

## Snow, cold weather likely to hang on

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Get out the winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves, because the cold weather is expected to stay around until the end of the week with more snow likely.

Snow started to cover the ground early Sunday morning while most people were tucked warmly into their beds. The storm left around five inches in the county, bringing .20 of moisture.

That means for the month, there has been .71 hundredths of an inch of moisture. For the year, there has been .74. Normal for the

month is .48.

Victor Stegemiller, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland, said the storm Sunday was predicted. He said he thought they did a fairly good job with notifying people with winter weather warnings in the media, but the area didn't get as much snow as was predicted.

The reason it snowed, said Mr. Stegemiller, was because of a ridge of high pressure over the Rocky Mountains. The jet stream split, and one of the split streams brought cold air from Canada while the

other one brought warmer air from California and Mexico.

The cold air is denser, he said, and as it moved over the warm air, it snowed. There were also jet stream waves which helped the area get snow, but that wasn't the main reason.

Mr. Stegemiller said the snow was very dry because of the cold. Not only the air temperature, but the surface temperature was cold.

Wet snow is a mixture of ice crystals and water, he said. The dry snow is just ice crys-

als, which is the type which fell Sunday morning.

Although the storm didn't close schools, it kept the city and county crews busy cleaning the roads.

City Foreman Dan Castle said the crew started around 9 a.m. Sunday with the snow routes and then moved to the Main Street. The crew also cleaned the parking areas at City Park.

This is the first time the city crew has cleaned snow this year, he said. With the last storm, there wasn't enough to clean the

streets. On Monday, the crew worked on cleaning the large piles of snow in the middle of streets.

Mr. Castle said the snow was loaded into trucks and dumped on property the city recently purchased south of town.

Around 7:15 a.m. Sunday, the county crew began work.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said they finished chaining the blades and got started after the wind stopped. He said the crew normally starts (See SNOW on Page 10A)

## Troopers tell drivers, kids to use seatbelts

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Some parents may have been a little shocked when they showed up at Oberlin Elementary School only to find eight state troopers standing outside, checking to see if the drivers and kids were properly secured.

The troopers visited on Thursday, Feb. 13, for Child Safety Awareness Week. Trooper Jerry Stritt of Oberlin said they also went to schools in Stockton, Phillipsburg and Smith Center that week.

He said the troopers stopped each car to make sure everyone in the vehicle had their seatbelts on and children were properly restrained.

The officers talked with people in 77 cars that day.

Of those, 12 adults received tickets for an adult not having a seatbelt on and 16 for a child under 14 not wearing a seatbelt.

The officers did give some warn-

ings, because in order to give a ticket for kids not being belted in, there has to be another violation.

Kansas law requires everyone in a vehicle wear a seatbelt, said Trooper Stritt, but there are some specific rules for kids.

Kids under 4 years old have to be in a child safety seat, he said. (In Nebraska, that applies to any child under 5.)

There used to be a weight exception in the law.

Kids over 100 pounds, even if under that age, didn't have to sit in a safety seat. That was taken out of the law.

Any child under 14 or under has to be belted in.

Tickets for not wearing a seatbelt are \$10 for adults and \$20 for kids, said Trooper Stritt.

The only exception to the seatbelt (See TICKETS on Page 10A)

## Oberlin's test well pumps less water than city expected

A test well drilled about 40 feet from the irrigation well the city bought last year hasn't shown the best numbers in preliminary tests.

Thaniel Monaco, an engineer with Miller and Associates, said the figures he has received are preliminary because all of the tests haven't been done. So far, he said, it looks like a well there would only pump 140 gallons a minute.

From the information the city received on the irrigation well, the hope was to get 400 to 500 gallons per minute. Mr. Monaco said that could still happen. They may be testing in the wrong spot, he said, and the numbers are only preliminary.

He said the drilling company, Layne Western, found a static water level about 24 feet below ground surface. The depth of the test well was about 70 feet with 30 feet of gravel at the bottom.

The 12-hour pumping test showed the test well could only pump for that long at 140 gallons per minute without drawing down the water level. Mr. Monaco asked for permission to test the irrigation well for 12 hours. The test well and irrigation well are only 40 feet away, he said, yet there is a big discrepancy in the numbers.

There will be some more expense to test the irrigation well, he added. The council approved the extra test.

Mr. Monaco said if the well is going produce 200 to 300-gallons per minute, the council might want

### Council roundup

At their meeting Thursday night, the Oberlin City Council:

- Took suggestions on the city's drought/emergency water conservation plan, although the group didn't take any action. Story on Page 10A.

- Decided to deny a request from J Corp to take out the chlorine and pressure tests on the water service lines. Story to come.

- Received information from Fortis Health Insurance and decided to set up an insurance committee to look at the three plans on the table for city medical insurance. Story on Page 3A.

- Decided to order street signs to replace old, worn street signs. Story to come.

- Heard that a test well drilled on land purchased by the city only pumped at 140 gallons per minute in preliminary testing. Story to left.

to look at a submersible pump.

