

Church:

Take advantage of the church listings to find out when and where to go.

Pages 6 & 7

Vol. 97, No. 103
75 cents

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Sports:

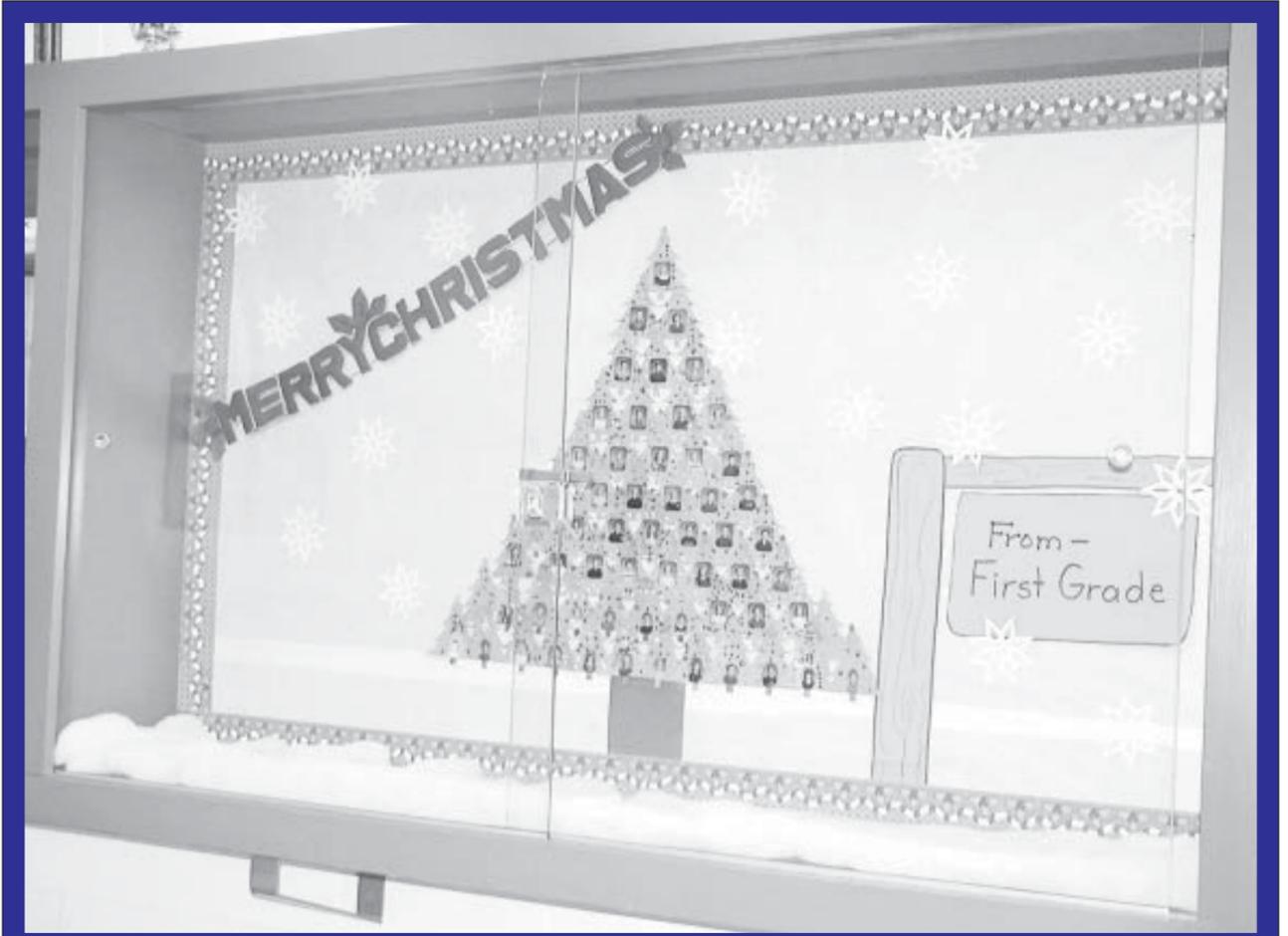
Norton wrestlers beat Phillipsburg and the Northern Valley boys and girls basketball teams fall to Brewster.

