

GO PIONEER

QUARTER 3

FOCUS ON.

Spencer's
Grocery

PG. 07

The Hidden Risks of AI in Schoolwork

Discover how students can use AI wisely, when to avoid it, and ways parents can help guide safe and responsible use.

PG. 04

WAKE UP SMARTER

Tech tips for stress-free school mornings!

PG. 01

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION WEEK

Celebrate with us this October! Details on the week that's ALL for customers inside!

PG. 10

Letters from **LEADERS**

Brenda Walta - VP Finance & Administration

Summer seemed to fly by this year. Schools are back in session and parents are juggling schedules and the numerous technologies in their kids' lives. Adults and children alike are more connected than ever. As a result, parents are constantly looking for smarter ways to keep their children safe online and offline.

When my children were young, I cautioned them about strangers and the importance of being aware of their surroundings. However, I never worried when they were at home, in my mind, home was safe. Today, things are very different. With the internet at their fingertips, the risks have changed. The online world can be frightening at times. Fortunately, the rise of fiber internet is making it easier than ever to harness powerful tools, that help protect kids while giving parents peace of mind. And with our lives becoming busier and more complex, automation has become essential to saving time and reducing stress.

Raising kids in the digital age can be challenging. Apps like Bark offer comprehensive parental controls and monitoring to manage and protect children's online lives. Imagine receiving alerts for issues like bullying, predators, sexual content, and more. Wouldn't it be helpful to be able to create custom daily screen time schedules for your child's devices? How about blocking access to specific websites and even entire categories? What about getting a notification when your child arrives at or leaves a set location? All of this is available with Pioneer Telephone's Bark app. With so many dangers lurking online, this app empowers parents to take action. If you're alerted to concerns like bullying, depression, violence or predators, you have the opportunity to be proactive - talking with your child and offering guidance when they need it the most. For more information, see our website at gopioneer.com.

The power of fiber brings countless advantages to the next generation. Kids can explore interactive educational videos, use digital textbooks, and research any topic imaginable. Students can collaborate with friends and teachers through emails, chats, and video conferencing. The internet offers a wide range of educational tools that allow children to learn at their own pace. Whether they are struggling with a subject or eager to dive deeper into advanced topics, fiber internet supports their curiosity and growth.

Fiber-optic internet offers ultra-fast speeds and unmatched reliability. Beyond streaming, fiber's real strength lies in its ability to support a growing number of connected devices. How many devices are in your home? Most of us wouldn't think of all the gadgets connected to WiFi. According to Consumer Affairs, the average number of smart devices in a home was 21 devices in 2023. These include smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, speakers, streaming devices, thermostats, locks, lights, appliances, doorbells, security cameras, and more. Can you imagine what that number will be in 5 years?



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 WiFi 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.

Contact Us



Editor

Madison McCollum
GoPioneerOK@ptci.com
888-782-2667

**Standard
Mail**

Pioneer Telephone
PO. Box 539
Kingfisher, OK
73750

**Social
Media**

@GoPioneerOK

Topic of Q3 2025:

Smarter School Days, Stronger Communities

In this issue of GoPioneer, we focus on how technology is shaping everyday life for families and communities. From simplifying hectic school mornings with smart home devices to creating tech-friendly study spaces and using AI responsibly, these tools can help students stay confident, prepared, and resilient.

We also share local stories important to some of our communities—like Spencer's Grocery, a family-owned business that has served its neighbors for generations, and Pioneer's partnerships with cooperatives that expand fiber access across Oklahoma.

CONTENTS

Features

Tech Tips for Stress-Free School Days01
From voice-activated reminders to smart plugs and bulbs, see how technology helps families start the day on the right foot.

Building a Tech-Friendly Study Space 03
Explore helpful apps, organizational tools, and proven study strategies to help kids focus and succeed.

Risks of Relying on AI for Schoolwork..... 04
Discover how students can use AI responsibly, when to avoid it, and how parents can monitor usage.

Inside Pioneer

Spencer's Grocery: Aisles of Tradition07
For over three generations, Spencer's has blended quality service, local traditions, and community spirit—proving that family values and hometown pride never go out of style.

