

THE NORTON TELEGRAM



Tuesday

January 21, 2014

Briefly

Booster club meets on Wednesday

The Norton Blue Jay Booster Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday in the high school cafeteria. Speakers will be Bill Johnson, head wrestling coach; Doug Reusink, head boys basketball coach and George Rossi, head girls basketball coach. All Norton sports fans are invited to hear the coaches' comments on the seasons so far.

Bridge club to meet on Wednesday

Bridge will be held at the library on Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Eisenhower bee set for Wednesday

Eisenhower Elementary School will have a Spelling Bee at 2 p.m. on Wednesday.

Story time at the Norton Library

Preschool story-time at the library will be held on Thursday, Jan. 23, at 10:30 a.m. The library staff will share stories, songs, games, and a craft about "Snow." Come join the winter fun!

Junior High bee set for this Thursday

Norton Junior High Spelling Bee will be at 1:30 on Thursday at the Norton Junior High gymnasium.

Kids dance camp to be this Saturday

The little kids dance camp will be held at Stull Gymnasium on Saturday starting at 10 a.m. with performance for the parents at noon.

Markets

Monday, January 21

Wheat	\$5.97
Milo	\$3.87
Soybeans	\$12.49
Corn	\$4.09

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

Wednesday - Partly cloudy skies with a high of 46. Thursday - Partly cloudy skies with a high of 23. Thursday Night - Clear with a low of 13. Friday - Mainly sunny with a high of 49. Friday Night - Clear skies with a low of 33. Saturday - Sunshine with a high of 61.

Prayer

Faithful God, give us strength to place you first in our lives, above all that we own. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen



Traffic was backed up for at least a mile Thursday afternoon after wind-blown dust and poor visibility caused two wrecks just outside Rexford. At least three people died in the pileups and over a dozen cars and

semis crashed, shutting down U.S. 83 north of the Nine-Mile Junction for hours.

– Photo by R.B. Headley, Colby Free Press

Dust storm takes three lives last Thursday

By **SAM DIETER** and **HEATHER ALWIN** *Colby Free Press*
KEVIN BOTTRELL *Goodland Star-News*

and **LADD WENDEL** *Oberlin Herald*
A Colby man was among three people killed and seven injured in a fiery 11-vehicle crash Thursday when wind-blown dust dropped visibility to near zero on U.S. 83 west of Rexford.

Dust caused the state Department of Transportation to close most roads across the area, including U.S. 83 from the Nine-Mile junction east of Colby all the way to Oberlin, Interstate 70 from Colby to Burlington, Colo., K-27 from Goodland to St. Francis and U.S. 36 from Wheeler to Atwood. As winds whipped up to 63 mph, accidents were reported east of St. Francis, on I-70 and elsewhere across northwest Kansas.

Five cars and six trucks piled up

about two miles west of Rexford in the larger crash, the Kansas Highway Patrol said. In a separate accident less than half a mile to the west, the patrol said, two semi-trailer rigs collided.

Fatalities in the Rexford accident included Leonard Scott Breeden, 51, of Colby; James Ocie Perrott, 57, of Perryton, Texas; and Jerold L. Lamb, 66, a truck driver from Florissant, Colo. All were killed when six semi-trailer rigs and five passenger vehicles piled up near mile marker 179 about 2 p.m.

Breeden was driving a small van, Ocie a Chrysler and Lamb one of the semi rigs.

Anthony Scott Ortiz, 30, Garden City; Federico Ortiz, 47, Apple Valley, Calif.; Dennis Wayne Pitzer, 44, Leoti; and David Edward Hapes, 50, Holcomb were among the truck drivers taken to Citizens Medical Center. An-

other trucker, Abraham Wiebe-Peters of Chihuahua, Mexico, was unhurt.

Andrew Abdrakmanov Karstrom, 19, and Timothy W. Karstrom, 62, of Omaha, were both taken to Citizens with what the patrol called "possible injuries." They were in a 2012 Toyota involved in the pileup.

David Leroy Shoemaker, 51, and Dottie J. Shoemaker and Richard Shoemaker, all of South Dakota, were in a 1996 Ford F250. All were unhurt.

