

PANTEXAN

FALL 2024

THE RETURN

*Employee magazine
relaunches*

AMARILLO, TEXAS

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The B61 bomb is one of the programs in Pantex's mission to guarantee the United States of America's nuclear deterrent.

Photograph by Michael Schumacher

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We are PANTEXANS!

Whether in academics, professional sports, or business life, teams are fascinating groups to observe and study.

United around a common purpose or goal, some teams work very well together, while others experience great struggles. In my experience, the teams that work best together employ shared traditions to reinforce the things they have in common. These traditions can be as simple as a door post that gets slapped each time a team exits its locker room, or as complex as weeks of immersion in a workplace culture and history.

Here at Pantex, we have a great number of traditions, too—traditions involving safety, attention to detail, and patriotism. Traditions define a very simple, yet vitally important attribute: identity.

This basic understanding of who we are informs a great deal about how we see ourselves, others, and even our outlook on life.

So, who are the people who keep Pantex running each day to guarantee the nation's nuclear deterrent? Well, we're more than 4,600 people who represent a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, expertise, and knowledge. We, along with our many partners, are united by a shared commitment to our nation, our mission, and each other. We are a team of Pantexans!

Teams face adversity, but they persevere. Team members may disagree at times, but they find common purpose. Teams undoubtedly struggle against incredible challenges, and—together—they overcome.

Pantex has seen much change in the last 82 years. Its mission in the twenty-first century looks nothing like when it was the last of 14 conventional munitions factories sending bombs and artillery shells to the World War II front lines. It has seen the lights go dark and, later, back on again. The first issue of the *Pantexan* publication actually predates the first Pantex bomb by two days, yet this icon of our unique identity, too, has seen the presses go still and, for a time, been only a fond memory among long-tenured employees.

But, now, the *Pantexan* is back. You spoke with a clear, united voice, and it has been my great pleasure to see this symbol of our site unity return.

As I said, Pantexans find a way to overcome adversity. Pantex has overcome loss in the wake of victory, the Cold War era, and so much more in the last eight decades. While change has been evident over the years, the site and what it stands for has remained the same.

Through it all, we have had each other. We have looked out for each other and delivered on our commitments to our nation, our community, and to the teammates next to us.

I hope you enjoy the restoration of the *Pantexan* publication. It brings me great honor to reconstitute this tradition and legacy with each of you.

We are strong. We are proud. We are Pantexans!



Colby Yearney

Colby Yearney
Pantex Site Manager

LEADERSHIP

JASON ARMSTRONG | *Manager, Pantex Field Office*
DR. RICHARD TIGHE | *CEO Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC*
COLBY YEARY | *Pantex Site Manager*

THE RETURN OF THE *Pantexan*

A common thread for generations of Pantex employees has returned.

By Candice Copelin

Starting on August 1, 1952, in the midst of a resurgence of production during the Cold War, Pantex employees found magazines lying around the plant in breakrooms and office areas that read “\$10 for a Name” at the top. This was a call to action for employees to name the magazine where they could find the details on how to pick up their Christmas baskets, who needed a ride-share, details about company golf tournaments, and updates within departments. Employees responded, and with multiple submissions for the name ‘*Pantexan*,’ it was clear history would be repeating itself, and the publication that began in World War II would continue to inform and entertain future generations of *Pantexans*.

The *Pantexan* ran its first issue in September 1942, and tucked inside were photos of people who saw the first munitions come through production lines, an article on how men who worked at war plants would not be subjected to the draft unless all non-war-effort men had been drafted, and a Laundry Report that stated “sleeves on the nurse and waitress uniforms should look better since we have a sleeve ironer.” In the past 82 years, it has published more than 1,000 editions with different styles and frequencies of release introduced with each new contractor. The most recent edition of the *Pantexan* was mailed in Fall 2013.

As the *Pantexan* relaunches in Fall 2024, there was no doubt what name it would carry forward.

For the longest time, the content in the *Pantexan* was not written by professionals but by volunteers in groups like Rail Transportation, Ammonium Nitrate Department, or the Booster Line.

