

Take advantage of the best local guide to what's on TV next week with The Telegram's handy schedule of programming.

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Friday,  
May 21, 2004

Norton, Kansas  
Home of Glenda Maurer

Briefly

## 'Click it or Ticket' to begin May 24

To increase the rate of seat belt use and lower the number of injury accidents, the Norton Police Department, along with the Kansas Highway Patrol and Kansas Department of Transportation, will be patrolling the streets and conducting special enforcement lanes during the Memorial Week Mobilization from May 24 to June 6 as a part of the "Click It or Ticket" campaign.

During those two weeks, law enforcement agencies will be focusing on violations such as speeding, driving under the influence, seat belt and child safety restraint.

Those in the front seat of a vehicle must use a seat belt, while all children, 4 or under, are required to be in a child seat and children between 4 and 14 are required to wear a seat belt no matter where they are sitting.

For more information, contact the Norton Police Department at 877-5010.

## Deadline coming for 'E', 'F' and 'G'

Persons whose last name begins with "E", "F" or "G" or businesses with the first letter beginning with "E", "F" or "G" have until May 31 to renew their automobile, pickup, motorcycle and/or motorized bike tags without paying a penalty. The Norton County treasurer's office will be closed on Monday, May 31, for Memorial Holiday.

Remember to bring or include your current proof of insurance, which includes the VIN, policy number and expiration date for each vehicle. Office computers are shut off at 4:30 p.m. to balance the days business.

If you have any questions, please call the treasurer's office at 877-5795.

Weather

## Forecast:

**Tonight** — Partly cloudy with lows around 60. **Saturday** — Partly cloudy in the morning then clearing with highs in the middle 80s. **Saturday Night** — Clear with lows in the lower 50s. Southwest winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts to 40 mph shifting to the northwest after midnight. **Sunday** — Sunny with highs in the lower 80s.

## Howell report:

Tuesday ..... High 69, Low 62, Prec. .02  
Wednesday ..... High 85, Low 61  
Thursday ..... High 74, Low 59  
Week ago ..... High 72, Low 43  
Month ago ..... High 69, Low 49  
Year ago ..... High 72, Low 50  
May precipitation ..... 2.11 inches  
Year-to-date precipitation ..... 7.34 inches  
(Readings taken at the Paul and Pat Howell farm 10 Miles North and 1/3 Mile East of Norton)

Prayer

Thank you, God, for the many ways you speak to us. Remind us to stop and listen, to worship and respond. Amen

# Watch where you park, fines will soon skyrocket

By VERONICA MONIER

It will cost you more — a lot more — in the near future if your car gets a parking ticket in Norton.

On Wednesday, the Norton City Council raised the price of a parking ticket from \$3 to \$25, an 833 percent increase, in the hopes that people will pay more attention and will be quicker to pay the fine.

If the ticket isn't paid within 72 hours, the fine goes up to \$50, which used to be \$5. After that, if it isn't paid within 30 days, it goes to the municipal court.

Councilman Jerry Jones said the issue has gone before the Public Safety Committee and that was what was recommended.

The Norton Police Department issues between 15 and 25 tickets a month said Assistant Police Chief Toby Kuhn.

"We are going to have some very irate people over this," he said. "The only thing I ask is that you (the council) backs us up when people come in to complain."

The council members said they would. Earlier Mayor David Corns that he had

met with the municipal court judge, the court clerk and Officer Kuhn about fine collection. Mr. Corns said the court is doing everything of reason within its power to make people pay parking tickets and all other traffic fines, including suspending their driver's licenses.

Councilman Ron Briery asked if there was a solution to the problem.

City Attorney Karen Griffiths said she would be willing to call other cities and to see what they did to collect delinquent fines and to see if she could get some new

ideas. She said most places are in the same situation as Norton with people not paying their fines.

Councilman Jerry Hawks said the courts have collected on a larger number of the delinquent fines than in the past.

In other business, the council:  
• Met with Mindy Harting and Phyllis Harting about the correct spelling of a street sign. Mindy Harting said the Boddy street sign was misspelled as Body and they would like it changed as it was named.  
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Bob Strevey and Inmate Wilson confer in the background while Inmate Hunter (above) pulls a strip of material through the strands threaded on the loom in the work area designated for the Inmate Clothing Project at Norton Correctional Facility. Inmates Hunter, Wilson and Kirk sort and hang clothes donated to do the project. Good, usable clothing is donated to Mexican/American Ministries in Garden City or to The Clothes Closet in Wichita.  
— Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts

## Inmates help clothe people in need

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

That old clothing you donated to charity may get a new lease on life if it goes to the Norton Correctional Facility.

