

THE NORTON TELEGRAM



Friday
October 14, 2011

Briefly

Hamburger feed to be held Sunday

The First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees will hold a Hamburger Feed this Sunday at the Fellowship Hall of the church at noon. The cost is a free-will donation and proceeds from the event go to Missions and Ministries.

Blood drive moved to the 4-H building

The American Red Cross Blood Drive on Tuesday, Oct. 18 has been moved from the Armory to the 4-H Building. The drive will still be held from noon to 6 p.m., but will be at the 4-H Building.

Music concert to take place Tuesday

On Tuesday, Oct. 18, the Eisenhower Elementary third and fourth graders will present a music concert. The concert is planned for 7 p.m. at the East Campus Auditorium.

Auxiliary bake sale set for Thursday

The American Legion Auxiliary will hold a bake sale on Thursday, Oct. 20. Some of the products offered will be pies, cakes, cookies and breads. The sale is planned from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Legion Dining Room.

Sons of the Legion to hold trap shoot

On Oct. 22, the Norton Sons of the American Legion will host an SAL five-stand trap shoot at the Norton Black Powder Range at 10 a.m. Kids shoot free on that day.

Markets

Friday, October 14, 2011

Wheat	\$6.19
Milo	\$5.70
Soybeans	\$11.49
Corn	\$6.19

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Tonight - Mostly clear with lows in the upper 30s. Saturday - Sunny and warmer with highs in the lower 80s. Saturday Night - Partly cloudy and not as cool. Lows in the upper 40s. Sunday - Partly sunny and cooler with highs in the mid 60s. Sunday Night - Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of light rain.

Kingham Report

Tuesday, October 11Low 48, High 65
Wednesday, Oct. 12Low 49, High 69
Thursday, October 13 ...Low 39, High 73
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear God, help us to see how great your love is for us. Teach us to depend on you, to trust in you, and to treasure and proclaim your faithfulness. Amen

Children get fire safety education

Since this week was National Fire Prevention Week, the Norton City Fire Department put on a presentation for the students at Eisenhower Elementary school on Thursday. The first activity was a short film about Sparky the Fire Dog and a rogue robot. Lessons about fire safety were presented in the film. Next, fireman Tyler Burns showed the students what he looks and sounds like once he is in his full fireman's gear. All the students were then invited outside to look at the new fire truck and the rescue truck used by the City. Each student walked away with a better understanding of fire safety, respect for what our local firefighters do, a water bottle, sucker and a bag of goodies.

- Telegram photo by Dana Paxton



Norton district removed from watch list

By Carleen Bell
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Thanks to favorable test scores and achievement data across the district, Norton Community School District officials reported this week that the school district has been removed from the academic watch list set by No Child Left Behind legislation.

Norton's Curriculum Coordinator Jeremy Hawks reported to the Board of Education Monday evening that with standardized test data from the 2010-2011 school year, students across the district scored well enough in reading and math tests to make Adequate

Yearly Progress. That achievement was enough to bring the district back into good standing and complete compliance with federal regulations.

Hawks reported that the district had been on the watch list, which serves as an early warning for districts not meeting achievement standards, because the district's Special Education sub-group didn't meet proficiency standards. The new data, though, was enough to eliminate the warning.

Each spring students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 take the Kansas State Assessment tests, the results of which are reported to state education

officials.

According to test score data from the district, 89.2 percent of all students in the district tested at or above a level that indicates they are proficient in reading and 89.5 percent tested at or above proficiency in math. Standardized test scores in those two subjects are key indicators of proficiency and weigh heavily on achievement and proficiency data.

The test data is also broken down into sub-groups, which include students of low socio-economic status and students with disabilities. Gender is also considered a sub-group.

Though the students with disabilities met proficiency requirements for the year in reading, the sub-group is considered proficient with "safe harbor" status, or the status of "proficient with growth." Though the group didn't reach basic proficiency levels, the growth from the previous year was enough to be considered proficient.

In order to receive safe harbor status, the percent of students in the group

scoring below standard has to decrease by 10 percent from the previous year, which Hawks said was a "huge gain" in the Special Education sub-group this year.

"Not only did the sub-group in (Special Education) meet this goal, but we increased our passing rate by 26.8 percent from the previous year," Hawks said.

