

Numbers show possible tax increase

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin City Council started budget talks last Monday, with preliminary numbers showing a possibility of a 6-mill increase in property taxes.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the increase is mostly due to bond and interest from projects that the city doesn't have a choice on, such as the new waste water treatment plant. The tax increase is not set yet, he added.

The council has to have the budget done by Thursday, Aug. 25, said Mr. Shike. Ten

days before that, the council will have to have a budget hearing and 10 days before that, a notice has to be published in *The Oberlin Herald*.

At the meeting, the council talked with department heads about what each area will need for next year and where cuts can be made.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said the police department needs a car budgeted for 2006, but 2007 should be an off year. The cars of Officers Allen Rogers and Troy Haas need to be replaced, he said, and then it will

be time for his car to be replaced, but it won't be "miled out" by then.

The last car cost around \$21,226, he said. Councilman Joe Stanley suggested they put \$22,000 in capital outlay for the vehicle.

Chief Lockhart said he would like to take an excess computer in the city office for his office, but the other computer at the department had been replaced. He said he would like to try a laptop for the department.

With both, capital outlay is probably at \$25,000, said Mr. Shike.

The department should also purchase

more handguns, the chief said, since some of the officers are carrying their own. The guns are approved through him, but he would like them to be department issue. It will cost around \$800 to \$900 to buy one.

Chief Lockhart said he would like to buy one a year until the department has what they need.

Have you taken into account fuel costs? asked City Attorney Steve Hirsch.

Not including February and March, the chief said, since the beginning of the year the department has spent \$1,439 on fuel.

So around \$5,000 for gas, said Mayor Ken Shobe. Chief Lockhart said he doesn't know how to cut down on gas unless they cut down on patrolling.

Maybe the city could buy fuel on contract and get a better price, said Mr. Stanley.

The county talked about that a couple years ago, said Mr. Hirsch, but the problem is where to store it.

Getting in the fuel storage business isn't as easy as it used to be, said Mr. Shike.

That is where the city and county should (See CITY on Page 8A)

County valuation may be the same again next year

Shifts in taxing areas may keep the valuation from changing

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Depending on what the state-assessed utilities do, the county's property valuation should stay about the same next year, although both real estate and oil interests have changed some.

County Appraiser Allan Hale met with the Decatur County commissioners and the county clerk Tuesday to report on the valuation numbers. Clerk Marilyn Horn had asked for the meeting to get an idea of what to expect for the new budget.

He said the real estate valuations were down 3 percent, primarily due to a 5.8 percent decrease in agricultural land.

Decreasing valuation for agriculture land is a trend, said Mr. Hale, that has been going on for a few years. The valuation is based on an eight-year average of income, and some recent poor years are starting to show in the numbers.

In order to see a change in that, the county will have to have several good years to bring up the average, said Mr. Hale.

Just because the agriculture land value went down, said Mr. Hale, it doesn't mean the market for the land went down. Unlike other categories, the assessment is made on income, not on market value.

Personal property, which includes boats, recreational vehicles, business equipment, farm trucks, golf carts and more, stayed the same.

The valuation for oil interests went up about 85 percent due to the increase in oil prices, Mr. Hale said. That is nearly double what it was last year.

A good way to picture the overall valuation, he said, is to take a pie. Real estate is 74 percent of that pie, and it went down three percent. Personal property, which stayed the (See COUNTY on Page 8A)



ON U.S. 36 between Oberlin and Norton last Wednesday Steve Tchudi (above) rode his bike as a member of the Bike-Aid team. Riders Nicola Bell and James Duncan (below) worked on a bike. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Cyclists stop here for night

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Ten cyclists going from San Francisco to Washington spent the night Tuesday at Chautauqua Park in Oberlin, then pedaled off for Norton and Phillipsburg.

The Bike-Aid team, nine riders and a truck, is on "a mission of peace and justice," trying to bring the world a little closer together, said James Duncan of Denver.

The riders take turns driving the rental van, which is packed with food, water and equipment. Wednesday, Nicolas Bell of Alameda, Calif., was driving.

He had pulled off to the side of U.S. 36 just west of Reager waiting for the riders. They were strung all along the road from Oberlin, where the group had spent the night in a park.

