

Norfolk City Outlook

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Mission of Mercy | 1-3 |
| Councilman Coy | 3-5 |
| Stormwater | 5-6 |

Mission of Mercy

By Diane Becker
City of Norfolk Staff Writer

A dental marathon is coming to Norfolk. Over 140 dentists, 40 dental hygienists and 100 dental assistants will be volunteering their services for two days to provide free dental services to patients in the Norfolk area. Nebraska Mission of Mercy was created to provide a wide range of dental services at no charge for adults and children who typically cannot afford to receive dental care.



Shown above is the 2006 Nebraska Mission of Mercy held at Heartland Event Center in Grand Island.

Dr. Bob Smith, a retired Norfolk dentist, is site chairman of the Norfolk Mission of Mercy to be held at the Divots Event Center in Norfolk on September 7 and 8.

“In so many areas in Nebraska there is a shortage of dentists. There are pockets of underserved people all over the state. We heard about the two-day free dental care clinic that was in Kansas so we participated and observed how they did it. We were impressed on how it was set up and how

many people were served. It’s a great outreach,” Smith said.

Two years ago, the Nebraska Mission of Mercy dental clinic began in North Platte with 60 dentists volunteering their services along with numerous hygienists, dental and lab assistants. They provided free dental care for 900 people. Last year, at the Grand Island Mission of Mercy, 130 dentists participated and treated 1,750 patients. This year, Smith says, organizers hope to have 140 dentists volunteering and they expect to treat 2,000 patients in the two-day clinic.

“They’ll fill teeth, extract teeth, perform selected root canals and regular dentistry. We’ll have six children’s dentists there also. Hygienists will also provide dental health education as well as cleaning and help treat gum problems,” Smith said.

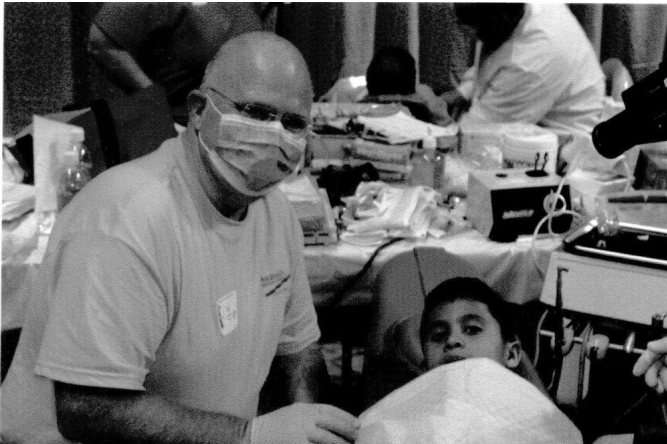
Literally tons of supplies have been donated by dental supply companies. At least six dental technicians will be on hand to keep the dental equipment up and running. They’ll have to with 100 portable dental units/chairs set up in the convention center.

Several lab technicians will also be available to make temporary partials. There will be a special child care area where certified child care professionals will take care of kids whose parents are being treated in the dentist chair.

Smith said that people typically start lining up the night before to obtain the free dental services. The Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department in Wisner has put up posters, distributed brochures, and posted information about the clinic on the ra-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)



Shown above is Dr. James Doyle participating in a Nebraska Mission of Mercy.

dio, newspapers, health fairs and inserts in church bulletins.

“People will typically wait six to seven hours in line. We’ll have security for crowd control, snacks from the Salvation Army and Porta Potties available. We’ll give breakfast to people in line that has been partially donated by food vendors in town,” Smith said.

Breakfast and lunch will also be provided to everyone at the clinic, patients and volunteers alike.

“We have a huge need for non-dental volunteers. Anyone interested needs to call the Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department (1-877-379-4400 or 402-529-2233) to fill out an application,” Smith said.

Plans for this year’s clinic began last year when nine area dentists and some of their office staff and assistants went to Grand Island to see how that clinic was run. Since then a steering committee consisting of Dr. Phil Samuels, Dr. Don Theophilus and Smith have worked on all aspects of the clinic from setting up a fundraising campaign to making sure there are enough plug ins for all of the equipment needed.

