

KINGFISHER TIMES & FREE PRESS

Est. April 22, 1889 - Oklahoma's Oldest Continuously-Published Newspaper

Sunday, August 20, 2023

No. 36 of the 135th Year

www.kingfisherpress.net

USPS No. 295-420

50 cents 10 Pages

More than a 'fair' time

Games, livestock, art, much more in store at Kingfisher County Free Fair

It's that time of the year again.

Time for residents to show off their skills in raising livestock and crops, as well as baking, canning, photography, art and a plethora of other talents at the annual Kingfisher County Free Fair.

Events kick off Wednesday at the county fairgrounds with the pedal tractor pull and Farmhand Olympics and continue through the end of the livestock show Saturday evening.

With lots of animals and exhibits to see as well as the opportunity to try your hand at the pedal tractor pull or Farmhand Olympics, you won't want to miss it, Kingfisher County 4-H Educator Heather Leitner said.

"Come on out and join the fun," she said.

Schedules follow for both the MACenter and Exhibit Building:

MACenter
Wednesday, Aug. 23
5:30 p.m. - Pedal tractor pull sign-up.

6 p.m. - Pedal tractor pull.

6:30 p.m. - Farmhand Olympics pre-entry.

7 p.m. - Farmhand Olympics.

Thursday, Aug. 24
5 p.m. Horse show books open (at the Round-up Club Arena).

5:30 p.m. Horse show entries due in the office.

6 p.m. - Horse show starts.

6:30 p.m. - Dairy and longhorn cattle in place and entry cards turned in.
7 p.m. - Dairy cattle



PRIZED TREATS - Pictured are some big winners from the 2021 Kingfisher County Free Fair. This year's annual event begins later this week at the county fairgrounds. [KT&FP Staff Photo]

judged, followed by long-horns.

Friday, Aug. 25
4:30 p.m. - Goats and market sheep in place and entry cards turned in.

5:30 p.m. Goats judged, followed by market sheep.

Saturday, Aug. 26
9 a.m. - Livestock judging contest (open to all county 4-H and FFA students with registration beginning at 8 a.m.)

9 a.m. - Poultry and rabbits in place.

11 a.m. - Poultry and rabbits judged.

4 p.m. - Beef in place and entry cards turned in.

4:45 p.m. - Bucket calf books turned in.

5 p.m. - Beef judged.

[See Fair, Page 2]



ACCIDENT SCENE - A pickup-truck was struck by a train near Okarche Wednesday. The two teens in the pickup were injured, but not seriously, according to reports. [Photo provided]

Teens suffer minor injuries after vehicle struck by train

A pair of Okarche High School students were injured Wednesday night when a pickup truck one of them was driving was struck by a train.

According to reports, the teenagers, both females, were taken to Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City where they were treated for minor injuries and released.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol did not release the names of the teens because they are minors.

"Both were checked out," a family member of one of the teens told the Times & Free Press. "They are going to be sore for a few days, but we are thankful it was not worse."

The accident occurred on the north end of Okarche on County Road 880, just east of U.S. Highway 81.

The OHP report said one of the teens was driving west on CR880 and failed to yield at the stop sign at the

[See Accident, Page 2]

Comfort Overload

Miriam, handlers take part in national K-9 conference

By Twila Adams
KT&FP Staff Writer

What do you get when you fill a room with 90 gentle, loving golden retrievers?

A lot of tail-wagging and an uplifting time of fellowship and training for the Lutheran Church Charities comfort dogs and their teams.

Joining others from across the country, Kingfisher Emmanuel Lutheran Church's comfort dog Miriam and her team members recently took part in the annual LCC K-9 Ministries National Conference in Northbrook, Ill.

Of the eight dog handlers and 12 ministry partners involved in the local ministry, seven members were in attendance including top dog handler Keith Leimbach and his wife Wendy, Pastor Tim McCarty and his wife Heather, Pat and Sheila Luedders and Susan Post.

Serving as a bridge for their ministry partners to share the compassion and love of Jesus, approximately 130 LCC K-9 comfort dogs from 27 states provide support and hope in their communities and throughout the United States during times of crises, tragedy and hardships.

