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Cannicott Expands BrightStar Care Territories Into One Integrated Agency



By Van Mitchell, staff writer

When Jarod Cannicott acquired two BrightStar Care territories in the Oklahoma City metro in 2021, his goal was simple: build a home-care organization that families can trust when they are in crisis.

By 2025, that same focus led him to expand across Oklahoma City and acquire the BrightStar Care location in Tulsa - a longtime office that had served the community for 17 years but was not consistently delivering care to the standard he expects.

"When we acquired the Tulsa location, the care experience wasn't meeting our standard," Cannicott said. "Fixing that required a full overhaul of staffing, training, and clinical oversight - and we've done that work."

Today, Cannicott operates five BrightStar Care locations as one integrated agency, with the scale to serve clients across Oklahoma.

"We serve clients statewide," he said. "We have clients as far west as Elk City, as far north as Ponca City, as far east as Grove, and then south down to Ardmore."

That reach is backed by a statewide caregiver bench - about 250 caregivers across Oklahoma - and a model designed for speed and reliability when families need help fast. "In many personal care situations, we can start the same day," Cannicott said. "And families get a live answer 24/7 from our own staff - not a call center."

A higher standard, with nurses built into the operation. BrightStar Care is known nationally as an in-home care provider, and Cannicott believes the brand's biggest differentiator is how strongly it leads with clinical oversight and skilled care.

"Nurses aren't an afterthought here," he said. "Our company is nurse-led. We have registered nurses deeply involved in how we deliver care - including roles that most people wouldn't expect, like scheduling and community liaison work - so oversight is baked into the operation."

Cannicott points to Joint Commission accreditation as one way BrightStar holds itself accountable to that standard.

The Joint Commission is a nationally recognized organization that accredits health care providers based on quality and safety standards, including many leading hospitals and health systems.

"We use that framework to keep our practices tight," Cannicott said. "It's about consistency and safety for families." That emphasis shows up in operational details as well. For example, Cannicott's teams reassess clients every 90 days, more frequently than the industry norm, because care needs can change quickly.

"Families deserve a plan that stays current," he said. "And reliability matters - the best care plan fails if shifts aren't covered. Our systems are built for coverage." Not just personal care: complex and skilled care at home.

Like many home care agencies, BrightStar provides private-pay personal care with CNAs and caregivers.

Cannicott says the difference is the breadth of skilled and higher-acuity care his Oklahoma team delivers - services many agencies cannot safely provide.

"We do private pay personal care, but we also do higher-acuity work," he said. "That includes private-pay skilled nursing, catastrophic workers' compensation cases, skilled care for Veterans in the home for complex conditions like ALS, home infusions, and therapy."

Those services can be the difference between a patient staying safely at home or cycling back through the hospital.

"For a lot of families, the question isn't 'Do we want home care?'" Cannicott said. "It's 'How do we keep mom or dad safe at home, and who can actually manage what's happening medically?' That's where skilled support matters."

Serving Veterans and supporting the spouse Cannicott said it is a distinct honor for his caregivers and nurses to serve Veterans and their families.

In Tulsa and across Oklahoma, BrightStar works with the Veteran community through the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program, providing CNAs and caregivers to help with activities of daily living.

See **BRIGHTSTAR** page 6

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Auditorium to Host Performing Arts Series

By Van Mitchell

As home of the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation's Performing Arts Series, it hosts an extensive schedule of concerts, dance theater, lectures, and cultural events throughout the year.



Armstrong Auditorium is an award-winning, world-class performing arts venue situated on the campus of Herbert W. Armstrong College, at 14400 South Bryant (at Waterloo) in north Edmond.

"Our mission is to champion Oklahoma as a world-class center for the arts by bringing monumental cultural experiences to Oklahoma," Shane Granger, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation said.

The Performing Arts Series features a veritable who's who of today's brightest stars in classical, jazz and folk music, as well as theater, classical ballet, folk dance and more.

Performers have included Broadway legends Brian Stokes Mitchell

and Kelli O'Hara, vocalists Renée Fleming and Frederica von Stade, the late conductor Marvin Hamlisch and the late pianist André Watts, violinist Joshua Bell and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Romero Guitar Quartet, the Canadian Brass, the Vienna Boys Choir, the Russian National Ballet, NEA Jazz Masters honoree Branford Marsalis and trumpeter Doc Severinsen, among many others. In 2026, there will be a series of new concerts at the Armstrong Auditorium to kick off the new year.

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in the world, the Venice Baroque Orchestra returns to the Armstrong stage.

They are teaming up with virtuoso violinist Chouchane Siranossian in a cleverly packaged program of works featuring the violin by Baroque composers from Venice, including Vivaldi, Tartini, Locatelli and Veracini—all gifted at showing off the fireworks of the fiddle.

The VBO and Siranossian won the Diapason d'Or award in 2023 for their recording of this program—named “Album of the Week” by several European radio stations. NDR Kultur commented: “Whoever thought that Baroque music ... is very predictable ... is deceived and beautifully surprised. A stirring recording.” Pizzicato magazine lauded “the contrasts between dazzling virtuosity and a delicacy that takes one's breath away”

On Thursday, Feb. 19 at 7:30 p.m. the Three Italian Tenors—Giovanni Maria Palmia, Ugo Tarquini and Gianni Leccese—present “Italia Musica Amore” (From Italy With Love), an extraordinary program of the most famously beloved Italian opera arias and songs, fusing Italian wit and charm with romanticism, lyricism, dramatic flair and operatic style. This project is the inaugural tour in the United States of this new Italian ensemble.

For over three decades, Jazz at Lincoln Center has been a leading advocate for jazz, culture, and arts education globally. Its touring initiative has brought the art form of jazz from the heart of New York City to over 446 cities in more than 40 countries.

They will be performing on the Armstrong stage on Thursday, March 5 at 7:30 p.m.

