

THE NORTON TELEGRAM



WEBSITE: nwkansas.com 12 PAGES

Friday

December 30, 2011

May 2012 be filled with all things good for you and your loved ones.

-Norton Telegram staff- Briefly

Pigskin winners asked to claim prizes

Several winners from the Norton Telegram's Pigskin Pick-Em contest have not picked up their scrip money from the Norton Telegram. The winners who need to claim their prizes are: -Stacy Area -Jennifer Boller -Len Coady -Brenda Husted -Abby Rice -Joni Shellito -Diane Smith -Kurt Vollerston The money expires at the end of February, so winners are encouraged to claim their prizes as soon as possible.

Telegram office will be closed Monday

The Norton Telegram office will be closed Monday for the New Year's holiday. The office will re-open at 8 a.m. on Tuesday.

Medical clinic to be closed Monday

The Norton Medical Clinic will be closed Monday for the New Year's holiday.

City office to be closed for New Year's

The Norton City Office will be closed Monday for the New Year's holiday. Monday's refuse route will be picked up Thursday, Jan. 5.

Markets

Friday, Dec. 30, 2011

Wheat\$6.37
Milo\$5.90
Soybeans\$11.02
Corn\$6.23

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

SATURDAY: Mostly sunny, with a high near 55. Windy, with a west wind 5 to 10 mph becoming northwest between 25 and 30 mph. **SUNDAY:** Sunny, with a high near 40. Breezy, with a northwest wind between 15 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph. **MONDAY:** Sunny, with a high near 39.

Kingham Report

Tuesday, Dec. 27 Low 22, High 47
Wed., Dec. 28 Low 27, High 52
Thursday, Dec. 29 Low 35, High 65
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Open our eyes, O Lord, to see you in new life as it comes. Amen



'A rough draft of history'

Storms leave path of destruction

By Carleen Bell
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Leaving a path of destruction across the county, a series of several severe thunderstorms and tornadoes swept across northwest Kansas on June 20.

After the storms, the National Weather Service office in Goodland reported that the storms hit areas of Wallace, Logan, Sheridan, Cheyenne, Gove, Graham, Dundy, Norton and Red Willow counties.

The storms in Norton County included at least eight separate tornadoes spotted by citizens, trained weather spotters and law enforcement officials.

Even with extensive property damage, particularly northeast of Alma where at least one house was reduced to a pile of rubble and another had a portion of its roof torn off. Local emergency response personnel said that no major injuries were reported as a result of the storms.

"We didn't have any patients to transport at all," said Jane Wyatt, Norton County EMS Director. "We triaged injuries on the scene and all the patients were code green, which means their injuries weren't severe enough for them to be transported to a hospital."

Though no serious injuries were reported, at least one Alma family narrowly escaped a tragic situation when a tornado struck their home northeast of Alma on Highway 383.



People affected by the destruction left in the wake of the June 20 storms assess the damage to a house just northeast of Alma. The house was ripped from its foundation and destroyed by a tornado the afternoon of June 20.

-Telegram photo by Carleen Bell (Storms - Continued on Page 5)

Blue Jay wrestlers win state tourney

By Dick Boyd
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Coach Bill Johnson's senior dominated Norton Community High School wrestling team won their second straight Class 3-2-1A State Wrestling Championship during competition at the end of February in Gross Memorial Coliseum in Hays.

In winning the Regional Championship the weekend before in Goodland, the Blue Jays qualified seven wrestlers for the state tournament. All but one were seniors.

Norton finished the final evening of the state tournament with three champions, two runners-up and one sixth place finish.

The Blue Jays totaled 131.5 points and Hoxie was runner-

(Wrestling - Continued on Page 5)

Norton Telegram welcomes three new staff to office

The Norton Telegram welcomed three new faces to the newspaper staff in 2011, including the addition of an Office Manager, Managing Editor and Society Editor.

Marcia Shelton joined the newspaper staff in April as the Telegram's Office Manager. Originally from Osceola, Neb., she graduated from Osceola Public Schools. Prior to joining the Norton Telegram staff, Shelton lived mostly in the Sandhills of Nebraska and in 2009,

she and husband, Max, moved to Kansas. Max is employed at Valley Feeds out of Long Island as the Assistant Feedlot Manager and Head Cowboy.

The Sheltons have two sons and one daughter. They also have nine grandchildren. In her spare time, Marcia especially enjoys pursuing art and photography. She is a member of the Thedford Art Guild and Gallery, a

(Staff - Continued on Page 5)



Marcia Shelton



Carleen Bell



Mike Stephens

City chosen for street improvements

Thanks to a grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation, the city of Norton will be seeing some significant funding to help repave a portion of Highway 36 through Norton.

Norton was one of 14 communities across the state selected in November to participate in the state's Geometric Improvement Program, which provides funds for projects that will improve intersections and road deficiencies.

Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson reported that the state of Kansas is contributing \$750,000 for the city to renovate a portion of Highway 36 from the four-way stoplight west almost to the Roadside Park. While the state is funding most of the project, Lawson said, the city of Norton will be required to fund 5 percent or about \$110,000 of the estimated \$860,000 project.

The geometric improvement project will include widening the selected portion of roadway with a cement surface, renovating the curb and gutter along the street portion and replacing road signs along the street. Sidewalk replacement also may be part of the project.

The city of Norton was required to request approval for the state's funding for the project, a process that Lawson said was quite lengthy. Along with Penco Engineering, based in Plainville, the city applied for the funding and met enough criteria to merit a visit from state officials. A committee of state officials visited the city earlier this year and after the visit, approved funding for the project.

Because the city will fund a portion of the project,

(City - Continued on Page 5)

County joins state incentive program

In an effort to encourage people to move to the county, Norton County agreed in July to participate in the state's Rural Opportunity Zone program.

The Rural Opportunity Zone is made up of the 50 counties, including Norton County, in Kansas that have lost more than 10 percent of their population since the last census. Issued by Governor Sam Brownback, the program took effect July 1.

Through the Rural Opportunity Zone, people who move into Kansas from out of state are eligible for tax rebates if they meet certain criteria. The most major piece of the requirements include a stipulation that the new residents must not have had more than \$10,000 worth of income from within Kansas.

If new residents meet the criteria, the incentive comes in the form of tax rebates where the citizens pay their

taxes as usual, but are issued a state refund for what they pay.

A second part of the Rural Opportunity Zone legislation is an opportunity for counties to encourage population growth through a student loan repayment program. Sproul explained that counties can opt to pay a portion of student loans for students or graduates who move into the county from out of

(County - Continued on Page 5)

Former police officer released

By Carleen Bell
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After months of court proceedings and negotiations, a former Norton police officer accused of sexual assaulting two women was freed, with stipulations, in early September after a motions hearing in Norton County court.

Ryan L. Zwegardt was released on a two-year diversion just one week before he was scheduled to go to trial on charges of rape and aggravated battery.

Zwegardt was originally charged on April 21 with two counts of rape, one count of aggravated criminal sodomy and one count of aggravated battery after two women accused him of sexually assaulting them in two separate incidents. The charge of aggravated battery was later dropped.

Since his April 21 arrest, Zwegardt had been held in the Graham County jail and was slated to go to trial later in September.

Norton County prosecutor Doug Sebelius and Zwegardt's attorney, Dan Walter reached an agreement, however, that will will defer a possible trial and keep Zwegardt out of jail for two years if he fulfills stipulations sets forth by the arrangement.

