

\$1 THE NORTON TELEGRAM



WEBSITE: nwkansas.com

8 PAGES

Friday

December 23, 2011

May your holiday be safe, happy and filled with love!

-Norton Telegram staff-

Briefly

Telegram will be closed for holiday

The Norton Telegram will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2. The regular Monday Extra and the regular Tuesday Telegram will be combined and published on Wednesday, Dec. 28 and Jan. 4.

Medical clinic set to close for holiday

The Norton Medical Clinic will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2 for New Year's.

City offices to be closed for holiday

The Norton City offices will be closed today and Monday for the Christmas holiday. Recyclables will not be picked up this week.

Christmas dinner set for noon Sunday

The United Methodist Church in Norton will hold a community Christmas dinner at noon on Christmas day. Anyone who wishes to partake is asked to bring a dish to share, such as salad, vegetable or dessert. Turkey, ham, potatoes, dressing and rolls will be provided. The cost for the meal is a free-will donation.

Library to host a story time Thursday

On Thursday, the Norton Public Library will host a story time at 10:30 a.m. Children will also get to make take-home treat bags of hot chocolate and marshmallows. Cookies and cocoa will also be served.

Markets

Friday, December 23, 2011

Wheat.....	\$6.08
Milo.....	\$5.64
Soybeans.....	\$10.82
Corn.....	\$5.97

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

Weather

SATURDAY: Sunny, with a high near 48. West wind between 5 and 10 mph. **SATURDAYNIGHT:** Mostly clear, with a low around 19. West wind between 5 and 10 mph. **CHRISTMAS DAY:** Sunny, with a high near 51. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southwest. **MONDAY:** Sunny, with a high near 47.

Kingham Report

Tuesday, Dec. 20Low 25, High 37
Wednesday, Dec. 21.....Low 23, High 46
Thursday, Dec. 22.....Low 27, High 34
Thursday, Dec. 22.....Two inches of snow
(Readings taken at the Kingham farm 9 miles northwest of Norton)

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for coming to us at Christmas and always, wherever we are. Amen

Grand prize drawing nets 12 winners



The winners of this year's Christmas On Us final drawing are (back, left to right) David Bainter, Cynthia Collins, Cathryn Blasi, Weldon Carlin, Kris Mizell, Darcie Brooks, (front, left to right) Andy Weskamp, Nick Mandl, John Carlin, Pamela Bigge and Karen Smith. The promotion wrapped up Thursday evening and three \$25 instant winners, one \$100 winner, one \$500 winner and seven \$50 winners were drawn.

-Telegram photo by Carleen Bell

The Norton Telegram's Christmas On Us promotion wrapped up last night with a total of 12 prizes given away. Three unclaimed \$25 instant tickets were drawn along with the bigger prizes of \$500, \$100 and seven \$50 prizes.

The program kicked off on Nov. 15 with a full page to introduce the participating sponsors. For every \$10 spent in the business participants would

get a ticket with numbers on them. Every Tuesday for the next four weeks, new ads came out with numbers hidden within them. These numbers were for the instant \$25 ticket winners. A total of 10 instant winners were provided for, along with the bigger prizes awarded last night. Only seven instant winners claimed their prizes, which come in the form of scrip money that can only be spent at the

participating Christmas On Us sponsors' place of business. Each winner has until March 31, 2012 to spend their winnings.

This year's sponsors were Destination Kitchen, Nex-Tech, Mainstreet IGA, Mortensen Computer Service, Moffet Drug Store, Sander Furniture and

(Drawing - Continued on Page 5)

Superintendent responds to governor's proposal

By Carleen Bell
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In light of Governor Sam Brownback's recent proposal to reform school finance, local school administrators are expressing uncertainty about the long-term sustainability of quality education without substantial property tax increases.

The governor made public last week his proposal to change how state aid for school districts is figured and distributed. According to information from the Kansas Department of Education, one of the major points of the proposal is providing each school with a base state aid of \$4,492 per student each year, which is an increase from the current

\$3,780. Other points include offsetting local property taxes through a Property Tax Equalization fund that will pay out in increasingly greater amounts to districts with low property tax valuations per student. The proposal also allows for unlimited local control over property taxes for educational funding. If the proposal becomes reality, it would

not take effect until the fall of 2013.

While Brownback argues that the new system is intended to eliminate litigation because the current formula isn't being funded, Norton Superintendent Greg Mann is among those skeptical of that thinking.

"What I'm reading is that it will increase litigation," Mann said. "The current Kansas formula is very complicated but the new formula eliminates weightings, which are based on the actual cost of educating certain groups of students."

The weighting to which the Superintendent is referring includes extra money to cover the cost of educating at-risk students or transporting students to and from school. The proposed new formula would instead consider the weighted funding part of the Base State Aid Per Pupil increase.

The superintendent also reported that each school district across the state would continue to levy 20 mills of property tax, but instead of keeping that money in the district, it is pooled at the state level and redistributed to districts according to property wealth. Essentially, the poorest districts would get the most money and the already wealthy districts will see little to no funding increase. That distribution is capped though, at 106 percent of what any district receives under the current finance system and no district would receive less money than it gets now, at least for the first year. In the future, state money would fluctuate with enrollment.

"It is possible that the state would occasionally increase the Base State Aid Per Pupil," Mann said, "but since the proposal gives school districts the unrestricted authority to raise local funds, my concern is that the increases would be infrequent and small."

According to the Superintendent, under the current system, the Norton school district is allowed to levy \$36,400 per mill without state equalization. Some districts of similar size are allowed to raise several times more per mill because of commercial or industrial properties that generate substantially more property tax revenue. While the Norton district, for example, would be allowed to generate more money through increased property tax rates, tax increases are always unpopular and can be subject to protest votes

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Calling contest draws 29 teams

By Carleen Bell
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As a way to raise money to support youth hunting activities and programs, the Norton Archery Club held a coyote calling contest over the weekend. The contest was held Saturday with 29 teams participating.

Of the 29 teams, the top finishers were Dustin Patterson and Ryan Houser of Westmoreland. The team took a coyote weighing 30.2 pounds and 48 crows for a grand total of 154 points.

The team of John Baker and Justin Baker, both of Norton, also took a prize for the biggest coyote, weighing 30.6 pounds.

The second place team consisted of Milton Wehrman of Hunter and Orin Holle of Oberlin, who took one bobcat, three coyotes and three crows.

The third place team was Lon Ninemere and Mat Armknecht, both of Hill City, who took 1 bobcat and one coyote.

The fourth place team was Rick Doeden and Kyle Beck, both of Oberlin, who took two coyotes.

Finally, the fifth place team was Brandon Reichert and Chris Russell, both of McCook, who took two coyotes.

All together, the 29 teams shot three bobcats, 17 coyotes and 55 crows this year. The calling contest has been held for about 12 years.

(Left) Rusty Goss of the Norton Archery Club weighs a bobcat harvested at this year's calling contest. The 20-pound cat was taken by Randy West and Luke Liebrant, both of Norton. West and Liebrant were one of 29 teams participating in the hunting contest.

-Telegram photo by Carleen Bell

