

Today's Weather  
March 27, 2025  
PT. CLOUDY  
HIGH 89° LOW 51°  
Precipitation 2%  
SW 16 MPH  
HUMIDITY 26%

Precipitation  
Year to date  
**.24**  
D-0 None

# THE SYRACUSE JOURNAL

\$1.00

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Serving Hamilton County Since 1885

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

FRI., MARCH 28  
KIDS RALLY  
WESLEYAN CHURCH  
K-6TH GRADE  
12:00 - 2:00 PM

SAT., APR. 5  
EASTER EGG HUNT  
ARMSTRONG PARK  
10:30 AM

SAT., APR. 5  
DONKEY BBALL  
BARNEY AKERS  
GYM  
7:00 PM  
CONTACT FFA  
MEMBER FOR  
TICKETS

SAT., APR. 26  
MUTT STRUT 5K  
DUANE OLSON  
MEMORIAL  
DOG PARK  
7:30 AM

WEDNESDAYS  
QUO VADIS  
AFTER  
CONFIRMATION  
GROUP  
ST. RAPHAEL  
CHURCH  
6:30 - 8:00 PM

SATURDAYS  
MENS PRAYER  
BREAKFAST  
SO. BAPTIST  
CHURCH 7:00 AM  
ALL ARE WELCOME

TUESDAYS  
PINEAPPLES  
WESLEYAN CHURCH  
5: 00 - 7:00 PM

STORYTIME  
HM CO LIBRARY  
BIRTH TO AGE 5  
WITH CAREGIVER  
10:00 AM  
RESUMES APRIL 2

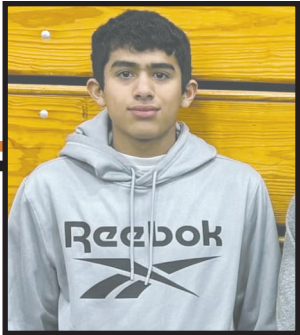
WEDNESDAYS  
SO. BAPTIST  
JAM 3:45 - 5:00 PM  
TAG 6:30 - 8:00 PM

BUDGET SHOP  
WEDS. & THURS.  
10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

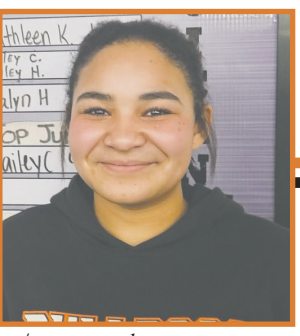
HM CO FAIR  
JULY 18-26  
"There's No Place  
Like Fair"

Commissioners Mtg  
First and Third  
Tuesday at 8:30 AM  
in the basement of  
the courthouse

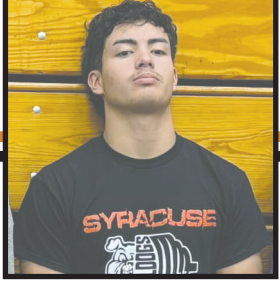
## POWERLIFTERS HEAD TO STATE



Left to Right - Angel Peralta, Aiden Stude, Stella Simon/courtesy photos



Left to Right - Natalia Figueroa, William Roberts, Deena Rochat/courtesy photos



Left to Right - Angel Ramirez, Ismael Bojorquez, Jhonatan Avila/courtesy photos

by Krista Norton Reporter

Syracuse Bulldogs power lifting successful season is ending with nine athletes qualifying for the state meet Saturday, March 29 in Conway Springs at 9:00 AM CT, 8:00 AM MT. Qualifying are Natalia Figueroa, Stella Simon, Deena Rochat, Angel Peralta, Angel Ramirez, Will Roberts, Ismael Bojorquez, Aiden Stude, and Jhonatan Avila.

Coach Rocky Castro, assisted by his wife Jen Castro began the program in 2023 with ten lifters, growing to about 20 lifters last year and finished the season with 38 lifters.

"Jen and I are excited and ecstatic that we were able to finally go back to Syracuse's powerlifting roots and bring it back like it used to be in the old days," said Rocky, "We started the program with ten lifters in 2023. Last year we grew the program to about 20 lifters, and this year we finished with 37 lifters!"

