

The Cadet Courier

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Principal Douglas Gross is LIGHTS out!

Mr. Gross was selected as the recipient by the Lozier Foundation and Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium

By Jesus Montoya

Douglas Gross, Elementary School Principal at West Point-Beemer, was selected as a recipient of the Lozier Foundation's Lights Outstanding Principal Award on October 31st, 2025, because of his outstanding leadership and impact on students. This award comes with a grant that will go to the Elementary school providing a total of \$25,000.

LIGHTS stands for Leaders Igniting Growth and Helping Transform Schools. This award goes specifically to principals in K-5 elementary schools, and is an annual award that goes out to a specific demographic of schools; it requires at least 51% of the students to have free or reduced lunch in order to be eligible to apply.

Mr. Gross was recommended to apply for the award by Superintendent Daniel Weddle of West Point Public Schools. The application process consists of submitting test scores of the school, accomplishments, school



profile, and many other factors contributing to the application.

"Mr. Gross is such a well-rounded leader in the elementary school, he cares about the students and staff, he's very good at developing processes and using data to make decisions about students in programs," stated Daniel Weddle.

These are all outstanding qualities that helped contribute to Mr. Gross winning the award. The Lozier committee selects and determines the winner depending on a recipient's growth and achievements.

When asked about advice he would give to prospective principals, Gross responded, "I would say be

yourself, be who you are, and don't forget where you came from, like I spent many years in the classroom, remember your roots, remember where you started and came from. Everyone is important and has a role, if you're going to become successful."

When talking about advice on being a leader, Principal Douglas Gross believes keeping true to yourself is important. Remembering where you came from and the hours spent in the classroom is essential.

He gives credit to his staff and teachers who keep doing an outstanding job. He believes that not only is this an award for him, but to the Elementary School as a whole,

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as everyone played a vital role, and that is why they succeeded.

This is a superb achievement for the Elementary School as 10 years ago, their school was seen as a Persistent Low Achieving School. In just a decade, they made significant improvements and changes in order to be recognized as a Blue Ribbon School. This did not stop here, it led them to be able to nominate Principal Gross into being a recipient for the Outstanding Principal Award.

"I have been really lucky to have Mr. Gross as the principal of the elementary throughout my tenure as superintendent," stated Daniel Weddle.

Superintendent Weddle believes Principal Gross is a well-rounded leader who cares about all of the students and the staff. He is very good with ensuring the decisions he makes are all student-centered.

Principal Gross has received a prestigious award, which will affect the Elementary School very positively. While the destination of the grant money is unknown at this time, they do know that it should go to the elementary school where all the students and staff can enjoy it.

NHS ceremony success

Honorary students join
National Honor Society

By Samantha Fehrer

On Tuesday, November 4th, the new National Honors Society (NHS) members were welcomed into this year's honor society. National honors society highlights students' success in academics, scholarship, leadership and service.

Advisor, Teresa Person, who has foreseen the chapter for a few years, scheduled the event and did the process of planning. Her commitment to this chapter ensured that the ceremony would run smoothly and effectively. She mentions how lovely it is to see the ceremony turn out from year to year.

"Mrs. Person always makes sure the ceremony ends up to be memorable. I think



The evening included a meal provided by the senior members of NHS, the meal was provided for current and new members, families, and other guests and staff. The atmosphere was filled with excitement for the new inductees to celebrate this huge accomplishment.

that's why it stands out the most to me as a student," stated a senior member.

During the ceremony, the new members were recognized for their dedication inside and outside the classroom. As each member was recognized, they got to sign the NHS chapter book, which

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has been a tradition for many years. This symbolizes their commitment to National Honors society. They also received their official certificate of membership.

Also during the ceremony, two senior members got the opportunity to honor a teacher who made an important contribution in their lives. Daniela Perez and Samantha Fehrer were chosen for this tribute. Daniela decided to honor the JAG (Jobs For America's Graduates) teacher, Kristen Christensen. Daniela discussed how much of an honor it was to have Mrs. Christensen as a teacher. Samantha Fehrer also honored a teacher who impacted her life. She chose to honor Carter Ossian as someone who truly made a difference in her life.