Their program “Great American Crooners” focuses on quintessential crooners such as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Bobby Darin, whose velvety voices and sentimental serenades made them superstars on stage and on screen. Featuring Robbie Lee and Shenel Johns, who have both graced Jazz at

Lincoln Center's stages and Downbeat Magazine's #1 Rising Star Male Vocalist, Benny Benack III.

Relive classics like “I've Got You Under My Skin,” “Misty,” “I Only Have Eyes for You” and “Moon River,” and enjoy incredible true stories about these legends. According to Granger, the series continues to grow in popularity and enjoys a broad subscription base of Oklahomans from as far as Weatherford and Tulsa, Enid and Norman. Armstrong offers both full season and flex subscription packages. Its Performing Arts Series runs annually from September to April.

The auditorium seats 823 and is lauded for its near perfect acoustics. Adorned with Swarovski chandeliers, Baccarat crystal candelabra once owned by the Shah of Iran, Appalachian cherry and caramel onyx from Azerbaijan, the palatial auditorium is a veritable “feast for the senses.”

“The best way to describe the Armstrong experience is ‘intimacy’,” Granger said. “Its small size provides an intimate experience in a chamber hall unparalleled in luxurious comfort, acoustic excellence and breathtaking beauty.”

Armstrong's programming is unique in that it offers audiences the rare opportunity to experience artists for an entire program in an intimate setting, according to Granger. The late pianist André Watts performed an entire solo program of Liszt. Renée Fleming sang a full-length recital with just piano accompaniment to a full house. “Those are indeed rare, monumental cultural experiences,” he said.

The Armstrong Auditorium has been honored with over a dozen awards, including three RedBud Awards, the state's highest honor, from the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.

To purchase tickets, call 1(888)-211-3530 or visit www.armstrongauditorium.org



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Chouchane Siranossian, violin

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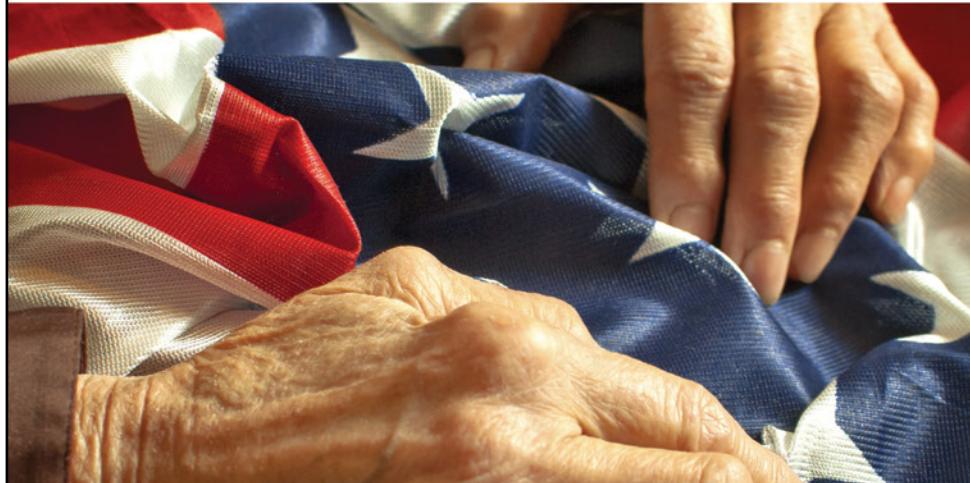
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BRIGHTSTAR con't from page 2

But he believes the most important story for many Veteran households is what happens when care needs become complex - and the spouse or family caregiver is carrying an unsustainable load.

"We work with the Veteran community through the Homemaker Home Health Aide program," he said. "And we also provide skilled care with Veterans in the home with help from the VA."

One example is ALS - they're currently taking care of ALS patients at home, and those families need a much higher level of support."

In progressive conditions like ALS, Cannicott says, the spouse is often under immense strain.

"We serve the Veteran by supporting the spouse," he said. "Respite and professional help can keep the household intact."

Cannicott says the Tulsa acquisition was not about adding dots on a map - it was about delivering consistent experience statewide, including Tulsa.

"We wanted to bring the same level of service across the entire state and bring that level to Tulsa," he said. "That work took real effort, but now we're seeing results."

One family's review reflects what the team aims to deliver - a partnership that helps people remain at home as long as safely possible.

"Working with our nurse, we were able to keep my parents at their home of 57 years for as long as we possibly could," a recent reviewer wrote.

For Cannicott, the mission is straightforward: scale through quality, responsiveness, and clinical oversight.

"We're proud of what we've built," he said. "And we're focused on doing it even better."

Need help in Oklahoma?

BrightStar Care answers calls live 24/7. For Tulsa care needs - including same-day starts for many personal care situations, and skilled support for complex cases - call (918)-392-9949. For Oklahoma City, call (405)-896-9600.

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VillageOKC to Host Positive Aging Seminar

Simple meals that support health and connection

VillagesOKC will host a free Positive Aging seminar designed to help older adults rediscover the joy and simplicity of everyday meals—especially when cooking for one or two.

“Table for One (or Two): Cereal Is Not a Meal!” will be Thursday, February 12, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Metro Tech Business Conference Center, 1900 Springlake Drive in Oklahoma City.

The presentation will be led by Chef Darin Leonardson, founder and CEO of Transformed Culinary Solutions and culinary consultant to Concordia Life Plan Community, a VillagesOKC partner. The session will blend discussion, interactive Q&A, demo-style food preparation and food sampling.



Chef Darin Leonardson will be the February Positive Aging presenter.

Designed with real-life challenges in mind, the program focuses on practical meal ideas that feel achievable—without extensive prep, cleanup, or waste. Topics include why nutrition matters more as we age, even as appetite and energy change; how food supports not only physical health but also mental engagement and social connection, and easy ways to make meals satisfying again when dining solo.

Chef Darin will share why adding color to your meals improves your health. He will provide a food demonstration with samples, highlighting simple techniques to achieve a better meal experience and benefits.

