

Tech talk with commissioners

By Cynthia Haynes
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"I talk tech," Shawn Mortensen warned the Norton County commissioners on Monday before going over some ideas for improving the county's computer systems.

"Sometimes," he said, "It just comes down to trust me and that's hard."

However, Mr. Mortensen said the county has the expertise of Alan Hale, the appraiser, who is pretty tech savvy.

Mr. Hale was at the meeting to visit about his department's computer needs and offer his assistance.

The county clerk's office is in pretty good shape for computers, Mr. Mortensen said. However, the appraiser's office has four systems that need replacing.

Mr. Mortensen suggested that the county come up with a comprehensive plan for computer replacements so that everything doesn't hit at once.

"We don't have to do anything right now," he said. "We just want to plan for the future."

There are several problems with older computers, he noted. Vendors stop upgrading and supporting the software and parts become difficult to obtain as the machines become obsolete and the manufacturer doesn't support them anymore.

Mr. Mortensen said he thought that the county should buy and run everything from a main server instead of having individual systems in every office.

He said while this may seem

scary, because as County Clerk Robert Wyatt pointed out if the server goes down, everything in the courthouse goes down. However, he said, in reality, the system is working well for others with very few problems. The server would have four hard drives and two power sources. If the county wants, it could also subscribe to two Internet servers so that if one goes down, it will have a backup there, he said.

The cost of a server would be between \$6,000 and \$10,000, he estimated.

He said the county has several options however.

No. 1: Do nothing. Just replace the systems as they fail.

The disadvantages of this is that its cheaper to replace several at once and the machines get slower as they age.

No. 2: Replace all XP systems. This way you can schedule and replace as time and money permit. The county gets about five years out of its IT products now, he said.

No. 3. Install a terminal server and purchase licenses. The advantage of this one is that you don't need to buy as much software and many offices can use minimum equipment.

Mr. Mortensen suggested that they could get a server and try out the appraisers office on it.

Mr. Wyatt said that the clerk's office has been forced to move to the Internet because many things that used to be done with pencil and paper are online only now.

Commissioner Charles Posson worried about security issues such as lost laptops but he

was assured that people in one office would not have access to data from another office.

Mr. Mortensen suggested that the commissioners talk to some businesses using a server system, like the banks, and allow the appraisers office to try it out.

Mr. Posson agreed that Mr. Hale was the most PC confident person he knew in the courthouse.

Mr. Mortensen said that he also wanted to talk to the commissioners about the county's web site, which he said, is badly in need of updating so the public can get good information about the county offices - who is in each department and what each does.

"We need to make a plan and follow through," Mr. Hale said adding that the website isn't a one time deal. "You have to feed it all the time. It's a living, breathing document," he said.

There are a few ways that the website can generate some revenue for the county, Mr. Hale said, but it will not be a money maker just a way to pay for some of the costs.

Mr. Mortensen said that he knows a couple of people who could redesign the web site at an affordable cost but that they would need someone from each county office to give them information and that's sometimes the hard part.

The commissioners decided to discuss the issue with their department heads at a meeting they plan to have on Wednesday, Nov. 13.

Program to improve workers health

By Cynthia Haynes
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Employers in Norton County will have a chance to help their employees become healthier through a new program sponsored by the Kansas Health Foundation.

Work Well KS is a program that is available to 10 communities a year, Norton County Health Nurse Gina Frack told the county commissioners during their meeting on Monday, November 4.

The idea, she said, is to improve the health of workers. Those who have a job, she noted, spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else so that's the best place to help them get healthier.

Also, she told the commissioners, those with self-funded health insurance, like the county, should see some premium benefits.

Ms. Frack said that she got training in Wichita and is working with the Norton Chamber of Commerce to present the seminar.

She said she hopes to have the seminar on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 16 and 17. The first day will be from 1 to 5:30 p.m. with a 10-minute midday break.

The second day should be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a 35 minute lunch break and two 10-minute breaks midmorning and midafternoon.

Ms. Frack said that she is looking for two people from the county and other employers to go to the meetings - a policy maker and a human resources person or someone with a passion for healthy workplaces. Both would need to attend both days, she said. There is no cost for the first two people from a company, she said, after that there will be a \$50 fee for each additional person.

There is a grant available, she said, to help employers get started making changes at their worksites to help improve employee health.

She said that the workshop is open to any business in the county.

Ms. Frack also talked to the commissioners about getting her department authorized to use social media. She had visited with them a few weeks ago about this subject and on Monday she brought them sample policies from other counties.

