

Take advantage of the church listings to find out when and where to go.

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Norton's FFA Club will celebrate its special week from Feb. 21-28.

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Friday
February 20, 2004

County's 'Cross' to bear is 'Blue'

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

An insurance salesman sat like a rock in a river on Tuesday as a wave of anger, indignation and unhappiness from Norton County commissioners washed over him.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield representative Charles Krull of Hays came to the meeting at the commissioner's request because of changes in the county's medication-payment plan.

"We were lied to," Commissioner John Miller told Mr. Krull. "Our county employees think we lied to them."

The commissioner went on to say that at a meeting in the fall the county employees had voted on a new prescription drug program that would raise their copay for medications from \$10 for generics and \$20 for brand names to \$10 for generics, \$30 for brand names and \$45 for five specific drugs.

Those drugs, Mr. Miller said were Vioxx, Celebrex, Bextra and Bextra LA, pain medications and Viagra, for erectal dysfunction.

However, he said the employees have

been coming to him and saying that they have been charged \$45 for a lot of other medications including those for diabetes, blood pressure and the heart.

Mr. Krull said that he hadn't lied to the commissioners or the employees but that changes were made in their plan after it was put in effect. He said that Blue Cross issued a new formulary list of acceptable drugs, which he received on Jan. 7.

"From the time I was here and 2004, this new list was primarily after the fact," he said. "At the time I was explaining it there

weren't more than five drugs."

County Clerk Robert Wyatt was not mollified by this, however.

"If this plan changed after you explained it to us, who was supposed to get back with Norton County and say, 'Whoops'?" he asked.

The commissioners were also not appeased.

"This is a bad deal, Charlie," Mr. Miller said. "It's not right."

"We may have to talk to the insurance (Continued on Page 3)

Norton, Kansas Home of Connie Sanko

Briefly

Wrestling tourney here this week

Norton Community High School will host the Class 3-2-1A Regional Wrestling Tournament of Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21 in the high school gym.

Competing teams will be Atwood, Beloit, Hoxie, Hill City, Lincoln, Osborne, Smith Center, St. Francis, Stockton, Belleville, Phillipsburg, Plainville, Minneapolis, Norton, Oakley, Oberlin, St. John's Military, Sylvan Grove, Kensington and Eastern Heights.

The tournament will begin at 2 p.m. on Friday and at 11 a.m. on Saturday.

Courthouse to close for hour

The Norton County courthouse will be closed from 11 a.m.-noon Monday for an employee meeting.

Norton County employees will meet with a representative from Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the county commissioners at the 4-H Building to discuss changes in the county's medication payment plan.

Tag deadline for 'A' is Feb. 27

Heavy truck and trailer tag renewals are due by Feb. 27. These vehicles include anything with a weight sticker of 16,000 pounds or greater and all not recreational vehicle trailers.

Proof of insurance is required for all vehicles. For trailers the insurance card for the vehicle that pulls it most should be provided. The deadline is 4:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 27.

All persons with the last name beginning with "A" and businesses beginning with "A" have until Feb. 27 to renew their automobile, pickup, motorcycle and/or motorized bike tags. Proof of insurance is required.

Weather

Forecast:

Tonight — Mostly clear and cooler with lows around 19. **Saturday** — Partly cloudy with highs in the upper 40s. **Saturday Night** — Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain. Not as cool. Lows in the lower 30s with southeast winds 10 to 20 mph. **Sunday** — Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of rain then partly cloudy in the afternoon. Breezy with highs around 50.

Howell report:

Tuesday High 57, Low 34
Wednesday High 69, Low 34
Thursday High 62, Low 33
Week ago High 31, Low 13
Month ago High 31, Low 23
Year ago High 60, Low 29
February precipitation60 inches
Year-to-date precipitation 1.15 inches
(Readings taken at the Paul and Pat Howell farm 10 Miles North and 1/3 Mile East of Norton)

Prayer

Lord, when our faith falters, remind us that wherever we see love at work, we can see you. Amen



Jerry Moran meets with Northern Valley Instructors Jason Dibble and Monica Wilson along with their government students as part of his listening tour. The students heard Mr. Moran speak to the public at the American Legion Hall Building Tuesday in Norton.

— Telegram photo by Kristen Brands

Rep. Moran visits folks in Norton

By KRISTEN BRANDS

Congressman Jerry Moran was in Norton Tuesday at the American Legion Hall to tell people what he is doing in Washington and to listen to their concerns.

After speaking at the Lions Club monthly meeting, Norton pastor Terry Worthington introduced Mr. Moran.

Mr. Moran started by telling folks what he was doing.