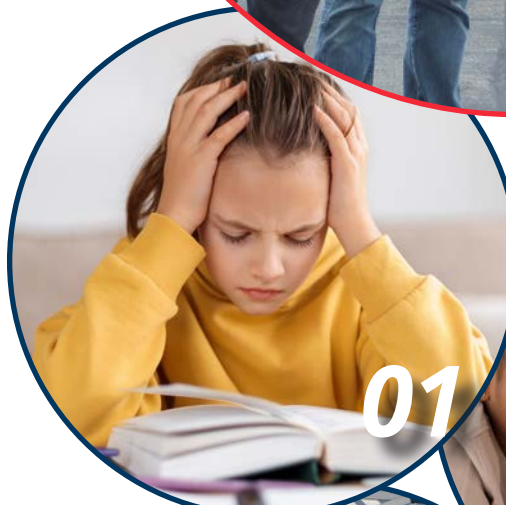
Celebrating Cooperative Month 09
Pioneer partners with fellow cooperatives to expand fiber internet, strengthen communities, and support local families.
Plus, get details on Customer Appreciation Week.

Community

Meet our Pioneer Scholars..... 11
Learn more about three of our scholars for 2025-2026.

Family Recipe12
Check out this Cheesecake recipe for a delicious treat!

AnniversariesBack
Help us celebrate the 25+ year anniversaries in our communities.



Wake Up Smarter:

Tech Tips for Stress-Free School Days

For many families, mornings are the most chaotic part of the day. Between getting kids dressed, packing lunches, finding that missing shoe, and making sure everyone is out the door on time, it can feel like a daily sprint. But thanks to smart home technology, mornings don't have to be stressful.

Smart home devices help automate tasks, keep schedules on track, and reduce the mental load on parents. Voice-controlled assistants like Amazon Echo or Google Nest can act as your morning coordinator. They can set multiple alarms—one for “wake up,” another for “time to eat,” and a final “time to go” reminder. Parents can also create routines that gradually turn on lights, adjust thermostats, and start the coffee maker automatically.

A big benefit of smart home tech is how it helps kids build independence. A simple “Good Morning” command can read off

their schedule, remind them to pack sports gear, or tell them what the weather's like so they know to grab a jacket. Instead of parents repeating instructions five times, the assistant can help keep everyone moving on time.

Even small upgrades, like smart plugs that turn on lamps or kitchen appliances, can save a few precious minutes each morning. For households with multiple family members on different schedules, having automation in place ensures nothing—and no one—gets left behind.

The goal isn't to replace your routine, but to make it smoother, giving you more time to enjoy breakfast together or grab a few extra moments of calm before the day kicks off.

COOL TIPS FOR YOUR SMART SPEAKER

Scheduled Reminders

Both Alexa and Google Assistant can set recurring reminders, like “Leave for the bus in 5 minutes,” that repeat daily without you having to ask each time.

Voice-First Setup

Both Alexa and Google Assistant now allow you to set up routines by talking—no app navigation required. Telling Alexa something along the lines of “I've been having trouble getting up in the morning” could segue into editing your first routine!

Personally a bigger fan of using the app—but each to their own!

Smart Lights Integration

Pair your speaker with smart bulbs to have lights gradually brighten when your alarm goes off—great for waking kids up gently.

Broadcast Control

Want to make an announcement to everyone in the house—without yelling down the hallway? Both Google Home and Alexa devices let you broadcast messages to all connected speakers at once.

Google Home: Say, “Hey Google, broadcast [your message].” You can also try “announce,” “shout,” or “tell everyone” for the same effect. To reach a specific room or device, say, “Hey Google, broadcast to [room or device name] [your message].”

Alexa: Say, “Alexa, announce [your message].” Your message will play on every Alexa-enabled device in your home. To send it to just one device, say, “Alexa, announce to [device name] [your message].”

Perfect for calling the kids to dinner, reminding everyone it's time to leave, or just saying goodnight—all hands-free.