Page 8 & 10

Friday

December 24, 2004

Merry Christmas to all



Pictures of first graders at Eisenhower Elementary decorate a display board tree. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Norton, Kansas
Home of Travis Smith

Briefly

Dinner planned for Christmas

The Norton Area Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring the annual Christmas Dinner at noon Saturday at the United Methodist Church.

Turkey, dressing, potatoes and gravy, vegetables and rolls will be served. Those attending are asked to bring a salad or dessert to complete the meal.

Donations will be accepted.

Paper to arrive early for holidays

The Norton Telegram is printing the paper early today so that all the subscribers can get their paper before the holiday and so the staff can spend Christmas Eve with their families.

The early Thursday paper will be repeated next week as The Telegram office will be closed Friday, Dec. 31.

The owners and staff of The Telegram wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Santa makes one last visit

The day before Christmas Eve (Thursday) will be the last night to catch Santa in Norton for a whole year. Santa can be found in the lobby of the Norton County Courthouse, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served, courtesy of New Age Industries.

So if you still haven't seen Santa, catch him while you can.

Weather

Forecast:

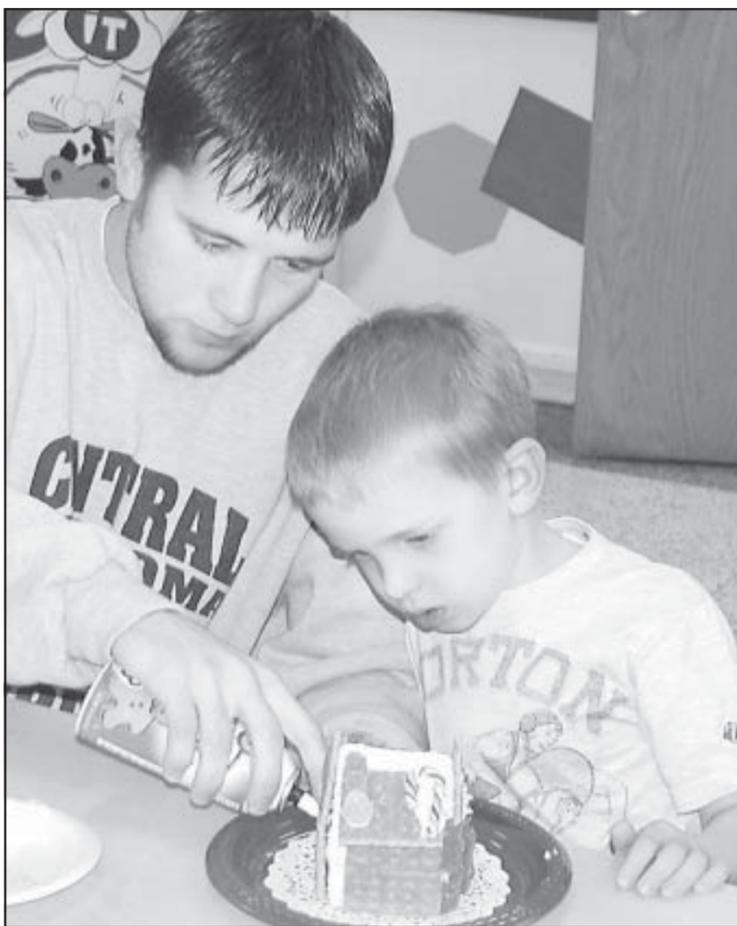
Tonight — Partly cloudy in the evening then clearing. Cooler with lows 6 below. **Friday** — Partly cloudy and warmer with highs around 30. **Friday Night** — Partly cloudy and not as cool. Lows in the mid 20s. **Christmas Day** — Partly cloudy in the morning then clearing. Much warmer with highs in the lower 50s. West winds 5 to 15 mph. **Saturday Night** — Mostly clear with lows around 20. **Sunday** — Mostly sunny with highs in the mid 50s.

