Supporters out working on election

Chief worries he'll have to let teachers go next year

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Supporters of the Oberlin School District have been busy putting up signs in favor of the local option budget increase and trying to get information out to the voters for the election later this month.

Many of the white signs asking people to vote for kids and the local option budget have been stuck in yards around Oberlin.

Part of the preparing for the election, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, was writing a very tough letter to the staff. In the past, he said, he has had the unpleasant job of terminating teachers who aren't competent, but he has never had to let good teachers go.

Mr. Glodt said even if the increase passes, he doesn't know if the 5 percent the district is asking for is enough to let it keep all the teachers. It may only cover the fixed costs, like utilities and insurance, depending on what they can find in health

Mr. Glodt said the increase gives the district the authority to increase its total budget 5 percent, but if the district doesn't need that much, then they won't collect it. There may be a year in the next five where the district only needs 3 percent, he said, and that is all that will be collected.

The superintendent said he has assured teachers that before he starts to cut staff, he will go back to the public and ask for more money. That decision apparently will be at least

Meetings next week

The Oberlin School District will be holding two informational meetings about the upcoming election on its plan to increase the local option bud-

The first meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday night in the Decatur Community High School auditorium. The second is planned for 7 p.m. next Wednesday at the Norcatur City Office in the old school building.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said he has put together a presentation about the need for the tax increase for the schools and will be able to answer questions. The election will be Tuesday, July 29.

Mr. Glodt said he also will talk about the election at 10 a.m. today on KFNF Radio.

Everyone is invited to the public meetings.

a year away.

With the exception of a few assistant football coaches whose jobs have been eliminated and not replacing a sixth-grade teacher at the grade school, everyone will have a (See JOBS on Page 8A)

City Council looks at \$2 to \$3 million for new sewer plant

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin City Council talked with the city's engineers last Thursday night about plans for a new waste water treatment plant, which will cost \$2 to \$3 million.

The city has no choice but to make changes at the plant, said City Administrator Gary Shike, because the old plant can't meet strict new state regulations. Although the city has a permit on the plant that is good for the next four years, the project must be completed by 2005, which is why the planning has already started.

The council talked about ways to pay for the project, including a loan through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Administration. That might force monthly rates to jump from the current \$10.75 median to between \$18 and \$24 to bring in enough to repay

the loan.

Thaniel Monaco and Chris Miller, engineers with Miller and Associates from McCook, talked with the council last Thursday at The Gateway. Their report included the history of the project, what the Kansas

Department of Health and Environment expects and some of the situations the city can expect to come up.

In 1966, the report says, the city upgraded the plant, and then in 1978 there were additional improvements. The facility is rated for a population of 4,500, and the treated effluent flows into Sappa Creek.

The state and the federal Environmental Protection Agency have been tightening up standards for water treatment. Since January 1997, the report says, the plant has exceeded the state limit for biochemical oxygen demand seven

The state permit for the plant was last renewed Aug. 1 and is valid through July 31, 2007.

Regulations say that the highest amount allowed in the summer for ammonia concentrate was 3.1 milligrams per liter of water and in the winter 9.4 milligrams per liter. Between January 1997 and last month, the limit was 14.2 milligrams per liter. There would have been over 70 violations on ammonia since 1997

(See SEWER on Page 8A)



SHE MAY BE TOO YOUNG for make-up, but Satur- Kyte (below right) learned how to make a balloon animal. day afternoon at the Under the Big Top summer camp, Erin Sammie Anderson (below left) worked on a mask made May (above) had her chance to paint her face and Aunt out of a white paper plate. Pam's arm while mom Susan, the clown, held her. Sara

Youngsters have fun

under the big top at summer camp

Balloon animals, silly masks and face paints filled Saturday afternoon for 20 kids who took part in the Under the Big Top summer day camp

The camp, sponsored by the Stick-To-It and Sappa Valley 4-H clubs, brought in kids, ages 7-11, from all over the county.

Cheryl Soderlund, with Stick-To-It, said they talked about having a day camp at 4-H Council but no other groups were interested, so her group asked the Sappa Valley Club to go in on one.

She said the idea wasn't to raise money, but to give kids a chance to hang around with others for an afternoon this summer.

The camp was held at the 4-H building at Decatur County Fairgrounds. Each of the kids was able to learn how to make a balloon animal from County Extenan animal mask out of a paper have some kind of face painting



Some of the requested designs were hearts, butterflies and a really large green lizard which covered one young man's forearm.

The afternoon cost \$3 a child and the volunteers fed them supsion Agent Byron Hale, to make per before they were sent home. Mrs. Soderlund said the kids had plate and construction paper and hot dogs, grapes, carrots, chips and freeze pops.