Each rider had to raise \$3,800,

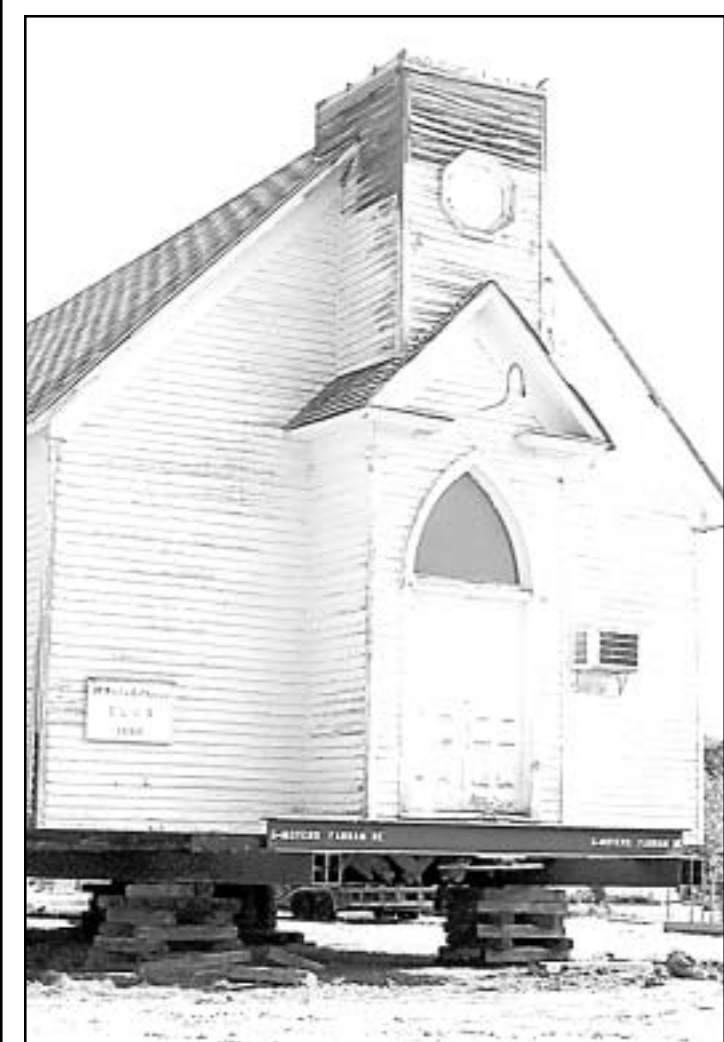


or \$1 per mile, Mr. Duncan said, to join the ride, which left San Francisco on June 24. The group plans to be in Washington on Aug. 15. Along the way, they are gather-

ing messages to take to Congress, Mr. Duncan said.

The group is riding under Global Exchange, which sponsors Bike-Aid, a cross-country cycling expe-

rience. "Since 1986, Bike-Aid has been taking people to places they never thought was possible," says (See RIDERS on Page 8A)



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH should be moved to Oberlin today from Norcatour, according to plans.

Norcatour church to be moved today to county museum

Ever seen a 38-foot-tall building being driven down the highway and over rural roads?

Now is your chance, since the old St. Mark's Lutheran Church should be moved from Norcatour to Oberlin today.

The church was given to the Last Indian Raid Museum about a year and a half ago by Bill and Bee Nelson and Lee Eckhart, the three remaining board members of the church.

Since then, both Mr. Nelson and Mr. Eckhart have died, said Curator Sharleen Wurm. Both of the men's grandfathers were char-

ter members at the church and helped to build it.

The church, which was built 117 years ago, in 1888, hasn't been used for services since 1984, said Mrs. Wurm. Even though it has sat for 21 years, she said the inside could be dusted up and used right away.

Although there are several old buildings on the grounds, the museum has always wanted a church, she said. The building will sit next to the old Bohemian Hall, which was moved to town in 2000. (See CHURCH on Page 8A)

District to welcome new staff at picnic

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin School District will welcome three new teachers and staff members at the annual back-to-school picnic sponsored by the schools, the Chamber of Commerce and the Oberlin Business Alliance on Tuesday, Aug. 16, in City Park.

New teachers and staff include Jason Ketterl, who will teach vocational agriculture; Maria Campo Cuesta who will teach Spanish; and Johanna Mason, school nurse.

