

Economic board ready to budget cash

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton County Economic Development Board has formed a sub-committee to get its budget in order.

County Attorney Karen Griffiths said it was possible for the board to have an interlocal agreement, which would give it the powers and protections of a quasi-governmental agency.

She said for that to happen, the board would have to have each city and the county adopt and sign the agreement, after it had been approved by the attorney general's office.

Vice Chairman Curtis Eveleigh asked if that would be the best option.

Mrs. Griffiths said the board could become a non-profit agency, but the process is complicated and time consuming. She said having an interlocal agreement would work better.

"I don't see the advantage in becoming a non-profit," Mr. Eveleigh said.

Mrs. Griffiths said with an interlocal agreement the board needed to make sure its funding was secure.

She said the board needed bylaws and it needed to make sure members stayed active.

Chairman John Miller said the bylaws used with the Juvenile Justice Authority and Community Corrections work very well. He said he would get copies for the other board members.

"It's important what you put in your bylaws," said Mrs. Griffiths. "It says how many you need for a quorum, who keeps track of everything and a lot of other important things."

In addition to bylaws, she said the board also needed to get its finances

secured. In order to get the 40 percent of its money from the City of Norton the board needs to get something put together and then take it to the city's finance committee, so a recommendation could be made to the city council, Mrs. Griffiths said.

Mr. Miller said they needed to set up a committee to formulate a budget, so it could be presented to the different city councils. He said they could get copies of several other counties' economic development committees' budgets to see how they were broken down.

Mr. Eveleigh said they would probably have a pretty simple budget, with a sizable part of the expected \$100,000 being taken up by the director's salary.

Volunteering to be on the committee were Mr. Miller, Mr. Eveleigh, and board members Gayle James and Donna Henderson.

Mrs. Griffiths said she would draft a copy of an interlocal agreement.

In other business, the board:

- Adopted its mission statement—The Norton County Economic Development Board is a countywide partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic strength of the county by recruiting new employers, retaining existing employers, and improving the quality of life for all of Norton County.

Mr. Miller said if the board needed to change either the vision or mission statement in the future it could.

- Formed a committee to draft a job description for the economic development director. They will be meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

- Set the next board meeting for 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13.



CeDoris McMullen, and her great-grandchildren, Andrew McMullen, 7, left, and Ashley McMullen, 11, sang an Easter song for Andbe Home residents on Good Friday. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Andbe Home residents enjoy Good Friday services

Residents of the Andbe Home held their own Good Friday services under the direction of Resident Resource Director Darlene McEwen.

The Rev. Rick Rostek delivered the Good Friday message on "The

Last Seven Words of Christ" and Andbe Home Director Coni Park read the corresponding scriptures. Ms. Park's daughter, Kayleigh Norwood, 10, sang, "Little By Little".

Mrs. McEwen had created a

worship area in the main dining hall complete with a draped cross and a picture of Christ. A vase of tulips, donated in memory of Ruth Hake by her family, were placed by the cross.

Resident CeDoris McMullen

and her great-grandchildren, Andrew McMullen, 7, and Ashley McMullen, 11, choreographed movements to an instrumental Easter song. The children's parents are Kari and Darren McMullen, Norton.

Commissioners study health insurance ideas

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Norton County commissioners are still trying to come up with the best plan to provide employee benefits, especially health insurance.

On Monday the commissioners met with Karol Roadhouse and Angela (McKinley) Carvalho of Group Benefit Specialists, a company which would work with insurance companies like Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Ms. Roadhouse, who met with the county last year, said that her company now has been working with Trego and Geary counties. Last year the commissioners asked her about other counties Group Benefit has helped and she said that she had only worked with cities and school districts.

During the past year, however, she said, she has helped Trego County get competitive bids on its employee health insurance from Blue Cross and two other companies. Trego County stayed with Blue Cross, she said, but changed its plan.

Commission John Miller said that while the employees really like Blue Cross the plan, the county has found out its plan may be dropped by the company.

Ms. Roadhouse said that her company has a good relationship with Blue Cross, which is unusual, she said, because Blue Cross does well on its own.