"My goals, as a member of congress, have been to make sure that Kansans are living well and making ends meet as well as providing the opportunities for their children to cultivate the same way of life," he said as he listed his priorities.

These include health care, small business advancement, transportation, education, and access to the current technology.

Congressman Moran pointed out that it is important to keep local hospitals open and offering quality service.

"When Medicare fails, we lose adequate health care," he said. "A reoccur- (Continued on Page 3)

County told not to worry about bonds

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The Norton County Commissioners were told that they were worrying needlessly about being able to use the money from a \$1 million bond project in time to satisfy federal regulations.

At their meeting Monday morning the commissioners received a pre-arranged call from Steve Berland, BG Consultants, which is helping the county with the bonds needed to repair or replace about 25 bridges.

The commissioners had been informed that the money from the bonds needed to be spent within three to four years but Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan said that it would not be possible to do all bridges on the list in that length of time.

Mr. Berland, who was on vacation in Florida but called to talk to the commissioners about the problem, said that 85 percent of the bond money needs to be committed or spent in the three to four years. However, he said that that shouldn't be a problem. The money doesn't have to be paid out. It just needs to be committed.

The wording is so that counties can't borrow money at low rates using bond issues and then never use it for the stated purposes, Mr. Berland said. If that language were not in the contracts, he said, it would be possible for a county to borrow money cheaply and then use it to make money at a higher interest rate than it was paying, thus using the bond money to make money rather than to do public works projects.

"I see what the purpose is," said Commission Chairman Leroy Lang, after Mr. Berland explained the reasons for the wording.

"You're not doing that," Mr. Berland said. "You have good intent. We've (Continued on Page 3)

Youngsters will make music Wednesday

Hundreds of students from the ten schools of the Mid-Continent Elementary League will be in Norton next Wednesday for the annual league Vocal and Instrumental Music Festival.

Band instructor, Don Mordecai said, "Norton teachers do a great job of helping with this festival. People shouldn't feel like they have to come for the entire day, but if there are some performances they want to see, they are certainly invited to come support the kids. It's going to be a great day!"

Mr. Mordecai also said that the festival is not a competition, but that ratings

are given for each performance

Other schools participating are Hill City, Victoria, WaKeeney, Stockton, Smith Center, Osborne, Plainville, Phillipsburg and Ellis.

Accompanists for Norton students are Cindy Mordecai, Sonya Montgomery, Cindy Penner and Priscilla Kendall.

SCHEDULE

Name/Group	Center	Time
Band	1	8:30 a.m.
A. Farber-Piano	2	8:48 a.m.
L. Ebner-Vocal	4	8:48 a.m.
B. Cook-Vocal	4	8:54 a.m.
K. Morel-Flute	6	9 a.m.

B. Boucher-Tuba 6 9:06 a.m.

Girls Ens. 3 9:06 a.m.

S. Lentz-Piano 2 9:12 a.m.

Sextet-Vocal 3 9:36 a.m.

K. Kent-Clarinet 7 9:48 a.m.

J. Gilgenbach-Piano 2 9:48 a.m.

A. Farber-Vocal 4 9:48 a.m.

K. Mindrup-Clarinet 7 9:54 a.m.

C. Harrington-Vocal 4 9:54 a.m.

Z. Bainter-Piano 2 10:06 a.m.

T. Vincent-Trombone 6 10:12 a.m.

A. Smith Maybon-Flute 7 10:12 a.m.

K.J. Jones-Horn 6 10:18 a.m.

C. Cox-Sax 7 10:18 a.m.

(Continued on Page 3)



The Prairie Dog 4-H Club had a nice way of saying "Thank You" to The Norton Telegram for helping promote 4-H in Norton County. Members and two of their leaders, Mary Wentz and Susan Hillebrand, delivered a tray of homemade cookies and snacks to The Telegram staff on Monday. Advertising Representative Carol Erlenbusch accepted the goodies for the staff.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plott

Business gets loan for equipment

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

A downtown Norton business got a little help from the Norton County commissioners on Tuesday with an economic development loan to buy a new piece of equipment.

Abi Delimont and Danielle Ruesch of Hot Shots, a downtown photography studio, talked to commissioners and applied for an economic development loan last month to purchase a machine, which would do one-hour photo processing.

On Tuesday the pair were in to see the commissioners again with more information.

Mrs. Delimont told the commissioners that the machine they want is being sold by a shop in St. Joe, which is going out of business. The machine, an Agfa processor, is still under warranty, she said, and can be purchased immediately.

To get the machine plus extra parts that will allow the printing of digital pictures plus shipping, supplies and other necessities will cost almost \$50,000. However, Mrs. Delimont said, she and Mrs. Ruesch can secure outside financing from her mother as part of a business deal.