At a meeting Monday night, the board got things in order for the new

school year, which starts on Thursday, Aug. 18.

With the majority of the items on the consent agenda, the meeting was short.

The board re-elected Dewayne Jackson as president and Jeannie Martin as vice president. Both will also serve on the bid committee.

Barb Olson and Monte Moore were elected to serve on the policy review committee.

Mrs. Olson will also serve as the governmental relations network contact with the Kansas Association

of School Boards.

Board Member Kurt Vollertsen will serve on the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center board.

In other business, the board:

- Appointed Principal Charles Haag in charge of gate receipts and activity fund resolutions.

- Rescinded all of the district's policies and approved all of them for the new school year.

- Agreed that the regular meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of the month. If that doesn't work, the board will meet the Tues-

day following. If a second meeting is needed, it will be the fourth Monday.

- Approved 11 students who live in the district to attend school out of the district.

- Gave the office permission to destroy financial records from the 1999-2000 school year.

- Approved the handbooks for the grade and high school.

- Approved employment of Mrs. Mason as the school nurse.

- Approved a food service agree-

(See SCHOOL on Page 8A)

Water use back up again last week

With temperatures in the high 90s and more last week, city water users kept the wells pumping using more than the 700,000 gallons a day water trigger five out of the seven days.

Weeks ago when the city pumped over 700,000 gallons of water a day

Mayor Ken Shobe decided it was time to go on water restrictions.

On the water restrictions, people are only allowed to water every other day based on their address, except for Monday when no one waters.

Some days have cut down the use

and other days the usage is well over 700,000 gallons. If the city pumps 1 million gallons the water rules say there will be no outside water use allowed.

The city used:

- 551,000 gallons on Monday, July 11.

- 705,000 gallons on Tuesday, July 12.

- 775,000 gallons last Wednesday.

- 724,000 gallons on Thursday.

- 847,000 gallons on Friday.

- 781,000 gallons on Saturday.

- 498,000 gallons on Sunday.

* City taxes might increase for next year

(Continued from Page 1A) cooperate, said Mr. Hirsch. At the airport, said Mr. Shike, he didn't know of any big expenses. The group noted that the city doesn't actually own the hangers, but does own the land under them. The city gets \$100 to \$200 a year on rent for each hanger, depending on the size. Mr. Shike said Fire Chief Bill Cathcart called and said he wanted to replace a tank on one of the trucks, which would cost around \$10,000. Last year there was \$3,000 in capital outlay so the council tentatively placed \$13,000 on the capital outlay for next year. Down the road, said Councilman Patrick Pomeroy, the fire department building is going to need work or replacement. It is a county building, said Mr. Hirsch. Maybe the city should put money away for a new building or an addi-

tion, said Mr. Pomeroy, since the city trucks are stored there. Surely there are grants for it, he said. The council didn't put any money aside. City Foreman Dan Castle said he has one mower that needs to be replaced for the cemetery department. The group also discussed the wall for the new part of the cemetery, for which money has been put aside. The council received a request from the library for an increase in their budget of \$3,100 and asked the city to come up with \$1,550 of it and the library the rest. Mr. Shike said the council made it through the whole budget, although all of the numbers are tentative. The council will hold another budget meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway. The meeting will be held downstairs and will not be aired on local access cable channel 7, but is open to the public.

* County valuation may be the same

(Continued from Page 1A) same, is seven percent and oil interests are five percent of the pie. Both of those increased. All of the numbers, said Mr. Hale, are approximates. Although oil interests are only a small piece of the pie, said Mr. Hale, they influenced the total by increasing so much. The last part of the pie, state-assessed utilities, including electric lines, railroads, pipelines and telecommunications, are sent to the clerk from the state. That part is 14

percent of the pie. If the county's valuation stays the same, said Mr. Hale, it will depend on the budget whether people pay more or less in taxes. Some of the individual taxing units might see valuations go up a lot if they have a lot of oil wells, he said. Others could see the valuations go down if they have mostly agricultural land. The more value the taxing unit has, he said, the lower tax levy they need to bring in a given amount of money. With less valuation, they need a higher rate to bring in the amount.

