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Tuesday  
January 2, 2007

Norton, Kansas  
Home of Cindy Field

Briefly

Bus company  
opens doors

Everyone is invited to take a tour of the new bus company that has set up its operation in, what was once, the Jennings School. An open house is planned for 3 p.m. Saturday at BCI International, 307 S. Pennsylvania Ave.

Quilters will  
meet Monday

The Heritage Quilt Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, in the basement meeting room of Prairie Land Electric. This is a change of date for the regular meeting because of the New Year's holiday. The program will feature Round Table Presentations by Kay Strevey, Freda Weyand and Lavon McCormack. Hostesses will be Anise Gill, Audrey Wiltfong, Vadis Madden and Ilene Ankenman.

Knowledge to be  
tested Saturday

Trivia Night will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday night in the Almena high school gymnasium. The night is sponsored by the Almena Congregational Church. Get a team together and call Kirk Kasson at 785-669-2453 to enter the competition.

Credit Union  
holds meeting

The United Northwest Federal Credit Union of Norton and Oberlin will be holding its annual meeting, beginning at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 15 at the St. Francis Parish Hall, 104. S. Wabash. Members should R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, Jan. 10.

Weather  
Forecast:

**Tonight** — Partly cloudy with lows around 20. **Thursday** — Partly cloudy with highs in the lower 40s. **Thursday Night** — Partly cloudy with lows in the lower 20s. **Friday** — Mostly cloudy and brisk with a chance of light snow. **Friday Night** — Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of light snow.

Kingham report:

Friday ..... Low 30, High 34, .80 Rain  
Saturday ..... Low 24, High 33  
Sunday ..... Low 18, High 28  
12" of Snow during the weekend period  
Monday ..... Low 7, High 25  
Tuesday ..... Low 6, High 27  
(Readings taken at the Fred and Carolyn Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear God, give us faith to trust your good intent for your world and courage to act to make those intentions a reality.  
**Amen**

It means what it says



This was a sight seen all over northwest Kansas following the ice and snow storm that hit the area Dec. 29. This sign was parked at the junction of US Highway 36 and Kansas 383 at what is more commonly known as "Six Mile Corner".  
— Photo courtesy of Jim Plotts

Winter weather cripples western Kansas

By VERONICA MONIER

Norton was lucky in the grand scheme of things when another winter storm struck western Kansas this weekend. Tales of towers and powerlines collapsing; lack of heat, electricity, running water and telephone services; and streets that were either too icy or too snow packed to dig out could be heard all across the area. Norton wasn't struck hard though, not as hard as a lot of other towns in the area. The storm came calling Friday afternoon with rain, then snow, then ice. It continued to alternate between freezing rain and sleet on Saturday, but was relatively clear on Sunday, which gave crews a chance to get a little more done. Roads going out of town were closed as ice and snow did their damage. In town, Norton received about two inches of ice and another inch or so of snow. City Administrator Rob Lawson said Norton had tree limbs down, a few power

outages Sunday, and a water leak Tuesday. He said city crews have been plowing and graveling the streets. But, he said, graveling is pretty much all they can do for the moment until the ice melts, because it is just too thick. For Prairie Land Electric, getting power back on is going very slowly, said Director of Operations Earl Hansen. "We're trying to cover a tremendous area," he said. "A thousand to 1,200 poles

went down in Norton, Decatur, Graham, Rooks and Phillips counties." The most damage, he said, was done to Graham and Phillips counties. He said power has been wiped out in Prairie View, Long Island, Hill City and Morland, just to name a few. Norton County had a few outages in the rural areas, but they are, for the most part, back on again. The electric company is getting help from four contractors who were already

here helping to fix the damage from last year's storm. The small crews called in more workers, giving Prairie Land help from about 100 extra people from as far away as Oklahoma, Missouri and Louisiana. Early Saturday morning around 1 or 2 a.m. is when power started to fail, he said. That first night, crews worked around the clock. Now they are working about 14 hours a day to get things up and running again. A shelter was set up at the National Guard Armory in Norton. But, no one came in so the shelter shut down, said Sergeant Bill Neff. People are now being directed to Long Island. Diana Hanchett, manager of the Phillips County Red Cross, said shelters have been set up at the Long Island Community Center and the Prairie View Senior Center where people can find somewhere warm to stay and hot food to eat.

Almena area is without power

By CAROLYN PLOTTS

The city of Almena lost power at 3 p.m. Saturday during the heavy ice and snow storm that blanketed the area. Fire Chief Leo Graham said he does not expect power to be restored until the weekend. Chief Graham said seven or eight houses have had power lines snapped by

falling tree branches. The good news is that there have been no injuries connected with the storm. "Our major concern has been the water supply," said Mr. Graham. He said the Norton National Guard brought in a 40,000 watt generator to power the city's water pumps.

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Biodiesel plant on the mind  
of development board

By VERONICA MONIER

Several experts in biofuel were at the last Norton County Economic Development meeting to discuss the possibility of building a biodiesel plant in Norton County. Jeff Hofaker, the Phillipsburg economic development director, said when getting something like this started, people have to look at the big picture. You have to plan it, do a feasibility study, do the actual project, and overcome any obstacles. Mr. Hofaker helped the Prairie Horizon Agri-Energy group get the ethanol plant started in Phillips County. Economic development covers five areas, he said. It creates businesses, expands businesses, retains businesses, recruits businesses and helps with com-

munity improvement. The ethanol plant, he said, wasn't recruited; it was created. Ethanol plants bring money back into a community's economy. "That's what you want from economic development," he said. "You want it to bring money back into the economy." The average wage of an ethanol worker is \$41,000, which raises the pay wage bar in the area. That's also a good thing, he said. "This project helped people start working together on other projects," he said. "It's bringing life back into the community." James Jirak, with United Bio Energy Biodiesel out of Wichita, said biodiesel

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City of Norton get titles  
for fire-damaged property

By VERONICA MONIER

The City of Norton is now in possession of the fire damaged property downtown. City Attorney Karen Griffiths said the city has the titles for the property and the agreement has been signed by both the city and the Hanes, who previously owned it. She said they are waiting on the county's help to start the clean-up process. Once begun, she said it should take about three or four weeks to finish it. Councilwoman Donna Foley said there have been a lot of people interested in getting bricks from the property. Councilman Ron Briery asked if it was a liability issue if people went down to the site and got them. Mrs. Griffiths said she would have to check into it. There would definitely have to be someone there to supervise and they

may not be allowed behind the fence. In other business, the council: • Heard from Councilwoman Elaine Mann that the police department has been interviewing possible candidates for the open positions in the department. • Set a Personnel Committee meeting at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 4. • Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. • Held a budget amendment hearing. There were no comments from the public. After the hearing, the council approved the amended budget. The amendment increases the council's budget authority in the electric fund because of increased costs with the new contract with Sunflower Electric. The city has the money to cover the increases, but needs the increased budget authority to do any-

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