However, she said, a loan from the county would be good because the interest rate is better and because the women would be adding jobs to the community.

The pair also said they have talked to the economic develop-

ment person at Rural Telephone about money for the business. The only problem with that, they said, was it sometimes takes six months or so to get the grants and loans approved.

Commissioner Dean Kruse asked if the women thought that the upsurge in digital photography would hurt the one-hour photo business.

The women said they expected to do about 50 percent of their business with people using digital camera at first but expected that segment to grow. While anyone with a computer and a printer can print out digital pictures, they said, it is harder to get good quality unless you have a better printer than most people have. Also the process takes more time and computer expertise than most people have.

Most people, they said, would rather drop off their film, stick or card or e-mail their photos to a shop and pick the finished prints up later without all the muss and fuss. This is the type of business that Wal-Mart does now, they said.

The women said they have had good response to their proposal ever since a story appeared in *The Telegram* about their idea.

"We haven't talked to anyone in the area who was negative about it," Mrs. Delimont said.

Mrs. Ruesch said that it will probably take five years to get the money back that they will be

spending on the machine. It could be done sooner, she said, but the people working the machine also need to be paid.

Commissioner Kruse said that the county only has \$20,000 left in its loan fund and doesn't want to loan it all out to one business. He said that the county would need a first position on a mortgage on the machine.

Mrs. Delimont said that isn't a problem with the mortgage. The company would be able to give the county a first on the mortgage and could get a shorter term mortgage of a year or so instead of the usual five years.

The women said that their shop will have to be open more hours, probably 9-5 during the week and maybe also on Saturdays.

Mr. Kruse said that the county wanted to get the most for its loan dollars in terms of helping the community and also needed to get its money back so that it could loan it to someone else.

He suggested and the other commissioners agreed to loan the women \$10,000 for two years at 4 percent interest with no prepayment penalty.

Commissioner John Miller said that he was behind the project.

"My biggest thing is I want you to succeed," he said. "We've seen our downtown business districts deteriorate and we want to help turn that around."



Three-year-old Makenna Hammond helps her Uncle, Craig Hammond, wash dishes during the United Methodist Pancake Supper held in Long Island Wednesday night.

— Telegram photo by Kristen Brands

County not happy with insurance company

(Continued from Page 1)

commission," Commission Chairman Leroy Lang said.

Mr. Krull agreed that the county could do that and that it would come back on him.

Mr. Miller asked why that would be when Mr. Krull didn't know about the change until after the fact.

"It rolls downhill," Mr. Krull said simply.

Then he asked the commissioners what he could do to make things right.

Mr. Miller said that they needed to go back to the five original medications with a \$45 copay.

Commissioner Dean Kruse agreed. "The right thing to do would be for the insurance company to do

what it said it would do," he said.

Mr. Krull said that he couldn't get Prime Therapeutics, the company that administers Norton County's health plan to treat the county's plan differently from any other plan.

However, he said, the county could go back to the five original drugs with \$45 copays if employees would be willing to pay a \$15 copay for generic drugs and \$30 for brand names.

The county had originally gone to the higher copay to save money, he said. The county expected to save \$21,000 on insurance premiums. If the employees will make the change to the \$15-\$30 copay, the county will not save quite that

much but will still save \$18,900.

"That would take money out of our employees pockets," Mr. Miller said. "They were willing to make a sacrifice. Now, do they need to make another sacrifice?"

"If you go to \$15 and \$30 the employees would be getting what they were buying, no \$45 copay except for those five drugs," Mr. Krull said.

The commissioners agreed to hold a meeting with the employees and Mr. Krull at 11 a.m. Monday at the 4-H Building. The courthouse offices will be closed while employees attend the meeting.

Congressman comes to Norton

(Continued from Page 1)

ring theme, everywhere I go, has been the rising cost of health care," the congressman reported. "Insurance premiums are going up, and we must get a handle on these ever-rising costs for our citizens."

Under education, Mr. Moran said he voted against the No Child Left Behind legislation because he believed the program is flawed and costly.

"The program encourages more testing, and Kansas already implements the pertinent testing," he said. "I also believe the testing takes more time away from the learning environment, which is the classroom."

Jon Lofgreen, Norton, asked how the 7 percent cut in the agricultural budget will affect farmers. Mr. Moran said that the cuts would most likely affect grants and research.

"What agriculture needs is some national spokesperson to explain that when there is a \$180 billion going toward agriculture, only 16 percent of that money directly goes to farmers," Mr. Moran said. "I think that there is a perception, especially in the urban community, that farmers are getting all this money when most all of it is going to nutrition programs."

