

## Oberlin elevator gets new lease on life

Work has started at the old Oberlin Milling elevator at the south end of Main Street, and the new owners hope to open the operation sometime between June 1 and June 15. Hansen-Mueller Grain, out of Omaha, bought the elevator and the one in Cedar Bluffs after the previous owner, Alan Marietta, filed for bankruptcy. At the end of last week, Tim Kolster, director of operations out of the Omaha office, was at the elevator getting things organized and fixed for the June opening. Mr. Kolster said most of the work is reno-

vation, including general clean up, repair and replacing any items that need it. He said the company is also doing some renovations at the elevator in Cedar Bluffs. He said the company has been in Oberlin for about a month and have been working on the facilities for the last two weeks. When a company buys a facility, said Mr. Kolster, there usually is more cleaning and fixing than you expect. He said the company hired the Macks Back Company from Ellis to clean out the grain bins. There was some unusable grain

left in the bins which had to be taken care of before the company could open the elevator. Hansen Mueller has hired Bill Gotchall from Wallace, Neb., as manager, and he has been helping with the renovation. Mr. Gotchall said he plans to move to Oberlin. Once the two elevators are open, Mr. Kolster said, the company will probably hire anywhere from five to seven people for part-time and full-time work. He said they would like to hire locally.

Hansen-Mueller was a creditor for Oberlin Milling for about \$901,000, according to bankruptcy documents. Mr. Kolster said that Hansen-Mueller decided to buy the elevator because of the marketing value in the area. The elevator will be open to take in grain, including wheat, corn, milo and soybeans. He said the firm plans to start out buying and selling grain and possibly offering some storage. The elevators can hold 500,000 to 550,000 bushels of grain.

Mr. Kolster said the company will also be offering a variety of programs available for farmers for the harvest. The elevators will be open between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with extended hours for harvest. The number at the elevator is 785-475-3116. Mr. Kolster said the company is community minded and they try to do as much business locally as possible. Hansen-Mueller owns 18 elevators and marketing offices throughout the country, he said.



**ON HER TRUMPET**, Allie Moore (above) played the echo to "Taps" at the close of the Oberlin Memorial Day services on Monday morning. Lt. Col. Robert Strevey (Re-

tired) (below) was guest speaker for the event at the Oberlin Cemetery. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

## Avenue of flags honors area veterans on Memorial Day

The wind whipped through 385 banners displayed during the 36th annual Memorial Day Avenue of Flags at the Oberlin Cemetery on Monday. Each of the American flags have been given to the Legion Post here to be flown to honor a veteran from the area. Legion Commander Gary Allen said the event started in 1967 with 46 flags and today it has grown to 384. The 385th flag, flown near the veterans monument, is the Legion's post flag. In the last year, he said, five flags have been claimed and returned to the families of veterans. Flags are retired when they become too old or fragile. At the same time, though, since last May, the Legion has been given seven new flags by families of deceased veterans. During the ceremony, Commander-elect Walter Pennell gave Charles Corcoran and Ray Lohofener an award for 50-plus years as members of the legion. Speaker was Lt. Col. Robert Strevey, U.S. Army (Ret.), who was born in Norcatour and raised on

farm just south of there. He graduated from the high school in Norcatour in 1960 and the University of Kansas in 1964. In 1966, Mr. Strevey went into the Army and served in Vietnam. After active duty, he stayed in the Army Reserves for 20 years. Col. Strevey spoke of the legacy of freedom won by patriots' blood, which is a great gift to people today. When the call to duty is heard, he said, the hard lesson that freedom is not free must be learned. The sacred nature of the legacy will be passed to our young people. Col. Strevey said the good of the nation depends upon the goodness of the individuals. The nation will only be as good as its people. Each person is important to the future of the nation, he added. Everyone is thankful to the young people who have committed themselves to the nation and to protect its freedom. "May God Bless America," he said, "and make her not only great, but good." To end the presentations, a gun



salute of three sharp shots were sounded by the American Legion firing squad. Brent Smith closed the services by playing "Taps" on his trumpet with an echo by Allie Moore.

