

School board may have to raise taxes

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin School Board will decide on a resolution to raise taxes for the local option budget at its meeting Monday night because the state is paying less and the district is trying not to cut activities or teachers.

So far, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, the district has been able to take cost-savings measures that haven't cut activities or required a reduction in teachers. He says that may not be possible next year.

At the beginning of the year, though, all Kansas school districts took a hit when the

state cut the per-pupil budget base by \$7, leaving the base at \$3,863.

At the same time, the Oberlin district lost 51 students, which meant less money and a lower budget.

Mr. Glodt said he called administrators and department heads to a meeting after the first of the year to discuss cost-saving ideas. Some of those ideas have already gone into effect, and others will be discussed at the May meeting at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the district office.

All along, Mr. Glodt said, he has asked for the staff to brainstorm ideas and stay

involved in the cost-saving efforts.

He said he feels the district has a tremendous thing going for it because they have been able to keep teachers and programs while surrounding districts have not.

The thing is that the state is paying even less for next year. At the best, said Mr. Glodt, the state will pay the same per pupil next year that they are paying this year, but no one knows for sure. At any rate, Oberlin will start with a lower student count.

Although the district is getting less money, costs continue to climb, he added. All of the fixed costs, from property taxes,

to electricity, to gas to health insurance, are all going up. This year, the health insurance for the staff will jump 37 percent, or \$102,588 a year.

A committee is working on other options rather than signing up with Blue Cross/Blue Shield again, he said. Just for health insurance for the current employees, the district will pay \$418,200. The employee pays for their family.

Mr. Glodt said the committee is looking with other districts for preferred health insurance. They also will have a meeting at 3:30 p.m. Monday in the high school about

the state health insurance plan. He said the district doesn't renew with the current provider until Oct. 1.

The bottom line is, said Mr. Glodt, in order to function this year, the district has had to dive into the capital outlay and reserve funds more than ever before.

Teachers will only be allowed \$300 instead of \$500 for classroom supplies next year. Mr. Glodt said they can get by with \$300 for a year, but not longer, not in order to continue to give good-quality education.

One option is to increase the fee for (See MONEY on Page 5A)

Spotters improve training

Group learns of 'super cells'

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

More than 60 storm spotters learned some of the secrets about spotting big, dangerous "super cell" thunderstorms during an advanced training class Tuesday at The Gateway.

Warning Coordinator Meteorologist David Floyd said to "expect the unexpected when spotting."

The two-hour class reviewed some of the information from the basic class, but delved into new information too.

Mr. Floyd said storms need moisture that is the fuel, and moisture in the air is measured by the dew-point temperature. The higher the dew point, he said, the more moisture. When dew point starts getting to 40, people can start thinking about storms, he said. People usually start feeling the humidity at 60 and above.

Super cells are marked by rotation in the updraft column, the towering cloud that forms the body of the storm. A rotating storm usually gets started, he said, by picking up horizontal rotation along the ground produced by wind shear, basically, winds blowing different directions at different levels. The storm grows and what is seen on radar, said Mr. Floyd, is a rotating storm.

The column of rotating air, two to four miles across, creates an area of low pressure. Surrounding air rushes in to fill the void, fueling the storm's growth.

These storms, said Mr. Floyd, are those known to cause severe weather events. There are three kinds of super cells, the classic, where rain falls adjacent to the updraft, in front of the storm in the direct of movement; low precipitation where precipitation mostly is blown away from the updraft; and high precipitation, where precipitation falls around the updraft.

He said a wall cloud, which is what spotters generally look for, typically slopes down toward the rain. Some wall clouds rotate and others don't. If someone sees a persistent, rotating wall cloud, they need to call the weather station; they are very important.

The meteorologist said scientists are learning more about storms, "but it's really more about what we don't know."

One thing most basic classes don't cover, he said, is a phenomenon called rear flank down drafts, which are a second downdraft of air near the rear of the storm.

He said they typically come down the back side of the storm and may have rain mixed in. It appears that they are an important ingredient in the longevity of the storm and tornado formation of tornadoes, he said. Usually, this down draft is clear and may eat away the low clouds behind the storm.

Rear flank down drafts, said Mr. Floyd, may precede tornado formation by five to 10 minutes, while others are a sign of weakening of the storm.

Mr. Floyd said although supercell storms can produce tornadoes, they do not guarantee them. Only 10 to 15 percent of supercells produce tornadoes.

