

2020 ELECTION



Photo by Jordan Green
Voting booths were set up at the Woods County Fairgrounds on Tuesday. Woods County voters passed a property tax increase.

Woods Co. voters hike taxes to fund EMS services

By JORDAN GREEN
News Editor

Woods County voters on Tuesday passed a proposal increasing their property tax rates to fund emergency medical services across the county.

Statewide, voters rejected two state questions and overwhelmingly voted to reelect Republican President Donald Trump, though the results of the presidential election may not be decided nationwide for days or weeks.

Woods County residents voted 2,089 to 1,523 to increase their property taxes by 3 mills on the dollar of a property's assessed valuation. The new tax levy will never expire unless a future ballot proposition to lower or eliminate it is passed.

County officials expect to collect about \$645,000 per year from the proposal to fund a new EMS district, which local medical officials say will provide a steady revenue stream for ambulance services in Alva, Freedom and Waynoka.

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FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY



1. Sadie Bier fires a rifle on a firing range in Afghanistan during a deployment from January 2011 to May 2012.



2. Shannon Leaper is shown in her Air Force uniform in this photo.



3. The insignia of the 325th Medical Group is shown in this photo.

4. Bier is pictured with another team leader in this photo taken during pre-deployment training at Camp Shelby in Mississippi.

Photos provided
Design by Jordan Green



In advance of Veterans Day, female NWOSU employees reflect on military service

By NICK DILL
Student Reporter

Northwestern Oklahoma State University has two female faculty members who are veterans.

Sadie Bier, comptroller at Northwestern, served in the Oklahoma National Guard. She was in the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, based out of Norman, and they were the Thunderbirds. Bier served for six years from 2007 to 2013.

Bier said she always wanted to join the military. "I always wanted to join when I was in high school, but I didn't," Bier said. "My senior year of high school, I met my husband, and he had just got back from his first deployment in Iraq."

"I was hanging out with all his military buddies, and they were based out of here in Alva. Being around them all the time kind of made me take the plunge, and my really good friend joined the military police unit out of – at that time, it was Kingfisher. After she had gone through, she kind of sparked my interest again. Everybody told me I couldn't do it, so I had to do it."

Bier said Veterans Day, celebrated annually on Nov. 11, means a lot to her.

"I've lost several friends through PTSD from our deployment with suicide," Bier said. "To me, it's a way we can honor them and the living. I don't expect anything for myself, but for those that fought in World War II and Vietnam, it's a way we can honor them for the sacrifices they gave up."

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VETS: ‘There is a different kind of struggle when you come home, especially for those types of wars’

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They gave up their family and normalcy.”

Bier said veterans face challenges when their deployments end.

“There is a different kind of struggle when you come home, especially for those types of wars,” she said. “My deployment wasn’t half as bad as some people have gone through. I think everyone should respect it and, if you see a veteran, tell them ‘Thank you.’ The elderly did so much, and I want them to feel good.”

She said her favorite part about Veterans Day is celebrating American pride. Students at the local middle school do a great job of honoring veterans with an annual assembly, she said. Students write a report about the holiday, and they interview local veterans.

Bier said she participates in the Veterans Day events that are hosted around town. She said she has been invited to eat lunch with students at the school on Veterans Day.

Shannon Leaper, director of library services at Northwestern, served in the Air Force from 1995 to 2004.

For a time, she was in the 325th Medical Command Group at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida.

Leaper said she joined the military because it provided her with money for college and gave her the opportunity to travel. She said serving in the military provided training for her career because everyone goes through technical

training for some type of job.

She said Veterans Day is an opportunity to thank individuals who have served and are still serving.

Both women said they were not discriminated against because of their gender.

“I never felt like there wasn’t an opportunity for me to excel and ... to grow as both a person and a military member.”
— Shannon Leaper

“For the most part, it was the same,” Bier said. “We kept up with [men], and we did just as well as they did, and some of our females did better than some of those males. My unit was very good and very equal. We had female squad leaders and a couple of female platoon sergeants. My experience was very good.”

Leaper agreed, saying she never felt like she was treated differently.

“I worked with a wonderful group of individuals in several different places, and I never felt like there wasn’t an opportunity for me to excel and for me to grow as both a person and a military member,” Leaper said. “I never felt singled out because I was a female.”