TOOLS TO HELP MAKE LIFE EASIER

Smart Speakers



Product pictured:
Amazon Echo Dot
\$49.99



Smart speakers like Amazon Echo or Google Nest can make mornings smoother by allowing you to help kids set alarms, call to their room, or even give you a weather update. Name-brand devices offer advanced features, but budget-friendly Amazon or off-brand versions work just as well for everyday routines.

Smart Plugs



Product pictured:
Amazon Basics Smart Plug
\$25.99



Automate lamps, coffee makers, or toasters so mornings start on time. While popular brands are reliable and more well-known, Amazon Basics and other off-brand plugs can offer the same convenience at a lower cost.

Smart Bulbs



Product pictured:
Linkind Smart Light Bulbs
\$29.99



Adjust brightness and color to mimic natural sunlight, making wake-up time easier for kids. Philips Hue is a favorite for customization, but Linkind, Amazon Basics, and other off-brand options are more affordable alternatives that can offer similar or even the same experience.

Smart Thermostats



Product pictured:
Amazon Smart Thermostat
\$69.99



Smart thermostats can help keep the house comfortable for those early school mornings while saving on energy costs. Premium options like Ecobee and Nest have advanced scheduling, but simpler Amazon or off-brand models can still do the job well for less.

Homework Without the Headache: *Building a Tech-Friendly Study Space*

Homework can be one of the biggest stress points in a family's day—kids procrastinate, parents nag, and distractions seem to multiply. But creating a dedicated, tech-equipped homework hub can make a world of difference. This intentional space isn't just about having a desk and a chair—it's about designing an environment that encourages focus, organization, and learning.

Start with the basics: location and comfort. Choose a spot away from high-traffic areas where noise and interruptions are minimal. Make sure it's well-lit, with either plenty of natural daylight or a good desk lamp to avoid eye strain. A comfortable chair and clutter-free surface set the stage for productive work.

Reliable connectivity is non-negotiable. A slow or spotty internet connection can break a child's focus and waste valuable study time. Fiber internet ensures fast, consistent speeds for streaming educational videos, accessing virtual classrooms, or collaborating on group projects. If your homework hub is far from the router, consider a mesh Wi-Fi system or range extender to maintain a strong signal.

Equip the space with the right tools. A charging station keeps laptops, tablets, and phones ready to go without cords snaking across the floor. Noise-canceling headphones help block out household activity. Organizational items—like bins for school supplies, a whiteboard for reminders, and folders for completed assignments—keep everything in reach and eliminate time wasted hunting for materials.

Incorporate smart technology for focus and safety. Apps like Grammarly, Quizlet, Photomath, and Forest can make learning more interactive and less frustrating. For families looking to protect kids online, tools like Bark and Pioneer's SmartWiFi app add an extra layer of control. Bark monitors online activity for signs of bullying or unsafe behavior, while Pioneer's SmartWiFi lets parents pause internet access to non-school apps during homework hours, block harmful sites, and prioritize devices so schoolwork isn't competing with streaming or gaming.

Set boundaries to avoid distractions. The best tech setup won't help if kids are toggling between math homework and TikTok. Establish clear rules—like a "homework first" policy, designated break times, and no social media during study sessions.

When you combine a thoughtfully designed space with fast, reliable internet and smart tools, homework time becomes more efficient, less stressful, and even—believe it or not—enjoyable.

Tech Tools to Try

Grammarly

Premium version: \$30/month or \$144/annually

An AI-powered writing assistant that checks spelling, grammar, and clarity in real time, helping students produce polished essays and reports.

Quizlet

Premium: \$7.99/month or \$35.99/year

A study platform that lets students create flashcards, play learning games, and take practice quizzes for any subject.

Forest

One time purchase of \$3.99

A focus app that gamifies productivity by growing a virtual tree while you stay off distracting apps or websites.

Bark

An advanced parental control app that monitors texts, emails, and 30+ social platforms for signs of cyberbullying, self-harm, and other safety concerns, sending alerts to parents. Pioneer offers their customers a discounted price on this service of \$12/month!

View more info on Pioneer's website!



