

State plans changes in hunting permits

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The state wants to change its system for selling hunting and fishing licenses and permits from paper to a computer system, but a plan to take money directly out of vendor's accounts might prompt the county to stop selling the permits.

Decatur County officials wonder whether they should stop selling the permits rather than let the state come in and electronically "sweep" their bank account.

The other vendor in town, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun thinks the plan is a good idea and will actually open things up a little because they will be able to offer all the licenses and permits without stocking so many forms. The

plan also eliminates the requirement that license agents buy a bond to guarantee that they'll pay the state, but they will have to have a computer and printer to handle the special license forms.

The commissioners haven't decided what they will do yet. The county received a letter about the change, since the county clerk's office is one of the vendors in the county.

The county sells around 500 licenses a year, including special permits, and gets 50 cents for each one sold, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn. That brings in about \$250 per year. She said with the change, the county is probably going to have to buy new equip-

ment because a computer will be needed on the counter. She said the clerk's office isn't even wired for a computer on the counter.

Although they haven't made a decision, commissioners are questioning whether the county will continue to sell the permits.

With the new system, the state wants to automatically withdraw the money made on the licenses from the county's bank account.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said as far as he knows, the county isn't required by any law to sell the permits and licenses. Most counties do, but some, including Sherman, have dropped the service.

Sherman County Clerk Janet Rumpel said they dropped the service at the end of

last year. She said the state doesn't offer any training to people who sell the licenses, the rules and regulations change every year, there are many questions but no toll free number and the fee the county gets is only \$.50 a permit which doesn't come close to the cost to sell them or the reports that have to be done.

Mr. Hirsch said he was concerned that the system would let the state come in and take money out of the county's account, and the county wouldn't have any control over that. If there was an error, he said, it could take "a month of Sundays" to get it fixed.

Dale's is the only other license agency in the county. Co-owner Bob Woolsey said

they do plan on selling the licenses with the automated system. He said he thought the system will actually open things up, since vendors won't have to be bonded.

The new system will allow access to all types of licenses, he said, and there won't be a problem with possibly running out of a given form or stamp.

The only downside, said Mr. Woolsey, could be that the store will only have one unit instead of three or four people able to write licenses at the same time. That probably won't be a big factor until the bird population is a little higher here, he said, but the opening weekend can get pretty busy. (See PERMITS on Page 5A)



IN THE BACK of a big red Decatur County fire truck Friday, Cory Wurm (left above) and Landen Richards checked things out. Kyleana Blau (below) tried on a fireman's hel-

met when the integrated preschool class from Oberlin Elementary School toured the fire station.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Kids take tour of station

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The youngsters sat in a semi-circle in the Decatur County fire station, their eyes wide as they stared at the man in the heavy pants, coat, mask and air tank.

Fire fighter Matt Farr showed off his full gear. Some of the kids, students in the integrated preschool from Oberlin Elementary School, were scared. Others wanted to get down on the floor and rough house with the fireman, who was crawling, showing the kids what he might look like crawling in their house if it ever caught fire.

The class walked to the fire station Thursday afternoon to learn about firemen and see the trucks.

Firemen Jim Soderlund asked the kids why his pants and jacket have shiny stuff on them. He said it was so that people in the house can see the firemen better, since in a house fire it is normally dark.

"Never run away from firemen," said Mr. Soderlund. "They are your friends."

Mr. Soderlund said if the smoke alarm goes off in their house, they should crawl to get out. He said it is important to get as low to the ground as possible to stay under the smoke.

He said if the kids ever find a match or lighter, they should tell an adult, same if they see a fire.

As Mr. Farr was moving around on the floor, Mr. Soderlund said the fireman's gear weighs 80 to 90 pounds. One mom in the audience told her son that was more than he weighed.

What's in the bottle? asked Mr. Soderlund. Mason Berry said it was oxygen, though the firemen's



air packs actually contain compressed air.

After each of the kids who wanted to get an up-close look at Mr. Farr's gear, they took turns trying on his hat and coat.