Howell report:

Tuesday High 42, Low 13
Wednesday High 28, Low 11
1/2" snow
Week ago High 50, Low 32
Month ago High 53, Low 31
Year ago High 50, Low 23
December precipitation 0.00 inches
Year-to-date precipitation ... 25.75 inches
(Readings taken at the Paul and Pat Howell farm 10 Miles North and 1/3 Mile East of Norton)

Prayer

O Lord, thank you for loving us so much that even when we wander you seek us and call us close. Amen



Making gingerbread houses is an annual tradition for first graders at Eisenhower Elementary. Tuesday, Skylar Johnson's big brother Eric (left), home from college, dropped by the school to give his little brother some architectural advice. Kylee Kindall (above) looked skeptical that the roof her mother, Victoria Kindall, was putting on her gingerbread house would stay. — Telegram photos by Carolyn Plotts

Merchants happy with holiday sales

By VERONICA MONIER

Holiday sales in Norton, for the most part, are up with some merchants saying things are better than last year.

Russ Erbert, owner of Russ' Jewelry, said holiday sales have been excellent.

"We've seen a lot of difference," he said. "Things were a little slow last year but they've really picked up this year."

Mr. Erbert said they are carrying a bigger selection of everything this year with the merchandise selling evenly.

"We haven't seen anything selling more than anything else," he said. "Necklaces, rings, pendants — they're all selling pretty even. We're really happy with what we've been doing this season."

Danielle Ruesch, co-owner of Hot Shots Photography, said they've been wonderfully busy.

She said their portrait packages have been the biggest seller.

Kowpoke employee Linda Esslinger said this is the year for appliances because

sales in that area have been good. Everything else, she said, has been normal.

Mary Oswald, owner of Twice Sold Treasurers, said her store's holiday sales have been good.

"We're very pleased," she said. "We've had a lot of locals come in. The new and antiques are both doing well," she said. "People are coming in and finding what they like. I've been busy gift wrapping."

Norton Flowers, Gifts and Greenhouse owner Annette Overlease said it's been a good season and that they are doing really well. She said they are selling quite a few gifts and a lot of fresh centerpieces.

"We did really well with the poinsettias this season," she said.

Dave Fischer, owner of ComputerPro, said his store has done great.

"With Christmas On Us, I feel very good about the sales," he said. "I'm very, very pleased with the sales we've had so far for the Christmas season."

EndZone Sports and Office Supply co-

owner Bill Manning said this year's sales are above last year's.

"We've been plenty busy," he said.

Steve Streck, owner of Hall's Clothing, said his store has its busy days and then has days that aren't as busy.

"It's been kind-of up and down, but I don't think that's unusual," he said.

He said since the forecast has turned cold, Hall's has been selling a lot of things like insulated work wear and sweaters.

Moffet Drug Store employee Patty Newell said sales are okay. She said nothing is selling more than anything else.

Here's Your Sign's holiday sales are also doing okay, said owner Kris Posson. Holiday sales at Artline Graphics are good, said owner Sue Ann Skrdlant. She said she thinks they are about average.

Kim Sander, co-owner of Sander Furniture and Gifts, said holiday sales are great. Her merchandise is selling equally, with nothing selling more than anything else, but with everything doing well.

County wants plans before action

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Norton County commissioners want to see more planning for future expansion.

At their meeting on Monday the commissioners talked with Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan about expansion at the airport and in other areas of the county.

Mr. Brannan said that he is worried about how new hangers would be put in at the airport. Without some thought and planning, he said, the city and county, which jointly have

(Continued on Page 5)

Commissioners want to see plans before moving

(Continued from Page 1)
 authority over the facility, will back themselves into a corner. He said a master plan for the facility is long overdue. "Somewhere back in the 60s somebody should have had a master plan," Mr. Brannan. "People think you're crazy but in 20 years it will pay off."
 He said that if the county and city aren't careful they will end up with no place for expansion at the airport.

Commissioner John Miller said he agreed. He said before anything more is done there should be a master plan as to what goes where and who pays for what.
 At this time there is room for four more hangers, Mr. Brannan said.

If more are needed in the future, there will be no place to put them unless a different configuration is set up, which should include a place to park planes in front of hangers without having them blocking the taxiway.

There is also a problem with an overhead power line, he said.

"I've never seen an airport with a power line," Mr. Brannan said. "They're always underground."

Mr. Brannan said that he has no problem having his crew working at the airport but doesn't want the city and county to have a problem with expansion some day.

