

Good luck at substate, girls!



Volleyball team to play at Substate Saturday in Phillipsburg.

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Survey ranks pay of officials

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

District Judge Bill Elliott is the highest paid official who serves in Decatur County, even though he doesn't live here.

Judge Elliott lives in Hill City and serves six counties of the 17th Judicial District, Decatur, Norton, Phillips, Smith, Graham and Osborne. He makes \$105,673, the same as all district judges in the state.

The Oberlin Herald has partnered with sister papers in the Nor'West Newspapers group to find the salaries and benefits of public officials. The information is in open records, available to any taxpayer who asks under the Kansas Open Records Act and federal Freedom of Information Act.

The second-highest paid official is Lynn Doeden, administrator at the Decatur County Hospital, who makes \$84,443 plus benefits. Benefits include paid time off, short-term disability, life insurance, health insurance and a 401K.

Mrs. Doeden, a registered nurse, says she has a bachelor's degree in nursing and is working on her master's in health care administration.

The third-highest paid official is Kelly Glodt, superintendent of the Oberlin School District. Mr. Glodt's salary includes a base of \$77,010 car allowance of \$2,400 and health insurance at \$3,461. The total is

Reporters publish salaries

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reporters for Nor'West Newspapers have been asking public officials across the region how much they are paid.

Public employees' salaries are, and always have been, open records. Any citizen can ask to see them, but few have the time to dig through city, county and federal files.

We feel those who pay the bills deserve to know what they pay for, and we've tried to compile an accurate list of top public officials' pay. Many, such as school administrators and judges, hold jobs that require advanced degrees. Generally, elected officials are paid less than professionals hired to run public agencies.

\$82,871.

Mr. Glodt said he had to have a bachelor's degree plus a teaching certificate from the state when he (See JUDGE on Page 5A)

Teachers, staff in school district all receive raises

The Oberlin School Board and teachers agreed to a new contract which includes a \$1,108-a-year raise for all teachers and an incentive to not use paid leave days.

The board met in two closed sessions, one for 15 minutes and one for 10, before approving the agreement. The teachers, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, had voted to ratify the agreement already and Leigh Davis, president of the local Kansas Education Association chapter, signed the agreement. The board voted to ratify the agreement at the meeting.

The teachers and board agreed on a 4 percent increase to the base salary on an "equalized schedule." That means that no matter where a teacher falls on the pay schedule, they will get the same base increase. For example, said Mr. Glodt, the base for a new teacher now is

\$27,700, a 4 percent increase would mean \$28,808. Basically, every teacher gets the same which is the \$1,108 whether they are in their first or tenth year. Those teachers still moving up on the salary schedule get normal increases for college hours, advanced degrees and experience.

There also were some increases for supplemental contracts for coaching.

The district switched back to Blue Cross/Blue Shield for health insurance. Mr. Glodt said they are paying considerable less than last year for insurance since premiums went down.

It is because of the reduction in the cost of insurance that the district is able to give raises, said Mr. Glodt. The extra money from the state is (See DISTRICT on Page 10A)



WITH A SMILE ON HER FACE, Celianna Shobe (above) sat on the Pumpkin Express and waited for the rest of her class to get on. Cindy Sheaffer (below) sat on a pumpkin for a class picture. — Herald staff photos by Kim Davis

Kindergartners ride in wagon to see pumpkins

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Bundled in heavy sweatshirts and coats, kids walked carefully up the steps to a wagon full of hay bales.

Carefully, they laid black trash bags over the bales so their pants wouldn't get wet from the moisture on the hay. When everyone was seated and had their arms inside the wagon, the tractor geared up and moved forward.

The wagon and tractor made up the Pumpkin Express, which carried the kindergartners to the pumpkin patch at Common Scents, south of McCook.

Each year, the kindergarten classes from Oberlin travel to Nebraska to learn how pumpkins grow, check out the patch, find their way through a maze and do the hay jump.

Friday morning, the first class went to the patch.

On getting there, Kelly Tirrill who works at Common Scents, turned the tractor off and got in the wagon with the kids.

Mrs. Tirrill looked at the field and said there are all kinds of pumpkins growing there: cheese pumpkins, almost peach in color; baby bear pumpkins, which had a rougher bottom side; baby boo

pumpkins, tiny and white; and illumination pumpkins, bigger and white. For each of the smaller pumpkins, she pulled a sample out of the basket.

In the field, she showed the kids a mammoth pumpkin, big and bright orange.

Besides pumpkins, they also raise gourds. First she pulled out a dipper gourd, which Indians used to dip up a drink. Next it was the spoon gourd, which was little and could be dried and seeded and used as a spoon.

Lastly, she showed the students the bowl gourd.

Mrs. Tirrill said the pumpkin patch started about 13 years ago. Each year since then, it has been replanted. First, she said, they come out with the tractor to work the ground, and then they plant the seeds.

Irrigation pipe is used to water the seeds, which turn into vines that are seven to eight feet long. The plants are watered a lot and vines grow with little yellow blossoms, which later grow into pumpkins.

Before leaving Common Scents, each of the kids got to pick either a little gourd or a small pumpkin to take home.



Farmers plan fundraiser for 4-H barn

Farmers hoping to improve the livestock facilities at the Decatur County Fairground will hold a hog roast at the last home football game and hope to get some weaning-weight steers and grain donated.

Michael Wasson and Clay Anderson, both involved in the group, said they started to raise money for the

project years ago. Recently the group got rejuvenated and started to work on the project again. They already have around \$30,000, but need around \$20,000 more to get started.

Mr. Wasson said they want to redo the livestock facilities in two to three steps, doing a little bit each

year including a covered arena and new housing facilities.

The men have set up two fundraisers for this fall. A letter written by Mr. Wasson and Mr. Anderson says they are asking for weaning-weight steers which will be held and fed at the Decatur County Feed Yard. The feed yard is donating

space for the cattle and will carry the feed bill until they are sold.

Karol Evans at the Decatur Co-op has set up a "grain bank," said Mr. Wasson, with the space to store grain being donated. The profit of the grain will help pay the feed bill. Mr. Wasson said they have received (See ARENA on Page 10A)

Newspaper wants Korean vet stories

The Oberlin Herald has received information about three veterans from the Korean War for a special section for Veterans Day in November.

There is only a week left to get information and a picture of the veteran in to the newspaper. Managing Editor Kimberly Davis said she wants to use the special section to honor and remember those who served the country in Korea.

The veteran can be living or dead. The idea is to run a profile of six to eight paragraphs on each veteran from that era, along with

a picture. Call Mrs. 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.

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

Publisher's work recognized nationally

The Oberlin Herald received an honorable mention for a serious column in small weekly papers by Publisher Cynthia Haynes in the National Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest earlier this month.

In the column, Mrs. Haynes urges her readers to pray for their enemies, including Islamic extremist Osama bin Laden, North Korean leader Kim Chong-il; and the kid who spit the gum out on the sidewalk that you stepped in.

The column was reprinted in several Nor'West Newspapers.

A sister paper, The Norton Telegram, received second place in sports photography for a picture of a little girl playing T-ball, published in the June 11, 2004 edition. Photographer Brandon Gay took the picture, which showed Brianna White swinging away at the ball although

her batting helmet covered her eyes.

The Manhattan Mercury was the only other Kansas paper to earn awards in the national contest. The Mercury earned third place for best sports feature story and best sports section and honorable mention for best local news coverage.