

City budget drops; taxes may increase

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

It looks like Oberlin city's budget will go down next year even though the property tax levy will go up a little, which means people should pay close to what they did last year in taxes with just a slight increase.

The Oberlin City Council approved publishing the proposed budget for next year of \$3,601,979 in today's *Oberlin Herald* at a meeting Thursday night. This year's bud-

get \$3,804,868.

The budget year is only about half over, however, and city officials say they won't actually know the expenditures until the end of the year. It's likely they will be less than the budget, though.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council decided not to do street sealing next year to help save some money. With the price of oil going up, he said, they don't

know what it will cost, but assume that it will be more than usual. In a normal year, it costs about \$40,000 to seal streets, which is around 6 mills in the property tax levy.

That would mean there won't be any street sealing for two years. Next year the city had planned to have the north/south streets done.

The crew will also wait to buy a mower that is needed, he said.

Last year, the property tax levy was 67.130 mills and next year's proposed levy is 73.498, an increase of 6.368 mills. Each mill raises \$6,911.

The increase in the property tax is to cover bond and interest payments the city makes, Mr. Shike said. Some of it, said Mr. Shike, is money the city already owes for the water project, renovation to the youth ranch and street projects in the past. Another part

is for building a new waste water treatment plant.

The city has a significant amount of bond and interest payments, he said.

Mr. Shike said people may see a little higher taxes next year, but he thinks they will be pretty close to what they are paying now. The council will hold a budget hearing on Thursday, Aug. 18, and then vote on the budget.

Group starts search

New doctor needed by fall

Eleven men and women are meeting weekly and making contacts to recruit a doctor to replace Dr. Wendy Vogel, who will be leaving at the beginning of September after seven years in Oberlin.

The group plans to make personal contacts the first six weeks with people they know in the medical field. After that, said Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city-county Economic Development Corp. and member of the doctor search group, they might have to hire a recruiting firm.

Also on the doctor procurement committee are Lynn Doeden, administrator of Decatur County Hospital; Larry Ganje, business manager at the Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic; Carolyn Burtis, a real estate broker; Shelley McKenna, a nurse at the hospital; Gary Bartels, certified registered nurse anesthetist at the hospital; Gaylord Shields, a retired farmer; Charlie Haag, principal of Decatur Community High School; Kurt Vollertsen, pharmacist and owner of Ward Drug; Montine Alstrom, who works at the Good Samaritan Center; and Jim Hollowell, a retired educator.

Ms. Grafel said the group had their second meeting last Wednesday.

Members of the committee are contacting former doctors here to see if they know anyone who might be interested. Mrs. Doeden has contacted the University of Kansas Medical Center because the college has a web site for people who are looking to hire and be hired.

The committee has been contacted by two firms willing to come here for between \$8,000 and \$26,000 to help the county get a doctor, Ms. Grafel said.

The last doctor who was recruited by the committee was Dr. Vogel, who they found through Hays Medical Center.

Ms. Grafel said they have talked with the Hays hospital and heard that some of its outreach clinics have been closed. She said they are also calling students who graduated from high school here and went on to medical school.

In another four weeks, if the committee hasn't found anyone, then a firm probably will be hired, said Ms. (See DOCTOR on Page 10A)

Water use on the rise again

City water users got close to 1 million gallons of water on Friday, with 915,000 gallons used.

If 1 million gallons of water is used in a day, it could trigger a stage three water emergency, with no outdoor water use at all. Currently, the city is on an even/odd watering system. The idea is to keep usage under 700,000 gallons per day, but the city exceeded that mark three times last week.

The city used:

- 473,000 gallons on Monday, July 18.
- 662,000 gallons on Tuesday, July 19.
- 604,000 gallons last Wednesday.
- 823,000 gallons on Thursday.
- 915,000 gallons on Friday.
- 796,000 gallons on Saturday.
- 693,000 gallons on Sunday.



JUST OUTSIDE OF OBERLIN, St. Mark's Lutheran Church (above) stopped traffic as it moved at a slow pace and took up of most of U.S. 36. Workers from Prairie Land Electric and G Movers (below) worked together

to remove a stop sign at South East Avenue on Thursday.
— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Extra-wide load takes slow journey from Norcatour here

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The truck and trailer screeched a little as the front right tire climbed the curb and the driver gently turned the wheel.

He took his foot off the brake and pushed lightly on the gas as the truck pulling the large white building moved forward at a snail's pace.

Three men came running telling Ray Groenwald to stop. The top right side of the 117-year old church was rubbing one of the power lines on Hall Street. One had been removed but two were left up.

