



ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, City Foreman Dan Castle helped move snow from the middle of Main Street in downtown Oberlin out to the country. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Power poles snapped off in blizzard

Electricity restored after 900 poles repaired

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
Electric crews have stayed busy since last week, fixing or replacing almost 900 power poles and restoring electricity to customers.

Especially hard hit were rural electric co-ops that serve most farms and country homes.

Bob Helm, manager of corporate communication at Midwest Energy in Hays, said his firm counted around 390 power poles damaged in some way. There were customers without power all over the area, including rural Great Bend and Hays, he said, but most of the damage was in northwest Kansas.

Some of the poles had cross arms broken, some had burn problems, some were broken in the middle and some at ground level.

Mr. Helm said it is going to take some time to get everything fixed, but all of Midwest's customers have power again and all of the substations are back on. He said all of that

was taken care of by Thursday.

He estimated that 94,000 customers were without power, some longer than others.

Midwest Energy's crews are out working, around 10 to 15 in all, he said, and also some contracted crews.

When the customers were out of power, he said, the crews were working long hours, up to 16 hours days.

Even in the blizzard, the crews started working on Sunday, he said. Linemen were driving places and trying to get the power back on. In places where it drifted, said Mr. Helm, they had problems getting to locations. They had bulldozers pulling trucks through some spots, he said.

The crews work hard and there are a lot of guys with a lot of experience, said Mr. Helm. The crew did very well to get customers on. When the (See CREWS on Page 12A)

Cold hits as city recovers from snow

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
Things got back to something resembling normal in Decatur County by about the end of the week, although the ground was still covered in white and some people still didn't have power.

Last Monday, just about everything in town was closed down because of the blizzard that hit the area Sunday night, leaving around 6 inches of snow some places and drifts reported as high as nine feet.

By last Tuesday, things started to get kind of back to normal, but few people were out on the streets. Thursday and Friday, there were more people out. Both the city and county crews had gotten things plowed.

Even though some in the county were still without power, people could make it to town for groceries or other needs.

Dave Floyd, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Goodland, said the main story with the blizzard was low atmospheric pressure to the east. Then there was a real tight pressure gradient across this part of Kansas, he said. The air was trying to rush from Wyoming into Kansas, which caused the high winds. At one point, said Mr. Floyd, the winds gusted at 79 mph.

This week, he said, the area is set up to have the first arctic air masses, which basically means it is going to be real cold. Wind chills may be 15 to 20 degrees below zero. Temperatures at night are going to be around zero, said Mr. Floyd, and highs during the day not much more than that.

He said the weather isn't normal for this time of year. It is a good 20 degrees colder than normal. Even with the early winter blast, he said, when people look back at the winter in February, the outlook may make it seem like the temperatures will be above normal.

Mr. Floyd said there was a possibility that the area would get another inch to inch and a half of snow this week, which means more work for

the county crew.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said they went to work last Sunday when they went out to get the graders from the country and bring them in to the shop.

Monday morning, he said, they started with about four crew members and worked their way up to eight. Several workers tried to drive to the shop and got stuck, so they had to walk the rest of the way. As each man showed up, the crew that was already at the shop would go help dig out the vehicles. Others got picked up by men driving the graders.

Mr. Stallman said the eight-person crew, normally 13, spent most of the day dealing with emergency situations. The crew helped rescue people from out by the feed yard, went out to open the roads so a pregnant woman could get to town and so a Dresden resident with a broken hip could be brought in.

The crew also helped get people who were stranded north and to the

south of town. They helped pick up hospital workers and get them to work and tried to get the airport open for an emergency flight.

The crew weren't the only ones out trying to get roads open. Mr. Stallman said the crew owes a big thanks to Bill Sauvage, who helped get the roads open so the pregnant woman could get to town. Greg Ritter tried to help get the roads open so the person with the broken hip could get to town.

