

Fair week kicks off on Tuesday

Games, rides, events all planned at fairground

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Fair week starts Tuesday with all types of entries, opening of exhibits, the 4-H food auction, mutton bustin' and of course, the first night of the home-owned carnival.

4-H youths have been preparing for months for this week, picking out recipes, making clothes, taking pictures, making arts and crafts and raising pigs, sheep and cattle.

All 4-H and open class exhibits need to be to the fairground between 9 a.m. and noon on Tuesday except for floriculture. That evening, all entries will be open for onlookers to see.

The carnival opens at 7 p.m. each night with rides and games for all ages.

The carnival, operated by the Decatur County Amusement Authority, offers swings, the Twister, Octopus, Tilt-a-Whirl, train, Ferris wheel and merry-go

round for rides. There is also a moon walk, kiddie cars and kiddie swings for the younger fair goers.

Games to be offered this year at the carnival include a fish game, which is 50 cents to play. Participants throw a bean bag through a hole in a fish, and the color of the fish determines the prize.

Other kids game include the duck pond for 10 cents, with a prize each time. There is the lollipop stand, 10 cents a sucker.

Other games include:

- Basketball — three balls for \$1, two out of three baskets win.
- Sinko — 50 cents and the first person to get five balls in a row wins.
- Tic Tac Toe — four balls for \$1 and three in a row wins.
- Potty toss — 50 cents per ball and must get a ball in the pot to win.
- Ricochet — 5 cents and the coin must clear all lines to win.

(See FAIR on Page 10A)

Oberlin district may gain land from Jennings

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin School District might gain around 110 square miles from the Jennings-Prairie Heights School District, which could mean lower taxes for the whole district.

The Jennings School Board will continue discussion on the proposal at their meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 8.

Under the proposal, the Oberlin district will get about 110 square miles, Hoxie about 90 square miles and Norton about 40 square miles after the Jennings district dissolves next year.

Last year, the Jennings School Board decided to disorganize. This coming school year, the district will keep the grade school open but the students in seventh through 12th grades will be going to neighboring districts. Jennings has contracts

with the Oberlin and Hoxie districts.

The board doesn't have the final say in how its land will be divided, said Kelly Glodt, Oberlin superintendent, but can make recommendations and then the state Board of Education will decide.

"We were looking at the favorite way to divide it up," he said. "We're still taking suggestions from the public and won't have a final decision until the next board meeting."

Mr. Glodt said the Jennings board has a lot of tough decisions to make on how to divide up the land. There isn't any easy way, he said, but they have done it as equitably as possible.

When the final decision is made, he added, if Oberlin gets around 110 square miles, it will mean some changes in the budget for the 2006-2007 year.

(See LAND on Page 10A)



Street turns to beach

AT THE BEACH PARTY on Friday, Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, (above) talked with Adam Kadavy, a deejay for KFNF. The radio station played music as kids played in the sand and adults listened. Main Street turned into a beach, with loads of sand spread around the center of the 100 block south. Joshua Norris, 1, (left) son of Rob and Tami Norris of southern California, sat in the sand and cried. Other kids built sand castles and some played sand volleyball. The event was sponsored by the Oberlin Business Alliance.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

City electric rates might be going up

With the cost of power increasing for the city, it looks like Oberlin electric rates might go up.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he is supposed to get a rate study from the Kansas Municipal Energy Association, but it probably won't be here until September.

The city, he said, is paying more for the power it is receiving under a new contract with Sunflower Electric Corp. Basically, said Mr. Shike, the city is losing revenue on power it buys from Sunflower. With a cheaper price for power, he said, the city would be making a little more

money.

The amount of power the city gets from Sunflower changes from hour to hour. The other power comes from Western Area Power Administration, but Sunflower transports it and the city pays to get it here.

The last increase in electric rates was about three years ago, when the council decided to raise it half a cent and dedicate the money to the infrastructure fund, he said.