Meteorologists are studying to find out which storms will and won't produce tornadoes, he said, but the further they dig, they are finding (See CLASS on Page 10A)



YOUNGSTERS JOINED THE BAND Monday morning at Oberlin Elementary School. Colton Pauls and friends (above) played Mexican instruments with the Batista family. Milo and Loudres Batista (below) performed for the students. The family band travels and performs six months out of the year. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

Band plays at school

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Students at Oberlin Elementary School laughed, sang and danced Monday morning with a family band from Mexico.

The students even had a chance to see Superintendent Kelly Glodt and a select group of teachers dance and play traditional Latin American musical instruments at a lyceum with the Batista family from Sonora, Mexico, sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association.

The band Alborada is made up of a family of four members: Milo, the father, his wife Loudres, their 15-year-old son Paul and their 11-year-old daughter Jhonna.

The name Alborada, said Mr. Batista, means the early morning light and the beginning of a new day. The family uses more than 30 different instruments.

The Latin American folk music is dedicated to El Toro, the bull, he said.

Mr. Batista showed the students several instruments, including the big drum from Argentina made of



a wood cylinder and cow hide. There is also a small guitar from Bolivia called a charrango. The instrument, he said, is 350 years old and has 10 strings.

The older ones are made with an armadillo shell, but the new ones are made with one solid piece of wood and hand carved.

Mr. Batista asked 14 students

from the audience and six teachers, including the superintendent, to come play with the band. Each person received a percussion instrument.

The students and teachers had the chance to dance and play with Alborada.

The band has played in 42 states at more than 1,000 schools. Mr.

Batista said this is their last performance of the year, so they will return home to Mexico.

The family tours for about half of the year. While touring, he tutors the kids, since it is really important for them to be educated.

The family will stay at their home in Mexico until about September, and start touring again.

Sheriff's department back down to two

The Decatur County sheriff's office will stay with two men until someone can be hired to replace a deputy who was fired last month.

Sheriff Ken Badsky told commissioners at their meeting last Tuesday morning that he and Deputy Mark Dahlsten had reached a mutual agreement that the deputy wouldn't work for the department anymore.

Sheriff Badsky said the deputy was fired. He was to get paid through April.

Deputy Dahlsten has been on medical leave since before the new year for knee surgery.

Sheriff Badsky said in mid April, Deputy Dahlsten returned to work and was helping Undersheriff Randy McHugh with truck inspections. He was let go on Monday, April 14.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch asked if the deputy would be around for a trial in May. Sheriff Badsky said he had been subpoenaed for it.

Undersheriff McHugh is back to full-time work, the sheriff said. He is now part of a fire fighting unit with the national guard, said Sheriff Badsky, so will stay here unless a big fire starts and the unit is needed.

Sheriff Badsky did not give a reason why Deputy Dahlsten was fired. He did say that he won't be doing anything about replacing him immediately.

He and Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy have talked about hiring someone together to work part-time for both departments.

The two department heads talked with Mr. Hirsch, who said he didn't see any problem with them sharing a person.

Mr. Pomeroy and Mr. Badsky said they would each pay half of the salary, although Mr. Pomeroy said

he didn't know if he could have anyone working for him on salary or if it would have to be by the hour. The sheriff said he thought it would cost \$30,000 for pay, \$15,000 from each department.

Commissioner Doyle Brown asked if the men had anyone in mind. Sheriff Badsky said he would like to have a good female officer, since there are a lot of times they need a female on the force.

Mr. Pomeroy said they would need someone with a good back to lift and rattled off some other requirements.

City looks at bonds

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin City council talked with the economic development marketing director Thursday night about issuing industrial revenue bonds to help a company that has purchased Oberlin Milling and the elevator in Cedar Bluffs.

Director Connie Grafel said Hansen-Mueller Grain, an Omaha-based company, bought the two elevators and asked about any incentives available for a new business, including industrial revenue bonds. She said the company doesn't know how much money it will take to rehabilitate the elevators.

She said Hansen-Mueller is asking for a motion of intent for the bonds. The company plans to hire five people to work at the facilities.

The company, said Ms. Grafel, is also asking for tax abatement on the property, which is appraised now at \$79,000.

She said the firm is also looking at a private source for the bonds, because if they go through the city their business information will be public.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he didn't think the city had ever issued industrial revenue bonds, although the county recently issued some for Wheat Ridge Terrace.

The city is not obligated to pay the bonds, he said. It is not city or taxpayer money being used; they are just asking the city to issue the bonds so they can get a lower interest rate.