## Commissioners, officials ask about federal laws

The Decatur County commissioners met with a representative from Rep. Jerry Moran's Hays office at their meeting last Tuesday, peppering him with questions about new and proposed federal laws. Eric Depperschmidt, constituent services representative, said he visits with people from Decatur County each year around this time, and this year decided to come during the commissioners meeting to field any questions he could take back to Rep. Moran. Commissioners Doyle Brown and Pat Glenn were joined by Economic Development Marketing Director Connie Grafel, Treasurer Jean Hale and Magistrate Judge John Bremer for the session. Ms. Grafel said she wanted to know about the proposed Homestead Act, which is designed to en-

courage people to move to rural areas with shrinking populations. Mr. Depperschmidt said it is still in committee with Sen. Brownback on the Senate side. The act sounds fairly promising, he said, for rural communities and families interested in buying new homes. The act would give young people money to move back to some parts of the country, Mr. Depperschmidt said, and Kansas would fit into its definition. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said Sheridan County wanted to participate in a Department of Justice emergency preparedness grant, but because the county didn't take part in the grant last year, it isn't allowed to this year. Mr. Hirsch said the grant provides for training and equipment to pro-

tect against terrorism attacks. He asked Mr. Depperschmidt if he could check into this and if there is anything the county can do. Mr. Hirsch said he has called both state and federal officials, and the each says it is the other's rule. Ms. Grafel asked about disaster relief for farmers. The signup deadline is June 6, said Mr. Depperschmidt. He said farmers he has talked with say if it is anything like signing up for the new farm bill, then they don't want to do the program. There is a lot of discussion about the Conservation Reserve Program and problems with it. Mr. Depperschmidt said what he is trying to figure out if the problems are with the law or the way the Department of Agriculture is interpreting it.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he keeps hearing about government consolidation. Mr. Depperschmidt said he hasn't heard a lot, but thinks from what he does hear, it will affect bigger counties on a county and city level. County Clerk Marilyn Horn asked about the Help America Vote Act which is supposed to make voting uniform so everyone is voting the same way at the polls. The state will have to spend around \$3 million on the equipment, she said, and then the county will have to buy the programs, which will cost around \$21,000. The county has seven polling places and this would change it to one, meaning that people would have to drive 30 miles to vote, said Mrs. Horn. Is that making voting (See OFFICIALS on Page 10A)

## City receives petition against helping business

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**  
An attempt to help a Nebraska firm revive an Oberlin business may have run aground on the rocks of competition. The Oberlin City Council received a petition with 109 names on it Thursday night against the city issuing industrial revenue bonds or a tax abatement for Hansen-Mueller Grain Co, which just purchased the old Oberlin Milling operation in Oberlin. The Omaha-based firm also bought the Cedar Bluffs Grain operation; both elevators had been closed following the bankruptcy of Marietta Enterprises last April. Economic Development Marketing Director Connie Grafel brought the idea of the industrial revenue bonds to the council at a recent meeting. The bonds are issued by a city or county and paid off by the business borrowing the money. Because they are municipal bonds, they are exempt from federal income taxes, and a tax abatement or incentive for the business can be included in the package.

The council never agreed to do either, nor was the company asking for a certain amount of bonds or a tax abatement. Thursday night, Ms. Grafel said the grain company hadn't gotten back in touch with her on what they are asking for. She said she does know that the company is looking into other sources of money. Mayor Ken Shobe read the petition, written on Decatur Cooperative Association letterhead. It said that the farmers of this area and surrounding towns built the co-op, and agriculture has built the town. On the last payroll, it says, 41 paychecks were issued. At year end, the co-op had paid 100 total employees and had a payroll of \$1,603,436. Property taxes paid were \$106,478. All of these figures are for the entire trade area, with the headquarters in Oberlin, the firm says. The petition says this revenue stays in the community. "To encourage a company to go into direct competition with the area

### Council Round-up

- At a meeting Thursday night, the Oberlin City Council:
  - Asked the city administrator to compile a report about empty business buildings, detailing who owns them, how long they have been empty and what the owners have planned. Story on Page 3A.
  - Decided to stay with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for the employee medical insurance. Story to come.
  - Agreed to give \$600 to the Northwest Kansas Family Shelter as the city has in past years. Story on Page 10A.
  - Received a petition against industrial revenue bonds or a tax abatement for Hansen-Mueller Grain Co. on Decatur Cooperative Association letterhead. Story at left.
  - Visited with Judge Paul Lueschen, briefly discussing dog tickets issued in the city. Story on Page 2A.

farmers and to consider giving them an unfair advantage or tax relief would not be in the best interest of our city or even our county, for that matter." The letter says that Hansen Mueller is a larger company that has its own financing avenues, and that the bankruptcy of Farmland Industries and the drought has had a financial impact on the co-op. How would this be competition with the farmers? asked Ms. Grafel. Mayor Shobe said he thought the letter means competition with the farmer-owned co-op. What if a cabinet factory moved to town and asks for bonds? Ms. Grafel asked. Would they be refused because there are two existing plants? Mr. Shobe said he thought (See PETITION on Page 10A)

