



Michelle Armbrister, founder of Mittens For Kittens, wrapped voting boxes Tuesday afternoon for the Pet Photo Contest. The money received from the contest will go towards purchasing supplies and medicines for animals in the Norton Animal Shelter.

— Telegram photo by Brandy Leroux

## Cute? Funny? Ugly? You decide

By BRANDY LEROUX  
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With the holiday season approaching, there are contests galore for adults. There are contests for kids. And there's even a contest for pets.

Michelle Armbrister, founder of Mittens for Kittens, is holding a contest for the cutest/funniest and ugliest/scariest pets in Norton.

Mrs. Armbrister started Mittens for Kittens, which is operated from her home, about five years ago.

"I wanted to bring awareness about animals in the shelter needing to find good homes and to buy medicines and supplies for them while they're waiting to find a new family," said Mrs.

Armbrister.

All money that is donated to Mittens for Kittens is used to buy collars, leashes, medicines and other supplies for the animals in the Norton Animal Shelter.

Pictures of several cats, dogs, and even a bird have been submitted to be voted on.

"We have a poster board with all the animals' pictures on it, and there are numbers next to the pictures. There will be boxes with numbers on them, and you vote by putting a penny into the box with the number of the pet you think should win," said Mrs. Armbrister.

Of course, there is no limit to how many times a person can vote for a pet.

The pet with the most votes in its category wins.

The poster boards and voting boxes will be at the Norton Animal Health Center and at Twice Sold Treasures in downtown Norton.

In the past, to raise money for Mittens for Kittens, Mrs. Armbrister held coloring contests, stocking decorating contests, stories about pets contests, and cookie decorating contests.

"We also will gladly accept any gently used collars, leashes, or any other pet supplies," said Mrs. Armbrister.

The last day to cast a vote for the pets is Monday Dec. 22.

The winners for each category will be announced the next day.

## Wind energy getting a step closer

By BRANDY LEROUX  
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Norton County is a step closer to having wind farms. On Dec. 17, counties interested in being a part of the Northwest Kansas Renewable Energy Collaborative will meet at the Colonial Steakhouse in Oakley at 10 a.m.

Dan Hartman, Logan County Economic Development Director, began investigating wind energy for Logan County and realized that the issue was too large for a single county to address alone. He contacted surrounding counties and said most of the counties in northwest Kansas are interested, as well as a few in southwest Kansas.

"I'm impressed with the interest of counties and their commitment to the collaborative," said Diane Becker, Norton County Economic Development Director, who was appointed by the Norton County Commissioners to represent Norton

County in the collaborative. "I feel we have a solid base to go forward with on the more substantive issues."

Norton County commissioners signed a declaration of commitment on Oct. 27.

"The declaration of commitment didn't require any kind of financial commitment, just a commitment to proceed with starting a collaborative," said Miss Becker.

The group has met once since then, and included representatives from commercial wind companies, community wind companies, government experts, attorneys, environmental organizations and leadership specialists in the meeting.

"We want to avoid a conflict like Lincoln and Ellsworth counties had. One farmer's land crossed county lines," said Miss Becker. "There were different regulations in place for the different counties, and it was a difficult situation. If we get

all the counties together to agree on rules and regulations, we can avoid things like that. Some of the attorneys were from Ellsworth and Lincoln counties."

The meeting on Dec. 17 is the next step in the process, the developmental stage. A steering committee of one person per committed county will discuss and suggest which direction the group should move into to best benefit the counties. Some of the aspects to consider are education, leasing, zoning and transmission lines.

"Dan Hartman is already working towards the education by hosting speakers at the meetings and also by compiling a desk guide for county commissioners on the many, many considerations of wind energy," said Miss Becker. "He is now working on a leasing guide for landowners to ensure that each one understands what issues to consider when signing a lease and to ensure equitable dealings."

## Senator addresses hot button issues

By BRANDY LEROUX  
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United States Senator Sam Brownback stopped in at the Town and Country Kitchen in Norton on Wednesday morning to talk about the economy, the bail out, and even a little about the future of agriculture in Kansas.

Sen. Brownback said the gross domestic product sees a downturn about every decade, much like the savings and loan crisis or the farm crisis of the 1980's, or the dot-com bubble burst of the 90's.

"It's too much money chasing too few deals," said Sen. Brownback. "Companies giving home mortgages for zero down to people who don't have a steady source of income or don't make enough to pay for the house."

Sen. Brownback said he really doesn't think the country will go into another "Great Depression," and that the recession will eventually turn around. Kansas' junior senator said there are four states primarily responsible for the economic issues we see now: Arizona, California, Florida and Nevada. And that so far, only one bank has been lost in this current crisis.

"The system is built to spend, not to save," he said. "Don't give up hope. We're in a difficult spot, but if we just keep moving forward, we can get through this."

Sen. Brownback said Kansas exports are on the rise, mainly

in the aerospace and agriculture fields, and passed around a T-shirt made of soybeans, a piece of carpet made out of corn, and a piece of half-wool, half-corn cloth. He said agriculture doesn't just mean food, there are other ways to use the products we grow in Kansas.