The seminar will also include a brief practical discussion on food safety, covering how long foods are safe to keep in the refrigerator or freezer, helping attendees reduce food waste while avoiding the risks of consuming expired items.

Chef Darin brings more than 30 years of experience in fine dining, corporate food operations, and senior living. From managing high-volume kitchens at Google to pioneering resident-centered dining programs, his work emphasizes fresh ingredients, personalization, and dignity at the table. “Food is more than nourishment—it’s connection, comfort, and dignity,” he said.

Julie Davis, seminar organizer, said the event reflects VillagesOKC’s mission. “This seminar is about meeting people where they are and giving them tools that truly fit their lives. Small, realistic changes can make a meaningful difference in health and happiness.”

The seminar is open to the public and offers a welcoming, informative environment for anyone interested in aging well—one colorful plate at a time.



Registration is open at villagesokc.org/positive-aging or by calling (405) 212-9120.



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AARP Warns of Data Center Utility Rate Threat

By Bobby Anderson, RN

Global electricity demand is set to rise sharply over the next decade and we may all be footing the bill for it through higher utility rates thanks to energy-leaching data centers.

A recent UN report says demand will rise by over 10,000 terawatt-hours by 2035. This increase is roughly equal to the total electricity consumption of all advanced economies today.

A new AARP survey finds that 75% of Americans, regardless of political party, believe state policymakers should work to ensure that residential utility customers do not pay for the costs of serving new large data centers, including the massive artificial intelligence (AI)-related facilities coming online across the country.

Reporting from multiple Oklahoma news organizations shows at least 18 data center projects in Oklahoma driven heavily by AI-related power consumption needs are either under construction or awaiting approval.

Although the survey was conducted nationally, the findings carry particular urgency in Oklahoma, where data center development is accelerating at an unprecedented rate.

The survey shows an overwhelming public agreement, with 78% of respondents saying data centers, not residential customers, should cover their own electricity and water costs associated with their large-scale operations.

"These findings reinforce what we're hearing from thousands of Oklahomans who say utility bills are already too high, and they can't



Oklahoma Representative Brad Boles (R-Marlow) and Senator Kendal Sacchieri (R-Blanchard) are introducing separate legislation to help shield Oklahoma utility ratepayers from a surge in data center construction. - Photos Provided.

afford a penny more," said AARP Oklahoma State Director Sean Voskuhl. "Residential customers must be protected from massive data centers and utility companies that want to leave customers holding the bag."

One Oklahoma senator is trying to slow the process down until we better understand who is going to pay for it.

In January, Senator Kendal Sacchieri (R-Blanchard) introduced Senate Bill 1488, legislation that would establish a moratorium on the construction of new data centers in Oklahoma until November 1, 2029 and direct the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to study the long-term effects these large facilities may have on state infrastructure and resources.

The moratorium would pause new data center development while the Corporation Commission conducts a comprehensive review of key concerns, including water supply impacts, utility rate pressures, property value effects, and optimal siting practices.

The bill requires the Commission to submit its findings and recommendations to the Legislature to inform future policy decisions.

"As data centers continue to grow rapidly across Oklahoma, we are confronting serious unknowns about how these large facilities affect our communities, our utilities, and our natural resources," Sen. Sacchieri said. "This bill stems from those unknowns, and there are real, serious concerns around what these data centers will bring to our state negatively. We must be sincere in addressing these unknowns and finding the best solutions for the erection of these very large facilities. There may be better solutions out there than what we are currently doing — which is allowing data centers to be sited anywhere and everywhere without thinking through the long-term effects and repercussions."

By pausing further development, the state can gain empirical evidence on how large-scale data centers interact with Oklahoma's infrastructure and environment, and tailor regulations that protect residents and ratepayers without undermining economic prospects.

"The goal is not to halt progress," Sen. Sacchieri added, "but to ensure that progress does not come at the expense of Oklahomans' quality of life or their utility costs. We owe it to our communities to understand what we don't yet know before we make irreversible decisions about where and how these facilities are built."

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Additionally, the survey shows that older Americans are increasingly worried about rising electricity costs, with 69% of adults 50-plus reporting their electric bills increased in the past year and 78% expressing concern about future increases.

"People are already sacrificing and being forced to choose between food, medicine and keeping the lights on," Voskuhl said.

Voskuhl said AARP Oklahoma is hopeful residential customers will see relief this year with legislation filed by Rep. Brad Boles (R-Marlow) that aims to prevent higher utility rates for families, seniors, and small businesses as data center expansion accelerates.

"As Oklahoma faces a wave of large load users like data centers, we need strong guardrails at both the Legislature and the Corporation Commission to ensure Oklahomans are not forced to foot the bill," Voskuhl said.

Voskuhl noted that AARP Oklahoma has long advocated on behalf of residential customers. "We need hard working Oklahomans to stand up and oppose any utility rate proposal that shifts data center-related infrastructure costs onto consumers," he said. "If people stay silent, they will pay the price."

Utility customers can take action online at waction.aarp.org/OKNoRateHikes.



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See Sudoku Answers on Page: 19

OPINION



Dear Savvy Senior

What are the IRS income tax filing requirements for retirees this tax season? I didn't file a tax return last year because my income was below the filing threshold, but I got a part-time job in 2025, so I'm wondering if I need to file this year.

Semi-retired Joe

Dear Joe,
Whether you need to file a federal income tax return this year depends on several factors: how much you earned in 2025, the source of your income, your age, and your filing status.

Here's a quick guide to this year's IRS filing thresholds. For most people, it's straightforward: if your gross income (all taxable income, excluding Social Security benefits unless you're married and filing separately) is below the threshold for your filing status and age, you generally do not need to file. But if it's over, you will.

2025 IRS Federal Filing Thresholds:

- Single: \$15,750 (\$17,750 if you're 65 or older by Jan. 1, 2026).
- Married filing jointly: \$31,500 (\$33,100 if one spouse is 65 or



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Do I Need to File a Tax Return This Year?

older; or \$34,700 if you're both over 65).

