

## Bus firm could use Oberlin airport

**By CYNTHIA HAYNES**  
If the Oberlin City Council agrees, a bus company hoping to buy the old Jennings school will use the airport in Oberlin for moving employees, customers and parts. Representatives of BCI, also known as Connoisseurs World Wide, and the president of Sardo Bus and Coach Upholstery met with Decatur County commissioners, Oberlin city officials, Jennings City Council members, county economic development personnel and others at The Gateway on

Tuesday, trying to revive a plan for BCI to set up a bus-outfitting plant and a refurbishing facility for coaches, both bus and train.

The company had planned to buy the Jennings school and use it as its headquarters. However, the firm said it needed an airstrip to land its company planes and jets and so its directors and customers don't have to drive from regional airports in Denver or other parts of Kansas or Nebraska.

"It's an all-day affair to get here from California," said BCI Chief Executive Of-

ficer Phil Oldridge. "It's an all-day affair to get here from anywhere. We have a customer base that needs to get here."

A plan to have the county help build a runway near Jennings fell through earlier in the month when it was discovered that it would be illegal for the county to use road equipment to help private industry in that way.

Tuesday, a new plan to add a runway, longer and wider than the current one, to the Oberlin airport and get federal grants to help

pay for the work met with the approval of everyone at the meeting.

Lee Gilroy, chief operating officer for BCI, said that he thought there were federal grants available to help upgrade the Oberlin airport to handle the traffic, which he estimated would include about 300 landings and takeoffs a year for his company alone.

Mr. Oldridge suggested that if the Oberlin airport was expanded, it might be able to attract more business, which would help the tax base, and maybe even get a regional

carrier like Great Lakes.

"We will base our company aircraft here and we will have others here also," he said.

The company has three aircraft, he said — a nine-passenger Cessna Citation corporate jet, a Hawker 700 and a Challenger. The Citation would be housed here.

He asked City Administrator Gary Shike how long he thought it might take to get a new runway at the airport, including getting a grant to help pay for it.

(See FIRM on Page 10A)

## Rains arrive a little too late

### Town thankful for moisture after long, dry start to the year

**By CYNTHIA HAYNES**  
The rains came. While appreciated, they're a little late.

Suffering from a dry spring, Oberlin and most of Decatur County woke early Thursday to thunderstorms, rain and hail amounting to about an inch of moisture in some places.

The official weather report says that Oberlin received .84 of an inch of rain. Residents of the western part of the county, however, said they got very little while those in other areas claimed up to an inch.

Tuesday morning, the heavens again opened up, giving Oberlin another half inch to one inch of moisture.

Meteorologist Mick McGuire at the National Weather Service in Goodland said that the area received up to an inch of rain. Since the readings for each day are taken at 8 a.m., he said, Oberlin only had a trace when he received the Tuesday information. However, McCook re-

ported 1.05 inches.

The last general precipitation was a snowstorm on March 20, Mr. McGuire said. Since then, only scattered showers have been reported across the northwestern part of Kansas.

The average precipitation for the year should be almost eight inches by the end of May, Mr. McGuire said. However, not counting the rain on Tuesday, Oberlin has received just 4.11 inches this year.

Adding to the lack of moisture, temperatures have been high, with both McCook and Hill City reporting new records of 101 degrees on Sunday.

In Oberlin, a high of 101 was reported for Friday.

A cool front moved into the area on Memorial Day, however, and temperatures should be cooler for few days before heading up again, Mr. McGuire said.

The rain, though late, was good news for farmers, said Brian Olson, (See RAIN on Page 10A)

## Oldest alum, 95, still buying cattle

**By MARY LOU OLSON**  
Earl Brown was recognized as the oldest alumnus at the Decatur Community High School Alumni Banquet on Saturday, representing the 1931 graduating class on its 75th anniversary.

Though he will turn 95 in December, Mr. Brown remains active in the operation of the feed yard at his farmstead southwest of Oberlin in Bassettville Township, which he owns with his son Steve. He said that working every day probably has helped keep him from aging that much in the last 20 years. He still leads a busy life, not only helping with the cattle, but also buying stock at area sale barns every week.

A lifetime resident of Decatur County, he has always been a farmer and rancher. He and his twin sister Mearl were among the 10 children of C.C. and Anna (Woolley) Brown.