## Annual car show to drive into town Friday, Saturday

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**  
There'll be cars everywhere. Antique, race, muscle, classics, dragster and sports cars. Cars built from kits. All kinds of cars will line Main Street on Saturday for all to see during the second annual Museum Summerfest Car Show and Swap meet. And that means people from all over Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado will be driving into town to show off their cars. Last year, over 150 cars lined a closed-off Main Street. This year, said museum board President Greg Fidele, the group is hoping to bring in 200 more. Dana Marintzer, one of the organizers, said as of Tuesday there were around 50 cars registered, which is about the way registration was last year at this time. She said last year on the day of the event, around 50 cars showed up and others came in the night before without pre-registering. The group has allowed people to pre-register for \$20 for as many cars

as a person wants to bring. Owners can register the day of the show for \$25. The event will kick off around 7 p.m. Friday night with a cruise-in at the A&W on U.S. 36 which will last until 10 p.m. On Saturday, the morning will start off with a "free" pancake feed at the Old Bohemian Hall at the museum from 7 to 9 a.m. Everyone is welcome to come eat; donations will be taken. Registration for cars will be from 8-11 a.m. in the drive through of the old The Bank building on the south end of Main Street. Mrs. Marintzer said the "Show and Shine" on Main will last all day. Main Street will be closed for the event. The Show and Shine gives people a chance to check out the vehicles and engines and talk with the owners. On the south side of Farmers Bank and Trust there will be a food court with vendors serving all day. (See CARS on Page 10A)

# \* Petition asks city not to help

(Continued from Page 1A) decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said he feels like he is between a rock and a hard place. He said he wants to bring businesses to town, but doesn't want to run off ones that are already here.

Dale Soderlund said he isn't concerned with businesses coming to town, but with the industrial revenue bonds and tax incentives. When the co-op was built, he said, there were no incentives. The co-op has taken a hit this year, but it hasn't come in and asked for help. He said the co-op welcomes competition but wants them to stand on their own feet.

Mr. McEvoy said he felt like the city is dealing with a company that has the money and they have already bought the elevator and begun work on it. He said he isn't saying that he would vote no to creating jobs.

If Hansen-Mueller creates three to four jobs, said Mr. Soderlund, and takes business from the co-op, will

the co-op have to lay people off. Those are people who live here and pay taxes here, he said.

The company never asked for tax abatements, said Ms. Grafel. That is just one thing that can be done with industrial revenue bonds.

What if the city gave the co-op some kind of a deal? Councilman Patrick Pomeroy asked. General Manager Karol Evans, who was sitting in the audience, shrugged.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the only way to do that would be if the co-op created more jobs, and council members said they would have to consider the request if it came in.

The council never voted but members said they wouldn't vote for any tax incentives for Hansen Mueller.

"You said no," said Ms. Grafel, "and they haven't even asked for a tax break. This was a run-it-across-the-table to see what would happen."

"It seems we have seen what would happen."

# \* Officials learn about new laws

(Continued from Page 1A) easier?

Mr. Depperschmidt said he hadn't really heard about this but said he would look into it and get some information.

Judge Bremer asked about a gun bill that was passed in 1994 and will expire next year. He said it is a pointless law. He said he can't set up his Memorial Day exhibit because the bayonets on the historical guns have to be taken off. Judge Bremer said the bill alters the cosmetics of an existing gun and he doesn't want to

see the bill passed again.

In the past, Mr. Depperschmidt said, Congressman Moran hasn't supported new gun laws because it is hard to enforce the existing ones.

The group briefly talked about economic development, tax incentives, legislation which would get Medicare payments to become more comparable between rural and urban hospitals and the new medical privacy act.

Mr. Depperschmidt left just before noon, headed to Atwood. He had been in Norton that morning.

# City donates \$600 to area family shelter

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday to give \$600 to the Northwest Kansas Family Shelter again this year.

Susan Wegele, with the shelter, said in 2002 the office received 4,891 calls. Of those, 1,768 were crisis and victim related.

She said 55 adults and 82 children were sheltered during the year.

All of the services provided by the shelter are free, she added.

Ms. Wegele said she is willing to do informational presentations to organizations in the area.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said he felt the shelter is a good program and a lot of people benefit from it. Ms. Wegele said there are no numbers for Decatur County, but she knows the shelter does provide services here.

Councilman Jay Anderson said it may seem cold-hearted, but the city has less money this year and the population is dropping. That is reality, Ms. Wegele agreed.

