

## Face-lift for Valley Hope



Valley Hope spruced up its sign on Highway 36 before the Thanksgiving holiday. The sign was painted early this week. Valley Hope is located at 709 W. Holme.

—Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

## Vaccine

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Norton still has no confirmed cases of H1N1, but Frack said that doesn't mean it isn't here. Testing is no longer being done for the influenza strain.

"We haven't had any confirmed cases in Norton, but it's out there," she said.

Frack said 60-70 percent of influenza cases are H1N1.

She said the best way to protect against influenza is to get the vaccine, both the seasonal flu and H1N1. She also said flu symptoms are not reflective of actually having the disease.

"You still need the vaccine to assure protection. The vaccine gives your immune system an extra boost," she said.

Seasonal flu shots ran out in September. The department is still waiting on shipments.

"We did find out our remaining shipment is going to be coming," she said.

Frack said she expects the vac-

cine to arrive in early December, but she will not know for sure until the vaccine actually arrives.

The health department expected to run out of H1N1 vaccine Tuesday. Frack said there has been increased demand due to the new group introduced this week.

"They are a group that has been interested in getting the vaccine," she said.

Norton County pools orders with seven other counties in northwest Kansas. This allows them to receive the vaccine sooner than if they had to wait to order by themselves.

"Norton is the ordering hub. If we didn't do it, we'd be waiting longer to get the vaccine," she said.

Frack said the department is dealing with an increase in traffic, although some people would have come in for other services.

"We're still maintaining all of our other services," she said.

Frack said this is not a one

season virus. Health officials expect it to be a two season virus. Another vaccine will be needed next year, even for people who got it this year.

"The hope is you'll only have to get one flu shot next year," she said.

The health department does not offer the nasal vaccine.

Another clinic is expected to be held next week.

## Student

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for the tennis team at Bethany.

Valentina described the differences between Kansas and her home.

A big difference for her has been the terrain. She said Kazakhstan has mountains, not plains. She said people are also friendly here and was surprised by people smiling and waving at each other on the street. She said they do not do that at home.

"I like it here," she said.

Valentina did not have the option of choosing a location when she entered the foreign exchange program. She said she loves Kansas and dreams about seeing a tornado before returning to her country.

"It's my dream," she said. She and Lucy have volunteered at the movie theatre two nights this week. The first time they were able to see New Moon. Valentina said she has now seen it three times.

She was able to spend some time shopping in Norton early

this week, and the family planned a trip to Kearney for today's black shopping deals. They planned to arrive at 4 a.m.

Lucy also took Valentina 4-wheeling, another first for the exchange student.

"That was really fast and exciting," Valentina said.

Valentina is experiencing American holidays for the first time. She said Thanksgiving is not celebrated in her country.

New Year's is a big holiday in Kazakhstan. She said trees, similar to Christmas trees, go up. She helped the Gosselins put up their tree and remembered helping her father with their tree when she was little.

Valentina is enjoying her time with Lucy's family. Lucy's mother, Kerri Donahey, welcomed her into their home.

"Thank you so much for this family. I feel so at home," Valentina said.

She will return to her home at the end of May.

# A bank without money

By **RON WILSON, Director**  
(Let's stop by the bank today. Unlike your local financial institution, there's no teller windows or ATM at this bank, but there is a tremendous resource. This is what Marci Penner calls the We Kan! Bank, a new initiative of the Kansas Sampler Foundation.)

The We Kan! Bank is not a financial institution, but rather a virtual, social capital bank where people can match needs with resources. The bank's first project was recently implemented in Whiting. It's today's Kansas Profile.)

Marci Penner is the Director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. One of Marci's transformational ideas for rural Kansas is the We Kan! Bank, designed to match rural community needs with those who can help. Marci says, "This is a social capital bank, where volunteer-led communities can open accounts of need and other people can open accounts of support." The "banker" helps match them together.

