

Seminar will tell why not to use drugs like meth

Recent sales of ecstasy, a form of methamphetamine, and a report that Decatur County has one of the highest rates of teen meth users in Kansas have prompted a county "interagency team" to schedule classes to teach people about the drug.

The team, made up of representatives from county agencies, received a \$1,500 grant from the state Juvenile Justice Authority for meth education. Public efforts will begin at noon Tuesday, May 8 with a presentation to the Oberlin Rotary Club at The Gateway.

That night, there will be an evening meeting for the public at Morgan Theater at The Gateway.

Deputy Jim Engel, with the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, and Duane Brown of Colby will be giving the seminar. Peggy Pratt, director of the Northwest Kansas Juvenile Services, said Deputy Engel will talk for about an hour on meth and then Mr. Brown, a former meth user, will talk. The two will take questions at the end of the presentation.

Deputy Engel said after Thomas County found 10 meth lab sites in 1999, the sheriff decided to send him to a safety school in Great Bend and he is now certified to seize and clean up meth labs. In the class, he said, he learned how the product is made and signs to look for if a person on meth.

Deputy Engel will try to teach people about the drug. He said he will have evidence from cases as visual aides, will talk about how to report meth labs to law officers and how to act around someone you think may be using meth.

People who take meth are very para-

noid, he said. They talk and move slowly and you should act slowly around them, trying not to agitate the user. Deputy Engel said there are some physical signs of meth use. Users may have open sores on their body from scratching themselves, they are often skinny, sweat a lot and don't take care of themselves. Overall, he said, they have bad health.

