



CARDINAL FLYER

Hayes Center High School Journalism

Thursday, October 15, 2026

HAYES COUNTY SENDS STUDENTS TO STATE BY LANIE SOUNDY

This past summer, Caylie Softley, Addison Richards, and Cooper Soundy represented American Legion Post 287 at both Girls and Boys State in Lincoln. To qualify, Post 287 interviewed the candidates who were required to maintain a high GPA, be a junior in high school, be a citizen of Nebraska, demonstrate strong leadership, be involved in the community, and have an interest in government.

Caylie, Addison, and Cooper began their journey by traveling to McCook where they got on a bus, and headed off to Lincoln. Once on campus, they were assigned to 'towns', which are made up of members on the students' dormitory floor. One of the goals of State is to have participants learn to campaign and run for different positions in the government. Both the girls and boys participated in their own mock elections, rallies, trials, legislative sessions, and debates. Addison and Caylie campaigned her way into winning a county commissioner seat. Students also toured the capitol building to help get a glimpse of what working in the government might look like and they met with a variety of people in Nebraska's government. When asked about his favorite moment, Cooper said he enjoyed, "...being able to talk to Jim Pillen not only as a governor, but also as a person. It was cool to just be able to talk to Jim as I would with any other adult I would meet." Caylie agreed and also added that she appreciated listening to speakers like the governor and Senator Deb Fisher.

The girls were also able to participate in media activities such as writing for a newspaper. They took part in choir, band, community service projects, a talent show, and other activities. Caylie said that her



Seniors Addison Richards, Cooper Soundy, and Caylie Softley attended Girls and Boys State in Lincoln this past June.

favorite activity from Girls State was performing in a Pitch Perfect dance routine with other girls from her floor in the talent show. Addison also mentioned that her favorite activity was sports night and playing flag football. The boys also participated in newspaper staff writing, music, interviewing alumni as the town historian, team sports, the pentathlon, and a track meet.

All three students were very happy with their experiences and would highly recommend attending. Overall, Girls and Boys State is an amazing opportunity especially for juniors looking to go into politics as the event teaches the attendees so much about our government, and many useful life skills that they will be able to use in the future.

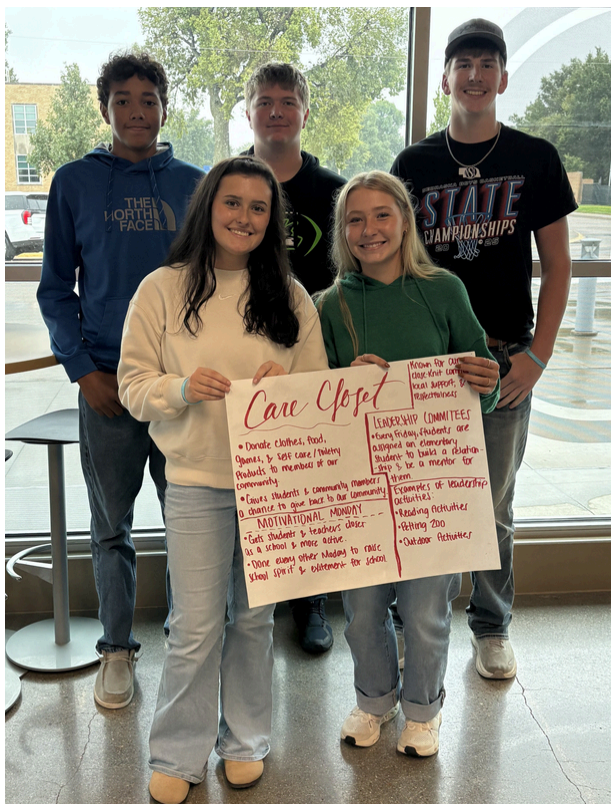


Photo by Brin Martin

RPAC Student Council Leadership Day

By Ava Messersmith

Members of the Hayes Center student council traveled to McCook Community College for the annual RPAC Student Council Leadership day on Wednesday, September 30th. Every year, the student council from each RPAC school assembles at the college in McCook to learn about leadership. The morning started off with a welcome from Kelly Rippen, the Vice President of Student Affairs of MPCC, and then a fun activity where all participating schools got to know each other. After that, students were split into teams to work together on a scavenger hunt around campus. While some groups did the scavenger hunt, others listened to a presentation about the importance and quality of a good leader. To finish off the day, each student council gave a presentation about different ideas they had implemented in their school. The Hayes Center student council highlighted the local care closet, motivational Monday activities, and student leadership committees which help improve the culture of our school.



