

# High tech equipment for Emergency Management

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

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Norton County will be getting a second thermal imaging camera, Emergency Management Director Justina Smith told the county commissioners during their meeting on Monday.

The camera is being provided by the federal government through Homeland Security, she said, and will be better than the one the county already has.

"It's Homeland Security money," Ms. Smith said. "We don't have to pay a dime for it."

The camera the county has now is held by the Norton-area fire departments, she said, and used for things like checking for people in burning buildings.

The commissioners and Ms. Smith agreed that the new camera should be given over to the sheriff's department so that it can be checked out by any county or city department that needs it since that department is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The commissioners also signed a transfer-of-property agreement on four tablets that were received late last year. The tablets have Windows 8 on them, Ms. Smith said, and the mapping tracking files they are to have are not available yet and the county employees are just learning to use the operating system right now.

"It's not a very (user) friendly system," Ms. Smith said of Windows 8. "It's going to take some time to get used to it."

The tablets are to go to the ambulance service, emergency management and the sheriff. The fourth will probably be

given to the Norton City police, she said.

Ms. Smith and the commissioners also talked about a mutual aid agreement between her department and the hospital over water.

She said that in case of a water shortage, there is a 3,000-gallon tank available to the county in Rooks county that can be used under a mutual aid agreement.

Getting the water the hospital may need is not a problem, Ms. Smith said. The problem might be in storing it and distributing it around the facility.

County Clerk Robert Wyatt said that he wanted to check with the county's insurance provider. There's probably no problem in non-drinking water, he said, but he was concerned that there might be something about drinking water that could cause the county problems.

"There are too many questions about providing the hospital with water," he said and asked the commissioners to hold up on signing the agreement until he could do some checking.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Agreed to a request by Valley Hope to close KQNK Road from 8 to 9 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 14, for a 5K run.

- Reappointed Ms. Smith to the Northwest (Kansas) Regional Homeland Security Council.

- Learned that the road and bridge building needs some sandbags because the basement has a flooding problem when there are heavy rains. There should be a drain down there, Ms. Smith said, but she can't find it.

- Were told that Ms. Smith is

working on the county's yearly emergency management exercise. The prison also needs one, she said, and they may work together. She said she is looking at a pipeline drill since several go through the county and none has been done recently.

- Signed an annual contract for the health department that allows Osborne to be the lead county for the service's WIC (Women's, Infants and Children's) program. Norton County goes together with several other counties on this program.

- Heard that the health department has had a problem with its county credit card. The department had an error and is supposed to get a credit on its account but hasn't seen it and Mr. Wyatt said that he has not seen the credit appear on the accounts of any other county department. The commissioners suggested that County Attorney Doug Sebelius be consulted on the problem.

- Were told by Emergency Medical Service Director Jane Wyatt that the service has made 244 runs from January through July of this year with 21 air transports, 42 ground transports to facilities other than the Norton County Hospital. There have also been 47 patients who refused to be transported and 20 stand bys for things like races and the fair.

The ambulance service has also obtained its own pharmacy license, she said, so that it can obtain the medications needed for the ambulances without bothering the hospital all the time.

## Catch of the day...



Sam Keckman of Fountain, Co. and Jeff Silversen of Colorado Springs, Co. weigh bass caught at the fishing tournament held last weekend at the Sebelius Reservoir. Both men are members of the Colorado TBF (The Bass Federation). Sixteen Colorado teams got their lines wet over the weekend. Many mentioned the large number of wiper caught but few bass.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

# Soldier

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being in the States he said besides his family he missed interaction with people. "At times it was real slow and our group was very small so you can only talk about so much for so long until you run out of things to talk about." He also said that he missed the food at home so the first meal he had upon arrival back in the states was at Taco Bell. There was little to nothing to do on Base he said. "The only thing we had was movies to watch and that got old real fast.", so after his return he said he has spent a lot of time memorizing the television stations.

He has made lifelong military friends, still texting and calling each other on a regular basis. He has also made memories that will stay with him forever like when the children from nearby village would come to the Base and help by working around the base. There were a lot of orphans or fatherless children that he will never forget.

When Jeff left the States for Afghanistan he left behind his wife, Britany, a son Liam, who is now two, another son Jackson, his three brothers, Jack, Sam and Seth, and his mother Sharon. Af-

ter returning home Jeff said that his son Liam would just stare at him wondering who he was but has adjusted well now and knows who "Daddy" is. Britany would often show Liam a family photo and point out Jeff saying "That is Daddy." "I am glad I didn't know some of the things that I know now, wife Britany said. "My neighbor and I called each other our "Deployment Husbands" because we helped each other get through it all while our husbands were gone."

Jeff's mother Sharon said that he didn't tell her a lot of

what was going on where he was because he couldn't. "As a mom, I worried about my son and was always hoping he was ok. I watched a lot of news but had a great support system here at home. What finally brought me to tears was this Mother's Day when his company posted a photo on facebook of them holding a Happy Mother's Day sign. I am so glad he is home now, I just want everyone to get home safe and be as fortunate as we are." she said.

Jeff said that being gone is hard, but he felt it was harder for the families left here, their

days are the same but someone is missing. But for the soldiers they are busy constantly with little time for anything other than work and sleep. "It was good to come back to Norton, to see how things had changed or stayed the same. I was shocked to hear of the multi-million dollar pool the city is putting in when so much work is needed on other parts of the town," Jeff said.

Jeff is currently full time active army but his estimated time of service will end in October of 2014. At this point he intends to get out and spend his time with his family.

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