

Used scraper causes headache for supervisor

By VERONICA MONIER

Buying a used scraper for the landfill has been a bigger job than either the Norton County commissioners or Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan expected.

Mr. Brannan went to Topeka last week to look at a used scraper the county is thinking of buying. He said he found out, when he was almost to Topeka, that the scraper was in the shop and couldn't be tested that day.

On Thursday he told the commissioners that the mechanics were replacing a seal and had the belly pan off.

Mr. Brannan said he told Martin Tractor, the company selling the CAT scraper, that it would have to be brought to Norton so that the county could test drive it before any decision would be made.

He said it was a straight machine with no major damage. There is a small dent in the front, but that's not too bad. He said it looks rough, but it just needs a paint job, which is being done.

Mr. Brannan said he got a copy of the scraper's service records. It looks like it was kept in good working order. He said the only actual repair it had was having a door, which was left open and blown off, replaced. Other than that, he said, all of the service it has had has been normal.

He said it will probably take about two weeks before the scraper can be brought to Norton.

He said he wanted to bring it to the county and give it a test run, but he thought it would be well worth the money.

The commissioners were meeting on Thursday to tidy up any end-of-the-year business and sign checks.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard from Acting Ambulance Director Andy Nielsen that the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Technicians is deciding to continue with the National Emergency Medical Technician registry. He said the state board is looking into getting a technician test that would be the same in several states so that technicians can transfer.

Mr. Nielsen said this has come up because the national registry is thinking about getting rid of an intermediate technician level, which is under the level of paramedic but the technician can start an IV. He said Kansas has 1,100 of the intermediate technicians.

- Passed a motion to allow the county's departments — ambulance, county treasurer, clerk, register of deeds, appraiser, elections, county health, road and bridge, special bridge, solid waste, noxious weed, 17th judicial, clerk of the district court, 4-H maintenance, and sheriff — to transfer money to capital outlay or machinery and equipment funds if there was money left in their budgets.

Arbor foundation offers free trees

Ten flowering trees will be given to each person who joins the National Arbor Day Foundation during January.

The free trees are part of the non-profit foundation's "Trees for America" campaign. The package will include two white flowering dogwoods, two flowering crabapples, two Washington hawthorns, two American redbuds, and two golden rain trees.

The trees will be shipped with instructions at the right time for planting between Feb. 1 and May

31. The six- to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free.

Members also receive a subscription to the foundation's bi-monthly publication, *Arbor Day*, and "The Tree Book" with information about tree planting and care.

To become a member, send a \$10 contribution to Ten Free Flowering Trees, National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Ave., Nebraska City, Neb., 68410 by Jan. 31, or go online to arborday.org.



Beautiful weather beckoned

Nice days send lots of folks outdoors

With the weather so pleasant last week, several people took the opportunity to enjoy the playground at Elmwood Park. Connor Boxler (left) rocked on a tiger, while his grandmother, Bonnie Boxler, supervised. Ryan Miller (above) showed off his skills on the jungle gym.

— Photos by Veronica Monier



County changes preparedness officer

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Norton County has a new Emergency Preparedness officer. County commissioners decided to make the change at the end of the year.

They selected Sheriff Troy Thomson as the new officer.

Former Norton Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Alvin Mapes wasn't sure if he wanted to keep the job or not last week during the weekly commission meeting.

He had been asking the commissioners to put him on salary or a new contract for several months. A contract he was offered earlier in the year was for less than he wanted and had little in the way of benefits.

He said he was hoping for a decision by the end of the year so he would know if he needs to proceed

with several meetings. He said that he has worked hard at the job, which keeps expanding. However, he said, he was eligible for social security and could just retire.

"I don't know," Mr. Lang said. "It's complicated."

At that time the commissioners said they would let him know any decisions.

"I'll get my deals in order and thank you all," Mr. Mapes said. "I enjoyed working with you. You let me know. I'll get thing lined out."

Mr. Mapes said that he was planning to hold a meeting at 6 p.m., Thursday for those eligible for grant money to see what each entity, such as the county sheriff, ambulance service and fire departments, will get.

He said he is also planning to attend a meeting on Friday, Jan. 7, in Phillipsburg to help show emer-

gency preparedness coordinators from this area how to fill out the reams of paperwork that goes with the job. The coordinators asked for the meeting with someone from Topeka, Mr. Mapes said.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held a budget hearing to change amounts in the special bridge and ambulance funds for unexpected expenses. The amended budget was approved.

- Looked over tax receipts for hangars at the airport. The land belongs to the city and county but the hangars are privately owned.

- Received an annual bill for \$568 from the district coroner, Dr. Roy Hartley. The district includes Norton, Phillips, Smith, Osborne, Graham and Decatur.

- Talked to Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald, who said he

has received another sample of netting to be use in wind screens but doesn't know the price of it yet.

- Received a list of people who have purchased millings from the county. The biggest customer was the City of Alma. Several distributors bought large amounts but they trucked most of it to others around the county, County Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan said.

- Received a list of 76 bridges that were sprayed for noxious weeds last year to help cut down on mowing and allow for safety because the bridges would be more visible.

- Talked to Sam Thomas, who farms in Nebraska and Kansas, about boring a water line under a road. County Clerk Robert Wyatt gave him a copy of county regulations for such a project.

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