



Photo by Traci Chapman

Brandon Mayse takes off from the starting line last week during the Oklahoma Special Olympics Summer Games in Stillwater.

Mid-Del competes at Special Olympics

By Traci Chapman
Contributing Writer

Last week marked the 33rd year Oklahoma State University hosted the Oklahoma Special Olympics Summer Games, but for those Midwest City athletes who took part in it, history was the last thing on their minds.

"I just want to win, to run fast," Kevin Zapf said before taking off down the track during the games' track and field competition.

Zapf did run fast and he also made friends, including Mustang's Brock Masie, who he ran alongside during his race. The two talked about how they had practiced and a dance scheduled for that evening — and annual event that is a favorite of Special Olympians every year, organizers said. The two athletes agreed.

"I really like that part, it's fun," Zapf said, as Masie nodded. "It's just great to listen to music and be able to jump around," the Mustang youth said with a big grin.

Midwest City's Bomber contingent was among what Special Olympics of Oklahoma officials called the biggest summer games ever. More than 5,000 athletes and volunteer partners were expected to participate in the



Photo by Traci Chapman

Midwest City's Kevin Zapf chats with Brock Masie of Mustang before a race at the Special Olympics Summer Games last week in Stillwater.

games, which ran from March 11 through March 13. Carl Albert and Del City high schools also sent athletes to the competition.

A variety of sports are part of the annual summer games — track and field, bocce, bowling, basketball, horseshoes, softball throw, golf and powerlifting. Events were held at Boon Pickens Stadium, Gallagher-

Bu Arena, Stillwater High School and more. "We pretty much just take over the entire area during that time," said Donna Ham, SOOK media and public relations coordinator.

In addition to sporting events, athletes have a chance — like Zapf and Masie — to meet athletes from other areas and make new friends. While many teams are sponsored by local high schools, participants range in age from children and youth to adults over 30. Regardless of age, Ham said those who take part in the games enjoy more than competition — the bonding, the fun, special activities — like the boys' favorite, the dance, are aimed and making the multi-day event "the time of their lives."

"It's about celebrating who they are and what they've accomplished, which for so many of them is nothing short of remarkable," Ham said. "They are beyond inspirational, every single year."

While the summer games are among the biggest single events of the year, Midwest City's special athletes stay busy throughout the year — with winter games, special activities and gatherings.

"It's just fun," Zapf said. "I like my friends."

Election:

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state and feds, who are the horses driving this, that we have the money to pay for it," Edwards said.

If the sales tax is not renewed, Edwards said Del City would have to consider raising utility rates or property taxes to pay for the wastewater treatment plant.

In addition to the wastewater treatment plant, the sales tax would fund several other capital improvements such as water and sewer line replacement, extension and design, property acquisition, purchase of police and fire vehicles, construction of a new library building, and public works equipment.

A new library is included in the current sales tax. Edwards said the project may not be completed by 2017, so it was added to the sales tax extension to provide adequate funding.

The sales tax would also fund road projects on Hiul Road, Bryant Avenue (SE 29th to SE 15th streets), Scott Street and others. Money would also be used to remodel the John Smith Sports Center, Senior Center, Eagle Lake Trail and other recreational and beautification projects.

Edwards said the city would also use funds to raise and maintain salaries of police and fire personnel.

"Now we're training a lot of people and then losing them to other departments in the metro because of wages," he said. "This will help provide raises for police and fire to keep us competitive with other cities."

The proposal would also continue to provide funding for juvenile justice programs and administration.

An extension and modification of the sales tax would require a majority vote on Aug. 23.