Sadie Bier, right, poses with members of her team in this undated photo taken during her deployment. *Photo provided*



The 325th Medical Command Group headquarters at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida is shown in this photo. Leaper was stationed at Tyndall. *Photo provided*



Sadie Bier poses for a photo in front of an abandoned building near Kabul, Afghanistan in this undated photo. *Photo provided*

News

VOTE: State questions fail by wide margins

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Woods County commissioners will appoint three members from each EMS station to serve on a board overseeing the money collected by the tax levy.

While the funds will be split between the EMS services in the three cities, each of the three EMS stations will continue to operate independently.

“It’ll have to be a joint venture between the cities and this board,” Randy McMurphy, chair of the Woods County Commissioners, told the Northwestern News in a recent interview. “I’m not on this board. It’s just an oversight to see that the funds are spent right where they need to be spent.”

Julie Dennis, director of Alva EMS, told the News in a previous interview that the tax will allow county ambulance services to buy new equipment.

“It will ensure more effective coverage for our service,” Dennis said. “With the current trend of the state regulations increasing the needs and requirements to be met to maintain current license ... this would produce and provide a mechanism in which we could potentially purchase that equipment that we need.”

STATE QUESTIONS FAIL

Oklahoma voters overwhelmingly rejected a state question that



Photo by Michelle Willson

Woods County voters on Tuesday passed a tax increase funding emergency medical services in the county.

could have kept prison sentences lower for people convicted of certain non-violent offenses and a question that could have helped fund the state’s expanded Medicaid program.

Voters rejected State Question 805, which would end the use of sentence enhancements for peo-

ple convicted of certain non-violent crimes, by a vote of 807,225 to 517,685, unofficial election results showed as of 11 p.m. Tuesday night.

Under Oklahoma law, non-violent offenses include speeding, stealing, larceny, some drug crimes, and some forms of do-

mestic violence.

Numerous state and local officials spoke out against the measure, including both candidates for the Oklahoma County Sheriff’s Office. Oklahoma County is the state’s largest.

State Question 814 would have taken some payments toward the

state’s Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, better known as TSET, and given that money to the State Legislature.

If the proposition had passed, legislators would have had millions of dollars more per year to use at their discretion.

While some lawmakers pitched the state question as a way to fund Medicaid expansion, the question didn’t mandate that the money had to be used for Medicaid costs.

TRUMP WINS OKLAHOMA; NATIONAL RESULTS STILL UNKNOWN

No one knows when the results of the presidential race will be finalized nationwide because of the high number of mail-in ballots cast in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. But in deep-red Oklahoma, voters left little room for doubt as to whom their favored candidate is.

President Donald Trump won all seven of Oklahoma’s electoral votes and the state’s popular vote in Tuesday’s election, beating Democratic challenger Joe Biden in the state by nearly 30%.

Trump won 893,138 to 441,748 over Biden statewide.

In Woods County, Trump won 2,989 to 590 over Biden, unofficial Tuesday night results from the state election board showed.

Making their voices heard



Photos by Jordan Green

Voters in Woods County’s 3rd and 5th precincts cast their ballots in the November 2020 presidential election on Tuesday at the Woods County Fairgrounds. President Donald Trump overwhelmingly won the county, where voters also passed a tax increase funding emergency medical services. Two state questions on the ballot failed.

ROCKET MAN

Rocket club members hope key fob sales go as high as a kite by competition time

By **DACODA MCDOWELL-WAHPEKECHE**
Student Reporter

Northwestern’s Rocketry Team is selling 3D-printed key fobs to raise money to compete in the Argonia Cup in Argonia, Kansas.

