

THE NORTON TELEGRAM



Tuesday

August 13, 2013

Briefly

Students to return to school Friday

The first day of school for all U.S.D. 211 students is this Friday. Lunch will be served at Norton Community High School and Eisenhower Elementary, but no breakfast will be served.

Senior parents meeting to be held

An informational session for parents of the 2013-14 Norton Community High School seniors will be held in the music room on Friday, Aug. 16, at 7 p.m. Shane Miller, high school counselor, will host the meeting which will cover various items of importance for the senior year.

Bike Bash to be held Aug. 16-18

The Northwest Kansas Bike Bash will be held August 16-18 at Larrick Park in Lenora. A bike rodeo and burn-out pit will be among the many activities. All proceeds benefit the Children's Hospital, Ministerial Alliance and the American Legion Riders. For questions call Tyler Burns at 785-871-2401 or Joe Sweet at 785-874-8765.

Milford Nature Center at library

As a culmination of the library's summer reading program, "Dig into Reading," Milford Nature Center will be coming to the Norton Public Library on Thursday, Aug. 15, at 10:30 a.m. They will present a program, "Can You Dig It? Life in a Dog Town."

Veterans' Affairs help with claims

Jody Tubbs of the Kansas Commissions on Veterans' Affairs will be in Norton from 10:45 until 11:45 at the Norton County Library to assist Veterans and their dependents with VA claims work on Tuesday, August 20. If you are unable to contact Ms. Tubbs at that time, you may contact her in Colby any Monday, Wednesday or Friday at 785-462-3572.

Markets

Monday, August 12, 2013

Wheat.....	\$6.96
Milo.....	\$5.04
Soybeans.....	\$12.09
Corn.....	\$5.89

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Wednesday - Partly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of rain. Wednesday Night - Chance of rain. Thursday - Overcast with a 40 percent chance of rain. Thursday Night - Overcast with a 50 percent chance of rain. Friday - Overcast with a 40 percent chance of rain.

Prayer

Dear God, teach us to be aware of your presence with us at all times and in all our daily activities. Amen.

Norton schools have two new teachers



Jill Lively, Norton, will be teaching junior high physical education and health. She is also the high school cheerleading coach and a junior high assistant KAY sponsor. Jill has been associated with the U.S.D. 211 schools for many years, but this will be her first year teaching. She is a graduate of Emporia State University.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens



Jill Schoendaler, Hoxie, is in her first year and will be teaching speech language pathology at the elementary, junior high and high school. She earned her master's degree from Fort Hays State University and her bachelor's from Kansas State University. "I'm really excited to be working with the staff and the children in the community," said Schoendaler.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

City Council approves budget for 2014

By Mike Stephens
mstephens@nwkansas.com

The Norton City Council met in regular session on Wednesday and approved the 2014 budget. A public hearing was held for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers related to the proposed use of funds and the amount of tax to be levied for 2014. The proposed total budget expenditures for 2014 is \$14,024,638, with an estimated tax rate of 59.613 mills. The tax rate for 2013 was 59.510 mills and in 2012 it was 58.714 mills.

The estimated assessed valuation is \$12,103,064. There were no comments or questions from the public.

The State of Kansas has a computation to determine the tax levy limits each budget year, and if the limits are exceeded, an ordinance must be published to authorize exceeding the limit.

The council passed a motion to suspend the rules and waive the three reading requirement for Ordinance #1642. It then adopted the ordinance, attesting to an increase in tax revenues for budget year 2014. The council then

approved the 2014 budget as published and presented.

Mayor David Corns reported to the council the city general sales tax receipts collected in June totaled \$23,216, the city pool sales tax receipts totaled \$34,824, and the county sales tax receipts totaled \$15,930, for a total of \$73,970. The 2013 year to date sales tax receipts total \$335,291.

The mayor said the Norton Public Library has received \$2,500 in donations to pay for the concrete for the statues. He stated Washington Square needs

some paint repair in the community room, and the light posts need to be sandblasted and re-coated. Corns said the State Library is furnishing a majority of the money for an AWE reading development program for ages 1-8, and the library is contributing \$500 for the program.

