

County sets recognition plan for veteran workers

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Decatur County commissioners worked Tuesday morning with a recognition committee and came closer to what the guidelines should be to honor employees who have worked in the county for years.

They had started the process at their last meeting, and last week they met again with the group, Road Supervisor Tim Stallman, Ambulance Director John Barrett and Sheriff Ken Badsky. Another member, Clerk of the District Court Janet Meitl, was unable to attend.

Commissioners decided that they will hold an appreciation dinner each year at which full-time employees and full-time volunteers will be honored for their service of five, 10, 15 years and so on in increments of five. At the five-year anniversary, a worker will receive a framed certificate and an engraved memento. At the 10-year anniversary, they will receive a plaque, which at each subsequent five years will have additional engraving done on it.

The guidelines say that workers will only be recognized for continuous service. The only

exception is if a full-time person gets permission to withdraw from the county to initiate retirement but then continues with work after the 30-day withdrawal. Also, if a person decides to go from full-time to part-time, they will be recognized for the full-time work.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said that they need to be careful with the employees and only honor those that work all the time. For example, he said, although they appreciate everyone who helps with the emergency services, those who are scheduled for a month each year are not eli-

gible. Commissioner Doyle Brown said, though, that there will always be someone with a special situation and they shouldn't limit themselves from honoring them.

Commissioners also discussed those who go over 25 years. Mr. Unger said they don't get that many who are here that long, but that when they do, it is something special. Mr. Brown agreed and said that in that situation, the person is normally getting towards retirement and they would do something different for them.

Mr. Barrett has been figuring out how long

employees have been with the county. He said that in total, there are 885 years of service on the list of 77 people he presented at the meeting. That doesn't include those who have worked here less than five years, he said.

The commissioners agreed to go ahead with the awards dinner and gave the go ahead for Rick Doeden of Custom Trophy to start the plaques. They haven't set a date yet, but are now looking at February because many other weekends are taken by sporting events at the high school.

Officials take oath for county

Outgoing register honored for her duty

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Decatur County office holders were sworn in by Magistrate Judge John Bremer Tuesday morning at the beginning of the commissioners meeting.

Taking the oath were Ralph D. Unger as commissioner for the 2nd District, Doyle D. Brown, commissioner for the 3rd district, Steven W. Hirsch, county attorney, Ken Badsky, sheriff, Judy B. Gaumer, register of deeds and Marilyn Horn, county clerk. Mrs. Gaumer is new to the job; all the others were beginning new terms.

At the start of the meeting, Mr. Unger was named chairman of the commission for the next year.

After Commissioner Doyle Brown had taken his oath for another four years, he presented outgoing Register of Deeds Pat Whetzel with a plaque honoring her 26 years of service in the county. Those attending were then invited downstairs to a small reception in Mrs. Whetzel's honor.

Don Stapp, who lives in Oberlin now but originally was a farmer from the Norcatour area, stopped in to see if County Clerk Marilyn Horn had a map



Serving up a big feed

CONNIE SIMONSSON CARRIED pancakes and sausage (above) to hungry customers at the Legion Auxiliary benefit pancake feed for Girls State on Thursday night at the Legion. Ross Van Pelt (right) mixed the pancake batter.

— Staff photos by Kimberly Brandt



by during the meeting to talk to the commissioners about the confusion over the numbers used for the school bond issue. Mr. Hale said that he was called by Superintendent Duane Steele to calculate what it would cost here to support a \$1 million and a \$6 million bond issue.

Mr. Hale said his figures were used in *The Oberlin Herald* and in discussions on what will happen to the taxes. These numbers are not correct for the bond issue, he said.

motion that the house and land be sold in March instead of May, when it should be, because real estate agents said that there would be a better market in March.



Pat Fringer, Doyle Brown.

of the districts for Oberlin School District.

He said that he wanted to find out who would pay for the projects if the school board passed a bond issue.

Mrs. Horn found the map and gave Mr. Stapp a copy, which he looked at with the commissioners, county attorney and clerk. Commissioner Ralph Unger said, looking at the map, it is a little hard to tell what the districts are because of how they "curve," but pointed out that each board member had a part of Oberlin.

Mr. Stapp asked if the district didn't get kids from Norton County. They do, said Mrs. Horn, and the tax money paid by landowners there is sent here.

Mr. Unger said he had attended the school board meeting the night before, as had Mrs. Horn, so that she could present information on the district's valuation.

