

# \* Service needs new volunteers

(Continued from Page 1A) been fortunate in that her boss will allow her to carry a radio during the day and take off if needed. A lot of the volunteers, said Ms. Manning, got burnt out from carrying a radio all the time. She said she has mixed emotions about a full-time paid position. She said if it happens, it should be somebody local, but that could then take away a volunteer and doesn't bring anyone new in. She said she doesn't know if it would help or not. She said when she got involved, her goal was to serve for 15 years, after that she doesn't know what she will do.

Working on the ambulance is rewarding, she said. She loves the work and loves helping people. It can be stressful, but when someone calls or comes up to her and thanks her for the work she has done, that means more than anything.

In Jennings, Mr. Pomeroy said, there are 18 volunteers, some of whom live out in the country and others who work out of town during the day.

The problem area is Oberlin, he said, because there aren't enough volunteers to cover all the shifts. To help out, he has brought volunteers up from Jennings to help cover.

State law says that if a county assesses a mill levy for an ambulance service, it has to be manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Mr. Pomeroy said.

One solution would be to put two people on call in Jennings and have them cover the entire county. Mr. Pomeroy said he doesn't want to do that. That means the ambulance would be 30 minutes away from Oberlin, with the largest population, the nursing homes and the hospital.

The ideal, he said, is to always have four people on call in each city, two for the primary crew and two on back up. That way, if a transfer or another call comes in, there are still two technicians to cover the area.

With the situation now, he said, if there is a major incident, all three ambulances wouldn't be satisfied. They would have to call for help from nearby counties, which could mean a delay of 30 minutes or more.

All three ambulances were needed at an accident his fall outside of Cedar Bluffs, Mr. Pomeroy said. Oberlin could man two ambulances, and the third one had to come from Jennings, so the third patient had to wait.

If the service needs to do an unplanned transfer, he said, it can take up to an hour to get people to cover.

The volunteers do get paid a little for their runs. He said for transfers, they get \$20 to go to McCook, \$40 for North Platte, Kearney and Hays, and \$100 for Denver, Wichita and Topeka. If the patient only goes one way, the volunteers only get paid for when the ambulance is loaded.

For a primary call, Oberlin volunteers get \$12.50 and Jennings volunteers get \$15. All of that comes out of the ambulance budget, around \$108,000 for the year. Mr. Pomeroy said out of that comes his pay, half the salary for Michael French, who works half time for the ambulance and half time for he sheriff's office, bookkeeper Karen Eskew's pay,

equipment and a transfer of about \$25,000 a year for a fund to purchase a new ambulance down the road.

If a full-time person is hired, he said, he didn't know if they could afford the transfer.

Mr. Pomeroy started a first-responder class in September with four people at first, but everyone but Mr. French has since dropped out. He will test on Dec. 13, but until then he can't cover calls.

Since being hired, Mr. Pomeroy said, he has offered three classes and gotten two technicians from them.

After the new year, he would like to offer another first responder class. It is a 76-hour course held two nights a week for two and a half months. He said volunteers have to be 18 years or older, but don't have to be out of high school.

As a first responder, they have to work with an emergency medical technician. He said he would like to offer the "bridge" class so the first responders can become technicians.

Mr. Pomeroy said he has been thinking about having a full-time person for a while. He said that person could help cover a bunch of call time. He said it would be nice to have someone to do public relations and public education for the department as well. He would train that person up to paramedic level and then the county would have two.

Commissioner Ralph Unger, who has served in the county for 31 years and put in 12 years on the state Emergency Medical Services board, said he didn't want to comment about the full time position since his fellow commissioners haven't had a chance to discuss it.

Mr. Unger said he doesn't know what the problem is getting more volunteers. It seems like there has just been a change in life in the last 20 years, he said. There are a lot more families where the husband and wife both work, and it has become harder to get volunteers.

The ambulance service has been around since around 1974. At that time, he said, officials said that a volunteer service wouldn't work. They gave the county six months, but they were wrong. Decatur County was used as an example to other counties develop a volunteer service.

Officials say that nationwide there is less of a tendency to volunteer than there was a generation ago, especially long-term volunteering. Mr. Unger said the community is aging and there is a certain amount of burnout.

He said the commissioners are open to ideas.

Mr. Pomeroy said he is going to do everything he can to get people on the service, but the way things are going, one day the bell will ring and no one will turn out to man the ambulance.

It just isn't a good scenario, he said. The county needs to keep the ambulance service going. It takes two people to go on every call, either two technicians or a first responder and a technician.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer can call Mr. Pomeroy at 785-475-8126 or talk to one of the other volunteers.

# County buys trucks for road and bridge work

Decatur County commissioners approved the purchase of three 1999 Mack truck tractors from a dealership in Hays for \$89,500 with trade.

Road and Bridge Supervisor said they had 259,000, 375,000 and 386,000 miles on them, but the dealership will make sure that any needed work is done.