"If you want to quickly reach a lot of people," she said, its a good way to go.

County Clerk Robert Wyatt added that the state association for county clerks uses social media to reach its members.

"Our web site and everything is going to social media," he said.

Ms. Frack added that at least one immunization program she uses is on Facebook only. Because of the county policy, however, someone has to get the information at home and bring it back to the office.

The commissioners promised to look into the problem but Commissioner Charles Posson said that he worries that people will either go to inappropriate sites or be on social media for no work related things such as playing games while they should be working.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that Ms. Frack is busy giving flu shots. She said she's been going up and down the streets offering flu shots at businesses.

- Decided not to hold a meeting on Monday as it is Veterans' Day and the courthouse will be closed. The commissioners will meet on Wednesday for a meeting with department heads, however.

Oranges

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weekends. It is often hard to get the entire cast together at the same time due to after school activities, but they pull it together and make it work. Brandon Gay is in his third year of directing the drama club with his wife, Candice, volunteering as the artistic director.

There are five main characters in the play, the narrator played

by Neysa Carlson, the prince played by Steve Cummings, the evil witch is Skylar Davis, the king is portrayed by Jared Shelton and the jester is Cody O'Hare.

The tech manager, Leif Carlson and artistic manager Shauna Gibson, as well as the rest of the cast and crew put in tons of work to bring this to the community. "We have a big senior group this year with a lot of ex-

perience so we decided to go for it and do something very unique and take some risks we haven't taken in the past." Mr. Gay said. "This is a great group and it has been great to watch them grow as actors and performers. I have confidence in them because the talent has always been there," Gay said.

So be sure to mark your calendars and be sure to see one of this weekend's performances,

Governor

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hunters. On Friday, hunters will hone their shooting skills at the Governor's Sporting Clay Tournament from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on land near the Prairie Dog Golf Course. A meeting for hunters and guides will be followed by the governor's reception which will include a performance by Nashville recording artist Morgan Frazier.

"Governor's Hunt" on Saturday. Many landowners in both counties have offered their land for the Classic's hunters.

An awards dinner is the only event open to the public and will follow the hunt from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Norton National Guard Armory.

The Classic closes out with additional hunting on Sunday for those who want another opportunity to bag some birds. "I'm really looking forward

to the Third Annual Ringneck Classic this year in Norton," the governor said. "Kansas pheasants are wild, big, and second to none, and I can't wait to get out in the field again."

For information, contact Tara Vance of The Norton Area Chamber of Commerce, or Scott Sproul of the Norton City/County Economic Development office at 205 S. State Street in Norton, or e-mail them at nortoneda@ruraltel.net.

Crafty ideas...



Brittany Adams of Prairie Craft Circle shows her craft kit ideas to Sharon Schulze and Karen Glenn during the Norton Craft Fair that was held over the weekend. Five locations were filled with homemade as well as home based business items for sale. The weather was nice and the crowd came out in droves to attend.

- Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

Lions

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outside of the rear driver's side window it alerts those assisting to look for the information in the envelope in the glove box containing the medical information and photo.

The packets contain a medical form to be filled out, a yellow envelope and a window decal. The packets are free to anyone interested in the program and it is brought to you as a service from your local Lions Club. Boxler has spoken with local law enforcement, fire departments and EMS about the Kansas Yellow Dot program and has had a great response to it. More people need to be aware of this so that in the event of an emergency a life might be saved.

There are currently 10,000

yellow dots out there so far in Kansas. By utilizing this program it makes the jobs of those in the medical field much easier in helping victims in emergency situations. If you or someone you know could benefit from this program see Jon Boxler at the pancake feed or at Boxler Insurance Agency in Norton to pick up your packet.

The Norton Lions Club has 65 members and they meet the first and third Tuesday of the month at noon at Town and Country Kitchen and the board meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month also at Town and Country Kitchen at noon. To become a member one must be invited and wanting to serve the community. "I am proud to be a Lion," Roy Skrdlant said and Mr. Boxler agreed saying he

had been a member for 53 years. Throughout all those years the Lions Club has been very active in community projects by providing Christmas baskets filled with food for a holiday meal and gifts for the children to planting trees, building restrooms, constructing concession stands, picnic shelters, fences, footbridges, park benches and many more things, too long to list.

This international organization was started in 1917 to help serve the community and to serve humanity and the Norton Lions Club chapter has kept it going strong by providing so much for our small community. Look around and see what they have all done and, if you don't know ask one, get involved and help make Norton a better place.

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