



Norton offers a wide variety of organized sports for the county's youngsters from wrestling programs to soccer and swimming lessons. Here, Jared Engelbert hits a pitch during a summer baseball game. — Telegram staff photo

There's plenty for kids to do

Norton County offers year-around activities for young people through the schools and community groups.

Norton Community Schools and the Northern Valley High School offer students the opportunity to play sports throughout the school year. Both districts have football, volleyball, cross country, basketball, track and field, and golf. Norton also offers wrestling.

There is also youth wrestling, football and soccer through private groups.

The Norton Recreation Commission offers everything from T-ball to adult softball during the summer.

At the recreation building, aerobic classes are offered. There is also an indoor walking area and a basketball court.

In the summer the Norton Swimming Pool gives young people and adults a cool way to get a little exercise. Swimming lessons and water aerobics are available along with a kiddy pool where younger children can play under the watchful eyes of their parents.

Besides sports, the Norton High School offers vocal classes and band, drafting, journalism, forensics, quiz bowl, art and computer classes. There are also dances held through-

out the year, including homecoming, snowball and prom.

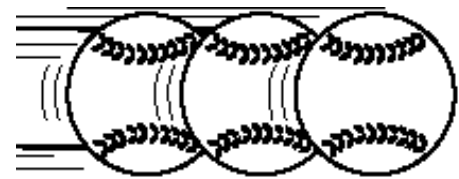
Northern Valley High School in Almena offers sports, FFA, forensics, dance, cheerleading, vocal music and band.

In October, 4-H begins for those who are 7 to 19-years old. There are five clubs in the county with well over 100 projects including animals, foods, clothing, and crafts. 4-H offers club and county activities throughout the year. There is no cost to enroll. Anyone interested in being in 4-H can contact the extension office at 877-5755.

Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops prepare young men and women for the future.

Also beginning in the fall is the Jaycees Shooting Education Program which is designed to introduce young shooters to the basics of safe gun handling and marksmanship.

There are youth groups offered through churches.



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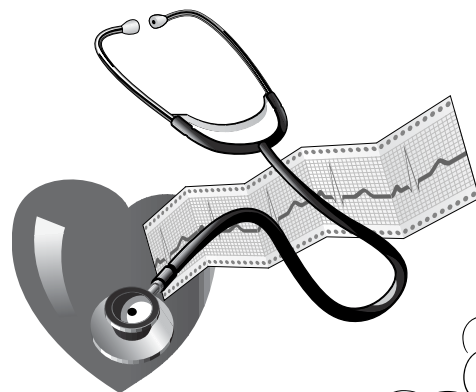
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Whoever said, "There's nothing to do in a small town," obviously never lived in a small town.

Norton is a vibrant, busy town with a wide variety of activities for residents and visitors.

First and foremost, it's a sports town. The Norton High School Blue Jays have excited their fans for many years with state-ranked football, basketball and wrestling teams. Any Friday night during the school year will find the stands packed with Blue Jay Boosters.

There's plenty of fine dining too. Norton is home to three nationally known fast-food franchises, a Chinese restaurant and several home-owned restaurants.

If you enjoy holiday lights at Christmas, county fairs, fireworks on the Fourth of July, Veterans Day parades and flowers in the spring, Norton is the town for you.

NORTON COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

Cultural events are brought to the city by the Norton County Arts Council. Plays, a crafts fair, a homes tour and children's theater are some of the events sponsored by the council. Individual memberships are \$20 and a family membership is \$40.

COUNTY FAIR

The highlight of the summer is Norton's county fair. It is always scheduled for the last full week of July so out-of-towners can plan their vacation. Set in beautiful, tree-lined Elmwood Park, the county fair has the perfect setting.

One of the new additions is the horse arena. The livestock barns are where 4-Hers display their animal projects.

Operated entirely with volunteers, the carnival and fair is an attraction that brings visitors from neighboring counties and Nebraska. Rides include a Ferris wheel, octopus, roller coaster, and kiddie rides. Game booths guarantee lots of winners. The fair provides inexpensive fun for the whole family. Grandstand shows run the gamut from gospel music to car races.

VETERANS DAY PARADE

Every year, Nov. 11 finds State Street in downtown Norton lined with hundreds of people who have flocked to town for the annual Veterans Day Parade. Initiated by Jake Durham, the parade has dozens of volunteers and hundreds of participants all assembled to recognize the men and women of the armed forces who fought for freedom.

HALLOWEEN PARADE AND WIENER ROAST

Norton residents love parades and kids. The two come together each Halloween for a pa-

rade down State Street. The Chamber of Commerce sponsors the parade followed by a wiener roast sponsored by the Norton City Fire Department.

SANTA COMES TO TOWN

Santa Claus has a home on the lawn of the Norton County Courthouse. Every holiday season Saint Nick arrives the Saturday after Thanksgiving. One of the highlights of the Christmas season is the sleigh rides made available during the holidays. Santa, his house and the rides are sponsored by the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Rainbow Lanes, on West U.S. 36 offers bowling for leagues and individuals. Call them at 877-3632.