- Married filing separately: \$5 at any age.
- Head of household: \$23,625 (\$25,625 if 65 or older).
- Qualifying surviving spouse: \$31,500 (\$33,100 if 65 or older).

For a detailed breakdown, including taxable vs. nontaxable income, you can request a free copy of the IRS "1040 and 1040-SR Instructions for Tax Year 2025" by calling 800-829-3676, or view it online at [IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040gi.pdf](https://irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040gi.pdf).

Check Here Too

Be aware that there are other financial situations that can require you to file a tax return, even if your gross income falls below the IRS filing requirements. For example, if you earned more than \$400 from self-employment in 2025, owe any taxes on an IRA, Health Savings Account or an alternative minimum tax, or get premium tax credits because you, your spouse or a dependent is enrolled in a Health Insurance Marketplace plan, you'll need to file.

You may also need to file if you're receiving Social Security benefits, and one-half of your benefits plus your other gross income and any tax-exempt interest exceeds \$25,000, or \$32,000 if you're married and filing jointly.

To figure all this out, the IRS offers an online tax tool that asks a series of questions that will help you determine if you're required to file, or if you should file because you're due a refund. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

You can access this tool at [IRS.gov/help/ita](https://irs.gov/help/ita) – click on "Filing Requirements – Do I need to file a tax return?" Or you can get assistance over the phone by calling the IRS helpline at 800-829-1040.

Check Your State

Even if you're not required to file a federal tax return this year, don't assume that you're also excused from filing state income taxes. The rules for your state might be very different. Check with your state tax agency before assuming you're off the hook. A complete list of state tax agencies is available at [Taxadmin.org/ita-members](https://taxadmin.org/ita-members).

Tax Prep Help

If you find that you do need to file a tax return this year, you can Free File at [IRS.gov/freefile](https://irs.gov/freefile), which is a partnership program between the IRS and tax software companies. Your 2025 adjusted gross income must be below \$89,000 to qualify.

If you need some help with your tax returns, the IRS sponsored Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program provides free tax preparation and counseling to middle and low-income taxpayers, age 60 and older. Call 800-906-9887 or visit [IRS.treasury.gov/freetaxprep](https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep) to locate services near you.

You can also get help through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide service at AARP.org/findtaxhelp or call 888-227-7669. You don't have to be an AARP member to use this service.

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FREE RIDE



Story by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

Senior News and Living is alerting seniors to Oklahoma City EMBARK's free downtown streetcar pilot program in 2026, encouraging them to take advantage of this new privilege.

The undated photo above is designed to shock readers into realizing they can ride OKC Streetcars free for the first six months of 2026.

This treatment of a free downtown public transportation announcement for 2026, "showing" rather than 'telling' the senior reader, is more than just a city update seniors might overlook. It offers an engaging approach that connects with an audience familiar with vintage trolleys like the one above.

EMBARK Streetcar Rides Downtown Free Until July

The old black-and-white photo of a streetcar helps create a mental picture of the familiar to relate to the modern light rail downtown at right.

This initiative aims to inspire seniors to explore downtown events more freely, fostering a sense of community and belonging through the free rides from 22 stops until July 5, 2026.

Instead of worrying about payment systems, seniors can comfortably reach downtown locations, confident that the free streetcar service offers greater accessibility and easier travel.

In a digital age where everyone can share news, Senior News and Living is using this descriptive storytelling to provide "meaningful context" that sets their coverage apart from a city hall press release.

This is perfect for seniors wanting to tour downtown or show their family the town for free, sharing the experience of enjoying the 'hushed hum of the electric motors' and the 'unobstructed views of the skyline' through the large windows of the downtown loop.

During our fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, OKC Streetcar set a new ridership record with 288,517 annual riders," said EMBARK Director Jesse Rush in a news release. "While this growth is encouraging, peer cities such as Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Cincinnati have shown that fare-free downtown circulator streetcar service can significantly boost ridership and year-over-year growth. Oklahoma City is launching this six-month pilot to test if removing fares further reduces barriers, increases usage, and improves downtown mobility. The results of this pilot will help determine whether a permanent fare-free service is the best long-term strategy for the OKC Streetcar."

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This free service can provide easy free access to major public events attracting large crowds in downtown Oklahoma City during the first six months of 2026. Seniors can park at their convenience near the 22 streetcar platforms and ride free to major festivals and high-profile events centered in the area and Bricktown.

In addition to OKC Thunder basketball games at the Paycom Center, the center hosts regional and national events. It is known for its world-class entertainment, hosting major concerts.

Through this free pilot program, streetcar service will be offered to and from the 60th Annual Festival of the Arts (April 23–26). Bicentennial Park is the hub of free family-friendly visual arts, live performances, and international cuisine, typically attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. Right next door, by free streetcar ride to packet pickup, Expo and start-

finish, is the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon (April 24–26): Traditionally held on the last weekend of April, this event, featuring a senior marathon, attracts 20,000 runners and thousands of spectators to the downtown start and finish lines.

This year's special Route 66 "Kickin' It" Centennial Birthday Bash (May 30) celebration will be centered at Scissortail Park and the Myriad Botanical Gardens, featuring Americana nostalgia and modern festivities. Again, EMBARK's free initiative in July aims to boost ridership, ease downtown traffic congestion, and encourage residents and visitors to explore downtown districts without a car.

The streetcar operates on two main loops connecting major districts. The Downtown Loop (4.86 miles) connects five districts, including City Center, Midtown, and Automobile Alley. The Bricktown Loop (2.04 miles) focuses on the Bricktown entertainment district.

Downtown Loop service begins at 6 a.m. Monday through Friday. On Saturdays and Sundays, 7 a.m. Service ends at midnight Monday through Thursday, 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10 p.m. on Sundays.

The Bricktown Loop maintains a later overall schedule. It begins service at 6 a.m. on Fridays and at 7 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, with late-night service until 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. For more detailed info, see <https://www.embarkok.com/streetcar/map-schedule>.



