

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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10 PAGES



Friday

March 6, 2009

Norton, Kansas
Home of Carrol Hall



Set your clocks up one hour before bedtime Saturday

Briefly

No trucks sent to controlled burn

There was a controlled burn north of Norton on Wednesday afternoon on John Lofgreen's property in Aldin Township, Road C and Road 1W. The burn remained under control, and no fire trucks were dispatched to the scene.

Junior high band, vocal concert set

The Norton junior high will present a band and vocal concert next Tuesday at the junior high gymnasium at 7 p.m. The public is invited and there is no admission charge.

Soldiers Home focus of program

An evening program for veterans and their families, and the public in general, is scheduled for Sunday, March 15 at 6 p.m. at the American Legion in Norton. The program will focus on the Ft. Dodge Soldiers Home, by Steve Dunkin, and the WaKeeney VA Cemetery, by Heidi Goff. A 'Freewill Donation Soup Supper' will be available at 5 p.m. in the Legion ballroom. Profits will go toward VA Hospital Canteen Books.

Forecast:

Tonight - Mostly cloudy with a low around 37.
Saturday - A 30 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy with a high near 48.
Saturday Night - A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly before midnight. Mostly cloudy with a low around 27.
Sunday - Mostly sunny with a high near 58.
Sunday Night - Partly cloudy with a low around 30.



Kingham report:

Tues., March 3 Low 21, High 57
Wed., March 4 Low 32, High 72
Thurs., March 5 Low 38, High 76
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear God, help us to trust your love and care for us, especially when life becomes almost more than we can bear. Amen.

Bump remover



City employee Steve Reedy used a road grader to try to level out the asphalt on South Kansas Avenue at the railroad tracks Wednesday afternoon. Some of the leftover asphalt was used to fill in potholes on the other side of the tracks.

- Telegram photo by Brandy Leroux

Wind energy development aired

By BRANDY LEROUX
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Wind energy development in Norton was the major topic at Wednesday's city council meeting, with Chris Land, Murphy International Development Corporation, giving a presentation.

Mr. Land said wind energy development in the United States is rising at a record rate of 25 to 45 percent per year. He used the company General Electric as an example. He said that company has 35 divisions, and all of them reported losses, except wind energy, which grew by 35 percent.

"Kansas is blessed with wind," said Mr. Land. "I know some of you may not think you're 'blessed' with it, but you are."

Mr. Land said community-based wind energy development is important to communities because it provides economic development that helps the people in the community, instead of the benefits going out to another community, like wind farms. He said the community-based wind energy development keeps the money and the energy in the community that the turbine is in, unlike a wind farm which has to hook up to transmission lines and sent to other states. He said community-based wind energy is connected to the distribution lines already present in cities, rather than the transmission lines, and also that the project can be completed in less than a year.

Mr. Land said the community-based wind energy revitalizes rural economies and stimulates local economies. However, because the needs of Norton would be a small turbine, the project would not create jobs, but would stimulate the hospitality and food industry in town.

Mr. Land said that Kansas utility rates have risen at about 8.5 percent per year.

Other city council business

At Wednesday night's Norton City Council meeting, the city:

- Waived the first reading of Ordinance 1583, regarding the cost of recovery fees from collection agencies.
- Approved change order #4 regarding the sewer plant motor pump replacements.
- Approved April 6, 7 and 8 as the Norton City-Wide Clean-Up.
- Was invited to a meeting with Norton City/County Economic Development and the United States Department of Agriculture, April 12 at noon at Town and Country Kitchen
- Heard from Parks Committee Chairman Kim Snyder, who told the council no decisions have been made for the Elmwood Park Speedway yet.
- Thanked Mr. Lawson and the city department heads for their budget proposals
- Thanked City Attorney Karen Griffiths and City Clerk Darla Ellis for their work on the changes to the personnel handbook.

"Fossil fuel costs will continue to rise," said Mr. Land. "But wind is free."

Mr. Land then moved into the action plan, and said the first step is a letter of engagement between the city and Murphy International, and then a three phase study process which will do site assessments, a feasibility study, and a preliminary engineering and cost analysis. Mr. Land also said their go/no go policy would allow the city to terminate the project at any time with no additional fees or expectations to finish the project.

• Approved the purchase of 12 self-contained breathing apparatus masks for the city fire department for \$2,388, which will be taken from the fire department's budget

• Thanked Chris Land, Murphy International Development Corporation, for his wind energy development presentation.

• Renewed the Norton American Legion's Class A Pub License

• Set committee meetings — Utilities Committee will meet on Monday, March 16 at 5:30 p.m.; Parks Committee will meet on Monday, March 23 at 5:30 p.m.; and Public Works Committee will follow at 6 p.m. The public is welcome to attend all committee meetings.

