

Someone to just 'pal' around with....



It's good to have an older pal when you're in grade school and thanks to an FFA program, several Eisenhower Elementary students have a high school mentor. The students, younger and older, are taking part in Partners in Active Learning Support or PALS, a mentoring program sponsored by the National FFA,

which matches high school FFA students with elementary youngster to, hopefully, help them develop their social skills and get them excited about school. In Norton, several of the younger PALS participants huddle up with their older counterparts.

— Telegram photo by Charlotte Stephenson

Company expands into northcentral Kansas

LENORA — Rural Telephone Service Co., Inc. is expanding its service area. The expansion will encompass 20 communities in northcentral Kansas.

Rural Telephone negotiated a purchase agreement with Sprint, the area's local service provider, to acquire more than 5,400 access lines in 12 exchanges: Burr Oak, Courtland, Esbon, Downs, Ionia, Lebanon, Luray, Osborne, Paradise, Republic, Russell and Webber. The new service areas additionally include the communities of Bellaire, Bloomington, Bunker Hill, Corinth, Fairport, North Branch, Otego and Portis. Rural Telephone presently serves approximately 10,000 customer access lines in 15 northwest Kansas counties. Rural Telephone is a member-owned and locally operated company since 1951.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to offer advanced telecommunications services to these communities," said Larry E. Sevier, CEO of Rural Telephone and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Nex-Tech.

"Rural Telephone/Nex-Tech take pride in providing state-of-the-art, fiber-based telecommunications and broadband services to

our customers. We will expand our long-standing commitment to deploy leading-edge technology in the communities we serve, offering advanced services to homes and businesses as we help position these communities to pursue economic development opportunities," he said.

Rural Telephone's purchase of these 12 exchanges is subject to state and federal regulatory approval, with finalization expected in late 2006. At that time, all existing Sprint local service accounts in these exchanges should be transferred automatically and seamlessly to the Rural Telephone system, with no requirement for additional customer action.

"We plan to offer an attractive bundle of communications services: voice, to include local, long distance and custom calling features; high-speed Internet access; and video services, as well as the convenience of having all services on one bill," said Sevier.

"We look forward to closing this transaction. Engineering and construction for improved services will begin following closing and will be ongoing for several years," he said.

Longtime employee honored for service

LENORA — After nearly four decades of service, Rod Wallgren is retiring from Rural Telephone.

His retirement took effect March 1. Fittingly, he received the prestigious *Key Employee Award* from the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association on Feb. 8 at the association's winter convention in San Diego, Calif.

"I am very pleased that Rod was selected for this very prestigious national award," said CEO/General Manager Larry Sevier. "Rod is a rare individual that has the unique ability to use a common sense approach to getting the job done. This has made him a very valuable asset to our organization throughout his career."

The award from the national association recognizes Mr. Wallgren's dedication and his instrumental role in the success and continual growth and development of Rural Telephone as a model telecommunications cooperative and industry leader, said Mr. Sevier.

"It's been a great place to spend the last 36 years," said Mr. Wallgren. "I've seen a lot of change, from keeping magneto systems running, the conversion to dial service and now IP switching. I've seen more change in the last five years at Rural Telephone than in the first thirty."

Mr. Wallgren's telephony career 'got off the ground literally,' as a tree trimmer in Rural Telephone's Plant Department in August of 1969. In the ensuing years, he has been 'working his way down the ladder' toward his current position as director of community relations/customer service.

Early in his career, Mr. Wallgren was instrumental in converting telephone service in the region from magneto, to multi-party lines, to single party lines. He worked one year as a construction assistant, five years as a lineman, and ten years as construction foreman. By 1986, he had been promoted to outside plant supervisor, overseeing the cooperative's conversion to one party service with 100 percent buried plant.

Three years later, he was named public relations/marketing manager, charged with the task of creating a new department and making Rural Telephone a pioneer of marketing in the rural independent telecommunications industry. For the past 15 years, Mr. Wallgren has helped negotiate the creation of Kansas' first full-motion two-way interactive educational network, recruited a successful telemarketing firm to Rural Telephone's Victoria exchange, creating nearly 100 jobs in the community and more than 2-million minutes of toll annually for the cooperative.

Under his leadership Rural Telephone, in 1991, earned both the *Marketing Achievement* and *Public Relation Achievement* awards from the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association. The company launched its award-winning customer newsletter and developed a series of school programs designed to market to the next generation of customers.

