

## City needs new contract for electricity

### Sunflower is the only company operating here

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**  
The Kansas Municipal Energy Agency is working on a new electrical contract for Oberlin, since the one the city has had for the last 20 years expires at the end of September.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the current contract is with Sunflower Electric Power Corp., a cooperative which serves rural electric and municipal utilities. The city is a member of the energy agency and then the agency contracts with Sunflower.

Mr. Shike said the energy agency has sent out a request for proposals for electricity to several entities, although Sunflower is the logical provider for the city. There are a few other agencies that provide power in western Kansas and southwest Nebraska, so the city could get power from them.

Sunflower owns the transmission line here, Mr. Shike said, so the city would still be paying the cooperative even if the power comes from another agency. Transmission cost is a significant part of the bill the city pays to Sunflower, he said.

North of town, a city-owned line brings electricity from the Sunflower line to the city's substation.

Most of the power comes from Sunflower, but the city gets a small part of its power from federal hydroelectric plants in Colorado through the Western Area Power Administration, said Mr. Shike.

Sunflower has its headquarters in Hays, but generates most of its power at a large coal-fired plant in Holcomb.

Oberlin's power plant can generate enough power to run the town, but there aren't enough radiators to cool the plant at peak use. Mr. Shike said as part of its contract with Sunflower, the city has to have generating capacity. The city runs the plant during the summer when needed.

Bob Polys, electric director of the agency with the municipal electric agency, said they are getting the city's request for proposals out to renew or replace the current contract. He said he isn't sure when the process will be completed.

Mr. Polys said the city probably will get a five- to 10-year contract. He said having the power plant absolutely helps with negotiations.

The agency has 64 member cities, he said, all in Kansas. As a nonprofit organization, the agency basically helps the city staff handle power issues. (See CITY on Page 10A)

## 40-year-old pool leaking and in need of repair work, liner

**By KIMBERLY BRANDT**  
The Oberlin Swimming Pool is over 40 years old and leaks, although city officials aren't sure where the water is going or where it is leaking.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the City Park pool was built in the 1960s and then added on to on the south side a few years later. The pool is at least the second to serve the city.

Mr. Shike said the original pool, which he thought was more like a swimming hole, was by the football field. He said he didn't know if it was lined or just an earth pit.

The pool usually opens Memorial Day weekend, depending on the weather. Before opening day, the pool is painted blue.

The pool loses water every year, said Mr. Shike, adding that he isn't sure how much of it is evaporation and how much is lost when the water circulates through the filters. He said there may be a leak in the piping, but they don't know for sure. He also said they also don't know where the water is going.

The leak isn't the only problem

with the pool. Every year, said Mr. Shike, they talk about changing the chlorinating system from gas to solid. The water in the pool has to be disinfected.