On Thursday before the clinic opens, two semi-trucks full of equipment will unload at Divots. Andrews Van Lines has donated cabs and drivers to bring the trucks to Norfolk. Members of various service clubs in Norfolk have been recruited to help unload the trucks.

Two-inch PVC pipe will be laid out in a grid on the floor providing suction to each chair. Each station will have suction, water, a table and light. In the event center there will be a portable x-ray machine available, a central supply area and a sterilization center.

“It will be one huge dental clinic with a command center and a food center for volunteers. Dentists will take only a couple of 15 minute breaks and a 30 minute lunch break,” Smith said.

When the doors open at 6:30 a.m. people will be screened by one of eighty registered nurses. Although there are no age limits, patients need to fill out a health questionnaire. Those who have had recent heart attacks, uncontrolled high blood pressure or untreated diabetes cannot receive dental service and will be referred to a physician. Eighty translators will be available for patients who don’t speak English. By 8:30 a.m. the first 1,000 patients who qualify for dental services will be identified and the rest will be sent home.



Shown above is Dr. David Merritt participating in a Nebraska Mission of Mercy.

The patients will then move on to an area that will identify the specific dental need. A numbing station will be set up to administer local anesthesia.

“Most of the dental problems are from neglect. These people are probably uninsured. Many have had tough circumstances. There may be multiple decayed teeth. A lot may be beyond repair. We want to teach patients good dental hygiene. They need to be out of pain and back to

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

chewing right and taking care of themselves better,” Smith said. There will be continuous videos in the waiting area demonstrating dental hygiene.

Toothbrushes, floss, antibiotics and pain medication as needed will be given to patients without cost. The Nebraska State Dental Association has contributed \$40,000 to this project with another \$25,000 coming from individuals and businesses in Norfolk.

Follow up care will also be provided by local dentists at no charge to have stitches taken out, a filling ground down or a dry socket treated.

“I think most dentists feel dentistry is a great profession and they’ve been blessed with the practices they’ve had in their communities. This is a great way for them to give back to their state and their communities,” Smith said.

Councilman Dale Coy

By Diane Becker
City of Norfolk Staff Writer

City Councilman Dale Coy always thought that some day long in the future he would get involved in city government. Then he reconsidered.

“I wanted to do something now to keep my kids around. I thought I might as well run while the kids are home so we can raise them in a great atmosphere. I love Norfolk and want it to be the best it can be,” Coy said.

Coy and his wife, Mick, have two children—Cady, age 12 and Riley, age 10. They have all learned more about city government since Dale was elected to Ward 1 in the 2006 November general election.

“I’d never run for anything before. I had always taken an interest in city government. It’s the easiest way to make an impact and it’s as grassroots as you can get,” Coy said.

He moved to Norfolk in 1969 when his mom, Doneene, married Norfolk native Ken Miller. He was seven-years-old at the time and attended Jefferson Elementary School, the same school attended by his children. Coy graduated from Norfolk High School in 1980. He obtained an Associate of Applied Science in Building Construction from Northeast Community College and then worked at various jobs working at K-Mart for six years and then at Gillette Dairy for six years. He

just started his 18th year at Goodyear on the rotating shift.

Because of his ever changing work schedule, Coy said it has limited what other activities he can be involved in. Getting off for city council work hasn’t proved to be a problem at his work place.

“Goodyear has a very supportive service duty corporate policy. They will let employees who are serving in elected positions to get off for meetings when needed with excused/no pay, vacation time or we can make up that time,” Coy said.

It can get a little hectic as there are regular council meetings the first and third Monday of every month. There are also finance meetings the mornings of the council meetings. Coy also attends two or more sub-committee meetings a month. He takes additional time to find out more about what his constituents think about city government and meet city leaders.

“It’s really enjoyable. It is as much work as you make of it. I could just sit back but I want to make good decisions. I try to get all the facts and I want to know all sides so I have a good perspective to make a good sound decision. It takes time,” Coy said.

Some of that time has been spent establishing relationships with leaders involved in economic development in Norfolk.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)



Shown above is Councilman Dale Coy with his wife, Mick and children, Riley and Cady.

“I am really interested in the economic development angle. I really feel Norfolk needs more industry which will then stimulate retail. It’s a pretty complicated process. It’s like seeing the tip of the iceberg when 90% of it is below the surface,” Coy said.