"We will certainly miss Rod following his retirement, but wish him the best of luck," Mr. Sevier said. "Working 36 years for one company is a rarity in any organization today."

Playing helps children to develop needed skills

By KAREN BEERY

Play is an essential part of child development, helping to build communication and social skills, aesthetic appreciation, creativity and problem solving. Board games help children and youth learn the basic skills of getting along with others, following rules, and sportsmanship, including learning how to be a gracious loser. Outdoor play adds the elements of fresh air and exercise. There is some concern now days that too much TV watching, video games,

and computer time is reducing children's time for the kind of play that is needed for good cognitive development and social skills.

There are studies that indicate that play is a significant factor, particularly from birth to age 8, in brain and muscle fiber development, in the creation and development of consciousness, and the ability to think reflectively. Such studies also contend that children who are deprived of play are more likely to exhibit aggressive and antisocial behaviors, and tend to

be prone to obesity. An inability to engage in play can result in behavioral instability, unhappiness and lack of mental well-being in children. The impact and experience of play is long-term; following rules, getting along with others, and learning to deal with disappointment are necessary components of healthy adulthood.

So what can parents do to insure needed playtime for children? Play needs to begin in infancy with simple toys and interactions. Toddlers can be taught to stack blocks

and pull toy cars, while at the same time learning to share with others, and how to try, try again when things don't go as expected. As children get older, parents need to encourage participation in play activities in addition to computer and video games, such as card and board games, backyard/neighborhood sports, as well as supervised recreational sports.

Mail questions to: *High Plains Mental Health Center, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601.*

Siblings campaign for office

Lucas Maddy and his sister, Katie Maddy, may be making history at Kansas State University.

It is believed they are the first sibling team to campaign for the offices of student body president and vice president in the history of the school.

The two learned of their victory in the primary election Wednesday night. Mr. Maddy said, "I told everyone here (at the Maddy's watch party) that we would need at least 1,200 votes to get past the primaries, but this just shows how well-qualified all the candidates were."

He is a senior in agricultural technology management. Miss Maddy is a junior in animal science and industry. She said, "We don't want students and the university to see the community as something they have to deal with, but as an asset." She said she and her brother will make it their goal to be a voice for students.

The general election will start today and run through 6 p.m. Wednesday. The results will be known shortly after the polls close. The Maddys are running against Matt King and Emily Besler.

Miss Maddy said, "We have a lot



Lucas Maddy and his sister, Katie Maddy, stood together, after making it through the primary election, as the first sibling team to campaign in the general election at Kansas State University for the offices of student body president and vice president.

— Photo courtesy of the *Kansas State Collegian*

of respect for them and their ideas. They're not our ideas, but they're good ideas."

The Maddys are the children of Dave and Patsy Maddy, Norton.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Housing Authority of the City of Norton has developed its Agency Plan for Fiscal Year 2006 in compliance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. It is available for review at the Authority's office located on 213 Horace Greeley Avenue, Norton, KS 67654. The Authority's hours of operation are Monday thru Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. In addition, a public hearing will be held on May 9, 2006 at the Authority's office at 5:00 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Ask me about a Crop1 Premium Discount Plan.

I can offer you the opportunity for a premium discount for the 2006 crop season. Call me today to learn more about how I can help you protect your bottom line.

Joy Johnson - 205 N. Kansas, Norton - 785-877-3221

FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES
Insurance • Investments
www.fbfs.com

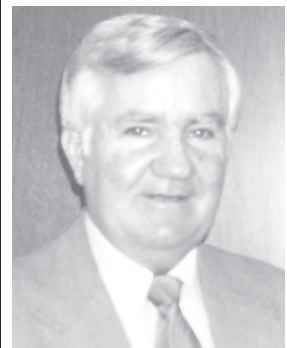
crop INSURANCE
First in savings™

The past payments of premium discounts are not a guarantee that future payments will be made or an indication of the amount of future premium discounts. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Services available through Western Agricultural Insurance Company/West Des Moines, IA in IA, KS, MN, NE, SD.
© 2006 C1002E

I'm Not Deaf!

I Just Can't Understand Some Words

Jim Housh
Licensed Hearing
Aid Specialist



"I will be in Norton EVERY WEDNESDAY"

Free Consultation
Free Hearing Test

Ask About Our Nu-Ear Digital Hearing Aids

Call My Toll-Free Number For An Appointment
1-800-331-7885

Located at: **Boxler Insurance Precision Hearing Aid Center**
108 N. First, Norton