

Norton man asks county to help struggling businesses

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

A successful Norton businessman wondered if there isn't something the county can do to help small businesses, which are struggling.

John Milnes stopped by to visit the Norton County commissioners on Monday and see if they had any ideas on what can be done to help small businesses, which are struggling and eventually failing.

Mr. Milnes said he saw the closed sign on the coffee shop and knew of a couple of other small businesses, which may have to close their doors soon because they're just not making it.

He wondered if there could be some sort of task force formed to help these businesses.

The commissioners said that they have worked with several small businesses, including the coffee shop but it didn't seem to keep them going.

"What can we do to help?" County Commission Chairman Dean Kruse asked. "We've worked with them.

"We're trying to form an economic development committee to try to get its arms around this but some people say some things can't be fixed."

Commissioner Leroy Lang

wanted to know if Mr. Milnes had any other ideas for helping businesses. The county has given loans to small businesses and worked with them when they've had trouble paying them back, he said.

"How do we catch this stuff before it happens?" Mr. Milnes asked

Commissioner John Miller agreed that there is a problem.

"When a person does fall on hard times is there a way for it to keep from going to the next step?" he said.

Mr. Milnes suggested having someone from the Small Business Development Center in Hays come up and do a walk through. Maybe they could suggest something that would help the business people.

"It bothers me," he told the commissioners.

"Us, too," Mr. Miller said. "It's hard on people and its hard on the tax base."

Mr. Lang agreed but didn't feel the county could do much to help.

"We're all concerned but there are some things beyond our control," he said.

"We have to accept that some of these businesses won't be here but we need to help everyone we can."

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked to Reggie Beckman, noxious weed supervisor, about the problems of weeds in the county. Weed seed that has laid dormant for several years has sprouted with the recent rains, Mr. Beckman said. Some county residents are good about getting rid of their weeds, but others aren't paying attention to the problem.

- Spoke with Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan. Mr. Brannan asked for a raise for the Road and Bridge Department secretary, Cindy Wegener, since she has finished her three-month probation. He said she has been doing a good job and been helping set up the budget for next year.

- Met with Solid Waste Supervisor Curt Archibald, who said that not much has been done at the new landfill over the last week due to the rain.

- Visited with County Attorney Karen Griffiths, who wanted to know if the Norton County Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs could use the county's tax identification number to apply for two grants to help fight methamphetamine use.

One grant, she said would be for law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians and the other would be for parents.



June bride Erin Foley and her personal attendant Kelsey Holste waited outside St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church for her cue to enter. Miss Foley, the daughter of Craig and Anna Foley, Norton, married Kelly Hill, Norton. — Photo by Carolyn Plotts

Airport board changes name of what it charges for hangars

By VERONICA MONIER

The Norton City/County Airport Board didn't raise rates but it did change what money from airplane owners who use hangars will be called.

Chairman John Miller said the board needed to decide if the hangar rental rates should be increased. Right now, rates are about \$50 per year per hangar.

"We've talked about looking at a maximum of \$200 a year," he said. "We need some discussion as to whether \$50 is an equitable price and if it's not, what is."

Airport Manager Delvis Miller said everyone who has a hangar, with the exception of one, built or bought their hangars and pay property taxes.

The reason for the rent, he said, was because the hangars sit on city property.

Board member Gail Boller, who is also a hangar owner, said they pay the property taxes, but don't get city services like residential property does.

"I'd be willing to pay a little more if they could finish that area

from the taxiway to the runway," he said. "It's full of rocks."

However, Mr. Boller said the hangar rent needed to be called something other than rent, such as an access fee.

He said people think the hangar owners are renting them out for \$50 a year and using them as storage. He said what people don't understand, when they hear "hangar rent" is that most own their own hangars.

"It would clear up a lot of misconceptions" he said.

The board approved the name change.

In other business, the board:

- Discussed applying for a \$77,000 grant to continue updating the airport.

Mr. J. Miller said that was how much the airport was eligible for and the board would have to put up 5 percent, or around \$3,700, match money.

He said the money could be used for runways, taxiways and maintenance which would cover a new parking lot in front of the airport office, putting in a taxiway to

the new hangars, and tying an access road from the office to the runway.

"We need to see if we can come up with the match money," he said.

Mr. Miller said they would need to talk to the city, but it seemed like the board should apply for the money before the deadline. The board agreed.

- Heard that Mr. D. Miller had sprayed for musk thistle and planned to mow around the runway lights.

- Learned from Mary Oswald that her husband Buddy has ordered their new hangar. The materials should arrive soon and then it will be put up, she said.

