

Good luck at state, ladies!



Volleyball team to play at State on Friday in Salina. Story on Page 7A.

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Opponents derail farm office closings

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

A plan to consolidate and close Farm Service Agencies in Kansas and across the U.S. died last week under pressure from Congress, farmers, farm organizations and employees. Bill Fuller, the agency's state director, said the "FSA Tomorrow" plan has been "indefinitely delayed," although the agriculture appropriations bill might allow up to 10 percent of offices nationwide to be reorganized and consolidated.

While the Decatur County office wasn't on the list to be closed, the one in Colby was being examined. And, officials say, down the road, some kind of reorganization is likely.

The plan, said Mr. Fuller, was designed to modernize the agency and redirect and reinvest the resources to enhance service to farmers and ranchers.

Bottom line, he said, is that the agency's budget and staffing levels are cut each year and it is important to redirect the resources

so they can staff offices and improve technology that some farmers are willing and anxious to use. The plan, which originated at the national level, was to close 29 of the 103 offices in Kansas. Nationwide, it would have consolidated 713 offices.

The result, said Mr. Fuller, would have been fewer offices, but more offices that were adequately staffed.

In Kansas, he said, 34 county offices share a county executive director who spends some time at each office. That means

the manager spends a lot of time in the car, he said, which is non-productive. The consolidation plan would have reduced some of that.

Although the plan has been in the works for the last six months at the national level, it was only unveiled about 2 1/2 weeks ago.

In Kansas, 48 counties met the national criteria to be reviewed, he said, and 29 needed to be consolidated under the plan. Mr. Fuller said in the next few weeks, he as state director was going to review those of-

fices and talk with farmers.

Six of those 48 counties are in northwest Kansas, including Logan, Phillips, Rooks, Thomas, Trego and Wallace.

"There has been so much emotion stirred up with this," said Mr. Fuller. "The state director was required to submit a plan in November."

Mr. Fuller said at the state level, they were developing a plan to consolidate fewer than 29 offices. (See FARM on Page 10A)

Teens group rebuilds

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Kids sat in a circle with their left hands held toward the center, waiting for them to be grabbed.

In the middle was another teen holding a key chain full of keys. He walked around the circle and grabbed one of the outstretched hands, then that teen grabbed another until there was a long snake of teenagers in the middle of the circle of chairs.

Suddenly the keys hit the floor and the teens raced to the empty seats. The one left standing grabbed the keys and started the snake over.

Pastor Doug Mason sat on a windowsill inside the Teens for Christ building and laughed as the kids laughed. On the last round he joined in with the teens.

It was Sunday night and around 20 teenagers in seventh through 12th grades had gathered for their weekly get-together.

After the game, the teens gathered towards the back of the building on couches and overstuffed chairs for a small concert with a local band called Inflamed. Before long, the kids were on their feet cheering on the band, made up of Schulyer Huellett, vocal; Brian Hileman, guitar; and James Carlisle, drums, who played spirit-filled metal Christian music.

Each week, said Pastor Mason, the Teens for Christ meetings are different. Variety is important with teenagers, he said.

Pastor Mason and his wife Joanna took over the group here in September. Since then, he said, they have seen between 50 to 60 kids pass through the doors of the building on Rodehaver Avenue. He said they average 18 to 20 teens a week.

The numbers are better than he expected, Pastor Mason said. He said he has worked with two other Teens for Christ groups, one in Russell which averaged 18 kids a meeting and one in Bird City, which he started. In Bird City, he said, they started with an average of four kids and it grew to 30.

Pastor Mason also serves at the Lund Covenant Church, where he is the co-pastor with Pastor Tom (See TEENS on Page 10A)



Yards cleaned

MONDAY EVENING, kids from Oberlin Elementary and Decatur Community High schools pitched in to clean up yards in town for the annual Halloween clean up. Mary Olson (left above) and Stephanie Bruggeman shared a rake to clean up leaves while Josh Fortin and Rhys Davies (right) waited to empty boxes of leaves into a truck.

— Herald staff photos by Kim Davis



Town may get new lake at park, plus a wetlands

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

It seems Oberlin might finally get a small lake back at Sappa Park after years of waiting and planning.

About 17 people, including the Oberlin City Council, met at The Gateway Thursday night to talk about the project. Dennis Haag of the Watershed Institute explained the plan his agency has proposed.

The city has accepted the proposal, said Mr. Haag, for a five-acre lake with a wetlands, or marsh ground, around it.

Mr. Haag said they have done some soil borings, but the results probably won't be back for two weeks. He said they are looking for sand which allows for seepage and silty material to help hold the water in the lake.

The city is limited to 18 acre feet of permanent water, he said. If the city wants a bigger lake, he said, it might have to buy water rights.

The city has been told that they can only capture and store 15 acre feet, said Councilman Joe Stanley. The city is allowed a little leeway,

said Mr. Haag. That amount has been changed to 18 acre feet.