Chief of Police Pat Morel reported a pending location for the statues at the library has been determined. The gas company will check to make sure all

(Council - Continued on Page 5)

County Commissioners hold budget hearing

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

Only one person showed up for the Norton County Budget hearing at 9:30 a.m. Monday morning.

Hospital Administrator Rich Miller told the commissioners that he was very disappointed that the county had left the hospital's mill levy at 2.5 mills instead of raising it to 4.5 mills as requested.

"We're a fairly easy draw on the county in comparison to other counties," Mr. Miller said, referring to the amount the county has to pay to support the hospital.

Commission Chairman Richard Thompson said that since the county's valuation should be up next year, the hospital would be getting more money anyway.

Commissioner Charles Posson added that at 4.5 mills and an increase valuation, the hospital would have gotten twice what it got this year from tax money.

Mr. Miller replied that the hospital has positioned itself to be the hub for health care in the area but that it must work constantly to stay ahead.

He warned that it could get expensive for the county if the hospital got into financial trouble and needs help and that without more money it will be hard to stay at the top of the heap in health care.

The commissioners noted his warnings but voted to accept the budget as published.

After Mr. Miller had left the meeting, John Mapes, with Miller and Mapes, the company which does the county's

budget, noted that the other counties in the area all have levies of 6 mills or more for their hospitals and some also have a sales tax to help support them.

He said that although he wouldn't compare, Norton's hospital with the one in Graham County, that county had a levy of 20 mills for their hospital at one time although it is down to 10 mills plus a sales tax now.

"It's very successful and it's profitable," Commissioner Posson said, adding that is why the county is not increasing its funding.

"Why should we double the tax load to give a profitable hospital extra money?" he asked.

Mr. Mapes noted that Norton has the most successful hospital in the area.

"We want a successful hospital," Commissioner Posson said, "and we

want it to be a hub for the area."

In other business, the commissioners:

- Briefly discussed meetings they needed to attend.

- Talked about the expense of keeping a county landfill versus transporting solid waste to another area. Mr. Wyatt said that when the county will looking to close its incinerator, a study was done and it was found that incineration was the cheapest, burying was the next and transporting was the most expensive by far.

- Learned that the courthouse had another water leak last week. It was in the basement, Mr. Wyatt said.

- Talked briefly about meetings with Becky Wilson, the new county road and bridge office manager.

Norton County tax levy will increase one mill

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

The Norton County tax levy will go up about one mill next year but the county is hoping to collect more money than that as the valuation of the area has increased.

County Clerk Robert Wyatt said the 2014 mill levy will be based on the county's November valuation. The commissioners approved a budget on Monday, based on a 95.669 mill levy. That could change a little, Mr. Wyatt said, since that is based on the July valuation of the county. However, he said, he doesn't expect it to change very much.

The county's assessed valuation for

2014 should be a little over \$50 million according to the budget. This year that valuation was just a little over \$48 million and last year it was a little over \$43 million.

The county hopes to bring in almost \$7,783 million with \$4,796 of that coming from property taxes and the rest from fees and other income.

This year the county is budgeted to take in close to \$7,621 million of which \$4,548 was in property taxes and last year the county took in \$7,679 million of which \$3,624 was in property taxes.

Several budget categories went down in the 2014 budget including the general fund, which will go from \$2.199 million to \$2.033 million for a drop of

\$166,000.

While the mill levy for the road and bridge department will go down a little, due to increased valuation, that department will have a little more money to spend next year, but not much.

The ambulance budget, the airport and economic development will stay the same but county health is getting a \$37,000 increase.

The county plans to spend almost \$77,000 in election expenses in 2014 while it had to shell out less than \$42,000 this year.

The appraisers office, the noxious weed department's expenditures and maintenance for the Andbe Home are all expected to go up a tiny bit while

the 4-H maintenance and the fair can expect the same amounts as this year, \$8,715 and \$9,000 respectively.

Soil conservation will get a big increase from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

The county again plans to spend \$95,000 to help with mental health and mental retardation.

While the hospital mill levy will not increase, the budget shows that institution getting \$138,768 next year compared to \$134,347 this year and \$121,000 last year.

Employee benefits are expected to go up again by about \$16,000 from \$1,291 million to \$1,313 but the tax rate to pay for that will go down from 21.731 mills to 21.54 mills.