The camp lasted from 3 to 6 p.m.

- Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

125th Year, Number 29

oan fund helped seven county businesses

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

Decatur County has loaned out \$90,000 of \$100,000 it got from a Community Development Block Grant in the fall of 2000 to make "micro loans," creating eight jobs and helping start or expand seven businesses.

Marketing Director Connie Grafel of the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. said of the \$100,000, 10 percent went to the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission for administration fees.

In February, the county received an extension so they could loan out

the rest of the money this year. Ms. Grafel said over the course of the 2 1/2 years, the money has been loaned to several businesses throughout the county to help them either start or expand.

The businesses include:

- Beaver Creek Kennels in Cedar Bluffs for LizAnn and Jeff Fortin for \$15,000 to help retain four jobs.
- Edgerton Automotive for \$15,000 to expand the business.
- Gorman Tarps for Robert and Robyn Rouse for \$15,000 to start up
- Red Apple in Jennings for Sarah Coiner for \$10,000 to expand and

create another job.

•E&S Meats in Jennings for Elton and Sonya Gillespie for \$9,925 to start up a business for value-added agriculture.

\$15,000 to start a business.

• Jennings Grocery Store for Lynn Baker for \$10,000.

All of the businesses are open and paying back the loan money, she said, except the Jennings Grocery Store. The county already has \$12,829 in the revolving loan account. Mrs. Baker filed bankruptcy, said Ms. Grafel, and she said she

didn't think all of that loan will be

paid back. The county can loan out money now, she said, but most people want to borrow the maximum, which is • H&B Construction for Brian \$15,000. Start-up businesses are Hileman and Jerry Bishop for fragile because they don't have capital. Mostly they are nickel-anddiming it all the way, she said.

> Maybe if banks see this as a success, she added, they will be more willing to take these risks.

These micro loans have been around for a while, said Ms. Grafel. Graham and Trego counties have had them longer than Decatur.

(See LOANS on Page 8A)

New program to monitor computer use

The Oberlin School District recently got a new filter program for school computers which allows teachers to block student access to categories like violence, sex, nudity, drugs, alcohol and pornography.

Technology Coordinator Jess Randel said the schools have had filters since he started in 2001, but this program is more aggressive and not only blocks certain things, but tells who is trying to get into the

Mr. Randel said the schools have to have filters on the computers in order to get E-rate funding, a federal program offering discounts on technology purchases. He said he feels like there is too much for kids to get into for there not to be filters.

Filter law doesn't apply here

The U.S. Supreme Court rethe public to block pornography and other undesired content, but the law apparently doesn't apply to the Oberlin City Library.

The court upheld a 2000 federal cently ruled that libraries must law which says that public librarhave filters on their computers for ies must install filters on computers the public uses so that pornography can't seen in a library. The idea is to protect children, but (See LIBRARY on Page 8A)

The filter program, he said, is attached to the firewall and runs off the server, so anyone who uses the allow the district to set up a time system and goes into the Internet is

pushed through. The district got the filter through Websense, to which they have a subscription that costs \$1,000 to \$1,500 time.

per year.

The other thing the filter does is limit for entertainment pages. Mr. Randel said he feels the Internet is good for the kids but he doesn't want them on entertainment pages all the

The new filter is installed and at this time everyone is the same when they log into the system. This summer, he said, he would like to set it up so that the teachers have a little bit more leeway.

The filter doesn't block everything, said Mr. Randel, especially some porn companies that have changed their names to get around

Mr. Randel said beside the filters. the schools have an Internet policy. If a student is caught doing something they aren't suppose to with one of the computers, there are consequences, including detention after school or losing the privilege to use the school computers.

(See FILTERS on Page 8A)

City residents asked to cut water useage Mayor Ken Shobe declared a The city will monitor its own

water watch at the City Council meeting last Thursday night, meaning that the city is asking people to cut excess water use.

He said the city hit 1.162 million gallons of water pumped per day recently. At this time there aren't any water restrictions, but the city hopes people will cut back on water use.

The goal of the water watch is education, he said. He suggested residents check the daily water usage on local access cable Channel 7, and try to cut back.

use, he said. During the watch, the city asks people to curtail their outdoor usage, and be efficient with indoor water. He said that means doing full loads of wash, taking shorter showers and making sure that drippy faucets are fixed. The city asked that people not

water the sidewalk, and only run sprinklers when it is cooler.

The trigger for a water warning is 1.3 million gallons a day. If water use gets there, restrictions will be put in place.