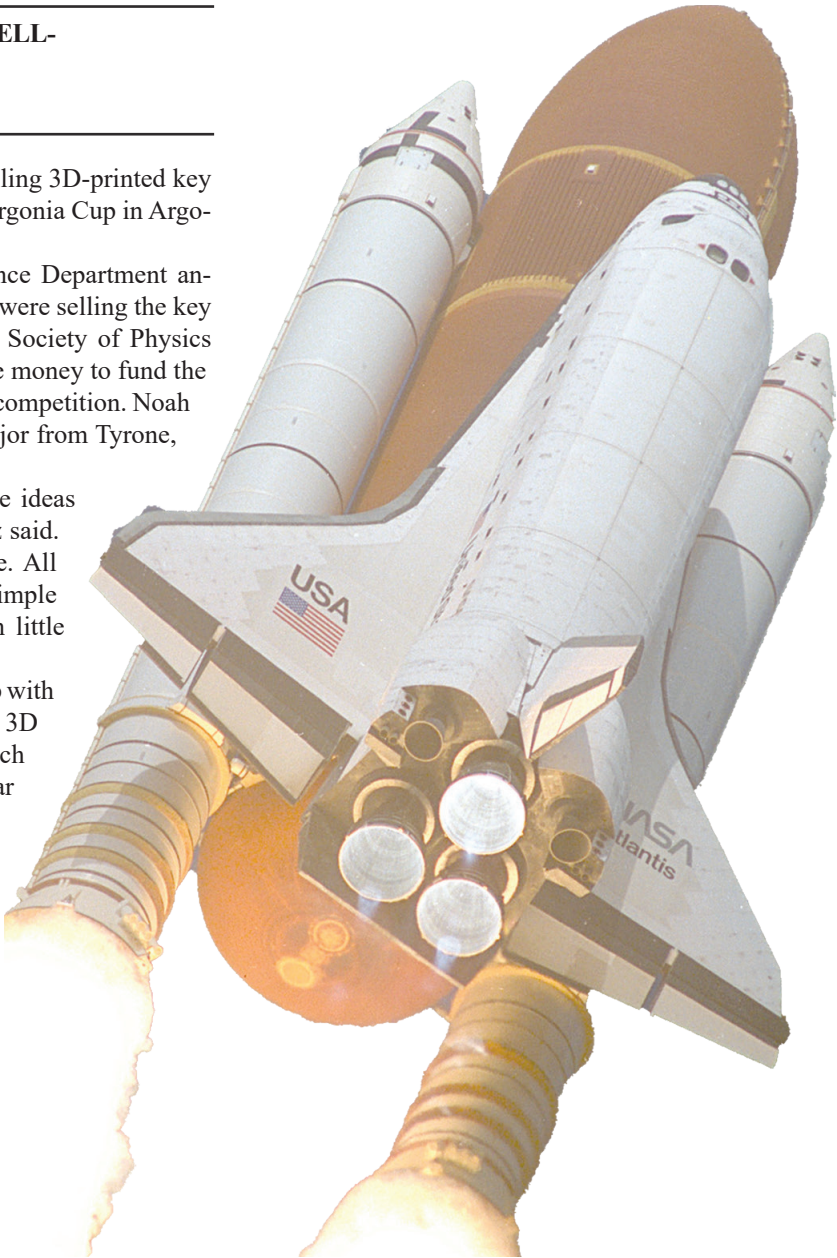
Members of the Northwestern Science Department announced in a tweet in October that they were selling the key fobs. The proceeds will go toward the Society of Physics Students. The rocketry team will use the money to fund the construction of a rocket for the Argonia competition. Noah Rodriguez, a petroleum engineering major from Tyrone, Oklahoma, came up with the idea.

“We were coming up with cool little ideas to sell for [the] rocket club,” Rodriguez said. “A keychain would be nice and simple. All I did was make something nice and simple to where we could customize our own little words onto it.”

It only took a couple hours to come up with the idea, he said. Rodriguez has his own 3D printer that he uses to make objects such as phone stands and toys, including a star destroyer from the Star Wars movies.

Pre-made key fobs with the words “NWOSU RANGERS” AND “NWOSU RRR” engraved upon them cost \$2 each. For \$3, customers can have a customized key fob made.

Dr. Steve Maier, the sponsor of the Northwestern Rocketry Team, said students can order a key fob by sending a direct message on Twitter to @NWOSU-science. Students may also email Maier at sjmaier@nwosu.edu.



At left: NASA STS-45 launches in March 1992. Above: A member of the Northwestern Rocketry Club uses a 3D printer to make key fobs. Right: Key fobs are shown in this photo.



From left: Photo provided by NASA/via Flickr; Photo by Dacoda McDowell-Wahpekeche; Photo by Dacoda McDowell-Wahpekeche