

\$1 THE NORTON TELEGRAM



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Friday

February 7, 2014

Briefly

Disc golf tourney fund raiser Sat.

A disc golf tournament will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8 at Elmwood Park as a fundraiser for God's Pantry. For more information contact Don Mordecai at 877-5475.

Calling contest set for this Saturday

The Norton Archery Club will be hosting a calling contest on Saturday. Must be pre-registered by 6 p.m. Friday. Check in will be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Saturday night at O'Briens Pit Stop Bar and Grill.

Home based expo will be on Saturday

The annual Sweetheart Home Based Craft Business Expo will take place Saturday at the Norton National Guard Armory from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Many vendors will be there and a lunch stand will be available.

New schedule for postponed games

The basketball games with Colby which were scheduled for Friday, Jan. 31 in Norton will be played on Monday, Feb. 10. The contests with Smith Center which were scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 4 in Norton will be played on Monday, Feb. 24.

Remember, the Norton girls and boys will play at Hill City this evening.

Art show to be held in Logan on Sunday

Area high school art students will be able to show their work off to family and friends on Sunday starting at 2 p.m. at the Logan Museum.



Saturday - Intervals of clouds and sunshine with a high of 26. Saturday Night - 40 percent chance of snow after midnight. Sunday - Cloudy skies with high near 20. Sunday Night - 30 percent chance of snow. Monday - Cloudy skies with snow flurries and a high of 17.

Markets

FEBRUARY 2014

Wheat\$6.25
Milo.....\$4.10
Soybeans.....\$12.55
Corn.....\$4.27
Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Prayer

Gracious Lord, thank you for reminding us that we can rise above the troubles and storms in our lives by setting our hearts and minds on you and on heavenly things rather than on earthly things. Amen.

A night for music...



The first and second graders at Eisenhower Elementary held a vocal concert on Monday night at the East Campus Auditorium, which was packed with family and friends. (Pictured) The first graders pro-

gram was Alphabet Adventures and they sang eight songs for the crowd. The second graders program was The Big Chill.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

Hospital board reports to county

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

The Norton County Hospital has lost almost \$400,000 since July.

Hospital Administrator Rich Miller along with hospital board members Von Fahrenbruch, Steve Berry and Rita Speer, presented the Norton County commissioners with the hospital's statistics at the commissioners' end-of-the-month meeting on Jan. 31.

The hospital, which for the most part has been run in the black, has had several problems, Mr. Miller told the commissioners.

Several changes have occurred which have impacted the hospital's financial situation; these changes include Medicare sequestration, the state of Kansas moving to a managed care Medicaid program (KANCARE), insurance company policy and rules dealing with preauthorization. Health-

care is changing.

Besides these issues, revenues have been lower than expected and contractual adjustments higher than budgeted.

Contractual adjustments are what happens when the hospital bills insurance or the government for services but because of a contract or government rule, only a portion of the amount is paid and the hospital has to write off the rest.

These problems have caused the \$391,896 in red ink, Mr. Miller said.

Mr. Miller gave the board the hospital's income statement for December. It showed that the facility had to contractually adjust \$203,247 to Medicare, \$89,385 to Blue Cross and \$16,465 to Humana. There were also \$29,674 in uncollectible bills.

In all, the hospital could not collect \$344,422 just for December.

At the same time, patient revenue

amounted to \$1,078,449, which was almost a quarter million dollars less than the \$1,312,526 expected.

The hospital was able to keep expenses below budget by almost \$72,000, but it wasn't enough to outweigh the deficits. So in December, when the budget said the hospital would probably lose about \$3,000, the actual loss was right at \$111,000.

Other figures in the hospital report included patient days of 239 in December, 299 in November and 268 in October.

The hospital had 12 babies born there in those three months - six girls and six boys.

Fifty-four surgeries were performed - 17 in December, 18 in November and 19 in October.

In December, the laboratory did 2868 tests for hospital outpatients and 290 for those in the hospital.

