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Page 6

## Tuesday

### December 27, 2005

Norton, Kansas  
Home of Mark Whitney

### Briefly

## Congressman begins tour

Congressman Jerry Moran began the first leg of his 10th annual Big First Listening Tour today with a stop in Stockton. Stops in this area include a stop at 9 a.m. Saturday in downtown Hill City; and at 10:30 a.m., Saturday in downtown Logan. Residents are invited to meet Mr. Moran at either of these stops. During the tour, he will visit in each of the 69 counties of the district.

## Booster Club

### will meet Jan. 4

The Norton Blue Jay Booster Club is taking a break during the winter vacation and will not meet this week.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 4, in the high school cafeteria. Wrestling coach, Bill Johnson; girl's basketball coach, Kevin Jilka; boy's basketball coach, Doug Reusink, will speak on their respective teams' early season competition and preview upcoming contests. Refreshments will be served. All Norton Community High School sports fans are invited.

## Paper needs weather watcher

For 10 years Paul and Pat Howell recorded the daily temperature highs and lows for *The Norton Telegram*. Following Mr. Howell's death in November, Mrs. Howell has continued the daily reports. However, she feels it is time for someone else to take over.

If you are an interested weather watcher and would enjoy keeping those records, please call *The Telegram* at 877-3361.

### Weather

## Forecast:

Tonight — Lows in the upper 20s.  
Thursday — Highs in the mid 50s. Southwest winds around 10 mph.  
Thursday night — Lows in the upper 20s. Friday — Highs around 50. Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph.  
Friday night — Lows in the mid 20s. Saturday — Highs in the lower 50s.

## Howell report:

Friday .....	High 61, Low 40
Saturday .....	High 54, Low 30
Sunday .....	High 58, Low 36
Monday .....	High 64, Low 33
Tuesday .....	High 56, Low 36
Week ago .....	High 39, Low 25
Month ago .....	High 28, Low 20
Year ago .....	High 43, Low 25
December precipitation .....	.60 inches
Year-to-date precipitation ...	22.75 inches

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

### Prayer

God, we pray you will bestow your grace and blessings on friends and loved ones and that they will walk close to you during the new year. Amen



Kurt Douglas vacuumed the floors to help get Saturday night's New Year's Eve party. Norton's new teen center, The Rock, ready for

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

# 'Rock' ready to roll

## Teen hang out to open Saturday

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

Dick Clark isn't the only one counting down to the new year.

Volunteers at The Rock, Norton's new non-denominational youth center, are counting down the days until their opening at 8 p.m. Saturday night for a "teens only" New Year's Eve party.

The Rock is on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and State streets in downtown Norton.

Volunteer Pat Douglas said there is still lots to be done, but it will be ready.

Considering the board of directors for the teen center didn't get possession of the building until late summer, their progress is amazing.

Decorated in a hip industrial style with lots of metal and bold colors on the walls, the 5,000 square foot facility will feature an X-Box game area, a big-screen television, a board game area, an Internet/computer area, a pool table and foosball area, and a stage for musical performances and speakers. Chief designers are Rochelle Cox and Stacy Richmond.

The dining and serving areas will have finished hardwood floors while the kitchen will have vinyl tile.

It is estimated that at least 1,000 man hours have already gone into the renovation of the former Browne's Clothing (Continued on Page 5)

# Councilwoman stands up for city employee

By VERONICA MONIER

Public criticism of a city employee didn't set well with one councilwoman and she said so at the council meeting on Wednesday. Councilwoman Elaine Mann said she has been the Parks Committee chairwoman for the past year and would like to commend the parks and cemetery crews.

Unfortunately, she said, there has been a lot of public airing lately, referring most recently to a letter to the editor that was published in *The Norton Telegram* on Dec. 16 about the condition of the Norton Cemetery.

"It's been a very eventful year and I think the crews have done a wonderful

job," she said.

"It upsets me when an individual employee is attacked. If anyone finds fault, they should walk in an employee's shoes for a day."

Rather than singling out individual employees, she said, people who are upset about something need to talk to either the council or City Administrator Rob Lawson.

She said the crews, including parks and cemetery, have a lot to do, and try their best to get everything done.

The crews went around the city and trimmed trees for the living, and so didn't get all of the trees trimmed for the dead," she said. "The seven-year drought hasn't

helped either."

Mr. Lawson said Parks Supervisor Steve Cole, who was mentioned in the letter, works under a budget and does what he is told to do by himself and, in turn, the council. He said he would like complaints to start with him and he will direct them as needed.

Mrs. Mann said Mr. Cole will work long hours in the summer when everyone else is taking a vacation.

"He bends over backwards to get things done," she said.

Councilman Jerry Jones agreed and said the parks department does a very good job, considering the number of staff available and the budget they have to

work with.

In other business, the council:

- Heard from Mrs. Mann that the Parks Committee met with the Amusement Association, also known as Norton County Community Services Association, to talk about their contract that was written in 1992 for the fair grounds.