He then answered questions from the group gathered.

Mary Goddard, from Morland, told the senator about a student from Italy who wants to go to Kansas schools, but is unable to because getting a student visa requires filling out a form that no one she has spoken to has been able to locate. Sen. Brownback said getting a visa legally is very difficult, but that he would try to find the form for her.

Ray Mizell, Norton, asked "How do we stop the bail outs?"

"I don't know," the senator said. "Where do you draw the line? Who decides what company is important enough or big enough for a bail out? One thing we know is the bail out has not stimulated the credit industry."

Sen. Brownback said he has tried to cut spending at the federal level for years, and is proposing using the base-cutting procedure to cull other federal programs.

Kirk Kasson, Norton, asked "Why is the Farm Bill called the Farm Bill?"

Sen. Brownback answered, "So it will pass." After some

laughs, the senator said the farm bill covers many things, and many more things are added to it because it will pass in the vote, but only about 16 percent of it goes to farmers.

Carolyn Applegate, Norton County commissioner-elect, asked if there is ever going to be drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge or off-shore drilling.

Senator Brownback said he highly doubts we will ever drill in the refuge, though off-shore drilling is possible.

"I think we can responsibly drill for oil in both places," he said. "Wind is also a great resource in Kansas, and we're looking at a revolving loan fund for communities to borrow the money to put up turbines and then pay back the loan over time."

He said Pratt Community College recently put up three small turbines and they have reduced their electric bill by \$1,000 a month. "It won't be long before these turbines pay for themselves."

Sen. Brownback said he signed a term limit agreement, so this is his last term as senator, and that he will be running for governor in 2010; also that he is trying to prevent the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay from being transferred to Fort Leavenworth.

Sen. Brownback closed by saying about the economy, "We can be bitter, or we can get better."

## School menus

### Tuesday, Dec. 9

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Waffles, syrup, hash browns, fruit punch, cereal and milk — Lunch — Parmesan chicken, french bread, buttered green beans, pineapple ring and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Breakfast pocket, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Macaroni and cheese, green beans, french bread, applesauce, brownie, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Banana spears, apple wedge, oatmeal muffin square, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, grape juice and milk — Lunch — Corn dog, tater tots, baby carrots, fruit cocktail, cookie and milk.

### Wednesday, Dec. 10

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Breakfast casserole, peach slices, cereal, toast and milk — Lunch — Soft shell taco, tossed salad with dressing, buttered broccoli, frosted pear and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Yogurt, bagel and cream cheese, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Chicken alfredo, carrot sticks, bread, fruit, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Sausage pancake stick, warm maple syrup, strawberry fruit cup, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, apple juice and milk — Lunch — Scalloped chicken, corn, sweetheart pears, celery stick, dinner roll and milk.

### Thursday, Dec. 11

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Pancake on a stick, syrup, chilled apricots, cereal and milk — Lunch — Chicken patty on a bun, mashed potatoes, dill spear, buttered spinach, banana cream pie and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Egg muffin sandwich, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Beef nachos, shredded cheese, peas, blonde brownie, fruit, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Shipwreck, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, orange juice and milk — Lunch — Beef burrito, cheesy broccoli, rosy apple sauce, blonde brownies and milk.

### Friday, Dec. 12

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Sausage gravy with biscuits, cereal, apple juice and milk — Lunch — Chili soup, crackers, carrot and celery sticks, cheese sticks, cinnamon roll and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Monkey bread, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Chicken and noodles, whipped potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower salad, french bread, cherry delight, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Hot ham slice, hash brown patty, peaches, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, apple juice and milk — Lunch — Turkey and noodles, whipped potatoes, green beans, peaches, dinner roll and milk.

### Monday, Dec. 15

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Cinnamon raisin biscuit, scrambled eggs, apple wedges, cereal and milk — Lunch — Pizza, tossed salad with dressing, buttered green beans, fruit cup and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Breakfast round, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Steak fingers, whipped potatoes with gravy, carrot sticks, french bread with margarine, mandarin cake with whipped topping, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Breakfast burrito, fruit cocktail, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, apple juice and milk — Lunch — Baked ham, scalloped potatoes, baby carrots, pineapple chunks, dinner roll and milk.

### Tuesday, Dec. 16

Northern Valley — Breakfast — Sausage, cheese biscuit, hash browns, cereal, milk and grape juice — Lunch — Chicken strips, french bread, tater tots, buttered beets, chocolate cake and milk.

Norton Jr./Sr. High — Breakfast — Pizza squares, fruit or juice, or cereal and toast with margarine and jelly, and milk — Lunch — Pigs in a blanket, coleslaw, frozen peas, jell-o with whipped topping, or chef salad, and milk.

Eisenhower Elementary — Breakfast — Blueberry muffin, peaches, or cereal and toast with peanut butter, orange juice and milk — Lunch — Lasagna, tossed salad, peaches, garlic bread and milk.

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