There also were 59 CT scans, 20 MRIs, 94 ultrasounds, 85 mammograms and 314 X-rays, for outpatients, done in December. Total ancillary outpatient services were \$4,744.

At the clinic, the practitioners saw 1,558 patients in December, 1,451 in November and 1,646 in October.

Mr. Miller also gave a report on the upper level renovations at the hospital.

The architect's original estimation for the work was \$3.5 million. However, due to surgery renovation requirements the architect recommended doing an addition from the ground level to the upper floor to help with meeting renovation requirements. With the cost of the addition and upper level renovation the "guaranteed maximum price" has risen to \$5,488,727.

The hospital board, Mr. Miller said, is planning further discussion and will make a decision at a later meeting.

Road and bridge requests a new tractor

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

cynthia.haynes@nwkansas.com

Norton County is looking to buy a new tractor and they have spent a lot of time with Road and Bridge Department Foreman Floyd Richard going over the possibilities.

At their end-of-the-month meeting on Jan. 31, the commissioners met with Mr. Richard and went over bids from two companies.

Shane Christensen with LandMark Implement presented his bid for a new

John Deere. The representative from LDI of Smith Center did not make it to the meeting because of the weather but sent his bid on a new Challenger.

The commissioners said that they would review the bids.

At their meeting on Monday, Mr. Richard brought in the costs of running the various county-owned tractors. The machine that the county is looking to trade in is a 2011 New Holland, which has had constant problems and been taken to Colby at least six times for cor-

rective repairs. Mr. Richard said that, while the county has hauled the tractor to Colby several times, he just found out when the company took it there, they charged the county mileage even though the piece is under warranty.

"That's why we're thinking of getting rid of it," he noted of the tractor's un-reliability.

The tractors used \$35,074 in fuel in 2013 and had \$55,134 in repairs and maintenance, which included a new transmission in one.

The commissioners decided to put off the decision on the purchase because Commissioner Richard Thompson could not attend the meeting and the two remaining felt that all three should be present before making such a major purchase.

Mr. Richard also told the commissioners that his men were not cutting up trees during the bad weather because it was too dangerous to use chain saws

in slick weather. The commissioners wholeheartedly agreed with that noting that safety should always be the crew's first concern.

In other business at their end-of-the-month meeting, the commissioners:

- Approved a demolition program that would allow the cities to remove dangerous and unsightly houses and put the debris in the landfill at reduced rates.
- Appointed Peggy Pratt, the Director of Northwest Kansas Juvenile Services, to the Norton County Hospital Board.
- Approved the payment of vouchers and payroll for January.
- Signed an agreement with Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas to receive services and provide tax support. The county has a .822 mill levy for the service.
- Accepted the 2013 annual noxious

(Tractor - Continued on Page 5)

The winners are...



The Norton County Spelling Bee was held on Wednesday afternoon at the Northern Valley Junior High gymnasium in Long Island. (Pictured) Taryn Kuhn placed third, Hadley Hauser finished second and James Sturgill was the winner. Kuhn, Hauser and Sturgill are all seventh graders at Norton Junior High School. As the Norton County Champion, Sturgill qualified to compete in the Sunflower Spelling Bee on March 8, at Fort Hays State University.

-Telegram photo by Mike Stephens

Law enforcement says buckle it up

Beginning February 24, and continuing through March 7, the Norton Police Department will join other Kansas Law Enforcement to stop what has been an epidemic for the past several years. In 2012, 43 teens lost their lives due to car crashes in Kansas; 74 percent of those teens were not properly restrained.

In an effort to change this trend, law enforcement across Kansas will be extra-vigilant when patrolling around schools. For more than 20 years, officers have educated and warned passen-

gers and drivers regarding the importance of using restraints while in their vehicle.

There should be no surprises when it comes to this enforcement effort. Officers will issue citations to any individual who refuses to obey the traffic laws, whether it is for speeding, texting or failing to buckle up.

"Even one teen death is unacceptable. Please slow down, put the phone away or turn it off, and always buckle up," said Chief Pat Morel.