Basically, the project consists of digging a hole and forming a lake. The theory is, said Mr. Haag, that a six-foot-deep hole should tap into ground water. The lake would be deep enough to maintain fish, he said.

The cost estimate given in July for the project was \$60,000, but that doesn't include higher diesel prices, said Mr. Haag.

He said the plans aren't set, and they can do anything the committee wants, depending on how much money the city and lake supporters can raise.

The plan shows the lake being 450 feet long by 450 feet wide, he said. It will be in front of the shelter house and there will be fishing areas and room for paddle boats.

Fish need eight feet of water in the winter, said Mr. Haag, but that can be solved by putting in an air compressor and aerating the lake so it doesn't freeze up and the fish have

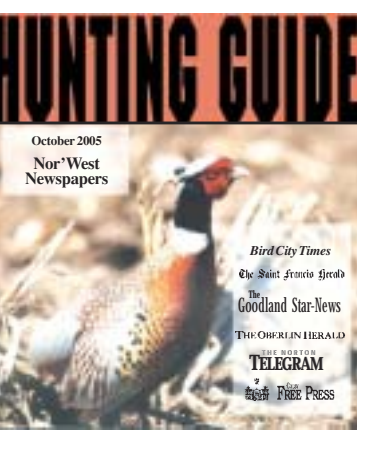
(See PLANS on Page 10A)

Fall hunting section inside today's paper

Inside today's edition of *The Oberlin Herald* is the annual fall Hunting Guide put together by Nor'West Newspapers.

The guide covers everything from bird and deer numbers to dishes to make with the meat after the hunt is over. The edition lets people know where they can go for walk-in hunting, where they can buy a license and state rules hunters need to know before going out.

With over 100 businesses represented in advertisements, there is a little something for everyone.



Voters to decide liquor sales by mail

The question of whether retail stores should be allowed to sell beer and alcohol on Sundays will be determined by voters in Oberlin through Decatur County's first mail election.

By Friday, registered voters should have received their ballots and instructions, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, also the county election officer.

Although the Oberlin City Council approved the Sunday sale of beer and alcohol, a petition with 47 signatures protesting that decision meant the question would go to a vote.

To vote in favor of Sunday sales, Mrs. Horn said, vote yes and to vote against it, vote no.

The actual election day is Tuesday, Nov. 8, but Mrs. Horn said she decided to do something new with this election. The ballots were mailed to voters who are registered in the city.

To vote, fill out the ballot, place

it in the provided envelope, fill out the back side of the envelope and mail or hand deliver it to the county clerk's office in the courthouse. No stamp is required.

If the voter doesn't complete the back of the envelope, Mrs. Horn said, the vote will not count.

She said the office mailed out 1,049 ballots, but they had 45 that have to be hand delivered since they are for people in nursing homes.

With new registration programs, she said, people can still register to vote up until Monday. If anyone comes in to register before Monday, they can still vote in this election.

With the mail election, said Mrs. Horn, people cannot vote at the clerk's office. If a person loses their ballot or it is destroyed, she said, they can file an application with the clerk's office and get a new ballot.

All ballots have to be turned in to the clerk's office by noon on Tuesday, Nov. 8, or received by mail on that day.

Time falls back Sunday

It seems evenings have been getting shorter lately, and they will seem even shorter after Sunday as the clocks are turned back an hour at the end of Daylight Saving Time.



Clocks are supposed to be turned back at 2 a.m. Sunday morning, but most of us will either set the clocks back Saturday night before going to bed, or when we get up. Just don't forget, or you'll miss that extra hour of sleep.

Conferences set for tonight

With the Red Devil volleyball team going to the state tournament on Friday, the schools are encouraging high school parents to meet with teachers tonight instead of Friday since several will be gone on Friday.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said the district decided to hold parent-teacher conferences from 5 to 9 p.m. tonight and from 8 a.m. to noon on Friday.

The team plays at 9:30 a.m. on Friday in Salina, said Mr. Glodt, so Friday morning some teachers will be

gone. He said parents should try to meet with the teachers tonight if possible.

Parents need to know how their kids are doing, Mr. Glodt said, so if the parents can't make it tonight and a teacher they need to talk to is out on Friday, there will be a sign-up sheet and they can meet later.

Mr. Glodt said it won't be as big a deal at the grade school, where conferences will be held Friday as scheduled.



AT THE Teens for Christ meeting Sunday, Joe Dunham and Katie Glading joined other students to play a game before they listened to the band Inflamed.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

* Teens learn about life, Christ

(Continued from Page 1A)
Smith, who is retiring.

Teens for Christ, he said, at the most basic level, works to introduce kids to Christ and teach them how to live like Him. The group doesn't get into theological issues, since it is non-denominational, but they talk about life skills and how Jesus would want a teenager to live.

Each week, said Pastor Mason, one teen is chosen to share a scripture at the next meeting and tell what that verse means to him or her. Then the students talk about "God sightings" and the way they have seen God work over the past week.

Prayer, said Pastor Mason, is a big focus. Not a week goes by that kids don't have a prayer request.

