



# THE OBERLIN HERALD

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## School board plans to meet on Herndon

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The Oberlin School Board will meet Thursday to get their thoughts together before they go to meet with the Herndon School Board next week about a possible district merger.

Herndon has asked Atwood, Oberlin and Golden Plains to talk to their board about consolidation. While the Herndon district is not necessarily planning to close shop right away, the problem of shrinking enrollment is causing its board to look at consolidation with neighboring schools.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt said that his board wants to get together to talk about what the

Herndon board will want to know.

The meeting with Herndon is to be informal, Mr. Glodt said. The board there wants to know about things like tax levies and local option budgets, but it won't be doing anything right away.

"It's almost like an interview," he said. "It's not our opportunity to sell the district."

Mr. Glodt said that Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann has sent the boards a list of questions that Herndon would like answered.

Thursday, the Oberlin board will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the district office and then on Monday it will go to Herndon for a 7 p.m. meeting at the school.

## New-size paper debuts today

Here it is, the new-size *Oberlin Herald*.

Be honest. Could you tell the difference when you picked it up?

Sure, the paper is a lot lighter, but that's because Christmas is over and no one is advertising much.

But the page you're looking at is a little smaller. The type area is an inch narrower and the sheet is an inch and a half narrower.

The new size, pioneered a few years ago by *The Denver Post*, has become the industry standard. Nearly all the papers sold in this area have switched already, and we decided it just made sense for us to switch, too.

Many ads were coming in for the new size, and it was a hassle to make them fit the old standard. It's getting hard to find the old-size paper.

Across the country, reports are that readers like the new size. It's just a little more handy, easier to hold, fold and read. We hope you'll agree.

A lot of work and planning have gone into this change. The press crew ordered new paper and checked the new sizes. Editors and makeup people had to resize ads and page templates so everything would fit.

This week, the press crew is having to switch back and forth until all the papers we print have switched over. Next week, the *Country Advocate* will switch to the new size. At the same time, the *Advocate* will go to mostly standard-size pages, rather than the smaller tabloid. The cover and back page will stay about the same, however, and the *Advocate* will still look like the *Advocate*.

One of the things the change should do is allow us to hold the line for a while on advertising and subscription rates, which will not change. A postage increase could affect subscription prices later, however.

So there it is. Let us know what you think about the new size.

— The Editors



**SPRAYING FOAM ON OIL**, Fire Chief Bill Cathcart (above) worked a blaze northeast of Oberlin. Rural firefighters spent about an hour and a half at the fire, which started as a controlled burn of. Firemen watched the smoking pit to see if the blaze was out (below left). They used an attachment to mix foam. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

## Fires strike oil pit, man's truck



A controlled burn in an oil pump containment pit last week that got out of hand and a pickup fire on Monday put the Decatur County Rural Fire Department to work.

The oil pump, belonging to Ron Uehlin, Danbury, is on Dan Uehlin's property about eight miles east and four to five miles north of Oberlin.

Ron Uehlin said they had been burning off oil in a containment pit on Dec. 19 in front of the pump. It had been there since this summer, he said, and needed to be cleaned up.

The fire got out of hand, melted through one of the pipes and oil started to back feed into the pit, feeding the fire.

Firemen were called out at 2:36 p.m. and arrived on the scene shortly afterwards. At 3:53 p.m., the crews returned to town, Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said.

Mr. Cathcart estimated there was several hundred dollars damage. The pump has been in operation since 1966, said Mr. Uehlin.

On Monday, Wade Jones of Oberlin was driving his 1997 Ford F150 pickup on the Danbury-



Kanona Road when he noticed that the back was on fire. He pulled over about six miles north of the U.S. 36 junction.

Firemen were called and arrived about 10:45 a.m.

The blaze started in the bed of the pickup, Chief Cathcart said, where some oily rags had been stored. Chief Cathcart said that the fire was probably caused by spontaneous combustion. It spread as the truck was driven in the windy weather.

The pickup was a total loss, he said.

## Goodbye, 2002

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Change seemed to be the theme for 2002 in Decatur County, with new chiefs hired to lead the school, the hospital going out on its own and the weather taking the fall crop for the first time in years.

Looking back over the year, there was always something new or different happening each month in *The Oberlin Herald*. There were new successful events held, people were hired and businesses came to town.

There are some things, though, that never change in a farming community. People are always waiting for the rain and snow to help give the crops a drink. They didn't have to wait too far into the year to get the first storm, but then it seemed they were few and far between.