The city has around \$130,000 in the water project fund to spend on putting in a well and a pump house. Mr. Monaco said a submersible pump could save \$25,000 to \$30,000.

The council didn't make any decisions.

## Three state legislators to visit over coffee here

The Decatur County Farm Bureau will sponsor a legislature coffee for Sen. Stan Clark of Oakley, Rep. John Faber of Brewster and Sen. Karin Brownlee from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. on Saturday, March 8, at The Gateway.

Sen. Brownlee, an Olathe Republican, is chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, which is placing special emphasis this

year on rural development. Sen. Clark and Rep. Faber, both Republicans, represent this area.

The three plan to discuss issues addressed in the 2003 Kansas Legislature, as well as anticipated issues and their impact on communities.

People are invited to attend and ask questions or voice any concerns.



WORKERS LOADED BOXES onto a conveyor belt and into a truck Friday afternoon from the Oberlin Duckwalls store, which closed last Tuesday morning without warn-

ing. Officials said the merchandise would go to other stores. Employees were being offered a choice of going elsewhere or severance.

—Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

## Store shuts doors without notice, shocking shoppers

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Customers coming to shop at Oberlin's Duckwalls store last Tuesday were greeted by locked doors and brown paper covering the windows.

The downtown store was closed Tuesday morning with no warning, as a team of managers from the firm's Abilene headquarters showed up at first light to start packing and moving the merchandise.

Decatur County Chamber of Commerce Manager Glenva Nichols, whose office is across the street from the store, said she got in a little after 9 a.m. and everything looked normal. Then she saw women in the window taking out the decorations and putting up the brown paper.

A sign on the front window says that Duckwalls has closed the store here and it invites customers to drive to Atwood or

Hill City to shop.

Mrs. Nichols said when the paper started to go up, she didn't know what was happening. When she found out, she said, her reaction was, that is just the way big companies do things. It is, in fact, the way Duckwalls usually does things.

A press release hand delivered to *The Oberlin Herald* that morning, says the sales floor of the store would close Tuesday and gave customers a little under a week to pick up their film and layaway items.

"As a normal course of business, we financially evaluate all of our locations on an annual basis or when the lease options allow us to exit a location," said District Manager Scott Orcutt. "Our study indicated that we would be able to make better use of our assets in another location."

The company runs 36 Duckwalls stores in Kansas, he said, including the ones in Atwood and Hill City. It



also operates Alco Discount Stores, including one in McCook.

Mike Bowman, a vice president,

was in town Monday helping pack up the store so the mer-

(See STORE on Page 10A)

## Students remember Columbia shuttle

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Red, white and blue posters lined the lockers on the main floor of Oberlin Elementary School, each with pictures of American flags, astronauts, space shuttles or other patriotic graphics in memory of the fallen Columbia.

After the shuttle exploded 39 miles above the earth in the last 16 minutes of its trip on Saturday, Feb. 1, fifth graders had a lot of questions, said teacher Casandra Holdeman. That's one of the reasons the students did the memorial project.

Each student made a poster with pictures and words of what they were feeling at the time.

Ms. Holdeman said she has had an interest in the space program for some time.

The students had just finished reading a story about the Challenger when the accident happened

The kids had questions about the delays in the shuttle taking off and whether the crew would have taken off when it did if they had known the trip would end this way. They talked with Ms. Holdeman about the heat generated when coming back into the earth's atmosphere, the panels that were missing and whether all the astronauts had died in the explosion.

She said in the past, the class talked about the phrase "This, too, shall pass." When something bad happens, she told them, it will pass, and if something good does happen, then they should enjoy it.

Students said that Americans shouldn't end the space program just because of the explosion.

After the posters were finished, each was placed in the hallway near the library so students and staff could read them.

Students Wade Juenemann, Kaden Macfee and Kyle Huntley said they found out about the explosion on the television and then, when they returned to school on Monday, everyone was talking about the space shuttle.

Kyle said he remembers that his teacher explained to the students what had happened and that there were seven crew members.

Clay Andersen said that even though bad things like the explosion happen, people should still enjoy the good things in life while they are here.

Mackenzie Carman said she was at her grandmother's house when she heard the news.

She asked her grandmother to call her relatives in Texas to make sure they were OK. She said her relatives had pieces of the space shuttle in their yard.

Mackenzie chose a picture of an eye with the world in it for her poster. "A tragedy in the sky, then people see the world in different eyes," is her slogan on the poster.

Christian Rittmann said he learned about the crash on television. Although he didn't have any questions about what happened, he said Ms. Holdeman told him that the shuttle had exploded and a piece had fallen off.

Sara Copeland wrote, "February 1, 2003, a space shuttle with a seven-crew team aboard changed a lot of peoples' lives. The space shuttle exploded. It has been about 17 years since the last explosion at NASA. We all should remember these brave people taking the risk to go to space and help other people learn more about space and its planets. Thanks to the brave people like these, we know more about space."