* Riders cross Kansas

(Continued from Page 1A) the group's web site at www.globalexchange.org. The group is traveling as economically as possible, Mr. Bell said, trying to make the \$3,800 each cover most expenses. While they occasionally eat at restaurants, most of their food is purchased at stores on the way or donated. At night, the group camps out, as they did in Oberlin, or sometimes stays at churches, said rider Amber Broch of Reno, Nev. While many groups travel down U.S. 36 during the summer, Bike-Aid got on at Boulder, Colo., and planned to head south to U.S. 24 and Beloit after spending the night in Phillipsburg. "We take the back roads," said Steve Tchudi, one of the oldest riders in the group, which has riders from 20 to 63. The riders average about 70 miles a day, Ms. Broch said, about 12 to 15 mph. Mr. Bell said that one of the reasons he came on the ride is to see the inside of the country. He lives in California and has been to the East Coast, but hasn't had a chance to get to know the heartland. "Pretty much everyone is nice," he said. "They're not radically different from people in California or New York." It's not easy to take most of three months off to ride a bike across the country. Ms. Broch just finished graduate school and several other riders are students, she said. However, a couple had to quit their jobs to join the ride. "All of us are pretty much jobless when we get home," she said. The group is also doing some community service along the way, she said, helping at a food bank in Boulder, painting a fence in Walden, Colo., and picking up trash in Utah.

Spreading it on thick



MEN WITH HUSKER STEEL spread cement on a bridge crew will replace this summer. It is only bridge which the — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

* Church will get new home at museum

(Continued from Page 1A) Mrs. Wurm said the foundation has been poured and everything is set for the move. The museum board and directors have been trying to get the church moved to town since it was donated, but first it rained, then it was winter, then the movers had other jobs, and then it was harvest. The first thing that had to be done was to take the steeple off, because with it on, the building was too tall and more power lines would have to be raised. The steeple was removed more than a year ago, said Mrs. Wurm, and placed on a trailer where it has been since. Then the bell tower where the steeple sits, had to be

shaved down because the building was still too tall. The steeple and the church will be pulled separately. Without the steeple, said Mrs. Wurm, the load is 38 feet high and over 12 tons with the trailer. That is taller than the Bohemian Hall, she said. G Movers out of Nebraska will be moving the church. Doak Construction used their crane to take off the bell tower and steeple. The plan, she said, is to leave Norcat around 9 a.m. today. The church will be driven east out of Norcat on a dirt road then onto U.S. 36 towards Oberlin. At the Jennings Road, they will turn off, go two miles south and then five west

to the Kanona Road. From there, they will go north two miles to U.S. 36. The church will come in on the dirt road that joins the highway near Cabinetland and follows the railroad tracks into town. The state has a rule that the building can only travel on the highway for 10 miles, said Mrs. Wurm. This route will make it just about perfect. Along the way, she said, Prairie Land Electric crews will have to be raising wires, since even without the steeple, the building is tall. Cebridge Connections, she said, will have to lower one cable right outside the museum grounds. Mrs. Wurm said she isn't sure

how long it will take to get to Oberlin, since the journey will be taken at five to 10 miles an hour. Once the building is here, the first project they would like to do is to repair and restore the steeple and bell tower and paint it before it is placed back on the church. Some rotted boards need to be replaced and the whole thing needs to be painted. Anyone who wants to make a donation may mail it to Last Indian Raid Museum, 258 S. Penn Ave. Oberlin, Kan. 67749 Mrs. Wurm said anyone who donates \$100 or more will have their name on a plaque that will be hung in the church.

* School board accepts policies for new year

(Continued from Page 1A) ment with the federal government through the state that the district will serve meals that meet federal standards, including so many meats, vegetables and fruits a day. • Agreed that Mr. Haag and El-

ementary Principal Duane Dorshorst will serve as the truancy officers. • Adopted a 1,116-hour calendar for the new year. • Approved Vickie Lippelmann as the clerk of the board, Carla

Depperschmidt as deputy clerk, Pam Simonsson as treasurer and the Kansas Association of School Board legal assistance fund as the board attorney. • Agreed to have the district's checking account and the activity

accounts at First National Bank. • Agreed that Mrs. Lippelmann and Superintendent Kelly Glodt can invest idle funds. • Appointed Mrs. Lippelmann as the representative for Kansas Public Employees Retirement System.

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