

County to buy an ambulance

Decatur County commissioners agreed to purchase a new Lifeline ambulance for \$98,300 after looking at a 2003 demonstrator at the meeting last Tuesday morning.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy brought Larry Kness of Rocky Mountain Vehicles to the meeting. Mr. Kness said the company sells both Lifeline and AV ambulances.

Mr. Kness said he decided to bring a Lifeline here for the crew and commissioners to see.

Mr. Pomeroy said he went over everything in the demonstrator and made a list of everything else he would like included. He asked for chains for the wheels, a CD player, a wall mounted cellular phone, three new flow meters, a dry erase board and a catch for the cot in the back.

He said the ambulance is a Ford 450 and rides well.

The Lifeline ambulance, said Mr. Kness, has a lifetime structural warranty as long as the county owns it. The AV ambulance has a 15-year warranty. There is also a seven-year

warranty on electrical work.

Commissioner Ralph Unger asked which the company sells more of. Mr. Kness said the Lifeline. Over a 10-year period, said Mr. Kness, the Lifeline will cost the county less to operate than the AV.

Mr. Pomeroy said he liked how quiet it was inside the ambulance and the way it handles. One of the things he said he didn't like about it was how it traveled at the top speed of 85 miles an hour. He said he thought the governor chip can be changed and it may help.

The commissioners went down to look at the ambulance and later approved the purchasing of the truck.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard a woman from Norton County will be over to help Mr. Pomeroy with the Medicare billings. He said Norton County gets back 80 percent of what they bill.
- Received the go ahead to get the \$600 worth of supplies to build the cabinets for the ambulance barn.

City hires company to clear out sludge

The Oberlin City Council hired a Colorado contractor to clean out the east holding pond at the waste water plant.

City Foreman Dan Castle told the council at the Thursday, June 18, meeting that the pond is full to the top. The city crew has been hauling sludge to any farmer who'll take it.

Mr. Castle said the city will have a problem when the weather is bad or the truck breaks down and the sludge can't be hauled. Then there will be no place to put the sludge with the full holding pond.

His recommendation was to clean out the east pond at a cost of \$33,000. Mr. Castle said he received a bid from Liquid Waste Management Inc., out of Longmont, Colo. The company told him they can come out here this summer and clean the pond in two days.

There are two ways to apply the sludge once it is taken out of the pond, he said. The first is on the surface, but if you spread it south of town, with the south winds, people might notice the smell. The other way, said Mr. Castle, is to spend some extra money and inject it into the ground. That was the way he said he wanted to go.

The sludge in the south holding pond, said City Administrator Gary Shike, is dead and sealed. That can wait until the plant has to be renovated in a few years, but if the city gets into a severe weather situation with the east pond being full, water will be coming back into the plant or the pond will run over.

If the pond is cleaned out, asked Councilman Jay Anderson, will it last until the city works on the plant? Mr. Castle said it would, but the city will have to hire someone again to clean out the ponds to comply with the state requirements.

Is purchasing a truck to chisel the sludge into the ground an option the city should look at? asked Council-

man Joe Stanley. Mr. Shike said he doesn't know if, under government regulations, it can be done that way after 2005.

This is something the last council thought they were going to have to deal with before the election, said Councilman Stan McEvoy. He said his concern was finding the \$33,000. Mr. Shike said the money would come out of the electric fund.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy suggested just taking out half the sludge, which would cost less. Mr. Shike said he talked about that with Mr. Castle. Taking half would give the city some cushion.

Mayor Ken Shobe said just for the company to come here it is a \$4,000 mobilization fee, so that would have to be paid twice.

The council agreed to do the whole project with the subsurface application.

Most to close for holiday

Most Oberlin businesses will be closed on Friday for the Fourth of July, including city, county, state and federal offices, the Decatur County Museum, Daylight Donuts, the Decatur County Landfill, financial institutions and *The Oberlin Herald*.