The council agreed to give the \$600, however.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, asking for an opinion about the length of the contract for construction services with Miller and Associates, which did the inspection for the city's wa-

ter project. He said he asked how the department defines contracted work days.

Mr. Shike said he is waiting for the reply but hopes that the city and Miller can reach some kind of agreement on the overrun for the inspectors.

In other business, the council:

- Approved paying swimming pool co-managers Jennifer Thomas and Katelyn Unger \$8.25 an hour. Mr. Shike said the two won't normally be working at the same time; the plan is to stagger their hours.

- Heard the city had sent out 39 mowing notices, which is more than normal.

- Mr. Shike said it is just a consequence of a wet spring. He also said the city has an ordinance which says that people aren't allowed to blow grass into the street.

- Changed the July meetings from the first and the third Thursdays to the second and fourth, July 10 and 24.

- Approved a "burn out" contest for the Last Indian Raid Museum's Annual Summerfest and Car Show on Saturday.

- Heard that Oberlin has been approved as a "Lifelong Community." The city gets a 74-page booklet to fill out, and has six weeks to six months to finish the survey.



WITH ONE FINGER STRETCHED OUT, Gannon Henningson pushed the buttons to make the roamer in the kindergarten class move the right direction. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

# 'Roamer' helps students learn

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Kindergartners at Oberlin Elementary School learned about directions and group work a little bit differently this year, by watching and working a little green robot.

The round green robot, called a roamer, moves on its own once a student pushes the direction buttons on its top.

Teacher Carol Brown said the roamer came through a grant from Wichita State University and Boeing Company.

The idea is to integrate technology into the kindergarten, first and second grade classes and help teach skills in estimation, addition, subtraction and programming.

That's not all, though. The kids got to build their own city for the roamer. By working in groups, the students got some ideas for what

to put in their city. Some they got by just thinking, but they also read the book "Saturday Walk," which showed the students what might be in their city.

The kids took boxes and covered them in brightly colored paper and used markers to write on each what the building was called.

The students got creative and decided all wanted their house next to the ocean, so they made an ocean with waves out of blue paper. Also included in the city is the White House, which is within a block of a farm; a police station; a county shop; a zoo; a bank; a drug store; a post office; and even a few businesses that are in Oberlin.

The students next did worksheets with directions so they would know which way the roamer had to move to get to a

certain spot.

The grant not only included the roamer, said Mrs. Brown, but a big number line that is placed on the floor. The city is built on blocks which matches the size of the number line, so students are able to tell the roamer how many blocks to move.

One student in the group reads the directions and another enters them into the top of the roamer. When all the directions are in, the student pushes go, and the roamer takes off working through the city.

The students don't always get the directions right, so then Mrs. Brown talks to them about how they should fix the directions.

"The kids are really excited about the town, the roamer, exploration and problem solving," said their teacher.

# Hazardous items can be left at landfill

Decatur County commissioners talked with the road and bridge supervisor last Tuesday morning about the recent household hazardous waste collection at the landfill.

Supervisor Tim Stallman said he plans to continue having the cleanup days twice a year and rotate them among Oberlin, Jennings and Norcatour.

With the new building at the landfill, he said, people can bring their hazardous waste in at any time and it will be put on the shelf for the trailer when it comes.

Mr. Stallman said he talked with B&H Paving, the company that will be sealing the north/south streets in the city, about sealing the paved road out of Norcatour this summer. He said the company bid a price of 62 cents a square foot, which would total \$8,000. The county will pay for half and Norcatour the other half.

Mr. Stallman said the commissioners will see a bill for a big repair

on a 1993 Dresser grader in Jennings. He said the repair was unexpected. The engine has been sent to Garden City for repair, and the bill may be \$10,000 to \$12,000.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Talked briefly about employees not parking in a couple of parking spots on either side of the ramp on the south side of the courthouse. The idea is to leave those spots for customers.

- Heard that Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy is interested in getting his PhD so he can teach emergency medical technician classes. The commissioners talked about the idea briefly.

- Received guidelines from Mr. Pomeroy and Sheriff Ken Badsy for the two departments to share a person to work with both the ambulance and sheriff's office. The commissioners looked at them but decided to wait to discuss the idea un-

til Commissioner Ralph Unger was present.

- Read a letter Economic Development Corp. President Jack Metcalf had written about Randy Hrabe with Northwest Kansas Planning and Development in Hill City concerning timeliness in getting the last draw down for the micro loan. The letter says although the application for H&B Construction was approved in February the money wasn't actually in the county until the end of April. The letter asks for Mr. Hrabe to work in a more precise manner. The commissioners have not yet decided if they will write a letter too.

