

## City raises electric rates to avoid loss

The Oberlin City Council raised electric rates one penny per kilowatt hour for every customer at a meeting Thursday night at The Gateway, saying the city was paying more for power and the electric fund might go in the red.

The council has been discussing a possible rate hike for electricity for months, but decided last year to table the discussion until the first meeting in 2006.

The city had several options, including raising the rate per kilowatt hour, raising the meter charge or a combination of both. The idea was to generate \$140,000 more a year. City Administrator said power the city buys is costing the city more now, and the extra \$140,000 will bring the electric fund back to where it was before power costs went up. Money is transferred out of the electric

### Council Roundup

At a meeting last Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Raised electric rates one penny per kilowatt hour for every customer on city power. Story at left.
- Agreed to credit Sunflower Cinema \$100 per month on its city bill. Story on Page 12.

• Heard the city has been fined \$2,500 by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for not meeting the schedule for the new water treatment plant, which said the project should be done by now. Story below.

fund to help with the street department, library, The Gateway and a half cent per kilowatt goes into an infrastructure fund to help upgrade the electrical utility itself. The fund is set up for large projects for the utility. The electrical fund also pays for all of the employees who work in the electric department

which includes a percentage of office staff if part of their job is electrical.

The penny increase brought all rates from 10.5 cents per kilowatt hour to 11.5 cents, and will generate the needed money. The council decided to leave the meter charge at \$5 per month. The increase will be seen

on February bills.

Mayor Ken Shobe said the decision amounts to an 8.2 percent increase, but the 1-cent hike actually is about 9.5 percent.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the hospital had been getting a break on its electric bill. Foreman Dan Castle said he thought the agreement was no longer in effect. If the hospital gets a break, he said, that means other large users should get a break, too.

Mr. Shike said there has been an agreement with the hospital which gives them a monthly break. After some research the group found that the break was for \$250 a month. The hospital pays \$100,000 a year, said Mayor Shobe, and the discount is saving them \$250 a month. It doesn't seem worth it.

The council decided that all users will pay

the 11.5 cents per kilowatt hour.

Before making a decision, the council discussed several options.

If the city raises the rates and brings in \$140,000? asked Councilman Patrick Pomeroy, will the city need an increase again next year. That could happen, said Mr. Shike.

What effect would energy conservation have? someone asked.

If they could get everyone to use less power, said Mr. Shike, the city wouldn't have to buy as much. When more power is used, he said, the last to be bought is at the top end and it costs more. It isn't as simple as saying if the customer uses more, the city makes more.

The group discussed changing the meter (See POWER on Page 5A)

## Engineers to pay city's state fine for sewer plant

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The state has fined the City of Oberlin \$2,500 for not meeting the schedule for the new waste water treatment plant, which showed the project being done by December.

City Administrator Gary Shike told the council last Thursday that Miller and Associates, the engineering firm on the project, said they will pay the fine. The schedule showed that the city would be finished with the lagoon system by now, but construction hasn't even started yet.

The new schedule says the plant has to be done by December 2006, said Mr. Shike.

There is an appeal process on the schedule, said Thaniel Monaco, the project engineer with Miller. He said they are asking the Kansas Department of Health and Environment that the discharge not be tested until January 2008.

Discharging ponds normally don't meet permit requirements the first time, he said, and sometimes not the second time they are tested.

Do you think the plant can be completed by December? asked Mayor Ken Shobe. Mr. Monaco said he thought it could.

City Foreman Dan Castle said

Mid States plans to try to install the city's new transformer starting Monday. The company showed up the day after the blizzard to install the transformer, he said, but because of weather conditions they were unable to work.

The crew found a broken power pole south of the high school, said Mr. Castle, and they fixed it before the council meeting.

Is anything going to be done about the downed street light near Oberlin Elementary School on Cass Avenue, Mayor Shobe asked. It is disconnected, said Mr. Castle. It will be removed and replaced.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that a used 1999 digger truck has been located in Oklahoma City. Mr. Castle said he plans to get some pictures in the mail and if it looks good, someone will have to go look at it.
- Heard that the lights on the south side of the airport sign are out.
- Heard that the bid letting by the Kansas Department of Transportation for the project on U.S. 36 has been moved to October. The bid letting was supposed to happen last April. The project will now start in December.