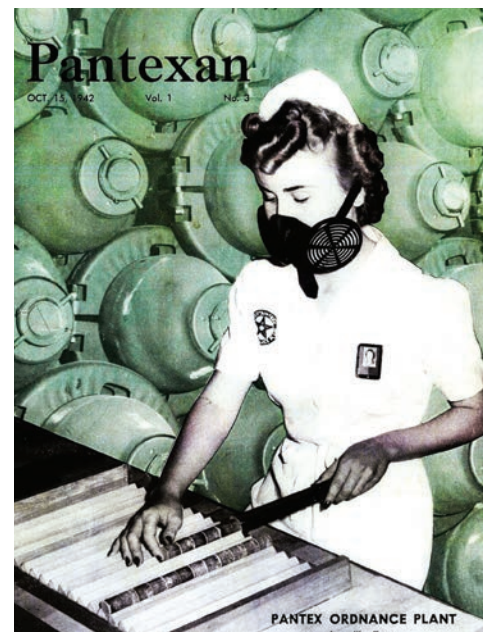
“It was a way for people to get out creative expression,” said Katie Paul, Pantex historian. “Many people that ran it were on the production line, and this was an opportunity for them to show their creative side.”

An early document describing the *Pantexan*’s purpose described its objectives, including communicating with employees, promoting excellent working conditions, the need for safety and security, and recognizing employees.

Because there was no such thing as Internet for more than half of the magazine’s existence—and a large portion of employees even today do not have regular access to a computer during work hours—it served, and will serve, as a way to foster community

at Pantex. There were some unique stories over the years, such as the reports of a plane crash on-site, or the brain surgery performed in the site hospital, but the *Pantexan* consistently painted the lives of generations of employees as caring, competitive, patriotic, and generous.

May the future of the *Pantexan* do the same.



Pantexan

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EVERYDAY EXCELLENCE

Pantexans working on the production line are dedicated to keeping their country safe.

By Andrea Caudill and Rachel Smith

The young woman gazes up at a cafeteria bulletin board covered in job postings. The big room is located in the heart of 1972's Pantex, and the board is where everyone stops to see what other positions are available. She spots the one she is looking for – assembler, a position known today as a production technician. A friend at the plant had mentioned it to her, and she is ready to throw her hat in the ring. She heads to the office that houses the paper job applications, fills it out, and waits to hear from the job recruiters.

The very act of applying for the job required boldness and courage, but the young woman had that in spades. Amarillo native Pat Alexander had graduated five years earlier as the Carver High School valedictorian of the last all-Black class before the integration of schools. After serving a stint at the local Helium Activity Center, she spent two years working in a clerical position at Pantex before she considered applying for the assembler job on the production line. When Pantex was founded during World War II, the majority of line workers were women supporting the efforts to build ammunition for the war effort. However, by the time Alexander began her time as a Pantex employee on February 1, 1970, work on the line was thought of as a “man’s job.”

She applied anyway, and when she sat down in the office facing the three men interviewing her for the job, she told them why she was qualified to have it.

“They were surprised I applied,” she said. “They were also surprised when they picked me.”

Alexander was not surprised.

“I knew I was qualified,” she said. “I knew women were skeptical about stepping into men’s positions, but I didn’t care. I needed a job, just like they did, and I was glad to do it. I made almost twice as much more [than as a clerk], and I said ‘oh that’s a good reason.’”

Alexander was among the first women to work on the production line since the facility had turned to nuclear weapon production. And while the work was repetitive, she said she found it interesting and appreciated what was being done at the facility to keep her country safe. She also had to find a path to cohesion with her coworkers.

“Most of them had been in the war—I was 23 and most of them were in their 40s and 50s, and some of them didn’t appreciate my interjection in there,”

she said. “But I didn’t care. I made the best of the situation.”

She reveled in the hands-on work of assembly and soon was part of a friendly group who never missed the opportunity for a vicious game of pinochle during their lunch breaks. She was a member of the softball team and notes that her bowling league team was a force to be reckoned with.

Alexander was, too, as she moved to a role as a high explosives quality inspector and then became a quality supervisor. When computers began to be integrated into the work space, she was recognized for computer literacy and was tapped for that work, becoming a computer analyst and then a computer security officer.

