

# County approves chemicals

Director gets bids for yearly supplies at cost of \$13,000

The County commissioners approved buying a little over \$13,000 worth of chemicals for the noxious weed department at their meeting last Tuesday.

Noxious Weed Control Director Gaylen Huntley said he had asked for chemical bids. Mr. Huntley received bids from four companies including Helena, Timberland, Van Diest and Vegetation Management Specialists

There was one for the chemical Plateau at \$266 a gallon which is used to spray stickers. He said the county had to purchase a minimum of 15 gallons of the chemical, which would cost around \$4,000. He said he only wanted two gallons, however.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn asked if they could buy it elsewhere. Mr. Huntley said he was going to check with other counties and see if they are going to buy the chemical. With the sticker chemical, said Mr. Huntley, the bill would be around \$17,000.

Chemicals purchased were 2, 4-DLV No. 4 for \$11.47 a gallon, 2,4-DLV No. 6 for \$15.74, Tordon 22K for \$83.37, Todron 22K for \$81.86 and 2, 4-D Amine for \$8.84 from Van Diest, Vanquish for \$63.95 and Diuron for \$2.95 from Timberland and 90 percent surfactant for \$10.70 from Vegetation Management Specialists. Those were the lowest bids, which the commissioners approved.

Mr. Huntley said the state sent out a contract for weed-free forage. If they are going to use bales on our roads in the county, they want to make sure that the baled stuff is weed free. Before, he said, the state wanted to take care of it and now they are sending contracts for the county to do the leg work although the state would still get the money. Mr. Huntley said if the county doesn't sign the contract, the state will still have to do the work.

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested that the county should send a letter to the state that they would prefer the state keep doing the work.

The commissioners signed the annual budget for the weed department, which has to be sent into the state.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that Mr. Huntley received approval from the state to be a weed director for 2004 in December.
- Heard that there has been some decrease in the county's acreage of noxious weeds due to drought.

# Decals available for vets

The Decatur County treasurer's office is selling decals for people with veteran's license plates for \$2 each.

The decals may be put on cars, trucks or motorcycles up to a gross weight of 20,000 pounds.

Anyone with a veteran's tag and a DD-214 military discharge may purchase up to three decals. There are decals for each branch of the service, including Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Merchant Marines and Navy.

Decals are also available for those who have received the Bronze Star or Silver Star. Proof of the award is required.



**FOURTH GRADER** Kade Brown gets to travel to the nation's capital after his essay about voting won a contest sponsored by the Stephen Decatur House Museum in Washington.

The contest was available only to students who go to schools in Decatur counties, named for Commodore Stephen Decatur. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# Fourth grader heading to Washington

An Oberlin Elementary fourth grader will be headed to the nation's capital over Presidents' Day weekend after taking the initiative to enter into an essay contest sponsored by the Stephen Decatur House Museum in Washington.

Christie Morris, who teaches at the grade school, said Principal Duane Dorshorst was sent information about the contest for students in schools in Decatur Counties. Kade Brown decided on his own to enter

the competition and won.

He now has the opportunity to take the winning essay to Washington D.C.

His essay, "The Significance of Voting," was one of three national winners in his age category, winning a round-trip airfare and accommodations for him and a chaperone this weekend. He will be accompanied by his parents, his brother Kelly, and his grandmother, Patty Brown.

Kade is the son of Kevin and

Carol Brown of Oberlin, and grandson of LeRoy and Katharine Sullivan, Cambridge, Neb., and Patty Brown, Oberlin, and the late Joe Brown.

The contest was open to students in grades 4-12 in all schools in Decatur counties across America. The historic Decatur House for 186 years was home and social venue for elected officials from across the country. It was the home of Commodore Stephen Decatur, an early

American naval hero.

The theme was the significance of the right to vote.

Kade's essay will be added to an exhibition on display in the Museum's exhibition gallery, "First Neighbors: Decatur House Residents and the Presidents," and will be on view through April 5.

The trip will include a tour of the Capitol. His entry will be featured in the museum's newsletter.

# Boy's essay discusses the importance of voting

**The Significance of Voting**  
By **KADE BROWN**

Voting, think about it... Voting is an act where citizens decide who is going to be in office. Citizens can also use voting to help make important decisions. This act is a right and a privilege. In front of the Decatur County courthouse, there is a long flight of stairs. My great-grandmother's picture was in the newspaper because, when she was 90 years old, she walked with a brace on one leg up that long flight of stairs to take the time to vote. If she could vote, everyone should take the time to make the effort. It is important to vote so that we can keep the rights that we have now. My grandfather fought in World War II to keep our country free, so a way to honor all veterans is to vote. We have rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion that should not be taken for granted. We live in a democratic country. The right to vote is a significant part of the democratic process for several reasons.