(Continued from Page 1A) f the current rules had been in place.

The limit, said Mr. Monaco, for fecal coliform bacteria in the water is 2,000 colonies per hundred milliliters and the average for the months between August and last month is 202,900, more than 100 times the

ways it could upgrade the plant either build another mechanical plant, which would cost more to run, or a lagoon system, which would cost more to build.

The mechanical plant will cost anywhere from \$50,000 to \$60,000 more to run each year than a lagoon system, he said, but with a lagoon system the city wouldn't have to treat for bacteria or ammonia.

Councilman Jay Anderson asked which plant would be out of date in 25 years. Mr. Monaco said right now he has concerns about discharging

The council heard about options for disinfection of the waste water, including chlorine/sulfur dioxide, sodium hypochlorite/sodium bisulfite and ultraviolet disinfec-

Disinfection, said Mr. Monaco, is just for the fecal coliform and is the

last thing the plant will do before the effluent enters the creek from a discharging lagoon.

They might be able to line the lagoons with soil, said Mr. Monaco. Depending on the soil, he said, there may have to be something added to

He said the state is looking at low-Mr. Monaco said the city has two ering the allowed seepage rate from a quarter of an inch to a tenth of an inch. There are regulations coming down to protect the ground water, he

The city is used to running a mechanical plant and has the capability to run one, he said. There are two design capacities, either .3 million or .45 million gallons daily.

The council asked that the engineers check into prices for both.

Dr. Anderson said he wondered if the city can finance a bond issue this year while interest rates are still low. City Administrator Gary Shike said the city can go through Rural Development again for a loan.

Mr. Monaco said the sewer rates would then have to increase from the current \$10.75 a month, which is the median, to anywhere from \$18 to \$24 to pay back the debt, but there may be some grants available.

* Loans help start, expand businesses

(Continued from Page 1A) It took a while to get the paperwork in and then the loans stopped, she said, because some counties weren't getting the money out. Hopefully, she said, it will start again and the county can apply for

Ms. Grafel said once stories started showing up in the paper, she started to get calls and comments. There was obviously interest out

another round.

Three of the applicants didn't qualify for the loans. In one instance, said Ms. Grafel, the committee didn't see any way that the money would be paid back.

Ms. Grafel said the development corporation is the first contact for a loan, and then there is a review committee made up of two board members, Ms. Grafel, one county commissioner and two financial people. That committee reviews the application and then it is sent to Hill City

and the paperwork moves up the

There has been a lot of paperwork picked up, but seven or eight applications haven't come back in, she

Ms. Grafel said in her opinion, if someone can't fill out the paperwork, they can't make a business work because they need to know that information.

This is an excellent program, she said, about the best thing going in business development. She said she wished there was a higher limit, more than \$15,000. Most of the loans are for five to 10 years, she said, and the county can continue to loan out the money as it is paid back. Of that money, 3 percent of the original \$100,000 will go to administra-

She said there are two applications out right now, both for new businesses in town.

"If you have an opportunity to support any of these businesses,' said Ms. Grafel, "please do so. They need your help and we need them in our community."

* Filters keep students out of undesirable sites

The students have to sign a copy of the rules at the beginning of the

Mr. Randel said there are around 300 computers in the district. The computers at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch don't have Internet access

that, and they will go through the filter, but will have stricter blocks.

The subscription also gets the district software and a list of sites to block for pornography, violence, sex, drugs and alcohol.

* Library monitors Internet

(Continued from Page 1A) most libraries already have filters on computers used by children. The 2000 law requires them on all com-

The Oberlin library here doesn't receive any federal money, said Librarian Carol Smith. The budget comes mainly from the city and state and system grants.

The library does have a system to keep people from messing with stuff they aren't supposed to, said Ms. Smith. There is a rating system for websites, and if the site is not rated,

it will not let anyone see it without a password. The password can only be obtained from the librarian and that deters people who might want to mess around.

There is also a list of rules about

what is inappropriate to look at on the public computers at the library, said Ms. Smith.

There are two computers for the public to use, she said, and they sit where they can be monitored.

She said the library has few problems with people trying to view inappropriate sites.

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Three stories high



Goltl (bottom) worked on the Ray Jewelry store sign last week. Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Apartments can get tax credits

The Oberlin City Council ap- tember or October, Mr. Hudspeth said he thought that Sappa Valley proved a resolution for federal tax credits for Commercial Management Co. out of Topeka, which is taking over the Parkview Apartments next to the ball fields. Ryan Hudspeth with the company

said the tax credits are a form of financing but they don't have anything to do with city taxes. The credits are done through the federal government, he said, but the city government has to approve a resolution that needs to be sent in.

