



Bulldog's Bark

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Volume 35 Issue 9-2025-26

STANBERRY R-II SCHOOL

MAY 2026



2026 graduates front row: Hannah McQuinn, Alexis Rogers, Kenzi Santa Cruz, Danielle Van Draska, Miley Davis, Lindsey Hailey, Isabella Wilson. Second row: Eva Cameron, Ally Santa Cruz, William Ellsworth, Olivia Blessing, Katie Libby, Evan Gregory. Back row: Vincent Smithson, Jaren Stoll, Russell Kerwin, Brayden Dias, Cortney Merrigan, Hayden Swan, Nathaniel Taylor.

The Class of 2026 Graduates 20 Students



By Tasha Stoll
Staff Reporter

The 2026 graduation ceremony began at 2 pm on Sunday, May 10th, in the gym. To start the proceedings, Junior Class President Brooke Robinson and Vice-President Kaitlin Porterfield led the graduating seniors to their seats.

As the ceremony commenced, Salutatorian Cortney Merrigan gave her speech. She spoke about moving three different times and how Stanberry stood out from other schools, it was better. She made lasting memories, found new friends, and discovered a new place to call home. We are so grateful she felt welcomed as a new student and made the most of her experience! After Cortney completed her speech, Eva Cameron and Vincent Smithson read the class history,

reflecting on the many memories they cherished together. Next, High School Counselor Liz Simbro announced the scholarships and awards, followed by an explanation of the seniors' future plans.

Vincent Smithson, the Valedictorian, then gave a speech regarding his memories throughout the years. He thanked the many people who helped him reach this milestone, noting that everyone plays an important role in one's future: teachers, coaches, friends, and especially parents. After Vincent concluded, Superintendent John Davison introduced the guest speaker, Brent Johnson. During his address, Brent mentioned that he wanted his speech to be memorable. He then reached into his jacket and pulled out



Cortney addresses her class, thanking them for welcoming her with open arms.



The class prepares for the national anthem, played by the band students.



Mr. Dias places the honor of the valedictorian medal on Vincent Smithson.



Danielle and Eva enter the ceremony, all smiles.



Evan and Vincent exit the ceremony with a cool handshake and pose.



Olivia embraces Mrs. Maronde after the ceremony.

envelopes containing money, specifically, two-dollar bills. While these bills are uncommon to carry around, he didn't just give them away; he explained the meaning behind them and offered three reasons they should stick with the graduates: declaring independence, acknowledging their rarity, and remembering "In God We Trust."

Principal Jason Dias then presented the graduating class to School Board President Brent Jennings, who handed

each student their diploma. To end the ceremony, Eva excitedly led the turning of the tassels. When asked how she felt about the day, Eva stated, "I thought graduation went well! I am definitely going to miss being with my class. They were all so fun to be around. Graduation definitely made me emotional, just knowing I won't be back next year as a student and with my friends." Congratulations to the Class of 2026; we can't wait to see what your future holds!



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2026 Graduate Plans and Awards

Olivia Blessing

Plans to enter the workforce in the restaurant industry

Olivia has won:

Collin Sager Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Olivia!

Eva Cameron

Plans to attend North Central Missouri College and major in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Eva has won:

A+ Scholarship from North Central Missouri College
Local PEO Scholarship
Gentry County Cattlemen's Association Scholarship
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
Jim Derks Memorial Scholarship
Bulldog Endeavor Scholarship
The Bulldog Pride Family Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Collin Sager Memorial Scholarship
William and Juanita Denslow Scholarship
Congratulations Eva!

Miley Davis

Plans to attend University of Nebraska-Lincoln and major in Business

Miley has won:

New Nebraska Scholarship from University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Congratulations Miley!

Brayden Dias:

Plans to attend Ozark Technical Community College Journeyman Apprenticeship Program

Brayden has won:

Collin Sager Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Brayden!

William Ellsworth:

Plans to work at Altec Industries
Congratulations William!

