

County questions voting rules

Law requires machines to help disabled voters

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Help America Vote Act will cost Decatur County at least \$10,000 a year in maintenance for two voting machines, county commissioners heard last Tuesday, and that won't allow any voting in the three smaller cities.

The act was designed to make it easier for those with disabilities to vote. The county, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, also the county election officer, has to have two machines designed to help handicapped voters. One has to be at the courthouse at all times and one at the polling place. For example, if there is one polling place for the county at The Gateway, one machine needs to be there, but there also needs to be one in the courthouse in case someone needs to use that.

Mrs. Horn said the county has to have the back-up in case one breaks down. The one in the clerk's office will be used for advance voting.

The county has to supply a polling machine at each poll that is open, she said. They will still need paper ballots because the machine can only help about 150 voters in a day.

County Roundup

At a meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with the ambulance director about renting an ambulance for five or six months, but didn't make any decisions. Story on Page 5A.

- Talked about the fireworks bill for the Fourth of July display each year and what they should do with the money allotted for it. Story on Page 3A.

- Discussed the Help America Vote Act and how many of the voting machines the county should get. Story at left.

- Decided to lower the price of county history books from \$100 to \$50. Story on Page 5A.

After the first year, the machines will cost the county \$5,000 a piece for maintenance. When there is a countywide election, for instance, (See VOTING on Page 5A)

Sunday sales will be decided in November

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin City Council agreed to hold an election on Tuesday, Nov. 8, to let voters decide if beer and alcohol should be sold on Sundays. Ballots may be sent by mail in hopes of getting a bigger turnout.

Sherry Brown, owner of Fine Spirits, asked the council to allow places that sell beer and alcohol to do so on Sundays. The council approved the sales and published a notice in *The Oberlin Herald* on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

Pastor Steve Smith walked a petition around town, obtaining 50 signatures to put the Sunday sales question on the ballot. All but three of the signatures were certified by the County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who serves as the county election officer. The petition only needed 40 signatures, however.

At a special meeting last Wednesday, the council approved the special election for the second Tuesday in November.

Mrs. Horn sent the council a note that her recommendation would be to hold a mail-ballot election, which she thought would encourage a higher turnout.

On average there has been a 35 percent turnout for city elections, she said, which means the ballots cost \$2 per voter if 470 people turn out.

Currently there are 1,344 voters in the city. Mrs. Horn estimated the total cost around \$2,500.

The council left it up to Mrs. Horn if she wanted to do a mail-ballot election.

Mrs. Horn said the ballots will be mailed out and then voters must return them back to the office by 7 p.m. on the day of the election. Ballots can be mailed in or dropped off. There would not be a polling place. Ballots would have to be mailed in or be hand carried to the courthouse.

If the election is done by mail, it will be the first time in Decatur County.



SATURDAY MORNING, Carolyn Burtis (above left) and Betsy Jakowski worked with wool to make rugs and wall hangings at Mini Sapa Days at the Last Indian Raid Museum. In the afternoon, St. Mark's Church was opened and visitors, including this woman (below), got a chance to look around. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Museum teems on Saturday

Kids ran around the museum grounds Saturday with their faces painted, carrying crossbows made out of wood and an arrow with an eraser on the end.

With the sun shining, kids played while their parents looked at vendor booths during the annual Mini Sapa Celebration. There were Pampered Chef items, books for kids, homemade candles, jewelry, decorations for the home, makeup and more. Some shopped for Christmas presents while others just looked.

Many toured the museum for free, looking at artifacts from the past and learning about the history of the area.

All day, the Last Indian Raid Museum was full of people.

First thing in the morning came the big pancake feed. Curator Sharleen Wurm said she thought around 150 were served.

At lunch time, some who had left returned for a polish sausage, pork burger or bratwurst for lunch.

At 2 p.m., the bell of the old St.



Mark's Lutheran Church rang and the doors were opened to the public by Bee Nelson for the first time since it was moved to the museum grounds this summer. People walked around the church, while some settled into one of the pews and caught up with friends. An ice cream social followed in the Bohemian Hall with music by Ron

Temple's Gospel

The museum board is working on restoring the church to its original condition.