County Appraiser Alan Hale stopped

In other business, commissioners:

- Heard from County Attorney Steve Hirsch, who said that several people have paid on their foreclosure notices, including a piece of farm property and another big one.
- Heard from Mr. Hirsch that there are two estates of which the money will go to county agencies. The first one is the Clarence Wishon estate, which will give \$3,000 to the hospital and \$3,000 to the Good Samaritan Center. The second is the Griswold estate in Thomas County, of which half will go to the Shriner's burn institutes and half to the hospital here. He said that he filed a

- Heard Mr. Unger say he had been told at the school board meeting that people didn't want the county giving \$1,000 to look into dairies for this area.
- Agreed that they would like a report from Western Prairie Resource, Conservation and Development, which asked for \$350.
- Appointed Terry Rush as the clerk of Roosevelt Township and Lonnie McEvoy as clerk of Center Township.
- Appointed Gold Bank, Commercial Federal Bank and The Bank as depository banks for the county.
- Approved the General Accepted Accounting Principles resolution saying that they don't have to follow all of the principles.
- Approved an increase in mileage payments for employees who use their own vehicles for work from 32 cents to 34.5 cents per mile.
- Named *The Oberlin Herald* as the county's official newspaper.
- Held a closed session for five minutes to discuss non-elected personnel.
- Heard from Mrs. Horn that Sheridan County sent \$25 to Hospice in memory of the late Commissioner Bob Glenn.

Officers rush to calls around the county

Sheriff's officers stayed busy Friday night with a domestic violence call in Jennings and a report of a possible party on the Traer Road.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said that on his way home from an incident at the high school he saw a truck sitting on the side of U.S. 36. It was full of teen-agers who said that one of their sisters was on her way to pick them up.

When he got to the Traer Road, he said that there were five vehicles coming off the road onto the highway. By

the time he had swung around to turn onto the road, though, he received a domestic violence call in Jennings.

He said that it was about 1:30 a.m. when they got the call from the Phillip Ritter home. By law they have to arrest the person in a domestic disturbance if there are signs of abuse, he said. Mr. Ritter, 34, made bond that morning.

He said that both Mr. Ritter and his wife Sharla had been drinking.

Last Tuesday, officers were called to Jennings for another domestic violence call. This time it was at the residence of Pamela Christensen, 45, formerly Kayla Kump, and involved her former husband, Richard Kump, 42. Officers said that when she called, she said that he was outside her home harassing her.

When they arrived in Jennings around 8 p.m., they couldn't find Mr. Kump.

Report of gunman draws police to school

After receiving a call that a young man who was upset after an argument had headed to the basketball game at Decatur Community High School with a gun Friday night, police and sheriff's officers rushed to find him.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said a caller told dispatch the man's name and gave a description of clothing. Officers received the call at about 9:38 p.m. and arrived at the school shortly after that.

With under two minutes of the game left, Chief Lockhart was in the gym with his sweater buttoned to his neck, calmly asking a young man to come out with him.

Chief Lockhart said that the man that officers escorted out of the gym was wearing clothes fitting the description the caller gave, although the caller gave a different name. The name that he gave, though, is another young man that the chief also knows.

The suspect, handcuffed and wearing a maroon sweatshirt, was escorted through the locker room to the outside door, where he was searched. By this time, Police Officers Scott Zeigler and Troy Haas and Sheriff Ken Badsky, Deputy Gary Baldwin and Reserve Deputy Barry Richards were in and

around the gym, all with their bullet-proof vests on. Officer Dennis Brown was at the door with the suspect.

Chief Lockhart said that the man was questioned and searched for a gun. The officers didn't find anything, even after they came back in and looked on and under the bleachers for a coat that belonged to the youth to see if there was a gun in it. They found no coat and later let the man go.

After the game, the officers searched the building to make sure that there wasn't a young man in the building with a gun, said Chief Lockhart. They didn't find anyone and left.

The case is under investigation for possibly being a false report, the chief said.

Later officers received another call which Chief Lockhart said may relate to their first call. At 1:15 a.m., a caller said that someone had been cut with a knife in the 100 block of South Beaver.

The officer who responded found that someone's finger had been cut. Chief Lockhart said that the case is under investigation as well.

He said that no charges have been filed and the department is not releasing names in either situation yet.

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Snow cuts Internet off

Internet services for nwkansas.com customers across northwest Kansas were interrupted for about two hours on Saturday by a power outage caused by heavy, wet snow which fell in Oberlin during the afternoon.

Power for the system at *The Oberlin Herald*, which provides both e-mail and domain name service for nwkansas.com customers, went out about 2:30 p.m. and was not restored until about 4:30 p.m. An entire block of downtown Oberlin lost power.

Steve Haynes, president of Nor'West Newspapers, said the outage was caused by the snow. Oberlin got about 8 inches during the afternoon, much more than had been predicted.

Customers in other towns with a secondary "DNS server" listed in their setup had outside Internet access, Mr. Haynes said, but all service to Oberlin customers was out because of the power failure, as was the e-mail server.

NEW EXCLUSIVE LISTING!

101 S. East. This classic 3-bedroom bungalow combines old-fashioned charm with modern conveniences. The high ceilings, big windows, original woodwork and hardwood floors reveal its Arts and Crafts heritage while the updated kitchen is designed for today's living. Located in the heart of Oberlin on a spacious corner lot surrounded by a privacy fence. Make an appointment to see this one today!

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