

# Norton Marine returns to visit and recruit

By DANA PAXTON

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Two weeks ago Norton had a hometown boy return, Marine Lance Corporal Ryan Blecha. He is the son of Charlotte and Bob Stephenson and was here for more than just a visit but to do some recruiting.

Blecha was joined by Private, Trenten Elkins of Hays and Staff Sergeant Nicholas McCulloch of Reno, Nevada who has been enlisted for twelve years now and is a recruiting officer out of Hays. They came to Norton and surrounding areas to recruit a few good men and women for the Marines. They look for those that are 18 to 28 years of age or 17 year olds that have completed their junior year of high school.

"The Marines offers a chal-

lenge and the opportunity to obtain intangible skills not found anywhere else," McCulloch said. "The Marine Corps also has a band enlistment, you get paid to be a full time musician. Once signing up it takes one week a month and two weeks out of the summer and the Marines offer 350 technical jobs for those who enlist so there is a place to fit anyone."

Blecha plans on returning back to the area to possibly be in law enforcement. He said, "It is well worth it, I have been to eight countries in the past three years and being gone for so long helps you appreciate your roots, where I came from, northwest Kansas. Being in the Marines not only helped me to appreciate where I came from but has also made me a better husband."

Private Elkins said, "I appreciate everything I have now and spending time with his family is priority, it takes the selfishness out of you. Home is wherever I'm at."

Being a Marine keeps the men on the move, moving from place to place constantly every three years but McCulloch wouldn't change it for a thing even after twelve years serving. He is a lifer but both Blecha and Elkin are unsure of how long of a tour they want to agree to.

There are two Marine boot camps. The one in South Carolina is for both men and women and the other is in San Diego California and it is only for men. Step up young men and women, travel the world, appreciate what you have and be one, the proud, a Marine.



Three United States Marines pose for the camera while in Norton on a recruitment mission. Private Trenten Elkin, Staff Sergeant Nicholas McCulloch and Norton's own, Lance Corporal Ryan Blecha. Always nice to come back to their roots they say and always nice to have the chance to thank them for their services.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

## Expect greater enforcement of state seatbelt laws

Two years ago Shelby Feugate was a 20-year-old who never wore her seat belt.

I thought they were uncomfortable and I just didn't like them," Feugate said. "I never thought I'd get into a crash."

Feugate spoke from a wheelchair Wednesday at a Kansas Department of Transportation news conference at the Shawnee Police Department. Feugate says she never wore a seat belt until after the crash that cost the use of her legs. In 2012, a car she was driving was struck by another vehicle on the passen-

ger side. The other driver was wearing a seatbelt and walked away; Feugate suffered a spinal cord injury that made her a paraplegic.

"I went to a rehabilitation center for two months to learn how to live life in a wheelchair," Feugate said. "What I miss most about my life before is being spontaneous. Now I have to plan everything in advance, even just to go out."

In May, the Kansas Highway Patrol and sheriffs and police departments across Kansas will be working overtime to catch

drivers who are not buckled up.

"Given the choice between a crash death notification and writing a seat-belt ticket, any law officer would much prefer the latter," said Shawnee Police Sgt. Jim Baker. "Making a death notification is one of the hardest parts of being an officer, especially when simply buckling up would have saved a life."

The extra enforcement is part of a larger, national Click It or Ticket mobilization that runs May 19 – June 1.

"Memorial Day weekend kicks off the summer vacation

season, and we want everyone to arrive alive," Baker said. "Just buckle up, or you will receive a ticket."

Kansas law allows that law enforcement officers can stop any vehicle simply for a seat-belt violation. No other violation needs to be observed. Baker said enforcement will focus on younger motorists, pickup trucks and nighttime motorists. National statistics show crash fatalities in these categories are more likely to be related to failure to wear seat belts than other categories.

Jenny Scheve, a former trauma nurse who now speaks for ThinkFirst of Kansas City, an injury prevention program, says the biggest challenges with unbelted crash survivors are head and spinal cord injuries.

"The body cannot regenerate damaged brain or spine cells," Scheve said. "Crash victims who were not wearing a seat belt are the most difficult cases, medically for the treatment staff and emotionally for family and friends. Lives are changed."

Chris Bortz, Kansas Department of Transportation Traffic

Safety manager, said Kansans are below the national average in seat belt use. In 2012 Kansas had a 79.5 percent usage rate, which is 39th in the country, compared with 86 percent in the rest of the United States.

"To save lives, we've created a new message that Kansans will see on television and online," Bortz said. "The message emphasizes that you will be stopped and you will get a ticket if you don't wear a seat belt. In Kansas it's the law. Click it or ticket."

