

Kristie Ham wraps up 17 years at HHS

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

With two decades of teaching business and technology under her belt, Kristie Ham has decided that she is ready to throw in the towel at the conclusion of the school year and retire from HHS after 17 years of service.

“I think teachers get to the point where they know it’s time,” Ham said. “I will really, truly miss what I am doing here. I love what I am doing here, and I love working with the kids.”

While she closes the book on her teaching career, Ham will not be completely stepping away from the students. She is hoping that whoever is brought in to fill the position will allow her to continue to be a part of FBLA.

During her time in Holyoke, Ham has served as an adviser for FBLA. For her dedication to the program, Ham was recently selected to be included on the FBLA Wall of Fame at the national headquarters in Reston, Va.

“I’m really hoping that the next person will feel comfortable with me,” Ham said. “I don’t want them to feel overshadowed or that I am trying to step in and keep control, but if I can help supplement or be a resource to them, that is really what I am hoping for.”



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Business and technology teacher Kristie Ham prepares for life after teaching as she will retire at the end of the school year. —Enterprise photo

Ham explained that her experiences in FBLA have been memorable for a number of reasons. She enjoyed the opportunity to build stronger relationships and bonds with her students outside of the classroom and witness as her students developed skills that are needed for the transition from high school to college and to the workforce that cannot be learned in the classroom.

“To me, when you see the students blossom and you see that transition, that is the big payoff,” Ham stated.

She may also do some work at the state and national level for FBLA.

Initially Ham, who had earned a degree in computer science from California State University, was interested in animation and virtual reality. While in California, Ham met her husband Ken, a Haxtun native, and the two eventually moved back to northeast Colorado to ranch and farm.

With the Internet gaining prominence across the world, Ham decided that teaching business courses was the best use of her degree as she believed that computers were going to become more and more a part of people’s lives.

She attained her teaching certificate and student taught in Haxtun before getting her first teaching job at Lone Star High School.

“In my first class when I started teaching, I had just seven kids in it. I was so scared standing up there, my knees were knocking together,” said Ham.

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After three years at Lone Star, Ham joined HHS. While teaching, Ham also attained her master's degree in education and technology through Cambridge.

In the beginning of her career, Ham taught mostly typing and word processing courses. Over the years as technology advanced, Ham adjusted her curriculum to ensure outdated procedures were not being taught. The constant evolution of the field and the curriculum kept things fresh for Ham, who said she enjoyed the ever-changing world of technology.

As computers became more prevalent in society, classes that were once a high school course were moved to the junior high and even to the elementary school. At the high school level, courses such as computer applications have been replaced with website design, digital design and Photoshop and video editing.

As she moves forward, Ham will use her business knowledge to help keep books for her husband's farming and ranching work.

Aside from work, Ham plans to spend more time with her family. Her oldest daughter KrisAnna just completed her freshman year at the University of Colorado at Boulder and her youngest daughter Kaylee is finishing up her sophomore year at HHS. In the past, Ham's family schedules revolved around school schedules, and now that does not have to be the case.

With the extra free time retirement provides, Ham plans to dive back into painting, something she hasn't had time to do in recent years. She also plans to get out more socially, meet with friends and exercise. She is looking forward to attending dinner theaters and ballets with her mother as well.

To celebrate her retirement, Ham and her husband have planned an Alaskan cruise for August, and after Kaylee graduates from HHS, she said they are hoping to take a family trip to Europe.

For Ham, who stated that she has a hard time not tearing up every year when she has to say

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goodbye to her seniors, the transition to not having a classroom full of kids will be an emotional one.

“It’s going to be really weird to me when I walk into this school and I don’t know the kids anymore. That’s going to be really hard,” Ham said. “It’s going to be hard six years from now when the kids have transitioned from the elementary school to here and the kids here now are gone.”

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