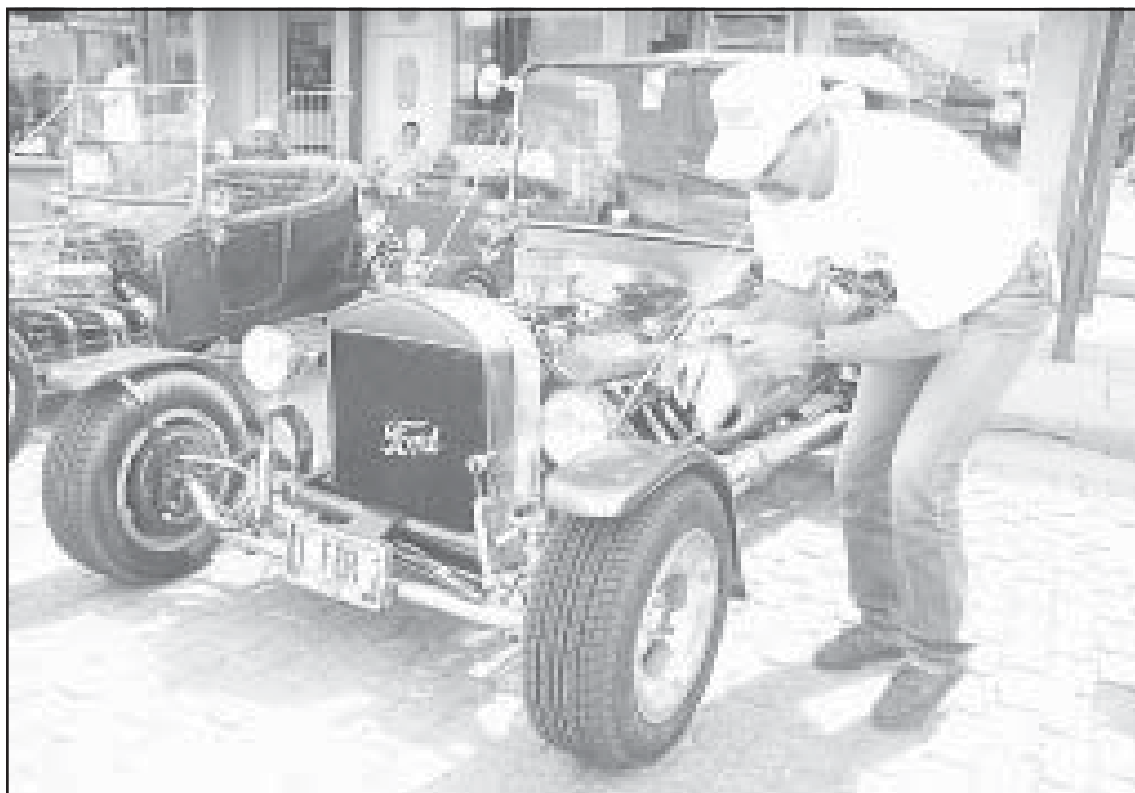
**In January**, Oberlin was looking for a school superintendent and a high school principal. Consultants McPherson and Jacobson held their first meeting to see what people wanted in a new superintendent for the school district.

The Nebraska company was hired by the school board to lead the search after Superintendent Duane Steele decided to retire.

The first meeting brought out 19 people who answered questions about what they wanted in a school chief.

Earlier, the board had said the two most important things in a superintendent were honesty and integrity. After that they wanted the person to have skills in academics, doing the budget, organization and curriculum.

**February**, the second month of the year, brought



**WITH A CLOTH IN HIS HAND**, Mark Hamel wiped the bugs from his 1923 Model T after driving it from Nebraska for the first Museum Summerfest June 1 in Oberlin.

storms three out of the four weeks.

The first one in early February brought six inches of

snow resulting in .30 of an inch of moisture. Schools in the county shut down and road crews worked long hours

to clean the white stuff off the roads.

In the second week, it started to snow again, mixed with winds up to 61 miles an hour causing blizzard-like conditions. The wind ripped shingles off of houses and knocked branches out of trees. Travelers were trapped in and out of town.

In the last week, it snowed again. It was only a few inches that were predicted by meteorologists. The ground was covered, but kids still went to school. A sub-state basketball game was postponed.

**March** brought a change to the Oberlin School District when a new superintendent was hired, although the decision was delayed by a week. The board decided on Kelly Glodt, but couldn't find him. Mr. Glodt, it turns out, was in Argentina on Rotary Group Study Exchange trip and was tough to reach.

The board finally found Mr. Glodt, who had been principal at Bernadine Sitts Intermediate Center in Garden City, and hired him.

