



Merry Christmas!

See Section C for letters to Santa.

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Crews plan teamwork for next snow

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Since the blizzard at the end of November, there have been a lot of questions about who is in charge of cleaning what roads, who can close roads and how emergency crews, including the state, county and city, can work together to get the job done and keep people safe.

On Friday, Dec. 2, workers from the county, city and state met at The Gateway to hash out what happened and what could have been done differently, although they didn't come up with a lot of answers.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy told the Decatur County

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

• Heard that the road and bridge department hasn't been able to get any No. 1 fuel to add to the diesel to winterize it. Story to come.

• Talked with the ambulance director and sheriff about trading an old ambulance for a truck seized in a drug bust, but the two decided it wasn't

worth it. Story to come.

• Discussed a recent meeting among city, county and state emergency crews about the blizzard. Story at left.

• Talked about the idea of starting a Red Cross unit here or getting the Salvation Army to help out in emergencies. Story on Page 3A.

commissioners about the debriefing during their meeting Tuesday, Dec.

6. He asked if Emergency Preparedness Director Bert Cool had de-

clared an emergency during the storm, one of the questions that came up during the meeting. No one knew for sure.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he called Mr. Cool on Tuesday, Nov. 29, and heard that people were getting stuck on the roads. Road crews were pulling them out, but they would head down the highway again to get stuck again.

The roads were supposed to be open, said Mr. Unger, but they weren't passable.

There were road closed signs on U.S. 83 on Monday and Tuesday during the storm, said Mr. Pomeroy.

During the meeting, said Mr. Pomeroy, they noted that only the state Department of Transportation had the authority to close a state highway. He said county officials don't have the power to do that.

How would the Department of Transportation know? asked Mr. Unger, saying the county crew did the work here.

Mr. Pomeroy said he had learned that all disasters need to be handled locally. The officials on the scene, said Mr. Unger, should have the authority to close roads.

What are they going to do if local officials do close a road? asked

County Attorney Steve Hirsch. No one had an answer for that.

Sheriff Ken Badsky said the commissioners can appoint someone to close a road in an emergency. At least the roads can be closed until the state guys can get here to take a look, he said.

Barricades to close the roads were put up on U.S. 83 going south out of town, at the U.S. 36 and U.S. 83 intersection and at the U.S. 83 and K-383 intersection, said Sheriff Badsky, but the county guys had to put them up; it wasn't the state.

The storm gave everyone a lot of (See CREWS on Page 12A)

Budget includes activities

Sports, clubs are inexpensive

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Extracurricular activities take a little less than 5 percent of the budget, the Oberlin School Board heard last Monday night, but the superintendent said it's hard to imagine the schools without them.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt handed out a study on activity costs, showing what comes out of the general fund and what comes out of money students raise at the high school for their activities. He said the board asked for the report at a previous meeting.

The district spent a total of \$251,082 on activities, he said, not including money the kids make and spend. That amount, he said, includes coaching and sponsor salaries, transportation and other expenses. Transportation alone last school year for all of the student activities cost \$90,771.

Without the activities, said Mr. Glodt, the school wouldn't be the same. It's been proven that students who are involved in both sports and other activities do better academically and are more likely to stay out of trouble.

Education is the district's main focus, he said, but it is good for the kids to be involved in things that interest them.

In a year, he said, \$250,000 out of (See DISTRICT on Page 12A)

Road job threatened by crunch

By VERONICA MONIER

Several road and bridge projects in northwest Kansas might not get done unless the state is able to come up with more money, since federal money is less than expected and the Legislature has been borrowing from the road fund.

At least one project in Decatur County — rebuilding K-383 from Jennings east to the county line — could be in danger.

Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller said at a press conference in Norton that in 2004, the Legislature restructured the 1999 Comprehensive Transportation Program's budget. That included an assumed increase of \$250 million from the federal government.

"The federal bill, known as SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), was approved this summer, and I appreciate everything that members of the Kansas congressional delegation did to get an increase in funding (See BRIDGE on Page 12A)



WITH THE WINNING TICKET, Bev Reiter (above) showed Steve Haynes and Dave Bergling her number, which matched the one for the grand prize for the Christmas on Us

giveaway Saturday. Clayton Carter (below) played the bells with her friends before the giveaway at the Centennial Park gazebo.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Women winners of bucks

Seven tickets were drawn out of a large trash can Saturday morning, and two were winners in the Oberlin merchants' annual Christmas on Us \$2,500 giveaway.

