nothing?

"If I wanted to be a game warden, that would be the place. I could even be a park ranger. I flew out there a few months ago for the first time and was able to get outside the cities," Trevor said. "They're cool too. But if you want the nature part, you have to go off the path. Even the agriculture makes it a pretty good area to be."

He grew up on 3,000 acres of land which led to an interest in nature.

"We had a creek that would annually get twice as big. So it constantly keeps taking more and more land as it goes and as it did it would unearth massive amounts of rocks," Trevor said. "That's kind of when I started getting into rock collecting. I once found a rock the size of a dime with a fossil, little snail shell helixes."

Like most kids, Trevor wasn't immune

to the call of technology.

"My parents bought me a Kindle Fire and then I stopped going outside. I started playing on my phone. Like, why would I want to go outside?" Trevor said. "And then I had an epiphany: what am I gaining from being inside all day doing nothing when I'm in the middle of this giant patch of land? So I started spending my free time down at the creek again."

Trevor admits that it 'got very boring' at times, but he knew balancing technology with his outdoor time was important.

Currently his free time is balanced between homework, working on campus, or video games.

"I actually did a little bit of work in the eSports arena. It used to be a racquetball court. So I cleaned it out and helped with all that and then the actual contract and constructors came in. They fixed it up and now it's a little two story room," Trevor said. "The transformation was incredible. They took this big empty room and after five months they turned it into a two story floor."

It's because of his job on campus that Trevor is an 'honorary member' of the eSports team.

"I would come into every single one of the practices and the coach just kind of thought I was a part of the team," Trevor laughed. "I met a lot of cool people though. My roommate is on the eSports team. He's *actually* on the eSports team. We play against each other at home. That's how I've been getting better."

Trevor plans on trying out for the team next year. For now, he practices in whatever free time he has, which is why he's particularly grateful for the Pioneer Scholarship.

"I make almost no money and I don't have any other scholarships, so this scholarship was a blessing," Trevor said. "I can talk for hours, but I can't articulate details when I put a pen on paper, so I really was blessed. I got the letter back and it was like Christmas. I opened the letter up like, 'Is this real? I Actually got it.'"

Trevor plans to graduate in May 2023 with his B.S. in Wildlife Management.

Q&A

What would you name your next pet?

I'm terrible with names, but I have like a wheel of fortune that has like 10 names. Whenever I need to name something, I spin the wheel and it gives me an option. So it will be like, 'alright, your name is Pixel, live with that.' or 'your name is aqua green'. They're just weird, random names.

Where would you relocate if you were forced to leave the country?

If I'm like a fugitive? Well, there's an easy choice and then there's Canada. So, I'm gonna go with Mexico.

If you could meet anyone in the world, who would you meet?

My grandpa. I was born October 2000 and he passed away 2003. The only thing I know about my grandpa is how everyone that has ever met him said he was the best person in the world.

Would you rather wear shoes for every second of your life or never be allowed to wear shoes again?

That's a difficult question. Probably wear shoes. If I needed them clean I would get a bucket of water and just scrub the shoes off. I would just be worried about sweaty, stinky feet if I had to wear shoes every day.

Who is your hero?

A few years ago out by Woodward there was a big wildfire. My dad—I don't think I could have the guts to do anything like what he did. He was up for three days solid on our giant tractor. It's like one of the really big expensive ones and it he had a tiller on it. And he was driving around... he chased the fire. He chased it in circles until he had chased the fire out of town.

My dad went to people's houses, and he carved the dirt all around their homes and their wheat fields. My dad plowed the land where the fire was coming through. It had been a good season so the wheat was golden and everything was burning. The windy Oklahoma weather just pushed on this fire. Man. It was crazy. My dad is my hero.

"I've always loved to eat and I like every meal to be a special occasion."

Breakfast Enchiladas

ingredients

16	16 fajita size flour tortillas
1 10-oz.	can Tomatoes w/ green chilies
1 6-oz.	drain and reserve liquid
1 stick	butter, softened and halved
1 lb.	bulk pork Sausage
1 dozen	(large) eggs
5	green onions, thinly sliced
2 c.	shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
4 c.	enchilada sauce (see below)
	Salt and pepper to taste

Enchilada sauce

1/4 c.	all purpose flour
2 c.	milk
1 1/2 tsp.	ground cumin
1 1/2 tsp.	oregano
1 1/2 tsp.	chili powder
	Reserved juice from tomatoes and enough water to make two cups

Preheat oven to 350°. To prepare enchiladas, thinly spread 1/2 butter on one side of tortillas. In large, non-stick skillet over med-high heat, toast tortillas on both sides till slightly browned. Stack on a plate and cover with towel. Set aside.

Spray skillet with cooking spray. Crumble sausage in skillet and cook until no longer pink, stirring occasionally. Drain on paper towel-lined tray. Wipe skillet clean with paper towel and return to heat (medium).

Beat eggs well and add to skillet along with green onions. Cook until done, stirring occasionally. Drain tomatoes and chilies, reserve juice for later. Add sausage and drained tomatoes and chilies to eggs. Stir until completely combined. Set aside.

For the Sauce:

Melt remaining butter over med-high heat in heavy sauce pan. Add flour and spices and stir till slightly browned. Slowly add liquids, whisking to blend. Cook over med-high heat, whisking continuously until lumps disappear, approximately 3 minutes.

Pour 1 c. sauce into bottom of two 10X13 baking pans. Spread evenly.

To assemble Enchiladas:

Place tortillas on a plate, one at a time. Add 3/4 c. egg mixture and roll up tightly. Place seam side down in baking pans, eight per pan. Cover with remaining sauce. Sprinkle 1 c. shredded cheese evenly over top of each pan. Bake uncovered 25 minutes or until heated through. Cool 10 minutes before serving.

