

Weather class to help spot storms

Advanced training to be offered in Oberlin

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**
With storm season here, the National Weather Service office in Goodland has started to take storm spotter training to counties in the area to show people the basics and more about tornadoes and other severe storms.

Dave Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist with the service, said he has already completed nine classes and has about 10 left.

Each class, he said, starts at 7 p.m. and is open to anyone who wants to come. He said the classes are free and there are no requirements. In the past, he said, he has had people as young as third and fourth graders at the classes because they have been interested in weather.

During severe weather, people go storm spotting and let the weather service know what is going on in their area. Meteorologists can see a lot on radar, he said, but eyes on the ground are important.

Mr. Floyd said the classes are pretty much a spring thing, since that is the storm season.

The service offers basic classes, which include the basic building blocks of thunderstorm structure,

types of storms and where to look around the storm for severe weather. The class also covers safety for the spotter and the general public, he said.

The information in the class also covers different kinds of clouds seen beneath the storms.

The advance class, such as the one that will be offered at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30, at The Gateway in Oberlin, will go into more detail on thunderstorm structure, including variations from one storm to the next. Mr. Floyd said spotters will learn why some storms produce more rain than others and why some produce hail. The class will also cover theories on why tornadoes form and what it takes for a tornado to develop.

Mr. Floyd said the service suggests that spotters take the basic class before coming to the advanced class.

The classes take about two hours and 15 minutes.

The class is mainly a computer presentation, he said, which includes about 40 minutes of video embedded into it. There will be a lot of blocks of thunderstorm structure, (See STORM on Page 10A)

Good Samaritan gets A-OK from state

The Decatur County Good Samaritan Center received a zero-deficiency rating in its last state review, meaning that the inspectors found nothing wrong at the center.

Director Joyce Ploussard said the state came for the review March 19 and 20. The reviewers talked with the residents and checked charts.

The final appraisal, she said, is based on what the reviewers see with the residents and how they look and feel. They check to see if the residents are well fed, clean and happy, and check the charts for procedure and medical condition.

"Surveyors were pleased with what they saw and felt that everyone as a whole was focusing in on their duties to obtain care overall," said Mrs. Ploussard.

She said the credit goes to the staff dedication and teamwork.

"We take pride in caring for the whole person in every way possible," she said, "and having a good

survey allows me to ring the bell of pride well deserved to all."

If the center did have a deficiency, then it would have to be answered in 10 days, she said, and the reviewers come back to make sure everything is fixed.

This is a yearly review, she said, so the state won't be back until next spring.

Mrs. Ploussard said that she has never had a zero deficiency rating before, and it's fabulous. Someone from the center will be going to Wichita to receive an award.

After the staff heard the results of the review, she added, they had a celebration.

The center and staff received a card from the Good Samaritan headquarters that called the review a "tremendous accomplishment."

Mrs. Ploussard said the county is very lucky to have two good nursing centers, including the Cedar Living Center.

Inspection costs too high on project

The Oberlin City council discovered Thursday night that inspections costs for the water project are \$5,841 over the contract amount so far.

Engineer Thaniel Monaco with Miller and Associates said he had been a little lax on the invoices and noticed they had already exceeded the contracted amount. The contracted amount was for 120 days, he said, although the contract with J Corp, the company doing the project, is for 180 days.

A bill is for an inspector hired by Miller and Associates and isn't something that is paid to J Corp., he said. Probably after next week, a full time inspector won't be needed.

Mr. Monaco said he didn't expect anything to be decided at the meeting Thursday night, but asked the council to consider an amendment to the contract. He said the price at the end of March is around \$39,000 and he is asking for an additional \$10,000. He said he had hoped that 120 days would be enough.

Basically, said Councilman Stan McEvoy, it is \$15,000 out of whack. Possible, said Mr. Monaco.

How are these amounts arrived at? asked Mr. McEvoy. It is an hourly rate for the inspector, he said,

\$37.50, plus 30 cents a mile.

