

# Highway group dedicates bridge over Republican

After dedicating a new \$8.59 million bridge across the Republican River west of Scandia, U.S. 36 Highway Association members approved a windmill promotion which they hope will draw traffic to the northern Kansas route.

Meeting June 13 at the Scandia Community Center, the association also discussed a feasibility study which would look into the possibility of developing U.S. 36 into a four-lane highway.

They heard reports about current U.S. 36 construction and maintenance by district engineers from the Kansas Department of Transportation. In addition, a report about highway financing was presented during the lunch hour by Jim McLean, a special assistant to Transportation Secretary Deb Miller.

Mr. McLean said the department was a little behind on money with the continuing state budget crisis, but the secretary thinks they can complete the core projects in the current highway plan. The agency is operating with a \$447 million deficit in the 10-year program at present, he said, and a larger deficit would cause problems.

"Next year is decision time," Mr. McLean said. "If you support the highway program, legislators need to hear from you now."

Next year is the year when Kansas will determine whether the present road program continues, he said.

President Steve Haynes of Oberlin led the dedication ceremony near the east approach to the new concrete bridge as a crowd of about 100 people watched.

The group heard brief remarks by Second District Engineer Donald Drickey of Salina, who said "this was a much-needed project, in our estimation."

State Sen. Janis Lee of Kensington praised Governors Mike Hayden and Bill Graves for developing the state's highway program, and thanked transportation officials for their work and dedication.

The U.S. 36 bridge was completed in the fall and is in use. Traffic is traveling across it as Sen. Lee cut the ceremonial ribbon. Then members and guests enjoyed a steak dinner at Scandia Community Center.

Rep. Jerry Moran intended to be present for the bridge dedication, but missed the ceremony because of an airport flight delay.

State officials present included Sen. Lee, a Democrat from Kensington, and Reps. Clay Aurand of Courtland, John Faber of Brewster, and Sharon Schwarz of Washington, all Republicans.

During their afternoon meeting, association members decided to move forward in promoting the highway as a route of windmills. This idea was suggested by Smith Center Mayor Larry Brown during the U.S. 36 fall meeting in Smith Center.

As chairman of the windmill committee, Penny Zeller of Seneca suggested a slogan, "Ride the Wind on U.S. 36... Travel the Trail of the Windmills."

The group approved her suggestion of signs carrying this message, with markers along the route wherever windmills are located. They will incorporate a picture of a windmill and the U.S. 36 shield logo.

Cy Moyer of Phillipsburg said he had researched the cost of large signs at the Missouri and Colorado borders which would invite travelers to take the road. The group authorized him to proceed with one or two 8-by-20-foot signs carrying the windmill theme at a cost of \$2,000 to \$2,500 each.

Mayor Brown reported information about a six-county Highway 50 expressway study that was completed in the area around Dodge City and Garden City. He learned that the commissioners of six counties in that area had paid the \$42,000 cost of that study.

President Haynes said the U.S. 36 Highway Association should move ahead with a four-lane feasibility study for their route across northern Kansas.

With extremely heavy traffic on Interstate 80 to the north, he pointed out, many travelers are searching for a less-congested route and U.S. 36 could benefit from that.

In addition, he said the people of northern Kansas deserve better roads.

While no money would be available for some time, Mr. Haynes said this study should be completed and presented to the state so that U.S. 36 would be in line for funds in the future.

Mr. Haynes urged the directors to find active members for the association's board. The group also heard and discussed an idea for a 400-mile garage sale along their Kansas route, which could draw a great deal of traffic.

The current officers were re-elected. They include Jim Erickson of Scandia, who organized the Friday meeting, vice-president; Mr. Moyer of Phillipsburg, executive vice-president; and Bonnie Youngquist of Kensington, secretary.

Next fall's board meeting will be hosted by Phillipsburg, and the 2004 annual spring meeting is scheduled at Hanover.

## Making cool treats



**HARD AT WORK**, Leah Marietta made a shake at Addleman Drug Store's soda fountain. The fountain is open only for the summer. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

## Petition OK'd Thursday

The Decatur County election officer has certified a petition to force an election on an increase in school taxes approved by the Oberlin School Board in May.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who is also the election officer, said she received the petition with 172 signatures. Only about 100 qualified electors were needed to require the election.

After receiving the petition, Mrs. Horn and employees had to check the names, addresses and signatures. Organizers had brought in the first few pages of names earlier and then brought in the last names on Thursday.

Mrs. Horn said she has sent a letter to the Oberlin School Board notifying the board of the petition. If the board wants to still increase the local option budget, using property taxes paid by people living in the district, it will have to go to an election.