Mr. Soderlund took them into the garage to see the trucks. How

many gallons of water does this truck hold? asked Mr. Soderlund, standing next to the large tanker. "A lot," one little girl answered. After laughing, Mr. Soderlund said it was over 4,000 gallons.

Outside, a large red fire engine was waiting for the kids.

With the help of the firemen, the kids climbed in and out of the truck. Finally they settled in. Several sat in the large back seat while others got in the front. Parents who had joined in on the tour climbed on the back and the group got a ride back to the school.

Residents hear about options for Jennings

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Around 50 citizens joined the Jennings School Board on Thursday night to hear what options the district has as enrollment continues to drop.

This year, the district saw a decrease in the full-time-equivalent of 31.5 students, leaving 31 enrolled this year. Enrollment has been declining for some time, but the drop accelerated this year.

Superintendent Dave DuBois said he had invited John Rasmussen, a lawyer with the Kansas Association of School Boards, to come out to talk with the group about options.

Mr. Rasmussen said the district basically has five options, including continuing with fewer students, negotiating cooperative agreements with other districts, disbanding, consolidation with another district, or trying to draw new students with a virtual or charter school. No decisions were made at the meeting, but the board is scheduled to meet on Thursday, Nov. 11.

The first option he went over was cooperative agreements, where the district enters into a contract with another district or districts to send students there. Agreements need to cover things like transportation, he

New boss hired

The Jennings School District will have a new superintendent starting Monday, Nov. 1, as its part-time leader moves on to a new job.

With the resignation of Superintendent Dave DuBois, Emery Hart, now the part-time superintendent at Utica, was hired.

He is the former superintendent in Morland.

Mr. DuBois was re-hired for the position as a part-time superintendent at the beginning of the school year. He told the board he has accepted a job as the chief of staff with the Center for Civic Education in Los Angeles. He starts in early November.

said, payment of costs and expenses and the authority and responsibility of the boards.

(See DISTRICT on Page 5A)

Superintendent gives suggestions to board, public

After studying the projected enrollment for next year and the expected decrease in the budget, Jennings Superintendent Dave DuBois had four suggestions for the future of the district which he handed out at a special meeting Thursday night.

Mr. DuBois said the handout was a draft of his suggestions, and the board doesn't have to take any of them.

This year, he said, the district has a budget of \$574,814 in the general fund and \$132,495 in the supplemental general (which comes from the local option property tax levy), for a total of \$707,309. The projected budget for next year is \$403,683 in the general and \$93,049 in the supplemental general for a total of \$496,732.

The worst-case scenario is \$319,856 in the general, \$73,727 in the supplemental with a total of

\$393,583, the superintendent said.

With those projections in mind, Mr. DuBois suggested four options:

- Change the high school, grades 7-12, into an "e-school" and maintain a kindergarten through sixth grade. This would mean cuts of four to six certified staff and other cuts. Older students would take classes via the Internet.

- Contract with another district to educate the upper grades and maintain a grade school. Jennings would then pay part of its state aid for each student sent to the other district. This is what the neighboring Lenora district does.

- Consolidate with another district.

- Dissolve, and let the state decide what happens to the district's territory.

Mr. DuBois didn't suggest any of the options over the others. There was no discussion.

Scavenger hunt to be held Saturday

The 25th annual Oberlin Scavenger Hunt will start at 7 p.m. Saturday at the band shell in City Park.

Twenty-five years ago, Rusty and Sharon Addleman and Delbert and Roxie Erickson came up with the idea for the hunt. It has been going on every year since then. Mrs. Erickson said she and her husband lived in Newton and then moved here. While in Newton she was a member of a club that had a scavenger hunt and then the faculty had one

too. When they moved here they got together with the Addlemans and organized a hunt. It started, she said, with 25 couples off their front porch.

She said she didn't have any idea it would last this long. Every year she sees it is still going on, she laughs.

Since starting the one in Oberlin, she said she helped organize one in Selden.