At 2 p.m. Bee Nelson put on an ice cream social in the Bohemian Hall while Ron Temple and his gospel group, including Edla Olson, Myrna Jones, Lois Carlson and Phil Erickson, performed.

On Sunday afternoon, Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler officiated at a rededication service at the church at 5 p.m., followed by a potluck supper at the Bohemian Hall.

"It was a wonderful weekend, which many enjoyed," said Mrs. Wurm. "I want to thank everyone who took part or helped in any way."

Devils football will be 3A next season

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

With an enrollment increase this year, the Decatur Community High School football team will move back up to Class 3A next year, getting a whole new set of opponents for the state playoffs.

Last year and this year, the football team played smaller schools in Class 2A, said Athletic Director Randy Olson.

Kansas has six classifications of schools, starting with the highest

enrollment schools and working down. There are 32 Class 6A schools, 32 in 5A, 64 in 4A, 64 in 3A, 62 in 2A and the rest are 1A.

If enrollment at the big schools fluctuate, Mr. Olson said, it can move the other schools around and some schools move back and forth from 5A to 6A.

The football classification is based on the enrollment of students in the ninth, 10th and 11th grades. It is set for two years. Next season and

in 2006, the Red Devil football team will play in Class 3A.

One thing that will change is the Red Devils' opponents for district and post-season play. This year, Mr. Olson said, the football team is in a Class 2A district with Hoxie, Hill City and Stockton. He said he hasn't gotten the information about where the Devils will fit into the 3A districts, but the teams will be different.

The football team will fill the schedule with Northwest Kansas

League schools just like they do now, he said. The team won't play one of the league teams next season, said Mr. Olson, but he isn't sure which one. None of the league schools is classified 3A, so the district will be different teams.

For all other sports and other activities, he said, the class is based on enrollment in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades. That classification changes each year. Currently, he added, the (See TEAM on Page 5A)

County may need to re-establish emergency planning group

The Decatur County commissioners and the health administrator discussed re-establishing an emergency planning committee to help write an Animal Health Plan and for disaster emergency operations.

Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said she got a letter from the Kansas Animal Health Department asking about the county's Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Plan. The county held two or three meetings about the plan last year, but there

hasn't been any work on it since then.

The state said there are people coming out from Tetra Tech, an organization the Kansas Animal Health Department hired to help counties write plans, next month to help with the plan, she said.

She said it would be good if the county re-established the local emergency planning committee. The county is supposed to have one, but Ms. Gamblin said she thinks it is a committee by list only. It doesn't ac-

tually meet.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he thinks the last time the committee met was over 10 years ago. He looked for the list of people on the committee during the meeting last Tuesday, but was unable to find it.

Those on the committee from more than 12 years ago included representatives from the commissioners/city council, law enforcement, emergency preparedness, firefighters, EMT, Red Cross, health/medi-

cine, environment, hospital, transportation, communications/media, community service/civic groups and facility or industry owner or operator.

The county also needs National Incident Management System training, said Mr. Hirsch, which will help emergency workers understand the terminology on the disaster plan; anyone who will participate in the event of a disaster or emergency including the fire department, health department,

sheriff's officers, police, commissioners and others.

If they don't, he said, then the county won't be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency money in case of a disaster. There also are some grants which the county won't be able to get without the training, said Mr. Hirsch.

Each department in the county is supposed to have a plan if there is a disaster. (See COUNTY on Page 5A)

Paper wants veterans' stories

The *Oberlin Herald* is looking for stories of veterans from Decatur County who served during the Korean War for a special section for Veterans Day next month.

This will be the first time the newspaper will run a section honoring veterans from the Korean War.

The veteran can submit the information, or anyone can nominate a relative or someone they know, living or deceased. The idea is to run a profile of six to eight paragraphs on each veteran, along with a picture. Call Managing Editor Kimberly Davis at the

paper at 475-2206 or mail in information about what your veteran did during the war, what branch he or she served in, where he or she lives now (or when the veteran died), when he or she retired and a photo.

Photos should be in a uniform of the era, but if one is not available, a later photo will do.

Please include a phone number and contact person in case we have any questions. Mail information to 170 S. Penn Ave. Oberlin, KS. 67749, or e-mail at kldavis@nwks.com. The deadline is Wednesday, Oct. 26. All pictures will be returned.