Evan Gregory:

Plans to attend North Central Missouri College and major in Computer Science

Evan has won:

A+ Scholarship from North Central Missouri College
Frank and Marjorie Carroll Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Ralph Pierce Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Evan!

Lindsey Hailey:

Plans to attend Metropolitan Community College and major in Physical Therapy

Lindsey has won:

Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant

Courtney Goforth Memorial Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Collin Sager Memorial Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Lindsey!

Russell Kerwin:

Plans to attend Southwestern Community College and major in Crop Production
Russell has won:
Raymond Sager Post 260 American Legion Scholarship
MFA Foundation Scholarship
Congratulations Russell!

Katie Libby:

Plans to attend Missouri Western State University and major in Nursing
Katie has won:
Black and Gold Scholarship from Missouri Western State University
Ralph Pierce Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Katie!

Hannah McQuinn:

Plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University and major in Early Childhood Education

Hannah has won:

Provost Scholarship, A+ Scholarship, and McIntosh Hall Scholarship all from Northwest Missouri State University
Bright Flight Scholarship
John T Belcher Scholarship
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
Make a Difference Scholarship
Tri-State Ford FFA Scholarship
MFA Foundation Scholarship
Erma E Alldredge Scholarship
Frederick W Schneider Scholarship
Andrew Clifford Armstrong Scholarship
JC Club Scholarship
Daniel Memorial Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Mollie J and Nelson G Allen Scholarship
SEA Scholarship
Congratulations Hannah!

Cortney Merrigan:

Plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University and major in Agribusiness and Accounting
Cortney has won:
Provost Scholarship and A+ Scholarship from Northwest Missouri State University
Hawthorne Charitable Trust Scholarship
Gentry County Cattlemen's Association Scholarship
Paul Dean and Beverly Shisler Scholarship
Frederick W Schneider Scholarship
Alva and Nina Faye Hughes Scholarship
Carl Messner QUWF Scholarship
Dr. Darrell "Jack" Holley/Missouri United School Insurance Council Scholarship

The Bulldog Pride Family Scholarship
Gentry County Farm Bureau Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Cortney!

Alexis Rogers:

Plans to attend Truman State University and major in Biochemistry
Alexis has won:
TrueMerit Scholarship and the Honorary Presidential from Truman State University
Andrew Clifford Armstrong Scholarship
Congratulations Alexis!

Ally Santa Cruz:

Plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University and major in Accounting
Ally has won:
Academic Scholarship and the A+ Scholarship from Northwest Missouri State University
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
Frederick W Schneider Scholarship
Phil Gray Memorial Scholarship
Shelter Insurance Foundation Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Kenneth & Rosemary Williford Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Ally!

Kenzi Santa Cruz:

Plans to attend University of Missouri-Columbia and major in Physical Therapy
Kenzi has won:
Academic Enrichment Award from University of Missouri-Columbia
Phil Gray Memorial Scholarship
Raymond Jennings Scholarship
The Brilliant Stanberry Class of 69 Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Kenzi!

Vincent Smithson:

Plans to attend William Woods University and major in Business Management
Vincent has won:
Academic Scholarship and the LEAD Scholarship from William Woods University
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
JC Club Scholarship
DAR Scholarship
Congratulations Vincent!

Jaren Stoll:

Plans to attend North Central Missouri College and earn the Agricultural Operational Technology Certificate

Jaren has won:

A+ Scholarship from North Central Missouri College
Elicia Elizabeth Eiberger Memorial Scholarship
Knights of Columbus Local Council Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Collin Sager Memorial Scholarship
Ralph Pierce Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Jaren!

Hayden Swan

Plans to attend North Central Missouri State University and major in Sports Management

Hayden has won:

A+ Scholarship from North Central Missouri College
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
Phil Gray Memorial Scholarship
Paul Dean and Beverly Shisler Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Congratulations Hayden!