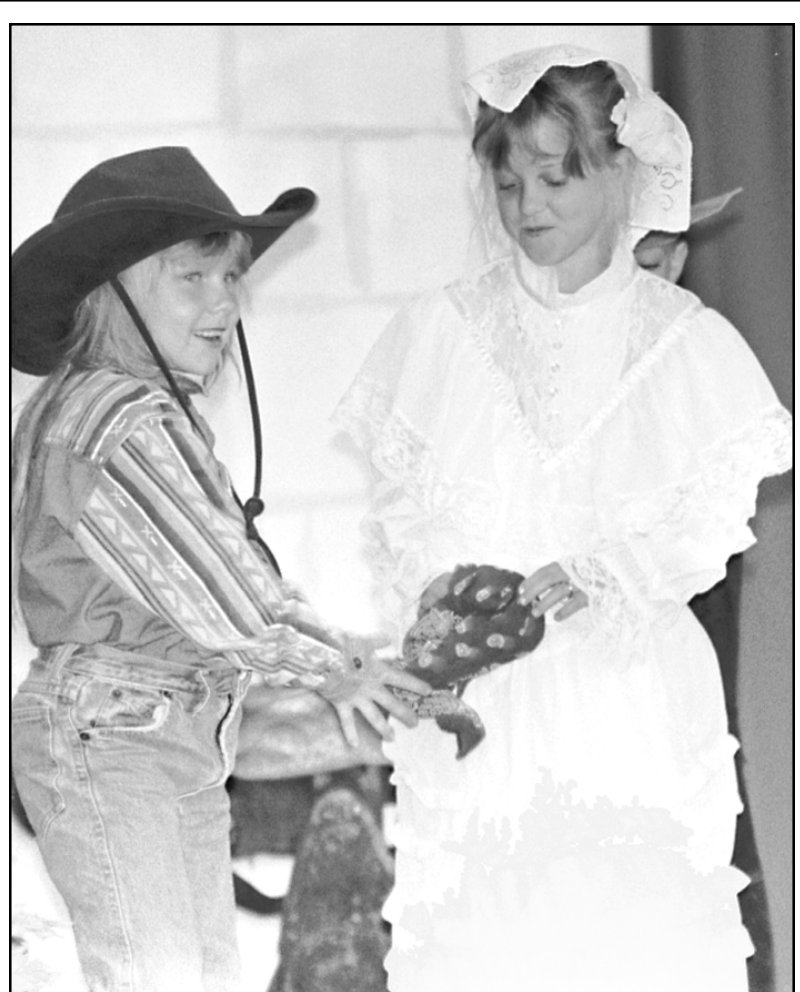
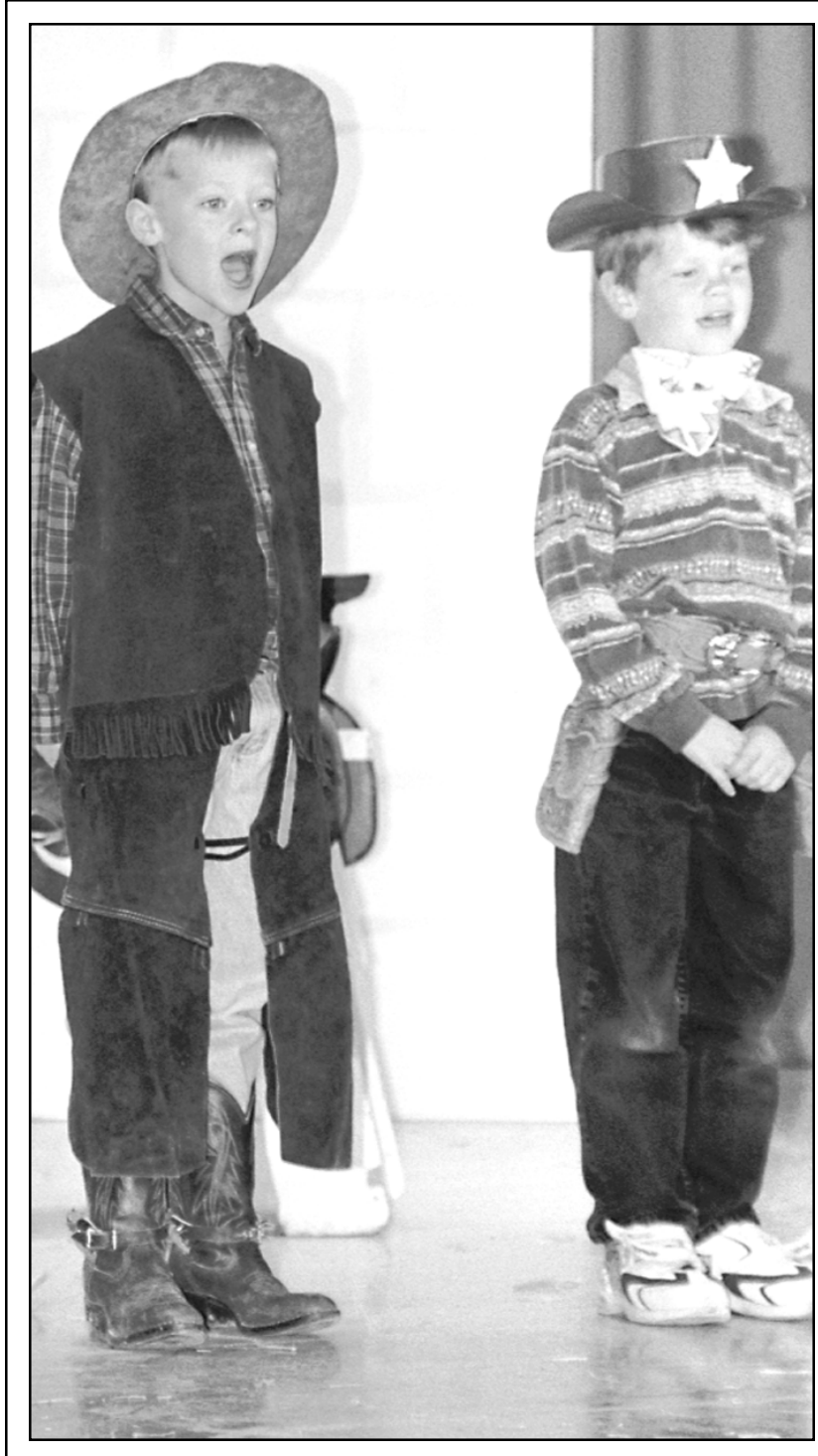
Although the Decatur County team is working on informing the general public about the effects of the drug, which can be made out of household product, over-the-counter drugs and common chemicals, they have also set up seminars at both school districts in the county. Jennings High School students will hear from the speakers at 10 a.m. on Friday and students in Oberlin will listen to the presentation at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, May 22.

