

Groundbreaking set for rodeo/expo center

The Southeastern Oklahoma State University rodeo team has a proud tradition of winning national championships.

That tradition of excellence will be bolstered by the University's announcement of a new Rodeo/Agriculture Expo Center, to be constructed on First Street, near the SE softball complex and inside the Crooked Smile Trail. This will replace the Equestrian Center, which is currently located on Ninth Avenue.

An official groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled at the new site on April 25 at 2 p.m. and the public is invited.

"This new multi-purpose facility will be a tremendous asset both to the University and to the community," said Southeastern president Thomas Newsom. "It fits nicely into the campus master plan that we have been developing over the past several months as we continue to build a vision for the future of our University. And these types of projects are not possible without the outstanding support that we continue to receive from our community, alumni, and friends."

The improvements will be phased in with the new Rodeo/Agriculture Expo Center completed by late 2022. The project also includes turnout shelters with 40 total runs and pasture shelters in 12 pastures for livestock and horses.



An artist rendering of the new Rodeo/Agriculture Expo Center, which will serve as the home of the Southeastern rodeo team.

With a 135' x 225' lighted outdoor arena, livestock penning, elevated announcer's booth and bleacher seating for over 500, the rodeo program will have a well-equipped space to practice and host more events.

The project also includes a new 3,800 square-foot structure for a classroom building that provides an office, computer lab, large meeting and classroom space, hospitality kitchen, and a shop area that will serve both the rodeo program and Southeastern as a whole.

"As the Southeastern rodeo coach and graduate of the University, I am very proud that we will be able to utilize the rodeo expo facility for our rodeo team, the University, and the community," said Christi Braudrick. "This new facility will (See New, Page 4)



Former Gov. George Nigh tells a story as Southeastern president Thomas Newsom and former Chancellor Glen D. Johnson applaud.

Gov. Nigh offers history lesson at premiere of Oklahoma!

The premiere of Oklahoma! March 4 at Montgomery Auditorium received an extra boost of excitement with the guest appearance of former Gov. George Nigh.

Theatre at Southeastern and the Department of Music presented the epic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical on Friday and Saturday night and again on Sunday afternoon.

Taking the stage prior to Friday's opening performance, Nigh offered an engaging history lesson. In 1953, as a state legislator from McAlester, Nigh introduced a bill to make Oklahoma! the official state song. As Nigh related, the bill drew immediate opposition, as many (See Memorable, Page 4)

AllianceHealth Durant receives Partnership Award

Twenty-six business and higher education partnerships throughout the state were recently recognized as innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma's workforce.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants.

Among the award recipients honored were AllianceHealth Durant and Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

"We are very fortunate to have AllianceHealth Durant in our community," said Southeastern president Thomas Newsom. "During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hospital's leadership, along with its physicians and staff, have gone the extra mile to help ensure the health of our citizens and the University. They are a true partner that makes a positive impact on Durant and the surrounding area."



Attending the partnership recognition event were Chancellor Allison Garrett, Alliance Health CEO Kevin Samrow, Dr. Nirmal Kaur, Dr. Amanda Hale, Southeastern president Thomas Newsom, SE director of alumni relations and development Mark Webb, SE assistant athletic director/head trainer Scott Willman, and SE athletic director Keith Baxter.

AllianceHealth and Southeastern have maintained a mutually beneficial relationship for more than 20 years. During the pandemic and under the leadership of AllianceHealth Durant's Chief Executive Officer Kevin Samrow, hospital physicians provided student-athletes with a variety of tests, including cardiac testing, pulmonary function testing and follow-up care if needed.

Savage Storm team physicians Dr. W. Joseph Harrison and Dr. Amanda Hale led the response, accompanied by Dr. Nirmal Kaur, to ensure SE athletes were spared COVID-19 side effects that would place them with an increased risk to injury or illness.

The expertise of these physicians, and the leadership from Samrow, allowed Southeastern to maintain some sense of normalcy as students continued their education.

Regent Mike Turpen served as master of ceremonies for the event which was held at the Nigh University Center on the campus of the University of Central Oklahoma.

New chancellor speaks at Legislative Tour event

Southeastern Oklahoma State University president Thomas Newsom and various SE administrators joined other area college officials, regents, legislators, and Chancellor Allison Garrett March 4 at the Southeast Oklahoma Regional Legislative Tour.

The event was held at Pete's Place restaurant in Krebs.

Chancellor Garrett provided brief remarks, and mentioned healthcare, engineering, and the teacher pipeline as three fields critical to education and the future of Oklahoma. Garrett began her duties as chancellor on Nov. 8, 2021, and is the first woman to hold the office.

Also attending from Southeastern were vice president for academic affairs Dr. Teresa Golden, vice president for student affairs Liz McCraw, and director of university communications Alan Burton.

In addition to Southeastern, officials from Carl Albert State College, East Central University, Eastern Oklahoma State College, Murray State College, and Seminole State College attended the luncheon.



Chancellor Allison Garrett

Savage Storm capture regular season men's title

It was a memorable season for the Southeastern Savage Storm basketball teams, and one of “what might have been” for the men’s squad.

