

Flames destroy barn

Pregnant sows lost in blaze

A fire destroyed a large barn at the farmstead of Kevin and Julie Schiessler south of Herndon in the Midway Community early Monday.

Julie Schiessler said that when she got up around 5 a.m., she saw no sign of a fire. Steve Schiessler, who lives west of the Schiesslers, also said he saw no fire when he went out at 6 a.m. However, when Kevin Schiessler got up shortly after 6, the barn was engulfed in flames.

The center section of the barn had farrowing crates, where four sows were waiting to give birth, Mrs. Schiessler said. There were heat lamps in that section, and it is possible one of them may have caused the fire.

She said they lost the whole barn, along with the sows, but were able to keep the fire away from other outbuildings and the house.

"We called 911 in Atwood and dispatch in Oberlin," Mrs. Schiessler said, "but only Atwood and Herndon responded."

Herndon Fire Chief Tim Solko said that Oberlin did not respond because the fire was in Rawlins County. The Decatur County firemen were told they would be called only if they were needed for backup.

Mrs. Schiessler said that a fireman from Atwood told them that it would have been impossible to save the structure even if they had been at the scene when it was discovered.

Danny Leitner, who is on the Herndon Fire Department, said that the barn was already gone when they arrived, but they helped save some big bales.

"We were fortunate that there was little wind," Mrs. Schiessler said. "There was old hay in the hay mow, as well as some which was being used for bedding. Several neighbors helped to water down the smoldering ashes throughout the day and a neighbor, Steve Arnold, brought us a big sprinkler, which was a big help."

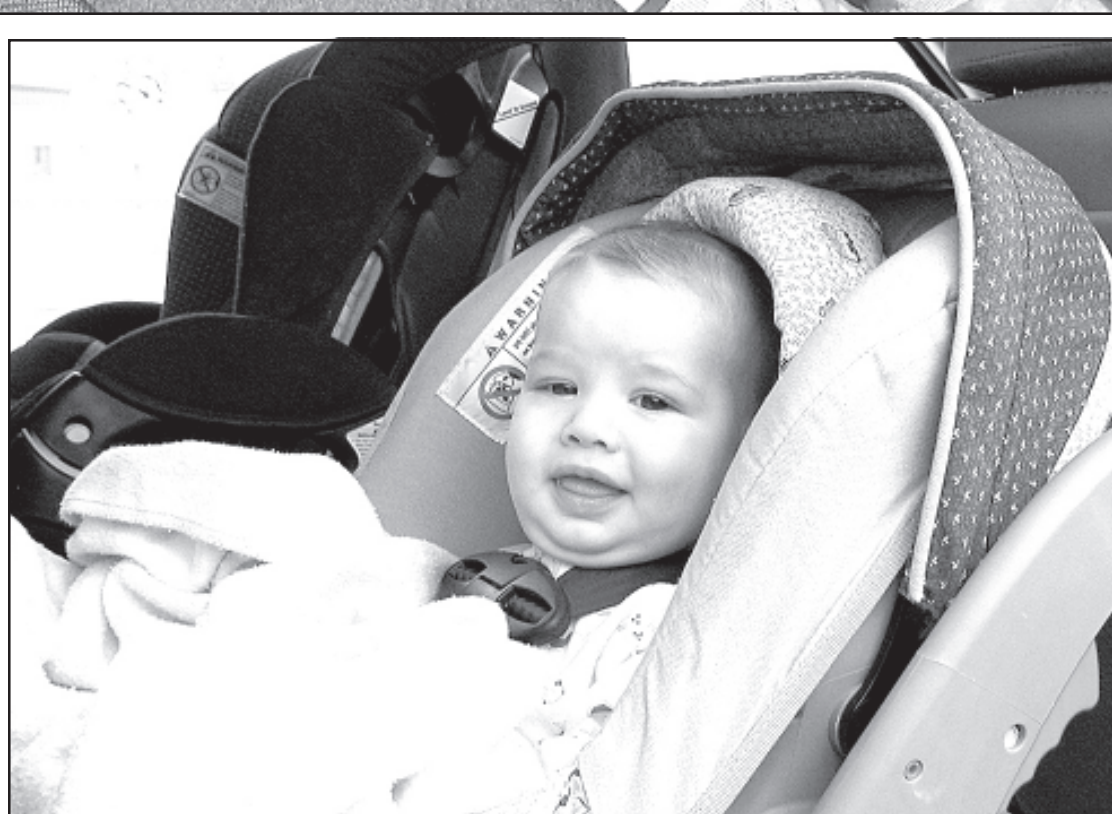
The couple's children, Christopher and Haley, had planned to choose their 4-H projects from pigs in these litters, she said.

There was no insurance on the structure, she added.



Troopers check kid seats

ON VALENTINE'S DAY, Trooper Phillip Henrickson (above) of the Kansas Highway Patrol checked child car seats for safety. Grady Lohofener (below) waited for his to get checked. The troopers looked at eight seats in the parking lot of the Decatur County Hospital, twice as many as they inspected at Smith Center the day before. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Commissioners buy chemicals to combat weeds

The Decatur County commissioners approved the purchasing of \$20,000 in chemicals for the noxious weed department at their meeting Tuesday, Jan. 31.

