



SPORTS | C1

BEDLAM HOOPS

We feature OSU's Natasha Mack ahead of tonight's Bedlam matchup between the Cowgirls and the OU Sooners



REAL ESTATE | B1

GRANDMA'S MOVING IN

The coronavirus pandemic has heightened the demand for homes that fit multiple generations

THE OKLAHOMAN

Saturday, February 6, 2021



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'Everybody's hero'



Members of the Elk City Fire Department, wearing ceremonial dress, walk in front of a Helena Fire Department truck Friday. Firefighters from across the state attended the funerals of two Waynoka firefighters who died Jan. 29. [JORDAN GREEN/FOR THE OKLAHOMAN]

Colleagues, community honor 2 firefighters killed in the line of duty

By Jordan Green
For The Oklahoman

WAYNOKA — One week after a deadly house fire here, hundreds of community members, first responders and family members gathered Friday to honor the lives of two fallen volunteer firefighters.

Mourners paid their respects to Waynoka firefighter Tayler Bradford and

Fire Chief Lonnie Bolar, who died while trying to rescue two people from a burning home around 3 a.m. Jan. 29. The man and woman trapped in the home, Jim Jones and Mylinda Walker, also died in the fire.

“Rural firefighters, volunteers, believe in mutual aid,” said Mike Feist, a volunteer with the Manchester Fire Department. “This is the height of mutual aid.”

Firefighters from across the state and region drove

See HERO, A2



An American flag flies over downtown Waynoka along the route of the procession for two fallen volunteer firefighters. [JORDAN GREEN/FOR THE OKLAHOMAN]

Oklahomans in Congress oppose budget bill

By Chris Casteel
Staff writer
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Oklahoma lawmakers voted against a budget blueprint on Friday that included provisions they favored and even authored, as they warned that Democrats would make the bill



Cole

a vehicle for a wide range of spending and policy measures. The Senate and House narrowly approved the bill that sets the stage for a new pandemic relief package, one that could be approved by majority vote. The House is expected to consider the package by the end of the month.

President Joe Biden said Friday the bill would include \$1,400 relief payments to eligible taxpayers, support for small businesses, rental assistance, aid for schools, funding for state and local governments and a hike in the minimum wage. He said he was hoping the package would be bipartisan.

“I’ve told both Republicans and Democrats that’s my preference: to work together,” Biden said. “But if I have to

See BILL, A2

CORONAVIRUS IN OKLAHOMA

The number of positive COVID-19 tests reported Friday by the Oklahoma State Department of Health increased by 2,662 to 399,727. The Health Department reported 29 additional deaths, and the state’s death toll rose to 3,710.

Here is a look at the latest numbers in Oklahoma and across the nation:

OKLAHOMA			
Positive:	(+2,662)	399,727	
Active:	(-196)	26,739	
Deaths:	(+29)	3,710	
Recovered:	(+2,829)	369,278	
Vaccines given:	(+31,645)	494,085	
UNITED STATES			
Cases:		26,680,214	
Deaths:		455,881	

Mayors join initiative to fight anti-Semitism

Fighting an open ‘Pandora’s Box’ of hatred is critical, OKC Jewish leader says

By Carla Hinton
Faith editor
chinton@oklahoman.com

Two Oklahoma mayors recently joined an initiative aimed at combating a rise of anti-Semitic rhetoric and violence across the country. Oklahoma City Mayor



Breea Clark



Roberta Clark



Holt

the American Jewish Committee, a Jewish advocacy group. Joel Schwitzer, regional director

for the American Jewish Committee, said the Mayors United Against Antisemitism initiative was initially created five years to combat the growth of antisemitism

in Europe.

