

Dog days of summer bring memories of popcorn

I don't know if these are the "dog days" of summer, but this weekend I sure felt like an old dog. Maybe, it's supposed to be "dog daze" because it was as if I was in a daze. Usually, on weekends I have a list a mile long of things to do. This weekend, I didn't even make a list.

Jim and James had manly-man things to do and I let them. When they would come back to the house for a break I would be right where they left me, "zoned out," in my recliner. Now, some would say if I was that tired, I must have needed the rest. But, I say I plain had no ambition. I wasn't sleeping, I was just "out of it."

I knew they had to eat and goulash sounded like the easiest thing to make for lunch, so that's what they got. Goulash isn't exactly a summer meal, but I had hamburger; I had macaroni and Lord knows I had plenty of canned tomatoes. Except for salt and pepper and a sprinkle of sugar, that's all you need for goulash. I cheat a

little and add a can of tomato paste. I made a big enough batch that they got it again for supper. And, Jim even had leftovers for one or

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



two lunches. My friend, Barbara, and I were lamenting how to know what plastics are safe to use. We're hearing so much bad press about BPAs (or is it BPHs?) and not using plastic containers in the microwave. My daughter, Kara, is becoming well-versed on natural foods, organic products and cancer-causing agents. She has almost entirely quit using her microwave. Paper isn't the answer, either. I read an article about the dangers of using paper plates in the microwave.

Back in the late '70s I was the proud owner of one of the early microwave ovens. First in the neighborhood sort of thing,

you know. It was an Amana RadarRange and it was built like a tank. Took two men and a gorilla to carry it in. Ew-w-w-w! RadarRange.

Almost sounds a little scary. I remember reading the manual from cover-to-cover before attempting to operate such a complex piece of equipment. Then the moment of truth. I made three precise slits in a hot dog, put it in a bun, wrapped bun and dog neatly in a square of waxed paper, set the timer for 15 seconds, told the children to stand back and pushed the power button.

At the sound of the "ding" we had a sizzling hot, hot dog. I had made microwaves! Of course, the girls wanted to try it and we soon learned what happens to a hot dog when "zapped" for 30 seconds. Trust me - it's not pretty.

I guess there could be life without a microwave. I use it to thaw hamburger, heat leftover coffee, "nuke" frozen dinners and make popcorn.

Oh, please don't tell me popcorn causes cancer.

Goals

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Applegate, Norton County; Ada Arford, Norton County; Dean Esslinger, Norton; Curtis Eveleigh, Norton County; Donna Foley, Norton; Toby Kuhn, Norton and Richard Thompson, Norton County.

Economic Development's goals are job creation, downtown development and housing.

Mrs. Stiles said she spends most of her time on job creation including business retention and expansion, entrepreneurship efforts and business recruitment.

For business retention and expansion, Mrs. Stiles said she offers one-on-one assistance to local businesses to find solutions to challenges, she assists businesses with accessing local, regional, state and federal programs, she provides educational opportunities to business owners and employees, she assists in attracting a skilled workforce and she creates initiatives such as the storefront renewal project and the buy local day in order to meet the needs of local businesses.

In 2008, Mrs. Stiles said she provided services to 40 existing businesses on 67 individual projects. She also worked on 11 business expansion projects; four were successful.

Economic Development also works on entrepreneurship efforts including one-on-one assistance with business planning, financing and education, offering educational seminars to encourage business startup, match entrepreneurs with local and regional and federal resources.

Mrs. Stiles said that in 2008, she assisted 13 entrepreneurs, resulting in five new businesses.

For business recruitment, Economic Development submitted proposals to businesses interested in relocating to Kansas, listed available buildings and land on the Premier Property Location web site for side selection, pooled resources and participated in regional initiatives such as wind energy development, dairy recruitment and manufacturing recruitment.

In 2008, Mrs. Stiles said Economic Development pursued ten business recruitment projects, four are still active projects.

Mrs. Stiles said Economic Development also works with downtown development including

Historic District Survey, Washington Street Park, Norton Visitor Center, Heaton Building, Dr. Lyon's House and State Street Parking Lot.

