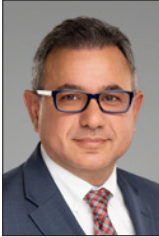


BUZZ

October 2026



BSA HEALTH SYSTEM welcomed **RAMZI DEEIK, M.D.**, as Medical Director of its Cardiothoracic Surgery Program. An accomplished cardiothoracic surgeon and physician leader, Dr. Deeik brings more than two decades of clinical leadership and cardiovascular program-development experience to BSA. Board-certified in

both thoracic surgery and general surgery, his previous leadership roles include nearly two decades as Chief and Medical Director of Cardiothoracic Surgery at a regional medical center in Northern California. His program-development experience spans multiple health systems and includes developing high quality and efficient cardiac surgery programs, helping design and launch cardiovascular operating rooms. Dr. Deeik's clinical expertise includes beating heart coronary artery bypass surgery, mitral valve repair, aortic valve surgery, minimally invasive and off-pump techniques. Among his clinical accomplishments, he was the first surgeon to perform robotic-assisted cardiac surgery in Northern California.

A \$3 million gift will transform **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY'S** acclaimed band program, providing extensive funds for scholarships and program needs. The gift also will establish a program endowment to offer invaluable corporate experiences for students in the Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business. The newly named **PRAIRIE THUNDER BAND PROGRAM**, which will encompass the Sound of West Texas Marching Band and the Symphonic, Concert and University bands in WT's School of Music in the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities. The gift also funds the **PRAIRIE THUNDER FOUNDATION CORPORATE CULTURE EXPERIENCE** endowment in the Engler College. The Prairie Thunder Foundation was established by a WT alumna and her husband, both of whom wish to remain anonymous. The foundation's gift includes \$2.5 million to the band program, providing a scholarship endowment, program funds and two professorships: the **PRAIRIE THUNDER PROFESSOR OF BAND**, held by **DR. B.J. BROOKS**, director of the School of Music; and the **FATHER ANTHONY C. NEUSCH PROFESSOR OF BAND**, held by **DR. RUSSELL TEWELEIT**. Neusch, a 1999 WT graduate, currently serves as pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Dalhart and St. Mary's Church in Texline and is an inspiration to the founders of the Prairie Thunder Foundation. Founded in 1917, the WT marching band is considered the largest spirit organization on campus. It is open to any student,

regardless of major. In the Engler College of Business, the new Prairie Thunder Foundation Corporate Culture Experience program endowment will provide support for student travel and corporate experiences. **DR. AMJAD ABDULLAT** is dean of the Engler College of Business.

CARDIOLOGY CENTER OF AMARILLO, a trusted cardiovascular care provider in the region since 2003, will join **BSA HEALTH SYSTEM**, bringing together two organizations with a shared commitment to expanding access to high-quality cardiovascular care for patients across the Texas Panhandle. The partnership honors the reputation CCA physicians and teams have built across the region while combining CCA's specialized expertise with BSA's comprehensive clinical network to enhance care coordination, expand access to specialty services and create a more seamless experience for patients. CCA physicians, advanced practice providers and staff will become part of BSA Health System as the organizations move through the transition and integration process.

A \$400,000 grant will help **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY'S LAURA AND JOE STREET SCHOOL OF NURSING** train nurses to deliver emergency and trauma care around the Texas Panhandle. The Street School of Nursing recently was awarded 8th grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Emergency and Trauma Care Education Partnership Program to further support the new post-master's emergency nurse practitioner certificate for family nurse practitioners who want to expand their expertise in emergency and urgent care. The Emergency Nurse Practitioner Certificate program, only the second such program in the state, is designed for family nurse practitioners who already hold a Master of Science in Nursing. It officially was announced in July, as was WT's new Doctor of Nurse Practice program, both following a \$5 million gift from the **HIGH PLAINS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES FOUNDATION** in March. **DR. HOLLY JEFFREYS** is dean of WT's College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The grant will help create a permanent educational pathway that trains nurse practitioners in emergency medicine, trauma stabilization, disaster preparedness and acute care management. It also will provide thousands in scholarship dollars to help working nurses continue their education. The ENP program will combine classroom instruction with simulation, EMS operations, disaster preparedness, and direct clinical experience to help students build advanced, real-world skills.

Twenty-four new faculty joined **WTAMU** for '26-'27 Academic Year. New hires include: **BRAD CARLSON**, theatre; **Angie Chadwick**, psychiatric mental health; **LEZLEY CUMMINGS**, nursing; **DR. GREGORY DEDRICK**, sports and exercise sciences; **HAILEY EAKLE**, theatre; **DR. JANNATUL FERDOUS EMA**, mathematics; **DR. JAGDISH GNAWALI**, mathematics; **DR. STEVEN GROTH**, voice; **EMILY HINDS**, English; **NICHOLAS JARAMILLO**, engineering; **DR. EMILY KINNEY**, English; **DR. JADE KNIGHTON**, environmental science; **DR. VICKI LAVASTIDA**, political science; **ANDI NEWBERRY**, art;

ELISABETH PIGNATO, English; DR. PENNY POLLART, testing coordinator; MEAGAN PRICE, social work; DR. ERIKA SCHMITT, psychology; LAUREN SNYDER, accounting; LAUREN STEPHENS, math; DR. AMANDA TINSLEY-MATHIAS, counseling; DR. MUSTAFA TOPRAK, educational leadership; DR. RAY URBINA, sports and exercise; DR. TYLER WEBSTER, clarinet.

BELL has landed an estimated \$300 million US NAVY CONTRACT to upgrade as many as 49 US Marine Corps AH-1Z Viper and UH-1Y Venom helicopters. The contract covers 28 AH-1Z attack helicopters and 21 UH-1Y utility helicopters under the Structural and Power Improvements for NextGen Effects program, known as SPINE. Bell said it will begin the modification work at its Amarillo Assembly Center in Texas in mid-2027. The company expects to deliver the first upgraded helicopters in 2028.

PANDA CARE CENTER OF HOPE (PANDA CARE EXPRESS), CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK AT HARRINGTON CANCER & HEALTH FOUNDATION, AND LITTLE BEES PLAYHOUSE have partnered to create a

THIS PAGE IS SPONSORED BY

cmms



CMMS CPAs & Advisors PLLC

TAX
AUDIT
ACCOUNTING
ADVISORY
PLANNING
and MORE!



801 S. Fillmore, Ste 600 Amarillo, TX 79101
806.373.6661 | atlasfirms.com

AN ATLAS NAVIGATORS, LLC FIRM • ADVISORS THAT LISTEN AND SERVE

joyful, healing-centered space for children and families within the **BSA PEDIATRIC DEPARTMENT**. As part of this collaboration, Panda CareExpress – Panda Care Center of Hope has donated \$10,000 to Children's Miracle Network at Harrington Cancer & Health Foundation to support the development of a Little Bees Playhouse experience inside the hospital, designed specifically for pediatric patients and their families. This immersive space will bring the magic of Little Bees Playhouse into a healthcare environment, offering children the opportunity to explore interactive mini-town settings that encourage imagination, creativity, and play. By creating a warm and engaging atmosphere within the hospital, the space is intended to provide comfort, foster emotional well-being, and offer moments of normalcy for children and families navigating medical care. Panda Restaurant Group has underwritten all administrative costs of Panda Cares since 1999. All money raised is used to help underserved youth and support disaster relief efforts in times of need. *AW*