Dr. Karen Aldridge asked if the government will have reform leg-

islation to stop people from attaching non-related items to bills.

Mr. Moran said that he was discouraged with this process and admitted that perhaps congress will never get its act together due to the pressure of "bringing home the bacon" to their districts.

Norton Hospital Administrator Richard Miller thanked Mr. Moran for his understanding of local health care needs, acting as the chairman for the Rural Health Care Coalition. Mr. Miller also said thanks for the \$1.4 million Department of Agriculture loan the hospital received for its remodeling efforts.

Mr. Moran took time to speak to a group of Northern Valley government students about the morality and legislation of gay marriages.

Junior/senior high will be site of music festival

- (Continued from Page 1)
- J. VanSkiike-Piano 2 10:18 a.m.
 - B. Wuest-Tuba 6 10:42 a.m.
 - T. Vincent-Vocal 4 10:48 a.m.
 - N. Ochoa-Vocal 4 10:54 a.m.
 - K. Kent-Piano 2 11:06 a.m.
 - L. L. Baird-Sax 7 11:24 a.m.
 - C. Milnes-Vocal 4 11:24 a.m.
 - Brass Ens. 1 11:30 a.m.
 - B. Lofgreen-Vocal 4 11:30 a.m.
 - Percussion Ens 1 11:48 a.m.
 - K.J. Jones-Piano 2 11:48 a.m.
 - Clarinet Ens. 3 1 p.m.
 - C. Kendall-Vocal 4 1:12 p.m.

- L. VanSkiike-Trom. 6 1:18 p.m.
- J. VanSkiike-S.D. 1 1:24 p.m.
- Sax Choir 3 1:24 p.m.
- C. Bredemeier-Trum 6 2:12 p.m.
- Flute Choir 3 2:30 p.m.
- K. Edgett-Bari Sax 6 2:36 p.m.
- J. Gilgenbach-Cl. 6 2:42 p.m.
- Chorus 2 3 p.m.

Sites

Center 1, High School Gymnasium; Center 2, Junior High Gymnasium; Center 3, Room No. 150; Center 4, Room No. 143; Center 5, Room No. 138; Center 6, Room

Time limit for bonds is just a formality

(Continued from Page 1)

named projects, we're not leaving them hanging out there."

County Clerk Robert Wyatt agreed.

"We have a schedule of starts and completions," he said.

Mr. Berland again reassured the commissioners that they were on the right track and were following both the letter and intent of the law.

"This is the same process you've been using for the past 12-15 years," he said.

"We'll clearly proceed with our best intentions."

After the call the commissions, Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Brannan discussed the confusion.

"Last time we subbed out the paperwork," Mr. Brannan said.

"This is first time Robert (Wyatt) has seen the paperwork."

Mr. Wyatt agreed but said that after the county has done three bond issues and paid attorneys, auditors and everyone else it seems strange that this is the first time it's been an issue.

"They had Robert and I scratching our heads," Mr. Brannan agreed.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Tax Levy for USD #213

Published in The Norton Telegram on Friday, February 13 and 20, 2004. (2T)

RESOLUTION TO LEVY TAX FOR CAPITAL OUTLAY FUND

WHEREAS, the board of education of Unified School District No. 213 of Norton County (ies), State of Kansas is authorized by law, to wit: K.S.A. 72-8801 et seq. As amended, to make an annual tax levy for a period of time not to exceed five (5) years in the district for the purposes specified in said law; and

WHEREAS, said board has determined to exercise the authority vested in it by said law:

RESOLUTION

Be It Resolved That:

The above-named school board shall be authorized to make an annual tax levy for a period not to exceed five (5) years in an amount not to exceed four (4) mills upon the assessed taxable tangible property in such school district for the purpose of construction, reconstruction, repair, remodeling, additions to, furnishing and equipping of school buildings, architectural expenses incidental thereto, the acquisition of building for school purposes and school building sites, the acquisition of school buses and the acquisition of other equipment and for the purpose of paying a portion of the principal and interest on bonds issued by cities under the authority of K.S.A. 1979 Supp. 12-1774, and amendments thereto, for the financing of redevelopment projects upon property located within the school district. The tax levy authorized by this resolution may be made, unless a petition in opposition to the same, signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the qualified elector of such school district, is filed with the county election officer of the home county of the school district within forty (40) days after the last publication of this resolution. In question of whether such tax levy shall be authorized to the electors in the school district at an election called for the purpose or at the next general election, as is specified by the board of education of the above school district.

CERTIFICATE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the above resolution was duly adopted by the board of education of Unified School District No. 213, Norton County, Kansas on the 9th day of February 2004.

Suzi Brooks
Clerk, Board of Education
Lenora USD #213