Another transformational idea is I Kan Help, which is a means of empowering individuals to donate time and/or money to rural communities that need them. Marci says, "Let's say there was a family that wanted to make a difference. If there was a website which they could click on to find

needed volunteer projects in their area, they could see where they could help."

Marci was thinking about this when she received a call from Rosa Thomas, owner of the Whiting Café in Whiting. Rosa invited Marci to her café's 25th anniversary celebration in August. Marci says, "I had something else going on that day, but it hit me that her café would be the perfect opportunity to try this idea. We could give Rosa an early anniversary present."

Marci says, "I know Rosa is a person who gives to the community." So Marci convinced Rosa to let volunteers give her café a makeover.

Marci says, "Rosa didn't ask for this help, we convinced her we wanted to do it. Anyone who can keep a café open for 25 years in a town this size deserves recognition and support."

Whiting is a truly rural community, with a population of 206. Now, that's rural. The Kansas Sampler Foundation called for volunteers and organized this effort.

On the last weekend of June 2009, more than 100 people donated time and effort to make repairs, clean, replace equipment, paint, and generally fix up the Whiting Café. Rosa prepared meals at the community center to

serve to the workers and paid the cost of the major repairs. Donors contributed more than \$5,000 to underwrite other costs. Volunteers received T-shirts saying I Kan Help!

Local folks helped serve meals. One artist designed and painted a mural saying, "Food so great you'll scrape your plate."

The preacher came over after church on Sunday to fix the pilot light in the grill. A country music band played for the group on Saturday night.

Marci says, "People worked late each night. Finally we had to get out of there on Sunday so Rosa and crew could prepare the café for 6 a.m. opening on Monday."

In the end, the rural community of Whiting had a beautiful new look to their locally owned café, and volunteers had donated more than 1,300 hours to the cause.

Marci says, "This was a pilot project. We can only do one of these major statewide projects a year, but maybe we could organize lots of smaller local projects which people could get involved in."

For more information, go to [www.kansassampler.org](http://www.kansassampler.org). Remember, it was no government agency or federal grant that made this possible, but rather the spirit of volunteerism which is rural America at its best.

## Budget

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the state, including the planned Manhattan lab—leaving \$35 million of funding for that organization next year.

- \$2 million from the regents university system.

- Unspent money from state agencies moved to the general fund, including some from the governor's office and the legislature.

- Medicaid reimbursement rates reduced by 10 percent over the rest of the fiscal year.

- Smaller cuts throughout state agencies, such as reducing parole services funding, letting some positions at the Kansas Bureau of Investigations stay open and reducing grants to municipal libraries.

Other state officials have begun weighing in on the new cuts. Attorney General Steve Six said that, although the state's situation is dire, he was disappointed by the cuts to his office and to Kansas Bureau of Investigations.

"Both agencies play key roles in protecting our families, assist-

ing consumers and preventing fraud in government programs," Six said in a Monday statement.

"The money that was cut from our budget is used to fund criminal prosecutions, crime victim services, legal counsel for state agencies and much more."

Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Deb Miller said the cuts would halt two transportation studies, leave many department jobs unfilled and seriously constrain her department's major project budget, slashing it to 40 percent of what it had been for the last 10 years.

"Cutting projects will impact jobs, not only of contractors but of suppliers. It will also eliminate the spinoff spending that happens in communities during construction," Miller said.

"We're going to do a lot fewer maintenance jobs and that will result in rougher roads and more vehicle maintenance."

Parkinson defended his actions Monday, saying it is his duty to balance the budget to make it through the session.

"When the Legislature returns in January," he said, "together we must look towards building a solution for the years ahead or we will permanently damage the foundation of our state."

### Twelve Days of Christmas

Starts in Norton on Friday, November 27

Beginning December 1 through December 23 - (22) \$50 Prizes will be given away each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. December 24 will be the Grand Prize Drawing of (10) \$200 Prizes

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