Schwitzer said a rising tide of anti-Semitic rhetoric and violence on American soil propelled his organization to relaunch the effort with the key focus on battling anti-Semitism in the U.S. He said the initiative was relaunched on Jan. 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

As of Friday, more than

See MAYORS, A2

Coronavirus cases drop at US homes for elderly and infirm

By Jay Reeves
The Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Coronavirus cases have dropped at U.S. nursing homes and other long-term care facilities over the past few weeks, offering a glimmer of hope that health officials attribute to the start of vaccinations, an easing of the post-holiday surge and better prevention, among other reasons.

More than 153,000 residents of the country’s nursing homes and assisted living centers have

died of COVID-19, accounting for 36% of the U.S. pandemic death toll, according to the COVID Tracking Project. Many of the roughly 2 million people who live at such facilities remain cut off from loved ones because of the risk of infection. The virus still kills thousands of them weekly.

The overall trend for long-term care residents is improving, though, with fewer new cases recorded and fewer facilities reporting outbreaks. Coupled with better figures for the country overall, it’s cause

for optimism even if it’s too early to declare victory.

“We definitely think there’s hope and there’s light at the end of the tunnel,” said Marty Wright, who heads a nursing home trade group in West Virginia.

Nursing homes have been a priority since vaccinations began in mid-December, and the federal government says 1.5 million long-term care residents have already received at least an initial dose.

See HOMES, A3



Carmela Sileo, left, and Susan McEachern sit next to each other and talk in the dayroom Wednesday at Arbor Springs Health and Rehabilitation Center in Opelika, Ala. [JULIE BENNETT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

BILL

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choose between getting help right now to Americans who are hurting so badly and getting bogged down in a lengthy negotiation or compromising on a bill that’s — that’s up to the crisis, that’s an easy choice. I’m going to help the American people who are hurting now.”

Oklahoma’s members of the House and Senate opposed the legislation, even though it included proposals authored by Sens. Jim Inhofe and James Lankford, and didn’t include any of the provisions Republicans have said they oppose, including a hike in the federal minimum wage.

An Inhofe spokesperson said, “The Democrats have been clear they intend to push a partisan agenda through the budget resolution and reconciliation process. Last night, Republicans pushed votes that required Democrats to go on the record about key issues, but that doesn’t change the fact that, at the end of the night, budget reconciliation was a flawed process that Senator Inhofe opposed.”

The Senate approved an amendment by Inhofe that would require Jerusalem to remain the site of the U.S. embassy in Israel. And it approved an amendment by Lankford to prohibit tax increases on small businesses during the pandemic and another to ensure houses of worship were treated the same as businesses in communities placing restrictions on activity because of the pandemic.

The Senate also passed provisions that would protect the Keystone pipeline and prohibit the administration from placing a ban on fracking on public land, but Democrats later removed them from the bill.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Moore, said Friday that the budget bill “is best described as a ‘shell budget’ as it is a budget in name only. Instead, it is a procedural mechanism designed to pave the way toward moving a budget reconciliation bill, which will be used for a partisan Democrat-only bill purported to be about COVID-19 but which in reality could be used for any policy they choose.”

The reconciliation process means Senate Democrats would not have to overcome a Republican filibuster to push the bill through. The bill passed 51-50 early Friday when Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote. That same procedure could be used again when the pandemic package is completed.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Friday, “It is a reconciliation bill, which means we can pass it with just 51 votes in the Senate. It would be my hope that we don’t have to use it as a reconciliation bill, that we will be able to have bipartisan-ship, with a facing of the facts of what is needed to meet the needs of the American people, both in this body and in the United States Senate.”

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCURACY

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TODAY’S PRAYER

Lord, help us accept changes in our lives; may our example be a witness to others. Amen.

4.2 magnitude, smaller quakes shake northern Oklahoma

By The Associated Press

ENID — Several earthquakes, including one of magnitude 4.2, one 3.7 magnitude and one 3.5 magnitude, were recorded Friday in northern Oklahoma by the Oklahoma Geological Survey.

The quakes were recorded southeast of Enid, about 95 miles north of Oklahoma City.

