

THE NORTON TELEGRAM



Friday

September 20, 2013

Briefly

Hospital meeting was re-scheduled

The Norton County Hospital Board of Trustees meeting has been re-scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the hospital's conference room. On the agenda, the audit report presentation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

Archery club to host last 3-D shoot

The Norton Archery Club will hold a 3-D Shoot on Sunday, Sept. 22, at the northwest corner of Prairie Dog State Park. Trickle start from 9-10 a.m. For more information call 877-3253 or 877-5269.

Treasure hunt set for the weekend

U.S. Highway 36 Treasure Hunt is this Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There will be garage sales along U.S. 36 from the Colorado border to the Missouri border. One man's trash is another man's treasure.

Elementary girls to start basketball

The Norton Eisenhower Elementary School girls will start their after school basketball practice on Monday. Practices will be in the Eisenhower gym and run from 3:45 to 5:15. Fifth grades practices will be on Monday and Wednesday and the sixth graders will practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Update code red information

A reminder to everyone to be sure your number is updated in the Code Red Community Notification system. Do this by going to DiscoverNorton.com and follow the link or contact the Norton County Sheriff's Department Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Markets

Thursday, September 19, 2013
 Wheat\$6.95
 Milo\$4.40
 Soybeans.....\$12.98
 Corn\$4.90
 Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Saturday - Clear in the morning, then partly cloudy with a high of 81. Saturday Night Clear with a low of 54. Sunday - Clear in the morning then partly cloudy with a high of 81. Sunday Night - Clear with a chance of rain in the evening. Chance of rain 40 percent. Monday - Chance of rain 40 percent.

Prayer

Dear Lord, sometimes, even when we seek your direction, failure comes and we question if we really heard you. Help us to listen when we feel like hesitating. Amen



Report has rural hospitals worried

By Mike Shields
KHI News Service

A new report from the inspector general of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services includes recommendations that, if acted upon, could undermine hundreds of small, rural hospitals across the nation including scores in Kansas, hospital officials and some rural health experts say.

"It would be a matter of time before many of them (the hospitals) would have to close," predicted Brock Slabach, senior vice president for member services at the National Rural Health Association, which is encouraging its 20,000 members to voice alarm about the 34-page report to members of Congress.

"I don't think any senator or congressman would want to preside over

the closure of hundreds of hospitals in rural communities across the United States," Slabach said, noting that even if the report's recommendations were to go mostly unheeded by federal officials there are other proposals, including a budget plan from the White House, that could hurt the hospitals as the government looks for ways to brake Medicare spending.

Proliferation

According to the Office of Inspector General, there are more than 1,300 U.S. hospitals designated as "critical access" facilities.

Kansas has 83 critical access hospitals, more than any other state.

The designation, created by Congress with the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, was intended to assure reasonably close hospital access to rural resi-

dents across the country by guaranteeing that the qualifying hospitals would receive favorable Medicare payment rates. The favorable rates were to help the small hospitals stay in business despite small patient volumes compared to their urban counterparts. They were enacted in response to hundreds of rural hospitals closing their doors in the 1980s and 1990s.

Sixteen years later, the facilities have proliferated. Now, only five smaller states on the east coast have no critical access hospitals. Kansas has 83. Iowa has the second most with 82. Texas has 80 and Minnesota, 79, according to a list kept by the Flex Monitoring Team.

'Necessary providers'

But until Jan. 1, 2006, states and their governors were allowed to also designate some hospitals that failed to meet

the distance requirements but qualified as "necessary providers." That state authority, which qualified the designated hospitals for the higher reimbursements, was widely used, Kansas being a prime example.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, then Kansas governor, signed off on the certification of 31 Kansas hospitals between 2003 and 2006, according to Slabach, who said he hoped she would remember why she did that now that she is the top federal health official.

"So, now that she's secretary we just hope she remembers her commitment to rural health and ensuring access to care in those 31 (Kansas) counties," he said.

In any event, the HHS inspectors

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Economic development looks at improvements

By DANA PAXTON
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The September meeting of the Norton City/County Economic Development board met last Tuesday to address ongoing projects within Norton County.