Students to parade Friday

Students at Decatur Community High School started Homecoming week Monday by dressing in pajamas for the day.

Each year, students have a different theme for each day of the week leading up to the big game Friday night. On Tuesday, the theme was to be hippie/bohemian; today it is super hero day, on Thursday it will be opposite/hat day and Friday is spirit day.

This year's Homecoming theme

for the floats is super heroes and the window theme is "evil villains," both with a comic-book flavor.

Thursday night, students will hold a bonfire, followed by last-minute float decorating. The floats can be seen during the homecoming parade at 2:30 p.m. on Friday down Main Street.

Each year, a homecoming king and queen are named. This year's king candidates are Denton Bailey, Jesse Juenemann, Drew Martin, Joe

Mondero, Jonathon Richards and Jason Thomas. The king will be announced at the dance following the game Friday.

Homecoming queen candidates are Whitney Beinke, Nikki Lincoln, Lora Marietta, Kaitlyn Stapp and Anne Wasson. The queen will be named during the spirit assembly Friday.

The Red Devils will meet the Oakley Plainsmen at 7 p.m. at Smick Memorial Field.

Books reduced to \$50

The Decatur County commissioners decided last Tuesday to lower the price of surplus county history books from \$100 to \$50 each.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he talked with some people who thought \$100 for one book was too much. Maybe, he said, the prices could be dropped to get the books sold. Commissioner Patricia Glenn said she agreed that the price was too high.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said the county has \$2,000 in the fund for selling 20 books. Is there a record of who purchased the books? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger.

Yes, said Mrs. Horn, for the most part.

If the price of the books is reduced, said Mr. Unger, then those who bought one for \$100 should get some kind of a refund. Only if the buyer requests a refund, said Mrs. Glenn.

The commissioners agreed to lower the price to \$50. The county got the leftover books, printed in 1983 as a donation from the publisher.

They also agreed that the county would give a \$50 refund to anyone who purchased the book at \$100. The buyer has the right to either the \$50 or another book. The original book has to have been purchased for \$100 from the museum, Chamber of Commerce or county. In order to get a refund, the buyer has to have proof of purchase.

The offer of a refund of \$50 or another book isn't good for people who purchased their books when they first came out or those who purchased one at an auction.

Service may rent a truck

The ambulance director asked the Decatur County commissioners if he could lease an ambulance for five or six months since there are only two trucks in Oberlin and one in Jennings.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said he wanted to rent an ambulance until the service is able to get a new one.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said it would be OK for Mr. Pomeroy to see what he could find for a lease and bring proposals to the commissioners.

Is the older ambulance decertified? said Commissioner Doyle Brown. Yes, said Mr. Pomeroy. Everything is out of it, the emergency medical technicians know it can't be used and there is a sign on it stating it can't be used. Besides, said Mr. Pomeroy, the truck won't start.

The service, said Mr. Pomeroy, was on the schedule to be inspected by the state this week. He said he was busy getting the paperwork ready.

With the increase in gas prices, he asked if the county is going to change its mileage reimbursement rates. The commissioners already accepted the Internal Revenue Service standards for mileage at 48.5 cents a mile for reimbursement, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn.

When people go places, such as meetings, said Mr. Unger, they should try to carpool as much as possible.