No decision was made. The council will probably discuss power rates at their meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

Water use drops, but still on high side

Oberlin used over 700,000 gallons of water four times last week, but peaks stayed lower than in recent weeks.

The trigger to go onto even/odd outdoor watering is 700,000 gallons. City water users have been on the watering system since the end of June.

Usage over 1 million gallons a day could trigger a ban on outdoor water use. The previous week, use topped 900,000 one day was near

800,000 on two days, but demand was down last week despite the heat.

The city used:

- 623,000 gallons on Monday, July 25.
- 524,000 gallons on Tuesday, July 26.
- 766,000 gallons last Wednesday.
- 637,000 gallons on Thursday.
- 747,000 gallons on Friday.
- 750,000 gallons on Saturday.
- 712,000 gallons on Sunday.

Young couple returns to farm

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Growing up, Michael Wasson always knew he wanted to be a farmer, and when the opportunity to get some land presented itself, he and his wife jumped on it.

Born and raised in Decatur County, Michael learned about farming working alongside his dad Jim and grandfather Donald. Michael said he did everything from riding along in the tractor to feeding the cows to riding horses.

After graduating from Decatur Community High School in 1997, he left to go to Colby Community College for two years and then on to Kansas State University, where he received a bachelor's degree in agriculture economics and a minor in agronomy.

While in Colby, he met his future wife, Kelly Lewis. She came from a ranch in southeast Colorado and knows the ins and outs of the cattle business, he said. The last thing her parents said before leaving for school, said Michael, was not to bring home a Kansas farm boy.

After receiving their degrees, the couple moved back to Decatur County until they got married in September 2001. Kelly received a degree in political science and business from Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

They lived in Merlin and



MICHAEL AND KELLY Wasson returned home to farm. The couple raises cattle and farms several crops north of Dresden.

Bonnie Anderson's rental house for almost two years and then Michael got a chance to be an agronomist for a co-op in Sutherland, Neb.

"We wanted to get out and see some more of the world," said Michael. "Everyone needs to do that."

In January, the couple returned to Decatur County after the Andersons approached them about purchasing their farm operation.

They said they bought the Andersons' home place three miles north of Dresden, including the house and land around it. Basically, said Michael, they work

the Andersons' operation.

Michael said he still works with Mr. Anderson each day. He said he has learned a lot from him.

Although he thinks his and Kelly's hearts are more in the cattle business, for a farming operation to work, they have to have cattle and crops. They grow wheat, corn and alfalfa.

So far, he added, they haven't regretted coming back here or coming back to farm. It is raining, though, he said with a laugh, and that hasn't happened in a while.

Michael said he and Kelly went away long enough to earn some money so they could start out farm-

Farming edition inside

Inside today's edition of is the Northwest Newspapers special report on "The Future of Farming," covering nine counties in northwest Kansas.

The section features stories about trends in farming and what's happening in each county, including Decatur, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Logan, Norton, Sheridan, Thomas, Wallace and Sherman.

Stories also delve into the farm bill, agritourism and other areas of farming.

To get into farming, he suggests young people go somewhere and work, get a start and save some money.

That money is important to start a business, he said, and you grow a lot outside of northwest Kansas and meet a lot of people. To come home to farm, he said, you have to love it.

Most people don't make a lot of money in farming. You live poor and die rich, he said.

The Wassons don't have any children yet, but he said, "If you aren't working for future generations, there really isn't any point."

* Fair events start Tuesday, end Saturday

(Continued from Page 1A)

- Soda can — three bags for 50 cents. Must knock cans off the stand to win.
- Ring toss — three rings for \$1 and the rings must go on the cans to win.
- Golf — \$1 per game.
- Bull's eye — three for \$1.
- Hoop toss — three hoops for 50 cents; hoop must be over peg to win.
- Birthday wheel — 50 cents per chip, then spin the wheel to the month you choose.
- Baseball toss — 50 cents per ball; all bottles have to be knocked off the stand to win.
- Break a plate — three balls for \$1; must break a plate to win.
- Moon walk — three 25-cent tickets.