Then work started to get a principal for the high school, since Gordon Matson had decided to retire.

**In April**, Banner Health Systems (formerly Lutheran Hospitals) walked away from its operating lease after 50 years. Lutheran had started management of the hospital when it opened in 1952. The county hospital board and staff had decided to go it alone as an independent facility. They hired BKD, a consulting firm, to help a little.

Administrator Lynn Doeden reported that all was well at the end of the month as the administrative (See GOODBYE on Page 5)



# \*Goodbye, 2002

(Continued from Page 1) team worked on the employee benefits and handbook.

**In May**, Superintendent Glodt and the school board offered a contract to Charles Haag as high school principal. Mr. Haag, with 13 years as an administrator in Nebraska, was scheduled to take over the position here at the end of the summer.

In June, as the sun heated things up, two new, successful events were held in Oberlin.

The first one, Relay for Life, raised \$8,000 for cancer research as survivors and volunteers walked the high school track into the wee hours of the morning.

The Decatur County Museum held its first Summerfest, Car Show and Swap Meet, bringing 150 classic cars to Main Street. It was a success; plans were made to have the second show this coming summer.

**By July**, the area's drought was getting serious. On a scale of one to five, weather experts said, the county hit a four.

The city decided to go to a "Stage 3" water emergency, meaning people were only allowed to water on even or odd days depending on the address on their house.

Stockmen lined U.S. 83 and the parking lot at Oberlin Livestock Auction to drop off cattle to be sold. Fields had been completely grazed and the cattle had nothing to eat.

The typical sale at the barn was

300 to 400 cattle in July, but one week this summer they had 1,400 head.

As school opened in **August**, the school district found it had lost 10 percent of its student body. Although expecting a drop of 24 students, the district actually lost 48. Other schools in the area reported the same trend for the most part.

The heat and sun ate up the fall harvest by **September**. Many of the crops were never touched by harvesters, just left in the field.

Milo crops that were cut produced just 20 to 30 bushels an acre compared to 80 to 120 bushels in a good year.

Dryland corn produced zero to four bushels an acre compared to 50 to 60 the year before or 80 to 100 a few years ago.

**In October**, the city started to plan for the future by purchasing 240 acres of land with an irrigation



**A MAN BUNDLED UP** for winter used his four-wheeler to move snow on Commercial Street on Jan. 31.

well on it next to the waste water treatment plant south of town.

Although it needs to be drilled, the well can pump 790 gallons a minute as an irrigation well. A representative from the state Division of Water Resources said the city will be able to get 400 gallons a minute from the well.

**In November**, after two years of planning and government red tape, the city's water project got

under way. The city hired J Corp of Hays to replace the main line on Cass Avenue and install connections for a blending so it can use a well with high nitrates and arsenic.

**In December**, both the city and county decided to join a movement to sue Gov. Bill Graves over his budget cuts. The governor decided that the state couldn't afford revenue sharing "demand transfers" from the general fund to cities, counties and the highway program.

The cuts mean \$17,000 less for the city and \$72,000 for the county. Both expected to get the money when they made out their budgets.

Some may say it has been a quiet year, without a lot of crime, fires or accidents, but there still have been a lot of changes going on.



**A CARHOP** in a poodle skirt served burgers, fries and floats to folks at Oberlin's A&W drive-in during the Museum Summerfest, Car Show and Swap Meet.

## Game wardens stopped traffic to check deer

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Over the rifle deer hunting season last month, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Highway Patrol set up several check points to monitor the health of the state's deer herd.

Dick Kelly, wildlife conservation officer in this area for the department, said they set up check points around the area, but they never had one in Decatur County. At the end of the season, one of the check points was set up near Norton, to the west of the city along U.S. 36.

The check points are designed to contact

successful deer hunters and find out the exact location where the deer were coming from, he said. It was combined with a game check station to make sure people hunting in this part of the state are following the laws and regulations.

The department, said Mr. Kelly, thinks the checks are essential for future hunting and sports related activities dealing with hunting in Kansas.

At the check points, Highway Patrol officers stopped all drivers on the highway. Wildlife officers took samples from dead deer to look for chronic wasting disease

which is a nerve disease similar to "mad cow disease" that is fatal to deer. So far, he said, there hasn't been a reported case of the disease of wild herds in Kansas. The disease has been found in deer in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

If a hunter wasn't going to mount the heads, the department asked for the head to test. If the hunter wanted the head, said Mr. Kelly, a sample was taken. Testing takes two to three months.

