

# Church:

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Pages 6 & 7

Vol. 98, No. 39  
75 cents

# THE NORTON TELEGRAM

# Sports:

Northern Valley Junior High students take first, second in league track. Youth attend Norton meet.

Pages 8 & 10

Friday  
May 20, 2005

Norton, Kansas  
Home of Myron Veh

## Briefly

### Graduations

### set for weekend

Norton and Northern Valley will be holding senior graduations this weekend.

Norton's will start at 2:30 p.m. in the high school gym on Sunday.

On Saturday, the Northern Valley High School ceremony will start at 2 p.m. in the gym. The district's eighth-grade graduation will be at 8 p.m. on Monday in the Long Island gym.

### Students to sell paper poppies

Fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students from Norton County will be distributing poppies made by disabled American veterans 9-11 a.m. Saturday.

The students will be offering the little red paper flowers throughout Norton for donations. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors the fund-raiser and donation canisters may be found in grocery stores and restaurants.

To make a donation, call Marcia Wiltfong, 877-2459.

## The Nugget

### puts out last issue

Norton Community High School's *The Nugget* will be in today's edition of *The Telegram* for those subscribers who get their paper delivered by carrier. People who want a copy, but don't get one with their paper, can stop by the high school to pick one up.

Norton High School students will get a copy of *The Nugget* at the school.

This will be the last edition for this school year.

## Weather

### Forecast:

**Tonight** — Lows in the upper 60s. Southeast winds 15 to 20 mph.

**Saturday** — Highs in the mid 90s. South winds 15 to 20 mph shifting to the north in the afternoon.

**Saturday night** — Lows in the upper 50s.

**Sunday** — Highs in the upper 70s.

**Sunday night** — Lows in the lower 50s..

**Monday** — Highs in the mid 80s.

### Howell report:

Tuesday	High 88, Low 53
Wednesday	High 87, Low 54
Thursday	High 96, Low 59
Week ago	High 75, Low 50
Month ago	High 80, Low 56
Year ago	High 85, Low 61
May precipitation	0.15 inches
Year-to-date precipitation	6.03 inches

(Readings taken at the Paul and Pat Howell farm 10 Miles North and 1/3 Mile East of Norton)

## Prayer

Merciful God, give us the wisdom and courage to serve others and to bear witness to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

# Norton prepares to raise rates

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton City Council held the first reading of two ordinances that raise the water and sewer rates at Wednesday's meeting.

Councilman Ron Briery read the first reading of Ordinance No. 1545, relating to sewer rate changes and Ordinance No. 1546, relating to water rate changes.

Ordinance 1545 says the minimum service charge for sewer usage inside the city will be \$13.25 per month for 200 cubic feet and \$1.53 for each additional 100 cubic feet. Outside the city, the charge will change to \$26.50 a month for 200 cubic feet and \$1.53 for each additional 100 cubic feet.

Ordinance 1546 says that for all meters less than two inches, there will be a minimum charge of \$16.82 per month for use

## Proposed prices for water, sewer

### Water rates:

In town — \$16.82 per month plus \$1.62 per extra 100 cu.ft.

Oversize meters — \$20 plus \$1.62 per extra 100 cu. ft.

Outside city — \$25.73 plus \$1.62 per extra 100 cu. ft.

### Sewer rates:

In town — \$13.25 per month plus \$1.53 per extra 100 cu.ft.

Outside city — \$26.50 per month plus \$1.53 per extra 100 cu.ft.

of up to 200 cubic feet of water, and an additional charge of \$1.62 per 100 cubic feet of water used. For meters between two and three inches, the minimum will be \$20 and \$1.62.

Outside the city limits, the service charge will increase to \$25.73 and \$1.62.

He said consumers hauling water in bulk containers will have a rate of \$11.21 per 1,000 gallons.

Councilman Jerry Jones asked how many gallons 200 cubic feet of water was. He said it would probably be easier for everyone to understand if it was in gallons

instead of cubic feet.

City Clerk Darla Ellis said 200 cubic feet was the same as 1,500 gallons of water.

Mr. Jones said he has had a lot of people talk to him about the rate increases and that it looks like there are a lot of low income people who are going to cut down on their water usage. He asked if that would affect getting the money the city needs to update its water and sewer plants.

Councilwoman Donna Foley said that was considered when the new rates were chosen.

"I just want to make sure because I don't want to have to come back in six months and change these again," said Mr. Jones.

Mr. Briery said the city had no choice about raising the rates.

(Continued on Page 5)

## Inmates develop green thumbs

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

It's beautiful in the spring and summer.

Stately cottonwood trees, flower beds, and manicured lawns complete the picture. Visitors could imagine that they are on a college campus until they see the high fences and razor-wire. This is the Norton Correctional Facility, a state prison.