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Senior Marathon is Evolving in Privileges

Story and photos by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

The Oklahoma City Memorial Senior Marathon began with a huge turnout in its first year, with more than 1,000 participants 65 or older, and has built on that by becoming more age-range inclusive. It now invites runners and walkers to compete at 60, making it a highly anticipated fixture on the seniors' fitness calendar.

This focus on inclusion empowers more seniors to log their first miles on their own and complete a "Run to Remember" by finishing the final 1.2 miles of a 26.2-mile goal.

Presented by Mercy Hospitals, the Senior Marathoners complete their event the day before the Marathon, Saturday, April 25, at 8 a.m. Their start is between the 7 a.m. start of the 5K run and the Kids' Marathon, a similar event at 9 a.m.

The course begins at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum and winds through downtown, ending in Scissortail Park!

The social aspect of running, a key to healthy aging, was addressed over the last two years when the planners introduced a Senior Groups program that offered cash awards for the largest participating groups.

Now that the age eligibility has been lowered to 60, many long-time participants are competing in the short Senior Marathon on Saturday as a warm-up. On Saturday, they run their entire regular distance to take advantage of the socialization throughout the weekend.

"This has become one of the quintessential races of inclusion that embodies our Marathon weekend," race announcer Mark Bravo said. "Now that the age eligibility for the Senior Marathon event has lowered to 60, a key element that affects so many seniors, lack of socialization, is made easier."

Seniors can actually walk or run the Senior Marathon (1.2 miles) on



Saturday—it's not about being fast, just being a part of things—and if able and prepared, participate in the Quarter, Half or even Full Marathon Sunday."

Director of Business Development at OK Runner Bravo is an author, running coach and a

professional motivational speaker.

"Moreover, not only taking in one of the true "destination races" in the US, but by preparing in the weeks and months previous, valuable relationships are often forged and enhanced, Bravo said in an interview. "I've participated in the first three Senior events, and in some capacity, will certainly be out there again Saturday to kick off this most special weekend of races."

The event's structure encourages seniors (aged 60+) to complete 25 miles starting in January, culminating in the final 1.2-mile race. This promotes consistent, long-term physical activity, which improves bone density, joint stability, and cardiovascular health in older adults.

Social connectivity is enhanced when seniors participate in groups at fitness centers, churches, and retirement communities. They combat loneliness and build lasting social connections through shared goals.

The Senior Group Program offers two \$500 cash awards to help winning groups with the most participants fund their local wellness programs, directly reinvesting in senior health infrastructure.

This event focuses on commemoration and resilience set in the "Oklahoma Standard" on the 31st anniversary of the 1995 bombing. Seniors who lived through the event set an example of healing for younger generations when races began with 168 seconds of silence. The courses

Con't. on page 19

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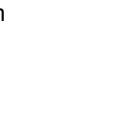
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are lined with banners of victims, turning the physical act of running into a collective act of remembrance and hope.

The community-driven event started in 2001 as a fundraiser for the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. It has been offering this experience to seniors for four years. Seniors who walk or run before the marathon on Sunday can support the downtown museum to help honor the victims, survivors, rescuers, and those affected by the April 19, 1995, bombing.

As the largest fundraiser for the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, race registration fees directly fund the mission to educate future generations about the impact of violence.

Last year, the overall Memorial Marathon weekend set a record, with 26,000 to 27,000 participants across all six race categories, including the senior division.

Along with lowering the age range for seniors to 60, the run on Sunday introduced a Quarter Marathon last year to celebrate the 25th anniversary. The new 6.55-mile Quarter Marathon may be in reach for seniors who want to double up over the weekend.

Seniors always show their appreciation when they interact with famous senior athletes, including Joan Benoit Samuelson, Bill Rodgers and Frank Shorter, who attend to run and speak to participants at the Health & Fitness Expo. Rodgers first won the Boston Marathon in 1975, and went on to win Boston and NYC four times each in the next five years.

Seniors and Senior Groups receive special privileges to recognize their participation in their event on Saturday. On Friday, April 24, the Health & Fitness Expo opens an hour early, offering exclusive entry and packet pickup just for Senior Marathoners at 10 a.m.

A \$500 prize will be awarded to the senior group with the most participants. All other groups will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win \$500 toward their wellness programs.

The Senior Groups program also offers early packet pick-up for coordinators who receive free registration, allowing them to collect packets for the group before race weekend. Due to the large number of seniors, special bus and van parking will be available for dropping off and picking up senior athletes at the Start and Finish Lines.

This allows seniors to feel like "elite" participants because of the on-course support from a massive outpouring of cheering from volunteering OKC residents. The support and encouragement from the community make seniors feel valued and part of a larger cause.

Senior marathoners can enjoy refreshments, the camaraderie of competition, and interaction at the "Finish Line Festival" presented by Continental Resources in Scissortail Park. They are invited to head inside to the popular Health and Fitness Expo at the Oklahoma City Convention Center. The OKC Convention and Visitors Bureau and OU Health present the Expo.

The entry fee of \$35, rising to \$40 on March 4, includes an event t-shirt and a finishing medal. It offers complimentary admission to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum that day, courtesy of their bib number.

This event can energize many people to participate in an activity that provides good health, a key to aging gracefully. Whether seniors run or walk, this "Run to Remember" is a proven way to stay active and promote good health.



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Belmont Cove

Owens Family Builds Belmont Cove Into Premiere 50+ Independent Living Community for Seniors

Gary Owens is a familiar face locally with his television commercials as owner of Galleria Furniture.

But Owens is also in the construction business where he and his son Justin have built Belmont Cove into one of the premiere 50+ independent living communities, with one located in Yukon at 1650 S Czech Hall Road, and the newest one in Oklahoma City, at 14604 Parkway Center.

Gary and his son, Justin, are owners and builders at Belmont Cove. Gary started construction in 1978, then added his son, Justin Owens and now grandson, Dawson Owens has been added, making this a great family-oriented team, all local to the area.