### Feeding the hungry



JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS, including Joe Hirsch, helped move over 3,000 food items from Stanley Hardware to the food pantry in the basement of the United Church last

Wednesday. The food was donated during the store's annual holiday food drive.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

## Bolt from heavens allowed new church

By MARY LOU OLSON

A bolt of lightning struck the steeple of the Oberlin Sacred Heart Church during a storm shortly before midnight on Aug. 16, 1954, changing everything for the parishioners, who were then faced with the decision of whether to rebuild or put up a new building.

A building committee, including Leo Zodrow, Ted Berls, Elmo Corder, Bert Berls, W.J. Corcoran, Eugene Koerperich, Vollie Pollnow, Francis Bruggeman, Joe Martin and John Kleinsorge, was appointed by the pastor, the Rev. Emil Sinner. Plans were made to erect a new church and rectory on a block donated by Joseph and Ed Martin at 210 E. Washington.

It was in commemoration of the completion of the new brick church and rectory 50 years ago that parishioners gathered on Dec. 4.

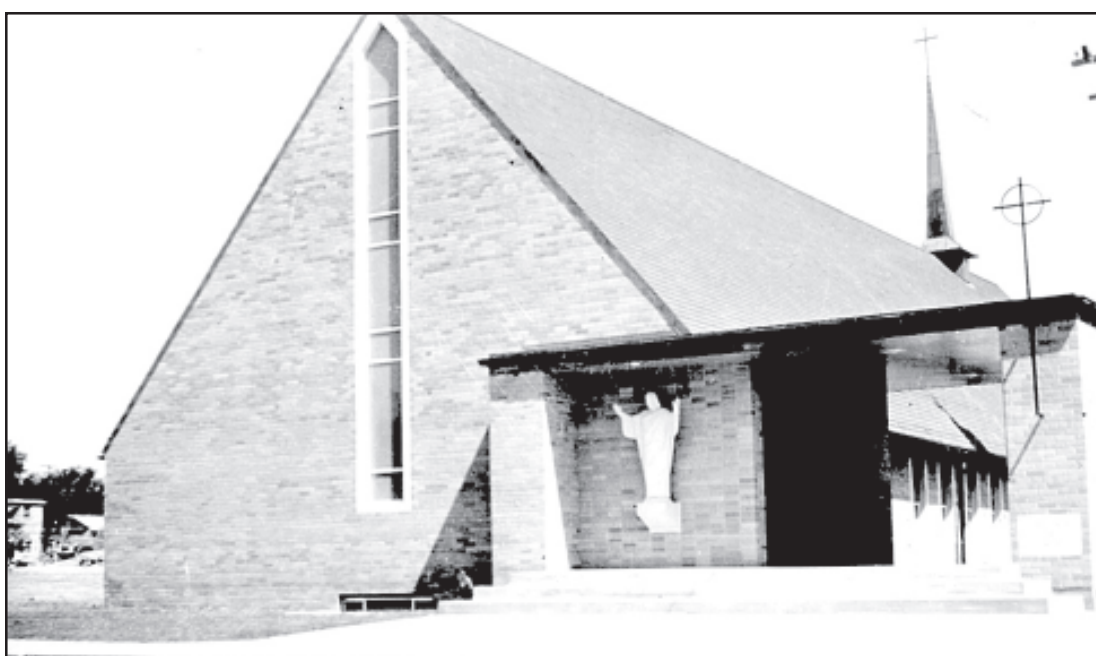
The Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Bishop of Salina, celebrated Mass to honor the 50th anniversary of the present church. Co-celebrant was the Rev. George Kochuvelikakam, sacramental minister of the Oberlin, Leoville, and Selden parishes, assisted by the Rev. Stan Chapin, deacon.

Assisting were Marianne Larue, lector; Martha Munson and Catherine Neal, eucharistic ministers; Bronson Scott and Tyler Bruggeman, altar servers; musicians James Buchholz and Patricia Glenn; Jacob Helm, cross bearer; the Mike Coleman family, ushers; the Lee Don Scott family, gift bearers, and Jerry Schuetz, rosary leader.

Following the service, a dinner catered by Geraldine Neff was served by the Catholic Youth Organization and the teachers, Duane and Pat Dorshorst.

