

# Unique home is efficient, yet lovely

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

A former Norton couple is building a unique, energy-efficient home just outside the eastern city limits.

Ted and Cathy Hanchett have built other homes and are incorporating many ideas they have admired in the past into this one. Mr. Hanchett helped his father, Melvin Hanchett, build and sell homes in the 1970s so is familiar with home construction and architecture.

The house's walls and roof are made from Styrofoam sandwiched between wafer board panels. This not only provides energy efficiency, but forms the structural integrity of the house, Mr. Hanchett said. The home also features triple-pane, thermal windows, cathedral ceilings, a solar-powered water system and waterproof, flexible stucco.

Not afraid to get his hands dirty, Mr. Hanchett is applying the stucco himself. A polyethylene mesh is stapled to the outside walls to hold the stucco. A polymer is mixed with sand and the colorant before it is applied to the walls. The first two coats are troweled and the last one is sprayed.

Daffer Construction, Norton, is the general contractor for the ranch-style home.

"It's a unique house," J. D. Daffer said. "It will be very efficient and it is extremely air-tight."

The Hanchetts and Mr. Daffer went to Watertown, S.D., to tour the facility of Enercept, the manufacturer.

Mr. Daffer said the cost is a little more per square foot than traditional construction, but the owner should recoup that cost in energy savings. He said the man who did the sheet rocking said it was the "evenest" heating/cooling in a house he had ever seen.

There are 2,500 square feet on the main level and an unfinished basement. The house has an open floor plan with three bedrooms and two and a half baths upstairs, extra-wide hallways, 36-inch doors, Italian tile, hickory cabinets and an arched entryway in front.

The main construction, which began in April, was completed in five months. Finishing touches including molding, ceramic tile and carpeting, are being added now.

There is 5,000 feet of wiring with fiber-optics, Internet, satellite, cable and telephone readiness.

The 85-gallon capacity water heater is electric and is so well insulated that it will keep the water warm even if the power is off for several days.

Mr. Daffer said he has built 43



Ted Hanchett stood in the dining area of his new home on the outskirts of Norton. The energy efficient house incorporated many innovative energy saving features.

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

houses in Norton and this is only the second one he hasn't drawn the plans for. It was all computer generated.

"It was a challenge — but it was a fun project, too," he said.

The Hanchetts live in Colorado Springs, and intend to stay there; one of their daughters and three of their grandchildren live there. But,

they also have a daughter and two more (soon-to-be three) grandchildren in Des Moines, Iowa, and Norton is a good half-way stop.

Mr. Hanchett is retired from the Air Force and as a chief probation officer in Kansas.

The Hanchetts said they have several reasons for building a second home in Norton including a

quiet, friendly community that has been home for three family generations. It is also a stable community with good schools, clean air, good water and few traffic problems, they said.

# County goes with Blue Cross again

Norton County is going with Blue Cross Blue Shield for their health insurance again.

The Norton County Commissioners reviewed bids submitted by CBIZ Benefits and Insurance Services, an insurance broker, for the 2006 health and dental benefits. CBIZ submitted bids to 11 companies; four of them responded.

After studying the bids, the commission decided that Blue Cross Blue Shield was still the best plan moneywise. The insurance company's bid was less than half a percent higher than the 2005 plan.

Other companies bidding were Humana, which submitted three plans, in all of which the employees would have had to pay a higher rate than Blue Cross Blue Shield; Coventry, which required a medical application from each employee and dependent; and Great West, which is a self funding company.

The commission also agreed that with health insurance being agreed upon, the services of CBIZ were no longer needed. The commission decided to send the company a letter terminating its employment, effective Nov. 30.

In other business, the commission:

- Talked to Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald about the county's options for a daily landfill cover. The county can either use six inches of dirt or an approved cover mixture of water and paper/glue. Both the dirt and the alternative cover have been approved by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The cost of the alternative paper/glue cover is \$13.47 per bag, which, the commission said, is a concern. But, they said, it is also a concern putting six inches of dirt in the landfill everyday.

The commissioners said, with the expense of digging a cell and the life expectancy of the cell, they didn't want to fill the landfill with dirt.