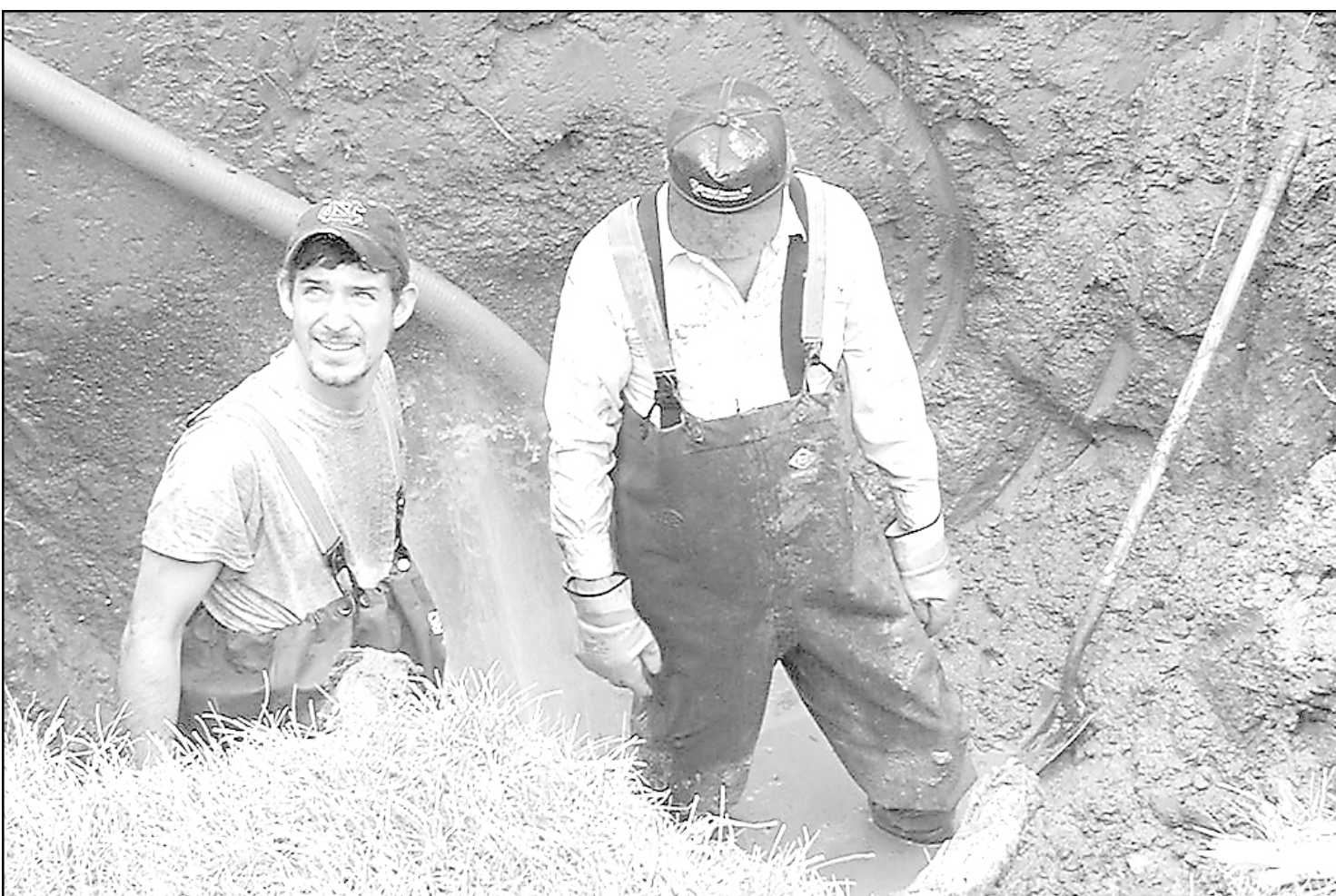
This year, he said he thinks the city will replace the sand in the filters on the east end of the pool. He said the boiler which heats the water is getting old. The boiler is always an issue, and in the future something will probably need to be done.

The temperature of the water is always a point of contention. Some people say it is too hot, he said, and others say it is too cold.

Mr. Shike said it would probably be a good idea to look at a liner for the pool, which would be cheaper than replacing it. He said several communities in the area have built new pools, but even if a community has a new pool, it doesn't mean they don't have problems.

He also said they don't know if the pool needs to be replaced right away. It just depends on what happens every year when it is filled.

Last year, the city appointed a (See POOL on Page 10A)



**IN A LARGE HOLE** on South York, David Sporn and Willard Perrin (above) of the city water department worked on a leak Friday morning. City Foreman Dan Castle prepared a clamp that would be put over the pipe to stop the leak. He used cooking grease to lather the clamp up first. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

## Crews repair gusher

The city crew got muddy Friday morning fixing a leak in a four-inch water main in the 100 block of South York Avenue.

City Administrator Gary Shike said someone called City Foreman Dan Castle first thing Friday morning saying there was water in the yard.

The crew removed a redbud tree which was near the leak and dug a big hole with a back hoe before they could see the problem. Water was shooting out of the main. Willard Perrin, water operator, and David Sporn, who works in the water department, fired up the pumps, climbed down a ladder into the hole and started getting the water out.

Just before lunch time, the men started to file down the pipe and get it smooth so they could put a repair clamp on it. Mr. Castle worked on the clamp, using cooking grease to get it ready to slide on.

The clamp was passed down as the pumps were turned off. City



crewman Rocky Diederich passed down tools as the men tightened the bolts on the clamp and the water was contained.

"The men do great work," Mr.

Shike said. There were problems with a couple of valves, he said, and as a result the crew is planning on replacing some of them.

The crew left the pipe uncovered to make sure that there weren't any further leaks. Mr. Shike said he hadn't heard of any more problems.

## City wells dropping, may need redrilling

At a planning meeting Thursday, March 18, the Oberlin City Council discussed plans for the water system, from adding well capacity to building a treatment plant.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the city is short on capacity for water. He said they need to look at re-drilling a well east of town to keep the water supply up. Mr. Shike said when the wells were checked in January, they were around an inch lower compared to the year before. In the long term, said Mr. Shike,

the city will need to get into water treatment. Today, well water is pumped into the city system, adding only chlorine disinfectant and chemicals to lower the mineral content. It is becoming harder to meet federal standards for water quality that way, though.