"We do probably 40% of the work ourselves, which allows us to pass the cost saving onto our residents, with about a 20% savings over the competitors' pricing," Gary Owens said. "We have a great full time construction crew, thanks to our leaders and building superintendents. **Jake Sellers has been with us for 25 years, Edgar Escamilla 25 years, and Carlos Escamilla 25 years.**

We have great office staff as well, with Carolyn Kulbeth assisting clients at the Yukon location and Claudia Escamilla taking care of the clients at the OKC North location."

Gary Owens said each location features maintenance free luxury high-quality homes with hardwood flooring, stainless steel appliances, and granite countertops.

He said their units come with a fire suppression system, security alarm, and a 1-car garage with door opener. These also come with a covered patio in the small yard with a stockade fence.

"Our Yukon location boasts easy access to I-40, dining and shopping areas and medical facilities. This community features walking paths, pet-friendly homes, and a clubhouse with a pool as well as regular scheduled activities. Each unit has 1,076 square feet of quality living space, hardwood flooring, stainless steel appliances, granite, ceramic tile, and so much more," Owens said.

Owens said each Belmont Cove North unit has 1,200 square feet of quality living space, fully furnished or unfurnished, with all the amenities of the Yukon location.

He said coming soon is a 7,000 square foot clubhouse and pool. The clubhouse will have an indoor pickleball court with 4 regulation sized courts in a heated and cool environment.

Owens said **Phase 1 is now complete** and leasing for units is open. The full development will hold 320 units when each phase is complete.

"Coming soon will be our location in Moore with all the same amenities as the first two locations. There will be a clubhouse with pickleball, a pool, walking trails, and so much more, making this a great place to live," Owens said.

Owens first got into senior independent living construction in the 1990s.

"We built one of these in the '90s in Mustang," he said. "And a guy called me one day and said, 'Would you sell it?' " And I did. I sold it to him, and I have regretted it ever since."

Fast forward about a decade later, Owens was looking for affordable senior living for his mother-in-law.

"My father-in-law was my building superintendent and he passed away. And so, I was looking for a place for my mother-in-law to move into," he said. "And we couldn't find anything new that she could really afford. And so, I thought, well, I ought to just build some of these and help myself and help the senior citizens. So, we did."

Owens said they started Belmont Cove about 9 years ago in the original Yukon location.

For more information call (405)-805-COVE or visit www.belmontcove.com or use your phone and scan this QR CODE. ● By Van Mitchell, staff writer



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Gary Owens, right, is the owner of Belmont Cove with locations in Yukon and Oklahoma City. Pictured on the left is Claudia Escamilla, leasing manager at Belmont Cove North.



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Free Medicare Webinar Live and On-Demand

The Oklahoma Insurance Department's (OID) Medicare Assistance Program (MAP) will continue its free Medicare Mondays webinar series in 2026, offering live and on-demand education for Oklahomans navigating Medicare.

The webinars, which take place at 10 a.m. on the first Monday of each month, provide unbiased information on essential Medicare topics for current enrollees and those approaching eligibility. Since launching in 2023, Medicare Mondays have helped hundreds better understand their Medicare options.

The series is hosted by MAP Divisional Director Ray Walker, who brings more than 20 years of healthcare industry experience to each session.

"Medicare is a great program that provides a wealth of healthcare services to older Americans, as well as people on disability," Walker said. "We want to make sure people have the information they need to be able to access that program and make the most of the healthcare coverage they've earned."

Registration is available at map.oid.ok.gov by clicking the revolving banner. Recorded webinars can be viewed on-demand under the Educational Videos tab and on YouTube.

2026 Medicare Monday Schedule:

Welcome to Medicare – Feb. 2
What if I Disagree? How To File an Appeal – March 2
Keeping on Top of Your Health – April 6
Medicare Supplement Plans in Oklahoma – May 4
Fraud Prevention and Reporting – June 1
Medicare Cost Savings Programs for Low-Income Seniors – July 6
How Medicare Covers Prescription Medication – Aug. 3
Getting Ready for Open Enrollment – Sept. 14
Medicare Advantage Plans – Oct. 5
Preparing for Future Healthcare Needs – Nov. 2
Medicare Changes for 2027 – Dec. 7

MAP provides free, confidential Medicare assistance to Oklahomans. For additional help or information, call 800-763-2828 or visit map.oid.ok.gov.



Governor Stitt Issues Executive Order Strengthening Oversight of Medicare Advantage Plans

New Requirements Will Protect Oklahoma Seniors, Providers, and the Stability of Care Networks

Governor Kevin Stitt has issued a new executive order establishing additional requirements for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans operating in Oklahoma, a move designed to better protect consumers and medical providers while strengthening accountability in the marketplace.

The executive order requires Medicare Advantage plans to have appropriate contracts with medical providers, ensuring patients have access to care and that providers are treated fairly and paid appropriately. By reinforcing network adequacy and contractual standards, the order addresses ongoing concerns about disruptions in care, surprise billing, and instability for seniors who rely on Medicare Advantage coverage.

"This executive order is an important step toward protecting Oklahoma consumers and the medical professionals who care for them," said Insurance Commissioner Glen Mulready. "Medicare Advantage plans play a growing role in our healthcare system, and it is essential that they operate responsibly, transparently, and with enforceable commitments to both patients and providers."

Mulready noted that he has long advocated at the federal level for greater authority for state insurance departments to oversee Medicare Advantage plans and to intervene when consumers or providers are harmed.

"We need Oklahomans taking care of Oklahomans," Mulready said. "For years, I have pushed for more tools and authority at the state level so state insurance departments can better address problems with Medicare Advantage plans," Mulready said. "While federal reforms are still needed, this executive order represents a meaningful step in the right direction and demonstrates Oklahoma's commitment to consumer protection."

The executive order reinforces the state's role in monitoring insurer practices, promoting stability in provider networks, and ensuring that Medicare Advantage enrollees receive the care they are promised.

