

# Elections are expensive

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

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Elections are expensive, Norton County Clerk Robert Wyatt told the commissioners on Monday.

Mr. Wyatt said that he has calculated that the recent election will cost the county about \$10,000. Much of that, he said, is from state and federally mandated items such as required ballot layout.

This year, he said, he consolidated workers as much as possible but still had to have four polling places – the courthouse, the Legion and in Lenora and Almena.

Mr. Wyatt said that he's going to figure how much it costs the county per voter but hasn't had a chance to do so yet since there are probably a few more bills to

come in.

The clerk in Saline County (Salina,) he said, has calculated that it costs them about \$10 per voter to hold an election.

Since many of the costs are fixed and mandated by either the state or federal government, he noted, the more voters the less the cost per voter.

Election supplies came to more than \$1,000 and the cost of setting up and printing the ballots and programming the machines was another \$4,600.

Poll workers for the four polling stations cost the county another \$3,500 and printing the notice of the elections in the area newspapers – *Norton Telegram*, *Hoxie Sentinel*, *Oberlin Herald*, *Phillips County Review*, and *Hill City Times* came to another \$232. The multiple papers were

needed because the school district extends into more than just Norton County.

While Mr. Wyatt said that he might have more bills coming in to raise the costs, he did know that out of 3,349 voters, 721 went to the polls making the cost per voter about \$13.85.

On Monday, the commissioners canvassed the ballots to provide a final tally for the state.

There were two provisional ballots, which were not counted because one voter had moved and the other, despite repeated attempts to contact them, had not provided proof of citizenship, Mr. Wyatt said. The discounted ballots did not change the results of any of the elections, however.

# Grants help Kansas farmers

Recently, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the award of \$5.3 million in Conservation Innovation Grants to develop approaches and technology that will help producers adapt to extreme climate changes that cause drought. These grants will fund projects benefiting several states that were significantly impacted by last year's drought. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty. Today's announcement is one part of the department's efforts to strengthen the rural economy.

"USDA is working diligently to help American farmers and ranchers rebound from last year's drought and prepare for future times of climatic extremes," Vilsack said. "Conservation Innovation Grants are an excellent way to invest in new technology and approaches that will help our farmers, ranchers and rural communities be more resilient in the future."

The grants will address drought-related issues, such as grazing management, warm season forage systems, irrigation strategies and innovative cropping systems.

Recipients plan to evaluate innovative, field-based conservation technologies and approaches, leading to improvements like enhancing soil's ability to hold water, evaluating irrigation water use and installing grazing systems that are more tolerant to drought.

Examples of projects include:

South Dakota State University: Received \$713,000 to establish four grazing management demonstrations on South Dakota and Nebraska ranches. Producers can observe and demonstrate the impacts of innovative grazing management practices on their land's ability to recover from the 2012 and future droughts through the use of rainout shelters.

Texas AgriLife Research: Received \$233,000 to develop guidelines for managing irrigation under drought conditions and computer programs for linking weather stations with irrigation scheduling.

University of Florida Board of Trustees: Received \$442,000 to address adaptation to drought by demonstrating and evaluating innovative approaches for improving irrigation water use efficiency of agricultural crops under drought conditions.

Colorado State University: Received \$883,000 to demonstrate synergistic soil, crop and water management practices that adapt irrigated cropping systems in the central Great Plains to drought and lead to efficient use of water. An existing model will be modified to allow farmers to calculate water savings from different conservation practices.

Intertribal Buffalo Council: Received \$640,000 to evaluate how traditional/historical practices aided tribes in dealing with drought, developing a best practices database, and using that information for training and demonstration projects. This

grant will support 57 tribes in 19 states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.)

NRCS has offered this grant program since 2004, investing in ways to demonstrate and transfer efficient and environmentally friendly farming and ranching practices. This specific announcement of program funding was in response to last year's historic drought.

Conservation Innovation Grants projects are funded by the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and awarded through a competitive grants process. At least 50 percent of the total cost of projects must come from non-federal matching funds, including cash and in-kind contributions provided by the grant recipient.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration - the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$700 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.