The city can issue the industrial revenue bonds for a facility outside its limits, said Mr. Hirsch, like the Cedar Bluffs elevator, but they have to have approval from the county.

If the council decides to go ahead with this, said Mr. Hirsch, it will need to hold a series of hearings on what, if any, tax breaks the company may get.

The downside to the bonds is more political than anything else, he said. Competitors may ask why the other company is getting a tax break and the business already in town is not.

In the resolution of intent, said Mr. Hirsch, the city has to say what tax abatement the company will get.

Council members said they would like more discussion, research and possibly a representative (See COMPANY on Page 10A)

Prom parade Saturday

Students at Decatur Community High School will be getting out their finest Saturday to strut their stuff downtown before the annual prom.

Juniors and seniors will march in the traditional promenade at 7 p.m., walking down Main Street to show their best to parents, family and friends who line the streets.

Afterwards, they will head to The Gateway for a banquet and dancing. The prom will last until midnight and then the Oberlin Rotary Club will take over for after-prom, which will go until 3:30 a.m.

People may view The Gateway from 6 to 7 p.m. The theme this year is Mardi Gras.

Memories and photos



WITH HER BOOK OPEN, Molly Green Lasiter, 5, spent some time Saturday morning during National Scrapbook Day to look at pictures. Over 40 people got together at The Gateway to work on their scrapbooks, buy new supplies and have lunch.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

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* Class teaches spotters

(Continued from Page 1A)

they have to keep digging.

With that said, he said supercells can't be ignored, but tornadoes don't have to have those storms to form.

There are also landspouts and waterspouts that start from the bottom up and can do damage.

There are a lot of times when rotating winds call gustnadoes are reported as tornadoes, but with them there is no connection to the cloud base and they are basically just dirt rotating, but they can contain some high winds.

Mr. Floyd said there are three things that a storm needs to form a tornado: a persistent updraft, a rear flank down draft that isn't too cold and an enhanced low-level wind shear, basically a boundary or eddy along the ground.

Boundaries often can't be seen by radar, but can be felt by a change in temperature of maybe 10 to 15 degrees, change in dew point, wind shifts, low level clouds and cloud layers moving in different directions.

There are 100,000 thunderstorms in the United States every year, said Mr. Floyd. Of those, 10 percent are severe, and of those 10 percent produce tornadoes, or about 1,000 storms.

The audience was given a chance to fill out a storm spotter card, to become a spotter with the National Weather Service office in Goodland, which sponsored the class.

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* Company seeks tax break

(Continued from Page 1A)

from the company to tell them their plans for the elevators.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy moved to table the decision.

Ms. Grafel said she was told the decision has to be made within 60 days after the purchase of the property, which was in the first part of April.

Mayor Ken Shobe said he didn't think anyone was ready to vote that night. One of the company's attorneys will be in town today, said Ms. Grafel.

Mayor Shobe said he wouldn't mind hearing some public comment on the idea, too. The council agreed to table the proposal, putting off a decision.

Added: Not many days until Mother's Day Shop Now

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Lights to honor victims

Luminaries to honor those who have cancer or died from the disease are on sale for the second annual Decatur County Relay for Life, which is a month away.

At the first relay last June, 520 luminaries lighted the inside of the track at Decatur Community High School. Throughout the evening, names of those on the luminaries were read aloud.

The relay committee has set a goal to light not only the inside lane of the track, but the outside this year.

"Keep the fire of hope burning by purchasing a luminary candle in memory of someone lost to cancer," said Committee Member Peg Smith, "in honor of someone fighting, or in special recognition of someone who has beaten the dreaded disease."

The luminaries cost \$10 apiece and the money will be used for cancer research. To purchase a luminary, contact Ms. Smith at 475-2296 or mail in the order form on page 8A. The form needs to be mailed to Peg Smith, Luminary Chairperson, Box 305, Oberlin, Kansas 67749. All luminary orders need to be in by Friday, May 30.



AT THE FAIRGROUNDS, Commissioner Doyle Brown and Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman pointed to where the horse arena will be located.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

County increases aid to arena

After some discussion Tuesday morning, Decatur County commissioners decided to change a motion from the week before to allow more dirt work to be done to put a horse arena just south of the fairground.

At the previous meeting, commissioners agreed for the county to do \$500 worth of dirt work if the horse group had \$500 already collected.

