THE OBERLIN HERALD 75 c (tax included; 54¢ delivered at home) 16 Pages, 2 Sections Wednesday, May 11, 2005 127th Year, Number 19

Water trigger lowered 100,000 gallons

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

With no increase in the amount of water the city can pump, and faced with a another long, hot summer, the City Council cut trigger for the emergency water plan from 800,000 gallons a day to 700,000.

Since the city has already touched that level once this spring, the decision means water restrictions are only a few weeks away.

For the past few years when the plan was reviewed by the council, the trigger has been lowered.. In 1999, it was 1.2 million gallons; last year, it was 800,000 and now 700,000, a total of 500,000 less.

The trigger was cut because water production has been declining,

City Countdown

At the meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

head of the water department decide which back hoe to purchase. Story on Page 10A.

• Approved a change order and final pay request for the water main extension on north U.S. 83. Story on Page 10A.

said City Administrator Gary Shike. It probably hasn't changed much since last year. The council mem- the city's wells has increased a little bers are just more realistic on how since last year, but it hasn't been close.

• Agreed to change the trigger for a water warning from 800,000 gallons • Decided to let the city foreman and to 700,000 gallons a day for the city's water contingency plan. Story on left.

> · Heard that a fourth full-time police officer has been hired and agreed to pay him \$9.65 an hour. Story on Page 3A.

• Discussed repaving some streets using the city crew. Story on Page 3A.

they are looking at it.

Mr. Shike said the water level in

enough to increase production.

The city has been working for years on how to get more water. Recently, it applied for an emergency water grant to help redrill well No. 9 and refurbish well No. 10 to get more water. So far, the city hasn't heard back from the federal government on the money.

The city had hoped to have the work done before summer.

Currently the city has three wells, No. 9 and No. 10 east of town along U.S. 36, and No. 11, south of town on U.S. 83. The two main wells are No. 10 and No. 11, but wells No. 9 and No. 10 can't be pumped together for long because they are too

has declared a water warning under the emergency policy, and the council has approved it. That puts the city on an odd-even water plan. Residents with odd numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Those with even addresses water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. People are only allowed to water between midnight and 10 a.m.. and 9 p.m. and midnight on their assigned days.

Extra outdoor water use is prohibited. In the previous plan, people were allowed to re-fill private swimming pools one day a week after sunset. Councilman Ray Ward said if the city was going to allow that,

For the last three years, the mayor then there should be a certain day for people to water their gardens.

The council agreed to add refilling pools to "Outdoor water use, including lawn water, car washing and refilling pools will be restricted from 12:01 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 9 p.m. to midnight."

The council also agreed to reduce the trigger to 700,000 gallons used in a day.

City Foreman Dan Castle said the water system pumped that much one day last week when the weather was nice. By Thursday, usage was back down to 500,000 gallons.

Since the city has already hit the trigger, Mayor Ken Shobe said, (See WATER on Page 10A)