- Applied a 3 percent cost of living adjustment that was budgeted to the city's pay scale that will become effective the first full pay period in January. The council also gave a 3 percent cost of living raise, that will start Jan. 1, to the salaried employees who are paid monthly and quarterly.

(Continued on Page 5)

# Chamber provides holiday food

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual Christmas Dinner Sunday at the United Methodist Church.

The buffet-style dinner was for anyone who couldn't be with loved ones on Christmas Day, said Chamber Director Karla Reed. The Chamber brought turkey, ham, potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes and corn.

Those who attended brought salads and desserts to round out the meal.

Forty-eight people attended this year.

"It was a nice crowd," Ms. Reed said. "And you couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day."

Ms. Reed said the dinner was started by George Jones, former owner of Hall's Clothing and LuJon's, in 1984, so that people who didn't have anywhere else to go would have somewhere to eat Christmas dinner.



Gary and Linda Matson were just two of the diners who enjoyed the turkey and ham dinner during the annual Christmas dinner sponsored by the Norton Chamber. — Telegram photo by Veronica Monier



Kim Gallentine tried out the recliner she and her mom bought at Sander Furniture with their Christmas On Us winnings. Her mother, Donna Goscha won \$1,000 in

the annual shop-at-home promotion sponsored by Norton merchants and *The Norton Telegram*. — Telegram photo by Veronica Monier

# Post office rates will go up Jan. 8

By VERONICA MONIER  
It's time to break out the 1 and 2 cent stamps again as mailing prices are going up on Sunday, Jan. 8.

Norton Postmaster JaNan O'Brien said first class postage prices haven't been raised for three years. The rise in costs, she said, was mandated by Congress.

Most postal rates and fees will be going up by about 5.4 percent. First class mail will rise from 37 cents to 39 cents, postcard stamps will go from 23 to 24 cents, and a stamped postcard will now be 26 cents.

For priority mail, flat rates cost will now be \$4.05 for an envelope and \$8.10 for a box. Express mail will be \$14.40 for the first half

pound or a flat rate envelope and \$18.80 for packages weighing over one-half pound up to two pounds.

Insurance will be starting at \$1.35, while delivery confirmation will be 50 cents with priority mail or 60 cents with first class mail; signature confirmation is \$1.90; and certified mail is \$2.40.

Mrs. O'Brien said 39 cent stamps are available now in coils, books of 20 and singles. One and two cent stamps are also available.

But, she said, flat rate stamps for priority mail won't be available until March.

The 24-cent stamp and stamped postcards should be available sooner than March, but, she said, she just didn't know.

# City, county still owe money to engineers

By VERONICA MONIER  
Norton County and the City of Norton will need to split the remainder of the money owed to BG Consultants, the county engineers, for the airport runway project.

The project was paid for with a 90-10 grant—90 percent was paid by the state and the other 10 percent was to be paid by the city and county, each paying 5 percent of the total cost.

The contracting company was paid, but BG Consultants is still owed about \$7,200, said Steve Zodrow, an accountant with Mapes and Miller. The consulting company has been paid \$800.

The mistake happened because of the confusion of how things were coming into the county, said Mr. Zodrow. It took him awhile to figure it all out as well, he said.

County Clerk Robert Wyatt asked the commissioners if they wanted to pay the entire bill and then bill the city for half or just pay half. The county would write a check this week, he said.

Mr. Zodrow said he would talk to the city.

Commissioner Leroy Lang said the county should pay the entire amount and then have the city pay the county its share.

Mr. Zodrow said that would be the cleanest way to do it for audit purposes.

Steve Berland, an engineer with BG, said doing it that way would help them get the project closed, which would help with their end-of-year audit.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Will meet at 9 a.m. Friday to take care of end-of-the-month business and next Tuesday.

- Moved the ending fund balances of the offices of clerk, treasurer, register of deeds, sheriff, district court and appraiser; departments of road and bridge, noxious weed, solid waste, county health and ambulance; and funds for data processing and elections to capital outlay.

The amounts will not be known until the funds are audited by Mapes and Miller in 2006 but the transfer had to be made in 2005.

- Held two closed sessions lasting 35 minutes with County Clerk Robert Wyatt to discuss non-elected personnel.

- Heard that the Solomon Township is planning to sell at auction on Monday, Jan. 16, a piece of property the county deeded to it earlier this year.

# Women start spending Christmas cash

By VERONICA MONIER  
Donna Goscha, the grand prize winner of the shop at home promotion, Christmas On Us, has been busy spending her winnings.

Mrs. Goscha won a \$1,000 after her ticket was drawn during the annual Christmas On Us drawing, sponsored by *The Norton Telegram* and Norton merchants.

She said her daughter, Kim Gallentine, had given her the ticket because she couldn't make it, so they were going to spend the money together.

Thursday afternoon they did just that as Mrs. Gallentine bought two recliners from promotion sponsor Sander Furniture. That took care of about \$640 of the

\$1,000 prize.