Pioneer SmartWiFi App—A home network management tool that lets parents pause internet access for non-school activities, block harmful websites, prioritize school devices, run speed tests, and set custom rules—all from a smartphone. All customers have a free version of SmartWiFi, but there are more premium packages that offer more features and benefits!

View more info on Pioneer's website!



Study Skills Spotlight

A great homework space is only part of the equation—kids also need effective study habits to make the most of their time. These proven strategies can help your child stay focused, retain information, and approach schoolwork with less stress and more confidence.

Chunking

Help your child break large assignments into smaller, manageable steps. For example, a research paper can be split into finding sources, writing an outline, drafting, and editing. This makes big projects feel less overwhelming.

Try This: Write each step on sticky notes or a whiteboard. Have your child remove or check off tasks as they're completed for a visual sense of progress.

Pomodoro Technique

Encourage your child to work in focused 25-minute intervals, followed by a 5-minute break. After four rounds, have them take a longer 15–30-minute break. This keeps their energy up and prevents burnout.

Try This: Set a kitchen timer or use a Pomodoro app so your child can see the countdown and stay motivated.

Active Recall

Instead of having your child reread notes passively, quiz them on the material. This strengthens memory and boosts confidence before tests.

Try This: Ask your child to explain the topic to you as if they were teaching it to a class. This reveals what they truly understand and what needs review.

Spaced Repetition

Encourage your child to review material over increasing intervals—such as the next day, then three days later, then a week later—rather than cramming. This helps information stick long-term.

Try This: Add review days to a shared family calendar or homework planner so both you and your child know when it's time to revisit material.

When parents encourage and model good study habits, kids are more likely to adopt them. By combining a distraction-free homework space with techniques like these, you can help your child develop skills that will serve them well beyond the school year—building independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

The Hidden Risks of Relying on AI for Schoolwork

Artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude are now part of everyday conversation—and they’ve made their way into classrooms, study sessions, and homework routines. While AI can be an incredible tool for brainstorming ideas, explaining concepts, and saving time, its use by students comes with important considerations.

Most AI platforms are free, with premium versions offering more advanced features for around \$20/month. Students can use them to summarize articles, solve complex math problems, generate essay drafts, or even create project outlines. While this convenience can be helpful for busy schedules, it also carries a risk: over-reliance.

When students lean too heavily on AI, they may unintentionally sidestep the very learning process that builds critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Experts caution that without balance, students could miss out on the deeper engagement that leads to true understanding.

Here are four huge risks of overusing AI in schoolwork:

1. Erosion of Critical Thinking Skills

A 2024 study from the Journal of Educational Technology found that frequent reliance on AI for idea generation and writing tasks can reduce a student’s ability to retain information and think independently. When AI delivers answers instantly, it removes the challenge of working through problems—a step that’s essential for building analytical skills.

2. Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Because AI can produce highly polished text, some students may be tempted to pass it off as their own work. Schools are updating academic honesty policies to include AI-generated content, and plagiarism detection software is evolving to flag it. Using AI without proper attribution can damage trust and undermine genuine learning.

3. Dependence on Technology

While tech can be a valuable aid, relying on it too much can leave students unprepared in situations where AI isn’t available—such as timed tests, in-person discussions, or real-world problem-solving at work. MDPI’s 2024 research warns that this type of dependency can become a long-term disadvantage.

4. Bias and Misinformation

AI tools are trained on large datasets that may contain outdated or biased information. This can lead to inaccurate answers or unintentionally harmful perspectives. Cross-checking facts from reliable sources remains essential, especially in academic work.

AI is here to stay—and it can be an amazing support for learning when used intentionally. But students, parents, and educators should treat it as just that: a tool. Encourage kids to verify information, credit AI when it’s used, and rely on it for guidance rather than complete solutions. Building the ability to think critically and solve problems without shortcuts is still the most important skill for school—and life beyond it.