Norton Community School District Superintendent Greg Mann explained that the district staff worked hard to help bring the district back into good standing with test scores. The district purchased learning software to help students and teachers prepare for the content of the tests and sent teachers to workshops and professional development seminars.

"We're very happy with the test results," Mann said. "The scores are an indication that our students and teachers took the tests very seriously and focused on the importance of the scores."

New regulations that affect graduation rates

By Carleen Bell
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Thanks to a change in the way the district is required to calculate graduation rates, the Norton Community School district has recently seen a drop in the percentage of students who are considered "graduates" from the Norton Community High School.

High School Guidance Counselor Shane Miller reported to the USD 211 Board of Education Monday evening that effective in the 2009-2010 school year, the United States Department of Education implemented a universal formula for states and school districts across the nation to calculate graduation rates. The change was necessary, Miller said, because each state had slightly different variations for calculating graduation and dropout rates and federal education authorities wanted to standardize the process.

The new formula has been dubbed the four-year adjusted cohort calculation. Though the new calculation includes some variables, the new formula is essentially the number of students who graduated in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier (with adjustments for students who transfer into or out of the district).

The new formula is different from previous calculations, primarily because of the "exit codes" that school officials are required to document for students who leave the district in any manner. In previous calculations, for example, students who earned a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or became home-schooled students would have been counted into the district's graduation rates. Under the

new calculations, however, those students don't get to be counted.

The new exit codes are more strict than previous calculations and students must meet one of the following criteria to be counted as graduates in a district's percentage: transfer to a public school in Kansas, transfer to a public school in another state, transfer to an accredited private school, transfer to a juvenile correctional facility where education services are provided or move to a foreign country. Student death also counts as an acceptable exit code.

Because of those changes, Miller explained, the percentage of students Norton gets to count as graduates has declined since the new regulations took effect. In 2008-2009, for example, Norton's graduation rate was calculated at 88.7 percent, well above the national target of 80 percent, and in 2009-2010, the rate was calculated at 93 percent. Had the district been using the newly-implemented guidelines, though, the rates would have been at 76.9 percent and 84 percent for those two years.

Miller explained that one of the challenges with the new system is tracking the movement of some students, particularly those who frequently transfer schools. Though less of an issue for small districts like Norton, schools in cities with big schools may have a harder time tracking where students go when they leave the school, thus creating difficulty in using the correct exit codes.

With the changes, many districts across the nation will see a dramatic decrease in graduation rates, which Miller said may lead to an adjustment to the way rates are calculated, though no plans have been made yet for possible changes.

Norton schools earn standard of excellence designation

By Carleen Bell
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Thanks to test scores from the 2010-2011 state assessments, all three of the buildings in the Norton Community School District have been awarded the state Standard of Excellence award from state education officials.

According to Norton's Curriculum Director Jeremy Hawks, the Standard of Excellence designation is awarded each year to school districts across the state that have enough students that meet or exceed standards in the standardized tests each spring.

At Eisenhower Elementary, the designation was awarded in reading to grades 4-6. Grades 3,4 and 6 also earned the designation in math. The Eisenhower Elementary earned the

building-wide excellence designation in reading, math and science.

The Norton Junior High earned the designation in grades 7 and 8 for reading, which earned the school a building-wide designation for reading. The junior high also earned a building-wide excellence designation in science.

Finally, the Norton Community High School earned a building-wide designation in reading.

Hawks reported that the Standard of Excellence is relatively competitive among school districts, but the Norton district is usually competing for the award each year. For each year the district earns the designation, the certificates are printed and hung along the walls of the school buildings.

Legion commander to visit Norton

The American Legion Post #63 in Norton will host the National Commander Fang Wong on Tuesday, Oct. 18 on the Commander's five-day tour of Kansas.

Wong will hold a reception at 10:15 a.m. at the Legion post at 1120 N. Norton. During his tour of the state, the Commander will visit 10 American Legion posts and Fort Riley.

Born in Canton, China, Wong

immigrated to the United States at the age of 12 in 1960 and became a naturalized citizen in 1963. He volunteered for the US Army, serving 24 months in Vietnam and retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer in 1989. He and wife, Barbara, have one son.

All American Legion members, veterans and guests are invited to hear the Commander speak on Legion programs and issues concerning veterans and our nation.