"It was so interesting to see how different teachers impacted students," one senior member stated.

National Honors Society chapter president, Lia Montenegro, is always excited to see the new members get inducted into the chapter. She believes that the new members will do the best that they can.

"It's a great way to showcase their hard work, and I admire that," Lia stated.

Lia also mentioned that every new member earned their

spot and is excited to see where this new chapter will take them.

Overall, this night was filled with excitement and celebration as the new NHS members were inducted. It showcased not only the academic accomplishments of the new members, but also the current members. The sense of community and pride filled the room, and it will continue to grow for years to come!

Montoya believes and achieves his way to success

Senior Jesus Montoya receives the NSAA Believers and Achievers Award

By Ethan Corrales

West Point Beemer Senior Jesus Montoya has recently received the NSAA Believers and Achievers award. Jesus was one of the 48 students who received this award out of the 800 nominated by schools all across Nebraska.

"There were 800 kids that were nominated for this award so for Jesus to get it is a huge deal not only for our school, but our community as well," said Athletic Director Jacob Hohenthanner when asked how this could impact

our school and others. "I think for our school, it kind of gives other kids an opportunity to strive for this award in the future and then do what is required to be given this."

School Counselor Diane Knaak stated that to be given this award, students must maintain a 3.5 GPA on a weighted 4.0 scale in addition to participating in NSAA and school sponsored activities throughout the entirety of their high school career. Jesus Montoya has maintained the GPA mark and has participated in the following NSAA and school activities; Cross Country, Track & Field, Wrestling, Speech, Journalism, FCCLA, FBLA, and Quiz Bowl.

"I hope other students look to his example and try to be excellent in the classroom and in activities. I also think Jesus demonstrates that good things happen when you take advantage of the opportunities offered by West Point-Beemer," stated Diane Knaak when asked how she'd hope this achievement affects others.

Each school across Nebraska is able to nominate 4 students to be added to the total roster. If any of them receives the Believers and Achievers award, each student has the chance to be one of six students selected to receive a

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\$1000 college scholarship for their following schooling year. It is also a possibility that the students selected will be recognized at a state NSAA competition.

“We had to submit our scholastic achievements, which include any achievements that you've gotten through in high school, like getting a spot in the national honor society, being on honor roll, getting an academic letter,” said Jesus Montoya when asked what the application process was.

Jesus also mentioned that they were required to submit all of their NSAA activities whether it would be team or individual, list his top four school and community involvement activities, and write a 250-300 word essay on

what leadership means to him and how his involvement in school activities has prepared him to lead in future opportunities.

Diane Knaak and Jacob Hohenthanner both hope that the achievements Jesus has earned will influence the younger students to strive to be the best students they can be and involve themselves in every aspect of their high school career.

Jesus is certainly a student worthy of this award as he involves himself in activities that benefit his career, is a prominent figure in the community, strives to be the best student he can be, and certainly ensures that he can help others whenever he can. Jesus stands out as a successful

student and is worthy of being nominated for a college scholarship.

Cadet Choir Takes the Stage

West Point-Beemer students are selected for EHC Choir

By Camila Calderon

On November 3, a selected group of students in the Choir traveled to an event at the Nielsen Center called the East Husker Conference (EHC) for the Honor Choir to perform. Students recorded their auditions anonymously to judges, who then chose at least eight members anonymously to perform at the conference. Choir Teacher Sarah Beach and a group of students had attended the experience, and learned many new things that they implement to their daily musical career. They combined themselves with many other students from different schools that attended the event, and practiced with them for the first time the very day they performed.

Choir Teacher Sarah Beach was one of the directors that participated in directing a choir at EHC. Her day was very busy as she had to create the schedule since was one of the people directing the event.

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“I overcame that challenge by leaning on choir directors from other schools to guide me on what they may have done in the past,” she states.