SOURCES:

Krullaars, Z. H., Januardani, A., Zhou, L., & Jonkers, E. (2023). *Exploring initial interactions: High school students and generative ai chatbots for relationship development*. <https://doi.org/10.18420/muc2023-mci-src-415>

Long, C., Smith, A., & Thompson, P. (2023). *Impact of Generative AI on Classroom Engagement: A Case Study in Middle Schools*. *Frontiers in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1206936>

Werst, M. (2023). *ChatGPT in Education: How Generative AI Can Revolutionize Learning*. *EdTech Magazine*. <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2023/03/chatgpt-in-education-generative-ai-perfcon>

Zhai, C., Wibowo, S., & Li, L.D. *The effects of over-reliance on AI dialogue systems on students' cognitive abilities: a systematic review*. *Smart Learn. Environ.* 11, 28 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00316-7>

Zhang, Y., Li, M., & Wu, J. (2023). *Sustainable Consumption and Production: Pathways towards Green and Circular Economy*. *Sustainability*, 15(18), 14025. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151814025>

SMART Use of AI in Schoolwork

How to Keep AI Use Healthy

Limit reliance

Treat AI like a tutor or helper, not a do-it-for-you machine. Use it to guide your thinking, not replace the process of working through a problem yourself.

Verify facts

Always double-check AI-generated answers with trustworthy sources like textbooks, reputable websites, or teacher-approved materials. AI can be wrong or outdated.

Acknowledge use

If your school or teacher requires it, be transparent about when and how you used AI in your work. This builds trust and keeps you within academic guidelines.

Mix it up

Don't let AI be your only learning method. Balance technology with hands-on practice, reading, group work, and discussions to strengthen your skills in different ways.

3 Smart Ways to Use AI

Explain It in Different Ways

Ask AI to restate a lesson or concept using simpler language, examples, or analogies until it makes sense.

Create Practice Problems

Use AI to generate extra math problems, vocabulary drills, or quiz questions to test your knowledge before a big exam.

Polish, Don't Rewrite

Let AI check for grammar, punctuation, and basic clarity—but keep your own words, style, and ideas intact.

3 Times to Avoid AI

Writing Your Entire Assignment

This skips the learning process and could be considered plagiarism.

For Exams or Tests

Unless the rules specifically allow it, using AI could be academic dishonesty.

As Your Only Source of Information

AI can be wrong or biased; always verify with credible sources.

Tools to Help Parents Monitor AI Use

Bark

Alerts parents if kids are using AI tools inappropriately or accessing unsafe content.

Pioneer SmartWiFi App

Lets you monitor and limit device access to certain sites or platforms during homework hours.

Screen Time Settings

Built-in controls on devices can block specific apps or websites if needed.

Spencer's Grocery: Aisles of Tradition

For decades, Spencer's Grocery has blended quality service, local traditions, and community support in every aisle.

For more than three generations, Spencer's Grocery has been a fixture in the lives of Blanchard residents—a place where people shop not just for food, but for familiarity, service, and the feeling of being known.

"My dad was an entrepreneur," current co-owner Spud Spencer said. "He's the one that started it all. He actually went into the grocery business when he was 13, and he faked his ID so he could go to work. His first job was at a Humpty Dumpty. Then he went to be a broker—selling potatoes, Clorox, Coca-Cola products to grocery stores—before finding the opportunity to buy his first store in Newcastle. I'm just kind of second generation—the third generation is fixing to follow my footsteps, hopefully."

That Newcastle store was the start of what would become a family tradition.

"We've always been a family business," Spud said. "It's part of who we are."

His mother, Dana, joined full-time in 1989 after retiring from Bunty Candies, where she had worked for nearly three decades. She took over the accounting and back-office work while Spud focused on store operations.

Over the years, the Spencers expanded their reach—operating stores in Purcell, Chickasha, Oklahoma City, and eventually Blanchard. The current Blanchard store opened in 2003.

When Jim and Dana retired in 2008, Spud stepped in to lead the business, joined by longtime partner and co-owner Jimmy Kemp.

"Jimmy started as our produce manager in Newcastle," Spud said. "When we closed that store, we brought him to Blanchard, and when Mom and Dad sold us the store, we made him a business partner."