County to offer service

Recycling trailer will be here soon

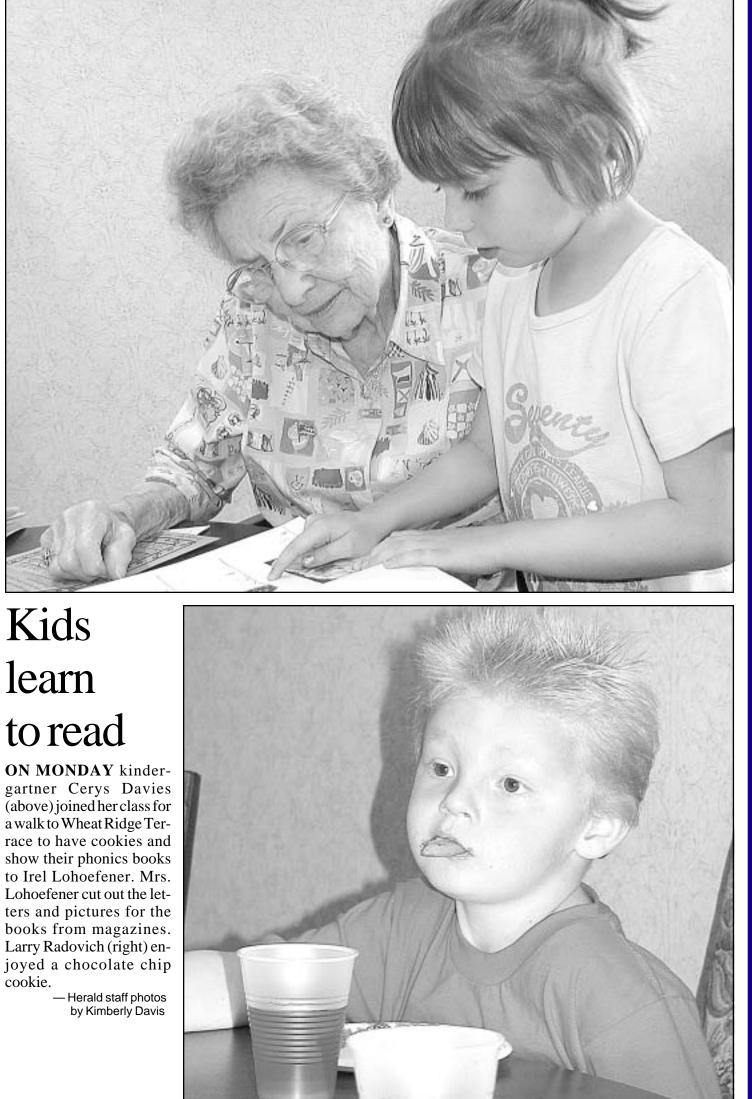
Soon, Decatur County will have a place for people to take recyclables, rather than loading them up and taking them out of town, since county commissioners decided to get a recycling trailer.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said the trailer, which belongs to the Northwest Kansas Recycling Association in Colby, is being used by Gove County now. Gove County is building a recycling building, and won't need the trailer anymore.

Mrs. Horn said Decatur County will be able to use the trailer until another county joins the organization or until the county can buy its own trailer or put up a building.

Commissioners have been discussing recycling for a few years, but hadn't made any decision until after the new year. The county paid \$1 per person to join the service, around \$3,400

Taking bottles, newspapers, glass, cardboard and other items to the recycling trailer won't cost the user anything, said Mrs. Horn, but the items do need to be separated



Railnet has new owners **Denver** company buys tracks here

Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado Railnet, which serves Oberlin, Cedar Bluffs and Herndon, is under new management after Omnitrax, a company based in Denver, purchased the line last Monday.

Bob Parker, Omnitrax chief operating officer, said things in Oberlin should stay the same. The train will still come as needed, unless there is an increase in businesses.

People will see this company more because the plan is to show high marketing support for the railroad and customers, he said. Mr. Parker said people will also see Omnitrax invest in the property.

There will still be the same people to work with on a daily basis. When Omnitrax bought the 559 miles of track, he said, they kept the same people.

At the same time Omnitrax purchased the Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado Railnet, they also purchased the Georgia and Florida Railnet with 297 miles of track and the Illinois Railnet with 113 miles. Mr. Parker said all of the lines will

first. Mrs. Horn said recycling should

make the county landfill last longer, saving everyone money.

She said they don't know when the trailer will get here, but it should be in the next few weeks. It will be parked at the old county shop on county property, but along the road.

Once the trailer is full, or close to it, the whole rig will be hauled to Colby to be dumped, she said.

Although recycling is easy, the association asks that users follow some guidelines:

• Wash and rinse glass before separating the colors. Colors accepted are clear, amber (brown) and green. The labels can stay on, but metal rings have to go. Light bulbs, ceramics, oven ware, porcelain, plate and auto glass, mirrors, heatresistant glass (Pyrex) and leadbased glass are not accepted.

•Newspapers, magazines, phone books, greeting cards and chipboard boxes all can be recycled. Chipboard includes cereal boxes, cake mix boxes and egg cartons.

All boxes need to be flattened and any plastic liner needs to be removed.

• Cardboard boxes need to be flattened. Cardboard that has paint, grease or oil on it is not accepted. Most pizza boxes are contaminated except for the lid.

• Junk mail and office paper are accepted, including white paper, copy paper, letterhead, computer printouts, pastel colored paper, carbonless, envelopes, window envelopes, direct mailings, faxes, brochures and file folders.

Shredded paper is also OK. Darkcolored paper and manila (dark yellow) envelopes and paper are not accepted.

Students to promenade Main Saturday

Fancy dresses, tuxes, ties, strappy and so are people in town. shoes, flowers of all colors and tradition; it's time for the annual jun- all ages line Main Street to get a ior/senior prom in Oberlin.

