

Overwhelming Hardships of 2020

As I sit here and look back on all the events of 2020, both good and bad, I would have never imagined the impact both physically and emotionally that the Covid-19 pandemic and the oil and gas industry's crash of 2020 would have on me, my family, friends, loved ones, community, and country.

In March of 2020, when the pandemic hit our nation head-on and the entire world was at its mercy, my parents and I were forced to stay home like everyone else to slow the spread of the virus. At first, I was upset that I couldn't see my friends. My family and I immediately went into action and brainstormed how we could help others in their time of panic and need. This hit our country so fast that we weren't prepared to handle it head-on at first. It was like someone took a blanket of hate, sadness, heartache, depression, sorrow, despair, suicide, death, and wrapped our world up in it with no escape in sight. So, we came up with a design for a face mask, and yes, we made several different designs until we mastered a design that was both effective and quick to assemble. We already had most of the supplies thanks to my mother's sewing room where we created an assembly line of cutting, pinning, and sewing, the facemasks. The word spread fast through our community that we were making masks and before we knew it, we had made over 1,500 face masks for our community, healthcare and essential workers. Reflecting back on what seemed like a crazy emotional time, I got quality time with my family and I could take pride in knowing in a time of panic and uncertainty, my family and I were able to protect my community and all those I care about with something so simple as a facemask.

As the pandemic wore on, the oil and gas industry took a hard hit with the price of oil crash hitting zero. Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse, they did. I say with pride that I am from a community that is the heart of the oil and gas industry. This industry has made our community prosperous and made a hardworking, well-earned way of life possible for all who live within it. So many families including my own were inherently affected in ways most couldn't recover from. Thousands upon thousands of people lost their jobs, health insurance, homes, and much more because they could no longer afford them, and businesses permanently closed their doors. Families were now faced with the fear of how they were going to feed their families and where they were going to sleep. There are good hard-working families that had to face these hardships. Before we knew it, like many other small-town communities, families and former thriving business owners in Artesia were fleeing this despair for just a slim chance of hope in our neighboring state of Texas. This was an overwhelming emotion of sadness for me considering I grew up with these families.

This was my senior year in high school. I had envisioned and worked so hard to prepare for this. I had been preparing myself for all the awesome experiences and memories I had planned to make with my friends, family, teachers, and classmates during my senior year. Never would I have imagined my senior year not attending high school, but being stuck in my home trying to teach myself subjects I did not know. The tradition of being a bulldog felt lost to this horrendous virus that has taken so many lives and impacted millions in the worst of ways. During the pandemic, I was still able to persevere and with positivity from family, friends, and my community, I was able to keep my grades up and will graduate as a mighty Bulldog with honors.

In times like these, we all have to come together united as one and be thankful for all we have, and consider how blessed we are to live in a country where we are free and anything can be overcome, even in the darkest of times.