

BUZZ

July 2025

HARRINGTON CANCER AND HEALTH FOUNDATION is now in their new location at 1732 Hagy Blvd., located in Amarillo's medical center. In the newly constructed building is also home of the **CANCER SURVIVORSHIP CENTER**, a gift from the Foundation to the community.



BRANDI REED is the new CEO of **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**. From Assistant Director of FSS Crisis Services to longtime Director of Education, Brandi has never just held titles—she's built movements. She's a trusted voice across Texas, having twice been appointed by the governor to serve on the **CRIME VICTIMS INSTITUTE COUNCIL**, where she's helped shape state policy around domestic violence. She founded the Panhandle's first anti-human trafficking coalition and represents our region on the statewide task force for both child and adult trafficking. Brandi is a fierce believer in early intervention. She serves on the **TEXAS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**, helping lead the charge for stronger early childhood prevention and support systems. In addition, she was named a **WOMAN OF DISTINCTION** by the Girl Scouts in 2018 and served for years on the committee that honors other change-making women in our community.

THE KORN FERRY TOUR, THE OCCUNET COMPANY, FRAMEWORK EVENTS and **TASCOSA GOLF CLUB** announced a five-year partnership to host a new professional golf tournament - **OCCUNET CLASSIC** - beginning in 2026. The inaugural OccuNet Classic will be played June 11-14, 2026, at Tascosa Golf Club in Amarillo, Texas. The OccuNet Classic will be a 72-hole tournament featuring 156 players from around the world and one of 26 events on the 2026 Korn Ferry Tour schedule. At season's end, the top 20 players on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List will earn their PGA TOUR cards for the following season, with the No. 1 player earning exemptions into the following year's PLAYERS Championship and U.S. Open. The OccuNet Company is an innovative Healthcare Services company focused on healthcare affordability and first-class member experiences. The OccuNet Company will become the title sponsor of the new Korn Ferry Tour event through at least 2030. The OccuNet Classic will bring the Korn Ferry Tour to Amarillo for the first time since the Tour's inaugural season in 1990. **ALEX FAIRLY** is chairman of The OccuNet Company. **JOHN DUNN** is managing partner of Tascosa Golf Club.

BUC-EE'S is embracing our region's heart for giving with a Major Gift to the **TEXAS PANHANDLE FIRST RESPONDERS MEMORIAL**. **TODD BECKUM**, president of the board in charge of fundraising said, "Buc-ee's is now the second largest donor to the Texas Panhandle First Responders Memorial, highlighting a true commitment to operating in the spirit of the Texas Panhandle." Buc-ee's joins more than 40 foundations and corporations along with more than 160 individuals who have donated to the Texas Panhandle First Responders Memorial. "This donation is a milestone for the project, as it brings us to just over \$800,000 raised to date," said Beckum. According to project organizers, about \$400,000 is still needed to break ground and begin construction. "Our ultimate goal is to raise the remaining funds, break ground, and begin construction by the end of 2025," says Beckum. The Texas Panhandle First Responder Memorial, which is a project of the nonprofit **FRIENDS OF AJ SWOPE**, will be built in downtown Amarillo on the Northwest corner of 11th and Polk. The Memorial will honor law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel from the top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The list includes more than 100 individuals from 45 area first responding agencies. Specifics about the Texas Panhandle First Responders Memorial can be found at firstrespondersmemorial.org, Including a list of those to be initially memorialized. In addition, secure donations to the Memorial can be made on the website or by contacting Friends of AJ Swope at (806) 353-2911.

BROWN GRAHAM proudly marks its 70th anniversary in 2025, celebrating a legacy of trusted client relationships, professional excellence, and a commitment to service that began in 1955. From its early beginnings as a small-town partnership, Brown Graham has grown into a respected regional firm with offices in Amarillo, Austin, Pampa, Prosper, and Spearman. Today, the firm's team of over 85 professionals delivers comprehensive services including audit, tax, business advisory, business valuation, fraud and forensic accounting, outsourced accounting, and wealth management consulting. "Our 70-year journey is a testament to the enduring trust of our clients, the dedication of our team, and the values that have guided us since day one," said **DANNY WOODS**, President and Shareholder at Brown Graham. "We're proud of our history — and even more excited about the future as we continue helping our clients and communities thrive." Brown Graham's diverse client base spans key industries such as affordable housing, agribusiness, construction, government, healthcare, nonprofit organizations, oil and gas, real estate, and retail. Across every service area, the firm's commitment remains the same: to deliver peace of mind through technical excellence, proactive solutions, and personal service.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on June 10th, to celebrate the start of construction on the \$159 million **PANHANDLE STATE HOSPITAL**. This new 75-bed hospital, located at 6610 W. Amarillo Blvd., will provide high-quality inpatient psychiatric services to adults in a non-maximum-security setting. It is designed with the latest mental health care standards in mind to promote recovery and healing. Since 2017, Gov. Greg Abbott and the Texas Legislature have invested more than \$2.5 billion to replace, renovate and build state hospitals across Texas. These projects are part of a comprehensive plan to modernize facilities and increase access to inpatient psychiatric care. The hospital will serve as the primary state-run mental health facility for the Texas Panhandle region. Construction is expected to be complete by July of 2027.