Nathan Taylor :

Plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University and major in Computer Science

Nathan has won:

University Scholar, Adopt-a-Bearcat Scholarship and Gerald & Wilma Mitchell Scholarship all from Northwest Missouri State University
Hawthorne One-Year Educational Grant
Phil Gray Memorial Scholarship
Lester Birbeck Scholarship
Congratulations Nathan!

Danielle Van Draska

Plans to attend Kansas State University and major in Kinesiology

Danielle has won:

Wildcat Non-Residential Scholarship from Kansas State University
Daniel Memorial Scholarship
Kameron Ty Wallace Memorial Scholarship
Kyle & Pat Snead Lady Warrior Athletic Scholarship
Congratulations Danielle!

Isabella Wilson:

Plans to attend Missouri Western State University and major in Animation
Congratulations Isabella!

NEWS

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MAY 2026



Choir students entertain the crowd.



Mr. Kirby directs the sixth grade band members, who wow the crowd with how far they've come this year.



Mr. Kirby awards the band members with their band letters.



Evan Gregory, the only senior band member, is recognized for his years playing the trumpet.

Stanberry Students Shine at Annual Spring Concert

By Lindsey Hailey
Staff Reporter



On Wednesday, April 22, the band and choir held their annual spring concert. The evening began at 7:00 p.m. and kicked off with the sixth grade band playing "Shoo-Fly," "On the Bridge at Avignon," and "Rock This Band!" The audience was very pleased with their performance.

Next on the program was the junior high and high school band, performing "Slideways" by Timothy Loest. Once the piece concluded, Mr. Kirby recognized the accomplishments of the high school band. First, Evan Gregory and Carter Mattson were honored for their efforts: Evan was awarded the "John Philip Sousa Band Award," and Carter received the "Director's Award for Band." Additionally, All-District Band members were recognized: Ellie Dias for All-District Concert Band (6th Chair Trumpet) and Carter

Mattson for Junior High All-District Band (2nd Chair Trumpet).

Following these recognitions, the junior high and high school choir took the stage. The choir performed "They Went to Sea in a Sieve" by Douglas E. Wagner, "America, the Beautiful" arranged by Ruth Elaine Schram, and "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" arranged by Roger Emerson. When asked for his thoughts on the evening, Principal Dias stated, "The spring concert was fantastic. It was great to see how far the kids have come musically since the beginning of the year."

Once the choir concluded, Mr. Kirby highlighted their achievements. Charlotte Schultz received the "Stanberry Junior High Choral Award." When asked about her experience this year, she responded, "I'm grateful for all

the opportunities I have gotten this year to improve, and I am thankful for where it has gotten me."

The All-District Choir members were then recognized: Charlotte Jennings (Alto), Kaitlyn Van Draska (Alto), and Keegan Schultz (Bass). Mr. Kirby also announced the District Solo/Small Ensemble Festival results. Ellie Dias received a Gold rating for her trumpet solo, while Charlotte Jennings earned a Gold rating for her vocal solos. The Stanberry Brass Trio, consisting of Ellie Dias, Evan Gregory, and Konnor Keough, earned a Silver rating.

Individual Silver ratings were awarded to Charlotte Jennings (clarinet solo), Trinity Regalado (clarinet solo), Blake Mercer (vocal solo), and Konnor Keough (trombone solo). Bronze ratings were awarded to Cooper Spaulding for his snare drum solo and

Kiara Willoughby for her vocal solo.

The Grand River Conference (GRC) band members included Owen Dias, Brantly Donovan, Carter Mattson, Kiara Willoughby, Ellie Dias, Trinity Regalado, Konnor Keough, Cooper Spaulding, and Evan Gregory.

Band members who lettered this year were Owen Dias, Eli Meyer, Brantly Donovan, Carter Mattson, Liam Wilson, Jaxon Baker, Charlotte Jennings, Jude Spence, Kiara Willoughby, Ellie Dias, Trinity Regalado, Rylan Worley, Konnor Keough, Cooper Spaulding, and Evan Gregory. Finally, the following choir members also lettered: Quinn Heyde, Charlotte Schultz, Charlotte Jennings, Kaitlyn Van Draska, Kiara Willoughby, Blake Mercer, and Keegan Schultz.

