

# County delays hiring decision for ambulance

## Commissioners want to talk with director about his request

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**  
Decatur County commissioners talked a little about a new person for the ambulance department last Tuesday, but said they want to continue talking and maybe meet with the director to get a better handle on jobs that could be done differently or be farmed out to save time.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy handed out a nine-page outline at the last meeting of what he does, what a new person could help with, what doesn't have to be done by a certified technician and what wouldn't be eliminated by hiring another full-time person in the department.

He asked Tuesday morning if the commissioners had given any thought to a new hire.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he went over the handout and thought they needed to sit down with Mr. Pomeroy and go over everything "with a fine-tooth comb." He said commissioners might be able to give him some suggestions to make some things more efficient and less time consuming.

One of those things is billing, he said.

Mr. Pomeroy said billing is one thing that a certified person doesn't have to do.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said Mr. Pomeroy could maybe use the prisoners more to help wash the ambulances. The department could just do a standing order for the prisoners on a certain day at the same time, he said, unless there is an emergency call.

Mr. Pomeroy said when he uses the prisoners, jailer Bert Cool likes for him to feed them. Mr. Pomeroy said he has used the prisoners quite a bit, but maybe he could use them more.

A new hire, he said, would do a lot of the work, but the main thing is that more of the calls would be covered.

Mr. Pomeroy said the new first responder class has started with five people. Of those, three live in town and one is prepared to move as soon as school is out.

He asked if the commissioners wanted to set up a special session to go over the material. Mr. Brown said he thought that was a good idea. He

## County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday morning, Decatur County commissioners:

- Decided they wanted to have another session with the ambulance director to discuss hiring a full-time person for the department before making any decisions. Story at left

- Talked with officials from the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center, who may want to use some of the money given to them from the Cochran estate to put in a sprinkler system. Story to come.

- Heard that the road and bridge department supervisor purchased a 1987 bulldozer from federal surplus for \$16,000. Story on Page 10A.

- Agreed to sign a mutual-aid agreement with Gove County. Story to come.

said he just doesn't feel comfortable making this decision yet.

Mr. Pomeroy said he is sensitive to the political side of this. The school is letting people go and then the county turns around and hires an ambulance person.

This is an agricultural community, said Mr. Unger, that is going into its fifth straight year of struggle.

Mr. Brown said he doesn't want Mr. Pomeroy to think that he is putting him off because he doesn't think the department needs this, but he wants to look into everything.

Mr. Pomeroy was going to come back towards the end of the meeting, but decided he wanted to wait another week.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Signed a check for \$600 to send four people to the Kansas Emergency Medical Technician Association conference.

- Heard that last week was pretty slow, with the department not having any calls or getting any money in. Mr. Pomeroy said that all ended Monday when they had three calls.



## Flapjacks stick to ribs at FFA feed

**DIGGING INTO A PILE** of pancakes, sausage and eggs, Bob Castle (above) of Oberlin was one of about 100 people who enjoyed the annual breakfast put on by the FFA Saturday morning. FFA member Logan Glaze (right) prepared more hot cakes for the hungry diners.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



## Sheriff gets gift for gear

### Fund-raising unit to send equipment

The Decatur County Sheriff's Office received notice that they will be getting a digital camera and portable breath tester from the U.S. Deputy Sheriff's Association.

The office received a letter stating they would be receiving the equipment in 60 to 90 days.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said Undersheriff Michael French applied for the equipment in November, 2003, asking for three portable breath testers and a digital camera.

The portable breath tester can be used to test whether a person is drunk.

Undersheriff French said he included in the letter information about the office, including the number of officers, amount of the budget, equipment needed and the number of people in the county.

He said it usually takes about six months to get a letter reviewed. Mr. French said he thought the response was pretty quick.

The office hasn't ever received any equipment from the association before. They just joined a year ago in January, said Sheriff Badsky. It doesn't cost anything for the county to be a member, but the association solicits donations.