The first item brought up was the old business of the Ryan addition. Director Scott Sproul reported that the project was almost done, gutters were down and the street paved. The only thing really left is the work to be done by the City of Norton but they will have to wait for the grading to be done before they can start. The city has the mains

in place, they just need to put a "T" off to each until before it will be finished. "We are moving right along and it has been pretty uneventful and everything has gone well to this point." Sproul said.

Another piece of old business was that of the Downtown Market Study. Sproul reported that they received 200 surveys back and should know the results this week. The information gathered will be gone over by experts and when Sproul meets with them he hopes that they will give him ideas and also help develop the plans needed to make the ideas a reality.

There has been a vacant board position and the next order of business was to fill that position. Sproul told the board that Attorney Karen Griffiths said it could be done one of two ways, elect one or leave it open. The board agreed to elect a new Board Chairman and this went to Brad Hopkins. This left the Vice-chairman's spot open so the board then elected Deena Wentte for this position.

In new business, Sproul reported that he has four people wanting to be involved with the Leadership Challenge, Maggie Bagsal, Aaron Hale, Chad Manning and Janice Monier.

The group agreed that this was a good bunch of people to have doing this.

The topic that dominated the meeting was that of the new Community Development Project. The biggest thing being looked at right now by the board would be a bowling/fun center in downtown Norton. "Some community members have already donated money to help fund this project so we need to talk about it and look at the feasibility of it and have a decision by the year's end." Sproul stated. They would be looking at several of the historic empty buildings in the downtown

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Sheriff updates commissioners at this week's meeting

By DANA PAXTON
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Sheriff Troy Thomson attended the Norton County Commissioners meeting this week to discuss equipping the new pick-up and daily averages.

Thomson reported that two bids were turned in to outfit the new county sheriff's pickup with lights, sirens and radios. Nex-Tech turned in a bid of \$5,759 but this did not include the radio. To get a radio from them would be an additional \$2,054. Gary Flannigan turned in a bid of \$5,864 for ev-

erything, including the radio but an off brand radio that Sheriff Thomson knew nothing about. He stated that he liked the Motorola brand better and could get it through Nex-Tech.

Thomson recommended to the commissioners that they accept the bid from Flannigan but instead of using the \$1,600 off brand radio, go ahead and purchase the \$2,054 Motorola radio from Nex-Tech and have Gary do all of the installation. The amount of money to be spent lays out like this...subtract the \$1,600 Tate radio from Flannigan's

bid of \$5,800 then add the \$2,054 for the Nex-Tech Motorola radio and the total would be \$6,318. The commissioners agreed that this would be the best way to go and told Mr. Thomson to go ahead with his recommendation.

Thomson then reported on daily averages in the jail. Last year at this time the daily average was 7.87 per day, that is .13 under the regular eight that can be held daily. This year from January 1 to September 15 the daily average was 9.97, over average. "Our highest number in one day was 16," Thomson said.

Thomson also reported that they frequently hold prisoners for other facilities over night from time to time and due to this he is going to charge the other counties \$20 per inmate per night. They are only there for a short time and go out on the bus the next morning so it is no trouble to hold them and it creates good relations with neighboring counties and by charging the small fee will help our local sheriff's department.



Chris and Tina Tanner built their 2-story slab home with comfort, practicality and efficiency in mind. The Tanner' had some special features added as well. The floors have radiant heat and the master bathroom has a sauna.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

New home will be on display for Tour of Homes

By MIKE STEPHENS
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Six miles north of town, Chris and Tina Tanner have built their dream home. The Tanners started building their home in August of 2010, because they had outgrown the small 800 square foot farm house they were living in. These high school sweethearts have been married for 15 years and have two children, and were in desperate need for more space. So, Chris and Tina decided to build

the exact home they wanted, themselves. Having worked for Nelson Bros. Construction for 10 years and then five years for himself, Chris had the construction knowledge and experience to build his family's new home, but it was 10 years in the making. Tina chose the blueprint for the house and Chris completed the huge undertaking in March, 2012.

They built a beautiful, yet modest, home that focused on efficiency, (Tour - Continued on Page 5)

