

From sand to snow...



Shane New, a Florida transplant, now living in Norcat, had some fun playing in snow from a recent storm. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

KAYs make a difference with toys

By ASHLEY COLIP

This school year, the Norton Community High School KAY Club intends to make a difference in and around the community.

At KAY Camp this past summer, the Area IV group decided to collect Teddy bears and other new stuffed animals to donate to newborns at the Norton County Hospital.

Other service projects the club is involved with is giving blankets to needy HeadStart children; donating money to the American Lung Association; and donating cleaning supplies to the battered women's shelter in Hays. KAY Club also gave gifts to the Angel Tree at Pamida and donated money to the American Cancer Society and to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The club co-sponsors, with Norton FFA, a boy named Stephen from Bangladesh. The two clubs



Emily Juenemann, a member of the Norton KAY Club, held one of the new toys the club has donated to the nursery at the Norton County Hospital. — Photo courtesy of Ashley Maybon

send money and gifts to him. this year, but is ready to make a difference. KAY Club will be very busy

Council offers its own 'Safe Ride'

By VERONICA MONIER
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The Norton City Council wanted everyone to have a safe ride home for New Year's Eve.

At the year-end meeting last Friday, the council passed a motion to contact the local taxi company, letting them know that the city will pay \$5 for each person the company took home from 6

p.m. Monday night until 6 a.m. Tuesday morning.

Councilman Jerry Jones said other occasions and holidays should be looked at as well.

At a previous meeting, he had asked about Safe Ride in Hays and how it was paid for.

City Attorney Karen Griffiths said she would look into it.

Mr. Jones said if people had

a safe way home, then maybe it would help some of the local businesses.

Mr. Jones also reported that the demolition on the Millan property on east Main Street was almost finished.

The council paid bills in the amount of \$675,227.74 before adjourning.

Trees should be left alone until ice melts

TOPEKA — Except for moving ice-downed limbs that are an immediate hazard, homeowners would do well to wait until the ice melts before dealing with damaged trees and their debris.

"Trying to operate a chain saw while also trying to brace yourself and stand firm on icy ground is practically asking for an accident," said Phil Sell, horticulturist with Kansas State University Research and Extension. "You could easily shake a tree enough to cause further breakage overhead. And, you could lose your footing while holding onto a powerful machine that's designed to cut things up."

Attempting to help weighted-down plants by knocking off their ice isn't wise, either, he said. If nothing else, that activity positions a good Samaritan below a tree that could have weakly attached or even unattached "hangers," ready to fall with the slightest breeze.

"Besides, when everything outdoors is cold and slick, you'll probably be hurrying, as well as acting a little bit clumsy," Sell said. "Your efforts could create more plant damage than the ice alone would cause."

"If you've just got to do something, you may be able to prevent breakage of small fruit or flowering trees that are ice laden by propping up their vulnerable branches with padded boards. You also can reinforce upright, multi-stemmed evergreens, such as arborvitae and yew, by tying the interior branches together with wide straps."

In addition to falling branches - which literally can weigh thousands of pounds - fallen and sagging utility lines are another hazard that ice storms can bring.

"Any damaged wires in or around your trees could still be energized. So, you should let the power company complete its repairs before any tree work begins," Sell said. "You'll also need to report any damaged street trees that are on the public right of way by contacting your community's forestry department."

"Whatever else you do, though, don't be tempted to use a pole pruner anywhere near utility lines. If necessary, hire a certified arborist trained in that specialty."

Arborists certified by the Kansas Arborists Association (KAA) and/or the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) have credentials that homeowners can ask to see.

The horticulturist warned that ice storms can bring out unprofes-

sional chain saw operators who want to capitalize on tree owners' plight. These operators may have no idea of whether a damaged tree truly is beyond recovery. If they can't talk homeowners into bringing a tree down quickly, they may suggest "trimming" it by cutting the tree's main limbs back to oversized stubs.

"That's a discredited practice called topping a tree. It's a sure way to produce a witch's broom canopy that's as weak as it is ugly - leading to more damage in the future," he said.

After the ice melts off is the best time to assess the full extent of trees' ice storm damage.

