

## City asks taxpayers to return survey

Oberlin residents received a survey in the mail from the city last week which could help lower the expected increase in sewer rates.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the survey is needed to see if Oberlin qualifies as a low-to-moderate-income area for grant purposes. The letter attached to the survey says that the city is preparing a Community Development Block Grant application to be sent to the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing.

On the last census, he said, the city was

close, but a little over the income limit.

Mr. Shike said the city is not trying to invade people's privacy. It is in everyone's best interest, he said, to fill out the survey and return it to the city because it could save us tax money.

If the city is above the income level, he said, then Oberlin is only out the expenses.

Mr. Shike said if the survey comes back and the results show that Oberlin is in the limits, then the results will be good for three years and could not only help get grant money for the sewer project, but future

grants. That could mean lower utility bills.

The city needs an 80 percent response to the survey, Mr. Shike said. Of the 80 percent, 51 percent of the families need to be below the income levels listed on the survey.

Those are:

- for one person, \$26,650.
- for two people, \$30,450.
- for three people, \$34,250.
- for four people, \$38,100.
- for five people, \$41,150.
- for six people, \$44,150.

- for seven people, \$47,200.
- for eight people, \$50,250.

The survey also asks how many families live in each house, their race, if there is a female head of household, if anyone is disabled and if there are any people over 65.

Mr. Shike said the city may still be able to get a grant to help with the sewer project without being a low income city, but with the designation, getting a grant could be a lot easier.

Each of the surveys, he said, has a number at the top, but the person answering it

does not put their name on it.

Mr. Shike said all the city is interested in is the total results. He said they don't want to know what each person or family in Oberlin makes.

The surveys will be filed, he said, in case the state wants to audit them.

The surveys have to be returned to the city office by Thursday, May 13. Mr. Shike said they can be dropped in the box outside the police department on Commercial Street, in the box outside The Gateway, mailed in or brought into the office.

## Grade school in Herndon may be closed

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Herndon Elementary School expects fewer than 10 children next year, which means it can't be accredited by the state and might be closed.

Superintendent Lee Tarrant said he doesn't know what will happen in Herndon, but the new joint Rawlins County School Board has set a public meeting on closing the school for 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 17, in the Herndon gym.

The Herndon School District consolidated last summer with the Atwood schools. Before the merger, the two school boards agreed that the high school in Herndon would stay open for a year and the grade school as long as economically possible, but at least four years.

The board had set the meeting for Monday night, but learned that they needed to publish notice of the meeting for two weeks in a local newspaper.

The meeting, Board President Kent Morgan, is for the public, especially those who live in Herndon, to express their viewpoints about the situation, particularly about the numbers.

There won't be any decision made at the meeting, he said; it is strictly informational.

In all probability, he added, the decision will be made at the June regular board meeting.

Nothing has really changed since the decision last year to try to keep the grade school open for four years, said Mr. Morgan, except the numbers.

Mr. Tarrant said the school year started with around 70 students in Herndon, but throughout the year six or seven have transferred to Atwood. He said before the merger a year earlier, Herndon had around 80 students enrolled in elementary and high school grades.

As of this spring, though, the Herndon School expects to have just eight kids next year.

Mr. Tarrant said Quality Performance Accreditation regulations from the state Department of Education say if the school doesn't have at least 10 students, it can't be accredited.

He said when the board said they would try to keep the grade school in Herndon for four years, they had anticipated around 25 students. Mr. Tarrant said if Herndon ends up having at least 10 kids next year, maybe it will stay open.

Of the students who are planning to leave, he said, some are going to Atwood, some are moving to Ne-

## Oberlin can bus kids here

The state's "10-mile" rule might allow the Oberlin School District to send a bus into Herndon and pick up students at their homes next year as long as they live 10 or more miles away from the school in Atwood.

Donna Whiteman with the Kansas Association of School Boards said Kansas law says if a student lives 10 or more miles from the "attendance center" in his or her home district, and lives closer to another school, the family can apply to the board where the student lives on or before July 15 to have a bus come pick the child up.