On Tuesday, he said, the crew cleaned up the emergency needs in town and got started on the county roads. Last Wednesday the main priority was to see that every farmer could get out of their house. On Thursday, the crew finished the job and started to tear into the remaining snow routes in the townships for school buses.

On Monday, said Mr. Stallman, the crew started to knock down some of the 10-to-12-foot snow drifts. The wind could add an extra day or two to the work, he said.

Rural Oberlin man dies after wreck on ice-covered road

Oberlin and Traer lost a friend Thursday night when a one-vehicle accident claimed the life of Richard Allan Grafel, 57.

On Monday, an estimated 500 friends and family members gathered to celebrate Mr. Grafel's life in a ceremony at The Gateway. Many stayed and had lunch at the center before heading to the Traer Cemetery for the burial.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Mr. Grafel was driving his 2001 Ford pickup southbound on County Road 5W about 7:30 p.m. Thursday.

Trooper David Schoenberger said Mr. Grafel apparently lost control of the truck on the snow-packed road.

The truck went into a broadside skid, went into the west ditch, struck a field drive and rolled. Mr. Grafel was ejected, and the truck came to a stop on its wheels.

The trooper said Mr. Grafel was found about 15 feet from the vehicle.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said he asked the patrol to work the accident, because that is normally what they do with a fatality. Sheriff Badsky said Leslie Urban saw the accident.

Trooper Schoenberger said he didn't get to the scene until about two hours later.

He said he was told that when the first person got to the scene, Mr. Grafel was still alive, and an ambulance crew came to take him to the Decatur County Hospital.

Mr. Grafel reportedly was on his way into town to meet a friend.

The report noted that he wasn't wearing a seat belt and Trooper Schoenberger said there wasn't any sign of alcohol involved in the accident.

The trooper said Mr. Grafel's son Greg was at the scene.

Greg said his father was a stand-up guy. He did a lot of things for people and never expected a dime in return.

(See MAN on Page 12A)

Just for fun



AT SACRED HEART CHURCH Sunday afternoon Timothy Helm (left) and Jacob Koerperich played a game of checkers in the basement while the adults cleaned up from dinner. — Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Three vehicles stolen

An Oklahoma man who may have been on drugs got lost in the Kanona area and commandeered a truck and two tractors before he was caught by a local man and turned over to the Decatur County sheriff's office.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said the man, Terry Stough, 27, was driving through Oberlin on Thanksgiving Day on his way home from South Dakota. Mr. Stough took a wrong turn and ended up heading east on U.S. 36 and then south on the Dresden Road, the sheriff said, and there he got lost.

He said Mr. Stough drove his car through a field, where he downed a couple of fences. He came to a stop in a barn, where he got his car high centered.

Sheriff Badsky said Mr. Stough walked to the nearest farm, where he took Larry Lively's 1985 Ford Ranger.

Mr. Stough drove the truck around and it ended up in a creek bed.

Sheriff Badsky said the man then walked to Doyle Brown's dad's farm south of Kanona, where he took a tractor that he got stuck in a well. The man then took a second tractor to try to pull the first tractor out, but that didn't happen.

Sheriff Badsky said Mr. Stough didn't get the first tractor pulled out, but did run over several fences before he stopped and walked back to the Brown farm, where he kicked in the door. Mr. Stough slept in the house. (See THIEF on Page 12A)

Well electrical upgrades will cost city thousands

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
It could cost the City of Oberlin anywhere from \$5,000 to \$16,840 to upgrade wiring for two older water wells so both can be hooked up to a portable generator in case the power goes out.

The City Council discussed the upgrades with Thaniel Monaco, engineer at Miller and Associates on

Thursday, but didn't make any decisions.

The new well No. 12 will have the wiring needed to hook up to a generator, said Mr. Monaco, but the other wells would need to be upgraded.

The cost of the generator is the current well project, he said, but the wiring upgrades are not. That means

the city would have to pay for the upgrades.

