

Ambulance low on help, volunteers

Shifts can't be covered as force shrinks to eight

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**
The Oberlin Ambulance Service is running with eight volunteers, only five of whom are able to help cover the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week schedule.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said in October, there were nine shifts where there was no one to cover from Oberlin. This month there are four open shifts.

So far they have been able to get all of the shifts covered. Mr. Pomeroy said he doesn't want to think about what will happen if there is no one on call.

Mr. Pomeroy said although there are eight volunteers, only five of them have schedules that allow them to be on call. Mr. Pomeroy, a full-time county employee who takes many calls, is not counted in the five volunteers.

To help out, he has asked the Decatur County commissioners if he can hire a full-time emergency medical technician, which would cost anywhere from \$22,000 to \$25,000, not including benefits.

Mr. Pomeroy said before he was hired in January 2002, the service lost a lot of volunteers, and he hasn't gotten any of them to come back. The roster has pretty much stayed the same, he said, since then he has added just one technician.

He said the county tried to offer its employees a one-time \$500 bonus if they volunteered for the service, but there were no takers.

In the last two years, he said, he

has helped update the equipment and protocols. He said he was hoping that once he got the morale up and bought some new equipment, that more people would want to volunteer.

He said that one reason he thinks that people aren't volunteering is that most families can't survive on one salary anymore. People with a job find it tough to drop everything and make an ambulance run.

All of the volunteers are in it for the right reason, he said. It isn't about the money they can make. He said he wants a volunteer ambulance service, but if a full-time person could be hired, then at least the days would be covered.

Linda Manning, who has been a volunteer emergency medical technician for the last 14 and a half years, said she got involved because her father had heart problems and she wanted to be able to help him if he needed it. Basically, she said she likes helping people. For almost 15 years, she has been an active volunteer.

Ms. Manning said when she started, there were at least 30 volunteers. They had a lot of pride in working on the ambulance and did community things like hamburger and pancake feeds to earn money.

In the last 10 years, that has dropped off a lot. She said part of the reason is that people can't get off work to carry a pager radio. She has



Pat Pomeroy



THE MCGRAW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH got a new roof (above) and white siding in August. Included in the renovations was an indoor toilet. When the church

was built, it had a steeple with a bell (below). A tornado destroyed the front of the church, including the steeple.

Country church has a reason to celebrate

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

It used to be that farm families went to country churches. Church buildings were used as the meeting place for a rural community and to hold school.

Nowadays, most churches are in town, and people who live in the country drive in on Sunday morning.

There are some exceptions, however. One is the McGraw United Methodist Church, south of Dresden in Sheridan County, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary at 2 p.m. on Sunday. The church, 2 1/2 miles south of the county line, has a long history.

Gayle Bainter, a lifetime member of the church, along with Russel Bainter and George Launchbaugh, said the church has just 11 members these days.

Mr. Bainter said he isn't sure if it is exactly of the 100th anniversary date for the church. Research

he provides shows that the organization is much older, but the present building falls a little short of 100 years.

Mr. Bainter's family has been connected with the church since the beginning. His grandfather, James B. Bainter, donated an acre of his farm ground to build the church on and his son, Warren Bainter, said he

had nine years of perfect attendance in the past.

James B. Bainter was part of a church that was meeting in an old building in McGraw. That is where the group decided to build and organize.

The research states that in 1887, 116 years ago, Sunday school and church services were organized and held in a log house owned by Wm. Steve, south across the North Fork of the Solomon River from where the Roy Bainter residence is now.

A year later, a building was pur-



G. Bainter



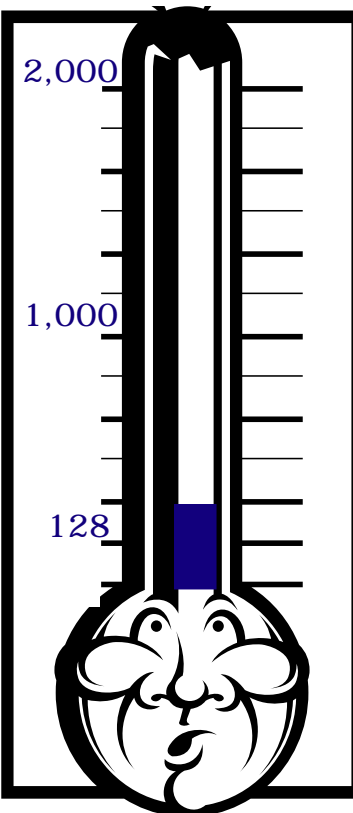
Accountant gives county good grades in managing money

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Decatur County commissioners met with the county's auditor, who told them that the county is managing its money well and some accounts which are decreasing in other counties are growing here.