Early on, they did not bring home team plaques, but this season, they brought home five team plaques, "I am proud of how well our lifters represent our school and program," said Rocky.

If you are unfamiliar with power lifting, there are three stations of competition,

See **POWER** p. 10

## SENATOR CLIFFORD AND REPRESENTATIVE LONG HOLD TOWN HALL IN SYRACUSE



Senator Bill Clifford visits Hamilton County/photos courtesy of Trudi DeWitt

by Michele Boy Editor

On the afternoon of Saturday, March 15, at the Hamilton County Library program room, a small crowd gathered to hear Senator Clifford and Rep. Marty Long at a Syracuse town hall.

Many topics were discussed including the recent measles cases in southwest Kansas, the Greeley County School Bond issue, and legalization of marijuana in Kansas.

At the time of the meeting, there were

a few cases of measles in Stevens County. Since then, there have been reports in Grant and Morton counties bringing the count up to ten as of Monday, March 24. Senator Clifford pushed for people to get vaccinated.

For those who don't know, Greeley County passed a school bond issue in May 2024 that Attorney General Kris Kobach disallowed access to bond funds due to the county not publishing the legal by reason of not having them on an official county website.

After three hearings on the bill, Governor Laura Kelly signed Senate Bill 2 to validate the Greeley County election last Friday.

Mike Lewis brought up the issue discussed at the Kansas Legislative Policy Group, Inc. - A coalition of Rural Kansas counties where they review legislative issues. One concern Lewis has was the legalization of marijuana - medical or recreation. Lewis said, "I am absolutely against it. Marijuana is so strong compared to 1968. We had a good discussion at the meeting. Legislators believe it may come soon but the consensus was we are against it."

## DREAM FIRST BANK ENTERS AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE BancCENTRAL

March 24, 2025 (Syracuse, KS) – Dream First Bank is pleased to announce it has entered into an agreement to acquire Oklahoma-based BancCentral, which includes the bank's branches in Alva, Enid, Cherokee and Woodward. For more than 100 years, Dream First has served Southwest Kansas and beyond, taking a people-centered approach to banking that focuses on building communities through empowering businesses and individuals.

"We are excited to bring BancCentral customers our community-focused and personal approach to banking," said Chris Floyd, president and CEO of Dream First Bank. "We have been firmly established for more than 100 years, and family owned for 40 years, and we are committed to building up the communities in which we operate by providing financial resources to make dreams a reality."

This merger is a natural evolution for both of our banks," said Taylor Horst, CEO

of BancCentral. "By joining forces, we can deliver greater value to our customers, invest in our communities, and build a more sustainable future for our employees. The merger is a testament to our shared vision of providing exceptional financial services and building strong relationships. We believe that together, we will be better equipped to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future".

Dream First offers conventional banking and loan opportunities, as well as non-conventional solutions for which it has become known, ensuring customers of all kinds can fund their dreams. This approach earned Dream First an induction into The Institute for Extraordinary Banking Hall of Fame in 2022, following the bank's recognition as the 2019 Extraordinary Bank of the Year, the only award recognizing elite, ambitious, result-oriented banks that stand out as the best in their community.

Dream First Bank offers its banking

services to customers nationwide, providing options for agriculture, business and families. From businesses looking for operating/working capital loans or treasury management services, to families looking for deposit accounts or mortgage loans, Dream First provides a wide range of individualized services catered to the customer and their specific needs.

Dream First would like to thank Peter Weinstock with Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP and Geoffrey Kay with Fenimore, Kay, Harrison, who served as legal counsel, Dan Jackson and Patrick Brown, financial advisors from The Bank Advisory Group, and Daniel Bass with Performance Trust Capital Partners, financial advisor to BancCentral, for making this acquisition possible.

About Dream First:

Dream First has been serving communities across Southwest Kansas and beyond for more than 100 years, with branches in Syracuse, Johnson, Garden City, Ulysses, Hugoton, Elkhart, Attica, and Arlington. The bank's roots are in agriculture, but Dream First provides a wide array of products and services to fit any dream.

Visit [dreamfirst.bank](https://dreamfirst.bank) for additional information.