A year ago Bob Strevey came up with an idea to provide work for inmates of the prison while providing an outlet for good, used clothing to people in need.

In most circumstances it would be called a 'cottage industry'. But because it's in the prison, it is called The Inmate Clothing Project.

"The intention is that the project will cost the institution nothing," said Mr. Strevey, a retired teacher and former prison employee from Norcatur.

With the endorsement of the prison administration, Mr. Strevey obtained commitments from The Bargain Box  
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## City, county close to finalizing agreement

By VERONICA MONIER

An agreement is being reached by the city and county about the airport.

Councilman Jerry Hawks said at Wednesday's Norton City Council meeting that the interlocal cooperation agreement for the joint ownership and operation of the Norton City/County Airport has been revised.

He said the agreement in place worked well in the past because of the dedicated people working serving on the board. But, he said, the county would have withdrawn from the airport unless changes were made and the city couldn't afford to pay for the airport by itself.

Mr. Hawks said the county commis-

sioner asked the city to sign the new agreement, now that all the changes have been made, so they could sign it and get things moving.

City Attorney Karen Griffiths said even if both the city and county signed the agreement, it wouldn't go into effect for some time, because it still has to go to the attorney general's office for approval. Only after that, she said, would it be official.

Mr. Hawks recommended that the council have the mayor sign the agreement and send it back to the county, and then on to the attorney general's office if they approved. He said the city needed to send the airport board members a letter

saying that the new agreement isn't official yet and telling them that they have done a great job on the board.

Earlier in the meeting, the council met with Tom Bennett of B & G Consultants. Mr. Bennett gave an update on the airport apron project. He said because money was limited, a base project was set up with additional alternatives. The bid opening was held April 19 and the base bid was \$184,000 from Werner Construction of Hastings, Neb. He said the additional alternatives were about \$43,000, totaling around \$227,000.

He said the county will be the lead agency that the state will send the check  
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## Thief breaks loose Prisoner escapes jail in Oberlin

An 18-year-old prisoner, who has recently been in the Norton County jail, dropped out of the Decatur County Jail on the fourth floor of the courthouse in Oberlin early Tuesday, cutting out a security screen, kicking out a window and climbing down strips of sheets tied together.

Though he went to a lot of trouble, it was all for naught. The Norcatur-area youth cut himself while fleeing, friends turned him in when he called asking for a ride, and by midday, he was back in jail, awaiting a trip to the penitentiary — and possibly facing a few more felony charges.

It was a classic escape, scaling down the courthouse walls on a rope made of knotted sheets, but then the prisoner's plans started to go awry. He wound up in Colby, staying just one jump ahead of a posse of city and county cops who finally tracked him down near the grade and middle schools.

Students had been locked down because police feared the escapee might be armed, but no one was hurt in the incident.

Dustin Dean Rhodig, also known as Dustin Cole, was being held in the fourth-floor jail after pleading guilty to two counts of felony theft. He was waiting for sentencing.

In Norton County he had been arrested on one count of sale or possession with intent to sell marijuana, one county of possession of drug paraphernalia, one county of felony theft, one county of criminal damage to property, two counts of burglary and two counts of misdemeanor theft.

The arrest came after a series of burglaries of several cars and a garage in Norton in November and then the theft of a vehicle in Norton, which was abandoned in Oberlin and replaced by a stolen vehicle, which was abandoned in Norton.

He had been convicted and sentenced here then sent to Oberlin on April 27 to face Decatur County charges.

Rhodig pleaded guilty to stealing a car and breaking into Pizza Hut in Oberlin. He also took a car in Norton County and had already been sentenced. He was transferred to the Decatur County jail on April 27 to face charges there.

Decatur County Sheriff Ken Badsy said Rhodig apparently escaped sometime between 2 and 4 a.m.

The dispatcher on duty checked about 2 a.m., the sheriff said, and he was in his cell. Sheriff Badsy said it is the only cell in the jail that doesn't have a camera in it, but that will change.

He said Rhodig detached a piece of metal from the inside of the window. He used it to cut out a small box-shaped part of the security screen over his window. Rhodig then apparently kicked out the upper panel of the window with his feet, leaving some jagged edges.