The prison's campus is so attractive due, in part, to the efforts of inmates enrolled in a vocational horticulture program taught by Chris Rich, a graduate of Barton County Community College and Pittsburg State University.

Mr. Rich is a contract employee, working for Southeast Kansas Education Service Center, also known as Greenbush. He must also meet all the rules and regulations of the Kansas Department of Corrections.

His horticulture program helps to beautify the grounds and offers inmates job experience.

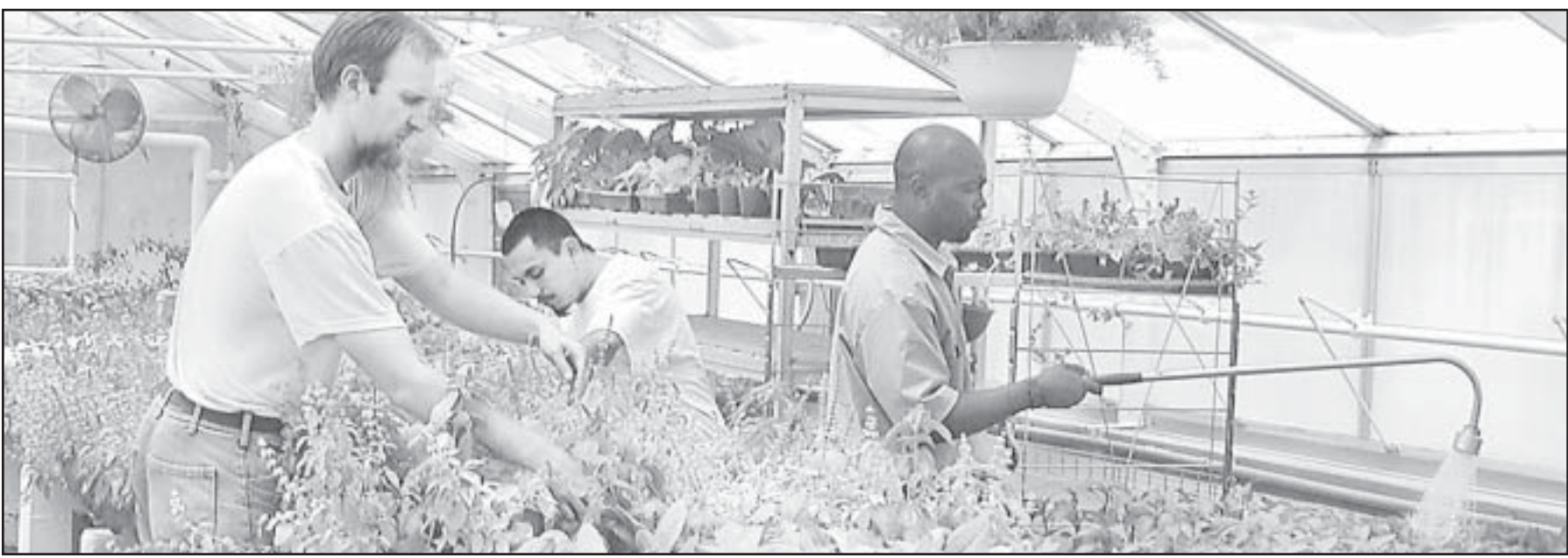
The horticulture program is available. (Continued on Page 5)



Nolan Koehn (above left) and Anthony "Red" Roberts admired the water garden they helped install while Rob Schlehuber (below foreground), Johnny Garza and Rahson Scott (watering)

worked in the greenhouse at Norton Correctional Facility. All are in the prison horticulture program.

— Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts



## Jennings holds last graduation

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

It was bittersweet Saturday as Jennings High School graduated six seniors, the last class to graduate from the Prairie Heights district.

Roxanne Bochert, Jody Brooks, Crystal Franco, Bradley Gawith, Kyle Kinser and Tiffany Wheeler all said good-bye to their school as the community said good-bye to its high school.

Next year, high school students will be contracted to schools in Hoxie and Oberlin. In July 2006 the board is planning to disorganize the district, which means there won't be any more graduations in the gym.

The seniors walked to the strains (Continued on Page 5)

## Farmer confronts commissioners

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

A Norton County farmer told the county commissioners that he didn't appreciate them interfering with his farming practices and that erosion on a road and some of his property was caused by improper engineering, not anything he's done.

Farmer Terry Nelson, along with his attorney, Charles Worden, came to talk to the Norton County commissioners on Monday after his government farm payments were cut off.

In mid April, County Road Supervisor Tom Brannan had told the commissioners he was worried about a road near the Nelson land. Terraces on the farm ground had been removed, he said, and drainage water was getting on the road.

"We're going to lose that road because of that," he told the commissioners at their April 18 meeting.

Mr. Brannan also said he was concerned about soil erosion, so the commissioners told him to file a complaint with the Farm Service Agency office and have them investigate the problem.