She suggested that the commissioners check with Blue Cross on how her company works with

them. Sometimes, she said, her company can negotiate a discount and sometimes not. If the county has a good track record for not having a lot of insurance claims maybe Group Benefit Specialists can come up with something.

"I think its important that your employees get choices and understand what you are going through," Ms. Roadhouse said.

Mr. Miller said that a local company would also like to bid on the county's insurance.

Ms. Roadhouse said that would be up to the commissioners. Typically we have access to all insurance companies that operate in Kansas, she said, but warned that a local company would probably have to add a commission for itself.

Ms. Roadhouse said that her company could look at insurance policies and compare them and recommend to the county. Then when there were questions from employees the company would answer them instead of everything going through the County Clerk.

Her company can work on a fee basis, she said, of \$875 a month or \$10,500 a year.

Mr. Miller said he liked the idea of having the local insurance company submit their plan to Group Benefit for them to figure things out.

"We're all dyed-in-the-wool Blue Cross people, but the cost is becoming so prohibitive," he said.

"There is nothing about Group Benefit Specialists that will

change Blue Cross and Blue Shield's procedures," Ms. Roadhouse said. "We don't have that kind of power."

She said that the company would do its best but might not be able to get all the information the county wants because of government privacy regulations.

Commissioner Leroy Lang asked about the possibility of pooling with another government group.

Ms. Roadhouse said that would need at least 5 municipalities, schools, counties or cities with at least a \$1 million in premiums.

"The answer is yes," she said. "But it will be a real challenge and a long process."

The advantage of the pools is stability, she said. You don't have the big swings up and down.

"We need to stabilize this," Mr. Lang commented.

"We don't control your usage. We can just help you understand and help educate your employees on what drives it," Mrs. Roadhouse advised.

"These employees didn't get any pay raises this year but we have a Cadillac of a plan," Mr. Lang said. "We're between a rock and a hard place but we have to come out with a pretty good plan."

The county is also looking at CBIZ Benefits and Insurance Services, which also does the same sort of work and went into a 15-minute closed session with its attorney Doug Sebelius to discuss contract negotiations for insur-

County OKs bid for landfill software

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The Norton County commissioners authorized the purchase of computers and software for the solid waste department despite problems with the bids.

The county had received a bid from Star Programming for software a few weeks ago but told the dealer's agent Kathy Hardy that they needed at least two bids on items.

However, when County Clerk Robert Wyatt checked with other dealers he found most did not make software for landfills and those that did only had software that was mostly for road and bridge departments with just a little landfill information thrown in.

Mr. Wyatt said that his sources said that the Star Programming software is the best and possibly the only landfill one available.

The bid from Star was for \$3,250, which includes software, installation and technical assistance.

Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald presented the bids he had gotten for computers to run the

software. He said that he gave bidders a copy of the specs which called for at least a 3 gigabyte computer.

He received a bid from ComputerPro for a one gigabyte computer for \$975 plus \$199 for a fax and printer combination and one from Mortenson Computer Services for a 3 gigabyte machine for \$1,328 plus \$170 for the fax/printer machine.

Commissioner Leroy Lang noted that ComputerPro had not bid on the machine that the county needed, since the software will not run on the smaller computer.

Commission John Miller said that since both bidders had received the specifications they needed to take the one which bid correctly.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that the City of Norton would like to have a cleanup time Monday-Wednesday, April 18-20. The first one of the year is usually countywide.

Mr. Lang suggested it be restricted to white goods and construction and demolition items

since the county doesn't have its own dump yet and can handle those items itself.

Mr. Miller suggested that Mr. Archibald work with Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson and also talk to Phillips County about a possible increase in trash during the cleanup. Mr. Archibald said he would check with Almema and Lenora about a county-wide cleanup.

- Learned that the Kansas Workers Risk Cooperative for Counties (K Worc) had inspected the county shop and found some minor things that need correction. Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan said the problems are being solved and he is glad that the group checks the shop and makes safety suggestions.