The tennis courts and Norton City Swimming Pool are located side by side at 804 W. Wilton. The phone number is 877-5080.

A disc golf course in Elmwood Park will find players sharpening their skills every Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m.

If you enjoy golf, Prairie Dog Recreation Association Golf Course offers nine holes with grass greens. Considered to be one of the finest golf courses in northwest Kansas, call 877-3643 for green fees and times.

Baseball diamonds are in Elmwood Park with summer leagues for all ages organized by the Norton Recreation Commission. Call them at 877-3087.

Norton Recreation Center, at 3 Washington Square, offers racquetball courts, basketball, a walking track, and aerobics. Call 877-3087 for more information.

Weightlifting is available to the public through the schools. The weightlifting room is at the East Campus, 877-3338.

The Norton Theatre, operated by volunteers, features twin screens and a snack bar. Show times are Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 7 p.m.; Closed Thursday. Call 877-2075 for movie information.

Pace Fitness Center is the newest addition to the list of things to do in Norton. A circuit of exercise equipment is geared to provide you with an adequate workout in 30 minutes. Call owners April and Kelly Karnopp at 871-0604.

Even the most avid reader will be able to find enough material at Norton's Public Library to keep him or her busy for a long time. If you have any questions call them at 877-2481. If the Library doesn't have the book you want, let the Northwest Kansas Library System know at 877-5148 or toll free at (800) 432-2858. They can get most books to Norton in a few days.

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The larger-than-life carving of a prairie dog, stands watch at the entrance of Prairie Dog State Park. Year-round facilities and top-notch sportfishing make this recreational area a popular spot for camping and fishing.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Lake, park, wildlife area provide recreation

Four miles west and one mile south of Norton lies the Norton Dam, impounding the Keith Sebelius Reservoir and about 2,500 surface acres of water.

Adjacent to the reservoir is the 5,500-acre Norton Wildlife Area.

The reservoir, the wildlife area, and the park all offer fishing, camping, hunting, boating and wildlife watching opportunities year-round.

Primary sportfish in the reservoir are wipers, saugeye, largemouth bass, crappie and channel catfish. Spotted bass, walleye, flat-head catfish, blue catfish, and bluegill are also present. Special creel and length limits may be in effect for some species. Always check Kansas fishing regulations and all posted notices before fishing.

The Prairie Dog State Park offers modern and primitive camping sites year-round. There are seven designated primitive areas. Walk-in camping is allowed on the entire area. Pack your trash to take home.

Pheasant hunting opportunities are usually good in the wildlife area. Quail and prairie chickens exist, but in lower numbers. Hunting pressure is heavy on the opening weekend of November, therefore planning hunts after November or during the week may be more productive.

Both whitetail and mule deer are present in the wildlife area, and hunting pressure is the heaviest during the firearms deer season. Turkey hunting and dove hunting are generally minimal.

Ducks and geese use the lake during their migrations. Duck hunting is allowed on the lake while goose hunting takes place only on

private land. To provide a secure resting area for migrating waterfowl, the middle fourth of the reservoir is designated as a waterfowl refuge, and closed to waterfowl hunting from October 1 to March 1.

Boating facilities include a two-lane boat ramp on the east end of the park, a small concession marina, and a large parking area.

The Prairie Dog State Park office winter hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Sunday-Friday. In mid-April, the hours change to 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. seven days a week. In mid-May office hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Sunday-Thursday and 8 a.m.-8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays through Labor Day.

Resident fishing or hunting licenses cost \$19. The resident combo (both fishing and hunting licenses) package is \$37. A non-resident fishing license is \$41. A 24-hour fishing license is \$6. A five-day trip fishing license costs \$21.

An annual camping permit costs \$151 plus utilities. A 14-day camping permit is \$66, but on April 1 it will go up to \$76. A daily camping permit is \$7, and will go up to \$8 on April 1. There are additional charges for utility sites. Electrical sites are \$5.50. A site with both electrical and water hook-ups costs \$7.50.

The first weekend in May is a free-park weekend. All other weekend visitors to the park must pick up a permit at the office or the self-pay station.

In addition to the state park office, hunting and fishing licenses are available at Pamida, Jamboree, End Zone, Timesaver, High Plains Co-op in Lenora, and Almena Lumber/Home Oil. Pamida and Jamboree also carry park permits.

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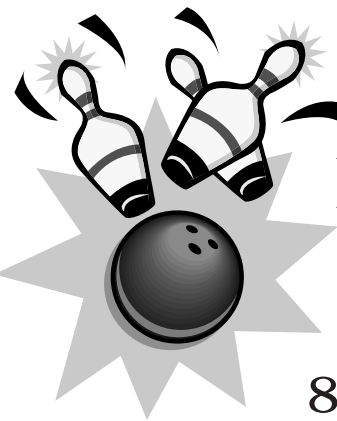
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