Mr. Monaco presented the council with payment request No. 5 for J Corp for \$43,536. The payment, he said, was for work completed up to March, 20 including meter work, paving along Cass Ave., the main line, pressure tests and the few leaks that had to be repaired.

He said it had been reviewed by him and the inspector and approved. Councilman Jay Anderson asked if there were any areas Mr. Monaco was worried about.

Mr. Monaco said he was interested in the trees and how the removal will work. He said he originally thought it would be subcontracted, but J Corp. is removing the trees themselves.

Time wise, he said, things are going well. There was a stop work order, a couple of snow days, extreme cold days and a few days off for rain. He said April 23 is the last day for the 180 contracted days.

The company then has around 30 days to clean up.

Mr. Monaco said the good news is the city will be under on the price for this part of the project.

The council approved the pay request.



SUNDAY AFTERNOON, snow was fun and snow was work. Kelden (above left) and Kyle Breth made a snowman with their Dad, Tim and little brother, Kole (not pictured)

in their front yard after snow had fallen all day. Lance Lohofener (below) used a snow blower to clear off a driveway. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

Sunday snowfall brings moisture to parched county

After temperatures jumped into the 80s and 90s last week, it was hard to believe that the ground was covered with snow Sunday.

The flakes started to fall Saturday, then quit. It was not until late that night that white started to cover the ground.

By morning, a blanket of snow laid over the county, making the roads slick and kids anxious to get out and play.

The snow seemed to switch from rain to sleet to snow throughout the day, and then moved back and forth to different kinds of precipitation.

By the end of the afternoon, though, highways had been cleared by melting, traffic, and state crews and were just wet, but snow remained on the grass and fields.

Oberlin received .64 inch of pre-

cipitation, according to the National Weather Service.

At the Breth home on Beaver Avenue, Tim and the boys Kyle, Kelden and Kole, built a snowman while their mom, Brenda, took pictures.

Bundled up, the three boys packed snow in the shape of a snowman with Dad's help. Mrs. Breth said she had bought a snowman kit two years ago and the boys had yet a chance to use it since there hadn't been much wet snow.

Sunday the area got that snow, and the box came out of storage. The kit included buttons, a corn-cob pipe, black hat, a carrot for the nose and black lumps of plastic coal.

After the first snowman was built and all the accessories were in place, the three boys were ready to tear it up so they could make



another. Dad held them off long enough so Mom could get a picture.

By Monday morning, paved roads in the county had no snow on them and county roads were mostly cleared. Students hoping for more snow to cancel school had no such luck.

Health workers offer fair

The fifth annual Decatur County Health Fair is just around the corner and organizers are just about ready for the big day.

The event will open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, April 25, at The Gateway. County Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said the office is getting everything ready.

On Monday and Tuesday, she was busy drawing blood from 157 people for the blood work special. Luckily, she had help since that was the most they have had for the blood work.

At the cost of \$25, she said, it is a bargain for complete blood work which includes tests for electrolytes, kidney and liver functions, alkaline phosphatase, glucose, cholesterol, triglycerides, hemagram and TSH. This is close to \$150 worth of lab work, said Ms. Gamblin.

Men could add the prostatic specific antigen test for an extra \$20, she said.

They will get the results from the blood work on the day of the health fair, she said. Jonna Inman, nurse practitioner for the Oberlin Clinic, will be at the fair to go over the results with anyone who have questions.

The blood draws, she said, aren't the only part of the fair. There is something for every age group.

An emergency helicopter and an ambulance out of Kearney, Neb., should be in the parking lot. For the (See HEALTH on Page 10A)



DECATUR COUNTY RURAL firefighters got a surprise last Wednesday when they were called out to a hay fire and it turned out to be a house just east of Cedar Bluffs. The home had extensive damage. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

Hay blaze turns into house fire

Volunteers from the Decatur County Rural Fire Department got a little surprise Wednesday morning when a call on a hay fire just east of Cedar Bluffs turned out to be a white house hidden by trees.