- Were told by Mr. Brannan that he planned to attend a class on workmen's comp claims to find out ways to lower the county's claim potential.

- Learned that the county had to pay \$1.97 per gallon for diesel fuel. Mr. Brannan said that he has to buy a load of diesel about every five weeks.

ance.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that County Clerk Robert Wyatt was injured in an accident and will be out of the office for awhile.

- Received a letter from Geocore on sampling wells at the new landfill. The wells are used to check chemicals in the water to make sure there are no leaks from the landfill into the water supply.

One of two new wells had some chemical contamination but not enough to cause concern, Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald said. An older well which had the silt removed is getting water in it, he said. Hopefully, it will continue to operate and the county will not have to drill any more new wells.

HANSEN MUSEUM

By LEE FAVRE

Last Friday afternoon, friends and fellow employees gathered for a going-away celebration for Rosemary Horn. Retiring after nearly 18 years at the Hansen Museum and Plaza, Mrs. Horn and her husband, Larry, will now enjoy their retirement as greeters at Milford Lake near Junction City.

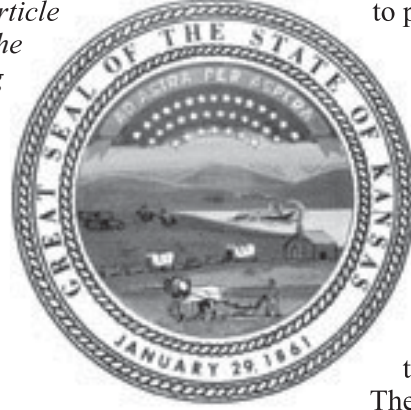
She was presented a bonus check from the museum as special

thanks for her years of hard work and dedication. Refreshments were served for those attending the emotional farewell.

Only days remain for the "Artist of the Month" display for March. Closing on Thursday, Michelle Lytle, McCook, has graced the gallery once again with her ink on bone art, as an honored winner from the 2004 Hansen Arts and Crafts Fair.

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1601 A Proposition to Amend Article 15 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas

A proposition to amend article 15 of the constitution of the state of Kansas by adding a new section thereto, concerning marriage. Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Kansas, two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the Senate and two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the House of Representatives concurring therein:



to public policy and void. "A vote for this proposition would amend the Kansas constitution to incorporate into it the definition of marriage as a civil contract between one man and one woman only and the declaration that any other marriage is contrary to public policy and void.

The proposed constitutional amendment also would prohibit the state from recognizing any other legal relationship that would entitle the parties in the relationship to the rights or incidents of marriage.

"A vote against this proposition would not amend the constitution, in which case the current statute that defines marriage would remain unchanged but could be amended by future acts of the legislature or modified by judicial interpretation."

Sec. 3. This resolution, if approved by two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the Senate, and two-thirds of the members elected (or appointed) and qualified to the House of Representatives, shall be entered on the journals, together with the yeas and nays. The secretary of state shall cause this resolution to be published as provided by law and shall cause the proposed amendment to be submitted to the electors of the state at the general election in April in the year 2005 unless a special election is called at a sooner date by concurrent resolution of the legislature, in which case it shall be submitted to the electors of the state at the special election.

Adopted by the Senate Jan. 13, 2005
Adopted by the House Feb. 7, 2005

Section 1. The following proposition to amend the constitution of the state of Kansas shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the state for their approval or rejection: Article 15 of the constitution of the state of Kansas is amended by adding a new section thereto to read as follows:

"§ 16. Marriage. (a) The marriage contract is to be considered in law as a civil contract. Marriage shall be constituted by one man and one woman only. All other marriages are declared to be contrary to the public policy of this state and are void.

"(b) No relationship, other than a marriage, shall be recognized by the state as entitling the parties to the rights or incidents of marriage." Sec. 2. The following statement shall be printed on the ballot with the amendment as a whole:

"Explanatory statement. There is currently no constitutional provision regarding marriage. There is a statute, enacted by the legislature, that defines marriage as a civil contract between two persons who are of opposite sex and declares all other marriages to be contrary