Embracing the conference theme "Presence, Comfort, Hope - Together We Serve," participants had the opportunity to hear from several speakers on topics such as grief and mourning, mental health issues, children and trauma and self-care.

[See Miriam, Page 2]



COMFORTING MINISTRY - Above, members of Kingfisher Emmanuel Lutheran Church's comfort dog ministry recently attending the annual Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Ministries National Conference were, from left: front row, Miriam (comfort dog) and Heather McCarty; second row, Susan Post, Sheila and Pat Luedders; and back row, Wendy and Keith Leimbach and Pastor Tim McCarty. Other team members not present include Mickie Post, Ora and Sharon Yoder, Liz Pendergraft, Karin Leimbach, Lois Henderson, Katie Schroeder, J. Juan and Denise Jech, Roger Post, Mary Krepel, Cliff and Karen Benson. Pictured left, Alex Chase and Miriam share a hug at the conference. Alex and his mother, Barbara Chase, who is the head counselor at Uvalde (Texas) Public School District, made a surprise appearance at the conference. [Photos provided]

Former county ADA killed in accident

A former assistant district attorney for Kingfisher County was killed in an accident east of Guthrie early Monday morning.

Tamara Hurd, 41, of Guthrie, was pronounced dead at the scene when she was struck by a car while riding a bicycle, according to a report from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.

Hurd served on District Attorney

Mike Fields' staff from January 2021 until January 2023.

She split her time between Kingfisher and Blaine counties handling juvenile and deprived cases as well as criminal misdemeanors and some felony cases.

The report said the accident occurred just before 4 a.m. on State Highway 33 about four miles east of Guthrie.

The vehicle that struck Hurd was a

2010 Toyota Camry driven by Clifford Roderick Darryl Mason, 62, of Langston.

Mason is the offensive coordinator on the Langston University football staff.

The specifics of the accident were still under investigation by the OHP at press time of this edition.

Prior to working under Fields, Hurd was a prosecutor in Logan County.



Tamara Hurd

Miriam

[Continued From Page 1]

Many of the sessions were very helpful in addressing situations the team encounters while deployed nationwide during disasters and crises as well as in the local ministry, Leimbach said.

"We heard from a retired Chicago Fire Department captain about mental health issues," Leimbach said.

"We also had a class about children and trauma in which they discussed how to interact with kids and help them feel safe."

Other discussions were about grief and mourning and how to be present, just listening and allowing people to spend time with the dog, Leimbach added.

Currently in their third year of ministry, Leimbach said they received their first national deployment in response to the mass shooting that occurred May 24, 2022, at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, in which 19 students and two teachers were killed.

As many as 12 dogs were sent during each of three weeks to comfort the students, parents and community and many of the dogs returned again, including Miriam, in August as classes resumed.

During that time, Uvalde Public School District head counselor Barbara Chase coordinated the placement of the dog teams throughout the school system as needed.

A welcome surprise at the conference, Leimbach said, occurred when the group was watching a video compilation about the yearly activities of the dog teams.

As the video began to break up, suddenly Chase and her son Alex appeared to the crowd's delight.

On behalf of the school and Uvalde community, Chase expressed her thankfulness for the love and comfort the LCC K-9 comfort dog ministry provided during the tragic event.

Previously getting to know several of the dogs when they visited Uvalde, Leimbach said Alex was in seventh heaven seeing 90 of the comfort dogs in one place at the conference.

"Alex was just hugging

all the dogs and getting all their cards, pets and licks," he said.

Another feature at the conference, Leimbach said, was a tribute to the 14 dogs which have passed away since the program's inception in 2008.

During the year, Miriam regularly provides comfort at assisted living facilities, the Compassion Clinic, a homeless ministry, a boy's group home in Norman and in a new ministry at the Canadian County Youth Detention Center as well as others.

In May 2023, Miriam and her team were also deployed to Allen, Texas, after the mass shooting at a local mall in which 15 people were injured, with eight victims losing their lives, including a 3-year-old child and a third-grade student.