Kimberly Brandt, managing editor of *The Oberlin Herald*, said she wanted to know how the commissioners were going to answer the question of why the county gave

more to the race track than to the horse arena. She said the county donated \$8,000 in dirt work money to start the track and then a final \$1,000 to finish it.

Building the auto track forced the horse arena to move to a new location.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the county didn't pay for half of the race track to be built.

The commissioners talked about when the race track was started, the agreement was that the horse arena would be put back in and mentioned

that the group had in a way been pushed out of its spot.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said if the group comes up with the first \$500, he didn't see a problem with the county finishing the dirt work, but the county won't put the fence panels up. The county does a lot of things for a lot of different groups, he said, without paying very much notice to it. The horse arena has to do with the young people in the county and does bring people in.

A motion was made for the county to finish the dirt work after the group comes up with the \$500. Commissioner Brown and Chairwoman Pat Glenn voting in favor of it. Commissioner Unger did not voice a vote.

* Money tight in school district

(Continued from Page 1A)
lunches and breakfasts. For the last 16 months, he said, the district has had to subsidize the food service \$8,000 a month.

There may be some added fees on consumable materials for the students. For instance, there may be a \$5 technology fee.

Another option the board will discuss is passing a resolution to increase the local option budget, which is at 13.11 percent of the total general fund budget now. The highest it can go is 25 percent, said Mr. Glodt.

If the board increases it, property taxes will go up. The superintendent said he isn't going to suggest going to 25 percent because there is no where to go from there.

Mr. Glodt mentioned 5 percent, but didn't say that was the recommendation he will make.

There are two kinds of resolutions the board can adopt, he said. The first sets up the local option budget for a certain amount of time. The second sets it up in a permanent resolution which would allow the board to increase it to the maximum of 25 percent.

People may not realize the money problems the schools are having, he said, but the situation is growing tighter.

"The biggest reason the general public doesn't understand the financial difficulties our school is in is because we continue with less money to put out a great product," said Mr. Glodt.

So far, he said, the students aren't suffering. If the district has to cut programs or teachers, though, test scores will drop. Right now, the district is just trying to get rid of any frills, he said, without jeopardizing the quality of education.

Mr. Glodt said either way, the people are going to feel the burden, with higher taxes either locally or to the state.

The state, he said, isn't trying to solve its money problems; they are just trying to divert them.

One thing that everyone has to keep in mind, said Board Clerk Vickie Lippelmann, is that the school is not a business that makes money, or like a child who receives an allowance. The district has to use the money wisely.

City sells six trees; 44 still available

Six of the 50 trees the Oberlin Tree Commission purchased are spoken for, leaving 44 still up for grabs.

Gary Walter, a member of the commission, talked with the Oberlin City Council about the trees at a meeting Thursday night. He said far fewer trees had been taken than the members of the commission thought would be by this time.

He said he felt there was a misunderstanding about the cost of the trees. The bur oaks cost \$82, prairie fire crab apple are \$69 and the linden are \$90.

Another misunderstanding was the size of the trees, which are about an inch and a quarter in diameter.

The group had to approve where the trees can be planted so they won't cause problems in the future. For example, said Mr. Walter, none of the bur oaks can be planted under power lines.

The commission purchased a tree to be put in the park to replace the one that was taken out, said Mr. Walter. It will be planted at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Mr. Walter said that Extension Agent Byron Hale tells him homeowners have about a three-week window to get the trees planted.

Of the trees that have not been taken, he said, 15 are being set aside to be planted on the right-of-way on

Cass Avenue. Those 15 trees will be held until Friday.

After that, he said, it will be open to anyone. Members have asked that the trees be planted on the city right of way, but after Friday they can be planted anywhere. People still have to fill out an application.

If the trees aren't purchased, the group has discussed planting them at the new section of the city cemetery.

The trees are in the substation by the city power plant for anyone who wants to see them.

To request a tree, call Mr. Hale at 475-8121 or stop in the extension office on the first floor of the courthouse.

Cardinal Cafe in Norcatatur closes once again

Rod and Marcella Mathill, who took over the operation of the Cardinal Cafe in Norcatatur a little over a year ago, closed the business on April 30.

The couple and their children,

Jessica, 11 and Nick, 9, moved to the area from Colorado after he accepted a position at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch. Shortly after the move, they were offered the opportunity to lease the community-

owned cafe.

Mr. Mathill went back to work at the ranch and Mrs. Mathill will be working as an advertising representative for *The Norton Telegram*.

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