Congratulations to everyone recognized for their outstanding performances!

Check out the school website www.sr2.k12.mo.us for daily announcements, lunch & breakfast menus, monthly calendar, teacher websites, and much more! Also, follow Stanberry Bulldogs on Facebook, Instagram, & TikTok!



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NEWS

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New FCCLA officers are installed for the 2026-27 school year.



Danielle Van Draska receives a STAR Events award from Hannah McQuinn.



FBLA Vice-President Eva Cameron awards Ally Santa Cruz with a 6th place certificate she earned in the Accounting I test at Districts.



Jaren Stoll poses with his parents, Teri and Jason who were honored as Honorary FFA Members.

Vocational Banquet Highlights Student Leadership and Success

By Allie Schieber
Staff Reporter

As the school year comes to a close, students, families, and community members gather for the annual Vocational Banquet, a night dedicated to recognizing the hard work, leadership, and accomplishments of students involved in FFA, FCCLA, and FBLA.

The banquet began at 7 p.m. with the invocation led by FFA Chaplain Allie Schieber. Following the opening prayer, FFA officers conducted the official opening ceremonies, sharing the responsibilities and duties of each office within the chapter.

After the FFA ceremony, FCCLA officers presented awards to members who excelled in their competitive events throughout the year. FBLA members were then recognized for their achievements and

participation in various competitions.

Among the highlighted accomplishments of the evening were Harper Heyde and Katelyn Shisler, who qualified for state competition in Broadcast Journalism and later advanced to the National Leadership Conference in San Antonio, Texas, taking place June 28 through July 2.

Once awards and certificates had been presented, each organization installed its new officers and members for the upcoming school year, symbolizing the transition of leadership and continued growth within the chapters. The presidents of each organization reflected on the importance of the banquet and the accomplishments of their members.

FFA President Avery Calhoun shared, "It was really great to see all of the organizations come together, and it was good to give out awards to recognize those who make our FFA chapter what it is." Kaitlyn Porterfield, incoming president of both FBLA and FCCLA, expressed excitement for the future of the organizations. "I am very excited to be the president of FBLA and FCCLA next year. I hope that I can help improve the organizations and encourage more people to participate in them," she said.

The evening concluded with heartfelt speeches from FFA Advisor Korinne Noble as she offered final words of encouragement and farewell to the graduating seniors. Guests then enjoyed cake and refreshments while



Alana Evans passes on the duty of Reporter to Blanche Eckard for the 2026-27 school year.



Parker Ginther recites his part of the opening FFA ceremony.

celebrating another successful year.

The Vocational Banquet served as a reminder of the dedication, talent, and leadership displayed by students throughout the year and highlighted the strong future ahead for each organization.

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A few of the senior boys enjoy hibachi at Stix Restaurant.



Eva Cameron, Cortney Merrigan, Danielle Van Draska, and Hannah McQuinn at The New Theatre & Restaurant before watching “Cactus Flower”.



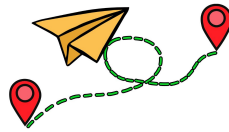
Jaren Stoll, Evan Gregory, Larry Marticke, Nathan Taylor, Hayden Swan, Vincent Smithson, and Russell Kerwin “break out” in the nick of time at Breakout KC.



Katie Libby, Ally Santa Cruz, Russell Kerwin, and Nathan Taylor enjoy a lunch buffet at Top Golf.