Later Mr. Brannan told the commissioners that his department had filed the complaint and that Mr. Nelson's government payments would be stopped while it was being investigated.

On Monday, Mr. Nelson met with commissioners to talk about the complaint and lodge a few of his own.

"We do not have a problem with erosion in our fields," Mr. Nelson said. "We do a good job of farming and I take it personally when I hear people condemning my farming practices."

He was removing terraces, he said, so that he could put in a circle irrigation system. The irrigation system cannot practically be used with terraces, he said.

He told commissioners the problem is a too small drainage tube and that his land has suffered erosion because of this.

"What are you planning on doing about it?" he asked the commissioners. "Because, I don't want your water going through my property any more."

Commissioner John Miller questioned Mr. Nelson about the problems with drainage.

"You're saying this thing has not been properly engineered," he asked.

Mr. Nelson said the drainage tube was too small and the road was too narrow. He said there have been accidents there because the road was too narrow for his farm trucks.

Mr. Nelson also questioned the commissioners on why they called the Farm Service Agency.

"I'm pretty offended guys that you are (Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 1)  
 trying to run my farm for me," he said.

"We're not trying to run your farm," Commissioner Leroy Lang replied.

"How many other farmers have you turned in?" Mr. Nelson retorted.

"I haven't turned anyone in," Mr. Lang said. "We're just worried about the road."

"And the problem was not my field," Mr. Nelson reiterated. "The FCS office has already confirmed that. The erosion was caused because your road dumped water through my field."

Commission Chairman Dean Kruse said the commissioners would talk to Mr. Brannan about the problem.

"It's our intention not to have bad roads, poor roads or roads that are a danger," he told Mr. Nelson.

"I would appreciate it if before you turn any of this in again you'd send Tom out to talk to me," Mr. Nelson replied, adding that he would expect a formal apology from the commissioners for the trouble and expense they've caused him.

Mr. Nelson and Mr. Worden then left the meeting.

Commissioner Miller said the county should have its engineering firm, B&G Consultants, check the road.

"As far as the roads being engineered correctly, I think they are good," Mr. Miller said. "Most of the roads in that area have wider road beds than every other road in the county. Is it our responsibility to have roads that this individual can get his spread-axle truck around every corner?"

Mr. Miller went on to explain that farmers use a spread axle truck because of state weight limits. With spread axles, trucks can carry 5,000 to 6,000 more pounds than with the traditional tandem axles because of the way the state weighs vehicles.

Mr. Brannan was called and asked to visit with the commissioners, which he did.

Mr. Miller told him to call in B&G to look at the road and to talk to the head of the Soil Conservation District about Mr. Nelson's problems.

However, Mr. Miller said, the county is only interested in the road and Mr. Nelson will have to deal with his terrace removal and any problems with federal government programs.

"We want to get rid of the rumors and get clarity," he said.

Also Mr. Miller asked that Mr. Brannan check the width of the road bed at the spot where Mr. Nelson had said there were wrecks.



Trenton Sprague, 7, (left) checked out the interior of a cabinet built in woodshop by Layne Graham. The cabinet was among pieces on display during Tuesday's Exhibit Night at Norton Community High School. Weston Ebert, 7, looked over artwork hanging in the hallway during the Exhibit Night.

— Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts

## Inmates beautify prison to learn job skills

(Continued from Page 1)  
 able to minimum security inmates and participation is voluntary.

However, it isn't easy. Tardiness and laziness is not tolerated. Mr. Rich expects the men to have a mature demeanor and a positive attitude.

"Part of my job is to get these men ready for a job on the outside," he said. "It's important they learn a good work ethic, some team work, take responsibility and are accountable."

Mr. Rich was quick to praise. "I've been here for seven years and this is the best class I've ever had," he said.

He also pointed out that gradu-

ates of his program have the lowest return to prison rate for any prison vocational or educational program — 13 percent. The national average is 50 to 60 percent.

The course takes about 780 hours with classes 7 1/2 hours a day, five days a week for six months. The curriculum includes book work, hands-on training and transitional training.

Transitional training is helping the men be ready to find a job. By the time they complete the course, they will have written their resume and a cover letter, will have practiced interview skills and researched where to look for a job.

Men who complete the course

will be certified in landscape design, turf grass management, greenhouse management operations or produce production and marketing.

Job opportunities are varied in these fields at botanical gardens, museums, theme parks, national or state parks, landscape companies, highway departments, garden centers and private businesses.

One of the biggest projects the class has completed is a water garden. They learned how to install the fountain, make the waterfalls and what kinds of plants will survive in that environment. Other landscaping was added, creating a

serene setting with park bench and wood chips.

Inmate Rob Schlehuber can every plant in the greenhouse

"This is a wonderful program," he said. "I feel like it will open some doors for me on the outside."