During that time, Miriam visited with students at the elementary and high school, also interacting with the hurting community.

"At the high school," Leimbach said, "one of the students who worked at the mall and had witnessed the aftermath, just fell to her knees, hung on to Miriam and started crying."

After spending some time with a counselor, she returned and sat down with Miriam again, just petting and hugging her, Leimbach said.

"She looked up and had a bit of a smile on her face and just said, 'thank you so much,'" he said.

Those moments are what it's all about, Leimbach added.

A recurring theme expressed by those they minister to, particularly those involved in mass tragedies, is "they're just happy we're there and also surprised by the distance many of the dog teams come to share comfort and caring," Leimbach said.

As a beacon of hope, a lighthouse was chosen as part of the theme for the conference along with the Bible verse in Psalm 43:3, "Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell."

Over the past three years, Leimbach said the team



CONFERENCE CENTER PIECE – A centerpiece designed by Miriam's team incorporated the conference's theme of a lighthouse as a beacon of hope (with an added Oklahoma flair). [Photo provided]

members have grown in their ability to talk and pray with strangers, breaking down walls and also have become closer to God and each other.

"We've learned to open up with people we don't know and may not understand, but are willing to listen and find out," Leimbach said.

As the conference concluded, Leimbach said it was good to share experiences and an uplifting time with the other dog teams and take home new tools they can implement as they serve others.

Celebrating her fifth birthday soon, Miriam and her team plan to continue their various ministries and will once again sponsor the second annual Miriam the Comfort Dog - Fun Run & Walk in October with the proceeds benefiting a local charitable organization.

Miriam is available to "comfort whoever needs it," Leimbach said, "but we only go where we're invited, so if there's a need, please contact us."



Bert Gritz



Joyce Holder



Carol Keeton

HPS board to get bids on transportation building addition; hires 3 more teachers

By Barb Walter

For the Kingfisher Times & Free Press

Bid specifications for Hennessey Public Schools' addition to its transportation building were approved by the school board at its meeting last Monday.

The vote included going out for bids.

It will take about two

months before a bid opening, said Superintendent Jason Sternberger.

The addition will allow space for bus maintenance and repairs onsite. It will also replace the school's old bus barn located between the baseball and football stadiums.

The 19,039 square foot addition will be immediate-

ly west of the existing 6,880 square foot transportation building on State Highway 51, according to plans by Renaissance Architecture of Oklahoma City.

The transportation building is located on the south side of S.H. 51 north and east of the school's softball fields.

It was built in 2010, primarily to keep the school's

[See HPS, Page 9]

Accident

[Continued From Page 1]

train tracks.

A southbound train struck the Chevrolet pickup truck on its right rear.

The collision caused the

pickup to spin. It came to rest in the south ditch of the eastbound lane before being removed from the scene by M6 Wrecker & Recovery of Kingfisher.

Fair

[Continued From Page 1]

5:30 p.m. – Swine in place and entry cards turned in.

6:30 p.m. (or 20 minutes after conclusion of beef judging) – Swine judged.

All animals are released after the selection of a grand champion for each species.

Exhibit Building

Wednesday - All entries are accepted from 4-6 p.m.

Thursday

8-9:30 a.m. – Entries accepted for 4-H, FFA (other than livestock and poultry), Open Class, Crops and Horticulture.

8 a.m. - noon – Entries accepted for Art and Pho-

tography.

10 a.m. – HCE, Open Class, 4-H and Crops exhibits judged.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. – 4-H steak sandwich fundraiser.

1 p.m. Art and Photography judged.

8 p.m. Building closes.

Friday

9 a.m. – Building opens.

9:30-10:30 a.m. – Entries accepted for Floriculture-Flowers.

11 a.m. – Floriculture-Flowers judged.

8 p.m. – Building closes.

Saturday

9 a.m. – Building opens.

4 p.m. – Building closes.

4:30-6 p.m. – Exhibits released.

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- DANGEROUS
- ILLEGAL
- AVOIDABLE
- ALL THE ABOVE

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