No injuries or damage

HERO

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fire trucks to this small northwest Oklahoma community to attend funeral services for Bradford and Bolar at the Waynoka Public Schools Multipurpose Building.

Firefighters lined their engines up in a farm field across the street from the school, creating a red and yellow ribbon for mourners to view. Firefighters later escorted the caskets of the two firefighters to the local cemetery.

On Friday, Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt ordered flags to fly at half-staff to honor the two.

“Both men tragically lost their lives while battling a house fire on January 29, 2021,” Stitt said in a news release. “Their service to our state will not be forgotten.”

Bradford, 28, was an athlete who held his school’s record in the long-jump. He enjoyed supporting the Waynoka Railroaders athletic teams, according to his obituary.

Sascha Bailey said she

were reported, according to Garfield County Emergency Management Director Mike Honigsberg.

Thousands of earthquakes have been recorded in Oklahoma in recent years, many linked to underground injection of wastewater from oil and gas production, which is being considered as a cause of the tremors, said state seismologist Jake Walter.

"This is an area we were



Dozens of fire departments’ vehicles from across the region were lined up in a farm field across the street from the Waynoka Public Schools Multipurpose Building on Friday as firefighters attended the funerals of two Waynoka firefighters who died in a house fire Jan. 29. [JORDAN GREEN/FOR THE OKLAHOMAN]

remembers Bradford as a kind, caring man.

“I watched him grow up,” she said. “He’s a family man. Loves family. He never met anybody he didn’t like. He was Tay Tay. He loved everybody, and he put a smile on everybody’s face. Didn’t matter what it was. He always made somebody smile.”

Bradford is survived by his wife, Clair, and his sons, Rycen and Maverick.

Bolar, 45, was born in nearby Alva and graduated from Waynoka High School. He was involved in the school’s FFA chapter, according to his obituary. He is survived by his wife, Janet,

already examining, we’ve also observed some smaller seismicity in the past month, not perceptible to humans,” Walter said. “It’s likely that it’s wastewater disposal related.”

There are about a dozen active disposal wells within a 10-mile radius of the earthquakes, said Oklahoma Corporation Commission spokesperson Sarah Terry-Cobo.

Commission regulators have directed producers to close some wells as a result of quakes. Regulators were meeting Friday to discuss the latest tremors, Terry-Cobo said.

The 4.2 magnitude quake was recorded about 11:45 a.m., about 90 minutes after the magnitude 3.7 and 3.5 quakes, in addition to at least six other tremors ranging from 2.0 to 2.7 magnitude.

Irwin said Bolar fought fires even when he wasn’t in a fire truck. Bolar worked for the county road department and used road graders to make trails for fire engines when fighting wildland fires.

“They were heroes,” Irwin said. “They both were. They were both good firefighters. I followed them on a lot of fires.”

Howard “Punky” Halcomb, a retired Pond Creek fire chief, was dressed in a black ceremonial uniform and mask as he stood beside a fire truck. Though he never met Bradford or Bolar, he said, he understands their sacrifice and dedication to fighting fires.

“We’re here for their support today,” he said. “This is not about us. It’s about them. It’s a terrible loss, and we feel their pain. Most all of these departments here are going to be volunteers.”

Bailey, who wore a Waynoka Fire Department shirt as she walked into the funeral, said Bolar was always willing to help others.

“He was a kind man that would give his shirt off his back,” she said. “He loved his family. He loved Waynoka, and he died doing what he loved. That’s Lonnie. Everybody’s hero.”

MAYORS

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200 mayors around the country had joined the joint initiative, pledging to declare “unequivocally that anti-Semitism is incompatible with the democratic values that are at the very bedrock of our society.” Mayors taking part in the effort signed a statement vowing to do their part to fight such bigotry.

Schwitzer, who is based in Dallas, said hate crimes against Jewish communities made up the majority of religious hate crimes in the U.S., according to recent data released by the FBI. Also, he said it was important to acknowledge a rise in anti-Semitic rhetoric and incidents from right-wing extremists.