He said the prisoner ripped his two sheets into strips and tied them together. He tossed the rope out the window and climbed down.  
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# Prisoner escapes jail, eludes police, and flees to Colby

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 Around 4 a.m., the sheriff said, the dispatcher received a call from a woman in Nebraska that Rhodig had called her from inside the Decatur Community High School and said he was out of jail.  
 Sheriff Badsky said Rhodig was looking for a ride.  
 Officers from both the Oberlin Police and the sheriff's department were called out and sent to the high school. Sheriff Badsky said a door at the school apparently had not been closed. Rhodig entered the school and found the teachers' work room unlocked.

Using a phone there, the young man made several calls.  
 Sheriff's officers checked the inside of the school while the police officers watched the doors outside. Sheriff Badsky said he thought the officers had just missed the escapee.  
 He said they checked with the phone company and found out where Rhodig had called. Some calls were placed to Colby, and the police department there was notified.  
 Although Rhodig had tried to arrange for someone to pick him up, George Ruzicka's Toyota pick

up turned up missing. Ruzicka lives 2 1/2 miles east of Oberlin and a mile south.  
 Colby officials were alerted at 6:30 a.m. that Rhodig might be headed their way. Almost three hours later, Colby Police Officer Kevin Dierks found the pickup abandoned on the east side of town. Dierks told other officers that an open box of ammunition was found in the pickup.  
 Soon after that, officers from the police department and Thomas County Sheriff's office went to 170 Thompson Ave. based on telephone calls. They searched the

home and spoke with a woman who told them she took Rhodig to 620 N. Grant Ave.  
 "Since officers got no response from the Grant Avenue residence," said Gary Shull, police investigator, "an emergency search warrant was obtained so that officers could search the residence."  
 While conducting the search, officers located one of the renters who led them to 225 W. 2nd St. That house appeared to be vacant, Shull said.  
 Again, an emergency search warrant was issued, but Rhodig

was not there. Shull said officers found information that led them to two homes a block from the Colby school campus.  
 Shull said he called Principal Terrel Harrison at 10:45 a.m. requesting a lockdown just in case Rhodig was armed and might be looking for a place to hide.  
 Almost 30 minutes later, the two houses were cleared. Then at 11:28 a.m., Alan Wade, school transportation director, said one of his drivers radioed that a man matching the description was walking between the administration building and Colby Middle

School on Third Street.  
 Officers moved in at 11:31 a.m. and arrested Rhodig. Later that afternoon, he was taken back to Oberlin, where the sheriff said he may be charged with escape from custody and criminal damage. He also may be looking at theft and burglary charges for taking the truck.  
 "Once Rhodig completes his court hearing in Decatur County," Shull said, "he will be returned to Thomas County to face charges of aggravated indecent liberties with a 15-year-old child... last year on Aug. 13."

# THANK YOU NORTON COUNTY EMS



**EMS**

THERE WHEN YOU NEED US



Norton County EMS workers are from left, front row: Andy Nielsen, Ruth Schillig, Marla Persinger, Diane Edgett, Beth Horney, Marla Job; back row: Bobby Dole, Howard Schemper, John Hanlon, Aden Schillig, Melody Kuncnrs, Mary Lou Atkisson, Sandra Dole, Teresa Hartzog. Not pictured: Wes Alsdurf, Barb Ballinger, Ron Ellis, Gary Flanigan, Shannon Goss, Toby Kuhn, Terry Peterson and Cynthia Schemper.



**NATIONAL  
 EMERGENCY  
 MEDICAL  
 SERVICES  
 WEEK**



*Emergency Medical  
 Services Week  
 May 16-22*

THESE COMMUNITY MINDED BUSINESSES THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND CARING

- + ZWICKLE ACCOUNTING
- + WORDEN LAW OFFICE
- + NEW AGE INDUSTRIAL CORP. INC.
- + CITY MOTORS, INC.
- + WALTER MOTOR COMPANY
- + FIRST STATE BANK Member FDIC
- + FIRST SECURITY BANK AND TRUST Co. Member FDIC
- + THE BANK Member FDIC
- + MOFFET DRUG STORE
- + PAMIDA PHARMACY
- + NORTON COUNTY CO-OP ASSOCIATION
- + THE NORTON TELEGRAM
- + NORTON COUNTY HOSPITAL AND DOCTORS CLINIC