



September 2026

HOCO Assembly Brings District Together for Games and School Spirit

By William Keefner and Jaydon Stephey



Students from across the district gathered for games, friendly competition, and school spirit at this year's Homecoming Assembly, organized by the Student Council.

The assembly opened with the traditional "We Got Spirit" cheer competition among the district's schools. The middle school claimed the victory after a close contest with both elementary schools.

Relay races followed, beginning with a matchup between Manassa Elementary and La Jara Elementary. Manassa finished first in a tight race. In the next matchup, the high school defeated the middle school by a wide margin.

Musical chairs brought another competitive moment as Miles Jaramillo and Joseph Gray advanced to the final round. After a spirited battle for the last chair, Gray won the game and received a prize from the Student Council.

The final game challenged teams to collect cardboard boxes and stack them into a tower. Middle school and high school teachers joined the competition, adding to the excitement. Mrs. Montage attempted to slow the opposing teams by kicking and tossing their boxes farther from the stacks, but the high school students still claimed the win.

A memorable moment came after Caden Casias, dressed as the school mascot, performed with the cheerleaders. Casias then asked Kaylee Smith to Homecoming, and she said "yes".

The assembly brought students and staff together to celebrate the start of the school year. The Student Council's planning helped make the event a memorable part of this year's Homecoming festivities.





Student of the Month

By: **Elena Reed & Sophie Sowards**



Centauri High School has named freshman Makayla Sowards its Student of the Month in recognition of her kindness toward others.

Creative and outgoing, Sowards enjoys riding horses, reading and creating jewel art. She is currently working on a jewel art project featuring a Highland cow.

Sowards participates in SADD and FFA and plans to join FBLA. She also shows her school spirit by attending high school games and supporting Centauri's teams.

As a freshman, Sowards is enjoying her first year of high school, building friendships, and making a positive impression on her teachers.

Centauri High School congratulates Sowards on her recognition and looks forward to her continued contributions to the school community.

Teacher Spotlight



Mrs. Amy Larson teaches College English, English Standards, Student Council (StuCo), Intro to Psychology, and Sociology. She has been teaching at CHS for five years and has also spent two years teaching in Korea. Her experiences teaching in different places have given her the opportunity to meet new people and experience different cultures. She has also visited the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and plans to visit Korea again in about a year.

Outside of teaching, Mrs. Larson enjoys collecting, reading, writing, and singing. She especially enjoys reading *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter*. She also has experience performing in front of large audiences and has performed in front of around 2,000 people. Between teaching, traveling, reading, writing, and singing, Mrs. Larson has plenty of interests and experiences that make her unique both inside and outside of the classroom.

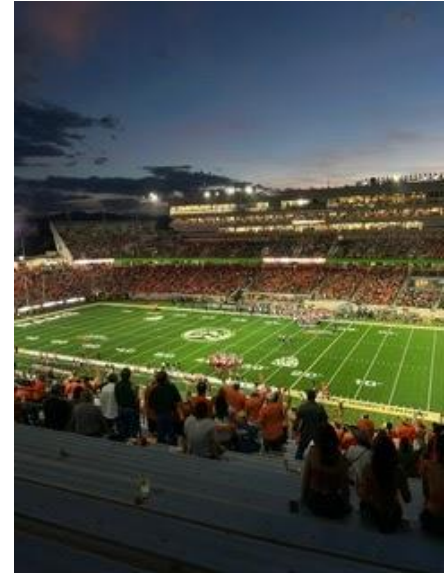


Centaury Students Visit CSU for Ag Day

By: Erin Herrera and Roman Chacon



Eight Centaury High School students traveled to Fort Collins for a three-day overnight trip during the weekend of September 11 to explore Colorado State University and participate in its “Ag Day” activities.



Teacher David Ruybal led the trip, sharing his former college campus with the students. The group toured campus buildings, became familiar with the university, and interacted with CSU students and staff.

Ag Day festivities included a barbecue featuring Colorado-grown foods, games, and opportunities to learn about the university’s agricultural community. The CSU Animal Science Ambassadors challenged the Centaury students to a trading-card scavenger hunt. Each student began with three ambassador cards and worked to collect all 15, signed by the ambassadors, to earn a special prize.