Each year, students at Decatur Community High School prepare The tradition of promenade has been for prom by trying on dresses, picking out tuxes and, of course, finding a date.

With prom on Saturday, students walk down the streets. at the high school are getting ready

Each year, adults and children of glimpse at the juniors and seniors dressed up during the promenade. going on for over 75 years. When it started, students use to go in and out of the stores, but nowadays they just

LandMark Inn, then back north on Penn Avenue before heading off to The Gateway for dinner and dancing. The promenade will start at 7 p.m., with the banquet to follow at 7:30 p.m.

On Friday, the junior class will spend the afternoon decorating the arena at The Gateway. From 6 to 7 They will start at Sunflower Cin- p.m. on Saturday, the public will be lin Rotary Club, and will end 4 a.m.

ema and walk south to the allowed to view the decorations. The dance will start at 9 p.m. and

end at midnight.

This year's prom marshal has not been announced. The juniors will vote on who will be king and queen on Friday.

The theme is "Viva Las Vegas." An after prom party will follow the dance, sponsored by the Oberkeep the same names except railnet will be changed to railway.

The lines were for sale, said Mr. Parker, and they looked like solid operations that were already in place. Omnitrax saw the opportunity to grow or improve the bottom line, he said.

The lines have a wide array of customers and aren't tied to one commodity.

Mr. Parker said there is room to expand and the company can spread the risk around.

Omnitrax is a transportation holding company, he said, with 18 short line railroads, five switching operations, a locomotive servicing divi-

(See RAIL on Page 10A)

Big First tour to be held

Congressman Jerry Moran will be at the LandMark Inn from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 2, as part of his annual Big First Listening Tour.

During the tour, which runs from April 18 to Aug. 19, Rep. Moran plans to visit all 69 counties in his district.

This year, his office says, many of the stops will be at historical and tourist sites.

"I am eager to begin my annual listening tour in order to discuss the issues important to Kansans and receive my marching orders," Rep. Moran said. "This year's tour will serve a dual purpose, as I also help to showcase the many tourist treasures that Kansas has to offer. By helping people to 'rediscover Kansas,' we can bring to light the efforts of those that work to preserve and protect the history and individuality of our state."

For more information, call Rep. Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/

Last Jennings graduation to feature six seniors

Six seniors will walk across the Hoxie next year. stage Saturday at the last graduation for students at Prairie Heights High School at Jennings.

The school board has decided to Kyle Kinser will speak. close the school and send high school students to Oberlin and Rogers, a teacher and senior class presentation during the event.

Graduation starts at 2:30 p.m. in

the high school gym. Valedictorian Gerber daisy, colors are black and Tiffany Wheeler and Salutatorian

sponsor this year.

The class flower is the pink gold and their motto is, "Reputation is valuable, but character is price-

The guest speaker will be Judith less." Seniors will put on a media

Vahling will hand out eighth grade and Ms. Wheeler. certificates to Nathan Baker, Jacinta Carter and Stephanie Stone.

Bochert, Jody Brooks, Crystal there isn't anything special planned.

School Board Member Alesha Franco, Bradley Gawith, Mr. Kinser

There will be a reception with refreshments following the gradua-Board President Lawrence Carter tion in the school cafeteria. Alwill hand out diplomas to Roxanne though this is the last graduation,

Final payment approved

The Oberlin City Council approved a change order and final pay request for the water main extension on north U.S. 83 at a meeting Thursday night.

Thaniel Monaco, engineer with Miller and Associates, said the project is complete and all the services are working. He said all of the testing on the equipment has been done.

There was one change order which cost the city \$212. The final pay request for Elk Creek Backhoe and Trenching of Nebraska, was \$9.058

The council approved to pay both. Mr. Monaco said he talked with Steve Tharman and Dave Barber from the U.S. Rural Development Administration about the emergency water grant to re-drill well No. 9 and refurbish well No. 10.

Mr. Tharman, said Mr. Monaco, was told the national office that awards the money has an unwritten policy that only a community that can't repay a loan is eligible for an emergency water grant.

Mr. Monaco said he asked where the policy is written and Mr. Tharman said it is an unwritten policy. Mr. Tharman said the state office was unaware of the policy.

This is the first time Miller has heard about the unwritten policy, said Mr. Monaco.

Mayor Ken Shobe said if it would help, the city could contact a congressman. If by the end of the week the city hasn't heard anything about the grant, said Mr. Monaco, he will get some other people on board and get it pushed through.

