

By KEITH VANSKIKE,
County Extension Agent
The fourth class of the Leadership Norton County kicked off its education schedule Thursday with the Norton City and County Government Day.

Class members were escorted by Sheriff Troy Thomson, an alumni of the previous class, while being given tours and visiting the offices in the Norton County Courthouse.

The class traveled to the Department of Corrections and visited the Norton City water and power plants.

They also had a session on parliamentary procedures before the day ended.

Participants are Tom Brannan, Sue Brown, Bill Lowry, Karla Reed, Karla Anderson, Lacy Frack, Rob Lawson, Kathy Zimmerman, Toby Kuhn and Deborah Anderson.

Each class session will be led by local administrators, leaders, teachers and business owners that will relate to the group about their



Class members of Leadership Norton, kicked off their fall schedule with Norton City and County Government day on Thursday. On their tour was the inside of the city water treatment plant. Inspecting the inner workings of the facility were (left to right) Deb Anderson (foreground),

Sue Brown (partially hidden), Karla Anderson, Richard Hahn, city employee (on the steps), Lacy Frack, Kathy Zimmerman, Karla Reed, Tom Brannan (back to camera), and Rob Lawson.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

area of expertise or business.

Other topics that will be covered will be agriculture, education, ru-

ral health, and economic development. The class will take a legislative trip to Topeka in February.

The goal of the leadership program is to establish a network of present and potential leaders by

exposing them and educating them to the issues that affect Norton County.

County keeps looking at health insurance

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Norton County commissioners talked to representatives of Bridges Group about health insurance for county employees.

Kathy Zimmerman, Norton, and Renee Spresser, Selden, went over options with the commissioners even though the county still has not received its quotes from Blue Cross, which has the health insurance now.

Mrs. Spresser went over the costs and benefits of the insurance that Bridges, which represents several companies is proposing, including deductibles, co-insurance and auxiliary costs.

Commissioner John Miller said the county wants to plan better for the ups and downs in insurance. He said he wants to make plans for

three years down the road not just for next year.

If usage increases, he said, what will happen to premiums? Will they go up?

Commission Chairman Leroy Lang agreed saying the county needs to get a three-to-five year contract with an insurance company.

Mrs. Spresser said the prescription drug benefit is the biggest item of expense for the insurance company most of the time. With small copays for medications, she said, the cost to the insurance company can be huge without even considering the cost of patients going to the hospital.

Mr. Lang said that for many years, because of a tax lid, the county employees didn't get a

raise. Instead they got somewhat better benefits. Now the employees have gotten a cost-of-living raise, but they still feel that they should be getting just as good of health insurance coverage as they were getting previously.

John Miller wanted to know if the county could put money aside to help people, who go out of the accepted doctor's network — such as going to Kearney.

Mrs. Spresser said that was possible but she didn't want to encourage people to go out of network because it would hurt both the insurance company and the county.

Mr. Miller said it might help the county to sell a new plan to the employees. He said he wants to have a long term relationship with the county's insurance company,

and to do that, the employees have to be comfortable and happy with their health insurance.

He suggested the women visit with the county health nurse to explain the plan to her and also to talk to other county employees to help them understand how the insurance would work.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked to rancher John McKinley about getting a fire hydrant for his property. The commissioners suggested he talk to Rural Fire Chief Steve Otter.

- Held a public meeting with Amy Griffey from the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission to get a \$120,000 community block grant for a new firetruck for the Norton

Rural Fire District No. 2. The truck and grant application costs will be \$140,000, Mrs. Griffey said, and the fire district will be expected to put \$20,000 into the project.

Even with a grant, she said, it will probably take a year to get a new truck, which are usually made to order.

- Heard from Acting Emergency Medical Services Director Andy Nielsen, who told the commissioners that he was going to take a class to get certified as an emergency medical services director because he's heard that the state might be requiring that in the future.

- Held a 10-minute closed session with Mr. Nielsen to discuss non-elected personnel.

Now is the time to think food safety

Home ed
Tranda Watts,
Extension
specialist



Many people have canning recipes that are passed down from generation to generation. However, with current research, many of those recipes have been found to be unsafe. This may be because of improper acidity, improper processing method for the type of food, too short processing time, no processing time, etc.

We recommend using updated, tested recipes to ensure safety of the food. If you would like the name of some recommended resources for safe canning recipes, please feel free to contact your county extension office or e-mail twatts@oznet.ksu.edu.

Tranda Watts is Kansas State University extension specialist in food, nutrition, health and safety for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. Call her at 785-443-3663 or e-mail twatts@oznet.ksu.edu. For more information, contact the county extension office.

Old Canning Recipes



Cornelius Webbe, (right) Garden City, and his sons, Peter and Abe checked their load of 1,500 pheasants after stopping for lunch in Norton Friday. Mr. Webbe works for Bob Hosban who owns a large pheasant-raising operation. Mr. Webbe was delivering the birds to Nebraska.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

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Wedding Registry

September 25 — Clint Cox and Corinne Ruhnke
October 2 — Tony Kemper and Sandra Sutter

Gift Certificates, Frames, Albums, Photographs, Cards

Money available for storage

Farmers and ranchers can get U.S. Department of Agriculture loans to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program is administered by the Farm Service Agency.

These loans are for seven years with annual principal payments plus interest spread out over the term of the loan. The maximum loan will be 85 percent of the net cost, but can't go over \$100,000.

The Farm Service Agency maintains a first lien on the facility; a first lien is also required on the real estate where the building is for all loans over \$50,000.

If you are interested in the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program, stop by the Norton County agency office, 113 N. Norton.

Disaster farm loans available

Norton, Decatur, Philips and Rawlins county farmers and ranchers have until Thursday, Sept. 23, to file for emergency disaster loans from the Farm Service Agency.

Those needing farm credit because of severe drought, excessive wind and insect infestation on or after Jan. 1, 2003, should make their applications at the Norton County agency office, 113 N. Norton, said Farm Loan Manager John C. Vogt.

He said loans covering physical and/or production losses may gotten at 3.75 percent interest.

Loans covering physical losses may be used to replace installations, equipment, livestock or buildings, including homes. Loans covering production losses may be used to buy feed, seed, fertilizer, livestock, or to make payments on real estate and chattel debts.

Mr. Vogt said the loan money can also be used for other operating and living expenses.

To be eligible for an emergency disaster loan, an applicant must be operating a family-size farm or ranch, must be unable to get credit elsewhere, and must have suffered a physical and/or production loss from a disaster.

Farmers who suffered at least a 30 percent reduction to at least one crop may have a qualifying loss. Emergency disaster production loss loans cover up to 80 percent of losses, or \$500,000 — whichever is less.

Weddings, funerals, engagements, and births.
You'll find it all in...

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Thank You!

Thanks for Making Good Neighbor Day Possible

- Dr. Lamont Shirk
- KQNK Radio
- Zwickle Accounting
- Russ' Jewelry
- Almena State Bank
- Jamboree Foods
- Dr. Craig Krizek
- Charles David Craig
- Western Distributing
- United Northwest Federal Credit Union
- First State Bank

Thank you to Dani and Abby from Hot Shots! for helping clean the roses, Gayle James and Norman Stockham for handing out roses in Lenora and Almena and to everyone else who donated

A Very Big Thank You!!

Norton Flowers, Gifts and Greenhouse
NORTON, KANSAS