One night while working on swing shift, inspiration struck. Alexander coded a program that would assist Quality Control in calculating densities. What was a tedious pen-and-paper task suddenly became a few simple keystrokes on the keyboard. The program was used for several years.

After nearly three decades of service at the plant, Alexander retired to her next career as a small business owner. Her family still operates Alexa’s Beauty Supply & Salon in Amarillo.

“I never had a job I didn’t like,” Alexander said. “I always find something exciting or new, or information that you never would’ve come across if you hadn’t been there. Before I got there, I had no idea what Pantex was about. The stuff I did, I never could have imagined, unless I was in a place like that.”



Pat Alexander dedicated nearly 30 years of service to Pantex and was one of the first women to work on the production line.



The men and women serving on the production line are a vital part of the mission that keeps America safe.



Today the men and women on Pantex's production lines serve as cornerstones both for Pantex and the Nuclear Security Enterprise. Among them are production technicians, who do hands-on work in refurbishing and dismantling nuclear weapons.

"Our PTs play a crucial role in the mission," said Chad Hall, deputy director of Weapons Assembly/Disassembly Operations. "Their work is critical in managing the nation's nuclear arsenal and making sure that weapons are dismantled in a manner that ensures no risk to public safety or national security."

Pantex is the key integration point in the weapon supply chain, where parts and services come together to assemble the nuclear deterrent. It serves as the nation's primary center for assembly, disassembly, retrofit, and life-extension of nuclear weapons, ensuring that the arsenal remains capable and reliable.

In their day-to-day activities, PTs strictly follow procedures to complete each task with the highest standards of safety, security, and quality. This disciplined approach ensures that all operations are conducted without incident, maintaining the integrity and the safety of Pantex's workforce. By delivering current and planned future weapons work, they contribute to the strategic goals of national defense.

"Their experience, dedication, and thorough approach ensure that the nation's nuclear arsenal is maintained and that they continue to deliver on our mission to help enable global security," Hall said.

Among the components required in nuclear weapons are high-explosive charges and special nuclear material, and for more than 50 years, Pantex has been at the forefront of manufacturing these critical components.

"Our team's ability to sustain pressing production needs ensures we deliver high-explosive parts with the precision and timeliness required to support all weapon modernization programs," noted Monty Cates, senior director for Explosives Technology Operations.

The HE workers are precisely skilled due to the complexity of the processes and the exacting safety and quality requirements.

"Most workers learn their skill sets from their teammates and mentors, since HE is not something one would learn in school or outside industry," Cates said. "The excellence of our High Explosives division is built on a foundation of these rigorous standards. Our team conducts regular inspections of equipment and products to ensure everything is in optimal working order, prioritizing safety and quality at every step. Their success in maintaining high productivity, safety, and quality directly impacts our overall performance and national security mission."

Without the technicians, scientists, and engineers working diligently every day to deliver explosive materials and components, global security may not be assured.

"They are the backbone of our operations, and their relentless efforts ensure that Pantex continues to lead in the manufacture of high explosives, safeguarding our nation for the future," Cates added.

The dedication and ownership that all Pantex employees bring to their demanding roles, including those working on the production line, are unparalleled.

"Don't be afraid of what you think you can't do," Alexander said. "They'll teach you anything you need to know. There are no other jobs in America that are the same as that."

"It was a long and fruitful career," she said of her service at the plant. "I am so proud of the work I did and serving Pantex's mission. I hope it helped."



THE ROAD FREQUENTLY TRAVELED

The Nuclear Security Enterprise requires teamwork across the sites.

By Amberly Winningham

All roads lead to Pantex. It is a phrase that we all have heard, but what does it really mean? To the men and women of our armed forces on the front line, it means that the work performed daily by Pantexans represents the culmination of the efforts of thousands of patriots from across the Nuclear Security Enterprise dedicated to providing the nuclear deterrent.