- Heard that the airport will be closed from 3 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 9, for the drag races during the car show.

Mr. D. Miller said they would be monitoring air channels and if a flight for life needed to land, they would clear a space.

- Set the next meeting for 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 11, in the city building basement.

Walkers step enough to cross state

Thirteen teams, most with six people, participated in 2005 Walk Kansas in Norton County this year.

Eleven of the teams walked more than the 423 miles needed to do a virtual walk across the state.

The teams held a round-up meeting at Elmwood Park recently.

The Walkabouts, captained by Bill Goscha, reported the most miles, 1,735, over eight weeks. Other Walkabout team members included were Joyce Lofgreen, Joan Bolt, Cathy and Lonnie Kellerman and Linda Burger.

Other teams which walked across Kansas and their captains were:

- Stride by Stride — Kathy Skrdlant, 1,356 miles;
- Moon Walkers — Deb Jones, 1,337 miles;
- Sizzlin' Six — Kathy Donaldson, 1,298 miles;
- Strutters — Pam Menagh, 1,000 miles;
- Noon Walkers — Karen Grif-

fiths, 867 miles;

- Team to Beat — Bob Cotton, 845 miles;

- Validated Gang Members — Kelly Gill, 715 miles;

- Purple Cat Pack — Keith Van Skike, 529 miles;

- Willing Walkers — Cindy Field, 490 miles;

- Purple Power People — Keith Van Skike, 478 miles.

The top five walkers were Mr. Goscha, 779 miles; Rebecca Skrdlant, Stride by Stride, 477 miles; Deb Jones, Moon Walkers, 449; Gale Hays, Sizzlin' Six, 411 miles; and Kathy Skrdlant, Stride by Stride, 384 miles.

The 2005 Walk Kansas asked participants to keep track of the daily servings of fruits and vegetables they ate.

Many walkers in Norton County and elsewhere did not have the recommended five servings a day, the participants were told.

Only 12 walkers met the recommended 280 servings of fruits and

vegetables for the eight-weeks.

The minimum servings of fruits and vegetables for most people when the walk started was five per day. That has been increased since the release of the new Food Pyramid Guidance System by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Eating the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables were Bob Cotton, Gale Hays, Karen Griffiths, Dr. Glenda Maurer, Shauna Robinson, Doug Griffiths, Joyce Lofgreen, Lana Jones, Deb Jones, Deanna Nelson and Deb Thiele.

The Noon Walkers ate more than the minimum of 1,680 servings for a team, with 1,731. Other top five teams were: Willing Walkers — 1,524; Sizzlin' Six — 1,503; Team to Beat — 1,476, and the Moon Walkers — 1446.

Call your local K-State Research and Extension Office or e-mail twwatts@oznet.ksu.edu. to find out about the 2006 Walk Kansas.

Federal security money gets scarce

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

In a couple of years, Norton County probably won't be receiving any more money from Homeland Security, Sheriff Troy Thomson told the county commissioners on Monday.

The sheriff said he has been told that the state will be regionalized for emergency preparedness. That means, he said, the counties won't get any more money and it will all go to regional centers, like Hays.

"This is pretty much it after this next year," he said of the money.

"Then we won't need an emergency preparedness director,"

John Miller said.

"Yep," said the sheriff.

Right now, he said, he is trying to order emergency supplies as part of his job as emergency preparedness coordinator. However, the Internet site that he has to order them through was not available. It is supposed to be accessed between Monday and June 30, he said. But as of midmorning Monday, he couldn't get the site up.

In other business, the sheriff said:

- That he has been unable to hire a deputy. He said he hasn't had any response to his ads and doesn't

know what to do next.

The problem, he said, is not uncommon out here, where wages are low compared to the cities.

"You've got to find somebody who's certified who wants to live in this area," he said.

- There are five people in the county jail now but it will probably be full on weekends for the next couple of months.

- Asked to have a 15-minute attorney-client privilege closed session with the commissioners and County counselor Doug Sebelius.

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Norton County Weather ----- June 14th - 18th

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
85/55	88/58	85/58	87/63	88/58

Normal High: 83
Normal Low: 55

Sunrise: 6:10 to 6:10am
Sunset: 9:11 to 9:11pm

Temperatures will once again climb close to 90 degrees as we near the beginning of summer. This week also looks dry partially due to a surface ridge moving through the high plains which will completely keep out the rain today and tomorrow. But Wednesday and Thursday southerly winds will push the ridge out and bring in Gulf moisture allowing for some widely scattered storms. However this weekend which will be dry and warm. A good weekend to head to the lake.

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