

Cultural sensitivity ends idea for making graves

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year.

- Approved a beer license for T.J.'s Bar and T.J.'s Steakhouse, 402 S. State for Tammy Danner and Jana Keiswetter.
- "We're waiting a little longer to open the steakhouse because we want everything to be right," Ms. Danner told the board.
- Ms. Keiswetter said that they would be getting a liquor license later.
- Authorized the closing of Main Street from State Street between Russ' Jewelry and the First State Bank on the north and Moffet Drug on the south from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, for *The Norton Telegram's* Christmas on Us pro-

motion drawing.

- Decided to change the regular time for council meetings from 7:30 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month to 5:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesday.
- At the request of Councilman Ron Briery the ordinance on changing the meetings will not be published until after Dec. 17 so that the first Wednesday meeting will not be until Jan. 7.
- Meter reader Jim Miller has been named employee of the month for December.
- Were told that the city Christmas party will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 9, in the basement of Prairieland Electric. Councilman Jerry Hawks said that he was

against having the party because it is a bad use of public money.

- Learned that construction of the new dog pound is moving along and that it should have heat soon.
- Heard that the Season's Greetings banner, which was not put up last year due to road construction, will be put up this year.
- Received a letter from the sheriff notifying the city that he was canceling the city's contract on dispatch and jail services as of Dec. 1, 2004.
- Heard that the Public Safety Committee wants to reword the dangerous animal ordinance.
- Tabled a resolution to raise cable television rates.

Norton students doing well on national standardized tests

By VERONICA MONIER

School Counselor Bruce Poage gave the Norton School Board an update on the results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills at Monday night's meeting.

Mr. Poage said the tests aren't required, but are given for three reasons.

First, it gives the teachers and other faculty members a broader picture of how the students are doing, because it is a national test rather than a state test.

Second, because it's given every year to a certain grade level, the school faculty can track the students' progress from year to year.

Third, it helps with the school improvement plan as it gives another source of data.

He said the students scores are good, but told the board to keep in mind that one student or even three or four students can skew a class' score dramatically. The scores are also affected by test weariness and the mechanics of taking the tests.

"The more tests the students do, the harder it is to get them excited about doing their best," he said. "We spend a lot of time on these group tests. If not actually taking them, then getting ready to take them."

Mr. Poage said they were beginning to integrate on-line tests,

rather than giving out the paper and pencil tests. He said the students did equally well both ways.

In other business, the board:

- Appointed board members Anna Foley and Jennifer Terrell as its negotiating team for teaching contracts.
- Heard from Superintendent Greg Mann that the school will be hosting the Regional Wrestling Tournament on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 20-21. Mr. Mann said the tournament will begin at 2 p.m. on Feb. 20. Because of the large number of people and vehicles expected — 16 schools will be participating — the high school and junior high will be dismissed at 1 p.m. that day.
- Was given an update from Mrs. Terrell on the Kansas Association of School Boards convention, which was in Topeka on Dec. 5-7. Mrs. Terrell said that the two hot topics at the convention were non-resident enrollment and school district consolidation. She said listening to the problems other districts had made her realize how good Norton is.
- Heard from Mr. Mann that the new computers approved at the November meeting have arrived. Mr. Mann said the transition and shuffling of computers at Eisenhower Elementary is about

one-half finished, while the new mobile lab at the high school/junior high is ready to use.

- Heard from Mr. Mann that the personnel documents from the Kansas State Department of Education were reviewed. He said all district classes and courses are taught by certified teachers, and over 98 percent of all classes and courses are taught by instructors who meet the new federal definition of highly qualified. These percentages are above the state averages, which in turn are above the national averages.
- Was told by Mr. Mann that the district's new bus will be returning to Master's Transportation in Kearney on Monday and will be there through the Christmas break, to have previously agreed-upon work finished. Mr. Mann said they have been happy with it.
- Instructed Mr. Mann to contact the Kansas Association of School Boards asking for help to establish general district goals. The board could use those goals in the evaluation of the superintendent.
- Heard from Mr. Mann that repairs to the wall-sign at the high school have been completed and the bills have been sent to the insurance company for reimbursement.

County, city spar over dispatch services

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"We're dealing with the same problem that the city's dealing with," he said. "Rising health insurance costs."

He said the dispatchers don't make a lot of money and the county gives them good benefits as an incentive.

Salaries also have gone up since the contract was signed five years ago, Sheriff Thomson said. At one time the county was having trouble hiring dispatchers because the pay was so low.

Commission Chairman John Miller remembered the time when the only applicant for the job was a convicted felon.

Despite the letter, Sheriff Thomson said, the county wants to keep its contract with the city.