City Foreman Dan Castle said Willard Perrin of the water department wants to either re-drill well No. 9, east of town or tie well No. 6, south of the football field into the system.

Mr. Castle said they should have tied well No. 6 into the system during the water project. The city would need to notify users if they pumped that well because of high nitrates.

The city has been promising the citizens of Oberlin more water for the last four years, said Councilman Stan McEvoy. The city needs to get another well piped up and get started with partial water treatment.

Mr. McEvoy said they need to get the city's engineer, Thaniel Monaco from Miller and Associates, in and

start doing something. It seems like the city is starting another project and the water one isn't even finished.

Councilman Ray Ward said he doesn't see any choice but putting in a water treatment plant.

Mr. Castle said Mr. Monaco was talking about treating water at the site. Mr. Castle said when the water project started out, the new well was supposed to be tied into the system to be blended. He said he thinks the city sort of dropped the ball on it.

## Spring forward

The days will seem a little longer next week as the clocks are turned forward an hour Sunday for Daylight Saving Time.



Sunday morning at 2 a.m. is the time to jump forward an hour. Most people will change the clocks before going to bed on Saturday.

That means everyone will have an hour more light at the end of the day and it will be darker in the morning when kids are picked up for school and parents go to work.

## Woman gathered cow chips for heat, lived in soddy

**By MARY LOU OLSON**  
Born in a sod house in Rawlins County, Myrtle Schiessler of Oberlin, who turned 100 on Sunday, said the mud walls kept her family warm, but didn't keep the snakes out.

Born March 28, 1904, Mrs. Schiessler was the oldest daughter of Charley and Mary (Hokenson) Henningson. Besides her brother, Edmund, and sister, Pearl, the soddy was also home for a cousin, Victoria Paschke.

"The walls of our home were very thick and were covered with wide strips of heavy muslin, as was the living room ceiling and the rough boards used for the floor were hard to clean.

"Among our chores as children was going to the pasture to pick up cow chips to burn in our kitchen range. We used a kerosene stove during the summer months for cooking. The living room had a double

bed, pump organ, phonograph, cane table and a rocking chair. We also had a telephone, wired with barbed wire."

She said the organ was ordered from either the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog and when it arrived in Herndon by train, her father brought it home in their buggy.

"My dad loved to play the violin," she said, "and Edmund and I played the organ."

Mattresses, she recalled, were made of corn shucks and were replaced every year, and their pillows were stuffed from clean chicken feathers. She said her mother made all of the clothes for the family. She said she remembers one time when a peddler, Charley George, stopped by to sell material, the family fed him supper and breakfast and he slept in the barn.

"For our hospitality, he gave my mother some nice material," she said.



**MYRTLE ANDEDMUNDHENNINGSON** (shown beside their original home) spent much time playing together while growing up on their parents' farm in Rawlins County.

A new two-story home was built on the Henningson farmstead by

Dan Olson in 1917, and it was there that the youngest child, Violet, was

born in 1919.

The family, like most others in the area, raised most of their own food. Mrs. Schiessler said she helped with the garden, the chickens, milked cows, and even played "hooky" one day from school so she could stay home and help with the butchering.

She said that if it hadn't been for the many home-grown meals of milk, cottage cheese, sour milk, garden produce, chickens and eggs, the family would have gone hungry. She said that her parents took wheat to the mill in Oberlin or Herndon for flour, but she and her siblings never got to go.

The washboard was replaced later by an early-day "push and pull" washing machine, which was a big improvement, she recalled. Later they purchased a gas Maytag washer from "Pop" Stinnette in Herndon.

"On Christmas Eve, Dad would bring out the horses and lumber (See WOMAN on Page 10A)

# \* City works on pact

## New contract is progressing

(Continued from Page 1A)

issues, he said. Mr. Shike said Oberlin generated its own power up to the late 1970s or early 1980s. The town fathers then started to get nervous about the only source of power being the city plant.

The energy agency's first project there was to act as a financing agency to build transmission lines to connect the city to the Sunflower line. At that time, they also did transmission lines in St. Francis and Sharon Springs. Mr. Shike said the city paid that line off almost 10 years ago.

The energy agency also has a gas supply department, although Oberlin doesn't participate in it. Midwest Energy is the gas supplier here.

Mr. Shike said the city gets power from the Southwestern Power Administration, but there is no way to get it to Oberlin. That power is used in cities in Eastern Kansas and that helps offset what Oberlin pays for the power here.

Councilman Ray Ward serves as a member on the governing body of the energy agency and Mr. Shike is the resident member. City Foreman Dan Castle is the alternate.