## Accident Report

March 11-A 1999 Semi, driven by Jesus Terrazes of Holly Colo., was traveling east bound when a deer entered onto the roadway from the north ditch. Terrazes was unable to avoid striking the deer causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton Sheriff Officer Bobby Annon.

March 11-A black 2005 Ford F-150, driven by Jordan Dondlinger of Edmond, was traveling east bound on Highway 9 when a deer entered the highway from the ditch. Dondlinger was unable to avoid contact, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton Sheriff Officer Larry Land.

March 17-A white 2005 Chevrolet, driven by Brent Brooks of Colby, was traveling east bound on Highway 383 when a deer came from the ditch onto highway. Brooks was unable to avoid striking the deer, causing over \$1,000 of damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton Sheriff Officer Larry Land.

March 19-A 2002 Dodge Stratus, driven by Gary Schllowsky of Phillipsburg, was traveling west bound on Highway 36 when a deer ran out in front of him. Schllowsky was unable to avoid contact, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton Sheriff Officer Rich Wenzl.

March 24-A red 2006 Mercedes Milan, driven by Thomas Bauer of Almena, was on Highway 36 headed west when a deer entered onto the roadway from the north ditch of mile marker 121. Bauer was unable to avoid collision, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated

by Norton Sheriff Officer Adam Wahlmeier.

March 26-A gray 2008 Dodge 1500 pick-up, driven by Devin Spargo, with three passengers, Evan Chambers, Jeremy Ulmer, and Paul Whitenburg all of Norton, was traveling southbound on W1 just north from Road J. Spargo was traveling too fast for the gravel roadway. Spargo veered to the right and applied the brakes. The truck struck a mailbox on the west shoulder then traveled through the intersection veering into the east ditch. The truck then hit the ditch causing the truck to roll one time coming to a rest on its wheels facing east. The accident caused over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. Spargo and a passenger were injured and both were taken to Norton County Hospital. The accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Adam Wahlmeier.

April 9-A 2003 Chevrolet 2600 pick-up, driven by Alex Gilgenbach of Norton, was traveling east on W1 road when a deer entered onto the roadway from the north ditch. Gilgenbach was unable to avoid collision, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Adam Wahlmeier.

April 9-A 2008 Ford Fusion driven by Stephen Mizell of Norton, was traveling south bound on Highway 283 when a deer ran out in front of the driver. Mizell was unable to avoid collision, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Rich Wenzl.

April 12-A maroon 2007 Lincoln Navigator, driven by John Guthard of Hazard, Neb., was traveling east bound on the highway when a deer entered onto the roadway from the

south ditch. Guthard was unable to avoid striking the deer causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Bobby Annon.

April 6-A dark blue 2008 Mercury Grand Marquis, driven by Cheryl Mann of Norton, was traveling west bound on Highway 36 when a deer entered onto the roadway from the south ditch. Mann was unable to avoid collision causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Offices Adam Wahlmeier.

April 17-A white 2002 GMC Yukon, driven by Cory Harrel of Greeley, Colo., was traveling east bound when a deer entered onto the roadway from the north ditch. Harrel was unable to avoid striking the deer causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Bobby Annon.

April 17-A white 1999 Dodge Ram 1500 truck, driven by Casey Madden of Norton, was traveling east bound when the vehicle's transmission seized, causing Madden to lose control of the vehicle. The truck skidded on the gravel, causing it to cross the roadway and enter the north ditch hitting a cement culvert. After striking the culvert the vehicle went airborne and came to a rest on its wheels in the north ditch facing southeast causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Bobby Annon.

April 23-A red 2007 Jeep Compass, driven by Randy Dues of Kensington, Kan., was traveling west bound on Highway 36 when a deer entered onto the roadway. Dues was unable to avoid collision causing over \$1,000 damage to the ve-

hicle. No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Adam Wahlmeier.

April 22-A teal 1995 Pontiac Grand Am, driven by Angela

Feldt of Lenora, Kan., was traveling north bound on Highway 283 when a deer ran out from the ditch. Feldt was unable to avoid contact causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle.

No injuries were reported and the accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Rich Wenzl.

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## Sidewalks

(Continued From Page 1)

assignments to all current USD 211 classified employees who have not resigned for 2014-15 with pay and benefits to be determined.

—accepted the supplemental

assignments for 2014-15 as presented.

—declared the recommended property (furniture) to be a surplus, and gave the Superintendent the authority to legally dispose of it.

—accepted the consent agenda

as presented, including the minutes of the regular meeting on April 14; bills and transfers; and the agenda for May 12 meeting.

—the board was reminded that Staff Movie Night is May 22, and they should report at 6 p.m. to get the popcorn started.