Ms. Whiteman said the law says the bus can run from the school to the student's home and from the student's home to the school. Downtown Oberlin is slightly closer to Herndon than is Atwood.

The family does have to fill out some paperwork. Larry Bluthardt, public service administrator with the association, said the family should get the forms from the receiving district, where the student wants to go. It will be sent to both districts. The receiving district's board really makes the decision by saying they will send a bus into the other district to pick the student up, he said.

Mr. Bluthardt said although the residential district has to act on the request, the board can't say no. Of course, the Rawlins County district probably will have a bus running to Herndon as well.

If there are students from Herndon who want to attend school in Oberlin, Mr. Glott said, the Oberlin School Board would be willing to talk about running a bus. They may run an activity bus if there were kids in Herndon who need a later bus.

The district also could run a bus to the county line to pick up kids.

braska and some will be going to Oberlin. Mr. Tarrant said he isn't sure what all of the families have decided to do.

Mr. Morgan said teacher contracts have been issued. They had to (See SCHOOL on Page 10A)



WITH HIS ARM HELD HIGH, Joe Stanley (above) displayed an airbrushed birdhouse at the auction Saturday morning at Stanley Hardware. Brian Loker (below left) and Dustin Armbruster broadcasted live from Main Street for KFN radio.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

## Birdhouses a big hit

One was decorated in American flags, another with cactus and moss and another had coffee grounds to simulate garden soil.

There were 18 unique houses, all designed and made by Oberlin people. All just big enough for a bird or two to live in.

The houses started out as kits that cost Joe and Regina Stanley \$8 to \$10 each, but they took on a life of their own by the time the big birdhouse auction rolled around Saturday morning.

The Stanleys, owners of Stanley Hardware, said they bought the kits at market in October 2003. Joe said his wife wanted to sell the kits at Christmas, but Mr. Stanley said he thought they could do something special with them. In February, he said, he thought of the auction in conjunction with the store's 15th anniversary.

Mr. Stanley started to check with several people he knew to see if they would be interested in decorating a birdhouse. In March,



they handed out the kits, and last month, the birdhouses started rolling in.

"They did a super job on them," said Mr. Stanley, looking at the array of crafty ideas.

The average auction price for the birdhouses was \$40. Mr. Stanley said the top price was \$140 for one made by La Vern Burtis.

Auctioneer Carolyn Burtis, who

volunteered her time, stood on the back of a pickup, yelling at people driving by and selling the houses to an audience of around 30 or so people.

Mr. Stanley said he and his wife purchased the store 15 years ago from Mike McVay. It had been a Western Auto store on the north end of the block on Penn Avenue.

(See STORE on Page 10A)

## Business starts to expand

The north wall of the old cafe building has been removed and plans are underway to open a new lumber yard in downtown Oberlin in the next couple of weeks.

With the approval of closing the alley between Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting and the old cafe from the Oberlin City Council, owner Greg Fidele wasted no time getting started on the expansion of his business.

Mr. Fidele said he has operated the business for the last 13 years and has been located downtown for the last five.

After Family Lumber, south of town on U.S. 83, closed at the end of last year, he said, he knew he and other contractors would still need lumber. Mr. Fidele said he was approached by some people who suggested he open a lumber yard, and he figured he might as well stock lumber for himself and for everyone else.

He said he plans to be competitive in prices with other stores in the area, but they may be a little higher for awhile until he can start buying in larger quantities.

The business will still be run out of the original building, he said, but he will be offering more supplies. Mr. Fidele will stock building supplies, expanded hardware items, dimension lumber, plywood, wall-board, trim and all the nails and screws to go with it.

The remodeling of the cafe has mostly been done by him and his staff, he said, although he hired Mick Barth to knock the wall out. Mr. Fidele said he has started to frame it back in and put the lumber bins in. Actually, he said, the plywood bins are in the back of his original building, but there isn't any lumber yet.

Once the lumber side is added, they will offer carpentry, remodeling work, electrical, heating, air conditioning and building supplies.