For well No. 10, east of town, the cost will range from \$5,000 to \$7,815. For well No. 11 south of town, the cost would range from \$6,280 to \$9,025.

The city wants a portable generator, said Mr. Monaco, so it could run any of the three wells in an emer-

gency.

If the council only wants to pick one well to upgrade, said Mr. Monaco, he suggests picking well No. 10 because it would be cheaper. All of the equipment inside the well will be new and the capacity is at least as much as well No. 11 or more.

The generator can be used on No. 12 if the city loses power, so people

still have water, but if that well didn't work for some reason, the generator wouldn't be able to hook up to the other wells.

City Administrator Gary Shike said they wanted to rig the generator so it can be moved and used for other things, too. The city ordered a 80-kilowatt diesel generator for the (See CITY on Page 12A)

* Crews work long hours to fix power

(Continued from Page 1A)
customer is in a rural, isolated area, sometimes it takes a while longer to get the line up again and when the crew is working in those conditions it is even tougher.

Director of Operations Earl Hansen with Prairie Land Electric in Norton said they counted at least 460 poles that have been damaged, but they expect over 500 total. A big share of the damage was in Decatur, Sheridan and Graham counties.

Sunday morning, said Mr. Hansen, the storm started in Cheyenne County and then moved to Rawlins and then to Decatur. Buy 3 p.m., the storm was all across the area.

The co-op brought in crews from mine cooperatives to help, he said, each sending four to six men on a crew.

Mr. Hansen said Prairie Land has 26 linemen who work in this area all the time.

Power started to go out last Sun-

day, he said, but by Saturday, Prairie Land had the last customers, those in the Jennings area, back on.

Mr. Hansen said they had power poles stocked up, but they had to get in five semitrailer loads of poles and supplies.

The crews were working 16 hours a day, he said, starting around 6:30 a.m. and still are working that long.

He said farmers with big tractors who helped the crews out, and so did the county highway department.

There are still quite a few lines still down to farm wells, he said, and the crews are still working 10 to 11 hours a day to get them going.

"The crews put out 150 percent," said Mr. Hansen. "and really worked at it hard for the conditions. The main thing is that we want to stress to the consumers themselves that they were really good."

He said they had a lot of calls about power outages, but the customers seemed to understand what was going on.

* Blizzard keeps city employees busy for the week

(Continued from Page 1A)
meals for them.

Mr. Shike said the women in the city office handled a lot of phone calls.

There have been a few complaints about snow removal. Councilman Joe Stanley said he has heard from a lot of people who would like some sand spread downtown.

Before the council meeting, Mr. Shike sent a memo which outlined two of the city's ordinances on snow removal. He said the city tries to clear snow blocking driveways, but that is really the homeowner's responsibility under the ordinances.

"Following snow clearance," one ordinance says, "it shall be the responsibility of property owners or occupants to remove any blockages of snow from driveways, sidewalks and vehicles."

Back in the 1980s, he said, the city started to clean out the windrow left

by plows at driveways. The crew still does this for people, he said, but people need to understand the long hours the crew is working and that they can't clear everyone's drive immediately.

The second ordinance makes it illegal for people to shove their snow out into the street.

"Following snow clearance," it reads, "it shall be a violation ... to pile or dump snow on any cleared street from a private driveway or sidewalk so as to constitute an impediment or hazard to normal traffic on the street."

Most contractors don't do this, Mr. Shike said, but people need to remember once a street is cleared, they can't dump snow on it again.

On Friday, city crews started hauling the large mounds of snow in the middle of the city streets downtown out of town. Sand was put down at the intersections.

* City waits to decide to upgrade wells

(Continued from Page 1A)
job, he said.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment requires cities to have at least one generator to hook up to a well to pump water, he said, just in case, but it doesn't have to be portable.

Usually in a power outage, the city just uses water stored in the water tower.

As the wells age, said Mr. Monaco, more of these kinds of upgrades will have to be done.