A crew from Prairie Land Electric came around with their bucket truck and took care of the line so the 28-foot-wide, 42-foot-long, 38-foot-tall church could pass by. The city crew was there to help, said Sharleen Wurm, but with only one bucket truck and Prairie Land Electric having several, the city crew didn't think they would be

able to move all of the wires themselves.

Mr. Groenwald of G Movers, who was moving St. Mark's Lutheran Church, was on the final stretch of a two day journey to get the church to its new home on the museum grounds.

The church, steeple and entourage started out around 9 a.m. last Wednesday from Norcatour.

The 10-hour move was a year and half in the making. In the spring of 2004, Bill and Bee Nelson and Lee Eckhart, the three remaining board members of the church, donated building to the Last Indian Raid Museum.

Mrs. Nelson said they didn't have the money to repair the church or to keep it in the shape they wanted. The three talked about giving the church to the state Historical Society, but it just wasn't feasible, so they decided to donate it to the county museum.

Since then, Mr. Nelson and Mr.



Eckhart have died. Both of the men's grandfathers were charter members of the church and helped build it.

Last Wednesday, though, Mrs. Nelson joined the entourage accompanying the old building to town.

She said it made her kind of sad to see the church moving down the highway, but she knew it was for the best.

"The church went to a good home," she added.

Seeing the church on the highway made her realize what a big building it is, she said.

Mrs. Nelson said she joined the church 53 years ago when she married. (See MOVERS on Page 10A)

Proposal sent in to be pilot town for rural task force

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

A group of 17 business owners, teachers and community leaders have made application for Decatur County to be a pilot community for the Governor's Rural Life Task Force.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city-county Economic Development Corp., said she read about the task force in *The Salina Journal* and within a couple of hours, Councilman Jay Anderson, a retired businessman, was in her office saying they should apply for it.

The idea of the Rural Life Task Force is to let the governor know

what is going on in rural Kansas. Marci Penner, founder of the Kansas Sampler Festival, and Dan Nagengast are co-chairs on the task force.

In the spring, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius asked for two pilot communities to work with the task force for two years to solve a problem. The task force will link up the communities and state agencies.

Ms. Grafel said the application, which the committee worked on together, has been sent in.

It is a competitive process, she said.

Mrs. Penner said the task force

has 42 applicants and members are reviewing each one. The project was open to all communities in Kansas with a population of 2,000 or less, she said.

Some of the applications group communities together. For instance, she said, she thought Rawlins County's application included Atwood, Herndon and McDonald.

The task force has until Aug. 15 to let the communities know. Those applicants who get to the next round will have more detailed applications due on Oct. 1.

The task force will pick from those communities and they will be

interviewed and visited.

By November, the two communities chosen to be part of the pilot project will be notified.

The proposal, said Ms. Grafel, shows that people in Decatur County are willing to work with their neighbors and already do through the Northwest Kansas Travel Council.

Being a pilot community could mean positive publicity for the area, she said, and the project ties in well with the wetlands project proposed at Sappa Park, which is just getting off the ground.

Members of the committee in-

clude Dr. Anderson; Ms. Grafel; Carolyn Burtis, owner of RJ Metcalf Real Estate; Kelly Glodt, Oberlin school superintendent; Neoma Tacha, retired cosmetologist; Charlotte Meints, retired clerk of the district court; Shayla Williby, grant writer; Kem Bryan, entrepreneur; Corey Cook and Breck Simonsson, high school students; Charlotte Bowen, antique store co-owner; Charles Frickey, lawyer; Bob Strevey, business owner; Brenda Breth, teacher; Karen Metcalf, manager of The Dresser; Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn; and Dianne Bremer, from Farm Bureau.

* Doctor needed here

(Continued from Page 1A)

Grafel. From the last time the committee was active, there was \$5,200 left in the bank. The county commissioners have agreed to give \$5,000 and the economic development corporation gave \$5,000. The group doesn't have a goal amount to raise, although they want to be able to hire a recruiter if needed and then have some in reserve.

Anyone who wants to donate can write a check to the Doctor Procurement Committee and send it to Decatur Health Systems, attention Lynn Doeden, 810 W. Columbia St., Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Ms. Grafel said the committee will be asked to guarantee a salary for the doctor's first year. The guarantee has been \$125,000, said Ms. Grafel, but now she thinks it will be closer to \$160,000.

If a salary is guaranteed and the doctor doesn't make that amount from seeing patients, then the committee will have to make up the difference.

The group will continue to meet at noon each Wednesday until September. Anyone else interested in serving on the committee should call Ms. Grafel or Mrs. Doeden.

