

# BLANCHARD E-NEWSLETTER

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## *A Christmas Star*

On December 21, 2020, just hours after the official start of winter, an exciting event is going to take place in the night sky—a long-awaited “Great Conjunction” between Jupiter and Saturn. This event is a rare close encounter of the solar system’s two largest planets! What makes this astronomical occurrence even more special is that it will show you one of the theories attributed to the “Star of Bethlehem.”

On the evening of December 21<sup>st</sup>, about 45 minutes after sunset, look low toward the southwest horizon. Jupiter will appear to Saturn’s lower left. Both planets will be close enough to see in the same field of view of a high-power eyepiece. By month’s end, the two planets, having separated to apart, will be setting about 1 hour and 45 minutes after sunset, right at the end of evening twilight.

All through the summer and into the fall, these two gas giants of the solar system have been calling attention to themselves in the southern evening sky. Jupiter of course, always appears brilliant and is usually one of the brightest nighttime objects, but in recent months it has stood out even more than

usual because of the presence of bright Saturn trailing just off to its left (east).



Some have suggested that these two planets might have been the legendary Star of Bethlehem. Actually, one of many theories for the Star of Bethlehem was a close conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BC. However, in that year Jupiter and Saturn met not once but three times that year (in May, September, and December).

The first conjunction (in May) presumably started the Magi on their way to Bethlehem from the Far East. The middle conjunction (in September) strengthened their resolve in the purpose of their journey, while the third and final conjunction (in December) occurred just as they arrived in Judea to meet with King Herod, who sent them on to Bethlehem to “go and search diligently for the young child.”

But while single conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn occur once every 20 years, triple conjunctions are far less frequent, occurring about once every 180 years on average; the last time was in 1981, but the next won't happen until 2239. For the Magi, Jupiter, pacing back-and-forth with Saturn in 7 BC would have been looked upon as something unique.

But this year, Jupiter and Saturn will only have a single meeting, on December 21st. We will be treated to another 6-arcminute separation on March 15th, 2080.

## *After Hours*

For Public Works after-hour incidents (ie: water leaks, sewer backups, low-water pressure, no water, etc.) please call 405.485.9391. The City's Central Dispatch is manned 24-7 and will contact the on-call personnel regarding the incident.

## *BOA Action*

The Blanchard Board of Adjustment held a regular meeting on **Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>** and discussed, considered and took appropriate action regarding the following agenda items:

**1 ~ Approved 2021 Schedule of Meetings.**

**2 ~ Approved Consent Agenda.**

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

## *Christmas Break*

The Blanchard Public Schools will be closed for the Christmas Holidays.

Students in the Blanchard School District will be out of school from **December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.**

No classes will be held during this period.

## *Council Action*

The Blanchard City Council held a Special Meeting on **Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>** and discussed, considered and took appropriate action regarding the following agenda items:

**1 ~ Held Public Hearing on Planning Commission's recommendation to approve a Conditional Use Permit for a medical marijuana growing facility at 1197 NE 70<sup>th</sup> Street.**

**2 ~ Adopted Resolution No. 2020-33 approving the CUP as recommended by the Planning Commission for a medical marijuana growing facility at 1197 NE 70<sup>th</sup> Street.**

**3 ~ Held Public Hearing on Planning Commission's recommendation to approve a Conditional Use Permit for a medical**

marijuana growing & processing facility at 240 NW 55<sup>th</sup> Street.

4 ~ Adopted Resolution No. 2020-34 approving the CUP as recommended by the Planning Commission for a medical marijuana growing & processing facility at 240 NW 55<sup>th</sup> Street.

5 ~ Held Public Hearing on Planning Commission's recommendation to approve a Conditional Use Permit for a medical marijuana growing facility at 1153 Red Bird Glen.

6 ~ Adopted Resolution No. 2020-35 approving the CUP as recommended by the Planning Commission for a medical marijuana growing facility at 1153 Red Bird Glen.

7 ~ Adopted Resolution No. 2020-36 approving the Final Plat for Phase II of Walnut Creek Estates as recommended by the Planning Commission.

8 ~ Adopted Ordinance No. 727 revising the subdivision regulations by adding private road standards and amending fire hydrant valve requirements and incorporating new standard details illustrating subdivision regulation requirements, as recommended by the Planning Commission.

9 ~ Adopted an Emergency Clause for Ordinance No. 727.

10 ~ Awarded contract to TFR Enterprises Inc. for being the lowest responsible qualified contractor for storm debris removal.

11 ~ Approved acceptance of storm debris from County residents, if they have a current Transfer account and deliver to the temporary burn site.

12 ~ Adopted a \$7 per cubic yard fee for storm debris disposal by County residents, if they have a current Transfer account.

13 ~ No action taken on an Operating Agreement with the ACOG 911 Association for 911 services to Blanchard.

14 ~ No action taken on an contractors and/or fee for storm debris.

The next regular meeting will be **Tuesday, January 26, 2021.**

## *Debris Removal Update*

The City has received over 2275 cy of storm debris at its Temporary Debris Staging and Reduction Site (TDSRS).

Contracts with T.F.R. Enterprises, Inc. have been executed for the storm debris pickup from the public right-of-way. **ONLY** storm debris will be picked up, **NO** household trash, **NO** construction material, and **NO** bags of leaves.

The contractor plans to start on **Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020**, due to Christmas holidays and issuance of performance and payment bonds.