Community at the Core

If there's one thing that sets Spencer's apart, it's the store's relationship with the community.

"People smile at you when you come in," Pioneer Public Relations Specialist Robin Fielder said. "You don't get that anywhere else. They're constantly giving back. A lot of the times when you think of Blanchard, you think of Spencer's."

That community focus shows up in long-standing traditions. One of the biggest is the annual hatch green chili pepper roast.

"We have 70 cases coming—about 2,800 pounds worth of peppers," said Chance Spencer, Spud's son and current Assistant Store Manager. "We roast them out front in a big rotating drum over three huge flames. People come and buy them by the case. It's a lot of work, but it's a fun tradition."

Spencer's also runs a monthly '10 Pound Meat Sale,' giving customers the chance to buy bulk meat at discounted prices.



SPENCER'S

BY THE NUMBERS

2,800 lbs

Hatch green chili peppers roasted each August during the annual pepper roast.

Every Tuesday

Senior Day, when shoppers 60+ get a 10% discount (and plenty of conversation)

10 Days

Length of the monthly 10 Pound Meat Sale, giving customers a chance to stock up and save.



One of Spencer's employees roasting peppers for their annual green chili pepper roast.

SPENCER'S

NUMBERS

1%

Portion of pre-tax sales donated to local organizations



60+ Years

Combined family history in the grocery industry, spanning three generations.



"It runs for 10 days every month," Spud said. "It's a chance for people to stock their freezers and save some money."

Giving back is woven into daily business. The "We Care, We Share" program—created by Spud's father in the 1990s—donates 1% of pre-tax sales from receipts collected by local groups.

"Churches and libraries use it the most," Spud said. "We send them a check probably once a month, maybe twice."

People smile at you when you come in. You don't get that anywhere else. They're constantly giving back. A lot of the times when you think of Blanchard, you think of Spencer's.

The Blanchard Public Library even recently recognized Spencer's publicly for the support the program provides.

Holiday giving is another staple.

"Around Christmas, schools and the Tri-City Hope Center buy tons from us for food baskets and pantries," Chance said. "There's even smaller groups—like a couple who come in every year to buy cases of apples and oranges for their church. We give them good prices so they can pass it out to families in need."

And then there's Senior Day—held every Tuesday—where shoppers over 60 receive a discount.

"It's almost like it's their get-out-and-see-everyone day," Chance said. "They stand around talking to each other, and the employees talk with them too. For a lot of them, it's the highlight of the week."

Preparing for the Future

The Spencer's team today is a blend of seasoned experience and new energy. Spud and Jimmy lead the business, while Chance and his brother Justin are preparing to take over when the time comes.

"They're kind of working like they're owners right now," Spud said. "I was

kind of worried a couple years ago, but not so much now. They've had their feet thrown in the fire and had to learn it."

Chance started in produce before moving into management, and Justin built his skills in the dairy department.

"I enjoy interacting with people out there," Chance said. "Being back here, you don't get that as much. It's easier when you treat people like equals and get along with them."

Spud says some of the most important lessons he's passing down came from his father.

"Whenever you hire a young man for his first job, you're the one that trains him," Spud said. "If we let him slack off here, he'll slack off at his next job. So we've got to be diligent."

The grocery industry has changed since Spud started in 1987.

"When I first started, you worked six days a week and only had Sundays off," he said. "Now we've shifted to five days a week for management. People don't want to work six days anymore." Even so, he says the heart of the work hasn't changed.

"Once I'm out the door, the party begins," Spud said. "Hopefully I'll still be capable for some consulting."

And when that day comes, Chance and Justin will officially carry the Spencer's tradition into its next chapter.

"Everybody knows everybody here," Chance said. "That's what makes it different—and that's why people keep coming back."

Celebrating Cooperative Month

Working Together for a Connected Oklahoma

As October brings Cooperative Month, Pioneer Telephone Cooperative stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, living out the cooperative principle of "Cooperation among Cooperatives."

