



Friday

November 30, 2012

Briefly

Living Nativity open on Sunday

The Norton First United Methodist Church Living Nativity will be Sunday evening from 6 to 8 p.m. Stop in afterwards for coffee and cookies.

KAYS will hang the greens on Monday

The Junior High KAYS will hold their annual “Hanging of the Green” on Monday night at 6 p.m. at the junior high school.

Junior High band concert Tuesday

There will be a Norton junior high band concert on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Norton Junior High Gymnasium.

Cookie and Candy walk Wednesday

The Norton United Methodist Women will be sponsoring their annual Cookie and Candy Walk at the Norton Community Center on Wednesday Dec. 5 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ribbon cutting Monday morning

White Fields Cafe will be hosting a ribbon cutting on Monday, Dec. 3 at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate the move to their new location at 108 East Washington Street.

Markets

Friday, November 30, 2012

Wheat.....\$8.54
Milo.....\$7.17
Soybeans.....\$13.70
Corn.....\$7.45
Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Friday Night - Partly cloudy with a low of 34. Saturday - Partly cloudy in the morning then clear. High of 66. Saturday Night - Clear with a low of 28. Sunday - Clear with a high of 66. Sunday Night - Clear with a low of 36.

Kingham Report

Tuesday, Nov. 27Low 16, High 50
Wednesday, Nov. 28Low 22, High 53
Thursday, Nov. 29Low 23, High 63
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear Lord, especially during this season of Advent, help us to reflect your light into the world, offering hope to those who are hurting and in need. Amen.



All I want for Christmas...



Children from the Sunshine Learning Center stopped by the Norton County Courthouse on Thursday afternoon to mail their letters to Santa Claus at the North Pole. (Pictured from right

to left) Adriana Winters reaches high to put her letter to Santa in the mailbox as Max Carter and Riley Griffin wait their turn.

—Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

Hospital board reports to commissioners

By Cynthia Haynes

c.haynes@nwkansas.com

The Norton County Hospital is running in the black but isn't doing as well as it did a few years ago and may not be able to do as much expansion as it has over the past few years.

Hospital Administrator Rich Miller, Chief Financial Officer Ryan Stover and board members Steve Berry, Warren White and Reva Benien visited with the Norton County commissioners during the weekly commission meeting on Monday.

Mr. Stover presented the commissioners with a copy of the hospital's annual audit, which is done by BKD, a Wichita accounting firm.

The report done on the hospital's year, which ended

June 30, shows that the hospital made money despite problems of bad debt, which had to be written off; uncompensated services; contractual adjustments; and a steady decrease in Medicare reimbursement.

The auditors pointed out that accountability is hard to spread out, as it should be, because the hospital operates with a small staff.

The hospital had a net patient revenue of \$10.2 million last year but also had expenses of \$10.7 million, 60 percent of which went for salary and benefits. Other operating income was \$263,000.

The doctor's clinic at the hospital accounted for an increase in salaries and expenses this year, he said.

The nursing school also accounted for some changes this year including a paper loss on the audit report as the building, which used to be the doctor's clinic, was transferred to the school.

However, in real terms, the hospital made a little money.

In 2013, the hospital is facing several issues, he said.

Medicare reimbursement may be cut by 1 percent for a \$41,000 loss and another 2 percent of Medicare money could be lost if new rules are enacted, and that will account for another \$82,000.

In addition, Kansas Medicaid has gone to a managed care system with three insurance companies in charge. The state is expecting to save \$1 billion over 10 years, Mr.

Stover said.

“That has us concerned,” he said. “The bottom line is we're concerned because if you're going to save that kind of money (you have to make cuts.)”

Commissioner John Miller agreed that the problem would be a big one noting that the emergency medical service had had a similar problem and lost a lot of money because it didn't have the extra person just to deal with the paperwork.

The state has given the medical providers a year, Mr. Stover said. But that isn't enough. It looks like more people will be added to Medicaid, he said, and the reimbursement will drop. The hospital may have to add another employee just

for the paperwork, he added.

The hospital has signed up with one of the state-sponsored companies but is still trying to deal with the other two, hospital administrator Miller said.

He added that having three companies, each with its own manual of requirements, will be a nightmare of paperwork for everyone.

The hospital will also need to start using an international classification of disease, he said. This is already being used in Europe and is a good thing but there are 70,000 codes and the doctors and coders will have to document everything. It's going to be tough, he said.

Commissioner Miller noted that the hospital would need more staff just for the coding.

“The hospital board and administration will have a huge challenge,” he said.

Hospital administrator Miller said that newer doctors will be able to adapt to the changes easier but the whole em-

(Hospital - Continued on Page 5)

Christmas lighting contest brightens town

The Norton County Arts Council is getting into the Christmas spirit this year and they are asking the people of Norton to join them. They are holding a Christmas lighting contest that anyone can enter.

It is quite simple, if you are interested in participating, all a person has to do is call or write the Arts Council President, Nancy McGinnis, by today to enter. The number is 785-577-4940 or write to the Norton County Arts Council at P.O. Box 225, Norton, Ks. All that is needed is your address and then go to town decking the halls, or in this case your home and yard.

A list of all the entered homes and ballots to place your votes on will be available at the Norton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Norton Telegram. Ballots can also be cut out of the Telegram. Then between Dec. 3 and Dec. 14 take an evening drive around the community and look at all the entries. Fill out your ballot and return it to the Chamber office or the Telegram no later than noon, Friday Dec. 14.

The winners will be contacted and announced in the Nov. 18 issue of the Telegram. Prizes are being given out, \$100 in Chamber bucks for first place, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place.

As some of you may have noticed, the Arts Council is trying some new things and the reason for this is because we almost lost our Arts Council and a few people refused to let it go so easily. Through fresh new ideas and some old reliables the council hopes to recruit new members as well as offer new things to past and current members.

So far an illusionist, a comedic hypnotist and the craft fair have been great successes. There are two programs left on the agenda. The next item brought to the community will be Melinda Ferree, a Patsy Cline impersonator on January 19. Then on March 23 there will be the Local Talent Show.

Please support the community of Norton. We must keep the arts alive through dance, music, art, entertainment and expression. So many say that there is

nothing to do in Norton, which couldn't be further from the truth. Thanks to several groups and organizations like the Norton County Arts Council, The Norton Area Chamber of Commerce, local churches, the Norton Recreation Commission, the USD 211 and USD 212 schools, Prairie Dog State Park, the Norton Longspur Pheasants Forever Chapter, Norton Elmwood Park Racing Association, Norton Rotary BB Gun Club and many other entities always have something going on.

We have a car show and drag races, mud drags, car races, the Lenora Jubilee, Almerna Antique Power Show, coyote calling contests, golf tournaments and 3D archery shoots to name a few.

We are a forward thinking community with a lot to offer it's citizens and visitors. If people will get more involved they will see that there are many things offered to them in our small town that can not be found in other towns. The key to this is supporting the events that take place here so we don't lose them. Become a member today.



Don't Forget to Order Your Fruit and Veggie Trays for the Holidays!!



Mainstreet IGA

313 W. Main, Norton, Kansas – Phone 785-877-2422
www.mainstreet.com