"As enrollment in Medicare Advantage continues to grow, proactive oversight is critical," Mulready added. "This action by Governor Stitt helps bring balance to the system and ensures accountability where it matters most — for Oklahoma seniors and the healthcare providers who serve them."



Oklahoma
Historical
Society

Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum Receive \$71,000 Grant to Restore Glancy Motor Hotel Sign



The Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton were recently awarded a \$71,505 grant from the Route 66 Revitalization Grant Program to help restore and display the iconic Glancy Motor Hotel neon sign. The sign is a significant part of Route 66 history as a popular rest stop that was well known to motorists across the country.

"The Glancy Motor Hotel sign needs significant repairs before it can be permanently installed outside the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton," said Chantry Banks, director of the Museums and Historic Sites division for the Oklahoma Historical Society. "We hope to have the sign placed at the museum in the spring of 2026, just a few months before the centennial of Route 66 in November."

The Glancy Motor Hotel was opened in 1950 by Chester and Gladys Glancy. The property in Clinton saw hundreds of thousands of visitors during the heyday of Route 66. With the construction of the interstate and subsequent loss of traffic along Route 66, the Glancy Motor Hotel would face the same fate as many other businesses along the highway. It eventually closed during the 1970s. Despite joint public and private efforts to keep the hotel preserved as a historic property, the building was demolished in 2023. The only remaining piece of the Glancy Motor Hotel is the neon sign that once stood outside it, preserved by the City of Clinton in the hopes of a future relighting.

In a joint effort to save it, the City of Clinton, the Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum and the Oklahoma Historical Society established a partnership to restore the sign and install it in Clinton with working neon

light. The sign has already been removed from the former motel site. The Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum will pay for the new monument base and commemorative plaque. The grant will cover the restoration and installation of the sign once it is restored. By preserving the neon sign, the only remaining original piece of the Glancy Motor Hotel, the state is preserving a vital landmark that embodies Clinton's connection to Route 66 history.

"We are honored to play a vital role in ensuring this iconic sign remains part of our community," said Brian Aneshansley, president of the Friends of the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum. "Installing the sign on the grounds of the museum next year will be an exciting day for the community and Route 66 enthusiasts."

Reinstallation of the Glancy sign will take place once the Oklahoma Highway Patrol building on West Gary Boulevard is vacated and demolished.

The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum is located at 2229 W. Gary Blvd. in Clinton. The museum galleries present the history and legends of Route 66 through the decades.

The Oklahoma Route 66 Museum is a division of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society is to collect, preserve and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people. Founded in 1893 by members of the Territorial Press Association, the OHS maintains museums, historic sites and affiliates across the state. Through its research archives, exhibits, educational programs and publications, the OHS chronicles the rich history of Oklahoma. For more information about the OHS, please visit okhistory.org.

Oklahoma Historical Society's Awards Banquet Scheduled for March 19

On Thursday, March 19, the Oklahoma Historical Society will host its annual Awards Banquet at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. Each year, the Awards Banquet brings together historians, educators and civic leaders to honor individuals and organizations who have made a significant impact on our understanding of Oklahoma history.

Among the awards presented, four individuals will be inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame for their distinguished contributions to Oklahoma history. Recipients are celebrated for their lifelong dedication and excellence in preserving, interpreting and sharing the state's story. This year, the Oklahoma Historical Society is honored to induct Donald L. Fixico, David W. Levy (posthumously), Linda D. Wilson and Timothy A. Zwink with this lifetime achievement award.

The event will also celebrate the efforts of outstanding educators, students and individuals. This includes recognizing Caleb Gayle, author of "Black Moses: A Saga of Ambition and the Fight for a Black State," with the E. E. Dale Award for writing the outstanding book on Oklahoma history for 2025.

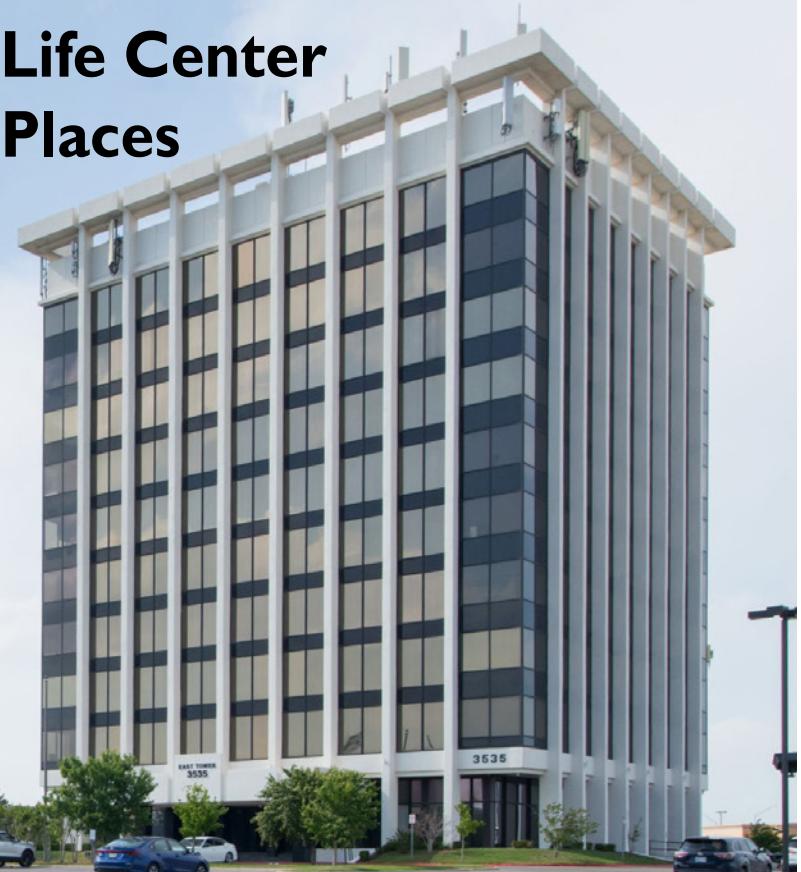
There will be a cocktail reception at 6 p.m. The dinner and program will begin at 6:30 p.m. Cocktail attire is requested, and guests are asked to RSVP by Monday, March 9. For a full list of awards and awardees or to purchase tickets, please visit okhistory.org/awardsbanquet. For more information or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Development Officer Brittney Berling at brittney.berling@history.ok.gov.