Sales tax receipts for Norton City and County were:

- city, year to date 2009, \$19,469.57
- city, year to date 2008, \$24,207.28
- county, year to date 2009, \$15,676.90
- total year to date 2009, \$73,465.77
- total year to date 2008, \$90,782.05

Councilwoman Elaine Mann said she thought wind energy development is extremely important for our area, and that it is the wave of the future.

Mr. Land added that Murphy International would manage the entire project, from start to finish so the city would not have to find someone else to finish the project at some mid-point.

Councilman Toby Kuhn asked if the turbine would supplement or eliminate the power plant already in Norton.

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Union leader visits local prison

By BRANDY LEROUX
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The Norton Correctional Facility seems to be safe from being shut down in 2009, but the Kansas Organization of State Employees, a labor union, is trying to keep the Norton facility from shutting down in 2010, when budget issues are expected to worsen.

Jane Carter, Executive Director of the organization, was at the Norton Correctional Facility on Wednesday, touring and holding meetings with the corrections officers. She said she will come back and have meetings with the administrators at a later date.

Monday and Tuesday the organization will hold a legislative reception and lobby day in Topeka for members of the union to have their voices heard by the state legislature.

"KOSE (Kansas Organization of State Employees) will pay for any member's hotel and food for the event," said Ms. Carter. "The legislature needs to hear from the working people."

Ms. Carter said state employees received no raises between 2001 and 2007, and that last year, they were able to successfully lobby for state employee raises.

One of the main issues Ms. Carter said,

was the need for state employees — all state employees everywhere — to let the state legislators know about the impact of making deep cuts or shutting down facilities. And especially, state workers in Norton need to let the legislators know what shutting down the correctional facility will do to the community.

Ms. Carter said turnover had been a major problem for correctional facilities in Kansas, with a 50 percent turnover rate; however, that it is now down to about 10 percent, mostly because people need their jobs.

"Our philosophy is 'Cut the fat, not the (Continued on Page 5)

Severe weather time near

Tornado sirens face statewide test Tuesday

By BRANDY LEROUX
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With next week being *Severe Weather Awareness Week*, The Norton Telegram will be printing articles and facts relating to severe weather leading up to May, when most severe weather hits Kansas.

The State of Kansas will be testing the tornado sirens on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m., if weather conditions are clear. If there is severe weather on that day, the test will be rescheduled. Along with the siren test, the Code Red phone system will also be tested, and the schools will all practice tornado drills.

The National Weather Service will hold a storm spotter meeting on Tuesday, March 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the Prairie Land basement.

"Those who attend will learn about weather conditions that, in most cases, are required for tornadoes to form," said Norton County Sheriff and Emergency Preparedness Director Troy Thomson. "They'll learn how to recognize the weather conditions, and may be called by the National Weather Service in Goodland to report on the weather conditions."

In the past, there have usually been between 50 and 60 people attending the meeting, including many officers from the sheriff's department, the city police department, the fire department and emergency medical services personnel.

"There is one major change to the meeting this year," said Sheriff Thomson. "The first hour will be the basic spotter class, and the second hour will be the advanced class for those who want to stay."

Generally, when there is severe weather in Norton County, sheriff's deputies, police officers and members of the fire department are out driving around and will call severe weather into the dispatch office, who will then call the National Weather Service in Goodland.

Last year was another record-setting year for severe weather in Kansas — as have been the last three of the last four years. According to the National Weather Service, there were 187 tornadoes in Kansas in 2008, with May experiencing the most — 127, or 68 percent of the year's total, and also a new record for any month ever in Kansas. However, there were only

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Scale used to measure tornado strength updated

The Fujita Scale, used to measure the strength of tornadoes, has been updated and replaced by the Enhanced Fujita Scale. The original Fujita Scale was developed in 1971 by T. Theodore Fujita. It measured the damage to structures from a tornado.

The Enhanced Fujita Scale, developed by a team of meteorologists and wind engineers, measures eight levels of damage to 28 indicators to estimate wind speed based on damage done by tornadoes. They are:

- EFO — 65-85 mile per hour winds
- EF1 — 86-110 mile per hour winds
- EF2 — 111-135 mile per hour winds
- EF3 — 136-165 mile per hour winds
- EF4 — 166-200 mile per hour winds
- EF5 — over 200 mile per hour winds

Indicators used include small barns and farm outbuildings, mobile homes, small retail buildings like fast food restaurants, large shopping malls, one-story schools, institutional buildings, service station canopies, and hardwood and softwood trees.