Across Oklahoma, Pioneer has forged meaningful partnerships with electric cooperatives, pooling resources, sharing innovative strategies, and committing to community-driven progress to bring high-speed fiber connectivity to rural residents. These efforts strengthen infrastructure and embody the spirit of working together for the greater good, transforming lives and communities one connection at a time—and it's something we are extremely proud of.

Pioneer's partnerships with Cimarron Electric Cooperative and Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (OEC) exemplify the cooperative spirit. By engaging in joint construction projects, we share the costs and efforts of installing main fiber lines and service drops, minimizing expenses and reducing property disturbance for our customers. This streamlined approach ensures that rural Oklahomans gain access to both high-speed internet and reliable electric services with minimal disruption.

Further strengthening this collaboration, Cimarron's referral program connects new electric customers in joint construction areas with Pioneer, enabling seamless access to fiber services. These partnerships highlight the impact of working together, making vital infrastructure more affordable and accessible while

expanding opportunities for rural residents who might otherwise be overlooked.

Pioneer also collaborates with CentraNet, the fiber division of Central Electric Cooperative, through an agreement tied to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) grant. A Direct Fiber Connection between Pioneer and CentraNet is in progress and expected to be completed soon, enabling shared network resources, expanding service options, and meeting the growing demand for reliable connectivity. Through this partnership, Pioneer is helping bridge the digital divide, empowering residents and businesses with essential digital tools.

Pioneer Telephone Cooperative's efforts are driven not by competition but by a belief that collaboration yields greater results for everyone, particularly our rural family and neighbors.

"Cooperation among cooperatives is a guiding principle we live by," Pioneer General Manager Blake Callaham said. "In Oklahoma, great things are happening because we believe in doing what's right—and it works."

As we celebrate Cooperative Month this October, let's honor the transformative impact of these partnerships and the cooperative spirit that continues to light the way for Oklahoma's rural communities.



CUSTOMER APPRECIATION WEEK

This October, as we celebrate Cooperative Month and Customer Appreciation Week, we're focusing on what matters most—you and your privacy.

Your Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI) is the information we keep on file for your account, like your contact details and who's authorized to make changes. To keep your account secure, we need you to provide the correct pre-established CPNI Password or answer a security question. We use this information to verify your identity before sharing account details or making updates, helping prevent unauthorized access and keeping your information safe.

Because we're a cooperative, our customers are also our members—and protecting your account is part of how we take care of you. By stopping by your local Pioneer office to review and update your CPNI, you're helping us keep your account secure and your connection protected.

As a small token of our appreciation, members who come in to a local Pioneer office to review and update their information in the first week of October will receive a free insulated travel bag. It's our way of saying thank you for being part of the Pioneer family and trusting us to keep you connected.



October 6 - 9

The first week of October!



*All customers who update their CPNI information during Customer Appreciation Week will receive a **FREE Pioneer branded insulated bag while supplies last.***

Meet Our PIONEER SCHOLARS



Landon Jirak • District 5 • Blanchard

Landon is majoring in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Oklahoma State University and plans to graduate in spring 2027.

"I chose my major because through my experiences I've become fascinated with engines and their applications when it comes to automotive and aerial fields," Landon said.

After graduation, he hopes to work for Tinker Air Force Base or Boeing, though powertrain engineering also interests him.

"I know I could make an impact with the aerospace jobs because I would be sure to keep the standard high and keep American aircraft reliable and sought after."

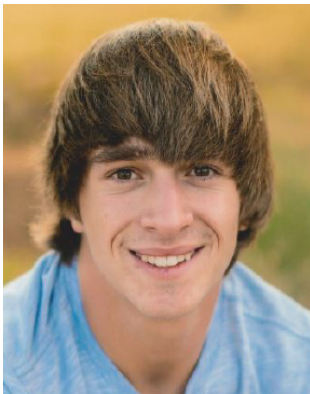
He works at The Links at Stillwater Golf Course and

is part of OSU's FSAE racing team. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and going to car events.

"This scholarship helps with the financial burden of paying for classes, and can cover my textbook material for the rest of my college," Landon said.