Steve Zodrow, from the accounting firm Mapes and Miller, said at

Food drive starts slow



The annual food drive has started at Stanley Hardware on Main Street.

The thermometer shows what has been brought in so far and the goal. After the new year, the food will be taken to the Decatur County Food Pantry.

the meeting Tuesday, Nov. 18 that outside of the hospital bonds, which are paid from revenues, the county doesn't have any debt.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the county tries to operate on a cash basis, and Mr. Zodrow said that is a good goal.

He went through the audit page by page and said everything looks good. Normally, he said, he tries to get the audits back a little earlier in the year, but hadn't been able to make it here because of schedule conflicts.

The report included a special "A133" audit which had to be done because the county had received more than \$300,000 in federal grant money.

Before getting commissioners to approve the audit, Mr. Zodrow pointed out a few problems.

Mr. Zodrow said that the county staff is not large enough to institute proper money-handling procedures, and there is not enough segregation of duties. The county gets written up for this every year because of its size, he said.

He said any checks or warrants outstanding for two years or more may be canceled and the money restored to the fund they were charged to.

When working on the budget, he said, County Clerk Marilyn Horn puts two line items from the budget into the general fund. Mr. Zodrow said those items can't be in the general fund and need to be moved back to line items. They include Parks and Recreation and Special Drug and Alcohol. Mrs. Horn said she would take care of it.

Mr. Zodrow said he found that the Rural Fire District and the emergency medical technicians are using the county's tax identification number. (See COUNTY on Page 8A)

Craft show draws crowd to Gateway

Snowman ornaments, candles, quilts, wooden decorations, sweatshirts and anything else that could be made by hand could be found Saturday at the 18th annual Oberlin Holiday Arts and Crafts Show.

The arena in The Gateway swarmed with people. Some were just there to look around while others were in a buying spirit.

The show, which ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., brought 1,100 people through the door. Vendors came from Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska to sell crafts. With 80 booths featured, there was a little something for everyone.

While the crowd looked and shopped, those who had made the items just continued to work. Lyn Cheney from Rexford spent the morning working on her craft items.

She said she was personalizing wooden signs with names of families, sports teams or pretty much anything. A few of the signs with the family's last name on them then had mittens made of wood hanging underneath names of moms, dads and kids.

She said she could personalize anything. Ms. Cheney, who works

at The Bank in Oberlin, said she makes the crafts on the side. She brings them every year to the show here.

An aisle up from her was Tammy Musgrave from Edgar, Neb. She had handmade goat soap on sale in every scent possible from lavender to oatmeal honey, which she said is the top seller.

Mrs. Musgrave said the soap is good for anyone's skin and has even cleared up eczema in the past. She said she takes the soap to the farmers' market in Omaha.

She told some women who were shopping that it makes a great gift and a teacher she works with like to buy the \$3 bars for stocking stuffers.

Money raised from the soap is going to help send her daughter Erin on her class trip to Europe this spring, she said.

Around 11 a.m., lunch was served by The Gateway. Hamburgers, Polish sausages and ribeye steak sandwiches were on the menu.

At 4 p.m., the parking lot — which had been full all day — emptied. People packed up what was left of their crafts to take home, along with new ideas for what to make for next year's show.

Homeowners open their doors for annual tour

The trees are up and decorated with lights and ornaments, the houses have been cleaned and collections dusted.

Four homes will open their doors Sunday afternoon for at least 100

people to get a chance to see special decorations at some of the area's nicest homes.

The annual Decatur Professional Women's Christmas Home Tour will feature the homes of Jonna

Inman, LaDawna Richards, Beverly Garrett and Gerry Neff, all in Oberlin.

The tour will start at the United Church at 3:30 p.m., then split into small groups that will take turns

going to all of the homes.

Diane Frickey, who helped organize the tour, said the tickets are on sale at The Dresser for \$12 and each member of the organization has a (See HOMES on Page 8A)



AT THE HOLIDAY ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW Saturday, Kristin McHugh worked on a horse made of wire and sculpting clay. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt