

Tuesday
November 28, 2006

Norton, Kansas
Home of Caroline Austerman

Briefly

Santa's coming back to town

If you missed Santa last Friday, don't fret. He and Mrs. Claus will be back in Norton from 6 to 7 p.m. this Thursday night on the lawn of the Norton County Courthouse in his gingerbread house. After meeting with Santa, the whole family can jump in the sleigh and take a ride around the block with Santa's elves. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be coming to town from 6 to 7 p.m. every Thursday until Christmas — Dec. 7, 14 and 21.

Surplus food to be distributed

Government surplus food will be distributed Friday and Saturday through the Norton County Senior Citizens. Food being distributed includes: cranberry juice, dark red kidney beans, dried cherries and two percent milk. Distribution will take place Friday, Dec. 1 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Alma Senior Center; from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Norton Senior Center; and from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Lenora Senior Center. On Saturday, Dec. 2, distribution will be held at 2:30 p.m. at the library in Clayton. For more information, call Ramona Pabian at the Norton Senior Center, 877-5352.

Quilters meeting Dec. 4 in Norton

Heritage Quilt Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 4 at Prairie Land Electric. Members whose last name starts with the letters "M" through "Z" are to bring finger foods for the tasting table. Members are reminded to bring their fabric bingo card, buttons and a gift for the gift exchange. Pam Cuthbertson and Jan Volgamore are in charge of the program. Hostesses are Pam Cuthbertson, Jerris McMullen and Judi Carlyle.

Weather

Forecast:
Tonight — Partly cloudy and colder. Breezy with lows around 17. **Wednesday** — Much colder and mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow. Highs around 20. **Wednesday Night** — Mostly cloudy and colder with a 20 percent chance of snow in the evening. Lows around 6. **Thursday** — Partly cloudy in the morning then clearing.

Kingham report:
Friday Low 35, High 52
Saturday Low 25, High 48
Sunday Low 27, High 35
Monday Low 23, High 30
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

O God, thank you for reaching out to us with your comforting love at those moments when we need your encouragement. **Amen**

Santa Claus is coming to town



Santa and Mrs. Claus had their sleigh stop in town Friday night so they could see what needed to be made in Santa's shop for the children of Norton. Garrett Esslinger (above) told Santa he wants a monster truck for Christmas. Santa and Mrs. Claus also took the orders of Rory Campbell (top left) and Ashton Saechol (bottom left). — Telegram photos by Veronica Monier

Student admits to making bomb threats

By VERONICA MONIER
A Norton student admitted to making bomb threats at the high school at his arraignment last week. Norton County Attorney Karen Griffiths said Justin Gibson, 15, was arrested and charged with two counts of felony criminal threat on Nov. 7 and was arraigned last Tuesday. The threats were written on the walls of two separate bathrooms on Oct. 30 and Nov. 1. The threats, which had different messages, caused the school district to evacuate its buildings and call in the Kansas Highway Patrol's bomb-sniffing

dogs. Both searches turned up no bombs, or bomb materials. At the time, Superintendent Greg Mann said they were sure the threats were just a sick prank, but decided to err on the side of caution and so, called in the Patrol's dogs. The first threat was found after school was dismissed, but the second was found while school was in session, and so the students were evacuated according to the district's evacuation procedures. Mrs. Griffiths said Mr. Gibson pled guilty to the first count of felony criminal threat; the second count was dismissed by the state as a part of a plea agreement.

The court, she said, has ordered a presentencing evaluation from the Court Services Department. Court Service Officer Cindy Boller will make a recommendation based on the evaluation, but Magistrate Judge Debra Anderson has the final say as to what the sentence will be. Mrs. Griffiths said because Mr. Gibson is not an adult, there is no sentencing guidelines and so a wide range of actions can occur. Mr. Gibson could be sentenced to one or more punishments, including being released into the custody of a parent, residential facility, Juvenile Justice Author-

ity, sanction house, community-based program or a juvenile correctional facility. He could get probation, have his driver's license suspended, be placed under house arrest, or be ordered to attend counseling, mediation or educational programs. His parents could be ordered by the court to take parenting classes. Mrs. Griffiths said the maximum fine that can be made is \$200. Also, she said, the school district will have to write a victim impact statement and will have to file it with the court for restitution. Mr. Gibson could be fined and have to (Continued on Page 5)

Hospital juggles budget to get furniture

By VERONICA MONIER
With a little financial juggling, the Norton County Hospital is buying new furniture for three public areas. Hospital Administrator Rich Miller reviewed the capital asset (equipment) budget with the hospital board at its last meeting. The list, he said, included patient monitors and defibrillators, patient lifts, new furniture for the employee dining room, Doctor's Clinic privacy renovations, a new telephone system, computer updates, new room temperature controls, and the physical therapy renovation. Of that, he said they budgeted \$40,000 in the nursing department for patient monitors and defibrillators and another \$1,600 in the cardiac rehabilitation department for another defibrillator. But, he said, they managed to get all of the defibrillators and patient monitors for \$27,211. The patient lifts cost \$2,911; \$9,000 was budgeted for them in the 2008 fiscal year budget.

He said they won't be updating the telephone lines or hospital computers this year and they probably won't do the Doctor's Clinic renovation project. So far, he said, they haven't done anything with the physical therapy department renovation or with the room temperature control project. What they have had to do, he said, was put in a new employee parking lot, which wasn't budgeted. It cost \$42,400 to asphalt it and another \$6,845 to redo the subsurface. He said in the 2007 fiscal year, the hospital has \$349,000 budgeted for capital assets, or equipment. So far, the hospital has spent \$97,000, which includes the unbudgeted parking lot. Board President Dennis Gilhousen said that brought them back to the question of what to do about the furniture issue. They had several options, he said. They could increase the \$6,000 to buy some or all of the furniture, or they could not buy furni-

ture at all, or they could wait until next year when it could be budgeted. He said the hospital has spent about \$15,000 less than what they budgeted for, but that was offset by the \$48,000 they spent on the parking lot. Although, he said, he didn't know if the lot really qualified as an equipment purchase. Mr. Miller said he would still like to see the hospital get furniture. But, he said, he realized it wasn't budgeted as it should have been and he understands that the board feels strongly about that. "Maybe we can put it in next year's budget," he said. Mr. Gilhousen said they were basically looking at something that exceeds the budget by \$16,000. The furniture proposal was for just over \$22,000. Board member Warren White suggested that they wait for a couple of months and see what else they buy and then make a decision. (Continued on Page 5)

Landowners need to report holdings

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Act requires that holdings, acquisitions, dispositions, leases and land use changes be reported within 90 days by foreign landowners, Vesta Hobbs, Norton County executive director, said. A person with dual citizenship should also report as a foreign landowner, she said. "A failure to report could result in a civil penalty of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the interests held in the agricultural land," she cautioned. It is the responsibility of the landowner, or anyone acting on behalf of the landowner, to timely report, she said. Forms to report are available from any local Farm Service Agency office.