

Back to School doesn't have to be complicated

While back-to-school spending is typically second only to holiday purchases, families are encouraged to check school fees and other fixed costs before shopping.

Budget cuts to education are happening in districts across the country. As a result, parents are likely to see increases in registration and other fees. In some cases, families may be asked to cover or contribute to costs for activities or services previously provided without cost, said K-State Research and Extension financial management specialist, Carol Young.

As the educational community struggles with how best to manage the current economic climate, Young noted that the increased costs will challenge families. The dilemma also offers a valuable lesson in helping children learn to weigh wants versus needs.

Young, who is based in Kansas State University's Department of Family Studies and Human Services, offered cost-saving tips:

1) Check with the school for a list of costs and requirements, such as registration, book and computer rentals or deposits, or other requirements, such as a calculator for math, art supplies or kindergarten mat and school breakfast or lunch.

2) Note costs for activities, such as rental fees for a band instrument or uniform, or add-ons for transportation, rather than regularly scheduled bus route, and for information about dress code or school uniforms. (Examples might include khaki slacks, T-shirts without names or sayings, or a minimal length for shorts.)

3) Ask about options for paying enrollment fees, such as spreading out payments.

4) Check to see if your family qualifies for reduced enrollment and other costs, such as reduced lunch fees or scholarships for band or other activities, and guidelines for applying. If they are available, follow the directions on the application exactly.

5) Consider required school-related expenses, including immunizations, health screenings and athletic physical, and check to see if these needs can be met at an economical or group rate with a local healthcare provider or through the local Health Department.

6) Review the school district list for required supplies. Plan to shop at home first, by checking supplies on hand and hand-me-downs such as a calculator from a previous year, backpack or book bag in good condition to hold down costs.

7) Check sale flyers for the best prices on school supplies; wait to stock-up though, as back-to-school supplies are typically reduced once the school year

begins.

8) Set aside time with each child to inventory and check the condition of clothing; make a list of items needed and note priorities, such as shoes.

9) Put the money where it matters. For example, buying shoes that fit will protect a child's feet and prevent accidents such as tripping. In times of rapid growth, consider gently used shoes (in the right size) that will quickly be outgrown.

10) Shop budget-friendly thrift-stores or a neighborhood exchange for lightly used basics, including slacks, jeans, shirts and jackets. Take the kids with you, and let them enjoy bargain-hunting for cool castoffs at affordable prices.

11) Spread out the expense, rather than trying to buy everything at once. Chances are, kids will want to wear summer clothing during the first weeks of school when the weather is still warm. Waiting also will give them time to settle in and see what others are wearing.

12) Trend or a short-lived fad? Help children choose budget-friendly clothes they will enjoy wearing. If a child wants something that doesn't fit within the budget, suggest opportunities for him or her to earn the difference. Older children (who have jobs) should be expected to take on increasing responsibility for their own expenses and extras.

13) Expenses typically increase with each grade level, and, as a child grows, his or her clothing becomes more expensive. To hold down costs, choose clothing with color themes that will mix and match to build a wardrobe.

14) Consider a pre-paid card for an older teen to teach money management; be specific, and reach an agreement about what the balance on the card is to cover and when or if funds will be replenished. Agree that if a teen overspends or misspends, he or she will have to do without.

15) Plan for school expenses to continue throughout the school year with costs for field trips, projects, school supplies, parties, and family outings to school events and programs.

"Keep records," Young said. Carry a small notepad and jot down this year's expenses to help in planning for next year. Save receipts, in the event purchases fail to meet expectations and will need to be returned.

And, as with any purchase, ask about a store's policy for returns or exchanges before buying.

More money management tips are available at K-State Research and Extension offices throughout the state and online: www.ksre.ksu.edu/financial-management/.

Fire Dept. gets new equipment



Norton Fire Chief Mitch Jones shows off the new fire truck for the city of Norton. The truck was purchased with the help of a Community Development Block Grant with the city contributing \$47,000 for the purchase.

—Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

By Carleen Bell

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After receiving a Community Development Block Grant for the purchase, the City of Norton recently purchased a new fire truck for the Norton Fire Department.

The grant funded \$259,000 of the purchase with the city contributing \$47,000, for a total of \$306,000.

The new truck replaces an old

pumper truck and city officials hope to sell the old equipment. The current fire department fleet consists of three pump trucks and one rescue truck.

The recently purchased truck was built in Alexis, Ill. It features a 2011 HME Cab and Chassis with an Alexis Body. Hays Fire and Rescue is a representative for the company and sold it to the city of Norton.

"We started working on get-

ting a new truck in 2004," said Norton City Administrator Rob Lawson.

Norton Mayor David Corns reported that the city applied for the block grant this year and signed the papers on Feb. 2.

"This is going to make a good addition to our current fleet," said Norton Fire Chief Mitch Jones.

Preventing conflict as easy as five steps

It starts in the morning with the kids before you go to work, then kicks into second gear with your co-workers or your boss and finally culminates at home with your spouse and children. It's conflict, and it doesn't have to be a part of your daily life, according to Tim Scudder, Chief Executive Officer of an international firm that prepares top companies and their executives on how to better deal with the conflict in the workplace.

