



# News

15 March, 2021

## SWOSU Physics Club Named Distinguished Chapter



The SWOSU Physics Club in Weatherford was recently named a “Distinguished Chapter” by the national office of the Society of Physics Students. Among those involved with the chapter are students and faculty (front from left): faculty sponsor Dr. Terry Goforth, Tabitha Taylor, Canute; Kaitlyn Schrick, Frederick; Ryan Horn, Buffalo; and Emma Bollinger, Stillwater. Back from left—Taylor Valdez, Adams; Riley Smith, Arnett;

**Jeffrey Lewis, Hollis; Raistlin Hiner, Anadarko; Brock Mason, Tuttle; and faculty sponsor Dr. Wayne Trail. Not pictured are Andres Arrieta, Weatherford; Roberto Soliz, Clinton; Josh Henson, Piedmont; and Grayson Butcher, Elk City.**

Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Physics Club in Weatherford has been named a "Distinguished Chapter" by the national office of the Society of Physics Students (SPS).

The SWOSU organization, a small but active group, was recently featured in the SPS Observer, a quarterly magazine of SPS.

In the fall of 2019, through support from the Oklahoma NASA Space Grant Consortium, the club started a rocketry project with the goal of competing in the 2020 Argonia Cup, a national collegiate rocketry competition held in Argonia (KS). To compete, each uses a high-powered rocket to fly a golf ball up to at least 8,000 feet and then deliver the ball as close as possible to a specified landmark near the launch site.

Sadly, the Argonia Cup was cancelled in 2020 but the club is preparing to compete in 2021.

Another ongoing project is the building of Dobsonian telescopes with parts collected from old, nonworking telescopes that have accumulated at the SWOSU Observatory. The club is using these parts to make simpler, more efficient telescopes that are more easily transported.

Their latest and largest project is a 16-inch Dobsonian telescope that uses a mirror donated some 15 years ago. When finished, it will be a large portable "Dob" that the club can take to remote public viewing sessions. Eventually, the club hopes to donate some of their student-built telescopes to area high schools.

The club has sponsored several viewing sessions at Roman Nose State Park and the SWOSU Observatory.

Other research projects include using microcontroller-operated seismometers to monitor the recent increase in Oklahoma earthquakes and engaging in astrophotography and photometry, using the SWOSU Observatory to explore the universe from galaxies to supernovae.

"These research projects mean a lot to us as students," said Brock Mason, president of the SWOSU Physics Club. "While they are great ways to make memories and be a part of something bigger than ourselves, they also enable us to expand our knowledge and skill sets beyond the classroom."

In addition to the mentioned projects, the club helps each year with Physics Day when area high schools bring students to the SWOSU campus to see demonstrations and projects. At times, the students take Physics Day to area schools.

In the past, the SWOSU Physics Club has received both "Distinguished" and "Outstanding" chapter awards from the national office.