"Beyond obvious breakage, look for cracks in crimped branches that haven't broken cleanly. Check for vertical splits below branch crotches. Never declare a tree a complete loss before considering its potential for recovery," Sell said.

In general, a tree may not be worth salvaging if more than half of its crown is gone, its overall form is ruined or the main trunk is split, the horticulturist said.

Sometimes, however, new growth can re-establish the framework of a damaged tree, he added. Once their ice load is gone, limber

branches may return to their natural upright position.

On trees with that kind of comeback potential, the first actual pruning task is to take care of any "hangers" or other dangerous branches still in the tree, Sell said.

"Whether you should attempt to do this job yourself depends on lots of factors. The bigger the damaged branch, for example, the more hazardous bringing it down can be," he said. "The higher in the tree it is, the harder it is to prune safely without specialized equipment."

The horticulturist recommends that homeowners confine their efforts to what they can reach from the ground without the help of a ladder.

"Even at that, if you have any doubt about your knowledge and self-confidence level, I'd strongly suggest finding a respected tree care company and asking for a certified arborist," Sell said.

Every county and district K-State Research and Extension office can provide "how-to" information on pruning that also promotes tree health. Plus, the office can help homeowners identify strong tree species to plant as replacements.

K-State holding calving classes

COLBY — Cattle producers know the investment of time, money and physical work that goes into achieving a high percent calf crop, and to help them hone their skills, K-State Research and Extension will host several calving schools just ahead of the calving season.

"Timely, correct obstetrical assistance has been estimated to reduce calf death losses by over 50 percent," said K-State Research and Extension northwest area livestock specialist Sandy Johnson.

At each calving school, featured speaker Bob Mortimer, who is a veterinarian with Colorado State University, will demonstrate the proper ways

to assist with various calving difficulties, said Ms. Johnson, who coordinated the sessions. Mortimer has trained veterinary students in obstetrics in the process of calving 3,000 or more heifers per year for more than 20 years.

Also on the program will be Pfizer Animal Health veterinarian Dale Grotelueschen, who will speak about management methods to improve calf health.

There is no cost to attend, but reservations to the hosting county office are requested by Jan. 11 to ensure enough workshop materials and food for meals.

Times and locations of the

calving schools include:

• Jan. 14 — 5:30 p.m., 4-H Building, St. Francis, (785) 332-3171.

• Jan. 15 — 9:30 a.m., Phillips County Fairgrounds, Phillipsburg, (785) 543-6845.

• Jan. 15 — 5:30 p.m., Jackson Co Fair Building, Holton, (785) 364-4125.

• Jan. 16 — 10 a.m., Community Education Conference Center, Cloud County Community College, Concordia, (785) 243-8185.

Those interested in attending should register by calling the telephone number at the location at which they plan to attend.

Soccer registration planned for Jan. 11-12

The Norton American Youth Soccer Organization will be holding early registration on from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday Jan. 11 and 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12 in the Prairie Land Electric basement.

The cost for early registration is \$30 per child.

A final registration will be held

from 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 26, also in Prairie Land Electric's basement. Registration will cost \$35 per child on this day.

Registrations received after Jan. 26 will be put on a waiting list.

The first game of the 2008 soccer season will be March 29.

Volunteers are needed to fill several board positions. Coaches and referees are also needed. For more information, contact, Toby Kuhn, regional commissioner, (785) 877-2275; Julie Baughman, registrar, (785) 877-2678; or Deena Wente, secretary, (785) 877-5235.

Program will discuss crop, pasture leases

One of the most common questions that come to the Norton County Extension Office relates to recent trends in crops and pasture land leases.

Since nearly every parcel of ground is either owned or leased, this topic is one of the most common areas of perennial discussion. A program to cover these aspects will be held from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 14 at

the Norton County 4-H Building in Norton.

Featured speakers will be Agricultural Economists Mark Wood and Daniel O'Brien from K-State Research and Extension.

Topics to be discussed include principles of equitable crop land leasing arrangements, recent and expected crop production net returns, and the development of equitable crop share and cash rent

lease arrangements for 2008.

There will also be survey responses to the crop and pasture lease surveys conducted recently. Emphasis will be directed to dryland and pasture lease programs.

The program is sponsored by the K-State and Norton County Extension Services. The public is welcome to attend this program.



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