City Foreman Dan Castle said they never planned to do anything with well No. 11, maybe just put in a double throw switch on the outside, but there is probably some

electrical work required to meet code.

Why wasn't wiring in the grant? asked Councilman Ray Ward. At that time, said Mr. Monaco, they didn't plan to move the generator to other wells.

In the 2006 budget there is \$10,000 in capital outlay under water, said Mayor Shobe, so there is money available. The council decided to wait to make a decision.

Mr. Monaco said there was no pay request for the well, but would be by the second meeting in December.

He said the electrical equipment for the well will be shipped in January and some in March. All the pipe work for well No. 12 is done, he said.

* Thief steals tractors

(Continued from Page 1A)
Mr. Stough woke up in the morning and headed back to the road, which is five miles south of U.S. 36, three miles south of Kanona and a mile and a half back east.

About then, Mr. Lively saw Mr. Stough and called the sheriff's of-

rice.

One of the tractors belonged to Mr. Lively and one to Mr. Brown.

In the field, said Sheriff Badsky, Mr. Stough tested positive for drugs. He was arrested and taken to jail, but has posted bond on criminal damage and auto theft charges and left.

Three win instant prizes

Three Oberlin more shoppers matched numbers in Oberlin merchants' big Christmas on Us giveaway to win \$50 last week: Roma Grafel, Maxine Sauvage and Debbie Ream.

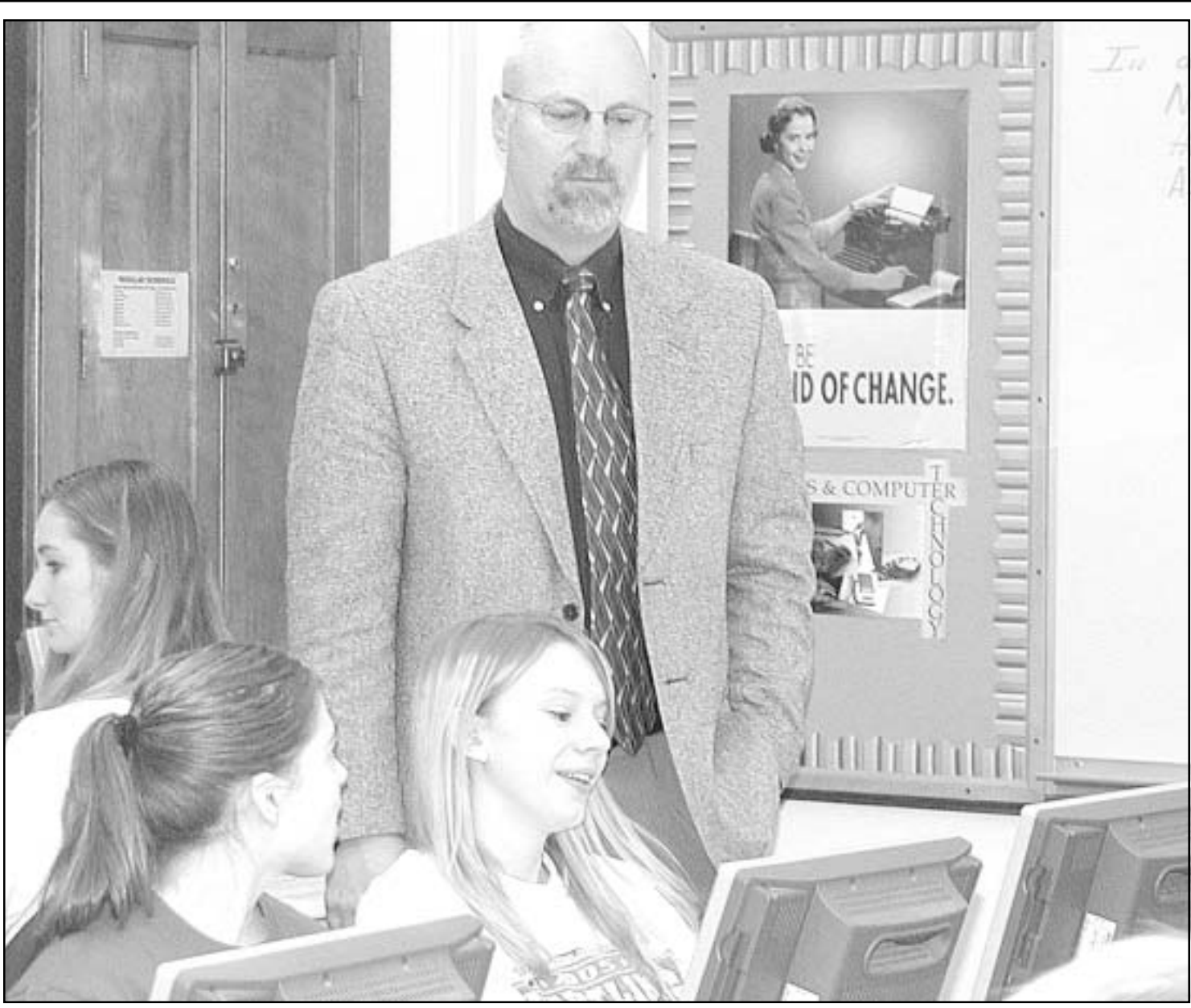
Mrs. Grafel said she got her ticket at Scrip R and she planned to use the scrip prize to help pay for a saddle. Ms. Ream goes to Raye's Grocery and said she would use the money for Christmas shopping. Ms. Sauvage got her ticket at Addleman's Drug Store and also planned to use the money for Christmas shopping.