Seniors Head to KC

By Olivia McQuinn
Staff Reporter



Senior trip started bright and early on Wednesday morning, May 6th. The seniors met their class sponsors, Mrs. Maronde and Mrs. Palmer, at the lobby doors to check bags and leave the school for Kansas City by 7:45 a.m. Those attending were Nathan Taylor, Eva Cameron, Kenzi Santa Cruz, Russell Kerwin, Vincent Smithson, Evan Gregory, Hayden Swan, Jaren Stoll, Cortney Merrigan, Danielle Van Draska, Lindsey Hailey, Hannah McQuinn, Miley Davis, Olivia Blessing, Katie Libby, and Ally Santa Cruz. There were a fun-filled three days planned for the seniors.

The first stop the class made was Topgolf for brunch and some fun golfing. After that, they traveled to Andretti Indoor Karting and Games, where they could ride go-karts, go

bowling, and play arcade games. Next, they stopped at Andy’s for ice cream. Once checked into the hotel, the students had time to shop or just hang out. At 7:00 p.m., they headed to dinner at Stix Restaurant, a hibachi grill; one of the highlights of dinner was Jaren catching six pieces of shrimp in his mouth.

The second day was just as eventful. Their first stop of the day was Breakout KC, where they all worked together in escape rooms. They then had lunch at Blind Box BBQ. Later in the afternoon, they had more shopping time at Legends Outlet Shopping Center. Dinner was at the New Theatre & Restaurant, where they were served a meal and watched the play *Cactus Flower*. Afterward, the students were able to relax around the hotel. Mrs. Palmer also brought the



Seniors enjoyed “Cactus Flower” at The New Theatre & Restaurant. Front row: Mrs. Palmer, Eva Cameron, Ally Santa Cruz, Katie Libby, Lindsey Hailey, Hannah McQuinn, Miley Davis, Evan Gregory, Mrs. Maronde. Back row; Danielle Van Draska, Kenzi Santa Cruz, Cortney Merrigan, Jaren Stoll, Olivia Blessing, Vincent Smithson, Russell Kerwin, Hayden Swan, Nathan Taylor.

seniors the letters that their seventh-grade selves wrote to their senior selves. She commented on the trip, “Senior trip was so much fun this year, thanks in large part to the fun-loving nature of this group of seniors. We tried a few new activities, like go-karting and hibachi, and it seemed like everyone had a great time. One of my favorite moments was our ‘class meeting’ on the last night, where the seniors read the letters they wrote back in 7th grade. It was a great reminder of the memories, growth, and friendships they’ve built

throughout the years.”

On the final day, the class had to be ready to leave the hotel for Dutch Bros by 8:30 a.m. After getting coffee and drinks, they headed home. When asked about the trip, Hannah commented, “It was really fun to do one last thing with our class before graduation. Go-karting and shopping were really fun.”

The seniors had a wonderful time hanging out with their class before graduation. Stanberry R-II is proud of all these students and wishes them luck in their future.

NEWS

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STANBERRY R-II SCHOOL

MAY 2026



Intermediate Track and Field Day



NEWS

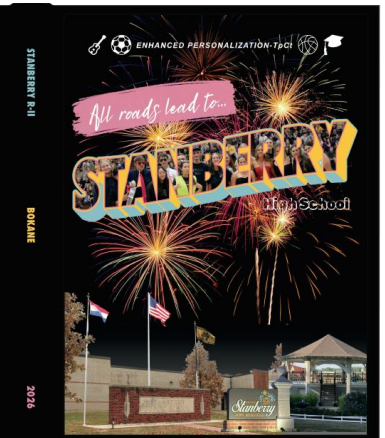
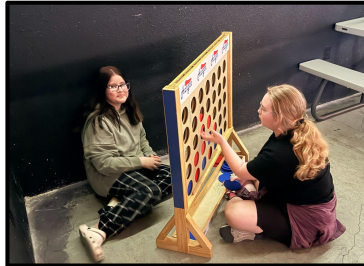
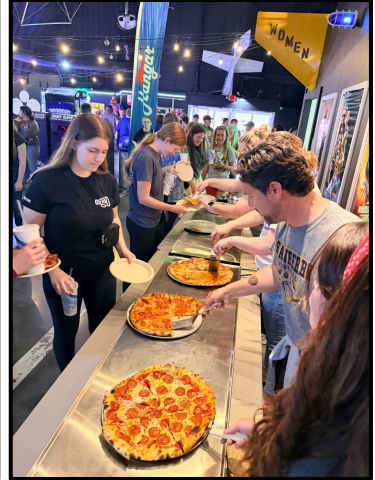
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JH/HS Field Trip to The Hangar