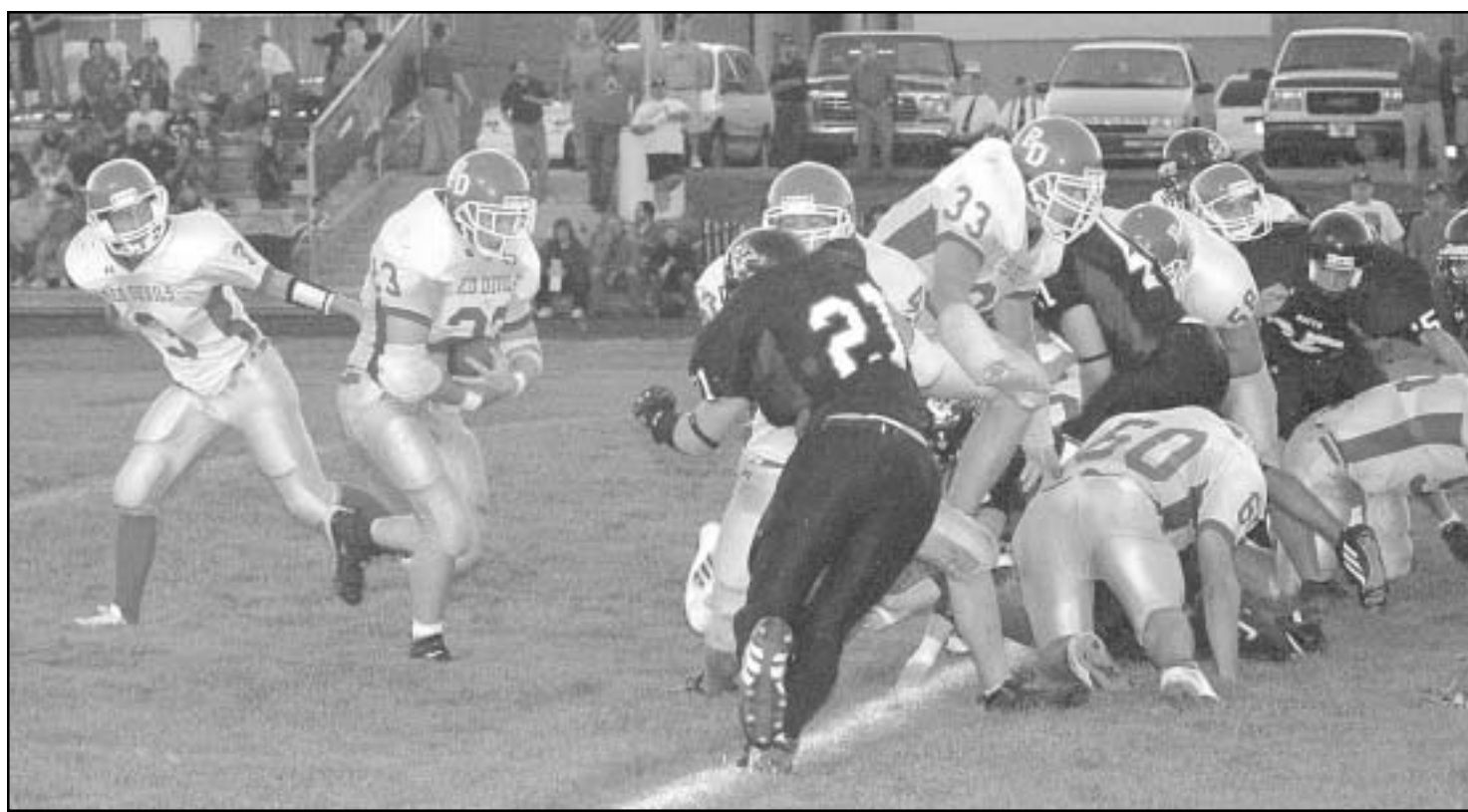
Mr. Pomeroy said the grant application for a new ambulance did meet the low-to-moderate income standard. He said they might hear something in October about the grant if the county doesn't get it, but they won't hear anything until January if the county does get the grant.

Offices to close

All federal offices, banks and financial institutions will be closed on Monday for Columbus Day.

The Oberlin Herald will be open, but since there is no mail service, news and advertising copy may be left at the office or placed in the slot on the front door over the weekend. Deadline is noon Monday.

Oberlin schools will be closed on Monday for teacher in-service training. State, city and county offices and most businesses will be open as usual.



AT THE GAME FRIDAY in Atwood, quarterback Denton Bailey handed the ball off to Josh Fortin, who tried to carry it up the middle. The Red Devils football team,

which is in Class 2A this year, will move back up to 3A next season. Game story, photo on Page 6A.

— Photo by Jonna Inman

* Team will move to Class 3A in football

(Continued from Page 1A) high school is in Class 3A for everything but football.

He said there are 142 students this fall in 10th to 12th grades. To be classified as 3A, the enrollment needs to fall between 132 to 206,

he said, so the high school will be a small 3A school.

The teams will still play the same teams in their league games and matches this year, said Mr. Olson. The only changes will be for sub-state and regional tourna-

ments. In western Kansas, Mr. Olson said, 3A schools are few and far between.

