

# Board raises levy to pay for air, roofs

**By KIMBERLY DAVIS**

The Oberlin School Board approved an increase of two mills in the property tax levy for capital outlay last Monday to help pay for building improvements, including air conditioning and roof replacement at both schools.

For each mill, the district gets \$27,214 in tax dollars, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, so the increase would add \$54,428 to the budget. Currently, the capital outlay levy is set at four mills, which brings in \$108,857.

Taxes for a \$50,000 house would increase about \$11.50 a year, or less than \$1 a month, county officials said.

The money in capital outlay can only be spent on the buildings and equipment, said Mr. Glodt; it can't be spent on teacher sala-

## School Countdown

At the meeting last Monday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Approved an increase of two mills in the property tax levy for the capital outlay fund. Story at left.
- Denied requests for early retirement from a teacher at the high school and one at the grade school. Story to come.
- Approved the purchase of around

\$26,690 in new reading books. Story on Page 10A.

- Approved a change in the science curriculum to include a general science course at the high school starting next year. Story below.
- Approved the re-employment of all teachers for the new school year. Story on Page 10A.

ries, operations or health care.

The board did discuss lowering the local option budget, which is also raised through local taxes. That money mainly goes for salaries, said Mr. Glodt.

This year the district decided to make some improvements to the buildings using the money put aside in capital outlay. Major projects include roof repairs and air conditioning the schools.

Mr. Glodt said the board approved a bid of \$215,000 for the air conditioning but they may be able to do the project for closer to \$190,000.

City Foreman Dan Castle is working on the project, said Mr. Glodt. There is a dishwasher at Oberlin Elementary School that isn't used. Mr. Glodt said they might be able to take a circuit there and use it for the air conditioning.

If they start cooking food again at the grade school, they would have to make some changes to hook it up again. The only reason they would do that, Mr. Glodt added, would be because the district has gained kids.

The district tried to increase the local option budget from 18 percent of the general fund to 25 percent in 2004, but oppo-

nents filed a petition and it went to a vote. That would have been a much larger tax increase.

Taxpayers said no in a special election at the beginning of March that year, 613 to 404. Since then, the district hasn't asked for an increase in the local option budget.

With the approval of the increase this year, taxpayers have the right to petition the request again. A legal notice that the board is asking for the increase is being published in *The Oberlin Herald* today and next week.

From next Wednesday, people have 40 days to file a petition, which would fall at the beginning of June. Over 10 percent of qualified voters have to sign the petition to send the question to an election, which the school district would have to pay for out of the general fund.

# Home will help young men change their lives

**By KIMBERLY DAVIS**

The new operator of the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch plans to help open an "interdependent living" program in Oberlin to help boys 16 and older with drug and alcohol problems.

Heath Bechler, chief executive officer and co-owner of King's Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, was here last Wednesday to buy a house and get things started. Mr. Bechler and Dick Kelsey are co-owners and co-founders of King's Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center.

The men purchased a house at 408 N. Elk from Allen and Marla Shelton, who moved to Smith Center when he was elected county attorney there.

The idea is to have a home where young men live when they have nowhere else to go, Mr. Bechler said. The boys will go to school, said Mr. Bechler, and learn social and moral skills in a structured situation.

The program promotes both getting a high school education and continuing after graduation, he said.

The idea is not for them to get an education just so they can make some money, but so they can make a living for themselves and have a field in which to work.

The organization already has two similar homes in Goddard, which is also where Mr. Kelsey operates King's Camp. King's Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center has a home for young men and one for young women in Goddard.

Part of the reason the homes have been successful, said Mr. Bechler, is that they are in small towns, which offer accountability and moral fabric.

Many kids don't feel they are accountable for their actions because they weren't raised that way, he said.

This is a big home, said Mr. Bechler, so they are shooting for seven kids. He said they are hoping to start taking youths by July 1.

There will be a full-time counselor and a case manager Monday through Friday, he said. There will also be one staff member for every (See HOME on Page 10A)

# General science will help students get needed credits

The Oberlin School Board approved a change in the science curriculum to include a general science course at the high school starting next school year.

Teacher Caleb Howland said students need three science classes to graduate, and this class will help those who struggle with the more advanced classes. It also will help everyone get ready for state assessments, he said, while maintaining the integrity in the department.

With the addition of the class, Mr. Howland said, students will have two ways to succeed.

The first track includes taking physical science as a seventh grader, life science as an eighth grader, general science as a freshman, physical science as a sophomore, biology I as a junior and an elective as a senior. The alternate includes physical science, life science, physical science, biology I and electives as juniors and seniors.

The advanced classes include chemistry I and II, biology II and physics.

With the current curriculum, he said, the last time the students take earth and space science is in general science in the fifth grade. Those will be covered in general science. Students are tested as sophomores for state assessments on earth and space science, he said, and they need to be

prepared.

The general science class, he said, is the best way to help all of the students. Mr. Howland said they went through the state standards and the class fits in with them.

Elementary Principal Duane Dorshorst, who tracks compliance with state standards, said some of the rules will change. The science teachers wanted to hit the earth/space science a little harder, he said.

There will have to be major changes at the fifth- and sixth-grade level next year, Mr. Howland said, because of the changes in the science curriculum coming up next year.

What will this mean for the work load for the science teachers? asked Superintendent Kelly Glodt.

Next year will be the most difficult year, said Mr. Howland. Biology I will be cut to one section for new students and those who have to take the class over. After that, it should be fine.

Obviously, they will need new textbooks for the general science class, said Mr. Dorshorst.

Mr. Howland said he already had a text in mind. He said he likes it because it covers everything. Each book will cost \$62, he said, and the school will need about 30.

The board looked at the book and approved the purchase.



## Roof job started

**VOLUNTEERS WORKED** at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch to repair the roof over the weight room and new chapel on Saturday. Tim Davis (top) measured some wood, Pastor Doug Mason (above) watched from the ground before he joined the men on the roof, while Joel Sowers (left) of near Colby helped hold some pieces together.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

# Filing date for August primary elections will soon be here

Filing date for the August primary election is only a few months away and the county is getting ready.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said local elections will include township clerks and the district 1 commissioner seat held by Commissioner Patricia Glenn. Most state-wide offices, including governor and lieutenant governor, will be up for election.

Mrs. Horn told the Decatur County com-

missioners at their meeting last Tuesday that the August election will be the first time that the county will have one polling place, which will be at The Gateway in Oberlin.

Under the federal Help America Vote Act, Mrs. Horn said, the county has to use an electronic voting machine to help handicapped voters.

The county will only get two of the \$5,000 machines, with one as a spare, so it

can only run one polling station.

All rural voters, including those in small towns which formerly had polls, will either have to drive to the county seat or vote early by mail.

At the polling place, said Mrs. Horn, there will be seven "batches" that roughly correspond to the old polling places, each with a set of election judges:

- Dresden, including the City of Dresden

and Custer, Lyon and Dresden Townships.

- Jennings, with Allison, Pleasant Valley and Jennings townships and the City of Jennings.

- Norcatur, with the City of Norcatur and Garfield, Lincoln and Grant Townships.

- Rural Township North, including Beaver, Finley, Harlan, Liberty, Logan, Olive, Roosevelt and Sherman townships.
- Rural Township South, including

Altory, Center, Bassettville, Cook, Oberlin, Prairie Dog, Sappa and Summit townships.

- Oberlin Precinct No. 1.
- Oberlin Precinct No. 2.

There is still a chance that Mrs. Horn will be able to take the machine and hold advance voting in the smaller cities in the county two weeks before the election, but the state Legislature hasn't passed a law to allow it yet.