Mr. Stallman said he would like to get the undercarriage of each truck overhauled, with new bearings and remanufactured oil pump and gaskets. That can be done for \$1,500

a truck.

He said he talked with Kirk Young at Truck Town, but the trucks he found were not what the county was looking for. They either had too many miles or didn't have some feature the county needs.

He also talked with Jay Hancock with Central Truck out of McCook, but their trucks had too many miles and the county wasn't going to get much out of the trade.

The commissioners approved the purchase for the price bid.

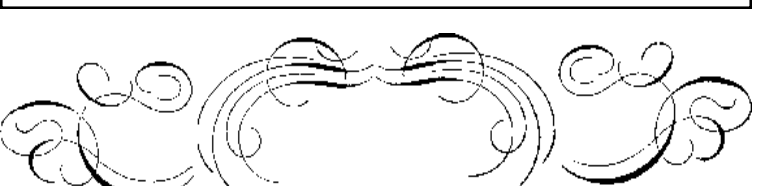
# Pizza Hut broken in to

Someone stole money and checks worth more than \$1,000 from the Oberlin Pizza Hut over the weekend.

Thieves apparently broke in the front door sometime between 11:40 p.m. Friday night and 7:45 a.m. Saturday morning. The glass door was broken.

Chief Wade Lockhart said there was an estimated \$250 worth of damage to the door and \$1,000 taken in cash and checks.

The break-in was discovered Saturday morning when the trash truck stopped to pick up refuse from the business.



**WITH A STAR IN FRONT**, this semi truck (above) from Decatur Co-op went down Main Street decorated in white lights during the annual light parade. A car (below) decorated in garland and colored lights was one of the first floats in the parade. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

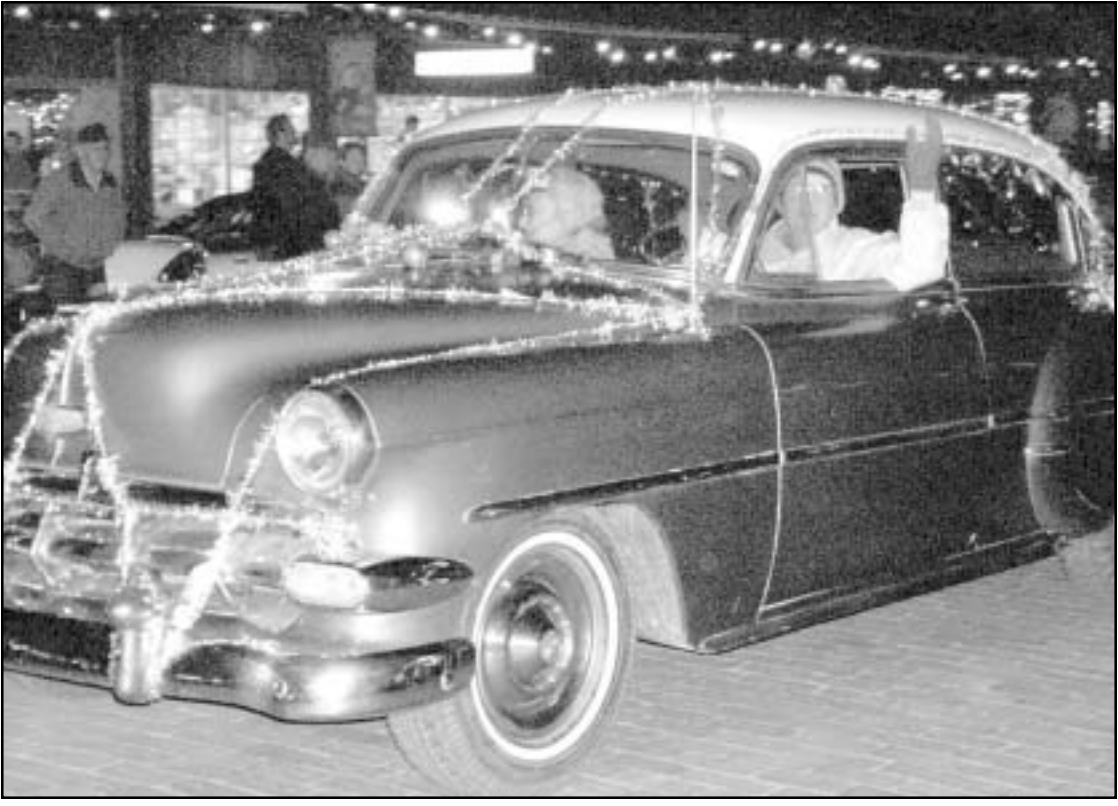
# Lights festoon parade

Tiny, multi-colored lights decorated everything from semi tractors to bicycles to cars Friday night for the annual Oberlin Business Alliance Parade of Lights.

People of all ages started gathering along Main Street around 6:15 p.m. Friday to see the parade. There was a fire truck, ambulance, a horse-drawn wagon carrying parade marshal Doris Black, old cars, a crop sprayer, four wheelers, a motorcycle, bicycles and more.