Brown in '31



Brown today

All were born on the family farm in Sappa Township. The others were Lena (Simpson), Verna (Quinlisk), Ralph, Harold, Mary (Alderson) Harry, Floyd, and Betty (Smith).

"We all walked the one mile daily to and from Plainview School when we were kids," he recalls. "Others in my class were my sister Mearl, Kermit and Vada Hackney and Lucille Ginther. When I started to

(See ALUM on Page 10A)



**WATER RUSHED BY DAVID SPORN** (above) worked to repair a major leak in Oberlin's water system on Tuesday. While Mr. Sporn was in the hole, City Fore-

man Dan Castle (below left) ran the backhoe. Workers had to turn Oberlin's water off for most of a day to get at the leak. — Herald staff photos by David Bergling



## Gusher! Water leak leaves most of Oberlin dry

**By KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
Hall Street filled with rushing water last Tuesday after an eight-inch cast-iron main cracked, letting water gush to the surface.

The break left Oberlin without water for much of the evening as city crews labored to patch the pipe.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the city got more than one phone call around 2:30 p.m. saying that there was water coming out under a bush at the corner of Hall Street and Griffith Avenue, across from the Decatur County Courthouse.

With the volume of water that was coming out of the 3 1/2-foot-

long crack, said Mr. Shike, it couldn't have been leaking for very long before it was reported.

The city crew had to pull out the large, spreading evergreen bush that was covering the corner, plus an electrical pole that held a street light.

The crew dug a large hole to get to the leak and started to work on the pipe. At the beginning, Mr. Shike said, the leak didn't look as bad as it was, but later they realized how serious it was.

The leak was in about the lowest part of town, said Mr. Shike, and there were no working shutoff valves nearby, so the whole town

(See LEAK on Page 10A)



**RESTORING HIS LATEST JEEP**, a 1955 Marine Corps Model M-38-A1 made by Willys, Col. Gary Allen (above) was checking out work to be done under the hood. A retired Army officer, Col. Allen will be showing his collection at the Summerfest Car Show in Oberlin on Saturday. — Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

## Ex-officer babies his old Jeeps

**By MARY LOU OLSON**  
Col. Gary L. Allen will share his favorite hobby when he displays several Jeeps and a trailer which he has restored at the Summerfest Car Show on Saturday in Oberlin.

Col. Allen said he started collecting old Jeeps when he retired after 36 years in the Army. Now he has three Jeeps and a 1/4-ton, two-wheel trailer, all of which he plans to show, except his most recent purchase, a 1955 USMC Model M-38-A1 Jeep, made by Willys, which he expects to have operational within 30 days.

A native of Decatur County, he said that as a young man, he followed the news during World War II and

his father shared his experiences in France as a combat medic during World War I.

"My uncle was a military policeman during World War II, so I was exposed to photographs and real-life stories of two horrific wars," he said.

When he came of age in high school, he said, he joined the Army National Guard in McCook. Though he was licensed to operate several vehicles, from a 1/4-ton Jeep to the M1 Abrams main battle tank, he said the M-38 Willys Army Jeep was his first one.

"When I retired, I wanted a Jeep just like that one," he said, "and my search did not stop until I found one." (See JEEPS on Page 10A)

## Owners will shine hot rods on Main

**By KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
Bright with chrome and polished colors, antique, classic, collectible and rare restored vehicles of all sorts will line Main Street most of the day Saturday.

Owners will have the cars, trucks and motorcycles polished to perfection for the fifth annual Summerfest Car Show sponsored by the Decatur County Museum and KFN Radio.

Each year, the event draws in people from Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska, some with vehicles to enter and some who just want to see them.

The weekend will kick off at 7 p.m. Friday at the Museum South Penn Avenue with a Cruise-In. The

museum staff and volunteers will serve hot dogs and soda while they check cars in for the show. There will be prizes, and events will be broadcast on KFN.

Activities kick off at 7 a.m. Saturday with a pancake feed at the museum's Old Bohemian Hall. An hour later, registration begins.

During the day, vehicles will be parked on Penn Avenue for the "Show and Shine," with prize judging, vendors and a raffle. Viewing the cars is free.

At the museum, activities include the Needles and Pins Quilt Show and crafters. The museum will be open, along with the gift shop. Tickets are \$3 for adults (See SHOW on Page 10A)