Biologically, said Mr. Kelly, wasting disease is what the department was looking for. The department wants to keep the herd vi-

able and if something does come up, the department wants to know about it right away.

The check points also were used to make sure hunters were following the law.

The most common violation, said Mr. Kelly, was where the person tagged the wrong species of deer. Basically, hunters had a tag for a white tail and had gotten a mule deer and put it on that animal, or the opposite.

Violators were charged with violations at the check point, he said, and the appropriate steps were taken. The animals, he said,

as well as some of the hunter's equipment is seized on site.

The animals are held as evidence, said Mr. Kelly, until the case is cleared and then they are disposed of.

There is a fine of \$250 to \$1,000 for taking an animal the hunter doesn't have a tag for. The generic term for illegally taking an animal is poaching, he said.

The Highway Patrol was asked to help primarily to assist the wildlife department and maintain safety.

Mr. Kelly said both in and out-of-state hunters had not followed the law.

## Cable firm's sign may have to fall, city tells the crew

A new Classic Cable billboard on U.S. 36 across from Sinclair may have to come down, since the advertising company that put it up didn't have a permit from the city.

The billboard went up on a windy, cold day before Christmas. City Administrator Gary Shike said he didn't know about the sign until it was being put up. He said he went and talked to the crew to tell them they needed a permit.

The leader told him he had called the city office and someone there had said he didn't need a permit. Classic employees here said they hadn't had anything to do with the sign, which apparently was ordered by their main office through the sign firm.

Thomas Outdoor Advertising Inc. of Manhattan put the sign up. Mr. Shike said the only way he has of contacting the company is by fax.

Mr. Shike said there is a city ordinance for signs constructed in the city limits. Part of the ordinance says that a sign in the business district along U.S. 36 can be no bigger than 6 by 6 feet. It also says that the person putting up the sign has to pay a fee to the city and get a permit. Mr. Shike said it is figured by a formula.

The company dropped off a check, he said, but the paperwork wasn't filled out and the permit wasn't issued. He said he told the firm to take the sign down.

The company has filed an appeal to the Board of Zoning and Appeals, which will hold a hearing at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 21. It has to go through the process now, said Mr. Shike.

If the board hears the appeal and says it is OK, he said, the sign will stay up. If they say it isn't, then it will be taken down.



**HANGING A BIG BAG**, workers for Thomas Outdoor Advertising out of Manhattan put up a billboard for Classic Cable last month. The city says the sign should come down,

however, because the firm didn't get a permit and the sign is too big for the business zone where it was erected. An appeal is scheduled. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

## Senior center finds it hadn't planned to pay utility bills for year

The Oberlin Senior Citizens Center board turned in an amended budget to Decatur County commissioners with added line items for utilities and insurance.

Calvin Ufford presented the budget to the commissioners at their meeting Tuesday, Dec. 17. He said between Commissioner Pat Glenn coming to their last meeting and phone calls with County Clerk Marilyn Horn, they had figured out that they were doing their budget wrong. The utilities had never been in the budget before, he said.

"Some of these items were being charged against our budget and we

didn't know about it," said Mr. Ufford.

He said he hopes the new budget works. The community needs the senior citizens center because people use it every day to play cards, eat and quilt.

The commissioners talked with Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin, who had a contract for the regional bio-terrorism plan. The county will get \$10,000.

Ms. Gamblin said she has teamed up with seven other counties, with Norton County doing the administration for the group. They plan to hire someone to set up some educa-

tional programs in the counties and get things in order in case of bio-terrorism.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said there probably needs to be an interlocal agreement between the counties. He said he would call the attorney general's office to make sure.

He asked what happens if this person is hired and then the state doesn't have the money. Ms. Gamblin said it is a one-time deal.

She said it is a good resource for the county because this person will be able to set up some of the bio-terrorism plans that she doesn't have

the time to do.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held a five-minute closed session with Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman for non-elected personnel. There was no action taken.

- Heard the ambulance service has worked 302 calls this year.

- Talked with Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy, who said he will be attending a meeting with Jerry Chambers from the Prevention Center here for the meth task force.

- Discussed that Herndon is going to stop mopping their ambulances

and there may be more calls handled out of Oberlin for that area.

- Held a two-minute closed session with Mr. Pomeroy for non-elected personnel. There was no action taken.

- Heard that the county's seat on the Western Prairie Resource Con-

servation and Development board is up. Jack Benton serves now. Anyone who is interested should contact the clerk's office for an application.

- Decided that the county offices will close at noon on Christmas Eve.

- Held a five-minute closed session for attorney/client privilege.

Internet tonight!  
Call 475-2206