DR. ANNA CENICEROS, DDS has joined the **DENTAL GROUP OF AMARILLO**. A Clarendon, Texas native, Cenicerros earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from West Texas A&M University and her Doctorate of Dental Medicine from

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, where she also completed a graduate certificate in Community Health in Dental Medicine. She is an active member of the American Dental Association and the Texas Dental Association. She is also fluent in both English and Spanish and is proud to serve a diverse population here in the Texas Panhandle.



DR. NIYA TABOR, DDS grew up in Mineral Wells, Texas. Her drive and dedication carried her to the collegiate basketball court and then ultimately to graduating summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene from Midwestern

State University in 2017. After several rewarding years practicing as a registered dental hygienist, Dr. Tabor felt called to continue to expand her ability to care for patients. She was accepted into UT Health San Antonio School of Dentistry and earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in May 2025. With over eight years of experience in dentistry, Dr. Tabor truly enjoys getting to know her patients and making them feel at ease. She's passionate about providing gentle, personalized care and is excited to welcome families and patients of all ages into her chair.

PHYSICIANS SURGICAL HOSPITALS became a statewide leader in robotic guidance, navigation, and imaging through the acquisition of the complete Excelsius™ technology ecosystem from

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Globus Medical. The hospital, which already features the ExcelsiusGPS® robotic navigation platform, has now expanded its capabilities with the addition of Excelsius3D™, an advanced intraoperative imaging system, and ExcelsiusHub™, a centralized connectivity and integration platform. With these three technologies working together, Physicians Surgical Hospitals is now the first facility in Texas to offer the complete Excelsius™ platform, enabling a fully integrated and intelligent surgical suite. ExcelsiusGPS®, the cornerstone of the platform, is designed to improve accuracy and visualization during spine surgery. The system integrates a rigid robotic arm with real-time navigation, allowing for precise trajectory alignment while minimizing radiation exposure to both patients and surgical teams. ExcelsiusGPS® will be utilized for screw placement across a wide range of procedures—from minimally invasive spine surgery to complex deformity cases, including posterior thoracic and lumbar fusions as well as sacroiliac fusions. By leveraging intraoperative imaging, freehand navigation, and robotic precision, we aim to reduce complications, shorten recovery times, and deliver consistently excellent outcomes for our patients.



DR. EMILY HUNT, dean of **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING**, has been elected to the board of the national **ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL**. The American Society for Engineering Education's ERC is composed of representatives from

engineering college, industrial and government fields to provide a forum for discussion about research activities of ASEE members, and to improve the effectiveness of research operations at ERC institutions, among other objectives. Hunt will serve on ERC's executive board alongside representatives from such universities as the University of Colorado-Boulder, Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg, Michigan State University and others. "For regional universities like WT, engineering research isn't about prestige—it's about purpose," Hunt said. It's about improving lives in real, tangible ways. Our research is focused on addressing the unique needs of rural communities—particularly in critical areas like water sustainability, energy access, and resilient infrastructure. These are not abstract

challenges for us; they are daily realities that affect families, farmers, and entire communities across the Texas Panhandle and beyond. Hunt's appointment to the ERC board follows WT's recent classification as a Research College and University by the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Hunt joined WT in 2005 after earning her bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Texas Tech University. She is the author of "Nanostructured Metallic Alloys: Synthesis, Properties, and Applications" and the children's book "Engineering Elephants." She also is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Society of Women Engineers, Materials Research Society and the American Society of Engineering Education.

Two veteran **WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY** administrators have been promoted to new positions, and the WT Bookstore has a new manager. **WARREN PITT**, previously the assistant vice president for human resources, will serve as the assistant vice president for budget. Stepping into his role in HR is **PAM YOUNG**, who previously served as director of human resources and Equal Employment Opportunity officer. Pitt, who earned bachelor's degrees in management and accounting from

▼ Pam Young, Paige Nelms, Warren Pitt



WT, began his career at WT in January 2022 after a career spent in auditing and human resources. Pitt will take a position previously held by Shelly McCune, who will retire after working at WT for about 30 years. Young, who joined WT in December 2022, has worked for years in human resources and risk management. Additionally, **PAIGE NELMS** has been promoted to manager of the University Bookstore following the retirement of longtime manager Terry Nepper after more than 20 years. Nelms joined the bookstore in May 2024 as the manager for general merchandise. *AW*

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MARCUS P. SCHMITZ
MD, FAANS, FCNS
Neurosurgeon



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Dr. Schmitz is a highly trained neurosurgeon, board-certified in Neurological Surgery. He graduated from University of Kentucky College of Medicine, in Lexington, KY. He completed an internship in general surgery, a neurosurgery residency, and became Chief Resident of Neurosurgery at A.B. Chandler Medical Center in Lexington, KY.

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