- Heard that Barbara Dehlinger's term representing the county on the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission is up. Anyone interested in the job should call or stop by the county clerk's office in the courthouse.

# Social studies curriculum may change next year

A new social studies curriculum for all grades was discussed at the Oberlin School Board meeting this month, although it won't be approved until June.

Oberlin Elementary teacher Steve Cullen said at the meeting Monday, May 12, that the whole curriculum had been rewritten to match state standards while still including student objectives.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said it has been six years since the social studies curriculum had been updated. Mr. Cullen said the new version is being typed at the high school and

should be done by this summer.

The board plans to vote on the curriculum at the June meeting.

The board talked about increasing the rotation for textbooks to try to save money. Mr. Glodt said they already are on a six-year rotation. He said he talked with teachers at the high school who are going to be ordering books this year and it turns out that the books may cost less than they thought, although not a lot less.

Mr. Cullen said at the grade school, he thinks the only consumable books are the spelling workbooks, which cost around \$12 or \$13

a year.

For Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, he said, he will take the extra samples so they will have books. Teacher Rhonda Barth said she needs a copy of every book for the special education department.

Mr. Cullen said he would talk with her.

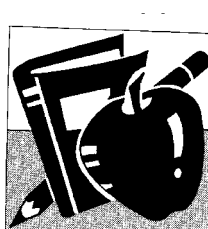
The board approved the purchase of the new books.

In other business, the board:

- Heard the last count for Sappa Valley Youth Ranch was 32 kids, an increase from 25 in the previous count.

- Approved the 4-H Council using the activity bus to take kids to camp this summer. 4-H will pay for the fuel and driver.

- Hired Gina Montgomery as high school secretary and Jennifer Schissler as a teacher's aide at the high school.



# \* Cars ready to roll

(Continued from Page 1A) The museum will be selling pork burgers and brats over the lunch hour, said Mrs. Marintzer.

After lunch, a poker run will start at 1 p.m. with people cruising around town and trying to collect the best poker hand at required stops.

A new event added this year is a "burn out," which will start at 2 p.m. at the south end of Main, past the museum.

Mr. Fidele explained the event to the city council as a chance for the owners of the cars to see who can get the biggest cloud of smoke. The bricks will be wet down with water and then the drivers will lock the brakes and step on the gas, spinning the rear tires.

He said he plans to have the sheriff judge the event and see who makes the biggest cloud of smoke.

Thirty-two trophies will be given out at 4 p.m. Some are on exhibit in the window of Gold Home Planning Center.

From 5 to 7 p.m., the museum will hold a barbecued beef supper at the Bohemian Hall for \$5 a head.

The meal is included in the registration fee for those who bring cars. Money raised at the supper will benefit the museum.

All of the action for the car show won't happen on the street. Mrs. Marintzer said the museum plans to have some games for the kids and will be open for tours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tickets to the museum will be adults \$3 and kids \$1.50.

Mrs. Marintzer said the day is a good chance for people to get out and see a variety of cars and enjoy some family fun.

# Accidents keep cops hopping

The Oberlin Police Department were busy Saturday with three accidents.

The first occurred at 11:10 a.m. when Rochelle Mather, 46, Clayton, was backing her 1998 Dodge from the east side parking lot at the Frontier Restaurant and backed into a 1991 Ford Taurus.

The car, belonging to E.A. Smith of Oberlin, was parked on the side of the road.

There was damage to both vehicles, but no ticket was written.

At 2:25 p.m., Paul Jones, 26, of Salina was backing a 1996 GMC out of a private drive on West Sappa and hit a parked 1995 Chevy pickup. The truck belonged to Randy McHugh.

There was minor damage to both vehicles, and no ticket was written.

The last accident was reported at 5:16 p.m., said Police Chief Wade Lockhart. Kendal Carman of Dresden said someone hit his 1999 Corolla. Chief Lockhart said Mr. Carman said he thought the car was struck around 3 p.m. at Raye's Grocery.

There was damage to the left rear corner panel.

On May 23, Chief Lockhart said the department received a report of damage to the United Methodist Church on the corner of Commercial and Cass. Someone had broken the wings off an angel statue out front and damaged the front of the statue.

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Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Grade Completed in School \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Swim Level Passed \_\_\_\_\_

Session(s) Preferred:  
June 23-27    30-July 2    July 14-18, 21-23

Level: I	II	III	IV	V	VI
10:30	10:00	9:30	9:00	8:30	8:00

Paid: Check \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_  
Pass/Fail \_\_\_\_\_

Paid: Check \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_