His biggest accomplishment so far is "building, troubleshooting, and adjusting the 3rd place competition robot" in his engineering design class, where he served as lead engineer. The project also brought his biggest challenge — giving up free time to meet deadlines.

His advice to future students: "Make sure to be good at time management when in college, because it is very easy to lose out on the things you love if you can't plan them into your already busy schedule."



Jack Wootton • District 4 • Carter

Jack is majoring in General Business at Southwestern in Weatherford and plans to graduate after summer classes in 2026.

"I chose my major because of the numerous options that a business degree offers compared to other degrees," Jack said. After graduation, he hopes to work in investment or business finance. "I would like to use this job to impact people by helping with wealth management and growing wealth."

He enjoys playing intramural basketball and

participating in charity softball tournaments. "This Pioneer Scholarship helps me by lessening the financial burden of college tuition and allowing me to focus more on studying," he shared.

Jack is proud of "maintaining a high GPA while working a full time job," though his biggest challenge has been managing time between school, work, and extracurriculars.

His advice to younger college students is simple: "GO TO CLASS."



Jackson Feely • District 1 • Okeene

Jackson is a Math major with a minor in Accounting at Northwestern Oklahoma State University and plans to graduate in spring 2025.

"I chose math because it wasn't that hard for me and there were a lot of options for me career-wise," Jackson said.

After graduation, he plans to pursue his CPA and become a personal accountant.

"I want to make taxes easier on people because doing your own taxes can be daunting and confusing," Jackson said.

He looks forward to the freedom his future will bring and is "absolutely" excited about starting a family. Jackson plays basketball for the Northwestern Rangers, is learning guitar, and enjoys listening to music in his free time.

"The Pioneer Scholarship has taken a large financial burden off of my family as my brothers are about to start their college careers," he said.

Jackson is proud of "making the state tournament in high school" and being part of the President's Leadership Class. He also values making it to the GAC tournament last year and playing a meaningful role on the team.

His biggest challenge in college has been time management as a student-athlete, but he's made it work.

His advice to future students: "Just give it your best shot. I promise if you don't know what you're doing then none of your peers know what they're doing either. Do your best and it will work out."

Lynda's Cheesecake

ingredients

1 can	sweetened condensed milk
1 block	cream cheese, softened
1/3 c.	lemon juice
1	graham cracker crust
1	cherry pie filling (for garnish)

1. Beat milk and cream cheese until well mixed and mixture starts to thicken.
2. Stir in lemon juice.
3. Pour into crust.
4. Refrigerate until ready to serve, best overnight.
5. Serve with cherry pie filling.



A photo of a young Blake and his mom!

Where did you find this recipe?

"This recipe was passed down to me from my husband's Mom."

What is your favorite thing about this recipe?

"My favorite thing about this recipe is it's super easy to make and it's one of my hubby's favorites."

Do you have any tips and tricks for preparing this recipe?

"We prefer Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk when making this recipe. I also serve the cherry pie filling on the side so guests can add as much or as little as they want. This also keeps the cheesecake from getting soggy."

-Laura Callaham, Kingfisher

Have a recipe or story idea to share?

Email GoPioneerOK@ptci.com OR visit or anonymous entry form at GoPioneer.com/community/gopioneer-magazine.





25+ YEARS ANNIVERSARIES

Jerry & Gayle McKinley – Frederick

Celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary July 5th. They have two children, three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Mark & Charla Sproull – Lamont

Celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary July 12th. They have two children and five grandchildren.

Al & Bev Swaney – Thomas

Will celebrate their 47th Wedding Anniversary October 22nd. They have three children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Keith & Carrie McKellips – Newcastle

Will celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary October 14th, 2025. They have three sons and two granddaughters.

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:

Email:
Subject: GoPioneer Anniversaries
GoPioneerOK@ptci.com

Standard mail:
GoPioneer Anniversaries
Pioneer Telephone Cooperative
P.O. Box 539
Kingfisher, OK 73750

GoPioneer.com:
Find Anniversaries under
'GoPioneer Magazine' on
our website.

*****IF SUBMITTING BY MAIL, PLEASE USE PRINT*****