

Man promotes Norton

Businessman came to town from Nebraska

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

Shawn Mortensen, owner of Mortensen Computer Services, says he is a promoter of Norton and a staunch supporter of rural economic development.

He says he could be the poster boy for economic development in Northwest Kansas and believes in what he is doing and what can be done.

While Mr. Mortensen was a student at the University of Nebraska in Kearney, he took all the business courses offered. But, needing something more challenging, he tried his hand at a computer course.

In his own words he "did horribly."

But, he persevered, took the course again and "aced" it. This began his life's work in technology combined with business.

In 1999, Mr. Mortensen had been working with an Internet service provider in Kearney, but had his eyes open for something else, since the job market was so saturated.

He applied for and got a position with Valley Hope Association in



Shawn Mortensen at the computer in his new office located at 101 S. Norton.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

their corporate office. At that time, he didn't even know where Norton was, he said. He had to look at a map to find it.

Following two years with Valley Hope, he worked for the Kansas Department of Transportation.

In January of 2003, he made the decision to go into business for himself and with the help of a low-interest, economic development loan, (which is almost paid off) from Norton County commissioners, Mortensen Computer Services was born.

Next, he applied to the City of Norton for an expansion loan and got it.

The business had been located on Holme, but in November they moved to a larger office at 101 S. Norton.

"Things have really snowballed," Mr. Mortensen said.

With more than 1,300 customers in Northwest Kansas, Mortensen Computer Services does everything connected with home and business personal computers.

His company offers spy ware and virus removal, web design, custom software, programming, software development, networking and is a website host.

On the retail side the store carries flat panels, printers, ink car-

tridges, CD burners, DVD drives, USB cables and Dell and Equus personal computers.

"We have hit the highest retail level with Dell," he said. "And we are cheaper than most other retailers."

Mr. Mortensen is full of ideas and plans. He has a vision to make Norton a technological hub. He foresees installing remote software to enable his technicians to work on personal computers anywhere in the world; he envisions Norton as a call center; and a center for weekly computer classes. Even now, his company has the capability of installing web cams

and offering management information systems.

For a guy who didn't even know where Norton was a few years ago, Shawn Mortensen and Mortensen Computer Services feels he is helping put the town on the map.

Other employees are Kim Wickler, office manager, and Jeff McClelland, technician.

Mr. Mortensen and his wife, Melanie, have three children, Lindsay, 19; Chelsea, 17, and Landon, 13.

To contact Mortensen Computer Services call 874-4844 or go to their website at: mortensen-computerservices.com.

Jennings election mixed up

Newspaper gets wrong names for candidates

Voters in Jennings may be a little confused about who is running for the Jennings School Board in the election Tuesday after an article in *The Oberlin Herald* printed candidates names from 2003.

The Oberlin newspaper printed that Lawrence Carter, Sarah Carter, Sheila Rhodes and Aden Schillig were all running for the board. Those were the candidates from two years ago.

There is actually only one person in Jennings who has filed for the board. Frances Bader is running for a two-year term on the board. There is one other two-year term open and three four-year terms, which will have to be filled by write-in candidates.

Editor's Note: This story is being run at the request of The Oberlin Herald since that newspaper will not publish another issue before the election.

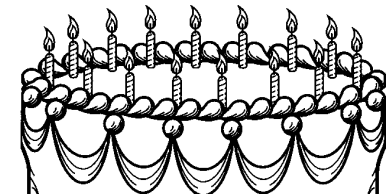
CORRECTION

In the Friday, March 25, edition of *The Norton Telegram*, Cody Lowry was incorrectly listed as Cody Hardy in the Northern Valley School honor roll on Page 8.

Information was incorrectly given to *The Telegram*.

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The Norton Telegram will correct or clarify anything that is wrong in a news story. Call our office at 877-3361 to report errors. We believe news stories should be fair and factual, and want you to tell us about any failure to live up to this standard.



The Family of **Lucille Stackhouse**

Would like to invite Lucille's friends and relatives to her 90th Birthday Party on April 9 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Whispering Pines in Norton, KS. If you can't attend please send her a birthday greeting at 113 Whispering Pines, Norton, KS 67654

Hospital to offer two-week cancer course

Norton County Hospital is bringing telemedicine to area oncology patients.

In April, Good Samaritan Health Systems out of Kearney, Neb., will facilitate the American Cancer Society's "I Can Cope" program at the hospital.

This is an educational program for patients with cancer and their families and friends. The course includes lectures, audio-visual

programs and group discussions. Presentations are made by a team of health care professionals including physicians, nurses, dietitians and counselors.

"I Can Cope" consists of four, two-hour classes. The meetings will be held at the hospital from 1:30-3:30 p.m., Wednesday and Friday, April 6, 8, 13 and 15.

Call Carol Elling, registered nurse, at the hospital, 877-3351.

Commodities distribution set

The Norton County Senior Citizens will distribute government surplus food for low income people of all ages in Norton County next Friday.

Distribution will be from 9-11 a.m. in Almena at the Senior Center; from 2-3 p.m. in Lenora at the

Senior Center; from 2-4 p.m. in Norton at the Senior Center; and from 2:30-3:30 p.m. in Clayton at the library.

Food includes peaches, orange juice, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, green beans, dried cherries, rice and walnuts.

Voters will have say on marriage amendment

By KATHRYN BURKE

Along with choosing school board and city council members Tuesday, voters will say yes or no to a state constitutional amendment on marriage.

A "yes" vote would support amending Article 15 of the state Constitution to define marriage as between "one man and one woman."

A "no" would leave the constitution as it stands, with no section on marriage.

There has been little to almost no talk in Norton about the amendment, although a couple of people did comment on it.

"It's a stand on the principles of the Bible," said Paula Strayer, who works at Bridges Group in Norton.

"Those principles are based on a marriage between a man and a woman. I guess it's not really my opinion, but something mandated thousands of years ago and it's what I believe.

"I think this country was built on those principles and they are what our forefathers had in mind. If we want to stand behind that, then I think we should vote 'yes'."

County counselor and Norton attorney Doug Sebelius said he is comfortable with the law as it is written now.

"My religious faith tells me that marriage is between one woman and one man," he said. "But I can see no danger in having a civil contract between those who choose to have alternate lifestyles. It boils

down to what danger is there to traditional marriage in allowing a contract between gays.

"I don't like the approach taken in this amendment. The second part, or part b, is more an elimination and oppression of rights than anything else. Gays should be allowed to their rights to contract like what is allowed now. I don't feel the constitutional amendment is necessary, especially when it is trying to prevent the rights that others should have.

"We need to think longer and harder about changing important documents such as the constitution. People are approaching this from a perspective of fear, rather than reason. They're confusing faith with civil law."

A statewide group, called the Kansans for Fairness, was formed to defeat the amendment.

Bruce Ney, the group's chairman, says he's outraged that we would even consider an amendment that "is meant only to hurt Kansas citizens."

The organization teamed up with 50 ministers from across the state to put together a letter against the amendment. The letter says that people of faith can and do disagree on the amendment.

"This amendment would hurt people, threaten religious liberty and stifle the diverse religious voices in Kansas," the ministers said. "For all these reasons, we urge all Kansans, and particularly, all Kansans of faith, to vote NO."

Kansas law already defines marriage as a civil contract between two persons of opposite sex and declares all other marriages to be contrary to public policy and void, says Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1601.

The amendment would prohibit the state from recognizing any relationship other than marriage as

entitling the parties to the "rights or incidents of marriage."

The proposition for the amendment reads:

(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.

The amendment is being brought to a vote of the people after being passed by a two-thirds majority in the both houses of the state Legislature.

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