Group receives money

The doctor procurement fund will receive \$5,000 from the county this year to help recruit a doctor to replace Wendy Vogel, who is leaving in September.

There will be a story on Dr. Vogel in next Wednesday's newspaper. The Decatur County commissioners agreed Tuesday to the \$5,000 donation, with the stipulation from Commissioner Ralph Unger that the money won't be used to hire a "head hunter" to look for a doctor.

He said he thought the committee could find someone with the help of technology and connections so they shouldn't have to use a recruiter.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city-county Economic Development Corp., said with Dr. Vogel leaving, the committee wants to hire another doctor.

She asked for the county to put in \$5,000 this year and \$5,000 next year.

She said the doctor procurement committee, on which Ms. Grafel serves, will try to find a doctor on their own for six weeks. After that, she said, they may use a recruiting firm, which could cost around \$18,000.

In the past, said Ms. Grafel, the group has had to guarantee new doctors \$125,000 a year, but that has risen to \$160,000. If they don't make that the first year, she said, the group has to come up with the difference.

Although the commissioners agreed to the \$5,000 this year, they said they would talk about \$5,000 for next year during budget discussions.

Crew busier this year

The Decatur County ambulance crew has been busy this year, answering 178 calls so far.

Director Patrick Pomeroy said that is up from last year at this time by around 30 calls. Last year the crew did 285 total.

Last week, he said, the crew helped Norton County, making a call to the state prison, because an inmate needed to be taken to Wichita and they called for help. The call was covered under a mutual aid agreement, he said.

Income surveys are still coming in, said Mr. Pomeroy. The department needs them by the end of the month so numbers can be compiled. If the county falls in the low-to-moderate income range, the department may be able to get a state grant for a new ambulance.



IN A BUCKET TRUCK, one of the Prairie Land Electric workers (above), watched as St. Mark's Lutheran Church came down the road last Wednesday. The sign, showing when the church was built (below), is on the front of the building.

— Herald staff photos by Kim Davis

* Movers take it slow

(Continued from Page 1A)

ried her husband Bill. She was quite impressed with it.

"It was a simple church," said Mrs. Nelson, "but it gave me what I needed."

Both Bill and Lee wanted to keep the church alive, she said, and they liked what the museum had planned.

The church, said Curator Sharleen Wurm, was driven east out of Norcatour on a dirt road and then they turned west onto U.S. 36 heading toward Oberlin.

Mrs. Wurm said the day went well. Around 15 to 20 people watched in Norcatour in the morning when the church left, mostly spectators. Along the way, people got the chance to see the church moving.

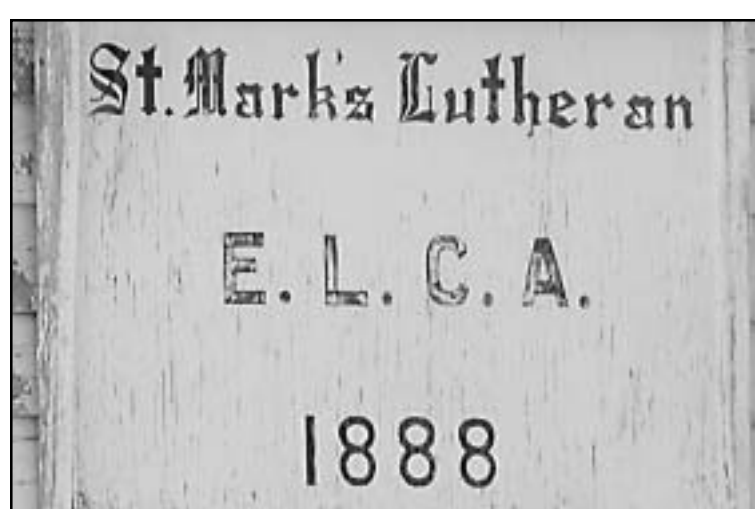
When it got to Oberlin, some sat in their cars at the Cabinetland parking lot to watch, while others saw it coming through town.

The fastest the group moved was 6 miles an hour. The procession was led by Sheriff Ken Badsky, who stopped traffic along the way. Behind the procession was another sheriff's car.

By 3 p.m., the church was parked on the outskirts of Oberlin. Greg Fidele, who serves on the museum board and is a heating and air conditioning contractor, had a little machine that said it was 114.5 degrees outside.

The group decided that they couldn't cut power to around 300 people in Oberlin in that heat, said Mrs. Wurm, which is what was going to have to happen to get the building into town.

They decided to call it a day and start again around 9 a.m. Thursday, with the idea that they would be at the museum a little after noon.



