

Kansas Counties designated as primary natural disaster areas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 37 counties in Kansas as primary natural disaster areas due to a recent drought.

Those counties are: Cheyenne, Graham, Lane, Phillips, Sherman, Clark, Grant, Logan, Rawlins, Stanton, Comanche, Gray, Meade, Rooks, Stevens, Decatur, Greeley, Morton, Rush, Thomas, Ellis, Hamilton, Ness, Scott, Trego, Finney, Haskell, Norton, Seward, Wallace, Ford, Hodgeman, Pawnee, Sheridan, Wichita, Gove and Kearny

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Jan. 15, 2014, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. The Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. The agency has a vari-

ety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

The Obama Administration remains committed to helping the thousands of farm families and businesses struggling with natural disasters. Actions taken by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in 2012 to provide assistance to producers impacted by the drought included:

Extended emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres, freeing up a record 2.8 million acres and as much as \$200 million in forage and feed for ranchers during a challenging time. Purchased \$170 million of pork, lamb, chicken, and catfish for federal food nutrition assistance programs, including food banks, to help relieve pressure on American livestock producers and bring the nation's meat supply in line with demand. Reduced the emergency loan rate, from 3.75 percent to 2.875 percent, as well as making emergency loans available earlier in the season. Allowing haying or grazing of cover crops without impacting the insurability of planted 2013 spring crops. The Department of Agriculture

worked with crop insurance companies to provide flexibility to farmers, and one-third of all policyholders took advantage of the extended payment period. Authorized \$16 million in existing funds from the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program to target states experiencing exceptional and extreme drought. Transferred \$14 million in un-obligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program to help farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Authorized haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program easement areas in drought-affected areas where haying and grazing is consistent with conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands. Lowered the penalty on CRP acres used for emergency haying or grazing, from 25 percent to 10 percent in 2012. Simplified the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.

Impacting communities...



Ag Valley Coop, partnering with Land O'Lakes Foundation's Member Co-op Match Program, has recently presented the Norton FFA Program a check for \$1,604.25. These donations are made to organizations which impact communities where members, employees, plants and facilities are located. These donations are made to enhance the quality of life in their local communities by educating the youth and getting them involved in projects that will educate the youth, assist needy families and teach the youth ways to help end hunger in rural America.

- Courtesy photo

Relay

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669-7000. Both men would be more than happy to talk to you about Relay For Life.

There were seven teams last year, down from the year before so they are hoping to reach a goal of 12 teams this year. Last year they raised a total of \$15,821 and they hope to exceed that this year as well. It will once again be held around the Norton County Courthouse square and if there is bad weather

it will be moved to the Norton Recreation Center. Marvin Matchett will once again be the MC and the Three Jacks will provide the entertainment.

"When you think of how much a cancer patient goes through with round after round of chemo, a six to 12 hour walk is a minimal sacrifice to make, that is just how I feel about it," Kimminau said. Being a Relay specialist she is constantly asked where the money that is raised goes. "It goes to research,

programs and services such as information, transportation and lodging to name a few," she said.

To kick off this year's relay, the A-Team is holding it's first fundraiser on March 8 at the Norton Theatre where two movies will be playing, Mr. Peabody and Sherman, a 3D movie for the kids and Son Of God. All they ask is a \$3 minimum and all proceeds will go towards Relay For Life.

Legalization

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her blood shows more than five nanograms of active tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the active constituent of marijuana. Some users will fall below that level three hours after consuming pot, but others will stay well above it depending on their metabolism.

Cheyenne County Sheriff Cody Beeson said that he has been asked his opinion and questioned about the new recreational marijuana law in Colorado several times. Being a border county, many are curious what his thoughts are on the new law.

He prepared the following statement:

I have spent some time recently researching this topic, he said. I have gone to Colorado and I have spoken with members of the Denver Police Department specializing in the issue.

Until distribution points are set up closer to the border, I do not see a larger problem than what we currently have. Legal medical marijuana has already created an environment increasing the transportation of marijuana into Kansas.

When medical marijuana is purchased and the sales tax associated with recreational use marijuana is not paid, and the marijuana is brought into Kansas to be resold, the person has committed a tax evasion crime as well as distribution crimes.

I do not believe the new law concerning recreational marijuana will not have a large scale effect on Cheyenne County. As of now, a non-resident can only purchase a small amount of marijuana at each transaction. This makes the process of completing enough transactions to justify the trip to Colorado difficult. Add in the fact, recreational marijuana carries a high tax, and it becomes hard for someone to go to Denver, purchase marijuana and return to Kansas to resell. As with any business, if the profit margin does not ex-

ist, the business cannot succeed.