Coy added that economic development is on a world scale now with Norfolk needing to cooperate, not compete, with Columbus, Fremont or Sioux City to bring businesses to the area.

“Some people don’t realize how much the world has changed in the last ten years. We need regional allies. Columbus and Norfolk can complement each other and not compete with each other.”

Challenges in Norfolk include one big thing, Coy said – deferred maintenance especially for recreation.

“Memorial Field needs a lot of work. It’s not ADA accessible. There are no locker rooms and the press box is too small. The school system usually owns the field and has different funding sources to keep it up. As a city we don’t have

those types of funds available,” Coy said.

He also said he would like Ta-Ha-Zouka Park to become the hub for family activities that it was in the past.

“I know that Skyview has taken some of that activity but other parks shouldn’t be on the back burner,” Coy said.

Coy said the council is currently working on getting Keno in the city.

“We’re the only First Class city in Nebraska that doesn’t have Keno. We could earmark that money for parks and recreation. It has the potential of bringing in \$400,000 a year.”

He added that some of those funds could be used to replace the well water currently used in Ta-Ha-Zouka Park with city water. The bath house at Ta-Ha-Zouka is not ADA accessible and is in need of renovation but Coy said it should have city water routed to it before any new construction is done.

“We rely heavily on sales tax revenues which have been pretty flat and leveled off recently which can be a problem,” Coy said.

He said that Norfolk was ahead of its time in the 1950’s and 60’s when many industries decided to begin operating in the city.

“City leaders were very innovative for that time,” Coy said.

He would also like to change the opinion some people have that city government isn’t very user friendly.

“Norfolk is one of the friendliest communities in the nation – just look at the letters to the editor about the kindnesses provided to strangers in Norfolk. When something needs to be done, people step forward. People in Norfolk have a lot to offer but until we let them know how or what they can do to help, they won’t step forward,” Coy said.

He emphasized for example that per capita, citizens in Norfolk and the area gave more nationally in the annual US92 St. Jude’s Telethon.

“If there’s a worthwhile cause, they’ll step up to the plate. We just need to let other people know what we need. Norfolk’s people are one of our greatest commodities,” Coy said.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

A statewide challenge, he added, is to get more funding for roads in Nebraska. “Highway 275 needs to be finished. Highway 81 needs to be finished along with Highway 35. Good highways are the arteries that bring life blood to Norfolk and create opportunities. We’re very fortunate to have Speaker Mike Flood in our corner.”

Coy said he encourages constituents to communicate with him about issues in city government.

“Some people are intimidated by city officials. I tell them they can call me any time. The communication could definitely be better. It’s not where it should be in a communication age. For instance people don’t understand that the \$60,000 landscaping study enables us to apply for hundreds of thousands of dollars of grants. You need to get people the information and give them the benefit of the doubt,” Coy said.

He said he feels more approachable than a typical elected official because he’s a “blue collar guy working in line next to somebody’s son, brother or neighbor.”

He has gotten ideas about the city that have been genuinely helpful and have passed them on in city council meetings. He’s not the only atypical member of the council.

“This is the youngest city council that I can remember. Erik Wilson is 30, Dave Fauss is 54, I’m 45 and Karl Reeder is 35. I’m really excited to be on the council. There is a definite feel of electricity. There’re new ideas. We’re a good mix. That’s how you get perspective. We have a nurse, a retired school teacher, a retired police chief, an artist, a junior high teacher, retail owner, a contractor and someone who makes hose. We’re a very diverse group with a lot of perspectives. We respect each other to disagree,” Coy said.

Coy’s family also provides him with perspective. They walked the whole ward with him when he was running for election. He wants to make sure Norfolk is a place they’ll want to stay and raise their families in, too.

Inlet Markers Being Installed

Question: Is all the water that goes into the city storm drain treated before it’s released into the Elkhorn River? It’s not and City of Norfolk officials hope that most citizens would answer “no” to that question. Water and anything else that flows into the storm drains around the City of Norfolk dump directly into the Elkhorn River.

