

'Tis the season... to be out doors



Charles and Vickie Taylor won first place in the Prairie Dog Christmas competition on Saturday for their Santa Claus and the Christmas Cowboys display. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor have participated for the last five years and won most years. They are from Oberlin but spent two days at the park. —Telegram photo by Erica Bradley

Oberlin project gets extra \$150,000

The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development acting state director Darla Buckman said this week that the Agency has approved a conditional commitment for a guaranteed loan of \$150,000, under the Agency's Community Facilities Program, to help with a Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development

ment Corporation project. The funding will be used to help construct a new community center for the City of Oberlin and the surrounding area. The new facility will include a senior center with meals provided. There will also be a theatre for community and school plays and other arts training.

Additional funds for this project include State of Kansas Tax Credits, Decatur County, Dane G. Hansen Grant, donations and an applicant contribution. "This loan and grant program is a tremendous tool available to rural communities to assist in develop-

oping new or enhancing existing facilities for public service, public safety, and health care," said Gary Smith, Director, Business and Community Programs. USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Program is designed to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. These facilities include schools, libraries, courthouses, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue facilities and equipment, police and emergency vehicles and services, community centers, public buildings and transportation.

County

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an employee wellness committee. The committee would draft a plan that would be beneficial in helping improve the wellness of county employees.

Mr. Mahoney also discussed with the commission year two of the wellness program. The main discussion was on the tracking and monitoring of employee participation in health management.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield representative Charles Krull discussed disease management programs and the possibility of personal information being shared. A business associate agreement would be necessary to cover HIP-PA requirements. Mr. Krull said he would check into Blue Cross and Blue Shield options.

Mr. Krull also discussed insurance rates for county employees. The rate may be larger than the commission expected and presents a problem for the 2010 budget.

The Norton County Commissioners met Monday and that report is being flagged for Friday's paper. They will then meet on Aug. 17 at the courthouse. All meetings are open to the public.

Park

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"We enjoy Norton's campground. We've been coming here for years," Mrs. Boxler said.

Buildings

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The state has cut education in order to save money in their budget, hurting many rural schools.

"They need to fund schools the way they should be funded for our children," he said.

"There is a lot of opportunity to move our facilities to a more modern, better learning environment," he said.

Mr. Griffith said technology in the schools needs to be upgraded as well.

Currently there are two com-

puter labs at the high school, one lab at the junior high school and one laptop lab at the elementary school.


He said the laptop labs are three years old and the computers in the labs are six years old.

Mr. Griffith said he would like to add computers to the science rooms, which would allow virtual lab work to be done. He said it would be safer for students to learn on a computer.

"I think our students deserve the best, and that is what we want to give them," he said.




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