

# \$1 THE NORTON TELEGRAM



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## Tuesday

### February 5, 2013

### Briefly

#### Fire department to hold meeting

The Norton Rural Fire Department District #2 budget meeting will be held Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Rural fire station.

#### Customers showed appreciation

Roy's Sales and Service will have a customer appreciation day on Thursday. Coffee and doughnuts will be served.

#### Workshops being offered in Norton

Norton City/County Economic Development and The FHSU Kansas Small Business Development Center is offering free workshops on Marketing, Social Media, Customer Service and Cash Flow starting Thursday. Pre-registration is required. For questions call Megan Horinek at 785-734-2592.

#### Booster Club will meet on Wednesday

The first meeting of the Norton Blue Jay Booster Club in February will be on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the high school cafeteria.

Speaking about the results of their team's recent competition will be Norton girls head basketball coach George Rossi, Norton boys head basketball coach Doug Reusink and Norton head wrestling coach Bill Johnson.

All fans of Norton Community High School sports are invited to the meetings.

You do not have to be a member of the booster club to attend.

### Markets

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

Wheat.....	\$7.60
Milo.....	\$6.97
Soybeans.....	\$14.20
Corn.....	\$7.31

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

### weather forecast

Wednesday - Clear in the morning, then partly cloudy. High of 57. Wednesday Night - Partly cloudy with a low of 32. Thursday - Partly cloudy in the morning, then clear with a high of 52.

### Kingham Report

Friday, Feb. 1.....	Low 15, High 38
Saturday, Feb. 2.....	Low 16, High 52
Sunday, Feb. 3.....	Low 29, High 51
Monday, Feb. 4.....	Low 21, High 54

(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to share our faith with others by using the gifts and talents with which you have blessed us. Amen

## A standing room only performance



First and second graders from Eisenhower Elementary School held a vocal concert on Monday night before family and friends in a packed East Campus Auditorium. Under the direction of Mrs. Jennifer Ruder, the first graders performed five songs and were dressed up as lady

bugs, fireflies, army ants, and caterpillars/butterflies. The second graders went with a farm motif and sang "E-I-E-I-Oops!," "Ham It Up," "Lost Sheep," "Cute Chicks," and "The Whole Barnyard Is Singin."

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

## School board faced with financial challenges

By Mike Stephens  
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USD 211 Board of Education held a special meeting on Monday, Jan. 28 at the Alice Tweed Center to discuss the budget situation for the 2013-14 school year and the ramifications of potential losses in funding.

Superintendent Greg Mann painted the financial landscape for the upcoming year to the School Board as going from bad to worse.

First of all, the three year "Budget Blessing" the district has enjoyed because of the attachment of Lenora USD 213 is in its third and final year, and will end on July 1, 2013.

"We knew our general fund was going to take a hit," Superintendent Mann said.

District 211 is expected to lose ap-

proximately \$340,000 from its general fund based on the current base aid per pupil. This financial shortfall would be manageable according to Mann, if the Local Option Budget wasn't going to take a big hit as well, but it is.

"What we did not know until very recently was what losing the 'Budget Blessing' was going to do to our Local Option Budget," said Mann.

At present, the school district has a Local Option Budget of \$1,650,000, of which 54 percent comes from state aid and requires a local mill levy of 16.38 mills to fund.

"Next year we will lose a very large portion of our state aid because of our district wealth being re-calculated to include the Lenora property, which has not been included for the past three years," said Mann.

When the re-calculations are done

it is expected the state's contribution to the district will decrease from 54 percent to approximately 36 to 37 percent.

In other words, in order for the school district to raise the same amount of funds for the Local Option Budget the mill levy will have to go up to an approximate 22.4 mills. This is an increase of 36 percent (up from 16.38 mills) and does not include the deficit in the general fund of \$340,000.

If the mill levy is not raised, and remains at the current 16.38 mills, the end result would be an estimated loss of \$370,000. Add to that the \$340,000 that will be lost in the general fund and the School Board will be looking at a potential decrease in funding of \$710,000 for the 2013-14 school year. According to Mann this decrease in funding is the equivalent of almost 10 percent of

USD 211's 2012-13 general fund and Local Option Budget combined.

"We find ourselves on a perilous perch, for sure, and one that will require some pain and effort to get off safely," said Mann.

Mann told the board that the lack of funding is not due to any concerns with the country's economy, but rather it is a calculated effort by Kansas Governor Sam Brownback to eliminate as many taxes as possible.

"We are seeing the reduction of income taxes and our Governor has vowed to do away with income tax altogether," said Mann. "There is an effort going on right now to re-classify large portions of fixed property to personal property which will require even higher mill levies to raise the same amount of money.

(Challenges - Continued on Page 5)

## Commercial taxes addressed at commissioners meeting

By Dana Paxton  
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The well known faces of businessman, Terry Nelson, Almena Agri Service, Janet Sell and Nelson Farms, Linda Donovan addressed the Norton County Commissioners at last week's meeting.

Janet Sell first showed the commissioners photos taken of the Almena Grain Elevator before and after it got

new paint on the two new grain bins that had been put up. Her mission is to draw younger people to the community of Almena and Norton County. Her concern is the community tax rates being placed on the citizens of the county make living here less desirable. Sell said, "We don't have the technology, or safety ability to have them work with in order to draw youth. We have to protect our own businesses, it is not just about

us but the community and the future of the community."

Almena Agri Service received a \$30,000 tax bill for the two new grain bins which hold 250,000 bushels of grain. Terry Nelson said, "This is more than shocking! If it were located on a farm in the country there would be no tax." Mr. Nelson strongly urged the commissioners and economic development director Scott Sproul to support the Neighborhood Revitalization Program to help assist in paying these high taxes. "If you don't support the Neighborhood Revitalization Program

you won't get new stuff in your county and I think the commissioners need to recognize that you will kill businesses with these taxes." Nelson said. "We all need for new things in Norton County and getting an enormous tax bill won't work."

Norton County Clerk, Robert Wyatt said, "For every dollar we exempt, someone makes up that tax. If you want it in your county, you are going to have to fund it yourself, the program won't do it for you, someone still has to pay."

Taxes will always be an issue in

(Taxes - Continued on Page 5)



## Norton loses Taco Bell franchise and many jobs

By Mike Stephens  
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Taco Bell Express has ceased operations at the Pizza Hut on Highway 36 in Norton, as of Friday, February 1. The Taco Bell Express licensee agreement had expired and was not renewed.

Taco Bell Express opened for business in 2000 and closed 13 years later, to the day, according to Jeannie Waters, Director of Operations for Pizza Hut.

The loss of Taco Bell Express in Norton also means a loss of jobs and tax revenues. Pizza Hut General Manager Alissa Gibson said 7 jobs were lost and that her staff has been cut to 26 employees. Gibson said more jobs could be lost in the coming months.

Taco Bell Express didn't renew the agreement because they didn't know how to support a full Taco Bell menu (most Express' do not carry a full menu) according to Waters and that profitabil-

ity wasn't an issue either.

"The Taco Bell Express was making more money than it ever had," said Waters.

Even though Taco Bell Express was profitable in Norton it wasn't nationally, according to Waters.

"This (Taco Bell Express) was the last one standing. It lasted eight years longer than most," said Waters.

Also lost with the departure of Taco Bell Express will be the two annual fund-raisers it held for the Norton Correctional Facility and donations made to the Norton Community Schools.

Pizza Hut's business is doing well according to Gibson and will be fine without the Taco Bell menu, but for patrons a replacement is not expected soon.

"It's a waiting game with Pizza Hut's legal department before a replacement can be found," stated Waters.