Mr. Shike is also on the executive committee, which meets once a month.

# \* Pool leaks water

(Continued from Page 1A)

pool committee made up of Abby Hisson, Gary Bartels, Teresa Shaughnessy, Peggy Ream and Anna Shaw. The committee is made up of people interested in keeping the pool and possibly may help raise money for it.

At a recent meeting between city council members and the county commissioners, Councilman Stan McEvoy asked the commissioners if they would be willing to help with the swimming pool.

Mr. Shike said the pool is one of those things that county residents get to use that they don't pay for with their taxes. If a person lives in the city, he noted, they still pay county taxes. The county pays for the ambulance service, but people in the city pay taxes for it. There are several things, including the swimming pool, library and airport, that city residents pay for but everyone uses.

It costs money to run the pool. Mr. Shike said. It isn't a money maker, but there are some things that communities just do for the quality of life, like pools, libraries, airports and community buildings.

## Internet tonight 475-2206!



MYRTLE SCHIESSLER (above) showed the dress which her parents, Charley and Mary (Hokenson) Henningson, bought for her wedding. She and her husband Mike (below) were married Dec. 29, 1926, at Immanuel Church in Herndon and spent their honeymoon in Lincoln, Neb.

# \* Woman relives past

(Continued from Page 1A)

wagon," she recalled, "and after Mother placed warm quilts on the floor, we would all ride to the Swedish Baptist Church for services."

Entertainment meant spending evenings with neighbors, making homemade ice cream, and just visiting, while the kids ran around playing hide and seek.

Mrs. Schiessler said she and her brother did everything together, but one day she decided to try to drive the family's Model T on her own. She said she started it up and had a joy ride around the yard.

"I had watched Dad and my brother operate it, so I knew how to shut it off, too," she said.

The Henningson children attended Fairview Country School. Her first teacher was Dorothy Bigelow, and she had all eight grades and lots of students. Mrs. Schiessler said one day she was late for school and someone was sitting at her desk. There was only one space left in the double desks and it was with Clemens Hutfles, so she just went over and sat down with him.

"It was at that country school that I met my future husband, Mike Schiessler," she said. "Our first date was going to a dance in the Leinwetter barn, south of Herndon. It was after he took me home one night and we were



standing on the porch that he popped the question. I said, 'Yes,' because I sure didn't know what else to say!"

They were married a few months later, at Immanuel Church in Herndon on Dec. 29, 1926. Her parents bought her wedding dress, which she still has. Her sister, Pearl, and his brother, Matt Schiessler, were the attendants.

"After the ceremony, everyone went to my folks' place for a wedding supper, prepared by Ida Hokenson, which was followed by a charivari. For our honeymoon, we drove his trusty old Model T Ford to McCook, then boarded the train for Lincoln, Neb.

"Conditions were bad when we

started our married life on a nearby farm. The grasshoppers were so thick in 1930 that the sun was blotted out. The depression hit in 1931, but our worst year was 1935, when the dust storms came in from the northwest. It was as dark as night and the dust piled up in the ditches and over the fence posts like snow."

After her husband retired from farming in 1977, the couple and their daughter, Frances, moved to Herndon. A grandson, Kevin Schiessler, took over the farm. Her husband died in April 1991 and Mrs. Schiessler and her daughter moved to an apartment in Oberlin to be near Kevin and his wife Julie, Christopher and Haley, in 1999.

The Schiesslers also had two other daughters, Doris Fedro of Waco, Texas, and the late Janice Berry. Mrs. Schiessler now has nine grandchildren, 21 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

She was still driving when they moved to Oberlin, but said that her last trip was to get a flu shot in 1998 at the Oberlin Clinic. Her driver's license expired on her 100th birthday, and she said she won't renew it.

So, to what does she attribute her long, healthy life?

"I never cooked in grease, I cooked healthy food and always prepared practically every meal from food that we raised on the farm. Another thing, she said, with a twinkle in her eye, 'I have taken one Aloe Vera pill, a dietary supplement, faithfully every day at noon for many years.'"

Most of her family plans to be here for her birthday celebration, which will include an open house from 2-5 p.m. on Easter Sunday, April 11, at Golden Age Center.

# Council discusses goals, priorities; no decisions made

The Oberlin City Council discussed goals for the city at a recent meeting which covered everything from a plan to hire someone outside the city to recruit businesses to street work to hiring someone to cook at The Gateway.

Councilman Stan McEvoy asked at an earlier meeting to have the planning discussion since the council hadn't had one in a while. At the Thursday, March 18 meeting the council took a few hours to discuss the goals.