Director Gaylen Huntley said he has three bids with government pricing.

The commissioners approved the purchase with Mr. Huntley getting to pick the least expensive chemicals.

Mr. Huntley said he also needed to purchase some chemical for prairie dog control, but that it needed to

be run through the general fund. The commissioners approved the purchase of \$2,700 worth.

The weed department would like to spray for grassy sandburs along the roads, he said, but needs to do some work to the system they use to

disperse the chemical. Mr. Huntley said they could put the system on the back of a truck, but it would cost around \$10,000. The commissioners suggested that he talk with the road and bridge supervisor about it and work out the costs.

Mr. Huntley said he would like another helper in the weed department. There will be an ad in *The Oberlin Herald* for the position.

Week belongs to FFA

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Forty-four members at Decatur Community High are celebrating FFA week, which started on Sunday and will run through Sunday.

The group is made up of high school students, although it can be open to some eighth graders. Vocational agriculture teacher Jason Ketterl, the group's sponsor, said there aren't many schools that have eighth graders as members.

Adults who serve on the school's agriculture committee include Sheriff Ken Badsky, and Brian Simonson, school transportation director, both of whom also farm; Monte Moore, farmer and stockman; Dr. Mark Olson, a veterinarian; and Paul Shields, a farmer.

The students do community service, hold a banquet and a community breakfast and sell fruit and meat each year to raise money, he said.

The idea of FFA, said Mr. Ketterl, is to promote leadership, career development and student growth.

Although FFA used to stand for Future Farmers of America, Mr. Ketterl said, today the group just goes by its initials. Only about half of the students in the group have farming families.

This year, he said, he and one of his officers go to all of the Oberlin School Board meetings. The idea, said Mr. Ketterl, is to get the students more involved.

All of the officers, which include Caleb Peters, president; Chet Ely, vice president; Kim Wessel, secretary; Shelby Jefferys, treasurer; Kaylee Zodrow, reporter; Alyssa Montgomery, sentinel; and Katrina Wentz, historian, hope to go to the Washington Leadership Conference. In order for everyone to go, including the sponsor, the FFA has to raise around \$7,000.

The conference would be good leadership training for the students, said Mr. Ketterl. Basically they would serve as pages for Congress.

The group is planning some fundraisers for the rest of the year to help raise the \$7,000. Mr. Ketterl said they are talking about a trail ride with Tripple Creek Riders on April 22, candy bar sales and working concessions for wrestling and track events. FFA members also talked about having an officer auction. They would sell off their officers, who would then do labor for whoever bought them.

During FFA week, said Mr. Ketterl, they are planning an Agriculture Olympics. Contests might include moving hay bales from one pickup to another.

Students have regular contests and compete against other FFA groups in the areas of meats, dairy, horticulture, landscape and other fields, he said.

There is a summer officers retreat and two of the members want to become district officers.

Notice of Personal Property Assessment

Personal property renditions must be filed between January 1 and March 15. Renditions filed after March 15 will have a penalty for late filing. Taxable personal property includes: Business and shop equipment, computers and printer, boats, motor and trailers, aircraft, mobile homes, camping and travel trailers, flatbed and car trailers, mopeds, ATV's, golf cars, trucks, non-tagged and non-highway vehicles and improvements on leased land. The Decatur County Appraisers's Office need to be notified of the sale of any personal property during 2005. All taxpayers must file before the March 15 deadline. All new businesses in Decatur County are required to contact the Decatur County Appraiser's Office to report business equipment for tax purposes. If you have no personal property to report, please call us to verify that you are in the county for census purposes.

Personal Property Penalties:

March 15 through April 15	5%
April 16 through May 15	10%
May 16 through June 15	15%
June 16 through July 15	20%
On or after July 16 through <u>May 14</u>	
of the following year	25%
Failure to File	50%

**Decatur County
Appraiser's Office
785-475-8109**

CHECK OUT THESE LISTINGS!



NEW LISTING! 509 N. York. Great ranch home with 2 large bedrooms, bath, main-floor laundry and kitchen with all appliances and eating area on main level; 2 bedrooms, bath, large family room and 2 storage rooms on lower level. Sited on corner lot this home has a beautifully landscaped yard surrounded by chain-link fence in back. If you need more vehicle storage, this one is for you with single attached garage, single carport and single detached garage.



PRICE DRASTICALLY REDUCED TO \$20,000.00. 604 W. Hall. One bedroom plus large family room with woodburning fireplace that could be 2nd bedroom. Kitchen has eating bar and new counter tops and backsplash, refrigerator, stove and dishwasher. Very nice bath, newer carpet and main-floor laundry. Other amenities include new vinyl siding, central air and heat, single car garage with electric opener, and large back yard.

Johnson Realty, Inc.

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McCook National Bank sent to Goodland