There are two weeks left for six more winners to claim instant prizes. Shoppers can try to match their tickets to the eight numbers printed in the ads in today's paper.

Prizes will be given out to the first six people to claim them.

On Saturday, Dec. 17, *The Oberlin Herald* staff will draw numbers for any remaining instant winners, then \$500 for second place and \$1,500 for first. All of the prizes will be given in scrip money.

This year's sponsors are Addleman Drug Store, Ward Drug Store, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Oberlin Mercantile, the Dresser, Shear Creations West and Day Spa, the Carpet Center, the Bank, Countryside Veterinary Clinic, Rocking R, Prairie Petals, Fidele Electric, Home Planning Center, Culligan, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Flowers by Lee, Ampride, Lifetime Eyecare and R&M Service Center.



ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL Duane Dorshorst looked over Karli Fredrickson's shoulder after he helped introduce the high school students to a new computer program. — Herald file photo

Principal honored with district award

Oberlin Elementary School's administrator received the district Distinguished Principal award from the Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals at a recent conference in Wichita.

Duane Dorshorst has been principal at the grade school for the last 10 years. Before that, he was the assistant principal at the high school for two years and taught high school science for 10.

"It is well deserved," said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, "and a great advantage to our district that he serves on so many state level commit-

tees because often he fills us in on items." Mr. Dorshorst was nominated for the award by other principals and superintendents in the association's 5th district, which stretches from Great Bend west to the state line.

The state, said Mr. Dorshorst, is divided into six districts. Each chooses a representative who gets an award. One state winner is chosen from those six to represent Kansas in national competition.

* Man dies after accident on snowy road

(Continued from Page 1A)
"He was a man who gave second chances," said Greg.

Mr. Grafel was born Feb. 22, 1948, in McCook, to Harlan and Norma (Crocker) Grafel.

He grew up on a farm in Hitchcock County, between Herndon and Culbertson, and was a 1966 graduate of Herndon Rural High School.