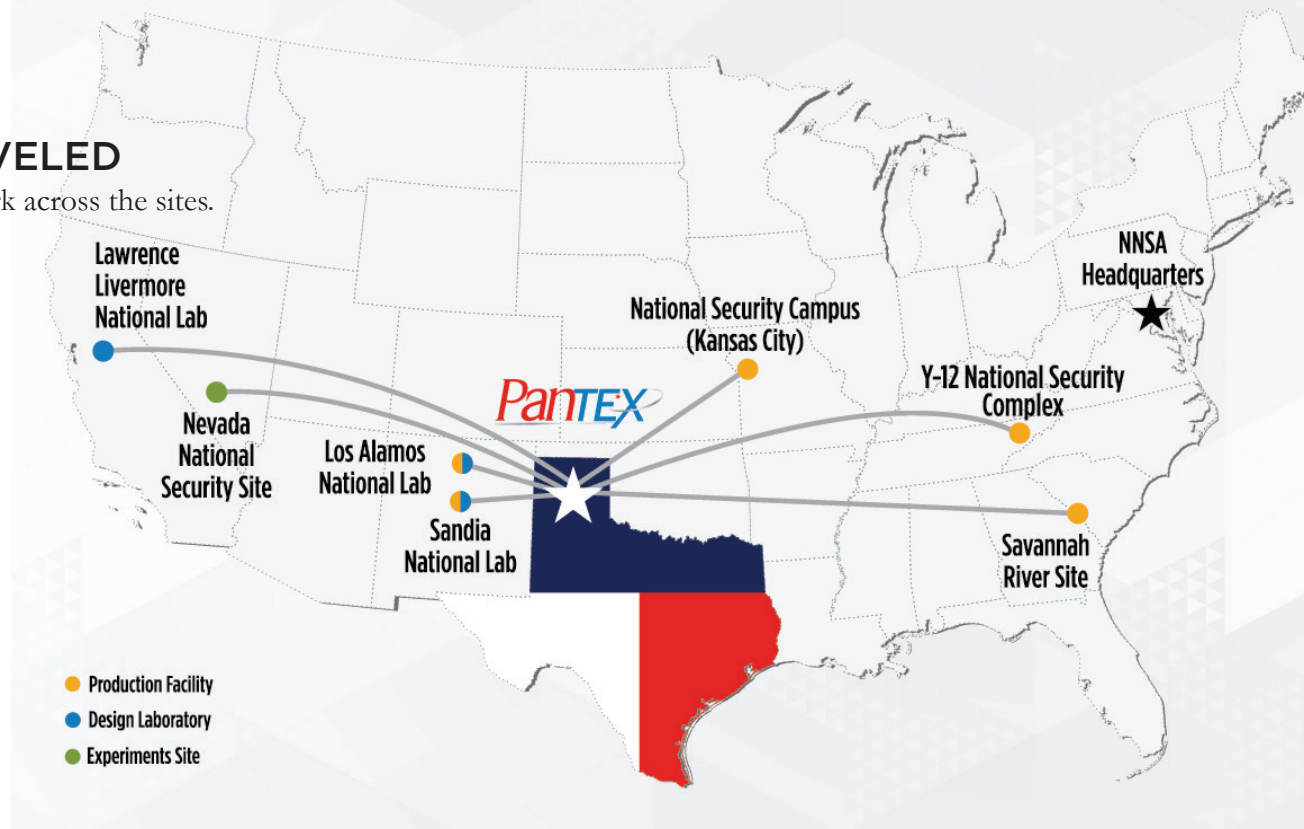
Through design, development, testing, production, and transportation, the ultimate mission is met through teamwork, integration, and collaboration. Pantex's role in United States national defense dates back to the 1940s. Due to its remote location centered between both coasts, Pantex was commissioned as a bomb-loading plant in 1942.

"The importance of the work done at Pantex has withstood the test of time," Colby Yeary, Pantex site manager, said. "Supporting national security and being part of the Enterprise is a responsibility that we all are proud to support and will continue to do for the foreseeable future."

Working to support the mission of maintaining the nation's nuclear stockpile, the NSE is made up of nine contractor-managed and-operated sites which are overseen by the National Nuclear Security Administration. These include three national laboratories: Sandia, Lawrence Livermore, and Los Alamos. Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos are responsible for design authority of the nuclear-explosive package. Sandia's responsibility takes the nuclear-explosive package and integrates it into the final air, land, or sea delivery system.

