

# Next year is Jennings' last

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

With enrollment dwindling, the Jennings School Board has decided that next year will be the last for its school.

The board plans to disorganize the district on July 30, 2006.

Superintendent Emery Hart said the district counted 30.5 students full-time equivalency this year. It has 30 students, 16 in high school and 14 in grade school.

Next year, he said, enrollment will drop because the high school is graduating six seniors and there are only one or two kindergartners coming in.

In the last few years, the Jennings district has seen a decline similar to most in the area. During the 2002-2003 school year, the district had 79 students. The next year, 2003-2004, that number dropped to 61. Last fall, the district started the 2004-2005 year with just 30 kids.

Next fall, Mr. Hart said, the district will send students in grades 6 to 12 to Oberlin and Hoxie schools. He said the board offered a contract with the Norton School District also, but Norton turned it down.

The Jennings board, said Mr. Hart, is in the thinking stage right now. Members are listening to suggestions from the superintendent and patrons before they decide anything else, like what to do with the building or how to suggest dividing the district's land.

Mr. Hart was hired in November when former Superintendent Dave DuBois left for a job in Los Angeles. He said the board knew then that the district's future was dim. Despite that, he said, board members have organized themselves and are doing a good job.

"The board is asking people for suggestions," he said, "not just doing things. That is what makes positive things happen."

Disorganization, he said, means the Jennings District's territory will be divided among its neighbors, the Oberlin, Norton and Hoxie districts.

The board will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. next Wednesday at the Jennings School to discuss the process. Everyone is welcome to attend, Mr. Hart said. A regular board meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.

Board President Lawrence Carter said the board decided to disorganize because the district is just out of students. If Jennings

consolidates with another district, he said, then everything — students, land, building and equipment — would go to that district. If Jennings disorganizes, then the territory will be split.

There are already students who once went to Jennings attending school in Norton, Oberlin or Hoxie, he said.

The final decision, said Mr. Carter, on how to split up the district is up to the state Board of Education, but they are interested in what the Jennings board suggests.

Basically, he said, the Jennings Board is only in the preliminary stages of its plan.

Through the whole process, Mr. Hart said, he has worked closely with the state board and its attorney.

The Jennings board can suggest how to divide up the land, he said. Then it will be the state board's decision which district gets what.

While contracting for secondary students next year, said Mr. Hart, Jennings will still be a school district. The grade school will be open for the next school term if there are enough students.

The boards in Oberlin and Hoxie have worked with him, Mr. Hart said, and with the Jennings board. He thinks all the board members in the other districts understand the difficult situation Jennings is going through.

"When you lose a school in a community, you lose a lot," said Mr. Hart. "In fact, it is the backbone of a town."

The Jennings board members have taken into consideration the families in the district, he said, and have tried to do what is best for them.

Mr. Hart said the board hasn't decided what they will do with the school building. He said the district will probably end up having an auction and sell some of the buses and other stuff, but none of those decisions has been made yet.

The board is still looking at everything. Some of those decisions will happen this summer. Mr. Hart said the board members want to make sure that they look at all the options and study everything.



Myron Veh, Norton, and his daughter Arloa Barnes of Smith Center, turned around at the end of the field during an antique tractor plowing demonstration Saturday south of Smith Center. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

ing an antique tractor plowing demonstration Saturday south of Smith Center. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

## Boys get to play with toys at tractor demo

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

You know what they say, "The only difference between men and boys is the size and price of their toys."

Myron Veh of Norton laughed but agreed.

"That's about right," he said.

Saturday, Mr. Veh, along with

dozens of others, had a chance to play.

Dozens of antique tractor collectors gathered in a field just south of the outskirts of Smith Center to "play in the dirt." Only tractors built before 1960 were allowed.

The wind blew and the dust billowed, but it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the drivers. Mr. Veh said they plowed 120 acres in three hours.

Mr. Veh drove a 1930 International 2236 that had belonged to his father.

"He bought that tractor two weeks before I was born," he said.

The tractor was restored by J. D. St. Clair of Smith Center.

Mr. Veh had his daughter, Arloa Barnes, Smith Center, with him as he took his turn pulling a three-bottom plow.

Mr. Veh said he plans to drive his tractor in area parades and take it to antique shows.

## Commission considers addressing system

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton County Commissioners might be taking another look at a 911 addressing system for county residents.

Sheriff Troy Thomson said people have been asking him when the county is going to put in an addressing system.

Commissioner John Miller said he didn't know. He said they have had a couple of proposals, but no one has ever made a formal proposal. He said other counties like the way Norton County's roads are set up and have said, if they could do it again, they would do it like Norton.