The group also attended CSU’s football game against Southern Utah. Our students cheered alongside the enthusiastic crowd as CSU secured a victory.

Beyond introducing students to college life, the trip gave the group time to build stronger connections. Ruybal, his wife, and daughter joined the students throughout the weekend, helping make the experience a shared opportunity for learning and friendship.



Centauri High School United for Suicide Prevention Awareness

By Tel Christensen and Slade Sowards



Centauri High School students and staff participated in suicide prevention awareness activities during the week of September 10, emphasizing kindness, connection, and support throughout the school community.

On Tuesday, students were encouraged to wear purple to show their support for suicide prevention.

On Wednesday, the Wellness Committee organized a game in which students clipped clothespins containing positive messages onto others. Students enjoyed the challenge of attaching the pins without being noticed, while also spreading encouragement throughout the school.

On Thursday, the school held an assembly featuring Fabian Ramirez, known as “Biscuit,” whose message highlighted the importance of looking out for friends, classmates, and teachers. To end the day, the entire high school gathered during seventh period to walk two laps around the track in recognition of Suicide Prevention Day. The walk gave students and staff an opportunity to stand together and remind one another that no one has to face difficult times alone.

Together, the activities emphasized that every student is a valued member of community and encouraged students and staff to continue supporting one another beyond the week’s events.



The Seniors Won the Buff Puff

By: **Teagan Mortenson and Lilyana Gutierrez**



Students packed the gym for the annual Buff Puff volleyball games. With bragging rights on the line, the boys from each grade took the court ready to battle for the championship. The night kicked off with the seniors taking on the freshmen. The freshmen came ready to compete, but the experienced seniors proved to be too much to handle. The seniors claimed the victory and secured their spot in the championship game.

Next up, the juniors faced the sophomores. Both teams fought to keep the ball alive and earn a chance at the title, but the juniors pulled ahead to take the win. Their victory set up a championship showdown between the juniors and seniors.

Before the championship could begin, however, there was another important part of Buff Puff to enjoy—the entrances. Each year, one of the crowd's favorite traditions is watching the teams run onto the court in their coordinated outfits. The seniors showed off their Buff Puff style in cut-off jeans and tops, while the juniors embraced a cowboy theme. The outfits, entrances, and personalities of each class added just as much entertainment to the night as the volleyball itself.

With the first two games complete, it was time for the seniors and juniors to battle for the Buff Puff championship. Both classes had already proven they deserved a spot in the final, but only one could walk away with the title. In the end, the seniors came out on top, defeating the juniors and earning the title of 2026 Buff Puff Champions.

From the coordinated outfits and entertaining entrances to the competition on the court, Buff Puff once again gave students and fans a Homecoming tradition worth cheering for.



Juniors Claim Powder Puff Championship During Homecoming Week

By: Violet Sandoval & Aubrey Sowards



The junior class defeated the seniors to win Centaury High School's annual Homecoming powder puff tournament on September 24. Held after the buff puff games, the tournament brought students together for an evening of competition and school spirit.

The opening matchup featured the freshmen against the seniors. The seniors scored seven points and secured a victory, earning a place in the championship game.

Next, the sophomores faced the juniors in an intense contest. The sophomores intercepted a pass, but the juniors maintained their advantage and won the game to advance to the finals.

The championship paired the juniors against the seniors, with both teams determined to finish the night on top. The juniors ultimately won by a wide margin, claiming the tournament title.

The junior victory capped an evening of spirited competition and added to the excitement of Centaury's Homecoming celebrations.



Curtis and Ruggles Crowned Homecoming Queen and King

By: Roman Chacon, Erin Kelly Herrera, and William Keefner



Seniors Kynlei Curtis and Caden Ruggles were crowned Homecoming queen and king, highlighting a night of music, dancing and celebration. Curtis and Ruggles were selected from four senior couples nominated for the honors.