She learned many things that day like how to organize and run an entire choir. She mentions that her favorite part of the event was seeing students form new friendships and performing songs they didn’t usually sing.

“The biggest thing that students took away from this experience was what it felt like to perform with such a large and talented choir,” she adds.

Junior Lizbeth Gonzalez was one of many students to attend, but was the only member from WPPS who was accepted into a selective choir. Her day was full of practicing as she practiced for Honor Choir and the Star Spangled Banner as well as a variety of other songs. After practicing with the whole group she sang with that combined with different schools, they performed their song. One thing she wishes she could change to make the experience easier is practicing with the group a day before the concert in order to get more used to it. In spite of that, she really enjoyed singing with new people. She learned how to

better use vowel placement and dynamics.

“I learned a lot about EHC: our vowels, a lot of our dynamics too, and our faces as well is also something I learned,” she states.

Junior Taylyn Maas explained that her favorite part of the event was when they first got together and sang for the first time as a complete choir.

“It was one of the most amazing sounds and it felt good to be a part of something so big,” she states. She learned many things from her experience at EHC; one thing she learned was that communication was critical, and it’s key to making things possible among other people. One thing she wished was more improved was a more well-known schedule.

“I would have liked to see the schedule improved. Not everyone had a copy of the schedule so it was hard to tell when you were supposed to be on break, in a sectional, or rehearsing as a whole choir,” she mentions.

EHC gives students the opportunity to learn many things from aiding in your skills, like vowel placement and dynamics, to daily life, like communication and bringing people together. The event brought people from different

schools joining together for the same sole purpose of making music with the addition of forming new friendships amongst one another. It was an unforgettable experience, and many will use what they learned as they move forward into their singing career.

Playoff drought finally over

West Point-Beemer makes the playoffs for first time in 5 years

By Chase Brestler

The West Point Beemer Football team qualified for the class C2 state playoffs. This was the first time since 2020 the Cadets have made the playoffs.

Not only was this the first time they made the playoffs since 2020, this is also their first winning season since then. The Cadets were in a drought with 4 straight losing seasons. Until this season when they finished 6-4. Although they had 4 losses, all 4 of them came against top 5 teams.

West Point had some players finish with some pretty impressive stat lines. Senior running back Myles Nielson, finished the season with 1040 yards on the ground, and he averaged 8.8 yards per carry.

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Nielsen also had 12 rushing touchdowns.

have gone undefeated at home since 2007.



Quarterback Peyton Penrose threw for 941 yards and 8 touchdowns on the season. Blaize Brockmann led the Cadets in receiving yards with 17 catches for 311 yards. Defensively the leading tacklers were Mason Toelle and GG Flores, they each had 81 total tackles. Brockmann led the team in sacks with 4. And as a team, West Point forced 9 interceptions.

West Point's season ended with a tough loss to Grand Island Central Catholic. Although the season didn't end on a good note, this year will be seen as a stepping stone for years to come. This season was also the first time the Cadets

The team did everything they could to maximize every opportunity. The returning players became leaders, and the younger players stepped up when their chance came. They also battled to the end of every game. From when the ball was first kicked off to the final whistle of each game players were giving all they got.

Many people have noticed this change and have decided to come back and support the Cadets. On alumni night the stands were nearly full with former players and students. A season like this could increase school spirit and support for the team.

This culture change is huge for Cadet football. West

Point-Beemer is trying to become a winning culture, and this season will be remembered by many as a stepping stone for years to come.

Boots on the Ground

West Point seniors plan to join the armed forces ahead of graduation

By Zaq Leslie

Boot camps have become a popular option for high school students seeking to gain practical skills in various fields. These experiences offer a unique blend of learning and real-world applications that can transform students' perspectives for their future careers. Recently West Point-Beemer High school Seniors Tripp Meyer and Jackson Winn attended bootcamp, which started on May 28th and ended on August 8th.

One of the major highlights of attending boot camp is the amazing learning environment. You're surrounded by peers who share the same interests and ambitions.

"Being in such a focused environment with like-minded students really helps you develop your skills faster," Tripp Meyer stated.