After buying the chairs, Mrs. Goscha went to *The Telegram* and renewed her subscription, taking care of another \$60.

She said they have also ordered a meat tray from Jamboree Foods to go with their Christmas dinner.

The rest of the money, she said, will be spent on groceries at both

Norton Shop and Save and Jamboree Foods.

This year's sponsors were First State Bank, Kellie's, Norton Flowers Gifts and Greenhouse, Sander Furniture, Jamboree Foods and Norton Shop and Save.

The money won from Christmas On Us can only be spent at sponsoring businesses.

# 'The Rock' to open for end-of-year party

(Continued from Page 1)  
Store. The building was donated to the non-profit organization by the Browne family.

For the special party Saturday night, teens will pay \$5 at the door that will cover their food and soft drinks all night.

The center will regularly be

open Saturday nights with a small fee for admission. Teens will be able to buy nachos, popcorn, candy and sodas. The directors have agreed the same rules will apply there as they do for school dances; if a teen leaves the center, they can't return that night.

It will be available, however, for

other youth groups like Fellowship of Christian Athletes or Teens For Christ, to use.

Parents can be assured that adult sponsors will always be on hand to monitor activities and provide good, wholesome entertainment.

Kurt Mann, volunteer and secretary of the board, said, "We re-

ally appreciate all the volunteer help we've had and the generous support from the community."

Other board members are Bill Johnson, president; Trent Richmond, vice-president; Samantha Fulton, treasurer; Julie Douglas, Karla Anderson, Rochelle Cox and Brenda Dole.

To volunteer or help The Rock, in any way, call Mr. Richmond at 877-4016 or Cody Shepherd at 877-2871.

# Council supports employee

(Continued from Page 1)

- Learned from Mr. Lawson that the city will begin using a company called State Payments after the first of the year to accept credit cards for paying bills and court costs. He said the service is free for the city but the card user is billed a small fee.

- Heard from Mr. Jones that, during the last snow storm, he noticed a lot of people didn't clean the snow off their sidewalks, making them impassable. He said the issue needed to be addressed.

- Learned from Mr. Jones that his term, along with Council-

woman Donna Foley and Councilman Jim Williams' terms, are up for election this year. He said people who wish to run for these positions need to file by Tuesday, Jan. 24.

- Accepted a bid from Schreibers of Trussville, Ala., for \$313,120 for the counter current aeration process equipment for the sewer plant, contingent upon the city's contract document provisions taking precedence over any discrepancies between Schreibers' proposal and the city's requirements. Schreibers was the only company to bid.

- Approved cereal malt beverage license applications for 2006: Not for consumption on the premises — Jamboree Foods, Love's Country Store, R&C Petroleum, Pamida and Norton Shop and Save; and for consumption on the premises — Rainbow Lanes, Town and Country Kitchen and Pizza Hut.

- Paid bills in the amount of \$135,017.49.

- Recessed until 12:15 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 30, to pay year-end bills and take care of any other year-end business.

# Defibrillators to be updated

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The Norton County Emergency Medical Service will soon have blood pressure units on all its ambulance defibrillators.

Ambulance Director Andy Nielsen told the Norton County commissioners last week that he is sending the three county units in one at a time to be repaired.

The bill for the update won't arrive until all three units are repaired, he said, which will be sometime in 2006 so the service doesn't have to worry about the cost affecting the 2005 budget.

Assistant Director Ruth Schillig asked if she could send some old accounts to the state so tax refunds could be garnished. She said it costs 15 percent but that's better than the nothing the service has received from those accounts.

She said she makes sure statements are sent out every month and the service accepts payments. Some accounts have also been turned over to the county attorney for collection, she said.

However, some will probably never be collected, she said. Some people owe but they've died without assets so there is no way to collect. They also have to write off part of every Medicare patient's

bill because Medicare only pays so much.

They are trying to write off bad accounts and keep their books current, she said.

The ambulance service brought in \$136,000 last year and expects to receive more this year, Mrs. Schillig said. The difference is a better knowledge of billing and accounts.

Commissioner John Miller asked if the new electronic billing to Medicare and Medicaid helps. With electronic billing, the department can find out if there is a problem with the billing immediately instead of several weeks down the road.

Mrs. Schillig said that works sometimes but there are glitches with the system.

She said she keeps all accounts both in the computer and on paper. If the electricity goes out or some-

thing they can still keep track of things.

"You can't rely on computers all the time," she said. "There's nothing wrong with old-fashioned paper."

In other business, Mr. Nielsen:

- Said the department should know around Jan. 20 if it will get a grant to help build a new ambulance building.

- Took a defibrillator to Prairieland Electric and taught four people to use it. He will hold another class for five more Prairieland employees after the first of the year, he said.

- Said he was going to try to get reimbursement from the state for the emergency medical technician bridge class that is being given.

- Told the commissioners that the ambulances will probably make a few less runs this year than last.

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