

# \$1 THE NORTON TELEGRAM



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10 PAGES

## Tuesday

February 12, 2013

### Briefly

#### Business shows their appreciation

Norton Auto Supply will be having their customer appreciation day on Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Stop in and check out their filter sale and enjoy some refreshments and a snack.

#### Early dismissal for Norton High kids

Norton Community High School will have an early dismissal on Friday, Feb. 15. School will be dismissed at noon for the regional wrestling tournament at Stull gym which begins at 2 p.m.

#### Soup supper to be held this Friday

There will be a Norton Rotary Scholarship Soup Supper Friday at 4 p.m. at the high school cafeteria.

#### Bunny shoot set for this Saturday

The Norton Archery Club Bunny Shoot will be held on Saturday, Feb. 16. Must be pre-entered by 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 15. Recurve, long bow, or compound bow only. Shooting hours start one half hour before sunrise. Check in no later than 6 p.m. Contact John Baker (877-3253) or Randy West (877-5269) for more information.

#### Give the gift of life and donate blood

The American Red Cross NW Kansas Blood Drive will be on Tuesday, Feb. 19 at the Norton 4-H Building from noon to 6 p.m. To schedule your appointment call 1-800- Red Cross. It's open to the public and walk-ins are welcome.

### Markets

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

Wheat .....	\$7.37
Milo .....	\$6.67
Soybeans .....	\$13.79
Corn .....	\$7.06

Markets Courtesy of Norton Ag Valley Co-Op

### Weather

Wednesday - Partly cloudy with a high of 54. Wednesday Night - Partly cloudy with a low of 27. Thursday - Partly cloudy with a high of 43. Thursday Night - Mostly cloudy with a low of 21. Friday - Mostly cloudy with a high of 34.

### Kingham Report

Friday, Feb. 8 .....Low 23, High 53  
 Saturday, Feb. 9 .....Low 30, High 55  
 .10 Rain  
 Sunday, Feb. 10 .....Low 27, High 38  
 Monday, Feb. 11 .....Low 17, High 37  
 (Readings taken at the Kingham farm  
 9 miles northwest of Norton)

### Prayer

Loving God, help us to know that you love us even when we make mistakes. Challenge us to keep growing in love for ourselves, our neighbors, and you. In Christ's name. Amen.

## Almena couple named Sweetheart winners



Nathan and Sara Johns of Almena are this year's Norton County Sweetheart Couple. Out of 27 couples they were drawn to receive several great gifts from area sponsors.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

This year's Norton County Sweetheart couple contest has a winner. Out of 27 couples nominated, Nathan and Sara Johns of Almena get the honors.

The couple met in 1998 through a friend at a party and started dating a week later. "It was love at first sight!" Sara said. "Nathan was from Minatare, Neb. and I was from Mitchell, Neb. We moved here to Norton County four years ago."

On June 8, 2002 the couple wed and through that union came three children: Brianna 13, Rachel, 9 and Jaden who is two years old. Another child is also part of this family, Nathan's daughter Kaitlin who is 15.

When notified about winning Sara said, "I am very excited, we never get to go on dates anymore. I only put our name in one time and figured it only takes one to win."

What makes these future dates so great are all the fantastic gifts offered to them by area sponsors of the contest. These sponsors are: Las Canteras, Mainstreet IGA, Russ' Jewelry and Repair, Sander Furniture, The Norton Theatre, Kowpoke Supply, Hidden Dragon, Fit To Go, Garden Gate Florals Etc., Town and Country Kitchen and The Norton Telegram.

## Public meetings set for local post offices

By Kevin Bottrell  
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The U.S. Postal Service is planning another round of public meetings, this time to discuss reducing the business hours at smaller post offices.

The proposed hour reductions are the latest in a series of moves designed to combat the Postal Service's financial difficulties. First class mail is down 60 percent over the last six years, costing the service about \$16 billion. Over the past several years, the Postal Service has come up with several plans to try and reverse its fiscal problems, with the initial plan being to close more than 3,700 post offices nationwide.

Brian Sperry, spokesperson for the Postal Service, said that when the service held community meetings, citizens said they would rather keep their post offices at reduced hours than see them close.

"So we plan to realign hours," he said. "Two to six hours depending on

workload at each office."