He said he would like to hire one or two more people.

Hours for the business will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, then once everything gets going, probably a half-day on Saturday morning.

## Oberlin makes magazine

People all over the world now know a little about Oberlin, Kansas, since the Decatur County Fair has been written up in this month's edition of *National Geographic*.

A story, "The Late Great Plains," written by John G. Mitchell, talks about generations of people in the Heartland, how many farmers are giving up and other people have changed their ways.

One part of the article talks about how the fair in Decatur County draws people near and far for a week of activities.

The magazine features a picture of the Ferris wheel in the background and Jane Carlisle working at the duck pond.

The web site [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com) has several more pictures of the fair in a video.

Although some in the area have a subscription to the magazine, others have had a hard time finding it since it includes three features focusing on Kansas.

## Committee starts work for June relay

Planning for the third annual Relay for Life is underway, and committee members are looking for teams.

The event will be held from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on Friday and Saturday, June 18 and 19, at the Decatur Community High School track. At least one member of each team will be on the track walking all night.

The relay raises money for the American Cancer Society. The first lap is walked by cancer survivors and the second by the survivors, their family and caregivers.

The committee will be selling luminaries again this year, paper sacks with candles in them, which will encircle the track.

Luminaries can be purchased for \$10 in honor of someone who had or has cancer.

Around 10 p.m., the lights on the track will be shut off and the luminaries will light the way. Gary Fredrickson, a committee member, said they hope to circle the entire track with the luminaries. He said all of the money raised goes to cancer research.

Throughout the night, the names on the bags will be read. The deadline to get the names printed in the program is Thursday, June 10.

The luminaries can be purchased up to the evening of the event.

Anyone interested in having a team or working should contact Sa-



# County talks with contractor

The Decatur County commissioners talked with a representative from Murray Roofing out of Colby about the roof on the Good Samaritan Center last week.

Jim Murray said he wanted to come back and talk with the commissioners because he had finished the work they asked for. He said he checked the roof and couldn't find any saturated areas in the insulation. Mr. Murray said, basically, he couldn't find any problems.

There have been several spots in the ceiling where there have been leaks at the center. Each time there is a leak, the roof is repaired in that spot. The commissioners decided to look into other roof options, tearing it off and putting a new one on.

During the last few weeks, the commissioners have talked with other companies, including Roofmasters from Colby and Weathercraft Co. from McCook.

Commissioner Ralph Unger asked if a roofing company would have a hard time screwing roofing down to the existing insulation. Mr. Murray said he didn't find a saturated deck or any moisture.

Mr. Murray said they took several tests to check the insulation. He said he laid down some densdeck, which is like a piece of plywood which will level everything out, in one area, a 4x8-foot sheet. He said they had to use more screws than normal because the insulation was floating and needed more anchoring.

The densdeck will help increase the roof's hail rating, he said.

Mr. Murray said there is an eighth of an inch slope on the roof already, except for the west side.

The contractor said he is willing to bid on the job. He said he didn't think it was necessary to tear everything off the roof.

He said that would cost over \$250,000, but to go over it will cost a little over \$100,000.

Mr. Unger said the county is working with its insurance company, the Kansas Counties Association Multi-line Pool, and hoped to make some progress in the next couple weeks.

# \* School may close

(Continued from Page 1A)

be committed to by May 1. He said there have been some retirements and there have been some adjustments made anyway.

If the school closes, the staff will be used in Atwood. If it doesn't close, there would be enough teachers to cover the school in Herndon. There are seven grade school teachers now.

Herndon High School expects to hold its last commencement at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, May 23, with 11 seniors. Next year, all high school classes will be in Atwood.

Mr. Morgan said he encourages people to attend the meeting. The board appreciates how the two communities have worked together, he said, and he thinks that will continue to be the case during the meeting and in the future.

# Council to hold hearing

The Oberlin City Council will hold a condemnation hearing for a building on South Buffalo at its meeting Thursday night.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the building at 404 S. Buffalo, which last housed Old West Printing, is owned by Steve Harrison. The council will decide what step to take next with the building.