Mr. Schlehuber is confident that he will, one day, be working in some aspect of horticulture.

Thirteen men are enrolled in the program.

One of the students, Rahson Scott, serves as class clerk.

State budget constraints could have affected the program, but 80 percent of the plants being grown in the greenhouse this summer are from seeds collected last year in an

aggressive seed-saving effort.

In addition to bedding plants, herbs and ornamental grasses, the horticulture class will be growing produce. Employees of the facility will be allowed to purchase these plants, fruits and vegetables.

"This is a good program," inmate Johnny Garza said, "I know it will help me with job skills on the outside. He's (Mr. Rich) a good teacher."

An orientation packet given to each student says: Everything done by you, in this program, is for you. This course will give you some of the tools needed to stay out of the prison system.

And, that's what it's all about.

## City council starts process to raise water, sewer rates

(Continued from Page 1)  
 "We have to do this," he said. "If we don't do anything, we'll be fined \$15,000 a day and it wouldn't be too long before the rates are sky high to pay for it."

In other business, the council:

- Accepted new plans for the water and wastewater treatment plants.
- Agreed to help the Norton

County Horse Council with putting in sewer lines to the horse arena if the council gets a grant to make improvements.

- Heard from Assistant Police Chief Toby Kuhn that from May 23 through June 5 a special traffic enforcement program called Click It or Ticket will be going on. As part of the program, the state is giving the department \$4,000 to

cover overtime pay for Memorial and Labor Day weekends. He said the program focuses on driving under the influence, speeding, and seat belt and child restraint use.

- Waived the formal third reading of and adopted Ordinance No. 1544, relating to when fireworks can be shot in the city limits.
- Adopted Resolutions 13-2005 and 14-2005, allowing the demo-

lition of houses at 513 W. Main and 515 W. Main that do not meet the city's uniform housing codes.

• Heard from City Attorney Chuck Worden that he was drafting a new description for his job.

• Learned from Mr. Briery that there had been several complaints made about dog excrement in Elmwood Park and asked that people clean up after their animals.

• Approved an application from Pamida for a cereal malt beverage license. The store will sell beer and wine coolers as carry out items and will not be selling on Sundays.

• Heard that the swimming pool's new hours will be 1-5 p.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. Monday - Thursday, and 1-8 p.m. Friday-Sunday. The pool should open Memorial Day weekend.

## Final class graduates from Jennings

(Continued from Page 1)  
 of "Pomp and Circumstance." They followed three eighth graders, Nathan Baker, Jacinta Carter and Stephanie Stone, who passed onto ninth grade.

Mr. Kinser, the salutatorian, in a short speech, reminded his classmates to take care of themselves, especially since he wouldn't be around to do the job. The comment was accepted with laughter.

He thanked each of his family members, friends and teachers.

Next up was Miss Wheeler, the valedictorian, who said there was once a time when they couldn't wait for this day to get here and now it is here and hard to believe.

"Together we stand looking toward a bright future," she said.

"Don't lose focus of your dreams." If there is something that you are doing that is distracting you from your dreams, she said, then put it aside.

Miss Wheeler told the graduates to prioritize their goals and make them happen.

"Everyone has dreams," she said. "Don't let them slip away." Before leaving the stage, Miss Wheeler wished each member of the class of 2005 luck in whatever they decide to do.

Teacher Judith Rogers said she has been part of the school community for the last seven years and has considered it a privilege. Mrs. Rogers took the time to acknowledge school secretary Lois Heilman for all she has done.

Mrs. Rogers gave the graduates seven steps for life:

- Make you own decisions.
- Live adventurously.
- Set your goals.
- Love your family.
- Have faith.
- Have patience.
- Live healthily.

"Live a long, happy, healthy, productive life with all the joys it can bring," she said.

Superintendent Emery Hart said it is a sad moment for everyone in Jennings. This is the last graduation. He thanked everyone for their support.

Each member of the class received two pink Gerber daisies, which they gave to mothers and family members to say thanks.

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## Farm program deadline approaches

Farmers who have not yet signed up for the Farm Service Agency's 2005 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program are running out of time.

The deadline is June 1.

"About 95 percent of our producers have signed their 2005 contracts," said County Executive Director Vesta Hobbs. "We are concentrating on getting that last 5 percent into the office before the June 1 cut off."

Farmers submitting contracts after that will be assessed a late fee of \$100 per farm.

Ms. Hobbs said when farmers sign their contracts they have the option of selecting whether and when to receive the direct and counter-cyclical payments offered by the programs.

Completing the contract paperwork is not complicated, said Ms. Hobbs. However, it can be time consuming.

The final hurdle is getting all of the required signatures, she said. All farmers, including owners and operators, who will share in the contract payments must sign the contract.

The Farm Service Agency can be reached at 877-5156.

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