More than 13,000 post offices are being reviewed, he said. The list of post offices up for review includes: Kanorado, Edson, Bird City, Brewster, Gove, Grainfield, Grinnell, Herndon, Rexford, Selden, Weskan, Jennings, Lenora, McDonald and Winona.

Sperry said residents in these cities will get a survey where they can state their preference for one of four options: reduce the post office's hours; close the office completely and provide curbside delivery; contract with a local business to offer some postal services; or close the office and provide box service at a nearby post office.

The survey will be due two weeks before each meeting. At the public meetings, a local postal service manager will share the survey results and take questions and comments.

Sperry said unless more than 60 percent of a community favors one of the four options, the office will automati-

cally get the reduced hours. There will be a spot on the survey for residents to fill in their preference for when those hours will fall during the week. Saturday hours will not change, he said.

The Postal Service will announce its decision one week after each meeting with a notice posted at the post office. The changes will be implemented within 30 days of the official notice.

Sperry described the new plan as a way to preserve rural post offices while cutting costs. Once fully implemented next year, he said, the savings are projected at \$500 million a year.

The Postal Service has also been consolidating its mail processing facilities. More than 100 processing facilities are scheduled for closure by July.

Goodland's mail processing had been done in Colby until the last round of consolidation, when it was moved to Salina. That facility is being closed and processing there moved to Wichita. Incoming mail processing was still being

done in Colby, but that too is moving to North Platte, Neb. Sperry said the target date for that move is Feb. 26. Colby will still serve as a transportation hub and a regular post office. Sperry said mail collection times will be unchanged.

The processing changes will save about \$1.2 billion annually, Sperry said, and the Postal Service has its eye on several other changes that will require acts of Congress. The service has been asking for several years to be allowed to get rid of Saturday street delivery, and in 2006 it was required by law to pre-pay retiree health benefits, which cost about \$5.5 billion each year.

"We are asking Congress to resolve that," Sperry said. "We will still pay retiree benefits, but we're asking Congress to make it more manageable."

Congress has yet to act on either issue.

### Formal introductions...



Norton held their annual Snowball Dance this past Saturday at the Norton Junior High Gym. Norton Senior High Principal Rudy Perez takes the time to greet everyone as they enter the dance and to meet the out of town guests. Drew Schrum is seen here introducing his date Justice Voss, from Logan, to Mr. Miller.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

## Commissioners hear the hospital numbers

By Cynthia Haynes  
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The Norton County Hospital is struggling with the new Kansas Medicaid rules and with putting in a new electronic health records system but is in the black and doing well.

Hospital Administrator Rich Miller, Chief Financial Officer Ryan Stover and board members Reva Benien and Carolyn Applegate visited with the county commissioners Monday Feb. 4.

Mr. Miller told the commissioners that the hospital officials like to update the county each quarter and provide statistics on patient count, income and expenses.

Since the hospital runs its year from July through June, he said, the latest data is for the six months from July to December of last year.

For that time, the hospital had 1,859 patient days. That's the number of patients seen multiplied by the number of days they were at the facility. In 2012, records show, the hospital had 1,675 patient days for the same time period.

Admissions were up a little with 365 people going into the hospital in the last six months as compared to 345 in 2012 and 355 in 2011.

The hospital has seen a big jump in obstetrics, Mr. Miller said, with 44 babies born in the last six months of 2012

as compared to 31 in the last six months of 2011 and 29 in 2010.

The biggest growth in this is from outside the county, he said, as surrounding hospitals no longer have the doctors to do obstetrics.

Outpatient procedures have also taken a big jump as things like respiratory therapy, cardiac rehab and lab tests have gone from 24,017 in 2010 to 28,718 in 2011 and 30,506 in the six month period.

The hospital is looking to replace Dr. Silan, Mr. Miller said, but he admitted, it's a tough recruit. Surgeons today just don't do what Dr. Silan did, he said. Younger surgeons don't do things like tonsillectomies and carpal tunnel surgeries.

Right now the hospital has three doctors and three midlevels, Mr. Miller said. The rotation works best with four doctors but everyone has been pitching in and covering the extra shifts.

Even short a doctor, Mr. Miller said, "We're the envy of a lot of communities."

While it is expensive to bring in outside doctors, sometimes it's necessary to cover all shifts, Mr. Miller said, and the hospital hires Docs Who Care, a visiting physician group.

(Hospital - Continued on Page 5)