The call came in at 11 a.m. when drivers passing by saw smoke coming from the area just east of Cedar Bluffs. To get to the house a person has to drive next to the railroad tracks under the bridge.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said the

firemen went out with a pumper and two pickups to fight the fire.

"I was totally amazed that it was the house," he said. "I'm not sure how the wires got crossed."

The house, owned by Lyn Reynolds, who also lives in the Cedar Bluffs area, was rented to Oscar Guerrero, who works at the Decatur County Feed Yard.

Within 30 minutes, Chief Cathcart called for the tanker truck. Firemen carried hoses to extinguish the

flames and used hooks to break down the front of the house.

The white house, although still looking the same from the back side, had turned a dark black in the front and on the roof.

Chief Cathcart said the fire started from an extension cord in the bathroom. The cord looked like it had been bent so many times wires inside were broken and exposed.

Even though the firefighters got (See FIRES on Page 10A)

* Health priority at fair

(Continued from Page 1A)
 last two years, the helicopter crew has planned to be at the fair but either got called away before landing on The Gateway parking lot or shortly after.

There will be bone scans for \$20, which measures a person's bone density for osteoporosis.

There will be representatives promoting the second annual Relay For Life, which is a walk that raises money for cancer.

Ms. Gamblin said there are several sponsors signed up for booths, including the Decatur County Farm Bureau, which will have Freddie the Combine there; the Oberlin Police Department; High Plains Mental Health, Decatur County Stand Against Violence, Mary Kay, Decatur Health Systems; fire department with trucks on display and Valley Hope. That doesn't include all the booths at the fair.

Ms. Gamblin said the Oberlin Lions Club will be selling food over the lunch hour. The money raised will go to students going to state band this year.

This year, she said, it has been harder to find companies to have booths at the fair. People are downsizing everywhere and cutting hours and it is harder to find time for a person to sit at a booth for several hours out of the day. Some local business that have participated in the past won't this year.

There are still spots open for any business interested in having a booth, she said; just call 475-8118.

Ms. Gamblin said people should attend the health fair. It is a good time to ask health questions, some that normally wouldn't be asked or thought of. For instance, she said, there will be booths about nutrition, which will include questions that people forget to ask.

City to keep Blue Cross for a while

The Oberlin City Council decided to keep Blue Cross/Blue Shield medical insurance for the city for the next month and pay the increased premiums in April so the city employees don't have to.

The council has been studying medical insurance options for city employees since the city received notice that the cost of the current plan would jump 44 percent.

The city has checked into Fortis Insurance, American Medical Securities and a state plan, also administered by Blue Cross. The city still hasn't received numbers back from Fortis or American Medical Securities, said Councilman Stan McEvoy, who is working on the insurance committee.

City Administrator Gary Shike said Blue Cross/Blue Shields asked for the city's insurance information again to see if the premiums could be reduced. He said American Medical Securities is high and probably not worth pursuing.

Fortis won't be back with the numbers until the end of the month, said Mayor Walter, and then the council would have to make a snap decision. The question then is how the council wants to handle the increased premiums for a month.

Mayor Walter said he didn't like the fact that the city would have to pay more, but it could be an increase of \$400 for each family.

If that does happen, it can be dealt with then, said Mayor Walter.

The council agreed to wait for more information, keep the plan the city has now for the month of April and pay the increase for one month.



FIREMAN Jim Soderlund helped John Brown clean out cane south of Oberlin last Wednesday afternoon.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

* Fires destroy house, cane and hay

(Continued from Page 1A)
 the fire out, the house is a total loss and probably can't be rebuilt. Everything inside was totaled too.

With the house and the contents, damage is estimated at \$25,000, he said. Neither the homeowner or the renter had insurance on the home.

Around 2 p.m. that day, the firefighters returned to the station just long enough to get cleaned up and ready for the next call.