25 years. The firm plans to replace The firm needs the tax credits to a positive thing. the roofs and rehabilitate the whole complete its purchase, he said. property at a cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

said. It will probably take a year to Councilman Jay Anderson asked

if the credits would have any effect on any of the other apartments. It shouldn't, said Mr. Hudspeth. The resolution says that the company may ask for tax abatement and two complexes, said City Attorney

local assistance, said City Councilman Stan McEvoy. That can be taken out, said Mr. Hudspeth. The company isn't asking for that help. The company may ask for help from He said Commercial Manage- the city to recommend it to good the people anything, said Councilment has been in business for about renters and a good manager, he said. man Joe Stanley, and it sounds like

Mayor Ken Shobe asked if the apartments would be competition The company will start managing for the publicly run Sappa Valley the apartments Aug. 1 and then start Manor. Ray Lohoefener, a member tion after removing the part about with the rehabilitation around Sep- of the Housing Authority Board, tax abatement and local assistance.

Manor is the only one that is subsidized by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to his knowledge. He said he didn't think it would have anything to do with that complex. There is a difference between the

Steve Hirsch; one is owned by the Housing Authority and doesn't pay property tax and Parkview, which is private, has to. The tax credits aren't going to cost

If this property is going to stay

open, said Mr. Hudspeth, it is going to need to be rehabilitated. The council approved the resolu-

Police deal with backing accidents

The Oberlin Police Department covered four accidents last week, one of which was between two driverless vehicles.

The first wreck happened at 8:30 a.m. Thursday when Matthew Dean Farr, 21, backed a 1995 Chevy Culligan truck from his drive into a pickup parked on S. Griffith belonging to Brian D. Kempt.

Mr. Kempt's 1995 Chevy Silverado was parked on the west side of the street. There was no damage to Mr. Farr's truck but over \$500 to Mr. Kempt's.

Mr. Farr received a ticket for im- Century owned by Joe Stanley. proper backing.

That afternoon around 1:45 p.m., Kricket Steinmetz reported that her 1999 Pontiac Grand Am had been hit and had under \$500 damage to the front fender.

Fridav afternoon at 12:35 p.m., Vivian Russ told police, she parked erly D. Reiter, 56, was driving her her 1994 Ford Club Wagon in front of First National Bank and left it running and locked. She said she turned around and noticed it was moving across Commercial Street and watched it run into a 1994 Buick

Mrs. Russ's truck didn't have any

damage to it but Mr. Stanley's car had over \$500 worth.

Mrs. Russ received a ticket for an unattended motor vehicle. There were no drivers in either of the cars.

That evening at 8:23 p.m., Bev-2000 Pontiac van while backing from the parking lot at City Park. She backed into a 1988 Ford belonging to Curt Van Pelt.

There was no ticket given.

*Jobs might vanish

(Continued from Page 1A) job this coming school year.

This is a tough situation for the teachers to be in, he said, because you don't want a bunch of professionals nervous about their jobs.

Over the coming year, the staff will be revising the reduction in force policy which governs teacher layoffs and they will have a chance to put their ideas in on how the district should be reorganized. There probably will be some at the grade school who think the high school should get cut and there will be some at the high school who think the grade school should get cut.

As of now, said Mr. Glodt, he hasn't nailed down how many teachers will have to be cut. That is impossible unless the board knows the exact amount it will pay for the What he does know is in the

spring, teachers to be cut will be notified and they will finish teaching the coming school year. Mr. Glodt said Oberlin isn't the only district that is cutting. He read about one school that had to cut nine

programs just to get \$9,000. The district expects an increase of about \$170,000 in fixed costs, he said, and that is a lot of programs. The only way to raise that kind of money is cut staff, he said, and each

teacher cut hurts a child's education. Another thing the board has going is negotiations with the teachers.

Mr. Glodt, three staff members, board President Chris Bailey and board member Barb Olson have been working on the negotiations for months now. Mr. Glodt said the last meeting is

scheduled for Tuesday morning and after that, hopefully everything will During negotiations, he said, the

group has worked on clarifying contract language, salary, insurance, the professional development council and the number of contracted days The election will be held on Tues-

day, July 29.

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> nice car local trade 1995 Pontiac Firebird "Formula"

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seats rear AC CD 1995 Cadillac Sedan DeVille 2000 GMC Safari "SLE" AWD, 1993 Ford Explorer "Eddie Bauer ED" "Concours", dk, green pearl, very white/silver, local one owner, very well equipped, quad seats, rear AC,

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