The engineer who looked at the building, said Mr. Shike, reported a hole in the soffit due to rot, rotting rafters, soffit falling down and the roof probably leaking.

The council will hold a pair of closed sessions at the end of the meeting for non-elected personnel and acquisition of real estate.

The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. in the theater at The Gateway. It is open to the public.

# Police work accident

Oberlin police worked an accident outside the clinic which resulted in no injuries and no ticket.

Chief Wade Lockhart said Leaudrey Black, 47, of Oberlin was backing a 2000 Chevy Blazer from a parking stall at the clinic and hit a 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix on the driver's side door, belonging to clinic manager Larry Ganje.

The accident happened at 2:14 p.m. on Saturday, April 24.

# Students can get help

Money is available for non-traditional students for the 2004 summer sessions at McCook Community College.

The \$250-\$500 non-traditional grants and scholarships are designed for people who want to pursue a college degree or certificate, or to update current skills or general knowledge.

To see which classes are offered, pick up the "Summer 2004 Class Schedule" at the campus or log on to [www.mpcc.edu](http://www.mpcc.edu) and select class schedules.

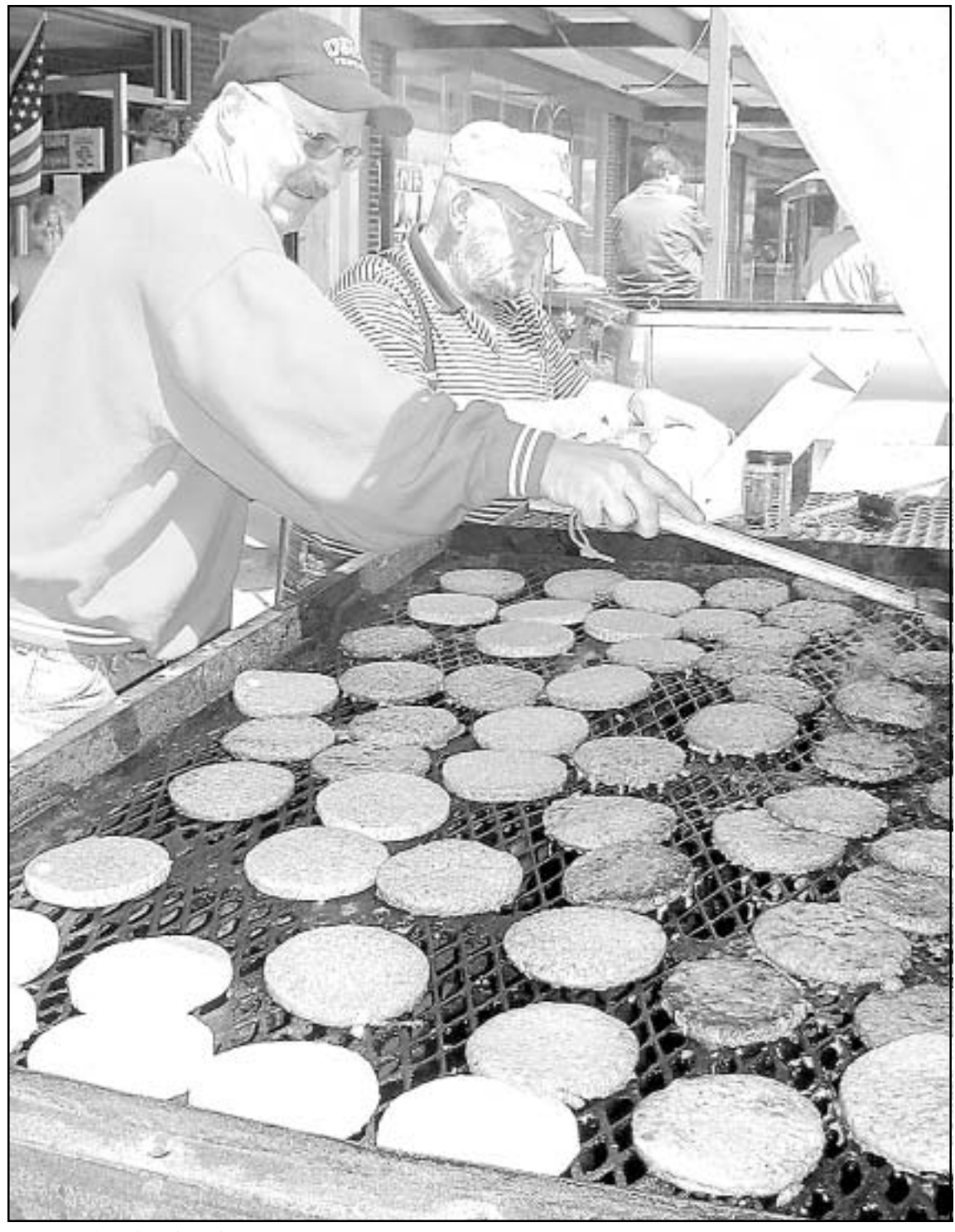
Call (800) 658-4348, extension 8112 or 8111. The deadline for summer awards is May 14.