Commissioner Leroy Lang said he's had a lot of comments from residents that they don't want the addressing system changed from rural routes to numbers. He said road names are also not standardized from county to county, and that could cause some problems too.

Sheriff Thomson said the way the appraiser's office set up the new numbered system probably wouldn't require the county to change its road signs. He said it would eliminate the rural route and box numbers.

Commissioner Dean Kruse said he didn't think a lot would need to be done to set up the new addressing system, just assign everyone a number.

He said it would make sense, because no one really knows where route so and so, box so and so is.

Sheriff Thomson said, the way the sheriff's system is set up now, if someone calls, the address that is listed in the phone book comes up. He said, unless someone knows where to go or specific directions are given, it can be a problem finding them with only a rural route and box number.

He said the appraisers have been working with the post office, so all of the new numbers would be accepted by both.

Mr. Miller said what the appraisers have set up is not a bad deal, but

that the commissioners would like a bit more information.

Sheriff Thomson said he would get more information and bring it back to the commissioners.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Spoke with Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan about the county's policy on buying gravel from the pits. Mr. Brannan said the policy is wrong on the website and that it needed to be changed. He said gravel can be purchased from the pit, but the county will not supply the gravel without a charge. The commission asked County Clerk Robert Wyatt to change the website.

- Heard from Mr. Brannan that construction on bridge OS-240 is nearly finished and should be open to traffic soon. The bridge is located about 14 miles south of Reager.

- Looked at the Turnerville area, which had been petitioned for the roads and streets to be closed by resolution. The streets include Turner Ave., Broom St., and Ann St. The request was made by Ken Schultz.

Charles Posson, a property owner in the area, said last week that he had concerns about closing the roads. But, later that day he looked at the area, and withdrew his opposition.

The commissioners decided to close the streets since there was no longer any opposition.

- Heard from Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald that the transmission in the 1989 Dodge pickup was not working. He said he had spoken with a couple of local repair shops. The commission asked him to get a couple of firm bids before doing anything.

- Accepted a bid from Nelson Brothers Construction in the amount of \$3,722 for maintenance work on the exterior of the Norton County Health Clinic, including installation of a retainer wall. Director Gina Frack said she received two bids. The second was from Shawn Wiltfong for \$3,822.

## Beef, lamb show will be this Saturday

The 2005 Norton Spring Prospect Market Beef, Heifer and Lamb show will be held this Saturday at the Norton County fairgrounds.

The spring show is for all members of FFA and 4-H. Entry fees are \$10 for beef and \$5 for lambs. Pre-register by calling Garrett Beydler at 877-3338 or Keith VanSkiel at 877-5755.

The lambs will begin showing at 10 a.m. with weigh in from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the fairgrounds. Beef will start at 11 a.m. with weigh in from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Norton County Cooperator. All entries must

be weighed in by 9 a.m.

Participants will be split up into junior and senior divisions for showmanship. There will be live animal classes following the showmanship classes.

Awards will be presented to the grand champion animals in each class. The champion steer, heifer and lamb will receive \$50 each. The champion junior and senior showman in both beef and lamb will be awarded a director's chair. Ribbons will be awarded to all competitors.

The show is being sponsored by Norton FFA, Norton County 4-H, and the Norton County Fair Board.

## Bible school set to start May 24

The theme for Norton Christian Church's Vacation Bible School will be "Wonder Working Power of Prayer". Classes will be held from 6:30 to 9 p.m., May 24, 25 and 26. On Friday, May 27, the special closing program will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a hotdog fellowship following.

Children will learn the Lord's Prayer and hear stories about Nehemiah and Lydia. Storytellers will be in costume and the scenery will depict Bible times.

Adina Ness from Wisconsin is originally from Romania. She and JoAnn Colip will lead the Mission Class. Children attending will learn about children who live in orphanages in Romania and Mrs. Ness' mission work as a dentist.

Vacation Bible School at Norton Christian Church is for all children ages four years old through sixth grade. For more information or to pre-register, call the church office at 877-2871 or co-directors Nancy Hager, 877-3841 or Melba Witt, 877-3660. A registration table will be available at the church on Sunday mornings and throughout Bible school week.

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## WILSONVILLE

By VELMA HOLTZE and LAURIE LAWS

On Friday evening Delbert and Laurie Laws traveled to Minden, Neb., to spend Mother's Day weekend with Rick, Shelly and Austin Anderson. While in Minden the Laws and the Andersons watched Austin play his last soccer game of the season. Austin begins softball on Thurs-

day of this next week. (He hasn't met a sport he doesn't like yet). After the soccer game the families went to Kearney for an afternoon of shopping for some of Delbert's on-going projects and Laurie's bathroom remodel. Delbert and Laurie enjoyed seeing all the beautiful landscaping that Rick and Shelly have done in their new yard.

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