Mr. Brannan said he is also worried about a new home going in. The builders plan to put in a two-inch water main, he said.

He said he knows there will be a church built in the same area in a few years and a two-inch main will not be big enough to serve both.

Also, he said, if any other development is done in the area more water will be needed. He said he's all for development but doesn't want to see a bunch of two-inch mains put in when a larger one is what is needed from the start.

"I'm not against growth, but someone has to initiate it so its done right," Mr. Brannan.

Commissioner Leroy Lang agreed.

The commissioners decided to ask the property owner and Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson to attend a commission meeting to discuss the problem.

Commissioner Lang said that he was worried about stagnant water collecting in a small main and the need for fire hydrants in

the area.

He said that he would vote against a right of way across the county road if the property owner would only put in a two-inch main.

"Will it be massive growth?" Mr. Brannan said. "No. But there will be growth."

"There are a lot of people who want to sell their house in town and move to the outskirts," Mr. Lang agreed.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Discussed insurance on an old church in Alma that is being used for storage.

Mr. Miller said the county should get rid of the building so it will not be liable for the contents, which do not even belong to the county.

- Talked about data backup procedures in the county offices including the clerk's, treasurer's and register of deeds'. Even though the county has no microfilm on a lot of data, most of it is duplicated at state agencies and computer backups are kept at a separate location.

- Held a 10-minute executive session on non-elected personnel.
- Heard from Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald that the dirt work on roads at the landfill was started on Wednesday of last week.

Mr. Archibald said that he is also still working on netting for screens and material to cover the trash each day. Both will be used to keep trash from blowing once the landfill is in operation.

- Learned from Mr. Archibald that the county's household hazardous waste project had been inspected and passed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The crew was pouring old paint into a big barrel, Mr. Archibald said.

- Held a 17-minute closed session with County Attorney Doug Sebelius on attorney-client privilege on non-elected personnel.

- Turned down a request by several county employees to carry over vacation time to next year.

- Authorized a state-required form saying the county will follow state procedures on elections.

County Clerk Robert Wyatt said there will be fewer polling places once this goes through because voting machines will be almost be required. But the county has little choice, he said.

Hospital to fix tile in basement ceiling

By VERONICA MONIER
 The Norton County Hospital will be doing a few improvements down under.

Administrator Rich Miller told the board Tuesday that, although the basement project had been tabled, he would like to do a few of the improvements.

Mr. Miller said nothing had been done with the ceiling tile for 30 years and asked for the board's approval to have it redone. He said it will cost \$1,400 to have new gridwork and tiles put up by Amax Co., the company which did the tile work during the renovation project. He said he would also like to install new lighting.

He said the hospital's maintenance crew said they could put the tiles in, which would save \$600. Amax, he said, would provide the commercial grade tiles, which the hospital can't get in town, and install the gridwork.

Board member Von Fahrenbruch asked if the cost of the labor to the hospital for it's crew installing the tiles would be worth the \$600 savings.

"If we're doing it, we want to do it right," he said. "The labor won't be free, just because it's us doing it."

Board member Weldon Brooks asked if it would look professional if the hospital installed the tile itself.

Mr. Miller said he thought the crew could handle putting in the tile, but not the gridwork.

he said.

Chief Financial Officer Brian Carlton said he didn't think it would break the hospital crew's hearts if they didn't have to install it themselves.

Mr. Miller said it would be better to have it professionally installed.

The board decided to have Amax do all of the work.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from Mr. Brooks that Tuesday's meeting would be his last. He said it has been interesting serving on the board.

Mr. Miller said the hospital appreciated his four years on the board. He said he had been a faithful and good member.

- Learned from Chief Financial Officer Brian Carlton that the hospital had 398 patient days, 48 admissions, four births, two inpatient surgeries, 18 outpatient surgeries, and 1,352 Doctor's Clinic visits in November.

- Heard an update on where the hospital is in getting the Dairyland computer system going from Mr. Carlton. He said the employees are still learning the system and that they are helping each other.

"We always compare ourselves to Scott City, who also had Dairyland," he said. "But Scott City had a little bit of an advantage. They already had an order entry system before they went live with Dairyland."