Both teams advanced to the Great American Conference (GAC) post-season tournament, with the women bowing out in the first round to eventual tournament champion Southwestern. Coach Darin Grover’s team finished with an overall record of 12-17, with a 10-12 mark in conference.



Briley Moon releases a shot during regular season play.

Briley Moon and Kamryn Cantwell earned All-GAC honors. Moon, a junior from Martin’s Mill, Texas, was a second team selection, while also earning Distinguished Scholar Athlete designation for her work in the classroom.

Cantwell, a junior from Bowie, Texas, was honorable mention.

It was a season of great accomplishment for coach Kelly Green’s men’s team. The Storm captured the GAC regular season title with a mark of 18-4. However, they were upset in the GAC semifinals by Southern Nazarene, and, despite an impressive 24-6 overall record, did



The Southeastern Savage Storm captured the regular season championship in the Great American Conference with a league mark of 18-4.

not receive an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Southeastern did dominate the GAC awards, with Adam Dworsky picking up Player of the Year honors, while Ante Brzovic was named the league’s Freshman of the Year, and Green earned Coach of the Year honors.

In all, six Savage Storm players received awards. Dworsky, a senior from Flower Mound, Texas, and Brzovic, a freshman from Zagreb, Croatia, were named first team selections, in addition to their specialty awards. Dworsky was also named second team NABC All-District in the Central Region as well as earning a spot in the Reese’s Division II All-Star Game. Kellen Manek, a senior from Harrah, Oklahoma, picked up a second team All-GAC selection, while Bobby Johnson, a senior from Atoka, and Jett Sternberger, a sophomore from Kingfisher, were both named honorable mention all-conference.



Adam Dworsky

Taylor Cox was recognized for his work in the classroom and was an Elite Scholar Athlete, while Dworsky and Manek were named Distinguished Scholar Athletes.

Ribbon-cutting held for new Einstein Bros. Bagels

The Durant Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting ceremony March 8 for Einstein Bros. Bagels, located across from the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The new dining and gathering spot was funded with capital investment from Sodexo and auxiliary revenue. Einsteins is open for breakfast and lunch, with a menu that includes bagels, salads, wraps, sandwiches, desserts, and a full-service coffee bar.

It is the first Einstein Bros. at a university to feature a drive-thru.



A large crowd attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Einstein Bros. Bagels.

Calendar of Events

April

- 1 -- Prospective Teacher Academy and Teacher Education Career Fair
- 5 -- Crystal Robinson meet and greet, Einstein Bros., 9 a.m., softball game, 2-5 p.m.
- 6-7 -- Red River Revue (Chorvettes), Montgomery Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- 8-9 -- Aviation Alumni Reunion (Career Fair-Reunion Dinner and scholarship ceremony)
- 15 -- Holiday
- 18 -- Faculty-Staff recognition event, 3:30 p.m.
- 25 -- Groundbreaking for rodeo/expo center, 2 p.m.
- 26 -- Tri-County Honors

May

- 6 -- Spring Commencement (Master degrees), Bloomer Sullivan Arena, 6 p.m.
- 7 -- Spring Commencement (Bachelor degrees) Bloomer Sullivan Arena, 9 a.m.

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Memorable performance

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legislators did not want to replace the then-current state song – “Oklahoma – (A Toast)”.

But Nigh had a plan. He delayed the bill for one legislative day, allowing him time to invite the Oklahoma College for Women Choir and Ridge Bond, who sang lead as Curly in the Broadway performance, to the House floor. With the House gallery packed, the college choir performed majestically, while Bond, in his Curly costume, strode to the microphone, bringing the house down.

The vote was then approved to make Oklahoma! the official state song.

Nigh, now 94, served as Governor and Lt. Governor of Oklahoma on two separate occasions. He later was president of the University of Central Oklahoma.

Other special guests of Southeastern Oklahoma State University president Thomas Newsom at the event were Gov. Nigh’s wife, Donna, and former Chancellor and SE president Glen D. Johnson and his wife Melinda.

In addition to Gov. Nigh, Chancellor Johnson and President Newsom also offered brief remarks.

“It was a truly memorable night for Southeastern and the Durant community,” Newsom said. “The presence of Gov. Nigh and Chancellor Johnson made it an historic experience for all of us. We really appreciate their interest and taking the time to support Southeastern and our outstanding music and theatre programs.”

The three-hour performance included 29 cast members and 14-piece orchestra. Among the SE faculty members involved were Dr. Aaron Adair, stage director; Dr. Jeremy Blackwood, musical director; Dr. Michael Scheuerman, orchestra conductor; and Riley Risso Coker, director of choreography.

New facility a plus for community

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have a positive economic impact on Durant through the events it can accommodate. And I am very excited about the future of the Southeastern rodeo program.”

The expo center is just the latest in a number of recent new/renovated campus facility projects, funded by partnerships/private donors, including:

- The Semple Family Museum of Native American Art, funded by a gift from the Semple family, and located north of the Fine Arts Building and Russell Building on Montgomery/Dunlap Drive

- Athletics Strength & Conditioning Center, volleyball court in Bloomer Sullivan Gymnasium

- Einstein Bros. Bagels, located next to the SE Barnes & Noble on University Avenue