From an enrollment perspective, the gain will be good for the district.

From a competitive perspective, he said it is good, too. For the last

few years the sub-state tournaments have been similar to a league tournament because it has been the same schools. Next season, the makeup of teams at sub-state will be different, which isn't a bad thing, he said.

* Voting machines could be costly

(Continued from Page 1A) for president, Congress and state offices, now there are five polling places including the courthouse, the Oberlin American Legion, Jennings, Dresden and Norcat. That would be \$25,000 a year for maintenance.

The figure doesn't include the machine the county has to have in the clerk's office, which is another \$5,000. That means the county would pay \$30,000 for the machines.

At a meeting in September, commissioners asked for public comment about going to one polling place in the county or spending the money to keep five polling places open.

In order to pay the \$30,000 maintenance bill, the county would have to increase taxes by just under one mill. A one mill increase would bring in \$31,651 and cost the average taxpayer around \$5 for a \$50,000 house.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch asked what would happen if the county went to one polling place but moved it around each time. One year, it could be in Oberlin, the next in Jennings and the next in Norcat.

What if there is a line at the machine and it is 7 p.m. and time for the polls to close? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown. Mrs. Horn said people who are in line could come inside and continue to vote, but the door for the polls are locked at 7 p.m. and no one else would be allowed in.

Mrs. Horn said if there is only one polling place, there will still be different counting boards for all the precincts at The Gateway. So far, she said, she has had three phone calls and each of them have said they don't want the county to spend the money.

The commissioners didn't make a decision. They meet every Tuesday at the courthouse starting at 9 a.m. All meetings are open to the public.

Council asks chief to get cars moved

In a 4-1 vote, the Oberlin City Council decided to ask the police chief to have people move cars they have parked at the old police station at the intersection of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83.

The only councilman who voted against the action was Councilman Rob McFee, who in the past has received letters from the city about inoperable cars on his property.

The day of the meeting, Sept. 22, City Administrator Gary Shike said there were about six vehicles parked on the city-owned lot which were for

sale by private owners.

The council asked City Attorney Steve Hirsch if people need to ask the city for permission to try to sell cars there. Mr. Hirsch said a policy needs to be written to cover that. He said the council could ask Police Chief Wade Lockhart to talk to the owners and tell them to move their vehicles.

City Administrator Gary Shike said that the lot is advertised for drivers to park semi trucks. The council decided to ask Chief Lockhart to tell the people to move the vehicles. All have been moved.

Students featured

Starting next week, *The Oberlin Herald* will feature a student of the week from Decatur Community High School, chosen by the staff at the school.

Any student, freshman through senior, can be chosen. The student's picture and a brief outline about who they are, parents, likes, dislikes and goals will be included.

Each week, Advertising Manager Dave Bergling will be looking for a sponsor for the Student of the Week.

At the end of the school year, the newspaper will give scholarships from part of the money raised by the Student of the Week ad. Although the high school staff can choose any student, only seniors will be considered for the scholarships.

This program replaces the "Senior Spotlight" which ran last year. That program produced enough money for two \$250 scholarships to Jennings and Oberlin seniors.

The Student of the Week will run on Page 3A each week, starting next Wednesday. Look for it.

* County needs a plan

(Continued from Page 1A)

Gamblin has a plan for what she needs to do depending on if it is an outbreak or something else. The emergency preparedness manager should have a plan that addresses all of the issues. Mr. Hirsch asked if the county had a plan for a blizzard, dust storm or tornado? If a tornado hit one of the towns, he said, are there plans for moving the dispatch office or somewhere for the courthouse to relocate?

In short, he asked, is the county planning for the kind of emergency that's more likely to happen here?

"We really need to get the local emergency planning committee running again," said Mr. Hirsch.

How do we do this? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown. They can call a meeting, but everyone might not show up.

Who is going to be in charge in an emergency? asked Ms. Gamblin. Everyone thinks they will be in charge of their own things, but there needs to be someone in charge of everything.

Ms. Gamblin said she would try to find the committee list. Mr. Brown suggested meeting at 11 a.m. on a Tuesday. No date was set.



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4x5 Rural Tel 'Walking the talk on Community' sent to Goodland on Monday night