

\$1 THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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8 PAGES

Tuesday
April 17, 2012

Briefly

Eagles to welcome organization leader

The Fraternal Order of Eagles members will welcome the Grand Worthy President Mel Fry to Norton 3288 Aerie on Friday, April 20. Social hour will be at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. with program to follow.

Kansas author will be at Eisenhower

This Thursday, Eisenhower Elementary will host guest author Dr. Nolan Carlson. A native of Kansas, Carlson has written 27 novels including the Summer and Shiner series. The author will be autographing pre-purchased books for the students.

Author to present at Norton library

On Saturday, award-winning author B.D. Tharp will be at the Norton Public Library 2 p.m. to share her novel Feisty Family Values.

Tharp's book "Feisty Family Values" is available for check out at the Norton Public Library. The author will have books for the public to purchase. The community is invited to attend this special presentation. Refreshments will be served.

Elementary band to present concert

The Eisenhower Elementary band student will present a band concert on Wednesday at 1:40 p.m. at the Eisenhower music room. The public is invited to attend.

Women in Ag to be held this Friday

The Women in Ag Conference will be held Friday at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Norton. For more information, contact Farm Bureau at 877-3221 or Twin Creeks Extension District at 877-5755.

Markets

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

Wheat.....	\$5.78
Milo.....	\$5.62
Soybeans.....	\$13.28
Corn.....	\$6.07

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Wednesday - Sunny with highs in the mid 70s. Wednesday evening - A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Thursday - Partly sunny with highs around 70. Friday - Partly cloudy with highs in the mid 60s.

Kingham Report

Friday, April 13.....	Low 47, High 70
Saturday, April 14.....	Low 41, High 75
	.25 Rain
Sunday, April 15.....	Low 43, High 66
	.20 Rain
Monday, April 16.....	Low 35, High 63

(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Merciful Father, thank you for being with us in the midst of our storms. Help us grow closer to you by reading your word and spending time with you in prayer. Amen.



Royalty crowned at 2012 Prom

The Norton Community High School held their Junior/Senior Prom Saturday night. The theme of the evening was "Poseidon's Paradise." This year's royalty included (left to right) Mitchell Shelton, Prince; Erin Terrell, Princess; Dillion McConney, King; and Alexis Henson, Queen. Along with a dance, the prom featured a banquet for students and staff and an after-prom party at the East Campus building.

-Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

County residents protest potential hog facility

By Carleen Bell
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Among public outcry and disagreement about the decision, the Norton County Commissioners agreed by a vote of 2-1 Monday morning to approve a resolution that might help a Norton County businessman expand his company.

Representing Calvert Swine, LLC, Terry Nelson, visited with the commissioners last Monday to request that the county submit a request to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to allow Nelson to construct a hog confinement near the unincorporated town of Calvert with less separation distance than is usually required by state statute.

Nelson is proposing the construction of a hog finishing facility, as an expansion of Nelson Farms, on Road E8 just east of Calvert with a capacity of 9,300 head of swine. According to information from the Department of Health and Environment, such a facility cannot be constructed within 4,000 feet of a habitable structure, such as a residence, unless all owners of the structures within that distance agree to sign off on the facility development.

On Aug. 15, 2011, Don Lowry, one of the owners of Spring Creek Ranch, which is located on the north side of the proposed site, signed a waiver giving permission for Nelson to move ahead with the project even though the separation distance is only 3,000 feet instead of the required 4,000 feet. On Spring Creek Ranch sits a house that has been vacated for about two years and Nelson said that he was told the house would be demolished.

Since Spring Creek Ranch is held by Trustees, however, more signatures are

required and Lowry is attempting to rescind his decision.

"We need the separation distance for that one house," Nelson said. "No one is living there and I was told the house was going to be removed anyway."

According to a letter to Nelson from the state department, dated March 29, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Environment can "reduce separation distance requirements if the (department) determines that the technology exists that meets or exceeds the effect of the required separation distance and the facility will be using such technology."

To meet those requirements, Nelson said he intends to use a multi-stage waste storage system and a shelter belt around the facility, but according to the department's response letter, that isn't enough for the distance reduction.

"While the department encourages the use of multi-stage systems, it is not considered to be a technology that is in excess of the required distances," the letter states. "Therefore, the department has determined that the request for separation distance reduction is not approvable."

The letter goes on to explain that the board of county commissioners may submit a written request seeking a reduction of separation distances. That request, however, does not guarantee that Nelson will be granted the distance reduction from the state department.

About 15 individuals showed up to the commissioners' meeting Monday morning to oppose the facility, citing concerns over air and water quality and quality of life of the people who live near the proposed facility.