(See HUNT on Page 5A)

* District hears options

(Continued from Page 1A)

Forexample, he said, the Jennings District could agree to send students in grades 7-12 to another district and maintain its grade school, as the Lenora district does. The Jennings District would then pay whatever is agreed on to the other district to educate those kids.

There are other kinds of cooperative agreements, he said, like sharing teachers or sending students to other districts for activities.

Mr. Rasmussen said when employees are shared, usually one district employs them and then the other district would reimburse it for part of the costs.

Contracting to send students to another district is one of the simplest things to do, he said, especially if the district is looking at low numbers in the high school or can't offer all the programs students want. Mr. Rasmussen said this is what Lenora does with Norton, but Lenora still maintains a grade school.

Jennings already has an agreement with Hoxie for football and Oberlin for junior high sports.

Another option, he said, is consolidation, in which a new district is opened from two or more districts joining. This is what Herndon and Atwood Districts did to form the Rawlins County School District.

An important thing to know, he said, is that consolidation takes 18 to 24 months to complete. When a new district is formed, he added, all of the teachers start over. No one has tenure.

Consolidation has to be voted on by the citizens of the combined district.

A district can simply disorganize, he said, which means the district dissolves and becomes a part of another district. That would mean the Jennings District would no longer exist and the land would be attached to another school district or districts.

The simplest way to disorganize, said Mr. Rasmussen, is for the board to petition the state Board of the Education to disorganize and attach to one or more other school districts. If the state board approves it, then there doesn't have to be an election. The state board will disperse any property the district has, including the buildings, money, classroom gear and other items.

Disorganization, said Mr. Rasmussen, doesn't require action by the board. Citizens can file a petition with the county election officer. The petition has to get signatures of 20 percent of the ballots cast in the last board election. The item would then go to an election.

With disorganization, the district would have to pay off any debt it has. The district can, if the board chooses, assume some of the debt of the district they are attaching to.

If the district decides to disorganize before July 1, the budget will stay the same for two years, he said. If it is done after that date, it will only stay the same for one year.

For a virtual school, which would mean the older students would take class via the internet, the program has to be approved by the state Department of Education, he said, and there are some personnel requirements. Jobs required include a program director, certified teachers, student and parent communication liaison, technical support staff, testing facilitator, data entry, training staff and counseling and interview services. One person, he said, can do more than one of the jobs.

Mr. Rasmussen said another option is a charter school, but he doesn't think that kind of school is supposed to be the sole offering in the district. He said he thought charter schools are to be an alternative.

There were some questions asked about eligibility in sports if the district were to join with another. Mr. DuBois said he asked the activities association, and officials said the students are automatically eligible in their new schools.

Mr. DuBois said he would like to see the board make a decision by February.

Local group plans dinner

A soup and dessert supper will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 30, at the Jennings Community Building to raise money for a renovation project.

On the menu are chili, potato soup, cake, tea or coffee, all for a donation.

Cards will be played at the Jennings Senior Citizens Center after the supper. Everyone is welcome.

In the bucket



WORKERS FROM Prairie Land Electric Cooperative were helping the city line crew Friday morning to replace a powerpole at Hall and U.S. 83. Police said Rodney Marshall, 18, ran into it with a 1993 Freightliner the evening before. The accident report wasn't finished Monday, and it wasn't

known if Mr. Marshall got a ticket, but he apparently left the scene after hitting the pole. Power in some areas west of the highway was out for about 30 minutes while the workers fixed the pole.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

* Permits to be sold over the computer

(Continued from Page 1A)

There may be a little more time involved in purchasing a license then.

Karen Beard, chief of licensing with the Wildlife department, said all of the paper licenses will be gone and the system will be completely automated.

When someone walks in to a vendor location, the equipment will be electronic. This will help the vendors sell the correct licenses and will help hunters because they won't be as likely to get the wrong license.

The licenses will be printed on a durable stock from the computer, so hunters will still be carrying something. Everything will be issued through the computer, she said.

The buyer also will see more licenses available over the Internet, she said.