The freight on the bags of paper/glue alternative from Tyler, Texas, is expensive and adds greatly to the daily expense.

The commission asked Mr. Archibald to see if a supply could be purchased from Haven, Kan., where a distributor is located. If so, the county could send a truck to Haven to cut down on freight costs. Mr. Archibald said he would report back to them on Monday to tell them what he found out.

- Spoke with County Appraiser Alan Hale about the geographic information systems (GIS) mapping meeting he attended in Topeka. Mr. Hale told the commission that the Solomon Valley Re-course, Conservation and Development (RC&D) group is compiling a six-county GIS mapping plan and will be holding a meeting in Solomon about it.

According to a recent RC&D meeting, if all the counties participated in the plan, approximately \$1 per parcel could be saved. This amounts to approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000 in the six-county area. But, not all of the counties have agreed to participate in the RC&D's plan because of the uncertainty of what really needs to be done. Many counties throughout the state have not done a GIS mapping plan because of the cost.

An estimated cost for Norton County would be over \$1 million. Mr. Hale said he or one of his staff will go to the meeting in Stockton and report back to the commission.

- Discussed the possibility of having an official snow day for the county. At the moment, the county doesn't have an official snow day and if an employee can't make it into work, they have to take a vacation day. After talking about the issue, the commission decided to leave the policy as it is.

- Heard from County Treasurer Cindy Linner that in September, the county received \$18,503.60 from sales tax, making a year-to-date total of \$253,937.49.

- Spoke with County Clerk Robert Wyatt about the election equipment that needed to be ordered by Dec. 2 so the county is compliant with the Help America to Vote Act.

The act requires all counties to be in compliance by January of 2006 with computerized equipment and the opportunity for second chance voting. The act also requires that all voting locations be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as well. If the voting locations aren't handicap accessible, they can no longer be used as voting sites.

Mr. Wyatt said he has attended to a couple of voting hardware demonstrations and, after reviewing the approved vendors, asked the commission to approve ES&S Voting Technology as the county's hardware vendor. The commission also signed a letter authorizing Mr. Wyatt to make the purchase from the Secretary of State's office.

# Tree helps people remember loved ones

By JULIA SCHEMPER administrative assistant, Hospice Services

Is there a star in your life? Is there someone whom you would like to honor or remember in a special way?

Now is your chance. Hospice Services will be decorating a tree of stars for the holidays. In this season of giving and caring, Hospice Services invites you to help decorate their Memorial Christmas Tree.

Stop by the Norton Public Library and give a tax-deductible donation. With your donation, a special ornament with the name of the individual is placed on the Christmas Memorial Tree. The ornaments will be displayed throughout this holiday season.

By giving to the Memorial Christmas Tree, you honor the

memories of loved ones. It is also a tradition of helping others in Norton County to receive care and comfort during a final illness.

By giving to Hospice Services you allow someone to share their gift of life with family and friends to the very end.

## Antiques appraisal set for Saturday

Whether it's something from Grandma's attic or rescued from the trash, area residents will have the opportunity to have items appraised by professionals.

Habitat for Humanity Rags to Riches Antique Appraisal will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 1008 Main St., Hays.

The appraisal fair will feature Hays antique dealers, Rick Davidson from the Brunswick Antique Mall, Betsy Clark from the Antique Mall of Hays, and Elaine Freiburger and Kim Ridder, from the Antique Warehouse in

Goodland. Appraisals will be given for \$3 an item or \$5 for two items, with a maximum of two items per appraisal.

All proceeds will go toward the building of Habitat for Humanity of Ellis County's first house. To learn more call (785) 628-2254 or go to the website: www.habitatelliscounty.org.

**OPEN HOUSE**  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6  
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
U.S.D.A. Service Center  
Farm Service Agency  
Natural Resources Conservation  
Norton County Conservation District

Stop by to see our new offices

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You are invited to attend a

**LONG TERM CARE INFORMATIONAL SEMINAR**

at the  
**Town and Country Kitchen Restaurant**  
Highway 36, Norton, Kansas

**Wednesday, December 7, 2005**  
Starting at 7:00 p.m.

— Seminar given by —  
Larry R. Long, agent - LTCP  
New York Life Insurance Company

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