COVER PREVIEW

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OPINION

Volume 35 Issue 9-2025-26

STANBERRY R-II SCHOOL

MAY 2026

It's
Your
Call



What are you most excited for this summer?

By Allie Schieber
Staff Reporter



Seventh grader,
Kasyn Redig,
"Raking hay."



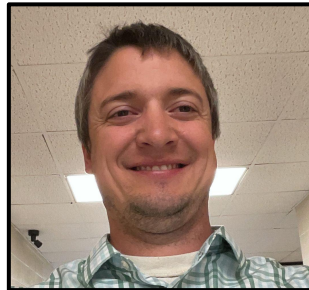
Seventh grader,
Sophia Sager,
"Going on vacation."



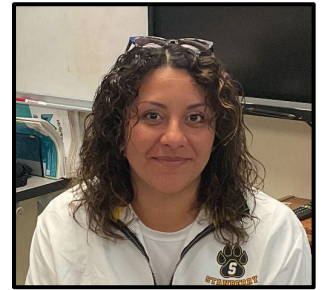
Sixth Grader
Tucker Runde,
"Swimming."



Fourth Grader
Bentley Moffat,
"Going swimming."



HS History Teacher
Jeffrey Maronde,
"Going to South Dakota."



Elementary
Paraprofessional
Mireya Varney,
"Going to camp."



Freshman
Brenden Ledford,
"Football & weights."



Junior
Kaitlin Porterfield,
"Having free time."

Survey Results

By Lindsey Hailey
Staff Reporter

Students in grades 7-12 were asked the question: *What are you most excited for this Summer?* 64 students responded.

Their options included warm weather, no school, sleeping in, swimming, or vacation.

Vacation

17.2%



Warm Weat...

17.2%



Swimming

7.8%

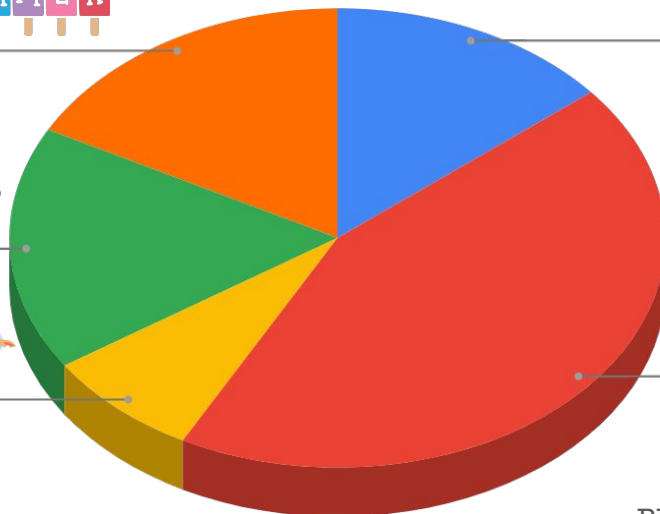
Sleeping In

14.1%



No School

43.8%



ENTERTAINMENT

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Brutus' Corner

By Allie Schieber
Staff Reporter

Each month *The Bulldog's Bark* has featured a school staff member. Our final teacher from April was **Mrs. Brittney McClurg**. Please join us next year as we continue *Brutus' Corner* featuring new teachers and staff members.

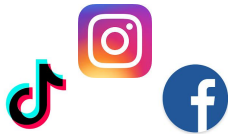


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