One reason why voting is important is the opportunity is available. Every adult has a chance to take part in elections. In America today, all United States citizens over the age of 18 may vote. In 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment made it possible for all 18-year-olds to vote in state and national elections. The original constitution only allowed white men who owned land to vote. The Fifteenth Amendment, added in 1868, says "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment allowed women to vote.

Americans have fought hard for the right to vote. It would make no sense not to try to do what we can to keep that right.

Another reason why voting is meaningful is that when you vote, you can freely choose who you want to be in office. In some countries, you get to vote, but you do not get to choose the candidates. The government chooses the candidates. When countries do it that way, sometimes a more undesirable leader is put into office. In the United States, we are able to elect a president as well as other officials. In other countries, when people go to vote, they fear that something might happen to them at the polls. We are lucky; we have safer voting polls. It's a privilege to live in the United States and have the freedoms we do.

A third reason the voting process is critical is that it does not just elect leaders; it also helps create laws, legislation, and policies. Voting helps to decide many things. If there is a problem or a decision to make, we solve issues by voting. It can, for example, determine whether a town is to build a new school, community building, or swimming pool. In this country, we also have absentee voting. Absentee voting is an opportunity for anyone who has other responsibilities on Election Day to vote. They can vote prior to the actual election date. For example, if a soldier is at war and cannot be home to vote, he can vote by absentee ballot. If a farmer is busy working in the field, he too can vote by absentee

ballot.

The voting system is part of our democracy. Democracy is a government that is run by the people, who rule either directly or indirectly. We began as a democratic society and we need to stay a democratic society. Because the people have a say, democracy is a good way to run a country.

In the United States, we have two main political parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. They take different stances with different issues facing America. But Democrats and Republicans share some of the same concerns for our country. They include freedom of speech, good education for all, healthy environment, and equality.

When you register to vote, you can register as a Democrat, Republican, or an Independent. Independents cannot vote in the primary elections. In an election, it does not matter which party you belong to; you can vote for whatever candidate you wish. It is important to be a good citizen. Voting is one way to be a good citizen. When voting, it is wise to know the candidates and what they stand for. One way of choosing is to watch a Presidential Debate. In a debate, the two main candidates discuss what they would do for the country. Debates are held on public television. To find more about the presidential candidates, you could also read newspapers.

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Kansas State Treasurer

# Apology will be mailed

The sheriff talked with the Decatur County commissioners about sending a letter of apology to a young man who was questioned at the Jennings School recently about an incident in the Dresden area.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said a couple of youths threw some firecrackers at pigs north of Dresden and then went into town and shot bottle rockets at some chickens in trees.

Witnesses got a tag number on the vehicle, and Undersheriff Michael French went to the school in Jennings to talk with a teen-ager who sources said might be involved or know about what happened.

The young man was called into the office and questioned.

The sheriff said the teen's father came to the office and talked to him. He was upset that the student was questioned in the school and wanted a public apology as well as a written apology.

Sheriff Badsky said he wanted to talk with the commissioners about it so they knew what was going on. He said he would probably do a written apology.

Commissioner Patricia Glenn said that she received a call from the father, too. He said the teen wasn't involved in the incident.

Sheriff Badsky said they have found out who disturbed the animals.

Although officers are allowed to contact kids at school, Sheriff Badsky said from now on they will ask their parents to either bring them in or the officers can pick them up and bring them to the office.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that last fall, Undersheriff French stopped someone and they tried to shut their car door on him. He now needs shoulder surgery. Sheriff Badsky said he thought the undersheriff would be out for around 30 days.
- Heard that there were 29 vehicle inspections in January, five one-vehicle accident reports, four offense reports, 39 papers served and four tickets written.

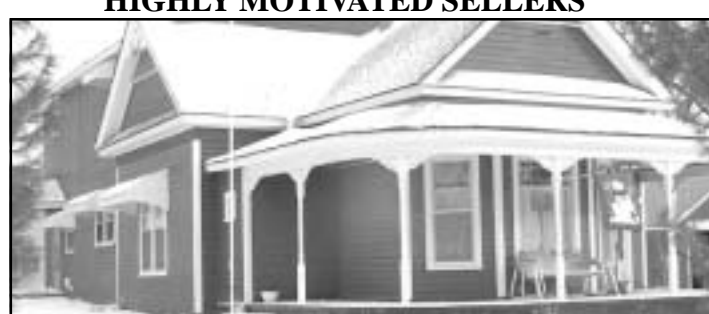
# Offices to be closed

Banks and financial institutions, as well as county and federal offices, will be closed on Monday for Presidents' Day.

Most businesses will be open, including *The Oberlin Herald*, as will city and state offices.

There will be no mail service, so news and advertising copy may be left at the newspaper office.

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