

# Emergency management praises our local planning committee

**By Cynthia Haynes**  
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 Norton County Emergency Management Director Justina Smith is proud of her group of volunteers and told the county commissioners so at their meeting before Christmas.

The group, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, has worked hard, she said, and the county is in compliance with state and federal regulations for the first time in years.

The planning committee is made up of a varied group of people which according to statute should include those from law enforcement, firefighting, emergency management, transportation, hospitals, health, emergency medical services, broadcast and print media, environment groups, community groups, elected officials and facility owners and operators.

Group members can represent more than one organization and organizations can have more than one member on the committee. There is no maximum to the number of people who can serve. However, those on the committee should be interested in emergency programs and the communities' right to know.

Serving on the Norton County committee are:

Chairman Ms. Smith; vice chair Keith VanSlike, Twin Creek Extension district agent; Troy Thomson, sheriff; Rob

Lawson, Norton city administrator; Carolyn Applegate, county commissioner; Pat Morel, Norton police chief; Pat Douglas, Norton correctional Facility human relations officer; Leo Graham, Almena Fire Department chief; Jane Wyatt, Emergency Management director; Gina Frack; county Health Department administrator; Toby Kuhn, Prairie Dog State Park manager; Deana Wente, KQNK radio news director; Julie Campbell, hospital pharmacy director; Corey Roy, Eisenhower Elementary School principal; Sandy Smith, county Road and Bridge Department supervisor; Kelly Jones, Prairie Land Electric technical assistant; Wally Burton, New Age Industrial plant engineer; Rick Mullen, Ag Valley Co-op location manager; and Kelly Ninabuck, Army National Guard sergeant.

Some of these will change, Ms. Smith said as there are changes in county offices and new members join the group later this month.

The group meets quarterly, Ms. Smith said, and the meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is scheduled for 1 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the Norton County Emergency Medical Services building and all meetings are open to the public.

The group is responsible for keeping tabs on possible haz-

ards, especially chemical, in the community.

According to the state handbook, which is more than 100 pages long, the state formed the local emergency planning groups because of federal regulations.

"The LEPC is a product of federal legislation that was passed after Bhopal disaster in India, where thousands of people died because of an accident involving an accidental release of a hazardous chemical. To prevent similar occurrence in our own communities, Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act," the handbook says.

(The Bhopal disaster was a gas leak incident in India in December 1984. More than 500,000 people were exposed to the gas and up to 4,000 people died as a result of the leak.)

As a result of that accident, the U.S. and Kansas governments set up local community groups to monitor places that chemicals are stored and used. It was felt that the local community would know more about where the problems might lie than anyone else.

The emergency group's handbook gives the committee's primary duties as:

- Review local emergency management plans once a year.
- Make available material safety data sheet chemical lists

# Wheeeeeeeeeee.....



Hailey Majors of Norton was one of many kids enjoying the sun and snow at Elmwood Park on Wednesday afternoon. For a seven year old, Hailey is in control of her sled and having a good time, but nobody told her school starts back up on Monday.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

to the public. (material safety data sheets contain the chemical's name, hazards and how to handle accidental exposure.)

• Have procedures for getting and processing requests for information.

• Get the name of the representative of each facility with possible chemical hazards, who will report the information.

• Be informed of any hazardous chemical releases, and have a way to inform others.

• Be able to take civil action against any operator who fails to provide the needed information.

In 2012, the Norton group looked at getting a grant to help people purchase NOAA weather radios at a reduced cost, held

a tabletop exercise to test emergency planning and has worked to get a list of hazardous substance used and stored in the county.

Anyone interested in joining the emergency group should contact Ms. Smith at 877-5750 or by e-mail at nortonemd@gmail.com.

# Legislators look at the idea of massage therapists being licensed

**By Kevin Bottrell**  
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Several organizations will be pushing the Kansas Legislature this year to approve a bill that would require all massage therapists to be licensed.

The main force behind the bill is the Kansas chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association with help from the national association and Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals.

Paige Harper, a Goodland

therapist and member of the association, said only six states do not have licensure for massage therapy, including Kansas. The association tried last year to get the legislation through, but it never made it out of committee.

"With so many new legislators, we have a lot of education to do," she said.

If the bill were to be passed and signed by the governor, massage therapists would be required to pay \$100 for a two-year license. They would be

required to undergo six credit-hours of continuing education a year.

"It sets a minimum standard of education and raises the profession up," Harper said.

Harper said those already practicing massage therapy will be grandfathered in, but would still have to do the continuing education.

One of the aims of the legislation is to make it more difficult for prostitution and human trafficking rings to operate. In

recent years, several prostitution rings using massage parlors as a front have been busted in Wichita.

"As it stands there's no license to take away," Harper said. "It gives law enforcement another tool. Especially out here where we don't all have the resources to protect our citizens."