The patrol was still investigating the pileup Friday morning, said Trooper Tod Hielman, information officer for the patrol in Hays. Reports did not list information about the occupants or owners of one of the passenger cars, a 2000 Plymouth Breeze with Kansas tags.

Hielman said he didn't know when the report might be updated to include

that information.

Rescue workers and law-enforcement had trouble getting to the scene, fighting the dust and trying to get around cars backed up on both sides of the wreck. Officers said that several injured drivers were trapped in their vehicles. One woman who called dispatchers saying she was in her car later was found safe in a trucker's rig.

Area sheriff's offices and Department of Transportation workers helped the patrol shut down nearby roads and clear the accident scene. Norton County Sheriff Troy Thomson said they monitored the area and kept in constant contact with the Department of Roads. "There was talk of closing roads in our area but by that time the roads near Selden had already been

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Norton streetscapes and fun center considered

By **MIKE STEPHENS**
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Economic Development executive director Scott Sproul updated the city council at its Wednesday meeting on Economic Development's activities. Sproul said they are working on finding a location for a new bowling fun center, and they are targeting the downtown area. Economic Development has located some equipment and hopes to move forward as soon as a location is determined. They recently sold tax credits for Network Kansas and \$22,100 will go into an E-community loan fund for training or other administration activities.

Sproul also said he is preparing an

application for the 2014 Federal Transportation Alternative funding program that funds streetscapes in downtown areas. He said the application will include beautifying the downtown, making it pedestrian friendly and addressing safety and other concerns. The project will include one full block of State Street and two intersections. The application deadline is Feb. 14.

In response to Sproul's report, the council passed a motion to approve the Design Agreement with BG Consultants for a downtown streetscape improvements project, contingent upon the City receiving an award of 2014 Federal Transportation Alternative funding for the project.

The City of Norton was notified by Kevin McElyea of Aquatic Design, Inc., that the manufacturer of final surface coating on the pool, called Diamond Brite, has just started requiring that water remain in the pool all year in order for them to warranty their product for five years. Leaving water in the pool would require a change order, so that two valves and another pipe be installed to maintain the proper water levels during the winter months, at a cost of \$6,154. According to McElyea, he has never experienced any problems with any of his projects that required repairs by Diamond Brite, and none of those projects required leaving water in the pool during the winter months. The

council decided against the change order and the pool will be drained at the end of the season as originally planned and designed. However, there will be no five year warranty if there are any cracking issues with the Diamond Brite surface coating.

There was also a change order presented to the council to add an outside disconnect at the swimming pool, which was not included in the original pool design. The cost of the change order for Prosser Wilbert Construction to add an outside disconnect at the pool would be \$4,087. The council approved adding the outside disconnect on the pool building, with the

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Pilot program for skilled laborers in Norton County

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**
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Skilled labor to work at Norton County's manufacturing facilities is hard to find so the Norton City/County Economic Development group is looking at a pilot program from Kansas Department of Commerce to try to remedy the situation.

Director Scott Sproul told the economic development board at its meeting on Tuesday Jan. 14 that the county has a 2.8 percent unemployment rate, which is very low. Also, nearby Sheri-

dan County has a 2 percent unemployment rate, he said.

This contributes to a shortage of skilled workers for manufacturing jobs in the county, he said.

There are pilot projects to help get skilled labor into the workforce in other areas of the state but none in Northwest Kansas. Midwest Energy and Co-Bank are pairing up to remedy that through Workforce AID, which is overseen by the Kansas Department of Commerce, Mr. Sproul said.

For some time the economic devel-

opment group has tried to work with both Northwest Technical College in Goodland and North Central Technical College in Beloit to get community college welding classes in Norton, he said. This has not been successful because the colleges don't have a group of people signed up to take the class so they are wary of starting something that may end up costing them money.

However, with funding assistance, one of those colleges or some others in this part of the state might be willing to start a program.

The program would be geared to getting people enrolled and going to work, not in two years, but within a few weeks or months, he said.

Mr. Sproul said he is meeting with the manufacturers in Norton County early next month to see if they want to do this.

"Every one of them is having workforce issues," he said.

He said the program would probably start out as temporary but if it works as well as hoped, it could become perma-

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