# Midwest outages are now online

In an effort to share electric outage information during storms and promote transparency, Midwest Energy recently added new features to its web page, allowing customers to view outages on its webpage, as well as track customer satisfaction metrics.

"As outages occur, customers can use the outage viewer to determine the extent of outages, and track restoration progress" said Pat Parke, Midwest Energy's Vice President for Customer Service. "The map allows

users to zoom in to get a sense of the affected area, but for security reasons it does not identify affected customers."

Additionally, Midwest has added a "performance dashboard," allowing customers to see recent customer satisfaction scores, how many customers participate in optional programs such as Midwest Customers Care and e-billing, a 12-month average of energy coming from renewable sources, and more.

"Sharing these metrics reflects the quality of our interaction

with customers, while reinforcing our identity as a customer-owned cooperative," Parke said. "Members wanting to know about their cooperative's performance won't have to wait on the next annual report; it is updated monthly and available anytime in a user-friendly format. We welcome customer suggestions for additional content."

Links to the outage viewer and performance dashboard can be found on Midwest Energy's website, [www.mwenergy.com](http://www.mwenergy.com).

again," the sheriff said. "I'm going to call the other sheriffs in the state and find out how they would handle this."

He also suggested another meeting, which both the police and High Plains officials could attend to look into a better solution to future problems.

Mr. Miller thanked everyone for their time and said he thought that it had been a good meeting and he had some more understanding of the problem now.

# County

(Continued From Page 1)

er."

County Commissioner Dr. R.A. Peterson suggested that the county might be able to split the bill with the hospital to help with the problem.

High Plains Mental Health came in and evaluated the patient, Mr. Miller said, but left the transport problem up to the hospital.

Mr. Sebelius said that he thought the problem should not have been taken to a public county commission meeting but

Mr. Miller said that he wanted to know what to do if this type of thing happened again.

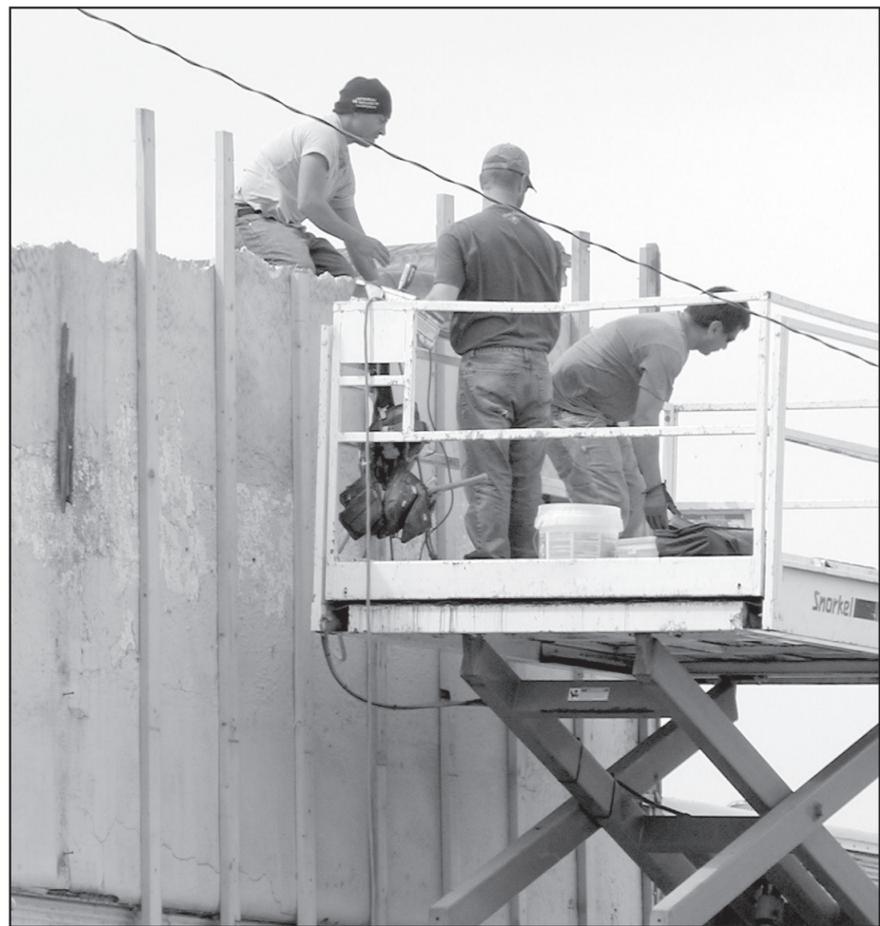
"We just want to know if it comes up again what we need to do," he said.