## U.S. 36 group hears project reports

The U.S. Highway 36 Association heard reports from highway officials about projects along the route during its annual meeting last week in Scandia.

Roy Rissky of Topeka, district engineer in Topeka for the Kansas Department of Transportation, highlighted U.S. 36 projects in northeastern Kansas.

The largest is a \$45 million project at Marysville, now under way, which includes a new bridge over the railroad and the Blue River. This is a cooperative venture between the state, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The rail line there carries 70 to 80 long trains a day, and this has resulted in major delays for U.S. 36 traffic. The project includes levee work and moving the railroad tracks.

Mr. Rissky described seven other projects which are planned between Marysville and the Missouri state line. These involve interchanges, new road alignments, grade separations, overlay work, and a four-lane section from Troy to Wathena.

The District 2 report for north-central Kansas was presented by District Engineer Donald Drickey of Salina.

Mr. Drickey described a \$4.6 million project covering 6.4 miles west

of Mankato in Jewell County. It includes surface rehabilitation, spot grading, and replacing the Limestone creek bridge.

Another Jewell County project will be 9 miles of surface rehabilitation east of Mankato's city limit at a cost of \$4.89 million. A third project includes curb and gutter, storm sewer and inlets at Mankato, 0.25 mile long and costing \$189,628.

Washington County projects include overlay and bituminous seal from about one mile west of the U.S. 36/K-148 junction to the Washington/Marshall County line, and seal from the east edge of Washington to the vicinity of the U.S. 36/K-148 junction.

Next year, Mr. Drickey said, the department would resurface the west end of the four-lane highway west of Marysville, lay 1-inch overlay in Washington County, and fill ruts on the highway into Washington.

The northwest Kansas report was given by District Engineer Chriss B. McDiffett of Norton. The 2003 projects include the replacement of the Norton railroad bridge at a cost of \$5.6 million, and overlay from West Street in Norton to the east county line.

Projects for 2004 include seal from the west junction of K-27 to its

east junction through St. Francis, a seal from the west Decatur County line to Oberlin; and a major modification from the west junction of K-383 into Norton.

Mr. McDiffett added that little was planned for Phillips and Smith counties, as that stretch of highway has received overlays in recent years. He pointed out that, in Smith County, the state has helped plant highway windbreaks in partnership with landowners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The sources of state highway funds were listed by Mr. McDiffett—with the major income being 32.1 percent from the fuels tax, 22.2 percent from federal funds, 11 percent from vehicle registrations, 9.2 percent from the sales tax, and lesser amounts from other sources.

President Steve Haynes recalled that the U.S. 36 Association board met with Colorado highway officials about five years ago. Since then, he said, Colorado has and rebuilt the highway all the way to Last Chance.

"They've done a section every year, and have done a good job for us," Mr. Haynes added. "There are more Kansas tags than Colorado tags on that road."

He noted that most of U.S. 36 in Missouri has been converted to four

lanes, with the exception of a 65-mile gap. No report was available for the Illinois section of the highway.

The federal highway situation was described by Brian Low, a new federal highway official in Topeka. He said recently traveled U.S. 36 and reported lots of resurfacing in Illinois. He noted that the Hannibal-to-Macon section in Missouri was not good; and said Kansas was ahead of Missouri in repairing roads.

Mr. Low described the problems that Congress faces in funding highway work, and added that federal funds make up about 30 percent of the Kansas highway budget. Safety is the highest federal priority, he said. A highway isn't guaranteed more funds because it is a part of the Federal Highway System, he added.

Sen. Janis Lee reported that the Kansas Legislature has a strong dedication to transportation, and felt that highway funding was OK. The demands for education and Medicaid funds have increased, she said, and this has hurt other programs.

With declining state revenues, there is competition for highway dollars, Sen. Lee pointed out, but the Legislature has a dedication to transportation. She hopes these problems will be alleviated by a rebound in the economy.

## Three people arrested after fight here

Four people were taken into custody and three were arrested after a fight in the 100 block of North Elk last Saturday night.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said a call came in around 10:12 p.m. that there was a fight in progress at the apartments. He said four people ap-

parently went to the apartment, an argument started and a punch was thrown.

The victim, Michael Musgrave, 21, was dragged out of his apartment, said Chief Lockhart.

At times, two of the individuals involved allegedly were beating on

him at once.

Three adults Jerry Farr, 43, Eric Farr, 18, and Nicole Horacek, 21 were arrested. A juvenile was taken into custody and then released.

Jerry and Eric Farr have been charged with misdemeanor battery

and Ms. Horacek has been charged with misdemeanor battery, criminal restraint and conspiracy to commit battery.

Chief Lockhart said Mr. Musgrave received minor injuries and bruises.

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