On Aug. 27, 1966, he married Connie Demmer in Herndon. They lived in Manhattan four years while

attending college. Mr. Grafel graduated from K-State in 1970 with a Bachelor of Science in zoology. The couple lived briefly in Wassau, Wis., where he worked for Kraft Foods, then move back to the Herndon area in 1971. They began a farming and ranching operation and were partners with her parents, Harold and Eleanore Demmer, in the D & S Grain and Cattle Co.

Rich was a member of the McCook Elks Lodge and served as treasurer of Finley Township. He

had many interests and hobbies, including woodworking and collecting antiques, but farming was what he enjoyed most and he was proud to have his two sons join the operation and work alongside him.

Survivors include his sons, Dan and Melinda Grafel and Greg and Amanda Grafel, all of rural Oberlin; his mother, Norma Grafel of Herndon; a sister, Sheila and Greg Marney of Rossville; four grandchildren, Kade and Isabel Grafel and Kel and Reece Grafel; and a special

friend, Karen VanKootenwall of McCook.

His father, Harlan, preceded him in death on July 20.

Funeral services were Monday, Dec. 5, 2005, at 11 a.m. at The Gateway in Oberlin, with the Rev. Dan Davis officiating. Burial was in Traer Cemetery with arrangements by Pauls Funeral Home.

Memorials were established to the Oberlin Fire Department, Decatur Health Systems or the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Chamber to hold house lighting contests here

Starting next Wednesday, members of the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce will be out judging Christmas lights strung across homes in Oberlin, Norcatur and Jennings.

The judges will spend three days from next Wednesday to Saturday night driving around the county looking at the lights. Chamber Manager Glenva Nichols said they would appreciate it if people who

want to be part of the contest would call the office at 485-3441 and leave their address.

Winners in Oberlin will receive \$75 for first place, \$50 for second and \$25 for third off their city elec-

tric bill.

Winners in Norcatur and Jennings will receive \$75 for first, \$50 for second and \$25 for third in cash prizes.

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<p>2005 Dodge Neon SXT PW, PL, Tilt, Cruise, Alloy Wheels, CD Factory Warranty</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">\$10,900</p>	<p>2001 Chrysler 300M 3.5L V-6, Loaded leather, 4-Dr, Sharp</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">\$10,995</p>	<p>2005 Dodge Durango Ltd. Pkg., 4x4, 5.7L Hemi V-8, Remaining Warranty</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">\$22,995</p>

2005 Chevrolet K-2500 Crew Cab, 4x4, Duramax Diesel.....	\$33,500
2005 Chevrolet K-3500 Crew Cab Dually, 4x4, Duramax, 1500 miles.....	\$41,900
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2002 Ford Explorer XLT 4x4, Loaded.....	\$10,900
2002 Honda Accord SE V-Tec, Sunroof, 4-Dr.....	\$13,900
2002 Ford F-350 Crew Cab Dually, Lariat, PowerStroke.....	\$17,995
2002 Volkswagen Beetle Turbo Diesel, Leather, Sunroof.....	\$13,995
2001 Chevrolet K-2500 Ex-Cab, 4x4, 6.0L V-8.....	\$12,900
2001 Dodge Ram 2500 4x4, 5.9 V-8, Long Box.....	\$9,900
2001 Dodge Ram 2500 4x4, Cummins, Flatbed.....	\$10,900
2000 Chevrolet K-2500 Reg Cab, 4x4, 350.....	\$8,950
1999 Chevrolet K-3500 454 V-8, 4x4, Dually.....	\$6,995
1998 Chevrolet K-2500 6.5L Turbo Diesel 4x4.....	\$8,995
1998 Dodge Ram 1500 Reg Cab, Snow Plow 4x4.....	\$7,995
1998 Chevrolet K-2500 6.5L Turbo Diesel.....	\$7,995
1995 Mercury Villager Mini-Van Nice!.....	\$2,995
1992 Dodge 3/4 Ton 4x2, Cummins Diesel, 5-Spd.....	\$5,495
1985 Ford Crown Victoria Under 50,000 miles, Nice!.....	\$2,495

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