### CHURCH HISTORY

The first Mass celebrated in Oberlin was said by the Rev. Augustine Reichert of New Almelo in

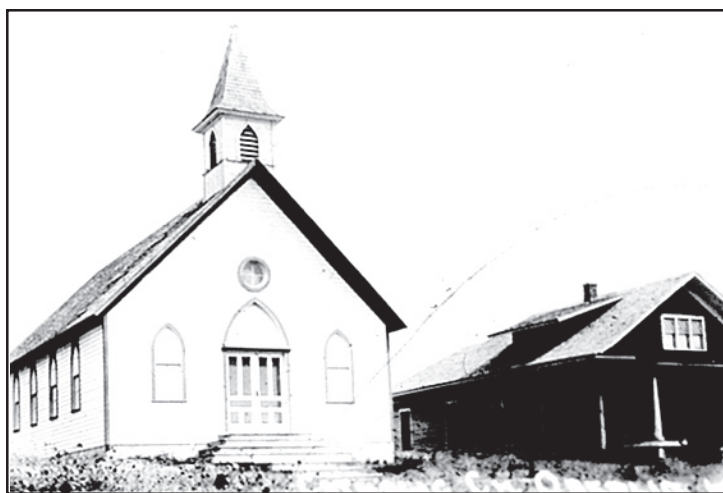


OBERLIN CATHOLIC parishioners gathered on Dec. 4 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the present church (above), which was constructed of variegated buff brick and trimmed with Silverdale limestone. A frame church (below) was built in 1911 at a cost of \$994.52 after the first church was destroyed in a cyclone.

1879 or 1880. Father Reichert said Mass every two months in Tom Crowe's building or at the homes of Mary Heitmann, Stephen J. O'Toole southwest of Oberlin or Ambrose Handwerk, in a log building built into a hillside.

In 1888, the Rev. Edward Smythe was sent to Oberlin to build a church, staying at the St. James Hotel. On Sunday, Sept. 30, 1888, the congregation met and plans were made to erect the first church for the parish, given the name Sacred Heart. A frame Gothic church was built at 302 E. Adams, northeast of today's church. First services were held Dec. 20, 1888, and the first Mass was celebrated on Dec. 23, 1888, by Father Smythe.

The Dec. 13, 1888, issue of *The Oberlin Herald* stated, "The Catholic church, as it approaches completion, rears its magnificent presence from its slight eminence.



It is an ornament to the city."

The first marriage performed in the new church was for August Schroeder and Ellen Conlon on Feb. 7, 1889, by Father Smythe. There was a great need of hitching racks (tying posts) at that time be-

cause most parishioners drove teams. On Feb. 28, 1919, Stephen J. O'Toole purchased property east of the church for this purpose and donated it to Bishop Cunningham.

(See CHURCH on Page 5A)

## Group needs cash to fix decorations damaged in storm

The blizzard after Thanksgiving was tough on Christmas decorations on the highways and downtown, and the Oberlin Business Alliance is looking for money to repair them.

At a meeting last Wednesday, the group discussed what to do about damaged decorations.

LaMoine Wolfram, owner of Oberlin Automotive, said the Christmas lights took a beating. The decorations, said Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, need some major work. The city crew brought one to the store, he said, and its fittings need repair work.

City Administrator Gary Shike

said the crew hasn't gotten all of the decorations down, but they are pretty well wrecked, he said.

Mr. Wolfram, who volunteers to work on the decorations each year, said he doesn't have any extra supplies. The alliance members said it was OK for him to get some bulbs.

Maybe the school would like to help out, said Mr. Stanley. Maybe the vocational students could do some welding on the fittings.

The alliance members need to decide what to do with the decorations, said Mr. Shike.

What about the ribbons for the (See STORM on Page 5A)

## Chamber banquet reservations due

Reservations for the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet need to be made with the Chamber office by Tuesday.

The banquet will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 19, at The Gateway. It is open to members and non-members. Tickets are \$17, which includes dinner served by The Gateway staff.

To make reservations, stop by the office or call at 475-3441.

Again this year, the Chamber will honor an outstanding teacher, community volunteer, agriculture builder of the year and community leaders for an individual or group.

Those at the banquet will be able to vote for Chamber board members. The seats that are up are currently held by Bryan Loker, Sid Metcalf, Marilyn Horn and Peg

Smith. Anyone interested in serving or who wants to nominate someone should call the Chamber office.

After dinner, Phillip Thomas, a history professor at Wichita State University, will portray the noted explorer, Capt. Meriwether Lewis.

President Thomas Jefferson chose Mr. Lewis and Capt. William Clark to lead an expedition across the new Louisiana Territory to the Pacific Ocean. Their Corps of Discovery reached the Pacific and returned home.

Mr. Lewis was rewarded with the governorship of all Louisiana in 1806.

Dr. Thomas will talk about what Mr. Lewis found during his exploration, including the wildlife, the plants, people and the geography from the Continental Divide to the Oregon coast.