Component production is performed by the Kansas City National Security Campus, the Savannah River Site, and the Y-12 National Security Complex. These components from across the NSE come together at the Pantex Plant, which is responsible for the assembly and disassembly of nuclear weapons that support the nation's nuclear stockpile. Another part of the NSE, the Nevada National Security Site, provides testing capabilities for the Enterprise. Every weapon has some aspect that comes through or is sent from Pantex.

"Pantex's role in the NSE is vital to national security," NNSA Pantex Field Office Manager Jason Armstrong noted. "The NSE is like a puzzle in the way that all the sites work together to achieve the collective mission. Without Pantex and the thousands



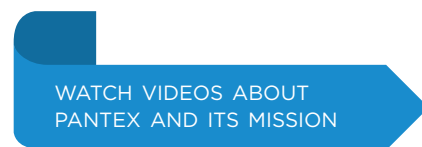
of Pantexans who make up the workforce, the puzzle would never be complete, since the work done here is so unique."

Pantex has plans to strategically position the site to accommodate future production demands. The vision going forward includes the capability to reliably produce any component, build any weapon, and qualify any system, on any day.

"Pantex's commitment to the NSE and mission is commendable," Armstrong added. "Seeing the plans for the future and knowing that thousands of Pantexans are dedicated to their work displays patriotism and work ethic at the highest levels."

With Pantex a key part of the NSE and continuing to support the U.S. nuclear stockpile, it is safe to say that roads leading to Pantex will continue to be frequently traveled.

"Whether working to support the United States or our local community, Pantex demonstrates excellence daily," Yeary said. "This excellence is achieved by the dedicated employees who show up every day and continue to make Pantex incredible."



ALL ROADS LEAD TO



CHANGE CAPABLE

Three things you need to know to be prepared for change.

By Occupational Health Services Manager and Certified Life Coach Don Morris

Employees at Pantex are experiencing a lot of change, which can be difficult to cope with, but they are not alone.

It has only been within the past few generations that changes have been so prevalent in our lives. Before then, most people's lives stayed pretty much the same across their lifespan. People grew up in the same geographic locations as their parents and grandparents, did the work their parents did, had the same belief systems, and they did not have as much change to process.

The world is different now, and major changes tend to happen every day. These changes can be economical, environmental, sociological, political, and organizational. Because we cannot control most of these changes, we must become more adaptable. We must become more comfortable and open to change in general. We need to become more change capable.

Uncomfortable change can lead to a lack of focus, which can lead to making mistakes on the job and safety concerns. We all want to return home happy, healthy, and safe. We can do that by lessening the impact of change in our lives by being more change capable.

COPING with CHANGE



OPEN MINDSET

- EMBRACE CHANGE
- NEW BEHAVIOR ENCOURAGES POSITIVE CHANGE



REDUCE STRESS

- SEEK HEALTHY BEHAVIORS
- AVOID RUMORS, STICK TO FACTS



SEEK SUPPORT

- KNOW YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM
- USE THEM AS A SOUNDING BOARD

WAM!

Warhead Assembly Modernization program becoming a reality at Pantex.

By Steve Myers

WAM!

In this onomatopoeia, the word sounds exactly like the impact the Weapons Assembly Modernization (WAM) program will have at Pantex.

Pantex has secured \$34 million in funding for WAM for Fiscal Year 2025, with that number expected to grow each year through Fiscal Year 2030.

As the title suggests, WAM is all about modernization, not only in the building or upgrading of new or existing facilities but also in the increase in capabilities and capacities within the weapon assembly and disassembly programs. The focus has been expanded past infrastructure to examine new and different modernization efforts and where they can be implemented across the entire Nuclear Enterprise.

From digital transformation to installing improved storage solutions, this is the first-of-its-kind program to modernize the site by reviewing and upgrading dozens of things.

“WAM is designed to modernize the capabilities needed to execute warhead assembly and disassembly operations for weapons, surveillance, and dismantlement programs,” said Program Manager Jennifer Simms. “It is also responsible for modernization activities supporting multiple weapon programs by identifying and implementing cross-cutting enhancements and providing benefits to all weapon operations executed at Pantex to ensure

future mission demand can be achieved.”

