

## Weather Corner



**Tonight...**Mostly clear. Lows in the mid 60s. East winds around 10 mph.

**Friday...**Sunny. Highs around 103. Southeast winds around 10 mph shifting to the south 15 to 20 mph in the afternoon. Friday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 60s. South winds 10 to 20 mph.

**Saturday...**Sunny. Highs around 105. Southwest winds 15 to 20 mph. Gusts up to 30 mph in the afternoon. Saturday night...Mostly clear. Lows in the upper 60s.

**Sunday** through Monday night...Mostly clear. Highs around 104. Lows in the upper 60s.

**Tuesday...**Sunny. Highs in the upper 90s. Tuesday night...Mostly clear in the evening then becoming partly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the mid 60s.

**Wednesday...**Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 90s. Wednesday's low, high: 63, 90

Water usage  
Wednesday  
2,069,000 gallons  
Tuesday  
1,724,000 gallons  
Monday  
2,309,000 gallons

3 Consecutive Days over 3.5 million will put us in a water watch  
3 Consecutive Days over 4.0 million will put us in a water warning  
3 Consecutive Days over 4.5 million will put us in a water emergency

A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-8367.

# New Oberlin center ponders bond issue

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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Backers of a new senior center, bowling alley and movie theater are working on a detailed cost list of what it will take just to build the senior center, which then could be paid for with a general obligation bond issue through Decatur County.

Greg Lohofener, who's been working on the project with the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp., said he could get the list together after the group talked with Sarah Steele, a bond lawyer with Gilmore and Bell out of Wichita.

The commissioners talked with Ms. Steele and Commissioner Ralph Unger, who was on vacation, on the phone during their meeting last Tuesday.

Others present for the meeting were Bob Strevey, economic development board chairman, and Vickie Bailey, a board member; Bev Reiter, with the Sunflower Cinema board; and Dorothy Moore, Helen Gee and Dewaine Stapp with the Golden Age Center.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch had sent Ms. Bell information about the project, including the assurances Mr. Lohofener asked for the county to make for a guaranteed loan at a meeting July 15. Mr. Hirsch said the commissioners want to know about financing options for the new center.

To do an industrial revenue bond issue, said Ms. Bell, the center would have to generate enough income to repay the note, because that kind of bond issue isn't paid by the county. The county could do general obligation bonds for part of the project, she said.

The county can do up to \$300,000 in general obligation bonds without having to go to an election, said Ms. Steele. Mr. Hirsch said the county could afford that much because it doesn't have any bond debt now.

The county's debt limit is 3 percent of the assessed valuation, she said. The county's valuation is around \$38 million, said Mr. Hirsch, and 3 percent would be

more than \$1.14 million.

If this is the direction the county wants to take, she said, she can work on it. There would need to be separate entrances for the three areas, she said, so the senior center would be independent. She said she'd need a cost estimate for the senior center, which is the part of the building that doesn't generate revenue.

Then for the other part of the building, including the bowling alley and theater, said Ms. Steele, the group needs to figure out who is in charge of it. If it's a nonprofit group, she said, so much the better.

If there's a prearranged buyer for \$300,000 in debt, said Mr. Lohofener, how long would the process take. With a purchaser already in place, said Ms. Steele, it could take 45 to 60 days.

The positive thing about an industrial revenue bond issue, she said, is that the county could grant property tax abatement for up to 10 years and sales tax exemption. That might help the bowling alley and theater get a more firm financial footing.

Can money from general obligation bonds be used for things besides building, he asked, like buying equipment. Yes, said Ms. Steele, the money just can't be

used for expenses.

Mr. Unger said he thought he would be in favor of the county issuing \$300,000 in a general obligation bond to get the senior center moving forward.

Mr. Lohofener said he has contacted some people to help with demolition on the current buildings. Some said they could work together and might donate some of their time, Mr. Lohofener said, but he didn't have anything in writing.

Mr. Hirsch suggested calling

Dave Barber with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development administration to see if the county needs to do an environmental assessment for a federal loan.

The group talked about using money that's been raised by the senior-center property tax levy for the project. That money, said Mr. Hirsch, is raised specifically for the senior center so it probably needs to be spent at the center.

To get going before winter, said Mr. Lohofener, something prob-

ably needs to be done next week.

Mr. Lohofener said Southwest Implement plans to donate the lot to the south of the center for the new building, and the old locker plant to the west for storage.

That building, said Mr. Hirsch, was the city's first power plant, also a meat locker and ice plant. It's probably one of the older commercial structures in town.

Ms. Moore said they checked into using the county ambulance barn as a senior meal site while the center is being built.

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## Incumbent strives for more

Oberlin Herald

Incumbent John Faber, a Brewster area farmer, says he wants to continue working for his district in the state House of Representatives.

Mr. Faber has served the 120th District, which covers Cheyenne, Rawlins, Decatur, Norton and Phillips counties, in Topeka for the past 12 years. Mr. Faber was born and reared in Rawlins County, where he lives now and farms.

Mr. Faber said he's had good success over the years as the representative for the area and wants to continue doing "a great job" for the district.

He is running unopposed on the Republican ticket in the primary Tuesday, and will meet Democrat Bob Strevey in the November general election.

It's important, said Mr. Faber, to get state policy makers involved in the district and what's going on in this part of the state. Communities need to be involved in what's going on in Topeka, too, he said.

Economic development and schools go hand in hand, he said. If there's no economic development, the schools will continue to lose students as parents move to areas that can provide jobs. With smaller school districts, he said, the more children one loses, the closer the threat of closing gets. When schools close, he said, towns die.

As a representative and a former school board member, said Mr. Faber, he has made a case for education in western Kansas and why it's important.

It needs to be paid for at the same level that the state is paying for education in eastern Kansas,

he said. The bigger cities, like Topeka and Wichita, have a bigger tax base, which means more local money.

Declining enrollment can be solved with economic development, said Mr. Faber, but everyone has to work together.

Mr. Faber said he's always been in favor of wind energy, although that doesn't supply the "base-load" needs, the power everyone uses when the wind isn't blowing. He said he thinks it was a mistake for Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to block new power plants.

The coal-fired generating plant proposed near Holcomb, near Garden City, would have been the cleanest one in the world, said Mr. Faber. The contracts for the coal were in place and it would have been a cheap energy supply. It would have brought the cost of electricity down.

The two can work together, he said, wind energy and the coal plant.

Mr. Faber serves as the chairman of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, which deals with farming, wildlife and parks and water issues. Water, he said, is something that will be more contentious. The state needs to learn how to conserve water and get the reservoirs back up, which will also help with economic development.

He also serves on the Education and Budget committees, and the Rules and Regulations committee.

He and his wife Renee have three boys, two of whom live in Colby and one who attends college at Washburn University in Topeka.

They have six grandchildren.

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