Spann House and National Foundation Life Center Added to National Register of Historic Places



The Oklahoma Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) are pleased to announce the National Register of Historic Places designation for the following properties in Oklahoma. The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of properties significant in our past.

Cleveland County
Spann House - 6810 E. Lindsey St., Norman, Cleveland Count.



Located between the city of Norman and Lake Thunderbird in Cleveland County, the Spann House, also known as Acorn Hill, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its Mid-Century Modern architectural style, which borrows from the icons of the day, such as Bruce Goff and Frank Lloyd Wright. Built between 1959 and 1960, and designed by Goff student Robert L. Thomas, the Spann House is an excellent local example of modern American architecture that has withstood the test of time while holding its historical integrity.

Oklahoma County
National Foundation Life Center
3535-3555 NW 58th St., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County

Oklahoma City's National Foundation Life Center, known today as the Landmark Towers, is located along Lake Hefner Parkway and Northwest Expressway. Built between 1967 and 1971, and designed by architectural firm Alan Lower & Associates, the National Foundation Life Center is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in community planning and development as part of the post-World War II suburban commercial development trend and its architectural significance as an excellent example of the New Formalist subtype of the Modern Movement.

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is an honorific designation that provides recognition, limited protection and, in some cases, financial incentives for these important properties.

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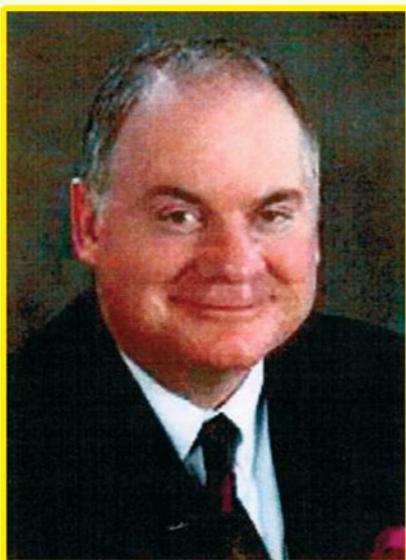
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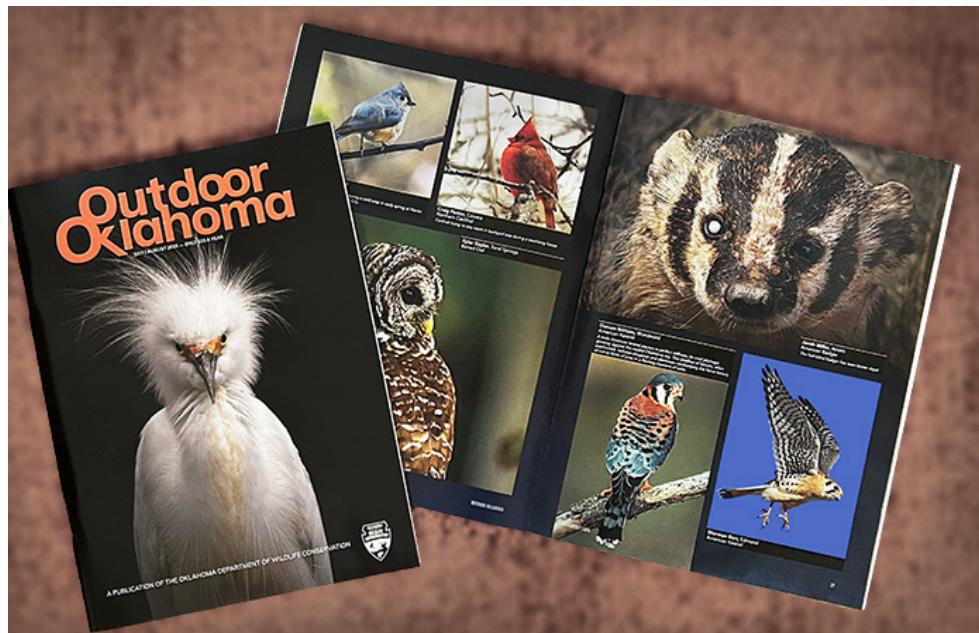
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OKLAHOMA
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Outdoor Oklahoma magazine's July/August issue will feature the wildly popular Readers' Photo Showcase winners. Contest entries will be taken online through April 15. (Photo: wildlifedepartment.com)

Outdoor Oklahoma Opens Photo ShowCase Contest

If you've taken an outstanding outdoors-related photo recently and would be proud to have your talent featured in a nationally-recognized magazine, here's your chance!

Photographers are invited to submit their best digital images to Outdoor Oklahoma magazine's annual Readers' Photography Showcase contest. The entry period is open now through April 15, 2026, at www.tinyurl.com/EnterRPS.

Of the hundreds of entries, judges will select "the best of the best" to be published in the July/August issue of Outdoor Oklahoma, the official magazine of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. If selected, your work will be seen and admired by Outdoor Oklahoma readers nationwide!

It's easy to enter the contest online. Each participant may submit up to three original digital images. Entries may represent a range of subjects relating to Oklahoma's outdoors. Subjects can be wildlife such as mammals, birds, fish or insects; landscapes, rivers, streams and lakes; sunsets, storms or rainbows; action shots from outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing; and more. The photos should have been taken in Oklahoma, but any photographer residing anywhere may enter.

Entrants will provide a description of the subject, location, photographer's name and hometown, and an optional brief account of what it took to get the right shot. Photos must be in sharp focus, and image resolution should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) for high-quality magazine printing.

For more information about the Readers' Photography Showcase and Outdoor Oklahoma magazine, go to wildlifedepartment.com/outdoorok/magazine

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