Daylight Donuts also will be closed on Saturday.

The LandMark Inn will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday for lunch. The Frontier Restaurant, A&W, Oberlin Sinclair, Crossroads Express, Pizza Hut, Meadowlark Grill, Dollar General and Ampride will be open regular hours. Raye's Grocery will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.



AT THE SAPPA CREEK WRITER'S RETREAT Saturday, Susan May (above) took notes while Merlou

Robinson (below) talked to about 18 women at the annual seminar. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

Writers get juices going at day retreat

The creative juices in 18 women started pumping Saturday as they took part in the Sappa Creek Writers Retreat at the Oberlin Covenant Church.

Barbara Dehlinger, co-organizer with Merlou Robinson, said the event is sponsored by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission, although the two women put everything together.

This is the sixth year the women have put on the event, she said. This year, they talked about ambiguity and paradox. They discussed things in their lives like this and then practiced a stream of consciousness kind of writing.

Mrs. Dehlinger said the other thing they worked with were the senses. With this activity, they did fun things like blindfolding each other and then touching objects. Then they had to write by using their senses.

They also had to describe one sense by using another one, like hearing butterflies.

"We do all kinds of different writing activities," she said. "Ac-

tually, what we do is not how to write something, but more to stimulate the juices of creativity to lead to wherever they may go."

Those juices carry over into other forms of art, not just writing, said Mrs. Dehlinger, adding that what they are doing is writing off the cuff. It isn't edited.

The day lasts from 9 a.m. to around 4:30 p.m., depending on the group. She said the day ended with the group writing about wholeness and what that means.

The retreat pulled in women of all ages, from high school to 80 years old. They came from Oberlin, Jennings, Atwood, McCook, St. Francis and one from Cuba, east of Belleville.

"Every year, we think that if we get 10 people it is a good group," she said. "After that, it is all icing on the cake."

The day costs each woman \$35, which pays for a continental breakfast, lunch and a book.

Mrs. Dehlinger said what the fee doesn't cover, Arts and Humanities picks up.



Students score high on battery of tests

The Oberlin School Board heard that test results from the grade and high schools this year were mostly well above the national averages.

Counselor Sheila Jansonius said at a meeting Monday, June 9, that students in the grade school take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills each year.

The school has a greater percentage of students in the high range than the national average, she said. Some teachers were concerned about individual scores, but as for each class and as a school, the numbers are strong.

Those students who had lower numbers or whom teachers had concerns, said Mrs. Jansonius, are al-

ready receiving some help.

High School Counselor Nita Lavielle went over the numbers from the college admissions tests for seniors to the Explore test given to eighth graders.

The admissions test, known as the ACT, is for seniors, but open to juniors, too. This year 35 students were tested. The mean score was 22.1 with the national mean at 21.

Mrs. Lavielle said it was impressive to see these students' test numbers because 10 of them scored high, between 26 and 36 points, nine in the high average range, 13 in the low average and three in the low range.

Ten students finishing in the high

range, she said, is a record since she started working for the district.

Juniors are also able to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, which is the National Merit Scholarship qualifying test. Twenty-four juniors were tested this fall. The mean score for verbal was 50.4 and math 52.7.

Mrs. Lavielle said no students were commended or received recognition from the National Merit program for the scores.

One-fifth of the students scored above the 90th percentile and three-fourths were above the 50th percentile. There weren't any above the 98th or 96th percentile, however

The PLAN test, which is given to sophomores, formerly was the pre ACT test. Mrs. Lavielle said the students scored a mean of 18.5, two points above the national mean.

One student scored above the 99th percentile, she said, and a third were about the 90th percentile.

The last test given is the Explore, which is for eighth graders. The students had a local mean of 17.5, with the national mean at 14.7.

Mrs. Lavielle said three-fourths of the students scored in the 50 percentile, half were in the 75th percentile, four scored about the 90th percentile and two scored at the 99th percentile.

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