Deputy Engel said at schools he tones the presentation down a bit. With the recent sale of ecstasy in Oberlin, he said, he will have information on the drug, which claimed the life of a teenager in Boulder in February.

The other day, he said, he did a program for students in Colby and he got positive feedback from them.

The interagency team is using the grant money to pay for the speakers and mileage but plans to have money left for other projects.

A suggestion was made to use the money for brochures and educational material about meth and about ecstasy which can be passed out at the Decatur County Fair in August and to put some information in front of the sheriff's office on the fourth floor of the courthouse.



Dressed in cowboy gear, students tell story of 'Pecos Bill'

WITH MOUTH WIDE OPEN, Pecos Bill, played by Nolan Henningson (left), sang with classmate Chase Copeland during the first grade play, "Pecos Bill," last Wednesday at Oberlin Elementary School. Dressed in bustle and wedding dress, Slue-Foot Sue, played by Amanda Marshall (right, above), got something blue from Jenny, played by Megan Huntley.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

People told to use compost pile right

The compost pile at the south end of the county shop east of town on U.S. 36 may only be open limited hours if people don't stop dumping plastic bags, metal and other things they aren't supposed to be in it.

The compost pile is a service the county provides for people to dump leaves, grass clippings and other natural things. The pile isn't a dump and isn't meant for trash, said Road and Supervisor Tim Stallman. He told Decatur County commissioners on April 10 that if people continue dumping trash at the site the gates to the pile will be locked and it will only be open at certain times so employees can watch it.

Mr. Stallman and the commissioners ask that people be more careful in what they put in the compost pile.

- In other business, commissioners:
- Looked at signs for people to put up to mark underground lines. Commissioner Unger said he thought they should go ahead with a regulation requiring the signs. He said they should have an additional sign if a line carries gas or flammables.
- Held a five-minute closed session for non-elected personnel.

• Heard Mr. Stallman clarify why the bid for the welder from the previous meeting was accepted. He said Linweld offered a free class to learn how to use the welder and offered a one-time deposit on the bottles, with oxygen and other chemicals which the welder needs to work. Oberlin Automotive didn't offer a class and after the first 10 years, the deposit belonged to the company and the county would have to pay again for the bottles.

• Approved a fax machine for the second floor, with the county clerk, treasurer and appraiser splitting the cost.

• Heard that Commissioner Unger received a complaint from someone downtown who thought the entire fourth floor should be smoke free since people can't smoke in the jail anymore.

• Talked with County Appraiser Alan Hale, who said he hasn't heard much feedback from the valuation notices sent out this month.

• Heard County Clerk Marilyn Horn received another bid for a bus from Kansas City. It is a 1999 with 50,000 miles and with the wheel chair lift and special seats in it. The cost would be \$25,000. Commissioners agreed she needed to look for more bids.

Free dump at landfill this week

The Decatur County landfill is offering one free trash dump for each family in the county this week, from 10-3 Monday through Friday and 8-noon on Saturday.

"It is something nice that the commissioners came up with a couple years back to give people a break," said Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman.

The free use can be used for a business, but you can't go to the landfill for your free time under your business

name and then go under your own name. You can only do one or the other.