Niki Kinderknecht spoke up in opposition of the facility, explaining that her son has severe asthma problems and he

must be protected from environmental triggers that could endanger his health.

"Hog confinements contribute to health problems because of the toxins released into the air," Kinderknecht said. "No matter what you do, all manure stinks. I'm concerned for the future of our water supply and for the future of my family's health."

Lauana Killman also spoke up in opposition, citing concerns over her husband's health and what potential toxins from the facility might mean for her husband.

"My husband was diagnosed with environmental sensitivity and we found that northwest Kansas was the cleanest area in the United States and we bought a house in Calvert because of that," Killman said. "I know what will happen to him if he has to be so close to the chemicals in the air every day."

Despite the opposition and concerns over environmental issues, Nelson maintains that the facility will not be a threat to the environment, especially with test wells around the potential waste lagoon.

"We have enough land to properly dispose of the nutrients (manure waste)," Nelson said. "We already have 15 monitoring wells around Husky Hogs and those are tested every year. The new lagoon would also have monitoring wells and those would be tested regularly."

Nelson also emphasized that regardless of whether the state allows him to build the proposed facility, he does intend to expand. The question, however, is whether the expansion will be one

large facility or three or four smaller facilities. Nelson said that the larger site would include a three-stage lagoon system and more environmental regulations than the smaller facilities, which would use only single-stage lagoons and carry far fewer regulations and permitting rules.

"The bottom line is that we are going to build a hog unit there," Nelson said. "For everyone's sake, we hope to build one big unit instead of three or four smaller ones."

In the end, the Norton County Commissioners passed a resolution to request that the Secretary of Health and Environment reduce the separation distance for the proposed facility from 4,000 feet to 3,000 feet. Commissioners John Miller and Carolyn Applegate approved the move and commissioner Richard Thompson opposed the decision.

Regardless of the vote, however, the commissioners made clear that they were not pleased about having to make the decision or what the final outcome would be.

"I don't like that the state has put this back in our laps," said commission chair John Miller. "I would much rather have what we have on the table today than (legislation) that is going to pass in January with more generalities and fewer regulations. Just because we ask the state to reduce the separation distance doesn't mean it will happen. The final decision isn't ours to make, but we will lose people and friendships no matter what we do."

Norton Junior high schedule revised for next school year

By Carleen Bell
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After beginning to consider the issue at their March meeting, members of the Norton Community School Board agreed last Monday evening to revise the Norton Junior High class schedule for next year.

Norton Superintendent Greg Mann reported in March that the proposed revisions would move the building's activity period from the afternoon to the morning and lengthen the period by about 10 minutes. As a result, each of the other class periods would be shortened by about one minute.

"The way the proposed schedule looks right now, there would be no conflicts with scheduling," Mann explained. "There would be a one-minute overlap between the high school and junior high passing periods once per

day, though."

Mann explained that the biggest advantage to changing the junior high schedule would be allowing the school to begin serving lunch to the junior high students earlier in the day, which will likely cut down on discipline and behavior problems in the building because students won't be waiting so long between breakfast and lunch.

The superintendent also explained that enrollment at the junior high is expected to be lower than normal next year with only about 80 students attending. With those numbers, the junior high building may have some extra space available that can be used for classrooms to teach high school classes.

The Norton board agreed to the change last Monday evening and the schedule will take effect next fall.

By Carleen Bell
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As an attempt to address over-crowding in the building, the Norton Community School Board agreed last Monday evening to begin exploring options for portable/temporary classroom space at Eisenhower Elementary.

Norton Superintendent Greg Mann reported to the board that music classroom space at Eisenhower isn't working well because of scheduling and crowding. In addition, the elementary will have three sections of every grade next year, which will make the building even more crowded.

As a temporary solution to the problem, the superintendent recommended that the school consider portable classrooms, which are modular buildings that would be placed around the school. A company called Mountain Home, based in Tulsa, Okla., specializes in portable classrooms and Mann said the company would deliver and

install the buildings and remove them when the district didn't need the space any longer.

The initial plan, the superintendent said, is to move offices and Title 1 classroom space to the portable buildings and use the vacated space in the Eisenhower building for classroom space.

Before agreeing to pursue portable buildings, the board discussed the ongoing Docking Institute study to assess district needs and community perception of those needs.

"I hope the Docking Institute survey would show that people are willing to build a new elementary building or add on to Eisenhower," said Board member Scott Ellis.

In the end, the board agreed to allow Superintendent Mann to begin exploring portable classroom space with a cost up to \$50,000 with board member Bill Jones opposing the decision.