The second was for another hay fire eight miles south of town, and it turned out to be just that. Chief Cathcart said John Brown had

rented a tub grinder from Roy Unger and was using it when he noticed the cane inside was on fire.

Mr. Brown drove the grinder up to the house, where he has a hydrant, to put water on the fire. By the time that was put out, Mr. Brown noticed smoke coming from a trench silo

just west of the house across U.S. 83, then he called the fire department.

Chief Cathcart said the only damage was to the cane and the hay; the grinder didn't seem to be damaged. The fire started either from a bad bearing in the machine or from overloading it, he said.

Commissioners accept bid for electrical work

Decatur County commissioners accepted the low bid for electrical work at the noxious weed building at their meeting Tuesday morning.

Director Gaylen Huntley said he received two bids for the work. One from Fidele Electric for \$521 and the other from Circutech for \$750. The commissioners approved the lowest bid.

Mr. Huntley said the department is going to use a truck they already have as the roadside spray truck. It already has an air conditioner in it, he said, and it will be worth spending the money to put the equipment on the back.

Road Supervisor Tim Stallman said the crew had finished taking down the snow fence and put up minimum maintenance signs for Harlan Township. He said other townships are interested in the process.

Mr. Stallman asked if the county could leave a second packer at the Speedway. The commissioners agreed, as long as the people at the Speedway know that if the county needs it they can take it back.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said he would like to have at least one ambulance and three emergency medical technicians at each race. He said he will ask for volunteers.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Signed an agreement for compliance with new federal privacy regulations for the ambulance service.
- Heard the the interest rate on \$100,000 in bonds for the hospital had gone down to 4.5 percent from 4.65 percent.
- Signed a check for the \$100,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture which had been transferred into the county account for the hospital.
- Received a letter from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment about a refund for \$642 from the office of the district

coroner's office.

- Talked about the recent department head meeting. The commissioners said that during their meeting someone asked about getting a county credit card. The commissioners agreed that the county already has gas cards and didn't think a credit card was a good idea.
- Heard that the Decatur County

Health Foundation has \$161,000 in their bank account and is accepting applications for scholarships.

• Heard that Appraiser Alan Hale sent a note to Kansas Counties Association Multi-line Pool about the valuation on the ambulance building. He said a new figure would be sent.

- Held a 10-minute closed session

for attorney-client privilege. There was no action taken.

• Called the Good Samaritan Center to let them know their rent payment is due. The commissioners plan to visit the center at their next meeting.

- Held a 15-minute closed session for attorney client privilege. There was no action taken.

* Storm spotters get class

(Continued from Page 1A)
 of slides from storms in the area. With the computer, the class has become more entertaining, he said.

Mr. Floyd said before the class, he'll cover some of the myths people have heard about storms and tornadoes.

In the past, people attending the classes have received spotter numbers, he said, but those numbers have been eliminated. He said it is just important that when people see storms, they call the service and give their name and where they are.

Mr. Floyd said the spotter classes became important after a big outbreak of tornadoes in the area in 1974 when there were 149 in two days.

Classes in the area will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday at the Hoxie Bowen Scout House, Wednesday at the Cheyenne Wells Town Hall Auditorium in Colorado, Friday in the Benkelman High School in Dundy County, Monday at the Atwood Prairie Development Center in Rawlins County. Tuesday at the St. Francis High School in Cheyenne County, Thursday, April 17, in the Leoti Firehouse in Wichita County and Tuesday, April 22, at the McCook Library in Red Willow County, Neb.

Weather delays show

Spring fashions were put on hold Sunday afternoon as winter weather outside forced the Dresser to cancel its annual show.

The "Spring Blooms" fashion show has been rescheduled for 3:30 p.m. Sunday at The Gateway.

Karen Metcalf, with the Dresser, said the show will follow the James Rivers piano program at 2 p.m., sponsored by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission.

Tickets are on sale at the store for \$2 or they can be purchased at the door.

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