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Throughout boot camp, participants engage in hands-on projects such as rifle training and rifle cleaning.

When asked what their favorite experiences were during bootcamp Jackson



stated “night infiltration course,” and Tripp's favorite part was having his body pushed to the limits.

“Working on actual projects made the learning experience so much more engaging,” Winn said. Another one of Tripp's favorite experiences was Night infiltration courses. This is when the Army fires live rounds about you or around you as you

climb, crawl, and run through obstacles.

In addition to the base experiences like rifle training and boot camp often provides soft skills training, such as communication and time

management. These skills are crucial in any job, and having that foundation before entering the workforce can give high school students a significant advantage.

However, boot camps are not without their challenges. The pace is often intense, and soldiers need to be prepared. The sergeants and higher ranking staff are always yelling, making sure that you are doing what you're supposed to. Staying organized and on pace with everyone else is crucial to keeping up with others.

At boot camp, the soldiers that you are with become your family. “While I was there, I made a ton of friends,” Tripp Meyer stated

As the boot camp comes to a close, there is one final project. This showcases everything that they have learned over the course that

they were there. This not only demonstrates their technical ability but also boosts their confidence and prepares them for the future. Everyone leaves bootcamp feeling accomplished and with a memorable experience. One that they could tell their kids.

When asked if there were any tips for people thinking about joining bootcamp Jackson stated “Don’t watch videos beforehand, they make it seem so much worse than it is.”

Tripp stated “Do what you're told and you will do fine. And have fun with it.”

In conclusion, boot camps are an excellent way to find out if the army or military is right for you. They proved a unique environment that fosters learning, collaboration, and personal growth. With insights from participants like Tripp Meyer and Jackson Winn, it’s clear that the experience is both challenging and rewarding. If you have the opportunity to attend boot camp, don’t hesitate.

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R.I.P. School Spirit

School Spirit at WP-B is not what it used to be

By Angeline Berganza

In recent years we have noticed the decline in school spirit. Out of nowhere people stopped attending school games and activities. There's still schools that have an incredible way with school spirit, but here at West Point Beemer school spirit is dying faster than the leaves on the ground. I want to talk about how school spirit is needed, why has it died down, and lastly how we can bring it back.

School spirit is needed because the players like the hype and support. The hype that the crowd brings to the games helps players get that victory. School spirit is also needed because it helps students become social and learn how to be confident and get the knowledge on how to be leaders. According to Connections Academy, a 2014 study showed that students who participate in school spirit have a higher GPA. This shows how school spirit should be essential in learning environments and how students should take the initiative to show school spirit.

Next, school spirit has died down throughout the year because students get a job and their free time to go and support their schools has declined. There are also some students who are unable to go to school games because of their riding situation.

Social media has also had a huge impact on the way students want to interact at school activities. Another big thing is lack of communication. Some students don't find the theme days on the school website and are unsure, so they don't want to show out. "It's easy to let school spirit fall by the wayside. We're overworked, overstressed, and sometimes it is different to get up behind our school and its decisions," mentioned Annie Brown.

Covid has also been a reason why school spirit has died down. Students were not able to stand out for their school because games were getting postponed or they weren't allowed to go due to the virus.

Lastly, how can we help bring back school spirit? We can bring back themed dress up days just like homecoming, but also for prom. Although the problem with prom is that it's just for juniors and seniors, creating the dress up days might create support. We could

start giving rewards for different things at games. For instance, we have the Cadet Crazies, but we can also do other things like the best dressed person and such.

School spirit is dying down and we need to save it, so let's use the facts we learned today to get this party started. First, we talked about why it is needed. Next, we asked why it's dying down, and lastly we took a dive and figured out how we can bring school spirit back. School spirit is needed in order to hype up our teams and create social outings for students. We took on the idea of how school spirit was ruined, and why it has died down throughout the years. We dived into the ideas of how we can bring school spirit to get these victories. School spirit needs to make a comeback but how do we get students to come out and support?