Optional: Garnish with chopped avocado, chopped tomatoes, and black olives. Serve with your favorite salsa.

If you live in Kingfisher County, you might know that Pat Mann doesn't make a habit of sharing her recipes. But lucky for you, GoPioneer readers, she's making an exception to provide the ultimate breakfast recipe: Breakfast Enchiladas.

"The hardest part of writing up a recipe is that I cook by freestyle. I just go to my kitchen and I create as I go, but I've tried to pay attention what I did this morning," Pat laughed.

I was fortunate to get the chance to try this and it's just as delicious as it looks. It's no surprise that Pat has been cooking since she was 10-years old.

"I grew up in a household with eight kids. My two older sisters didn't much care for housework and they got involved in a whole lot of other things," Pat said. "I just loved to be my mom's helper and I begged her to let me do anything to help. I remember standing on a chair and helping her get the bottles out of the sterilizer."

Her mother wasn't big on sharing the kitchen, which Pat said she understands now, but she still gave her the chance to get in front of the stove.

"I started doing a lot of the cooking when I was nine or 10. My mother would let me watch her for one week and then the next week she would let me try and make the meals myself. That's kind of how I got into cooking."

Pat and her husband own Country Mannor B&B out on HW 74 and cater to the Kingfisher County area. She's just glad her gifts can

give joy to people around her.

"I've always loved to eat and I like every meal to be a special occasion," Pat said.

Though it isn't required, Pat recommends serving these enchiladas with your favorite salsa and garnishing them with chopped avocado, tomatoes, and black olives.



Pat in front of her favorite tool: the kitchen stove.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

MAY-JUNE 2022

May 22

Cruis'n Oklahoma Hennessey Edition
123 S. Main St.
Hennessey, OK

Show off your car or browse over 1300 other vehicles at the annual Cruis'n Oklahoma Hennessey Edition. There will be multiple events to enjoy, including dyno competitions, burnout competitions, helicopter rides, outlaw R/C racing, drone racing, ATV/UTV barrel racing and drifting rides. Cruis'n Oklahoma Hennessey Edition is a family-friendly event with a kids' area, farmers market and entertainment by the Robert Allen Band. In addition, all Hennessey restaurants and shops will be open for the event.

Event Hours:

Sunday, May 22

1 p.m. - 6 p.m.

June 4

History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip
Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center
507 S. 4th St.
Enid, OK 73701

Step back in time and experience life on the Cherokee Strip during History Alive! at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid. On the first and third Saturday of each month, the historic buildings in the Humphrey Heritage Village come alive with reenactors who are tending their shops, working their trades or socializing at the Village Church. Visitors can learn about different skills and trades of the time, or file their own land claim in the Land Office. Don't miss out on your chance to experience Oklahoma's early days at this fun-filled event.

Event Hours:

Saturday, June 4

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

June 8 - 11

Woodward Elks Rodeo
Woodward County Fairgrounds
E. 2nd St.
Woodward, OK 73801

One of the oldest PRCA rodeos in Oklahoma, the Woodward Elks Rodeo is often dubbed the toughest rodeo in Oklahoma. Since its inception in 1929, this event has grown each year and welcomes national rodeo legends to the arena field for action-packed competition. Cheer on the riders as they compete in bull riding, calf roping, saddle bronc riding, team roping and more. Guests can enjoy children's activities, stagecoach rides and other rodeo-themed activities.

Event Hours:

Wednesday, June 8

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 9

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Friday, June 10

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 11

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.



Pictured: Three-year-old Harper Beth Vasquez on her bike.

{ PIC OF THE MONTH Rolling Out

The Vasquez family got their exercise in on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 after biking and walking to Pioneer Telephone Cooperative's 69th Annual Meeting! Ashley Chlouber Vasquez said Harper (pictured above) "had a ball, all the guys were directing her through the traffic like the vehicles and she got a kick out of that."

We love seeing our Members and Customers at community events! Thanks for joining us.

HAVE A LOCAL EVENT COMING UP?

Reach out to GoPioneer Magazine to
have your event featured.

Email us at: GoPioneerOK@ptci.com

*Please note: we will need to have your dates a
month and a half in advance! Our next issue will
be in JUNE.*



Celebrating

25+ YEARS

ANNIVERSARIES

Van & Carolyn Kraft - Shattuck- Celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary Jan. 13th.
They have three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Bobby & Letha Jones - Tuttle- Celebrated their 58th Wedding Anniversary Feb. 14th.
They have three children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Gator & Connie Pyle - Chickasha - Celebrated their 41st Wedding Anniversary April 3rd.
They have a son, a daughter, a daughter-in-law, a grandson, and two granddaughters.

Jack & Sharon Dill - Blanchard - Celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary April 7th.
They have two daughters and a granddaughter.

Reed & Teresa Overstreet - Enid - Celebrated their 35th Wedding Anniversary April 24th.
They have five sons, four daughter-and-laws, and 15 grandchildren.

Joe & Jeanette Kloeppe - Kingfisher - Celebrated their 64th Wedding Anniversary May 6th.
They have three daughters, two son-in-laws, five granddaughters, six grandsons, and four great-granddaughters.

Thomas & Rhonda Luckinbill - Blanchard - Celebrated their 58th Wedding Anniversary May 9th.
They have three children, 12 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Happy Anniversary from all of us at Pioneer!

Want your Anniversary published?

To have wedding anniversary announcements of 25 years or more, simply submit your anniversary information including town, wedding date, and number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to GoPioneer Magazine at any of the following addresses:

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