Although there are only two officers working, with Randy McHugh on Army duty at Fort Riley, the office has four vehicles. Sheriff Badsky said the idea is to get a portable breath tester in each car.

The one they are receiving from the association is a new style that is digital and gives an instant readout. Undersheriff French said the cheapest model like this costs around \$470. The one the office has now just flashes red or green if the person is over or under the limit.

Sheriff Badsky said Shayla Wilby, who is taking a grant writing class, is working on a grant to get more of the machines.

He said the old unit was donated by the state about 10 years ago. He said they would like to give it to a bar or to the school, if they would use it.

Undersheriff French said they have been working on getting equipment from other resources than just the county budget.

If something is free, like this equipment, and there is a need for it, said Sheriff Badsky, the office should go after it.

## Ford dealer buys Toyota franchise

Wagner Ford-Mercury in McCook has expanded its line to include Toyotas with the recent purchase of the franchise from Budke Motors.

Chris and Annette Wagner have operated the Ford dealership since January 2000 and now have purchased the Toyota line from Dion Budke. The Budke family has been selling Toyotas in McCook since 1965.

"This is a great opportunity for our dealership, and we feel privileged to provide Toyota sales and service in this area," Mr. Wagner said.

Transfer of the merchandise took place Thursday afternoon. Wagner's dealership is on the west side of West Second Street between B to C streets.

"We are a full-service franchised new car dealer with a team of certified technicians," said Mr. Wagner.

Among services offered by Wagner's 25 employees, he said, are sales, service, parts, body shop, rentals, full detailing and 24-hour wrecker service.

Mr. Wagner's auto sales career started in 1986 when he joined Record Buick-Olds in McCook. He became a member of the Howard Kool Motors' sales team in 1990, and purchased the Ford-Mercury dealership in 2000.

In addition to offering Toyotas, Wagner's also will feature an increased used car and parts inventory, as well as Toyota models in the dealership's rental fleet.

## Man, 48, gets six years in molestation

A 48-year-old Oberlin man has been sentenced to nearly six years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of aggravated criminal sodomy with a 3-year-old girl.

As part of the plea bargain, a second count was dropped. Bruce Winder was charged in January 2002 with three counts of sodomy with a child under 14 years old.

The charge carries a punishment of 38 to 172 months in prison with a fine not to exceed \$300,000.

In August, the third count was dismissed but Mr. Winder still faced two counts. Court documents said the third count was dropped after the preliminary hearing because the judge didn't find probable cause.

A 12-member jury trial was scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 15, and Friday, Jan. 16, but Mr. Winder

pleaded guilty to the first count of aggravated criminal sodomy and the second count was dropped.

On Tuesday, Feb. 10, Mr. Winder was sentenced to 45 months in state prison with 36 months of post-release supervision. Mr. Winder has been held in the county jail and is scheduled to leave for state custody this week. Preston Pratt, who was the assistant county attorney in the case, said that normally he would have left earlier, but state prisons have been full.

This is not Mr. Winder's first run-in with the law. In October 1996, Mr. Winder was charged with one count of battery against a law officer, a Class A person misdemeanor, and one count of obstruction of official duty, a class A non-person misdemeanor.

He was sentenced to the county jail in the incident, which occurred after he had run his car into the side

of the old Lohoefer elevator. He resisted attempts by two city policemen to restrain him, and tried to bite one on the leg.

In April 1997, there was a jail break by two men who attacked the jailer, Deputy Bert Cool. Mr. Winder, then a trusty at the jail serving his sentence, came to the deputy's rescue, possibly saving the man's life.

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## Public Notice to Residents of Oberlin

**The City Water Department will be Flushing City Water Mains Thursday, March 11 at approximately 10 p.m.**

Please be aware that certain amounts of discoloration may appear in your domestic water supply.

*Thank you for your cooperation*

Gary Shike, City Administrator