The theme this year was "Holidays are Happy Times." The parade started at the south end of Main Street and headed up to the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center.

Many on the floats threw candy to the kids along the route as an-



nouncer Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, told a little about each entry from the side of the street. There were 15 entries, with the

Decatur Co-op taking first place with its semi truck, sprayer, four wheelers, tractor and liquid tank truck; The Bank taking second with

ing third with a horse-drawn wagon carrying Mrs. Black and others riding. The winners received \$50, \$30 and \$10 in Santa Bucks.

# \* Church celebrates 100 years of service

(Continued from Page 1A) in September 1956. An annex was built in October 1967 by the Porsch brothers from Selden.

In 1976, the outside of the church was painted. In 1978, under the direction of Bonnie Kreutzer, the in-

side was remodeled. Mr. Bainter said he was raised in the church and has seen the changes over the years.

When he was a boy, he said, a tornado came through and blew the steeple and the bell off the top of the

building. Although an entry was built for the church, the bell wasn't put up right away. Instead, the bell sat on the church grounds. One day someone stole it, and the church has been without a bell since the late 1920s.

Mr. Bainter said the flags in the front of the church, which include an American flag and a United Methodist flag, were dedicated to Harold Miley, who lost his life in Europe during World War II.

He said seven boys from the congregation went to the war. Back then, said Mr. Bainter, the congregation was larger than it is now. At one time it had more than 25 members.

A lot of things have changed over the years, for the church and for the town of McGraw. Mr. Bainter said the town is pretty much just the church.

He said it was a thriving town when the Rock Island Railroad, built

in the late 1800s, decided to come build to the north, but most people from McGraw decided to move to Dresden. Although the rail was expected to go up the north fork of the Solomon, it never quite made it. He said people moved to Dresden to be closer to the railhead. The track was finished there and it was evident that it would never get to McGraw.

His grandfather decided to stay where he was in McGraw. Mr. Bainter now lives on the family farm, which is half a mile from the church.

The most recent changes include a new roof and siding in August. It also got an indoor restroom. All those years, churchgoers used an outhouse.

Mr. Bainter said everyone is welcome to come celebrate with the church. The worship service will start at 9:45 a.m. and then the celebration will be at 2 p.m., with refreshments to follow.

# \* County auditor gives good report

(Continued from Page 1A)

ber for accounts at The Bank. Those agencies need to get their own number. He said they may actually have a number and just need to find it.

Mr. Zdrov had several things listed under county ambulance in his report. He said this isn't uncommon when the county hires a new director. Mr. Zdrov said he has talked with Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy about helping him with electronic bookkeeping.

One thing noticed during the audit is that for billings in 2002, the total billing was \$113,178 and the collections were \$34,449. There was \$9,427 written off by the commissioners.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said the positive thing is that collections were up 70 percent over the year before.

Mr. Zdrov recommended that the director report monthly on collections, which he does.

The auditor suggested a group of counties getting together and hiring a person to do electronic billing to Medicare, which is confusing. He said it seems if Medicare knows the county has had a problem with bills in the past, the agency almost makes it harder on the county to get anything approved.

Mr. Zdrov also reported that the way the director recorded receipts doesn't allow for any correlation to the amounts for the treasurer, the billing register isn't totaled each month, there is no write-off registry and there is no accounts receivable control ledger or individual accounts receivable records.

Commissioners approved the audit and ordered that it be sent on to the proper authorities.

They also approved hiring Mapes and Miller for another three years, with a cost of living increase in pay. The cost will be about \$15,000 for each year.

# \* Homes to be on tour

(Continued from Page 1A)

few to sell. All of the money raised will go to scholarships the women's group gives each year.

Mrs. Neff said she decided to put her home at 304 N. Elk Avenue on tour because of the scholarship programs.

She said she and her husband are the second owners of the house, which was finished in 1981.

The home has two bedrooms upstairs and two down. Mrs. Neff said she has been busy decorating for the holidays. The home also features some antique furniture. One of the other homes on the tour

is at 605 N. East Avenue. Mrs. Richards said three rooms have Christmas decorations dictated by the decor. She said they have a den which her husband calls the "man room," decorated in a western theme, so it has a western tree. The kitchen is decorated in apples and berries and the main living area is done in snowmen.

The home, which has four bedrooms, two bathrooms was probably finished in the 1970s, she said.

After the tour, the group will meet back at the United Church for a soup supper and dessert provided by the club. For questions, call Mrs. Frickey at 475-2882.

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Wed.	Mexican Buffet <i>Featuring</i> ..... Fajitas, Tacos, Burritos, ..... Nachos
Thurs.	Country Skillet <i>Featuring</i> ..... Chicken Fried or ..... Sausage
Fri. & Sat.	Prime Rib & Steak & Shrimp or ..... Bullfries

**Open Tues. thru Sat. 4 p.m. to 12 p.m.**

**Grill Hours: 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Tues. thru Thurs.)  
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