

# Business group wants to fill empty store fronts

The Oberlin Business Alliance got an idea to help fill empty store fronts downtown at its meeting last Wednesday at The LandMark Inn.

Kem Bryan said she was walking downtown and it made her sad to see so many empty businesses. She said her idea is for other businesses, either downtown, on the highway or those operated out of homes, to adopt an empty building and decorate the windows.

There are a lot of things coming up, she said, Memorial Day, alumni weekend and

fair, and it would be nice to make downtown look good.

Karen Metcalf, with The Dresser, said she thought it was a great idea.

At least for the summertime it would work, said Mrs. Bryan.

Mrs. Metcalf said The Dresser would do a window. Mrs. Bryan said she had contacted some of the building owners.

Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, asked if this was something the alliance wanted to take on. Rusty Addleman, owner of Addleman Drug Store, asked if the city

already has a project going on that would list all of the owners of the buildings downtown. Councilman Jay Anderson said he thought the city probably knows.

Mrs. Metcalf asked if possibly the alliance needed to be paying more attention with things going on, for example, the vacation of the alley next to Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting.

Dr. Anderson said he asked Mr. Fidele what the Chamber and alliance thought and he said he hadn't talked to either group.

Mrs. Metcalf said she is sure everyone has

an opinion on the alley. She said her concern is that the city had a chance for a new business — Mr. Fidele plans to put a small lumberyard in the old cafe building — and might have blown it.

Maybe the alliance needs to pay more attention to what is going on, she said.

Mr. Stanley, also a council member, said the city had 100 times more comments about the alley than the proposed \$3 million sewer system.

Mrs. Metcalf said when she looks from The Dresser on the east side of the street,

there are so many businesses closed and maybe the alliance just needs to be more proactive.

In other business, the group:

- Discussed Secretary's Day next Wednesday at The Gateway.
- Reservations are due on Friday. The lunch costs \$12.50.
- Talked about holding a burger fry before prom on Saturday, May 15, and over the lunch hour on Friday, May 28, for alumni weekend.

## Old man loses cash in scam

An elderly Goodland man told police he gave con artists \$42,600 in a yard cleanup scam.

Police Chief Ray Smee said he believes there are three or four people involved in the scam April 2, including one posing as a U.S. marshal. He said the suspects stayed at Motel 8 for two nights and made reservations for a third. Police put the room under observation after the scam was reported, but no one returned.

The chief said the man, in his mid-70s, was quite embarrassed that he had turned over the money. He said the man's yard did need some cleanup, but \$1,000 should have covered it.

"I don't want to embarrass the man," Chief Smee said. "He already feels bad about it, but I sure want to find these guys."

"We were about two hours behind them when we got the call. We don't have much to go on. We know there is a criminal case and probably a civil case when they are caught."

The chief said the man posing as the marshal wore a badge and a set of handcuffs on his belt, a white cowboy hat, white shirt and jeans. He cashed two checks, one for \$10,000 and the other for \$32,600, at First National Bank.

The bank called the victim to verify the checks, then converted them to money orders.

Smee said the victim's nephew, who lives in Atwood, became suspicious and called the bank, which in turn called the police about two hours after the checks were cashed.

"The nephew called to ask why the city was referring people to a Wisconsin firm to clean up yards," Mr. Smee said.

"I told him the city had not referred anyone about yard clean up. That was when we found out these people had gone to the man's house and said they were there representing the City of Goodland, and that he needed to clean up his yard."

Chief Smee said a teen-ager, not part of the scam, was to help with the cleanup and promised \$160 but only got \$40.

The chief said the suspects left behind a Bobcat that may have been rented in Hays.

He took the loader and put it in the city impound lot.

"I figured if they were coming back, they would have to come talk to me," Mr. Smee said. "We don't have much information, and what we do have is sketchy. All we know is they were driving a red Ford pickup and a white Ford pickup. No one was sure about the license plates."

"We will be waiting for the money orders to be cashed to see if we can follow them."



### Children find treasure at Cedar Living Center

CEDAR LIVING CENTER hosted an Easter egg hunt last Tuesday, which brought out Robyn Rouse and her daughter Dani (left) to get some sweet treats. Ben Glading (above) checked out the goodies in his basket.

## Ranch youths steal van

Oberlin police were busy Monday trying to chase down a van stolen from the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch just before 8 p.m. by two teens who apparently decided they wanted to take off.

Officers described the van as a brown Dodge with a dent in one door and Nebraska license plates

starting with 48. It apparently belongs to a ranch employee.

Police checked the highways east to Reager and south of town without spotting the van. The dispatcher called Norton to alert officers there and notified the state Highway Patrol. The vehicle was listed as stolen in the national crime computer.

## River meeting set for Gateway

The quarterly meeting of the Republican River Riparian Project will start at 10 a.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

The project is led by landowners and farmers from Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska. The group works on the environmental problems along the Republican and its tributaries including Sappa, Beaver, Prairie Dog and Driftwood creeks.

Duane Cheney, with Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development agency, said that the group has been together for a little over a year, with the first meeting in Cambridge, Neb., the second in Wray, Colo., and then this one in Oberlin.

He said the project is set up to inform landowners, towns and counties about the needs of the riparian area along the river and its tributaries. The group will focus on three areas, including natural resources such as water, economic needs for the area and social concerns like population loss.

The group hopes to develop landowner partnerships, preserve and

enhance quantity and quality of water in the river basin, teach people about water and preserve and enhance the economic viability of the basin.

Lunch will be served at the meeting. Registration costs \$15 per person. Afterwards there will be a tour of Sappa Park, headed by Jack

Benton, to look at what has been done with the shelter house and the area.

Anyone interested in attending should call Mr. Cheney at (785) 462-2602 since they need a head count for the meal. He said the meeting will last until around 3 p.m.

## Health Fair to be held Friday

The sixth annual Health Fair sponsored by the Decatur County Health Department will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday at The Gateway.

The fair will have around 25 booths with information on topics including Parents as Teachers, mental health, food and nutrition, and health check ranging from eyes to breast exams to glaucoma testing.

Both the Decatur County fire department and ambulance department will have trucks on display. An

air ambulance helicopter from Kearney, Neb., is scheduled to be on display from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. unless the crew gets a call.

Those who had their blood drawn for testing will get the information back. Those who would like bone scans done can do so that day for \$20.

The Oberlin Lions Club will be selling lunch starting at 11 a.m.

Admittance to the health fair is free.

## Museum to hold rummage sale

The Last Indian Raid Museum's annual rummage sale, sponsored by KFNF Radio, will be Saturday and Sunday at the Bohemian Hall.

The sale will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

All of the items have been donated and the money raised will go

to the museum. Anyone interested in donating to the sale can bring items in from 10 a.m. to noon or 1 to 5 p.m. this week.

The museum won't take any heavy appliances and requests that items be nice, clean and usable.

For questions, call 475-2712.

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