At the end, the group has a lesson. Right now, he said, they are watching a series called Pete and Andy, comedians who take things right out of the Bible. It is all backed up with scripture, he said.

The teens relate to Pete and Andy, he said, because they aren't "super Christians" and they have their doubts and questions, just like teenagers do.

The group has four standard

meetings, he said, and then on the fifth week, they have game night.

Pastor Mason said he has been working with youth for 25 years. At first, he said, there were some bad meetings, but he has learned how to relate to teens. One of the failures for most adults when dealing with kids is that they are too adult, he said, and they want order.

He calls the meetings controlled chaos. There is just enough control to get the point across so the students can understand, he said, but not so much that the kids can't be themselves.

"I'm in there playing with the kids," said Pastor Mason, "helping make the chaos."

In the past, he said, the group had a "fifth quarter" at the Teens for Christ building after sporting events, but they haven't been able to this year because there isn't any water in the building.

The group travels to Rexford monthly for a program called "the Edge." Around 250 teens show up for activities, music, games and food. At the last Edge, he said, a kid from Oberlin stood up and accepted Christ.

The group plans three mission trips each year.

Pastor Mason said there are some things that the group needs, if anyone wants to make a donation, including around 15 folding metal chairs and a couple of eight-foot tables. He said he would also like to do something with the windows in the building. The one in the bathroom is broken, he said, and it would be nice to enclose the front display windows to help with the heating and cooling bills.

When Eric and Cindy Scott ran the program, said Pastor Mason, they said they had someone paying the utility bills, but that isn't happening right now.

The group gets in around \$800 in donations each month, which helps pay those bills, but he has been working without a salary.

Snacks are donated, with Anita Hirsch coordinating the list. He said someone has provided a projector and a laptop computer for the group.

Pastor Mason said all teens are welcome at the meetings, which start at 6 p.m. each Sunday at the group's building, at 118 S. Rodehaver.

* Farm offices to stay open

(Continued from Page 1A)

The positive side to the "FSA Tomorrow" plan is that the national office left it up to the states to decide about the offices. One of the negative sides to the plan being killed is that in some states, he said, offices will stay open that have no employees.

The agency offered some buyouts to employees, he said, and in Kansas, he had to give up 10 staff mem-

bers who will leave in November. That means county offices will have even fewer staff members to do the job.

The national office offered the buyouts because they didn't have the budget to continue operating with the current staff, he said.

He said the budget for the agency comes through an appropriation through Congress, so it is tax dollars. Part of the money goes for agency

operation, but the biggest amount goes to programs and benefits for farmers.

"The bottom line is that the Farm Service Agency, like a lot of organizations, can't continue to operate the way it has since the 1930s," said Mr. Fuller. "Service to farmers and ranchers is the No. 1 priority, and I think we can do that with some fewer offices."

* Plans drawn to build lake

(Continued from Page 1A)
the oxygen they need. The compressor isn't in the price estimate, he said, but it isn't expensive.

The lake, said Mr. Haag, isn't going to be filled from Sappa Creek. The committee could decide to stop up the creek, he said, but the lake would turn into more of a big snake, narrow and shallow.

Tom Ewing asked if this eliminates using water from the city's treatment plant. Yes, said Mr. Haag. "I would love to get that sewer water in there," he said, "if we could find an economical way."

Earlier in the year, the city got an engineering estimate of a couple hundred thousand dollars to pipe the waste water outflow to the lake.

Rick Pauls, co-chair of the lake group, said his biggest concern is waiting on Mother Nature to fill the lake if it isn't getting the water from the creek. Mr. Haag said they might get permission to charge the lake one time by pumping water out of Sappa Creek. He said he is confident they can come up with a plan to work with a reasonable budget.

Some of the habitat planted in the proposed lake bed will need to be cut to allow soil, said Mr. Haag. Do you mean the food plots? asked Mike Ferguson, with Pheasants Forever, which leases the lake bottom as a hunting and recreation area. He said he wants to be involved if they cut anything and the group expects to be reimbursed for the cost of the grain.

Mr. Stanley said he thinks what is happening at Sappa Park is great. There are places to hunt and to walk, but he said he thinks there needs to be more signs. The sign-in box is a good start, he said, but if they build trails, they may need to be closed during hunting season or at least for the start of deer, turkey, pheasant and dove seasons.

Maybe the frisbee golf course, said Mr. Stanley, needs to be closed during those times, too.

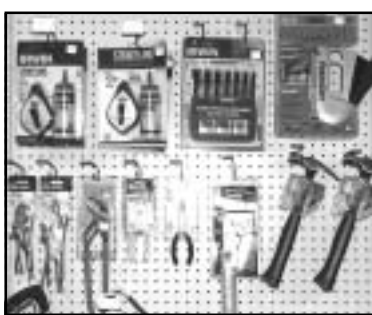
There is a lot going on there, he said, and he would hate to see someone get hurt. Mayor Ken Shobe said they don't want to prohibit anyone from being able to use the park, but people need to be aware of hunting activity.

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