# Congressman plans a visit

Nebraska Congressman Tom Osborne will be the featured speaker at the first annual Moments of Magic banquet of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ellis County at 6 p.m. on Monday at the Holiday Inn in Hays.

The banquet is a culmination of a year-long effort by the organization to raise funds and educate the public about mentoring. Congressman Jerry Moran also plans to participate.

The public is invited. Tickets, which are \$25 or two for \$40, may be purchased by calling (785) 625-6672, or at any Sunflower Bank location in Hays.



WITH A LARGE GRILL, Duane Dorshorst (left) and Brian Keahey cooked hamburgers to sell for \$1 to raise money for the Sunflower Cinema on Saturday in front of Stanley Hardware.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

# \* Store celebrates 15 years

(Continued from Page 1A)

Mr. McVay moved it about three years before the Stanleys bought it and turned it into Western Hardware. The merchandise then came from Our Own Hardware, which was later purchased by Do It Best Hardware, the current supplier.

Mr. Stanley said there wasn't any particular reason why he and his wife bought the store. They were both 33 years old at the time. It just seemed like a good idea.

Over the years, he said, it has been a family operation with him running the business, Mrs. Stanley (who still works days at The Bank) doing the books and their two kids have helped out. Sarah lives in Louisiana and Jessica who is attending Fort Hays State University.

The store employs Deb Macfee and Sharon Ream, who are there to help customers each day.

The anniversary celebration started on Thursday with a paint clinic for women. Mr. Stanley said

there were 15 women at the class, which was geared toward women partly because of marketing. Women make the decision on 60 percent of the purchases anymore, he said.

After the birdhouse auction Saturday morning, the grill was fired up and the store sold burgers for \$1 each.

Mr. Stanley said all the money raised from the auction and burgers will be donated to the Sunflower Cinema. They raised \$1,050, which he thought the theater board was going to use for a sound system.

There were also 50 or so door prizes given away. In January, he sent out 100 or so letters to vendors. He told them that he advertises and sells their products and asked for door prizes.

Some of those items were in the treasure chest, a locked box that everyone over 18 had the chance to try to open. Kimberly Brandt picked the right key Saturday morning.

Another drawing was the wishing well, which allowed people to wish for any item in the store. If it was worth \$100 or less, the winner got it. If it was \$100 or more, they got \$100 off the total cost. Steve Haynes' name was drawn for an electric chain saw.

Mr. Stanley said the whole event had gone well. He said he was flabbergasted about the birdhouse auction and appreciated everyone who put them together and those who showed up to buy them.

# Crazy hat day



WITH CRAZY HATS ON, Joan Evans, dietary aide at the Good Samaritan Center, stood behind resident Marilyn St. Clair on Monday. Many residents and staff members sported hats for the afternoon and enjoyed a treat in the common room.

— Herald staff photo by Dave Bergling

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