Photo by Leah Anderjaska

Seniors Attend Career Discovery Days

By Ava Messersmith

On Wednesday, September 30th, Hayes Center seniors Caylie Softley, Kynleigh Fisher, Monica Dinas, Ayleen Hernandez, Natalia Rojas, and Jennifer Medrano traveled to McCook to participate in the Career Discovery Days at Community Hospital. Students participated in 6 sessions throughout the day, learning about topics in health care careers such as radiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, pharmacy, human resources, surgical services, sleep studies, labor and delivery, laboratory operations, and stop the bleed training. Each session included hands-on experiences in the hospital with equipment and interactive demonstrations. Students were able to talk with professionals in each field about their schooling, work experience, why they chose their career, and what a regular day would look like on the job. Caylie Softley summed up the experience with, "All of the people there were awesome. They were all so nice, and they would answer any questions that you had. I had a lot of fun and I loved it!"



Photos of the Week



Photo by Monica Dimas
Eighth grader Cydney Softley spikes the ball off the set from Jordyn Lacey.



Photo by Harli Cox
Irelynd McKillip smiles for a picture before glueing her stickers onto paper during art time in preschool.



Photo by Monica Dimas
Caylie Softley cuts a bar of goat milk soap in preparation for her upcoming FFA ag demo competition.



Photo by Carly Softley
First grader Quinten Vapenik builds a lego structure during free-time.



Photo by Carly Softley
Matias Camano Garcia listens to the heartbeat of classmate Alexander Anderjaska in preschool.



Junior High Competes at State Cross Country

By Ava Messersmith

On Saturday, October 10th, the junior high cross country team traveled to Papillion-LaVista South High School to run at the state cross country meet with over 1,400 junior high athletes from across Nebraska. The junior high girls team had three runners that competed in the 3 kilometer class C&D race. Cydney Softley led the team, finishing 18th, followed by Paige Messersmith in 122nd and Kinsley Vapenik in 130th. The boys had five runners compete with Gavin Johnson finishing highest for the team in 35th followed by Mateo Espinoza in 119th, Mateo Hernandez in 136th, Hank Rutherford in 227th and Caysen Sonnenfeld in 231st. An open class race for younger athletes had Konstatine Sankey placing 59th, Nicholas Sankey placing



Photo by Ava Messersmith

Kinsley Vapenik, Paige Messersmith, and Cydney Softley start the girls race at the state cross country meet.

128th, and Hudson Sonnenfeld placing 264th. The MHC junior high cross country team finished off the season with a successful day with runners from all grade levels competing well and positively representing our school.

SPORTS SCORES

Varsity Football @Hemingford, Friday, Oct.9

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Hemingford (5-2)	14	16	16	8	52
MHC (3-4)	0	6	0	6	12

Bentley Broz, Lucas Mahanes: Touchdowns

Varsity Volleyball @Southern Valley, Tuesday, Oct.8

	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
Southern Valley	17	14	26
MHC (17-6)	25	25	28

Varsity Volleyball @Sutherland, Thursday, Oct.10

	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
Sutherland (9-16)	18	15	14
MHC (18-6)	25	25	25



Photo by Monica Dimas
Kindergartners smile for a photo before resuming their cheering for the junior high volleyball team in their win against Hitchcock County.

Cross Country @ Sutherland Thurs., Oct.8

Girls

Team

2nd (RPAC Runner-Up)

Individual

Carly Softley (4th)

21:51.0

Agneshka Sankey (7th)

22:45.2

Ayleen Hernandez (25th)

26:34.6

Ava Messersmith (34th)

28:39.3

Boys

Team

10th Place

Individual

Rubiel Lopez (20th)

21:09.1

Aaron Lawson (36th)

23:09.3

Steven Werkmeister (42nd)

25:21.3