“This alarming rise in antisemitic incidents led us to relaunch this campaign,” he said.

Roberta Clark, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City, said social media posts about Holt’s decision to become involved in the initiative have drawn interest from numerous members of the local Jewish community.

“I believe that Mayor Holt has expressed and not just expressed, but modeled, the importance of diversity and respect for all. I know he reaches out to all groups and I know that he makes himself accessible to everyone so it does not surprise me at all that he felt this was an important statement to

make. I’m very grateful and I know members of the Jewish community are very grateful for his leadership on this,” she said.

“If you think that injustice is wrong, if you think it is occurring, you have to appropriately stand up and speak out so that people know that you don’t agree with them and that it’s not OK.”

‘Pandora’s Box’ of hatred

Clark said the mayors’ efforts to raise awareness are needed.

She said the Anti-Defamation League’s audit of anti-Semitic incidents in 2019 showed there was a 12% increase in anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. She said the Jewish advocacy organization’s tracker of anti-Semitic incidents as of 2021 includes several pages of reports of anti-Semitic and racist vandalism, harassment and assault incidents across the country.

“These incidents are of great concern. We saw with the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol anti-Semitic and racist messages on things that people were wearing and things that people were carrying. This messaging, many of us are so offended by it and what it stands for, but I think there are people who see it and are fired up by it and agree with that thinking. They somehow feel that, whether it’s a social media thing or something as horrible as the insurrection at the Capitol, the Pandora’s Box is open and they can show their true feelings and express their hatred because they’re

seeing other people express their hatred,” Clark said.

“So whether it’s in real life or it’s on social media, it’s pretty frightening because I really believe that when gone unchecked, hateful thoughts lead to hateful words, lead to hateful actions.”

Restating stance against bigotry

Holt said the effort to combat anti-Semitism and bigotry fits in with his mission as an elected leader of Oklahoma City.

“I think it just fits in really well with at least a couple of my core values as mayor. One has been working really hard to make sure that every one feels welcome in Oklahoma City and that extends to all different kinds of diversity — obviously ethnic diversity but also religious diversity. I’ve been pretty passionate about that type of issue for some time,” he said. “I want everyone to know that anti-Semitism and bigotry in general is not accepted in Oklahoma City.”

Holt said he posted his involvement with the initiative on Facebook and he saw that some people wondered if this issue was something that needed to be emphasized because anti-Semitism is obviously wrong.

The mayor said he wished that were the case.

“The other core principle is that sometimes I find that we still need to restate what seems to be obvious truth especially with what has happened in the last few years with the obvious rise in white supremacy in the country,” he said.

“Maybe it’s obvious to us but apparently it’s not obvious to everybody, so let’s draw a line in the sand about where we stand when it comes to bigotry and anti-Semitism. Let’s be very clear and on the record and public about our positions. That way we continue to create an ecosystem where that stuff is just not socially acceptable.”

Meanwhile, Norman Mayor Brea Clark said she has had the opportunity to work closely with Jewish students and residents in the Norman area and she considered the Hillel Foundation at the University of Oklahoma, a Jewish organization, “a wonderful partner.”

“After the horrible anti-Semitic graffiti that took place in our community in April of 2019 as well as the recent horrific events at the U.S. Capitol, it’s important to make it very clear that I stand strong against anti-Semitism,” Clark said in a statement.

“We are constantly working to build an inclusive community, and Norman residents need to know that I support our Jewish community here in Norman and around the nation.”

Faith Editor Carla Hinton edits The Oklahoman’s Spiritual Life section, and covers faith and spirituality plus other topics for the newspaper and Oklahoman.com. Contact her with story ideas and comments at chinton@oklahoman.com. Please support her work and that of other Oklahoman journalists by purchasing a subscription today at oklahoman.com/subscribe.

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