The Homecoming court nominees represented all four classes. Freshman nominees were Jace Keys and Samuel Chavez, while Kourtney Johnson and Chad Miller represented the sophomore class. Junior nominees were Gracie Garcia and Grayson Hunzeker. Senior nominees included Makissa Quinlin, Rhett Taylor, Joslyn Sowards, Caden Ruggles, Kynlei Curtis, Dakota Smith, Alaysha Silva and Keaden McGinnis.

Following the crowning, Curtis and Ruggles took the dance floor to celebrate. Throughout the evening, students enjoyed a mix of upbeat music, swing dancing, and slower songs.

The dance gave students of all experience levels an opportunity to practice their moves, spend time with friends, and celebrate Homecoming together.



Bristol Pence Wins Grand Champion Female Hereford at 2026 MHJN



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Bristol Pence earned Grand Champion Female Hereford honors with her heifer at the 2026 MHJN in North Platte. Judge Ryan Rash selected her animal for the top honor.

The achievement reflected Pence's hard work and dedication to raising and preparing her heifer for competition. Livestock exhibitors devote considerable time to feeding, grooming, training and caring for their animals before entering the show ring.

Having her heifer selected by Rash added to the significance of the experience for Pence. Rash's background includes competing as a junior exhibitor, serving on Texas A&M University's National Champion Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Team and judging livestock shows throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

For Pence, the championship marked a memorable milestone and recognition of the care and effort she invested in her animal.



How Do Teams Qualify for the Playoffs?

The CHSAA Board voted unanimously to move from the current CHSAA Seeding Index, which combines the MaxPreps Rankings and a Ratings Performance Index (RPI) ranking system, following the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year. The change coincides with the start of a two-year cycle, with the 2026-28 cycle beginning in fall 2026.

“After much discussion with our districts, leagues and membership as a whole, the board believes that this move is the best decision for each of our sports and postseason play moving forward,” CHSAA Board of Directors President Joe Brown said. “As proven by the data we’ve looked at, this move will provide the most accurate representation of teams in the postseason.” At Centauri, the sports that will be selected based on the MaxPreps rankings are football, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, and baseball.

Each of these sports first qualify teams for their brackets via league champions as automatic qualifiers. Then, the remaining available at-large slots in the tournaments will be filled in via the MaxPreps Rankings. However, the rankings you see on the MaxPreps website will differ from the ranking system used by CHSAA. Following is an explanation from CHSAA on why that is the case. Following significant membership feedback and support last fall, the Board of Directors determined that the RPI ranking component should be removed and only the CHSAA rankings driven by MaxPreps should be utilized moving forward.

When the Board voted to remove RPI from the Seeding Index, the underlying MaxPreps formula remained unchanged. We still use the exact same multi-sport rankings engine provided by MaxPreps that our membership has relied on for years.

We title our official data the “CHSAA Rankings Powered by MaxPreps” to intentionally differentiate it from the default ratings listed on MaxPreps.com. While both utilize MaxPreps’ proprietary engine, the rankings on CHSAANow.com are unique due to specific rules requested by the Board and membership, as well as a distinct football formula:

Football formula: Public football rankings on MaxPreps.com use a separate, football-specific algorithm. CHSAA applies a consistent, multi-sport formula across all sports. Historical data: In football specifically, MaxPreps.com incorporates prior-season data during early- season weeks. CHSAA rankings rely strictly on current-season data. Forfeits: MaxPreps.com ignores forfeits. CHSAA incorporates them into our data calculations. Margin of victory: CHSAA applies specific margin-of-victory caps in certain sports, which differ from standard MaxPreps calculations.

Calculation timing: CHSAA rankings run on a separate, more frequent update schedule than the public site. Because of these policy and formula differences, the two sets of rankings will not match. As a result, the default rankings published on MaxPreps.com play no role in

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postseason qualification or seeding. This is not new, nor is it a change. It has been the case since CHSAA began running the MaxPreps ranking engine internally a few years ago. Official rankings can be found at CHSAANow.com/rankings.

We have updated our Rankings FAQ to be even clearer regarding this information, in an effort to help you should questions arise from your coaches or community:
CHSAANow.com/rankings/faq.



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