The WAM focus includes developing and implementing production modernization strategies to increase capacity and resiliency for weapon assembly and disassembly, implementing storage solutions for accelerated delivery of non-nuclear components, implementing new processes and technologies that increase efficiency in weapon assembly and disassembly operations, providing equipment and infrastructure to enable new technology insertion, modernizing critical equipment and capabilities that enable weapon assembly operations, and executing planning and other project cost activities for future major infrastructure projects supporting weapon assembly operations.

NNSA Warhead Modernization Program Director David Schrock toured the site and was asked about the highlights of his visit.

“Among the highlights for me, personally, was hearing of the great collaboration in setting the groundwork for the Warhead Assembly Modernization program,” Schrock said. “Many of the individuals we spoke with already had familiarity with the WAM program and were excited to submit potential projects to help modernize their specific capability areas.

“I sensed how proud, professional, and knowledgeable each Pantexan was to accomplish the mission for the enterprise,” he added. “Every time I visit, I am amazed at the work Pantex accomplishes.”



Congratulations to the

2024 ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Senior Clerk Shawna Clem has been chosen as the 2024 Administrative Professional of the Year. Clem’s supervisor, Alvin Gomez, nominated her and said, “Our department, which normally has three clerks, has been down to one: Shawna. Besides always being dependable, reliable, steady, and trustworthy, Shawna never complains—she just shows up and not only gets the work done but does so with a positive, can-do attitude every single day.”



Safeguards and security

HONORS TEAM MEMBERS

Christopher Burns is Pantex’s new senior director of Safeguards and Security, coming to Pantex with 30 years of military and security experience and a fresh perspective. Burns implemented quarterly Safeguards and Security awards ceremonies designed to acknowledge individuals who have demonstrated excellence as a result of their hard work and contribution to the Pantex mission.

“I think it’s important to not only talk the talk but to walk the walk,” Burns said. “I wanted to demonstrate to my teammates that they, along with their families, are important to us.”



Intern program

EXPERIENCE LEADS TO FULFILLING CAREERS

Pantex welcomed a total of 38 interns from across the nation as part of the wider CNS Intern program. The 10-week internship offered concrete experience in the CNS sites and their missions, culminating in a final project that they shared at an Intern Expo. Because of the unique missions at Pantex and Y-12, internship experience gives these graduates an upper hand in landing a full-time position at one of the sites. From the 2023 CNS intern class, nearly 40% became full-time employees, with more planning to seek a position after they graduate.



Excellence awards

NA-90 RECOGNIZES TEAMS

The 2023 NA-90 Infrastructure Excellence Awards honored four winning teams at Pantex. The winning teams were praised for their high standards of innovation and continuous improvement, safety, teamwork and collaboration, agility in overcoming adversity and problems, and enabling future successes.

Winning Pantex teams included the West Interconnect Recovery, the Bay and Cell Flame Detection System and High-Pressure Fire Loop Upgrades, the Zone 12 Air Compressor Replacement, and Building 12-44, Cell 6 Ceiling Replacement Project.