The Decatur County Fair Board has lined up a full week of events in front of the grandstands.

On Tuesday, events will kick off with Mutton Bustin' rodeo, where kids who weigh 60 pounds and under try to stay on the back of a sheep as long as they can.

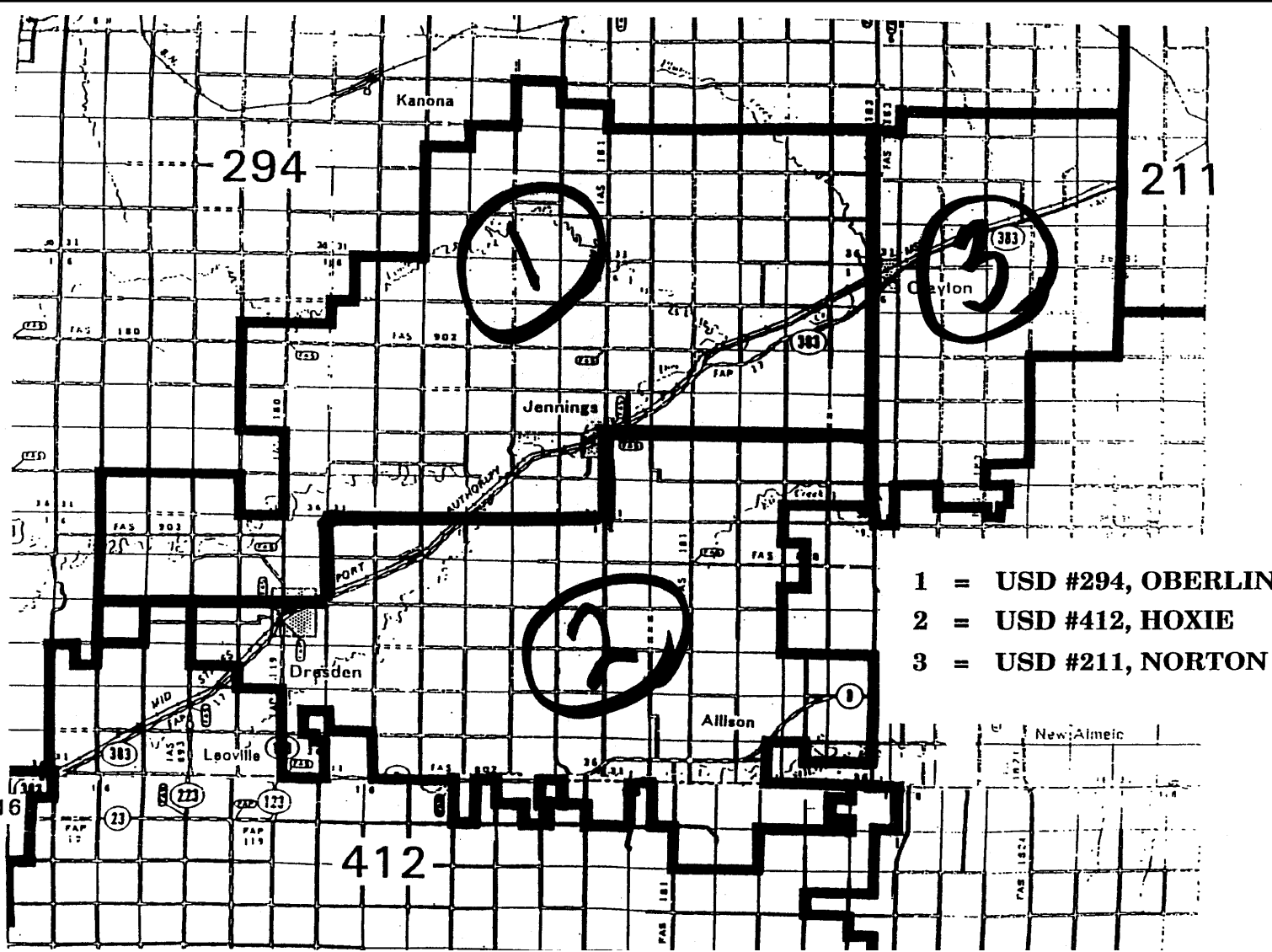
Participants need to check in at 6:30 p.m. on the dirt in front of the grandstands. The contest starts at 7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, Aug. 10, Anita Hirsch will head up a show of local talent at 7:30 p.m.