He said Scott City went through the same thing four years when they got their system.



Librarian Mary Luehrs held children spellbound during the preschool story hour last Thursday. Mrs. Luehrs reads to children at 10:30 a.m. every Thursday at the Norton Public Library. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

No parking problem to be revisited

The City of Norton will revisit to problem of parking near East Campus after representatives of the Norton school board attended the council meeting last week.

Norton Schools Superintendent Greg Mann said the school board understood why the city changed the one block of Wilberforce St. north of East Campus to no parking.

"We were surprised and maybe a little confused," he said. "But I think we understand. I don't think we were 'irked' as the paper said.

"We know it's not a good situation. It's been a problem as long as I've been here."

But, Mr. Mann said, on the other hand, the district has limited parking and those nine spots represent 9 percent of the parking at East Campus.

Mr. Mann said the district had two suggestions. The first, he said, was to restore some of the parking to the block.

The second, which he said was really the solution that would sat-

isfy everyone's safety concerns and that the council should give serious consideration to, was making that block one-way going east.

He said he wasn't asking for parking on the north side of the street, but felt that making the block one-way would allow buses to unload safely and still allow for parking on the south side of the street.

If the council didn't like either proposal, he asked they at least amend the ordinance to say school vehicles, rather than just passenger buses, because a lot of schools bring Suburbans.

Councilman Jerry Hawks said the ordinance was supposed to have been amended in the third reading, but it didn't get changed.

Councilman Jerry Jones said he had a school bus driver tell him the no parking was a good deal. He said he's also had numerous neighbors and citizens tell him they didn't see having no parking on that block as a problem.

Mr. Mann said there were maybe 15 times when there are buses on that street.

He said the city was taking away parking all the time when there was only a concern maybe 10 percent of the time. It varies from year-to-year, he said, the major problem is during football season.

Also, he said, the school isn't the only entity that uses East Campus.

Mr. Mann said he understood why the city made the decision that they did.

Councilwoman Elaine Mann said she recommended that this go back to committee. The Public Safety Committee will meet at 5 p.m. on Monday. The superintendent was invited to attend.

In other business, the council:

- Appointed Curtis Eveleigh to serve on Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Eveleigh was on the board several years ago and said he would like to do it again. The term expires in 2007. Mr. Eveleigh is replacing

Bud Posson, who chose not to serve again.

- Waived the formal third reading and adopted Ordinance No. 1541, which will keep the surcharge on electrical rates.

- Failed to amend the Dec. 1 minutes for lack of a second. Mr. Hawks said he would like the minutes to say that he was opposed to approving the third reading of the no parking ordinance until the school was contacted.

- Heard from City Administrator Rob Lawson that Judge David Baumgartner will not be able to serve as municipal judge because he was elected as the Phillips County attorney.

- Held a 10-minute closed session to discuss non-elected personnel.

- Heard from Mr. Hawks that the airport board got a request for an additional hangar at the airport. He said the board will be developing regulations for expansion of hangars and developing a policy to be followed regarding expansion.

Wrap Up Your Holiday Shopping In One Stop!



The Telegram Staff will be glad to help you with a renewal or gift subscription

Make Someone Happy On Your Shopping List!!

PLEASE SEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS
 PLEASE START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION FOR ME
 PLEASE ADD TO THE FOLLOWING SUBSCRIPTION

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____
 STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION FROM _____ IS ENCLOSED
 MY CHECK FOR \$ _____

NORTON, PHILLIPS, GRAHAM, DECATUR & FURNAS COUNTIES:
 1 Year—\$60.00 • 6 Months—\$32.00 • 3 Months—\$18.00
ELSEWHERE IN KANSAS AND NEBRASKA:
 1 Year—\$70.00 • 6 Months—\$37.00 • Student (9 Mo.)—\$52.50
 Less than 6 months would be \$15.00 per month
ELSEWHERE IN UNITED STATES:
 1 Year—\$76.00 • 6 Months—\$42.00 • Student (9 Mo.)—\$57.00
 Less than 6 months would be \$15.00 per month
 TAX IS INCLUDED IN ALL PRICES

THE NORTON
TELEGRAM

215 South Kansas Avenue, Norton • 785-877-3361; E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com