

BB team shooting for first

By DICK BOYD

The Norton County Jaycees BB gun team will compete in the Kansas Jaycees State BB Gun Championships on Saturday in the Wabaunsee High School Gym in Alma.

Teams consist of young people from 8 to 14 years of age.

Norton BB gun teams have won 34 of 38 state championships during the program's existence. Norton did not compete in 1982.

Norton shooters have won the Daisy/Jaycees International BB Gun Championships eight times, more than any other team in the world.

Three Norton teams will enter Saturday's shooting championships in Alma and a top three finish would again guarantee Norton a spot in the International Championships, which will be held this year in Bowling Green, Kentucky on July 2-4.

This year's Yellow team includes Kyle Edgett, 13; Brock Lauer, 13; Kerby Brandyberry, 13 and J.D. Gall, 12, all of whom were members of Norton's International team in 2002. The other member of the Yellow team is Katie Gall, 10, who was an alternate on last year's Norton International team which placed second.

Alternates on the Yellow team are Travis Stapel, 10 and Dylan Sprigg, 9. Coaches for the Yellow team are Dan Lauer and John Gall.

Shooters are not allowed to compete in the International Shoot two years in a row.

Members of the Blue team are Kylie Nuzum, 10; Cole Archer, 11; Dustyna Sprigg, 11; Brittany Boucher, 13; Nish Millan, 14. Alternates are Lane Vanover, 8 and Whitney Mulder, 9. Coaches of the Blue team are Cameron Archer and Kirk Nuzum.

Shooting for the Red team this year are Caleb Vanover, 12; Logan Kelly, 12; Lane Archer, 8; Meaghan Peterson, 10; Jade Braun, 11. Alternates are Austin Montgomery, 9 and Trey Millan, 9. Coaches of the Red team are Fig Millan and Steve Otter. Tom Edgett is a coach who will assist with all three teams.

Coach Lauer will be assisted in the challenge room by his wife Teresa, who is also the classroom instructor. Assisting in the grading room and the classroom have been Misty Nuzum, Patty Gall, Keri Vanover, Jean Stapel and Dwight Sprigg.

This year's state shoot will be hosted by the Manhattan Jaycees. Competition on Saturday will begin with the written test from 9:15 a.m. until 10 a.m. A coaches' meeting will also be held during this time.

Shooting from the prone position will be held from 10:10 a.m. until 11:40 p.m. Competition from the sitting position will be from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Kneeling position firing will be from 1:20 p.m. until 2:50 p.m. Shooting from the standing position will be from 2:55 p.m. until 4:25 p.m.

Presentation of team and individual awards will be about 5 p.m. There is no admission charge for the shoot.

Norton's preparation for the state shoot began in October when the shooters entered the Jaycees gun safety program, sponsored by Daisy and the National Rifle Association. After passing the course, they began practicing marksmanship in each of the four positions and studying for the written test. Practices are held every Wednesday evening in the National Guard Armory.

"We are right about where we want to be at this point," said Coach Lauer during last Wednesday's practice. "It will be interesting because all three teams are shooting well. The Yellow team has our best shooters but the Blue team is really shooting well and could give them a run for the money."

"We have quite a few first year shooters but they have made progress from the day they started and that's what we want to see."

"We're testing our youngsters on the written test every other week and they seem to have a good knowledge of it. We should do okay on it."



Bowlers raise cash for youth

Money was raised and fun had all day Saturday during the fourth annual Big Brother Big Sister fundraiser Bowl for Kid's Sake (below) at Rainbow Lanes in Norton. A little over \$8,000 was collected from 37 teams throughout the day to help with the child/adult mentoring program. Big Brother Big Sister Director Erin Manning (left), who hosted the fundraiser, got each hour and a half round of bowling started.

— Photos by Veronica Monier

Co-op reports a profit

The Norton County Cooperative Association made a profit last year. It wasn't a big profit, but in a bad year, any amount in the black is good, some 40 shareholders were told at the cooperative's annual meeting on Wednesday.

Board Chairman Lee Juennemann told the group that the year had been stressful because of the continued drought.

"Norton was one of the few Co-op elevators that actually showed a profit," he said.

John Mapes of Mapes and Miller accountants, told the group that the company's assets had dropped almost \$1 million. However, he said, that was mostly in stored wheat so there was a similar drop in liabilities.

The company didn't buy much equipment and maintenance and repair costs were down, he said.

The bottom line is that the company made \$162,000.

Mr. Juennemann said that a good 2003 wheat crop and cutting expenses helped the cooperative come out in the black.

He said that there were no injuries at the cooperative last year, not even after the lightning strike at the Garvey Elevator.

"It's another successful year at the Norton Co-op," he said. "Grain prices are slowly rising and cattle prices are good."

Manager Linda Donovan said that the company has been working to write down the equity loss from the bankruptcy of Farmland and that shareholders will be able to take the loss on their 2004 taxes.

Manager Robert Smith said that the co-op has hired a full-time agronomist/salesman to help its customers and is working to keep the price of fertilizer and chemicals down.

Brock Ellis and Mr. Juennemann, both of whom have served 6 years, were re-elected to the board.

Rural executive speaks at summit

Larry Sevier, chief executive officer and general manager of Rural Telephone, was one of six communications industry representatives to speak at the Kansas Rural Broadband and Telemedicine Summit in Lawrence last month.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell attended the event, which was hosted by the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics on the Kansas University campus.

Mr. Sevier explained how Rural Telephone and Nex-Tech are delivering high-speed Internet, or broadband services, to western Kansas.

"Eighty-five percent of our regulated service area has access to broadband services," he said. "We continue to assist our neighbors who did not have broadband, utilizing fiber-to-the-home and wireless technology, and in the near future, broadband over satellite delivery."

Mr. Sevier warned that independent companies like Rural Telephone depend on universal service funds to provide service in sparsely populated areas.

"We have put almost every dollar we make back into plant but without a stable revenue stream, the independent companies in Kansas may be forced to the sidelines," he said. "We simply cannot continue investing without an ad-

equated return."

Mr. Powell said broadband fosters economic development.

"The availability of broadband access is critical in attracting new businesses to rural areas and giving existing businesses the availability to compete with firms in more urban settings," he said. "With broadband access, worker productivity increases, jobs are created and wages grow."

He said that it is important to bring broadband to every home in America and said that it cannot be done with a single technology. He compared the development of multiple broadband technologies to the creation of multiple colors

on a painter's palette.

"We have more colors or more tools in the tool box to solve the problems that have always been with us," he said. "Rural Telephone and Nex-Tech are painting with a broader brush. They are using more tools from the tool box."

Others attending were Gov. Kathleen Sebelius; Sen. Sam Brownback; several state senators and representatives; Kansas Corporation commissioners and representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Communications Commission.

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