## Free Breakfast & Lunch

The Blanchard Public School has announced that the USDA is allowing the school district to feed breakfast and lunch to children 1-18 years of age, for FREE! This will last until December 31, 2020, or until funds run out.

They are working on getting everyone's accounts credited for the meals they have charged. If your child still has a balance on their account, please continue to pay this off, as the USDA will not pay for past charges.

If you would like to receive a meal, please contact Jamie Romine, [jromine@blanchard.k12.ok.us](mailto:jromine@blanchard.k12.ok.us) or by phone 405-485-3391 ext 270, please leave a message stating how many you request to pick up.

## Holiday Closing



City offices will be closed on Christmas Eve, **Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** and on Christmas Day, **Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**.

City Offices will be closed on **Friday, January 1, 2021** for observance of New Year's Day.

If you have a police or fire emergency, please call 911.

If you have a water or sewer emergency, please call 485.9391.

Offices will reopen on **Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>**.

## Major Disaster Declaration

On November 13, 2020, Governor Kevin Stitt requested a Major Disaster Declaration from the federal government related to the devastating early season ice storm that began on October 26.

The thirteen (13) counties included in this request are: Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Dewey, Grady, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Logan, Noble, Oklahoma, Payne, Pottawatomie, and Roger Mills.

The multi-day storm system produced up to two (2) inches of ice in some areas, left hundreds of thousands without power and caused millions of dollars in damages for local governments and tribes.

Damage assessments have been completed and turned into the Oklahoma Emergency Management, but in these thirteen (13) counties alone, the storm resulted in an estimated \$27 million in debris removal and other damages.

If approved by the President, the designation will deliver federal funding to assist municipalities, counties, tribes and rural electric cooperatives with debris removal, infrastructure repairs and other costs associated with responding to the storm.

Governor Stitt stressed that the state will continue to request additional counties be added to the Major Disaster Declaration in the coming weeks.

As of today, President Trump has not signed the Major Disaster Declaration.

## Meeting Calendar

- January 11<sup>th</sup> ~ BPS Bd of Ed
- January 14<sup>th</sup> ~ Planning Commission
- January 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Board of Adjustment
- January 21<sup>st</sup> ~ Juvenile Court
- January 26<sup>th</sup> ~ Traffic Court
- January 26<sup>th</sup> ~ City Council
- January 26<sup>th</sup> ~ BMIA

## Notice of Continuance

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission gave notice that the hearing on the administrative authorization to drill and complete the Goose 1-4, as a commercial saltwater disposal well proposed to be located in the SE/4 of the SE/4 of the SW/4 of Section 4-T8N-R4W, McClain County (north side of NE 55<sup>th</sup> and east of Rockwell Avenue) has been continued from January 8, 2021 to **February 5, 2021 @ 8:30 a.m.**, Corporation Commission, Jim Thorpe Office Building, First Floor, 2101 North Lincoln Blvd, OKC, OK 73105.

## Police Blotter

No arrests made.

## Public Comments

Each year, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation proposes changes in the administrative rules that govern hunting and fishing in Oklahoma, and this year's public comment period will continue thru **January 8<sup>th</sup>**.

Many proposed changes are simple housekeeping matters, but some may be more substantial. For example, new aggregate bag limits for trout have been proposed, and various changes have been proposed for hunting season dates, open hours and bag limits in wildlife management areas. For a summary, go to [www.wildlifedepartment.com/public-meeting](http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/public-meeting) and click on Rule Change Proposals 2021.

Comments may be made online at that same site. Letters can be sent to P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. People might also choose to attend a public hearing beginning at 7:00p.m., January 7<sup>th</sup> at the John D. Groendyke Wildlife Conservation Building, 1801 N. Lincoln Blvd in OKC.

Members of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission are expected to consider proposed changes at their regular meeting set for **February 1, 2021**.

## Senior Nutrition

Curbside pickup and home deliveries will continue for the Blanchard Senior Citizens Center. The dining area will reopen with a limited occupancy of twelve (12), so RESERVATIONS ONLY.

### LUNCH MENU

(December 21<sup>st</sup> ~ 25<sup>th</sup>)

**Monday** ~ Chicken and Noodles, Carrots, Peas, Dessert.

**Tuesday** ~ Pigs in Blanket, Baked Beans, Tater Tots, Dessert.

**Wednesday** ~ Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Broccoli, Roll, Pie.

**Thursday** ~ Closed (Merry Christmas).

**Friday** ~ Closed (Merry Christmas).

If you are 60 or older, you are eligible to participate free of charge. However, a suggested donation of \$2.00 is requested. Citizens under the age of 60 may participate but are required to pay \$5.00 for the meal.

Please call 485-9260, if you would like to be considered for a home delivered meal or RESERVATION. Please be advised, the home delivery will begin the next business day. The Center is still delivering lunches daily.

## Special Events

12/21<sup>st</sup> ~ Winter Begins

12/24<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Eve

12/25<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Day

1/01<sup>st</sup> ~ New Year's Day (Closed)

1/18<sup>th</sup> ~ Martin Luther King Day

## Ways to Shop Local



\* Connect with local owners and let them know that you support them!

- \* Buy a local gift card for use later!
- \* Shop online or by phone!
- \* Order take-out!
- \* Order food ahead of time (don't wait in line!)
- \* Utilize delivery options!
- \* Send online flowers or gifts!

## Winter Solstice



The winter solstice is one of the two times each year that the Sun is at its farthest point from the Equator and appears to stand still. It occurs on Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:02 p.m. CST.