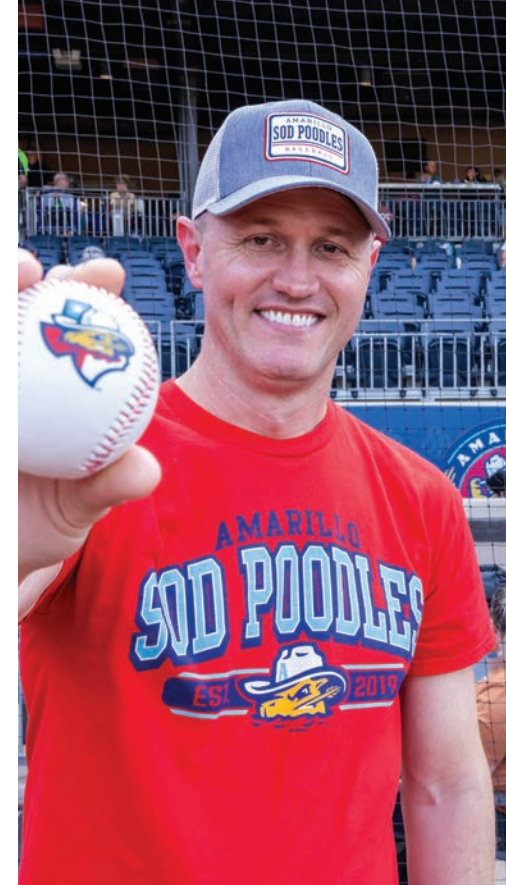


Dedication

NNSA NAMES RANGE #6 FOR RANDY PUTT

On Friday, July 19, a ceremony dedicating Firing Range #6 was held to honor former Pantexan Randy Putt.

In more than 30 years of service, Putt served as a special response team leader, range master, and training manager, demonstrating his commitment to service to the U.S. Department of Energy and NNSA. In 2011, he earned the Association for Talent Development's American Society of Training Development Award. Additionally, his diligence and business acumen saved the Protective Force nearly \$4 million while delivering innovative simulation capabilities.



PAST AND PRESENT PANTEXANS



"The owner of the Amarillo Gold Sox, which was disbanded July 6 of this year, is Bob Seeds, now material inspector for automotive transportation. He has played with major league baseball teams for the past 15 years and just finished the season with Indianapolis. Other teams were the Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox, Boston Red Sox, Detroit Tigers, Montreal Royals, New York Yankees, Newark Bears, New York Giants, and the Baltimore Orioles." (excerpt from *Pantexan* Vol. 1, No. 2 October 1942)



Former Pantexan Lorraine Olalde prepares a project in the Pantex Plastics Shop. "Adiprene, the material used most often in the Plastics Shop . . . is specially designed to protect nuclear weapons. With its various colors used to make seals, packaging and tools. Most recognizable of the products may be the red W76 nose cone." (excerpt from *Pantexan* Vol. 59, No. 3 Summer 2013)



Consolidated Nuclear Security Career ONE engineer Nate Copley is not afraid of a challenge, and this spring he took on The Big Texan's 72 oz. steak challenge.

DID HE DEFEAT IT? WATCH THE VIDEO TO FIND OUT!



community CALENDAR

SATURDAYS THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Canyon Farmers' Market
🕒 8 a.m.-noon

Now in its eleventh season, the Canyon Farmers' Market at the square in Canyon offers locally grown produce, homemade baked goods, arts and crafts, live music, activities for children, and food trucks.



Downtown at 4th Ave. and 15th St., Canyon

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Puppy Tales
🕒 4 p.m.

Puppy Tales offers children a chance to build reading skills and confidence by reading to therapy dogs.



Northwest Branch of the Amarillo Public Library, 6100 W 9th, Amarillo

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

War of the Wagons
🕒 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

This food truck event is both a cook-off and mental-health-awareness community event. Come support your favorite food truck and watch them battle to be crowned "Wagon Warrior 2024." There will be a family fun zone and lots of activities.



Texas Panhandle War Memorial, 4111 S. Georgia St., Amarillo

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

28th annual Chamber Good Times Celebration® BBQ Cook-Off
🕒 5-10 p.m.

Tickets (\$30 advance, \$40 at gates) available through the Civic Center Box Office, by phone at (806) 378-3096, or at any Panhandle Tickets outlet, including all area United Supermarkets/MarketStreet/Amigos stores at their customer-service desks.



Tri-State Fairgrounds, 3301 SE 10th Ave., Amarillo

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

6th annual Hope for Our Heroes Gala
🕒 5-9 p.m.

Semi-formal event will feature cocktails, dinner, veteran- and service-dog graduation ceremony, live and silent auctions, as well as Team Never Quit special guest speaker Taya Kyle, widow of American Sniper Chris Kyle. Register at www.blbtexas.org/events.



550 S. Buchanan St., Amarillo

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our **MISSION**

CAN BE YOUR MISSION, TOO

THE

PANTEXAN

is filled with stories about people who support our mission and make our plant great.

Want to join the Pantex team or know someone who does?

SCAN the QR



OR VISIT



PANTEX.ENERGY.GOV/CAREERS



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WE'RE SOCIAL



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