Most states recognize licenses issued in other states, she said, and would be able to bar someone from practicing were they to have their Kansas license taken

away. Harper said the legislation will also protect the public, as untrained massage therapists can damage patients. Licensure also opens up an avenue for payment through insurance, she said.

It might be difficult to get passed in a year when the Legislature is concerned about funding, she said, and there have been criticisms that the association is trying to run people out of business. The grandfathering clause is very liberal, she said,

and the continuing education hours are easy to come by online or at some community colleges.

"We're not trying to alienate anyone or take people's jobs away," she said. "We're following the standard set by other states."

Harper encouraged people to speak to their senator or representative, and said anyone with questions can call her at (785) 821-4442.

# Shrine

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sen by the Kansas High School Football Coaches Association.

Jacob was also honored by being named to the Super 11 by the Hays Daily News.

He also received honorable mention All-State in Class 3A from the Wichita Eagle-Beacon and Topeka Capital-Journal.

Jacob is the son of Jennifer and Jamie Wildeman and David Brooks.

Head coach of the West team will be Ryan Cornelsen, Hays

High. His assistant coaches will be Steve Martin, Wichita Northwest High; Mike Lee, Andover High; Dave Fennwald, Mulvane High; Brad McCormick, Garden Plain High and Matt Hendricks, Sterling High.

Joining Jacob Brooks on the West team from this area will be: David Cardinal, running back, linebacker, Hays High; Bradey Chard, offensive and defensive lineman, Plainville; Dalton Gantz, fullback, linebacker, Ness City; Kip Keeley, full-

back, linebacker, La Crosse High; Drew Kite, tight end, inside linebacker, Scott City High; Stanten Krone, fullback, linebacker, Beloit High.

Other players on the West team are: Gabe Bergmann, tight end, offensive lineman, defensive end, Concordia High; Cody Busby, running back, cornerback, Salina South High; Bryce Chavis, quarterback, cornerback, Riley County High; Deelsaac Davis, defensive end, Andover High; Riley

Dowler, quarterback, strong safety, Arkansas City High; Denver Doyle, running back, linebacker, Garden Plain High; Kolby Fennwald, split receiver, safety, Mulvane High; Collin French, offensive, defensive lineman, McPherson High; Jarod Gagnebin, defensive end, Hutchinson High; Riley Galyon, quarterback, running back, Sterling High; Justin Gemachlich, offensive, defensive lineman, Dodge City High; Hunter Harrison, fullback, linebacker, Great

Bend High; Alex Lee, offensive lineman, Wichita Northwest High; Justus Moreland, free safety, punter, Wichita Heights High; Zeke Palmer, quarterback, Bishop Carroll High; Wes Phillips, split back, free safety, Maize South High; Markus Phox, wide receiver, defensive back, Wichita Collegiate High; Sean Rodriguez, running back, safety, Nickerson High; Kellen Sims, quarterback, running back, wide receiver, Derby High; Ethan Stallbaumer, running back, linebacker, Maize

High; Bryce Steiner, quarterback, cornerback, Central Plains High; Logan Thompson, quarterback, defensive back, Sedgwick High; Cody Walther, offensive, defensive lineman, Rose Hill High; James West, offensive, defensive lineman, Junction City High; Clay Wilcox, offensive, defensive lineman, Chaparral High; Tanner Wood, quarterback, running back, linebacker, Conway Springs High; Nick Young, offensive and defensive lineman, Madison High.

# County

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He also said that the county must have a written job description for the emergency management position, which he wasn't sure if there was one or not.

Mr. Posson said that when he becomes a commissioner, later this month, he wants to examine job descriptions for various county jobs and define who is in charge of what.

"We have to manage this thing so it doesn't get out of hand and become something it was never designed to do," he said of the emergency manager's job, which all the commissioners agreed it had changed radically

in the last years as state and federal regulations and money have pushed it one way then another.

The sheriff noted that Homeland Security started out handing out money to the states and counties and they started all kinds of programs but now the money isn't there and the counties are still trying to keep the programs going.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Amended the county budget to give the health department more spending authority since it had taken in more money than expected but could not spend it for supplies and training without a budget change.

• Moved money from the equipment reserve fund to the solid waste department. Commissioners said that the shortfall in that department was due to incorrect figures used in budgeting and also because the county had purchased a compactor and had to have a trac loader repaired at the landfill.

• Heard from Commissioner Miller that he had been to Stockton and looked over their tarp selection. The county will tarp its trucks to prevent debris from spreading. Mr. Miller said that he didn't get a firm price on the tarps.

• Heard that Norton County had one of the largest call emer-

gency volumes in the northwest Kansas area if you excluded Hays from the equation.

• Received a request from Karl Kohfeld to look at the one-half to one mile link of County Road E2 between KQNK Road and U.S. 36 for paving when the county does other road projects in the area. While the commissioners agreed that the road needed more work, they said they didn't know if there was enough money left in the road budget to do any more paving. However, they said they would look at the stretch, which receives a lot of traffic.

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