Mr. McEvoy said he would like to see someone hired to sell Oberlin more and bring people and business to town. He said the person in the position would spend more time out of Oberlin than here.

Councilman Jay Anderson said he would like to see a packet developed that would include all the positives about the city.

Councilman Joe Stanley said the Convention and Visitors Bureau would like to put some signs up at the Last Indian Raid monument at the cemetery to explain the area's history and pull more people in off the highway.

There could be a gazebo near the monument that would have maps and information about the Last Indian Raid, said Councilman Patrick Pomeroy. The idea has a lot of potential, said City Administrator Gary Shike, but it is ambitious.

City Foreman Dan Castle said there are a lot of plans for the cemetery, but the city needs to wait for donations to come in to get them done.

He said they would like to put in new trees at the cemetery, and they have memorial contributions for some.

Kent Ploussard of The Gateway staff said it has nothing to do with money, but the city needs to limit the size of head stones at the graveyard. Mr. Shike said if there is a size limit, it should be in decided before the

new side of the cemetery is open.

The council discussed the digging and closing of graves. Marvin Hansen does the digging and then the city crew closes the graves.

Some of the city streets need to be re-paved, council members said. Mr. Castle said that the city will never get anything done on the streets if they never get started. The city needs to continue sealing the streets or they will fall apart.

Just to re-pave five or six blocks at a time would be expensive. He said just to do two blocks would cost an estimated \$100,000 which includes curb and gutter work.

Can the city apply for grants for paving? asked Mr. McEvoy. The city can, said Mr. Shike, but the city will still have to pay half on most of them.

Mr. Ploussard said the two back doors on the west side of The Gateway need to be replaced. He said the city has received bids in the past, but hasn't done the doors.

He said there is a want list for The Gateway, including sliding doors on the walking track, a storage shed and changes to the duct work in the arena for heat.

Mr. Ploussard said they haven't had any luck hiring someone to cook and do events.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said his office needs a computer, one of the vehicles has 64,000 miles on it and needs to be traded in, they need a strobe light bar for a car and the furnace in the office may need to be replaced.

Mr. Shike said he had talked with Fire Chief Bill Cathcart about the fire station. Mr. Shike said Chief Cathcart said there isn't enough room to store the fire trucks. The council discussed whether some should be sold and if there is any rental space available in the area.

The council didn't make any decisions at the meeting, nor did it set any formal list of goals or priorities.

# Theater dinner Thursday

The Oberlin Royal Neighbors will host a taco buffet dinner from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday night at the Golden Age Center as a benefit for Sunflower Cinema. The Royal Neighbors National Headquarters will match part of the

money donated.

The theater board plans to use the money to buy a pretzel warmer for the concession stand and upgrade the speaker system in the theater.

Everyone is invited.

## INCOME TAX SERVICES

Reasonable Prices  
Electronic Filing and Direct Deposit  
of Refund Available.

### Hirsch & Pratt, LLP

Steven W. Hirsch / Preston A. Pratt  
Attorneys-at-Law

124 South Penn., Oberlin, Kansas

785-475-2296

Don't settle for any ordinary

# IRA

KEN WELLMAN  
Investment Representative  
109 West 'D' Street  
McCook, NE 69001  
308-345-6730  
1-800-658-0500  
www.edwardjones.com



RON FRIEHE  
Investment Representative  
308 West 10th Street  
McCook, NE 69001  
308-345-5666  
1-866-345-5677  
www.edwardjones.com



- Tax advantages
- Flexibility
- Tailored investments
- Personalized service

Transferring your existing IRA is easy.

Call or Stop by today for details.

www.edwardjones.com  
Member SIPC

**Edward Jones**  
Serving Individual Investors Since 1871

**Permastone Floors that stay in style**

16" x 16"

Regular price \$3<sup>89</sup> sq. ft  
Now: \$3<sup>18</sup> sq. ft

New Outdoor Carpet Arriving Soon!  
"You Stand On Our Reputation!"

**Carpet King**

308-345-8007  
We're on the Bricks

301 W. 3rd St. McCook, NE 69001  
Ken & Nora Rasmussen

When Severe Weather Threatens

**WEATHER EYE METEOROLOGISTS**

are on duty nights & weekends **24/7**

Watching Northwest Kansas

**105.3 COYOTE COUNTRY** **93.9 PRAIRIE THE ROCK THAT TALKS!**

**NO OTHER STATION WATCHES 24/7**

**Edward Jones**  
Serving Individual Investors Since 1871