

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

WEBSITE: nwkansas.com

10 PAGES



Friday

August 21, 2009

Norton, Kansas
Home of Carl Neff

Post Fair Special
in today's Telegram



Briefly

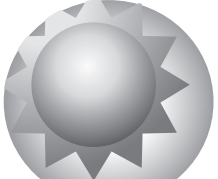
Early Childhood Screening planned

Eisenhower Elementary and KID-LINK will conduct a free Early Childhood Screen on Aug. 28. If you have a concern in any of the following, please call to schedule your child for this screening: developmental areas, vision, hearing, speech, motor, behavior and/or reasoning. Eligible children are birth through age 5. The appointments are approximately 30 minutes beginning at 8 a.m. To schedule call Eisenhower Elementary at 877-5113 by Aug. 27 and ask for Joan Hale.

Meals on Wheels

Delivering Meals on Wheels Aug. 24-30 will be Immanuel Lutheran Church. The contact person is Fonda Lawrence 877-3145. Please be at the Norton County Hospital by 11:30 a.m. each day.

weather forecast



SUNNY

Tonight - Clear with a low around 50.
Saturday - Sunny with a high near 87.
Saturday Night - Clear with a low around 59.
Sunday - Sunny with a high near 91.
Breezy with a south wind between 10 and 20 mph.
Sunday Night - Mostly clear.

Kingham report:

Tuesday, August 18 Low 61, High 81
Wed., August 19 Low 54, High 83
.12 Precipitation
Thursday, August 20 Low 56, High 80
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for grace that brings us through the joys as well as the trials of life. Continue to strengthen our faith each day. Amen

Storm sized job



Dan Bainter picked up tree branches yesterday in Norton to finish the cleanup job after last Saturday's storm. The public works crew was out in force all week picking up trees and tree branches around town. The

storm caused much damage, and Public Works Supervisor Bainter estimated 41 loads of trees, or 90,000 pound were taken to the landfill. -Telegram photo by Erica Bradley

Norton yards still house wheat

By ERICA BRADLEY
erabradley@nwkansas.com

Norton residents are still picking up the damage caused when a Kyle Railroad train filled with wheat derailed on July 28 spilling an estimated 15,000 bushels of wheat on residential property.

Heather Cole had been sleeping in her living room when the train derailed early that morning. She said the accident was terrifying, especially since her young granddaughter was sleeping in the next room.

This week, Mrs. Cole reported that the railroad still has not cleaned up the spilled wheat in her backyard.

She said wheat is starting to grow, and the recent rain has caused the mess to foam and attract flies as well as maggots.

She said she is concerned about the smell, as well as the flies that have found their way into her home.

"The windows can be shut, and the flies still get in," she said.

Mrs. Cole said railroad crews have been out to work on the railroad, but they have not worked on cleaning up the remaining wheat.

"They cleaned some of it, but they left a lot of it," she said.

The City of Norton reported that a street sweeper swept the streets, but they were not allowed on residential property because the railroad said they would clean it up.

Mrs. Cole said the remaining wheat is a health concern due to the smell and flies.

Gina Frack, Norton County Health Department nurse, said the health department is not able to do anything about the situation. She said in metro areas health departments have more authority in environmental and other areas that allows them to handle these kinds of situations. (Wheat - Continued on Page 5)

Norton's city budget still has problems

By ERICA BRADLEY
erabradley@nwkansas.com

State-mandated changes to Norton's water treatment plant are still causing problems for the city's budget, and at Wednesday's city council meeting the council was updated on the status of the loan they are required to pay off.

The city has \$11 million in debt and is required to pay \$456,000 per year.

Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson said the city's state revolving loan may be able to be refinanced.

"I think we need to look at all the options," he said.

Mr. Lawson said John Mapes, Mapes and Miller Accounting, will review their options with them.

Toby Kuhn, chair of the finance committee, reported on the last finance meeting. He said \$40,000 needs to be transferred between water fund accounts to be able to meet the expenses.

Mr. Kuhn said the rain has been a blessing this summer, but they are not selling as

much water which is hurting the fund.

"We are looking very seriously at offsetting the expenses," Mr. Kuhn said.

The finance committee recommended taking several steps. Mr. Kuhn said they are looking at increasing utility rates, he recommended a city-wide hiring freeze and he recommended a five percent reduction for city departments.

City council discussed increasing utilities but did not vote for an increase.

"We understand utilities are a big chunk of people's budgets," Mr. Kuhn said.

Mr. Kuhn made a motion to approve the hiring freeze and another motion to implement the reduction in department budgets. Both motions passed.

In other city council business:

• Mr. Kuhn also discussed the bids for the water treatment plant. He said finance committee reviewed the corrected bid by Downing Drilling. Mr. Kuhn said the errors were corrected, and he made a motion to accept the bid. He said it would save \$100,000 if the council accepted that

bid over the others. Vote taken, motion passed.

• Roxanne Kent presented more information to the council regarding the city ordinance she wants adopted regarding animal cruelty. Ms. Kent said she presented her arguments at the public safety committee, and they asked her to present it to the county commission. She said they told her it had to be a city ordinance.

Ms. Kent said she wants The City of Norton to adopt The City of Lawrence's code regarding animal cruelty when leaving dogs in vehicles during summer months. She said she wants the code changed to allow no more than five minutes in less than 70 degree weather. She said she does not think it is too radical, and she does not think she's asking too much. The city council referred the matter back to the public safety committee for discussion.

• Mr. Lawson reported the tennis courts have been sealed, and they are ready for (Council - Continued on Page 5)

Logan working around smaller budget

By ERICA BRADLEY
erabradley@nwkansas.com

School districts across Kansas are faced with decreased budgets this year due to the economy, and Logan Schools are no different. They are beginning the 2009/10 school year with less money in their budget, but they are still offering specialized programs to their students.

Logan Superintendent Bob Jackson said he is starting the year with \$50,000 less in his budget.

"\$50,000 is a big deal in Logan, but it is not a big deal at bigger schools," he said.

Mr. Jackson said there is an increase in enrollment, which he said helped with the budget problems.

He estimated that there would be an increase of 14 students this year, which will be up from the 175 enrolled last year.

He said the increase can be attributed to

people who have moved to Logan.

Mr. Jackson said Logan had been losing an average of five students per year before enrollment jumped this year.

He said enrollment is Logan's biggest problem because there isn't a lot of growth in the area.

He said the budget problems have caused the art program to be cut, but he hopes to return to that program next year.

"I don't care what program it is. It's important to someone," he said.

Mr. Jackson said he hopes other cuts are not necessary.

"Our board has been proactive in looking at things we need to do. We're pretty bare-boned right now," he said.

In spite of budget cuts, Logan schools still offer unique programs. The preschool and Spanish programs will be offered again this year.

Mr. Jackson said the preschool program started five years ago. He said it has been successful in preparing children for kindergarten and given three and four-year-olds a basic foundation in things like letters, numbers and lining up properly.

This year, Mr. Jackson estimated there would be 14 children in the four-year-old preschool and 12 children in the three-year-old preschool.

Logan schools also offer a kindergarden through 12th grade Spanish program. Mr. Jackson said Spanish is mandatory for students until they are freshmen, then the program is optional.

Mr. Jackson said neither program is in danger of being cut, but other cuts may be necessary depending on next year's budget.

"We will do everything we can to cut somewhere else and not negatively impact our children's education," he said.