“It would cost millions of dollars to direct all the water that goes through the storm drains to a water treatment facility. Our goal is to make people more aware of this so they don’t put anything in the storm drain thinking it will be cleaned out somewhere along the line before it goes into the river,” said Jim Koch, Stormwater Coordinator for the City of Norfolk.

As part of a three-year program to educate Norfolk citizens about the hazards of letting pollutants enter storm drains, the City of Norfolk is installing plastic curb markers that say “No Dumping – Drains to River” and have pictures of frogs or fish on them. There is also the Spanish phrase “No Contamine!” on the markers. Dawn Miller of Keep Norfolk Beautiful is partnering with the City to install 500 markers near some of the 1,600 storm drain inlets across the city.

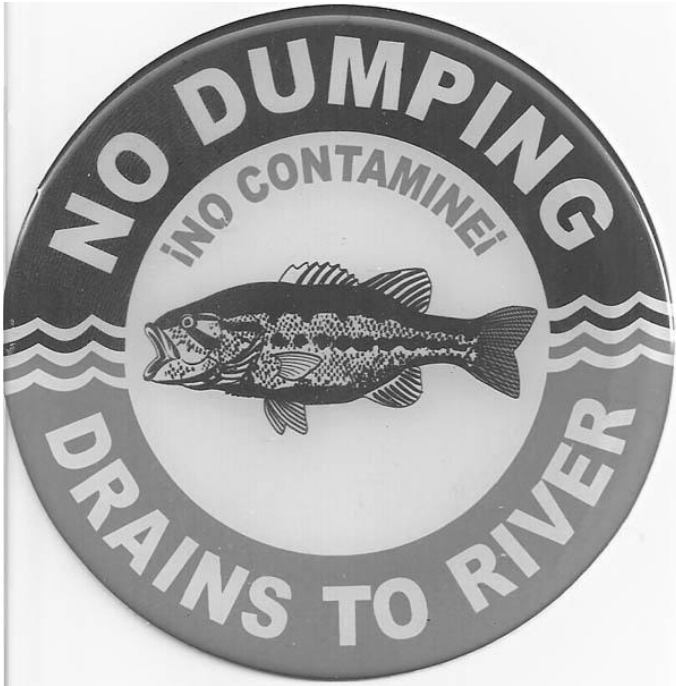
“Pollutants in rivers will kill fish, any aquatic life, birds and ducks. This is a BMP, a Best Management Practice, to keep the drains clean and stop people from throwing litter that eventually goes down the storm drain,” Koch said.

Although current littering laws make it a violation of the law to put pollution into storm drains, an Illicit Discharge Ordinance is being drawn up by the City of Norfolk to specifically set up guidelines and fines to prevent people from putting anything down the drain.

Koch said a survey about storm water management has also been sent out to home owners with their water bills. The survey is available on the city website at <http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us>

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)



(click on Storm Water Survey). It is also included on this page of the newsletter. The goal of the survey is to see how aware people in Norfolk are of storm water issues. Recently, experts on storm water from Lincoln gave presentations to city employees to educate them about how to prevent pollutants from entering storm drains on city property.

“For instance, people need to make sure they put kitty litter or Garage Dry products on oil spills in their garage or on their driveways. Videos show what you can do to prevent pollutants from going down the drain,” Koch said.

It is recommended that people wash their cars on the lawn or grassy area and not on their driveways so that water can be absorbed by the grass and not run down into the storm drain taking detergents with it. It’s also best not to overfertilize lawns. Fertilizer and water not used by the lawn wash away into the street and down the storm drain.

“We would like the public’s input on storm water issues. If they fill out the survey and return it to us or complete the survey on the website, we can get a better idea of where they’re at on storm water issues and educate them from there,” Koch said.

Please feel free to complete the survey below and send it in. You can either mail it in to City of Norfolk Street Division at 1010 S 8th Street or you can drop it off at the Street Division’s office.

1. Is the water that goes down the Storm Sewer treated before being released into our rivers?
 Yes No
2. Are Household generated pollutants a significant contributor to water pollution?
 Yes No
3. Have you previously received information related to Storm Water Pollutants?
 Yes No
4. Does your community have a Storm Water Management Plan?
 Yes No
5. How would you rank the importance of eliminating pollutants in storm water runoff?
 Very Important
 Somewhat Important
 Not Important

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