The church, said Mrs. Wurm, was on Hall Street by lunch time, which was good because people who were on their way to lunch had a chance to see it. There were some onlookers on their porches and in their yards as the church came through town.

The heat kept a lot of people inside, said Mrs. Wurm, but she suspected several watched from windows.

Mrs. Nelson, said Mrs. Wurm, came along the first day with some friends. They watched the church leave Norcatour and then waited at the county landfill and watched it come over the hill.

Mrs. Wurm said she is still unsure what the move will cost. She said she isn't sure what Prairie Land will charge for all the line work.

They had anywhere from three to six trucks running both days. Cebridge Connections also took down some cable lines on the Hall Street.

The church won't actually be put on its foundation until sometime this week. Mrs. Wurm said she was really anxious to get inside and see how everything stood the trip. They had to tie down an upright piano before leaving Norcatour, and all of the pews and other furnishing remained inside.

Anyone who wants to make a donation for the move can send it to the museum at 258 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Those who

donate \$100 or more will have their name on a plaque in the church.

Many memories, history tied to old church

Couple wanting to get married sparks idea of building church

St. Mark's Lutheran Church has a long history with an interesting beginning: a couple wanted to get married but there was no church, which started talk of building one.

Former church members say Maggie Eckhart and Louis Rinkenberger of Norcatour wanted to get married in 1888. The couple began looking for a Lutheran minister and found the Rev. J. W. Kimmel in McCook.

On Feb. 2 of that year, he came to Norcatour to perform the wedding. That brought on the discussion of having regular services.

The pastor returned to Norcatour in May to hold services. At that time, there were 17 in the church.

Mr. Kimmel looked into buying lots in Norcatour for a church site through the secretary of the Lincoln Land Co.

In June 1888, he reported that he had purchased lots 7 and 8 in block 7. For \$50, a 28-foot-by-40-foot building could be completed in 12 months on the site.

In June, the first communion service was held. John Eckhart and Benjamin Hoover were elected elders and N.B. Nelson and John Summit were named deacons. The others present were called charter members.

Later that summer, the first load of stone was delivered and foundation work was started. All of the labor was donated. Reports show that the only cost on the foundation was \$2.50 for lime.

In a large service on Sept. 8, 1888,

the cornerstone was laid. A Rev. Pugh preached and the Norcatour band and choir performed.

The history of the church shows that the lumber was delivered on Sept. 3. It was purchased from C. M. Deitz of Omaha for \$387.20, with \$98 paid for freight. The windows were bought in Chicago for \$110. Other expenses included furniture for \$115, additional lumber for \$90, hardware for \$41, a bell for \$88 and an organ for \$65.

In December, a mortgage of \$300 was given to the Board of Church Extension and one for \$400 was given to John Eckhart, each to be paid in three years.

On Dec. 16, 1888, the church was dedicated.

Over the years, the church changed, had several pastors and many members.

The mortgage note changed hands, a new roof was put on, the inside was replastered, a parsonage was built next door, the parsonage got a bathroom and many pastors preached in the building.

Pastor J. O. Baumgartner served in the church from 1965 to 1974. From 1974 to 1981, the Rev. Larry Arganbright, from Faith Lutheran in Oberlin, served and then Rev. Gregory Larson preached from 1981 to 1984.

Rev. Larson was the last pastor to serve in the church.

The church hasn't been open for 21 years, with the last members slowly fading away over those two decades.

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Lucky shopper will win \$1,000

One lucky person will win \$1,000 in scrip money in August to be spent with participating Oberlin merchants in the second annual \$1,000 Shopping Spree sponsored by *The Oberlin Herald*.

Shoppers 18 and older can sign up as many times as they like at one of the 13 participating businesses. Employees of the newspaper or their immediate family members are not eligible.

Then on Saturday, Aug. 20, the winner will be drawn out of all of the names from all 13 businesses.

The drawing will take place at 10:30 a.m. at the gazebo in Centennial Park. You must be present to win.

The winner will have from Monday, Aug. 22, until Friday, Aug. 26, to spend the money, in

the form of scrip spendable only at participating merchants. The winner has to agree to have their picture taken and notify the newspaper when and how they will spend the money.

Deadline for entries is 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 19, and the cans are out at the participating businesses. No purchase is required to sign up or to win.

Participating businesses are Ward Drug Store, Raye's Grocery, Addleman Drug Store, LandMark Inn, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Hansen's Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning, Countryside Veterinary Clinic, Prairie Petals, Stanley Hardware, R&M Service Center, Rocking R, the Dresser and Culligan Water Conditioning.