Mrs. Stiles said two grants were received-the Kansas State Historical Society grant was granted for the Historic District Survey and the Federal Home Loan Bank grant was granted for the Norton Visitor Center.

"Communities large and small across Kansas and the nation have bolstered their local economies through investment in their downtown areas. We have partnered with key community organizations such as the Norton County Community Foundation, Norton Downtown Restoration Committee and Lyon's Club. Together we have several projects underway in downtown Norton," Mrs. Stiles said.

"Our goal is to successfully complete these projects and expand our efforts to the Highway 36 business district and the downtown areas in Alma, Lenora, Clayton and Edmond," Mrs. Stiles said.

Another important element of economic development is housing. Mrs. Stiles said it is an important component in facilitating business growth.

Initiatives include the Norton County Neighborhood Revitalization Act, the Norton City/County Economic Development Demolition Program, the Heaton Building, strategic planning and rental property owners meetings and education meetings about available programs.

Mrs. Stiles said economic development is working with the City of Norton to assess interest in housing rehabilitation grants.

"The ultimate goal of each of these initiatives is to attract wealth and employment to the county and increase the tax base," Mrs. Stiles said.

"The direction of economic development is determined by the community," Mrs. Stiles said.

Mrs. Stiles said the strategic planning session for the five year plan will be held Sept. 3 at 5:30 p.m. in the economic development office, located at 113 N. Norton Street, Suite B.

Board meetings are open to the public and held the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the economic development office.

County

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to continue, but he believes they should finish what they started.

"The system will give the appraisers office the resources they need so they won't have to contract out for mapping services," Mr. Hale said.

He said the commission is still considering funding the software.

In other commission business:

• John Mapes, Mapes and Miller Accounting, delivered the preliminary budget to the commission. The recommended budget cuts were made, and Mr. Mapes will make the changes and return the proposed budget for publication. The tax dollars will be down because valuation has decreased by \$2 million. The commission said it was going to be a difficult budget year, but every department has to share in the balance so taxes are not increased.

• Gina Frack, Norton County health department, delivered data to the commission showing documentation to support her budget request. The commission discussed charging more for the administrative fee with vaccinations. Mrs. Frack said the department is already charging the maximum fee and raising it would not benefit the department.

• The commission reviewed a letter from Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas in regards to a board appointment. There is a vacancy due to Ruth Lofgreen's resignation. The commission agreed to appoint Alice Goscha as the Norton County representative to the board, effective August 1.

• The commission signed the Education Incentive Grant Program application. The application is for grant money for Emergency Medical Technician classes. If approved, the funding would reimburse Norton County Emergency Medical Services for the class.

• Norton County Road and Bridge Supervisor Tom Brannan gave his weekly report. He said mower tractors are running, but some roads have been too muddy.

Mr. Brannan also reported on road maintenance. Various roads were discussed.

• Natalie Linner, county appraisal clerk, gave the commission a report on the 2008 appraisal/sales ratio study. The study is delivered to the county each year by the Division of Property Valuation. The report breaks down the property class of assessed and appraised property completed by the county appraiser.

Idol

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Mrs. Wehner received \$250, Mr. Smith received \$125 and Mr. Maddy received \$100.

The judges were Terry Crull, Roger Cooper and Kelsey Noel.

Patsy Maddy, Norton Idol organizer, said contestants came from as far away as Wichita.

She said all contestants sang during the preliminary round and ten moved on to the final round.

"Farm bureau has always tried to provide entertainment for Friday night during fair week," she said.

She said they used to hire bands but switched to the Idol competition to get the community involved and bring people to Norton.



Stacy Wehner

Mrs. Maddy said 40 contestants participated in the first and second

year of competition.

Mrs. Maddy said some of the judges thought the competition had fizzled since there were only 26 participants this year, but competition was stiff.

"If singers want to sing in Norton Idol, they better have a good set of pipes," Mr. Crull said.

Mrs. Maddy said CW Productions, in Hays, provided light and sound. She said Nex-Tech recorded the performance and would broadcast it at a later date.

"Norton area sponsors and businesses provided financial support and donations to make Norton Idol successful for a third year. We couldn't do it without them," Mrs. Maddy said.

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~ Dana Paxton ~

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