What I do see happening is an increase in people going to Colorado to purchase marijuana for their own use, and bringing it back to Kansas, lowering the amount of illegal transactions happening in the county, and making the crime a case of possession instead of distributing.

I see an increase in driving while impaired on marijuana cases. Decatur County has one of the few drug recognition ex-

perts in our area on staff. This will help with identifying these cases and prosecuting those cases.

I am also prepared to continue working with Colorado authorities and monitoring the locations of distribution points.

While marijuana is legal in Colorado, it remains illegal to grow, possess, distribute or drive under the influence of marijuana in Cheyenne County, he concluded.

Schmidt proposes tougher fraud law

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt will ask the legislature to strengthen penalties for people convicted of Medicaid fraud, he announced recently in Sedgwick County.

Schmidt said he will propose legislation to reform the state's Medicaid Fraud Control Act by enhancing criminal penalties and increasing fines. The measure also would make other changes to the Act to improve enforcement.

"Medicaid fraud is an assault

on taxpayers, and it also can put at risk Kansans who never receive the legitimate services they need," Schmidt said. "Under current law, a person who defrauds a dependent adult of a large sum of money ends up serving prison time, but the same person using the same fraud to steal the same sum from the taxpayers gets probation. That's wrong, and this bill aims to fix it."

Schmidt's office is the lead enforcer of the Medicaid Fraud

Control Act. During fiscal year 2013, his Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Division recovered a record \$33.7 million for taxpayers and obtained 15 criminal convictions. Schmidt said the new bill, if enacted, would strengthen his ability to enforce the law.

"Protecting taxpayers from fraud is a top priority of the attorney general's office," Schmidt said. "We appreciate the legislature's consideration of our request to strengthen our ability to protect taxpayers."

Hays to experience fake ID crackdown

Using a fake ID to get into bars or purchase alcohol will be a lot more difficult now, thanks to a campaign known as "Fake ID 101."

On Jan. 14, local police officers underwent training on campus at Fort Hays State University in order to better prepare themselves for this initiative. The training included lectures over fake IDs, features on the most recent driver's license designs, conducting liquor control buys, drug recognition and trends, cell phone searches, and basic narcotic investigations. Mike Baker, president of the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, and Doyle King, executive director, also delivered presentations.

The "Fake ID 101" campaign

is set to run through June 2014 and is sponsored by Everyday Prevention Impacting Community Coalition of Ellis County, the Regional Prevention Center, the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office, Alcoholic Beverage Control, the Hays police department and FHSU campus police.

"Fake ID 101" was created to discourage the use of fake IDs within the community. False identification is an ID borrowed from a family member or friend, an ID altered in any way or an ID containing completely falsified information. The consequences for use or possession of a fake ID are a fine of up to \$2,500 and up to a year in jail.

To enhance coverage, a task force consisting of members

from Hays police, FHSU campus police and Alcoholic Beverage Control will perform compliance and bar checks. Along with those checks, surveillance operations will occur in bars and other liquor establishments as well as during community events to hinder minors' access to alcohol.

An advertising campaign for the "Fake ID 101" initiative is in the works for television, radio, billboards and websites in the community and on the FHSU campus. Display boards will be featured inside bars popular within the high school and college-age demographic, and posters will be noticeable inside additional bars, restaurants and other places where liquor is served.



Help us find Norton County's "Sweetheart Couple"

We need your help! Simply fill out the ballot, and then cut it out of the paper and take it to any of the businesses listed below. Couples must be at least 21 years old, married and live in Norton County. On February 11, the winning couple will be announced in The Norton Telegram, and will be recipients of gifts listed in the advertisements on this page. There is no essay to write, just fill in the ballot and that's it! The luck of the draw will determine the winner. Each couple nominated will be placed in a large box from which one ballot will be selected. This ad will run again on January 31, February 3, and February 4, meaning you can nominate more than one couple. Ballots will be picked up on February 7. READY? SET? VOTE!!! Employees of the Norton Telegram are not eligible.

DEPOSIT YOUR VOTE AT ANY OF THE BUSINESSES LISTED BELOW

MY NOMINATION FOR NORTON COUNTY'S SWEETHEART COUPLE IS:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

Drop your ballot off at any of the following merchants

(MUST BE THE ACTUAL BALLOT IN THIS AD, NO COPIES)

- ♥Bodyworx Massage
- ♥Pfonz' Grill
- ♥Russ' Jewelry and Repair
- ♥Sander Furniture
- ♥Norton Theatre
- ♥Studio One 11
- ♥Downtown Car Wash
- ♥Kowpoke Supply
- ♥The Razor's Edge
- ♥The Norton Telegram
- ♥Las Canteras
- ♥Fit to Go
- ♥Garden Gate Florals Etc.
- ♥Town and Country Kitchen