All existing vendors will be brought into the system at a reasonably low cost, said Ms. Beard. For

those who want the complete setup, it will be a one-time fee of \$100, and for those who want to use their own computer and just need the printer, it will cost \$50. The one-time fee will include all the supplies.

It will probably cost new vendors more, she said.

Ms. Beard said the department is looking at June 2005 to run a pilot program and then hopes to have all vendors on line by that August.

If something should happen and the system goes down the first year, she said, the paper licenses will still be around. By 2006, everything will be completely automated.

The cost per license will go up 50 cents to \$1.15, she said, to help pay for the new system.

Right now, she said, the vendors get books of licenses, and they have to purchase a bond to guarantee they will pay for the inventory they get. Those bonds will no longer be nec-

essary.

With the automated system, said Ms. Beard, the computer will kick out a report every Monday of what has been sold and what the vendor owes. By that Thursday, the money owed needs to be in the vendor's bank account, and the state will automatically take it out.

The point-of-sale equipment runs on a phone line or the state will provide the software and it can run through the Internet.

There are many positives to a full database, she said. Ms. Beard said the machine is set up to swipe a driver's license and pull the information off of it, and then the vendor will just need to verify the address. If someone is from out of state, then that may not work, but there will be a keyboard to type in the information.

The department has sent out surveys to vendors, she said, and is get-

ting ready to send out a second survey. She said they have about half of the surveys back in and a few of the vendors have decided not to sell licenses anymore. Most of those were small-volume vendors who felt they didn't sell enough to justify the cost, she said.

* Hunt started 25 years ago

(Continued from Page 1A)

The original four planned the first three scavenger hunts and then passed it on to the winners.

The hunt is held each year just before Halloween. One clue starts out the whole thing. That clue leads teams to the next one and then on.

Clues are left all over town.

Last year, the team that retrieved all the clues, had the best time and mileage won.

The team included Scott Carlton, Cody Salem, Casey Alstrom and Tyson Garrison. As the winners, they got to organize this year's scav-

enger hunt.

The hunt will cost \$5 a person, which will include admission to a party afterwards. There is no limit on the number of teams or team members.

Anyone interested should meet at the band shell Saturday.

Challenge at grade school to end

The Support Our Schools box tops challenge at Oberlin Elementary School will be over at the end of October.

Students, with the help of parents, grandparents, family and friends have raised \$310.50 so far. The box

tops are found on top of General Mills cereal boxes, cake mixes and other dry food items. Each of the tops is worth cents 10 for the school.

Each week, what the classes have brought in is tallied and the totals are posted in the cafeteria.

The challenge will only last until the end of the month, but students can bring in box tops and Campbell's soup labels until the end of the year.

The box tops will be redeemed for classroom and teacher supplies.

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Oberlin only down 11.5 kids

In final counts, the Oberlin School District lost 11.5 full-time equivalent students this year.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said this year there are 31 kindergartners and 26 seniors. That means if no one moves out or in the district, there will be a gain of five kids next year.

The board talked with Shanna Long, a parent, at the meeting last Monday night. Mr. Glodt said she suggested having a sidewalk built in front of the gravel parking lot where the staff parks and having a landing built on the west side of the kindergarten building along the street.

The sidewalk would cost \$1,400 and the landing would cost \$7,875, he said.

In other business, the district:

- Agreed that board member Dwayne Jackson will be the voting delegate for the Kansas Associate of School Boards state convention.

- Approved appointments for the site councils. At the high school, that includes teachers Brenda Breth, Nita Lavielle, Candy Dejmaj and Maria Sanden; staff member Marilyn Diederich and parents Brad and Angie Erickson, Lee and Jane Gilliam, Jill Reichert and Patti Stapp. At the grade school, that includes teachers Keith Grafel, Diana Steinmetz, Cynthia Matson and Jennifer Monaco; staff member Jackie Anderson and parents Maureen Anderson, Vickie Huntley, Tim Breth and Roger May.

- Held a 50-minute closed session for negotiations and a 15-minute closed session for personnel. There was no action after either session.

- Approved Gloria Schultz as part-time custodian at the high school.

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