"I just know that this isn't a county obligation," Mr. Sebelius said. "I haven't heard one word that someone dropped the ball."

Mr. Sebelius said that he thought High Plains could help with this type of problem.

"I can guarantee you, we'll probably be in the same boat

# Sunshine brightens up



4-D Construction out of Phillipsburg is giving the Sunshine Learning Center a facelift. Manuel Venegas, John Daugherty and Lewis Martinez are seen here removing the face of the building. The underlying bricks were starting to crumble and so they are being removed and will be replaced with a wood structure and metal facing. 4-D Construction does all things exterior.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

# Be the best gardener you can be

Kay Melia

As we move ahead into the growing season that is rapidly approaching, I wish to pose a few questions to each and everyone of you who are planning some kind of planting this spring, I merely wish to encourage you to begin thinking about what lies ahead as the weather warms and outdoor activities increase. And so I will ask each one of you to seriously think about what you will be planting and how you intend to care for whatever it is you will be growing this spring. There will likely be no absolute answer to the questions I pose...but hopefully they will begin to arouse your thoughts about the season and get the juices flowing. You may want to make some notes.

Do you feel like you have a pretty good idea of what varieties, or names, of the various garden crops are the most productive, whether you grow veg-

etables or flowers? Or do you grab the first packet of cucumber seed, or zinnias seed that you see on the rack, figuring that a cucumber is a cucumber, and a zinnia is a zinnia. Remember, some varieties ARE more productive than others.

Are you convinced that you know the ideal dates for planting certain vegetables or flowers, or do you just plant everything at once, believing that if it's time to plant onions, it must be time to get those geraniums out into the flower beds?

Have you considered watering your garden and flower beds with something other than the lawn sprinkler, or do you feel that if it's good enough for the grass, it must be good enough for the tomatoes?

Do you have a favorite tool you use to rid your garden of weeds? How do you manage weeds that grow between onion plants, in the potato row, or in

the flower beds?

Mulch is any kind of biodegradable material, that, when placed between rows of beans, or around newly planted trees, will keep the soil damp, cool, and weed free. Do you mulch anything in your garden, and if so, do you know the best time to apply it. If you garden in the heat of summer, do you climb out of bed earlier than usual and do some of the heavier work in the garden when it's nice and cool?

And finally, do you plow your entire garden plot in the late fall of the year, always adding all the organic materials you can get your hands on, or do you wait until spring to plow, when it's too late for any soil additives to biodegrade?

Form your own basic garden opinions. Make some plans. Ask questions if you're not pleased with past years' efforts. Compare notes with other gardeners.

## County-Wide Cleanup County Residents Only

(Businesses and Commercial Excluded)

### April 22, 23, 24

Electronic Waste Must Be Brought in Separately - Phones, Computers, Flat Screen TV's, Monitors, Printers, Stereos, Radios

Bring Your Tree Limbs, Appliances, Construction Debris, to the Norton County Solid Waste Facility at the East Edge of Norton

Hours: Monday through Friday-8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Saturday-8:00 a.m.-noon

## PLEASE NOTE:

All Items Will Need to be Disposed of in the Proper Location, So . . . FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, Keep All Items Separated According to the Following:  
CONSTRUCTION DEMO PILE: Furniture, Siding, Windows, Carpet  
METAL PILE: Appliances, Metal

TREE PILE: Trees, Branches COMPOST FILE: Grass, Leaves, Yard Waste

NOTE: There will be a \$4.00 charge for small car tires, \$5.00 for pickup tires and a \$25.00 charge for appliances not accompanied by a certificate saying freon has been removed

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