On Thursday, Aug. 11, the Colgate Country Showdown will return, sponsored by Coyote Country radio.

The following evening, a roller demo derby will start at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, Aug. 13, will be the tractor pull sponsored by the Colorado Truck and Tractor Pull Association. There will be five classes of tractors from all over pulling a weighted sled from Colorado.



1 = USD #294, OBERLIN
 2 = USD #412, HOXIE
 3 = USD #211, NORTON

A PROPOSAL TO DIVIDE the Jennings School District shows what land each district will get if the proposal is approved by the state Board of Education. The proposal would give the Oberlin district about 110 square miles, Hoxie about 90 square miles and Norton about 40. The map above

* Land may be given to other schools

(Continued from Page 1A)

Currently, he said, the Oberlin district's valuation is about \$27 million. That means every mill of property tax brings in \$27,000. If that land has an valuation of \$3 million, it would raise the district's overall valuation, and mean each mill would bring in about \$30,000.

The general fund won't change, said Mr. Glodt, because the district

will still get the same amount of money from the state.

The capital outlay is at 4 mills now, he said, that won't increase, but the district will get more money because each mill will bring in more money. If the land is worth \$3 million, then the 4 mills will bring in \$12,000 more a year.

The district should be able to lower the rate for the local option

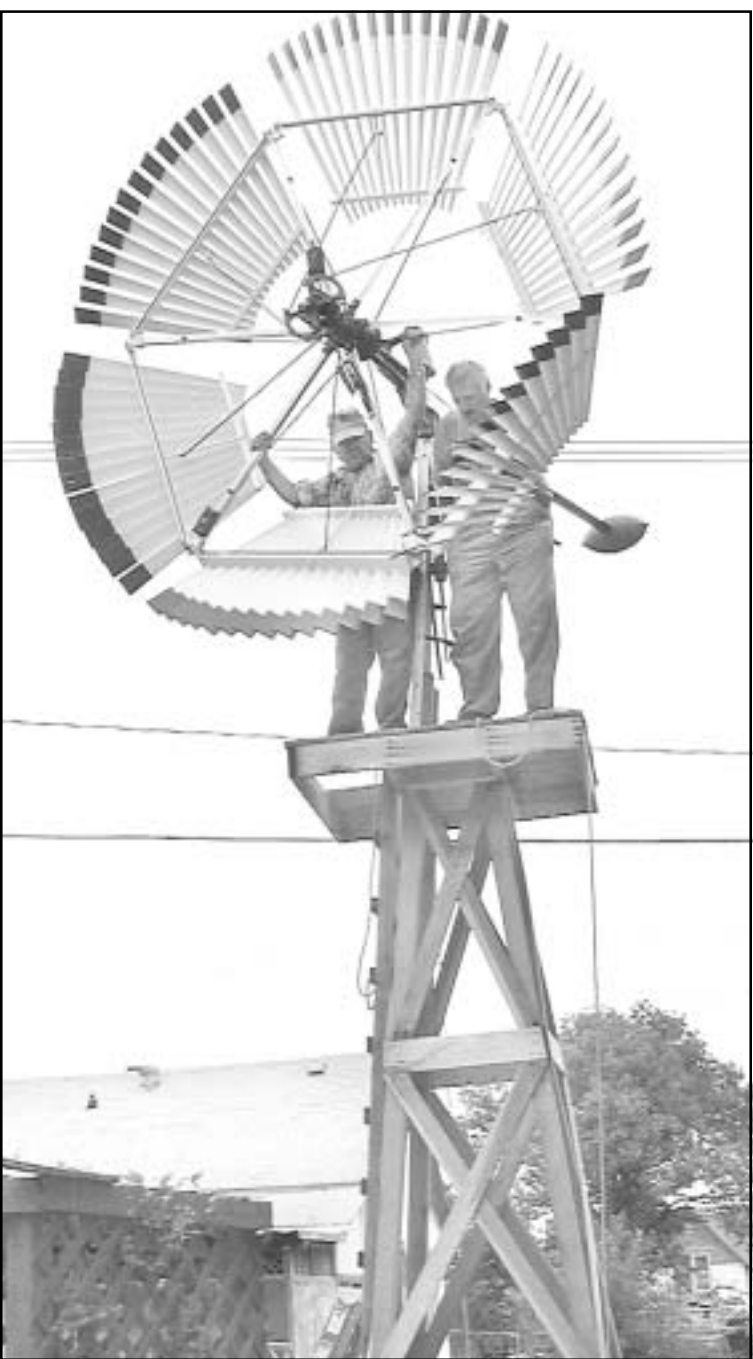
budget, which means people who are paying in the Oberlin District now will pay less taxes. Mr. Glodt didn't say if people who are in the Jennings district will pay less than they are paying now.