"We don't want to give the impression that the county wants to

split with the city on this," he said. "It wouldn't be good for the county or for the city."

Representatives from both have met several times in an attempt to get things straightened out.

A draft of a new contract is to be drawn up, so that negotiations can begin.



Richard Martin, Norton, is president of the Norton Golden Glow Club. He was checking out some of the gifts (above) Monday night at the club's annual Christmas party. He and Frosty kept a close eye on the presents and made sure everyone had a gift to take home. Eight residents of the Andbe Home joined the group for a potluck supper (below) and provided the entertainment. The Andbe Home group led the audience in a group participation number called, "Donner Is Sleeping". Santa Claus, disguised as Duane McEwen, made an appearance and presented a skit entitled, "Santa and the Christ Child". To wrap up the entertainment, the Andbe Home residents performed "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas".

— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts



Sheriff, commissioners discuss dispatch services

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Sheriff Troy Thomson can catch criminals and evildoers but he needed help Monday to explain why the costs of dispatching has gone up over the last five years. Sheriff Thomson came to the Norton County commissioners meeting on Monday with his figures asking for suggestions on how to explain to the City of Norton why its bill for dispatch services has gone up over the last several years.

The problem, he said, is wages and insurance. Both have risen dramatically over the last few years and, in order to keep his people, the sheriff has had to raise the pay rate of his help — both deputies and dispatchers.

Health insurance and benefits have skyrocketed, he said.

All these things have to be paid for and it is important to have well-trained help in the dispatch office.

When an emergency arrives the dispatchers have to be calm and effective. Commission Chairman John Miller agreed. He noted that last month when there was a big car chase going on U.S. 36, the dispatchers had to be talking to several agencies and patrol cars and writing down everything everyone said.

"I would rather be out in the field as a deputy than doing their job,"

he said. He advised the sheriff to write up his notes on cost increases on a single sheet so that it would be easy to follow when he presented his case to the city's finance committee.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Gave Emergency Medical Technician Andy Neilsen authority to get bids to buy several pagers for those without them and purchase a jump kit for a technician, who normally gets to the scene before the ambulance arrives.
- Received a thank you from Cynthia Schemper for allowing her to take the emergency medical technicians class. She will be helping with the bookwork for the ambulance service. She also suggested the service needs more continuing education classes to keep the technicians sharp and their certificates in date.
- Told Lenora school district bus driver Ernest Long that he should get together with Norton County Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan to get some gravel put on the hills west of Lenora.
- Were told there was supposed to be an inspection at the old landfill on Wednesday to check for cracks. The snowstorm that is expected to hit Eastern Kansas has

caused the inspection to be put off.

- Learned that most of the questions raised about the county's landfill application have been answered with the help of Pat Cox of BG Consultants.
- Heard from Mr. Brannan that he is still looking for a good, used Mack truck, that his people are doing road work and that a tarp has been put on a third trailer to haul sand.
- Passed a resolution to take the sheriff's department out of the direct health care provider status on the county's insurance due to federal regulations regarding privacy of health information.
- Learned from County Health Nurse Gina Frack that she is trying to make sure all her people get their comp time and vacations taken by the end of the year. She was reminded that employees

have to take their vacation time before the end of the year or lose it.

- Heard that the health department has billing problems with state Medicaid. The rules on home health have changed, there is no manual and it is getting hard to get paid from the state, Ms. Frack said.
- Received a visit and Christmas cheese and sausage gift packages from a representative of Penco Engineering. Mr. Miller gave his to the clerk's office staff.
- Reviewed bids to repair the Lenora ambulance, which struck a deer on Dec. 1. The commissioners accepted a bid from Gall Motors of Norton for \$1,237.85 for the repairs.
- Talked to Treasurer Cynthia Linner on how to handle outstanding checks. Ms. Linner will reissue checks and get the books cleaned up for the end of the year.

Viaduct work slowed by cold

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April when the weather warms up. During the final pouring, the overnight temperature has to be above 35 degrees for a week.

Other work after the bridge deck is complete includes laying asphalt and concrete bridge approaches, installing guard rails

and seeding. Mr. Schleicher gives a tentative completion date of July 1 for the entire project.

Capital Contractors of Lincoln, Neb., is the main contractor in charge of the \$5.7 million viaduct project. The new bridge will be wider, including 24 feet of driving lanes and 16 feet of shoulders.

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Sammy's Missing—

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He's a chihuahua, white with brown spots, was wearing a red collar with green ID tag. He's very friendly and we all miss him—even his friend the cat. Call 871-1765, work 877-3351 ask for Ed or 877-5851 ask for Tanya. Last seen by NCHS Tech Bldg. Please call us with ANY information. Home 874-4014.