The council approved the purchase of a 1999 Dodge two-wheel drive pickup from Jr's Used Cars for \$9,000 and a 2001 Dodge fourwheel-drive pickup for \$11,000. The 1999 truck will be for the cemetery and the 2001 will replace the foreman's truck.

* Water plan



Kids prepare for show

ON THEIR RECORD-ERS, Cheyenne Soderlund and Miki Dorshorst (above) played in the dress rehearsal last Wednesday for the concert Thursday evening. Serena Stacy, Kiah Blau, Sara Kyte and Samantha Anderson (right) sang after they practiced their songs with the band.

- Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



* Denver firm **buys** rail

(Continued from Page 1A) sion and more. Most is for freight, although the company handles some passengers.

There are six large Class 1 railroads in America, said Mr. Parker, and the short lines are similar to the commuter or feeder airlines. The short lines are used to deliver freight in remote areas where the main line doesn't go.

"If it wasn't for the short lines," said Mr. Parker, "sometimes the Class 1's would abandon customers in remote areas and we would have to rely solely on trucks."

Mr. Parker said Omnitrax has been expanding rapidly, with the Railnet line rails being the fourth, fifth and sixth purchases in the last five months.

This is the first venture into Kansas for the company, he said.

Relay wants walkers

The Relay for Life committee wants cancer survivors interested in participating in the June 17 event to call a committee member.

Melinda Grafel, who is helping with the relay, said they sent letters out to survivors they know about, but haven't received many back. She said they might have missed some, too.

Survivors normally walk the first lap to kick the relay off and then caregivers and family members join them on the second lap, said Mrs. Grafel.

Any survivors interested in participating should call Mrs. Grafel at 785-322-5234 or Sue Black at 475-3453. If the survivor wants a relay T-shirt, they need to call one of the women by Sunday.

Council tables backhoe purchase

The Oberlin City Council decided Dan Castle said he would.

to let the city foreman and the head Is there a little more reach on these of the water department decide backhoes? asked Councilman Jav Listen for the

(Continued from Page 1A) there seems to be no question as to whether the city will be on even/odd watering. The question is when will it happen.

The plan is set so the mayor can declare the warning at any time and then the council approves it at the next scheduled meeting.

The mayor didn't declare a warning at the meeting, but the council did approve the changes to the plan unanimously.

which backhoe to buy since the bids Anderson. Both are bigger mawere so close and it will be used chines than what the city has now, mostly in the water department.

said he sent letters to John Deere, erpillar. Caterpillar and JCB dealers. The city received a bid back from Cat- ing at leasing the machine, but there erpillar for a 420D for \$58,070 and is \$129,000 in the equipment fund JCB for a 214 for \$56,166. John so it could be purchased outright. Deere didn't respond.

Both bids, said Mr. Shike, met all cilman Joe Stanley, then the counthe specs. There was a slight differ- cil should let Mr. Castle and Mr. ence with the controls in the Cater- Perrin decide. If Mr. Perrin runs it, pillar model. Salesmen from both said Mr. McFee, he should choose companies were in the audience and it. said the bids would be good for at least 45 days.

water supervisor Willard Perrin is salesman said he would bring his going to be the main user. Foreman backhoe up next week.

said Mr. Shike. He said Mr. Perrin City Administrator Gary Shike had driven the JCB, but not the Cat-

Mr. Shike said the city was look-

If the bids are similar, said Coun-

The council tabled the purchase until after Mr. Castle and Mr. Perrin Councilman Rob McFee asked if make a decision. The Caterpillar

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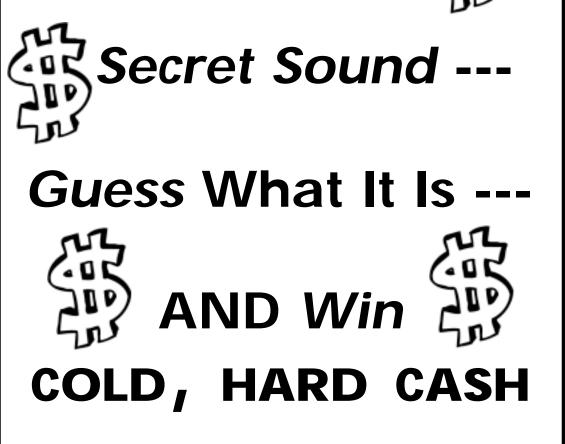
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