He said that recent research suggests that the top reason why people leave their jobs is because of a poor relationship with their immediate supervisors. Conflict, both at work and at home, can actually be an opportunity to resolve long-standing issues and help people lead more fulfilling and productive lives. The secret is understanding the five keys to conflict and how to move them forward toward the final step - resolution.

"The key to managing conflict isn't just about pushing them to resolution, but also to learn how to have nicer conflicts," said Scud-

der, Chief Executive Officer of Personal Strengths United States of America and co-author of *Have a Nice Conflict: A Story of Finding Success and Satisfaction in the Most Unlikely Places* www.haveaniceconflict.com. "As one set of conflicts is resolved, others will take their place, so it's important to learn how to make conflicts productive and positive experiences, instead of allowing them to distract us from our goals and disrupt our lives."

Scudder's five keys to conflict include:

Anticipate - Anticipating conflict starts with knowing who you're dealing with. Then ask yourself how various people might view the same situation differently. When two or more people see things differently, there is the potential for conflict. If you can figure that out, you have a good shot at steering clear of it.

Prevent - Preventing conflict is really all about the deliberate, appropriate use of behavior in your relationships. A well-chosen behavior on your part can prevent

conflict with another person. But you need to prevent conflict in yourself sometimes too, and that might have more to do with choosing your perceptions than choosing your behaviors.

Identify - There are three basic approaches in conflict: rising to the challenge, cautiously withdrawing, or wanting to keep the peace. When you can identify these approaches in yourself or others, you are empowered to handle the situation more productively.

Manage - Managing conflict has two components: managing yourself and managing the relationship. Managing conflict is about creating the conditions and empowering them to manage themselves out of the emotional state of conflict. It's also about managing yourself out. Managing yourself in conflict can be as easy as taking some time to see things

differently.

Resolve - To create movement toward resolution we need to show the other person a path back to feeling good about themselves. When they feel good about themselves, they are less likely to feel threatened and are free to move toward a compromise and resolution.

"Unresolved or poorly managed conflict costs companies in ways they can't even calculate," he added. "Lost institutional memory, low productivity, bad morale, high turnover all cost real companies real dollars. On the other hand, well-managed conflict can not only prevent all those losses, but it can also promote higher productivity and a stronger bottom line. So, the end result will not only be fewer conflicts, but also nicer ones with positive results."

Nex-Tech expands internet access

In an effort to ensure universal broadband accessibility, Nex-Tech is providing free broadband and Wi-Fi connections to 35 public libraries in central and northwest Kansas.

For small community libraries like the Norcat Public Library, the donation addresses a critical need. "We now have super fast Internet capabilities for free," said librarian Deb Marshall. "Our limited income can now be spent on better uses such as updating our books, getting our books cataloged, which we couldn't remotely do without good, fast, reliable Internet, and other items to continue to make our library updated and user friendly."

Nex-Tech/Rural Telephone CEO/General Manager Larry Sevier said the donation exemplifies Nex-Tech's dedication to partnering with, and giving back to, the communities it serves. "Even as Nex-Tech continues to

expand broadband availability throughout central and northwest Kansas, the organization understands that providing free public-access Wi-Fi connections is critical to ensure that every individual regardless of income has access to these essential services," he said.

Sevier stated that this donation of free services would collectively amount to approximately \$21,000 per year into the central and northwest Kansas economy.

Local libraries that will be getting the service include the following: Almena City Library, Graham County Public Library, Jennings City Library, Lenora Public Library, Logan Public Library, Long Island Community Library, Natoma Public Library, Norcat Public Library, Northwest Kansas Library System, Norton; Norton Public Library, Oberlin City Library, Phillipsburg City Library.

Chiropractor

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planning and guidance, acupuncture and spinal manipulation, among other services. "I like to attend eight to 10 seminars a year to keep up on the latest practices and technology in my field," Peterson said. "The only constant is change and I like to keep ahead of the game."

Though always looking for positive change, one change Peterson doesn't see in his near future is retirement.

"I just love what I do and I love being in this practice," he said. "What would I do if I retire? I get bored on the weekends and I look forward to coming to work. I'm not retiring anytime soon."

Correction

The case of Ryan L. Zwegardt, the former Norton police officer accused of sexual assault, includes charges from two individuals, not one as previously reported by our newspaper. The Norton Telegram apologizes for the error.

The Norton Telegram will

correct or clarify any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at 877-3361 to report errors.

We believe that news stories should be fair and factual and appreciate your calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.



THE NORTON
TELEGRAM and the Norton Area
Chamber of Commerce welcome
Las Canteras Mexican Restaurant
to the business community

Las Canteras Mexican Restaurant is located at 203 W. Washington Street, Norton, Kansas, phone 785-874-4074. Las Canteras summer hours are every day from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. They have daily lunch specials and drink specials. Las Canteras has recently remodeled a room where meetings can be held.