At 11 a.m., the first ticket was drawn out of the can, but no one from the crowd of around 250 people came forward to claim a prize. Members of *The Oberlin Herald* staff stood in the gazebo, while kids took turns drawing tickets out of the bucket.

Since all of the "instant winner" prizes had been given away earlier in the promotion, only first place of \$500 and grand prize of \$1,500 were left.

First to holler out from the back of the crowd was Penny Fringer, who showed the matching ticket to win the \$500 in scrip money. Mrs. Fringer said she would use the money to buy a few more gifts for Christmas and some groceries.

The other tickets drawn were included 975812, 5363310, 3268587, 3268587 and 7008907.

Then it was time to draw for the grand prize. From the same area where Mrs. Fringer was standing came a little holler. Bev Reiter came walking up with the winning ticket, No. 3824667, which she got at Raye's Grocery.

Mrs. Reiter said she has never won before and was excited to win this time. Actually, she said, she doesn't normally make it to the drawing. She said she would spend the money on bills and Christmas



gifts. She said she was sure her daughter will have some plans for the money, too.

After the grand prize was given away, some headed downtown for hot chili and treats served at several businesses. Before the drawing started, the bell ringers from Faith and St. John's Lutheran churches

performed Christmas music.

All of the money given away during the Christmas on Us promotion is in scrip money and can only be spent at sponsoring businesses. Sponsors include: Addleman Drug Store, Ward Drug Store, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Oberlin Mercantile, the Dresser,

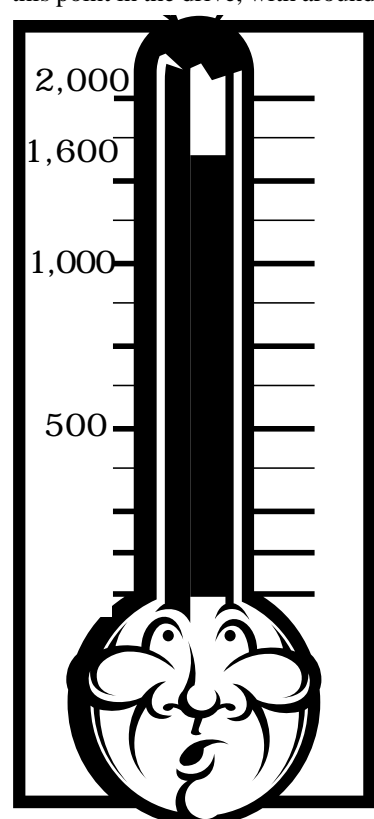
Shear Creations West and Day Spa, the Carpet Center, the Bank, Countryside Veterinary Clinic, Rocking R, Prairie Petals, Fidele Electric, Home Planning Center, Culligan, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Flowers by Lee, Ampride, Lifetime Eyecare and R&M Service Center.

Pantry needs food

Week and a half left in campaign

With a week and half left before the end of the year, the annual food drive at Stanley Hardware is 400 items short of the goal of 2,000 items.

On Monday, owner Joe Stanley said they are doing pretty well for this point in the drive, with around



1,600 items. He said he thinks the items will come in pretty well the last week.

A lot of people who come home to visit for Christmas will donate to the drive, he said.

After the first of the year, the junior high student council will help Mr. Stanley take all of the items to the Decatur County Food Pantry at the United Church.

In the past, he said, they have collected nearly a ton and a half of food.

The pantry is low on all items, including canned and dry goods and household items, he said. Canned items they need include spinach, carrots, potatoes, mixed vegetables, vegetable soup, vegetable beef soup, chicken broth, beef broth, meat, ham, cream of mushroom, cream of potato, cream of celery, cream of chicken, cream of broccoli, peaches, apple sauce, mixed fruit, olives, jelly and juice.

Dried goods needed include baking powder, baking soda, coffee, tea bags, sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, pancake mix, mustard, mayonnaise, pancake syrup, ketchup, salt and pepper, crackers, Hamburger Helper, ramen noodles, salad dressing, condensed sweet milk, dressing, popcorn, coffee creamer and oatmeal.

Household needs include toothbrushes, trash bags, sandwich bags, laundry soap, foil, all-purpose cleaner, bleach, laundry soap and cleanser.