Mr. Glodt said no matter what the decision is, having more land will be a benefit to the district. It could increase the transportation budget since the district would be bigger, he

said, but they won't know right away.

He said they are looking forward to having some of the junior high and high school students this year. No matter what happens, he said, the goal of any district should be to provide the best education possible.

Jennings is doing the best they can in the district's last year, said Mr. Glodt.



WORKING TOGETHER, Gale Schulze (left) and Jim Plotts assembled a windmill in Mr. Schulze's back yard in Norton on Tuesday morning. Mr. Plotts, from Norcat, built the tower and restored the entire head of the old Monitor windmill.

— Staff photo by Carolyn Plotts

Men collect parts to build windmill

Gale Schulze of Norton says he's an old country boy, and he had always wanted a wooden windmill, even after he and his wife Sharon moved into town.

During a conversation with Jim Plotts of Norcat, the two men discovered they had a lot in common. Mr. Plotts has been collecting windmill parts for years.

Mr. Schulze wanted one, so the two struck a deal.

Mr. Plotts estimates it took him two weeks to completely restore the original mechanism and construct the 10-foot diameter head. He made the tower and head out of redwood. He hand cut each of the 84 blades that go into the six sections, called sails. The whole apparatus, counter-

balanced by a cement "football," stands atop a 19-foot tower.

The windmill, a Monitor model, was made by Baker Manufacturing.

Tuesday morning, Mark Bailey and his father Gail Bailey of Bailey Electric, Norcat, drilled the holes for the legs. They used their utility truck to set the tower and the head.

Mr. Plotts, with the help of Mr. Schulze, assembled the sections of the head while standing on the four-foot-by-four-foot platform on top of the tower. Mr. Schulze tied each section to a rope, which Mr. Plotts then pulled to the top and attached to the head.

The windmill works, but at the Schulze home it is strictly decorative. There's no well to hook it to.

Getting ready for hazards



AT THE DECATUR HOSPITAL on Thursday, employees Karen Bailey, Cathy Claussen, Becky Tate and Renee Zodrow tried on decontamination suits which would be used in case of a biohazardous spill.

— Photo by Otheila Vacura

Nominations for Soil Conservation and Windbreak Awards

are now being accepted at
 K-State Research & Extension Service (785) 475-8121
 Decatur County Conservation District (785) 475-3131

To nominate a Decatur area producer, contact either office by August 22nd.
 Awards sponsored by the Kansas Bankers Association

Listen to Kimberly Davis of The Oberlin Herald every Wednesday between 9 and 10 a.m. on "Pulse of the Prairie"

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