Each family or business is only allowed to dump five passenger tires and one refrigerated appliance, for which you must be able to provide a certificate of evacuation of the refrigerator. If the certificate is not provided it will cost \$30.

Mr. Stallman said the event is popular. For the last two to three years, there have been close to 100 participants.

Information ready for school bond issue

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
An informational sheet put out by a committee working to sell the Oberlin School bond issue is in its final stages before it will be ready to hand out.

Monday night at a KIDS executive committee meeting, a skeleton crew looked over the sheet, finding only one thing they may want to change. Bond representative Steve Shogren, from Ranson and Associates in Wichita, suggested putting graphics of kids on the sheet so it will stand out more.

Mr. Shogren said when he first came to Oberlin and found out that none of the school buildings had air conditioners, he was surprised. He said that may be something to play up on the information sheet.

Chairman Jack Metcalf said some of the rooms do have window units, and Principal Duane Dorshorst said the idea of air conditioning the schools is what

is getting the most negative feedback from people.

The bond issue covers heating, ventilating and air conditioning all of the elementary school and some rooms at the high school. School board members have stressed that air quality and cooling are not the reason the bond campaign was started. Although studies have shown air quality improves learning, the primary reason board members looked at renovation was because of electrical needs and plumbing.

The executive committee agreed that air conditioning wasn't the main reason for the bond issue and wasn't the most important part of the plan.

Mr. Metcalf said speakers need to be able to address the air conditioning issue as well as committee members, since the question of why kids need the cooling in the schools will be asked.

Mr. Shogren gave one answer to the

question of why kids need air conditioning when their parents go through school without it. He said 30 years ago, people didn't have cooling units in their houses, cars, tractors, work and everywhere else, but nowadays kids have been raised with an air conditioning everywhere.

Although there were only four members of the committee at the meeting, work that needed to be done was finished. The crew spent some time working on a game plan for the first public meeting on the bond issue Thursday.

Mr. Shogren said the meeting needed to be structured for success. He suggested a welcome speech, him talking about finance, the architect going over the plans, a main speaker from the area and then a closer and a question period.

Mr. Dorshorst said he thought the speakers bureau committee was basi-

cally trying to get people into the buildings to have a look around and see what is going to be done if the bond issue passes.

"To be honest with you," said Mr. Shogren, "I think these meetings are way too early."

He said they should wait until the group has more information out in the community, but if they are going to hold a meeting, not to waste it and just have a tour, but have a whole public information evening.

The members looked at an informational pamphlet which Mr. Shogren said other schools have done. He said ordinarily the school board pays for it since the information isn't promoting a yes vote. He said one of the pamphlets he showed cost \$1,500.

The committee didn't make any decisions on the pamphlet.

Shingling postponed at shelter

Volunteer days to re-shingle the Sappa Shelter House set for Saturday and next weekend have been postponed until the shingles arrive.

Jack Benton, who is on the committee working to fix up the park, said the manufacturer where he ordered the

shingles had the days mixed up somehow and the material wasn't delivered in time.

Mr. Benton said he will notify people when the days, something like an old-fashioned barn raising, are rescheduled.

Options to sell old church to be discussed by City Council

The Oberlin City Council will discuss selling the old Presbyterian Church at Commercial and York at its meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

The church was donated to the city 10 to 12 years ago, and services haven't been held there in over 20 years. City Administrator Gary Shike said it was about 1978 when the church consolidated with another to form the United Church.

No one has bid on the building, he said, and just because it is on the agenda doesn't mean the council will sell it.

In recent years, the Decatur Area Theater Association has used the building to store props and for rehearsals.







However, the roof leaks and the building needs work.

Council members will also see designs which engineers have been working on for the upcoming water project. Mr. Shike said he doesn't know when the project will start. The project is being planned by Miller and Associates, a McCook engineering firm.

The council will be signing documents to keep the ball rolling on the project, Mr. Shike said.



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