

Water trigger lowered 100,000 gallons

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

With no increase in the amount of water the city can pump, and faced with 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:

- Decided to let the city foreman and head of the water department decide which backhoe 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.

- Agreed to change the trigger for a water warning from 800,000 gallons 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.

said City Administrator Gary Shike. It probably hasn't changed much since last year. The council members are just more realistic on how

they are looking at it.

Mr. Shike said the water level in the city's wells has increased a little since last year, but it hasn't been

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 close.

For the last three years, the mayor 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,

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 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, heat-resistant glass (Pyrex) and lead-based 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.

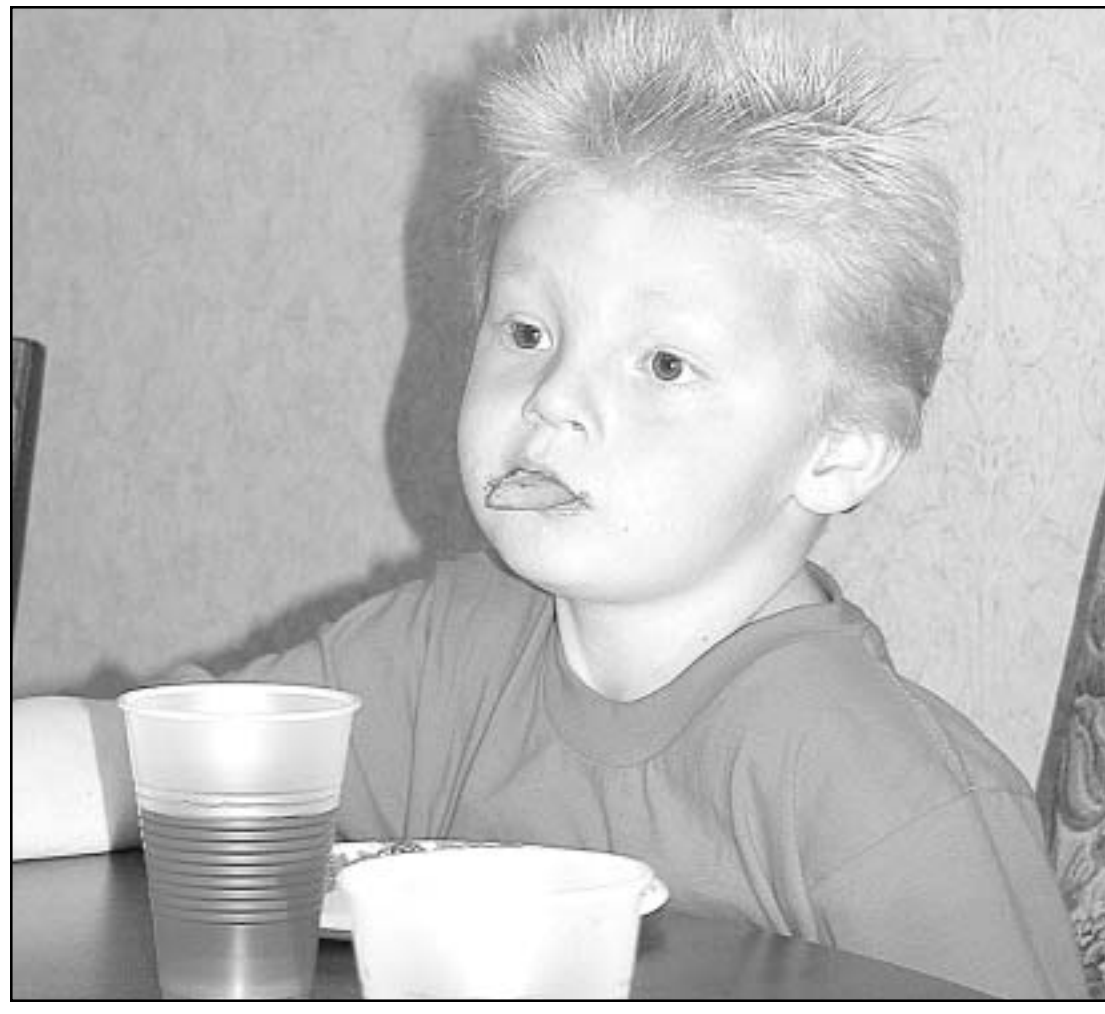
Shredded paper is also OK. Dark-colored paper and manila (dark yellow) envelopes and paper are not accepted.



Kids learn to read

ON MONDAY kindergarten Cerys Davies (above) joined her class for a walk to Wheat Ridge Terrace to have cookies and show their phonics books to Irel Lohoefer. Mrs. Lohoefer cut out the letters and pictures for the books from magazines. Larry Radovich (right) enjoyed a chocolate chip cookie.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Students to promenade Main Saturday

Fancy dresses, tuxes, ties, strappy shoes, flowers of all colors and tradition; it's time for the annual junior/senior prom in Oberlin.

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

With prom on Saturday, students at the high school are getting ready

and so are people in town.

Each year, adults and children of all ages line Main Street to get a glimpse at the juniors and seniors dressed up during the promenade. The tradition of promenade has been going on for over 75 years. When it started, students use to go in and out of the stores, but nowadays they just walk down the streets.

They will start at Sunflower Cin-

ema and walk south to the 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 p.m. on Saturday, the public will be

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 Oberlin Rotary Club, and will end 4 a.m.

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 keep 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 division. (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/moran/01/

Last Jennings graduation to feature six seniors

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

The school board has decided to close the school and send high school students to Oberlin and

Hoxie next year.

Graduation starts at 2:30 p.m. in the high school gym. Valedictorian Tiffany Wheeler and Salutatorian Kyle Kinser will speak.

The guest speaker will be Judith Rogers, a teacher and senior class

sponsor this year.

The class flower is the pink Gerber daisy, colors are black and gold and their motto is, "Reputation is valuable, but character is priceless." Seniors will put on a media presentation during the event.

School Board Member Alesha Vahling will hand out eighth grade certificates to Nathan Baker, Jacinta Carter and Stephanie Stone.

Board President Lawrence Carter will hand out diplomas to Roxanne Bochert, Jody Brooks, Crystal

Franco, Bradley Gawith, Mr. Kinser and Ms. Wheeler.

There will be a reception with refreshments following the graduation in the school cafeteria. Although this is the last graduation, there isn't anything special planned.

