

City may need to build water plant

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

A McCook engineering firm told the Oberlin City Council at its meeting Thursday night that the city needs to build a \$3.7 million water treatment facility, but the council put off a decision.

The council has been talking about having to put in a water treatment facility for years because the government keeps tightening the standards for drinking water. The treatment plant would be able to treat for arsenic and uranium, for which several of the city's wells are over the standards.

Until a couple of years ago, there were no federal standards for uranium or arsenic.

Now, with tighter rules, this is something that the city will have to do and pay for, officials say.

The plan showed that a plant could cost homeowners \$20 or more per month, but engineers said that could go down if the city can get state or federal grants. Definite numbers were not discussed.

Thaniel Monaco and Chris Miller with Miller and Associates, the firm which does most of the city's work, talked with the council about the condition of Oberlin's water and the possibilities for treatment.

The men recommended a coagulation plant with a contact clarifier and filtration,

which would cost \$3,678,500.

The state said yes to the re-drilling of well No. 10 because they knew that the city was moving towards treatment, said Mr. Monaco.

Well No. 11, by the old bowling alley, won't be in the treatment plan because it meets federal limits for arsenic, nitrates and uranium by itself. Mr. Monaco said it would take another blending pipe to get No. 11 into the treatment plant. The city put in a blending pipe in 2002, but it has never been used to blend water.

The nitrate level in the water is below minimum on all the wells the city uses, said

Mr. Monaco, but there is a problem with uranium and arsenic.

Mr. Monaco said the engineers looked at everything to see what treatment system would work best, how the water would mix and at what flow rate.

The city's future well, No. 13, which is the old irrigation well, may be the highest in uranium at 113 parts per billion, he said.

There are several treatment alternatives, he said, including ion exchange, lime softening, reverse osmosis and coagulation filtration. They looked at what wouldn't be good for the city, said Mr. Monaco, and that took out lime softening.

Cost is a factor, he said, but they also need to know how much water would be wasted.

There are options for discharging waste water, including into the creek, a deep well with a permit or to an evaporation pond. Different treatments allow different ways to discharge the waste, Mr. Monaco said.

Next the engineers looked at the cost. The one that looks the best, with all of the factors, Mr. Monaco said, is coagulation with a contact clarifier and filtration. The treatment plant would cost \$3,678,500, plus financing costs for a bond issue.

The council didn't make any decisions. (See CITY on Page 10A)

Pool committee asks city to hire a grant writer

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin pool committee reported to the City Council on Thursday, suggesting that the city hire a grant writer and start looking for some money.

The council said that the committee has done a good job so far. The city pays to belong to the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission in Hill City, said City Administrator Gary Shike, and they have grant writers, but haven't said anything about getting a grant writer to work on a pool.

The committee presented a new plan for an outdoor pool costing \$1,536,000. The first plan to come used numbers that were for a few years away and it included several extras the pool committee didn't ask for. This plan includes estimates to build a pool now. Although there is room for a slide, the slide isn't included, and neither are sun shades. All can be added later.

Anna Shaw, spokesman for the committee, said the members need to know what the council wants them to do now.

Mrs. Shaw said the committee suggested building a single six-lane outdoor pool with a "zero depth" entry for smaller children, instead of an indoor pool, which would cost \$5

million or more.

With an indoor pool, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, the question is, would people use it. She said she doesn't like indoor pools because the chemicals dry out the skin.

Mrs. Shaw said she has a membership to the YMCA in McCook just to use the indoor pool there.

What would an indoor pool cost to run, just for personnel? asked Mayor Ken Shobe. Mrs. Shaw said she didn't have that figure with her, but it would add up.

The pool committee, she said, needs direction. If the council wants them to keep going, she said, then the committee wants to make a three-fold brochure to hand out. The committee has already talked with the Norcatour City Council and will be going to Jennings and Dresden, she said.

The Norcatour council seemed pleased with the plan when the committee went to talk with them, said Mrs. Shaw.

The City of Oberlin is about maxed out on the amount of bonds it can sell to borrow money, said Mayor Shobe.

Councilman Joe Stanley said he could live with the outdoor plan.

The committee did talk with the (See POOL on Page 10A)

Oberlin graduate begins military life at storied West Point

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Dedication. That's what it took Denton Bailey to get to the spot he is at today.

Bailey, 18, just left to live out his dream of serving in the military, becoming the first known person from Decatur County to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

Col. Delbert Townsend said he checked with Decatur Community High School at graduation and Bailey is the first to get a nomination to West Point and attend, although there was a young man who went to the Air Force Academy.

He has always wanted to serve in the military, Bailey said, and he also wanted to get a college education. With a great love for the country and history, he said he wants to be a leader in the Army and serve in the infantry.

Although the dedication to family, church and school has been with him for years, the process to attend West Point started last August.

Bailey said he had to send a letter to West Point saying he was interested in attending, and the school sent information back to him. Three to four essays later, all on why he wanted to attend the academy, it was time to talk with Congressman Jerry Moran.

The Bailey family traveled to Abilene to the Eisenhower Center, where they talked with Rep. Moran. The congressman sent in a nomination for Bailey and he was accepted, but on a waiver.

Bailey said he hurt his shoulder his freshman year in high school, and the academy officials were concerned that he could get reinjured. Thanks to Col. Delbert Townsend, though, the waiver was lifted and (See MILITARY on Page 10A)



D. Bailey

Cooler weather slows water usage

Water use in Oberlin stayed below 600,000 gallons a day last week, the lowest it has been so far this summer.

With cooler temperatures and showers people in town apparently didn't water their yards or gardens as frequently or for as long.

The city has been on the water restrictions, including even/odd watering, since the beginning of the summer.

People with even addresses can water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Those with odd addresses can water Tuesday, Thursday and

Saturday. Watering is allowed from midnight to 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight on the designated day. No outdoor water use is allowed Monday.

Last week, the city pumped:

- 418,000 gallons on Monday, June 19.

- 591,000 gallons on Tuesday, June 20.

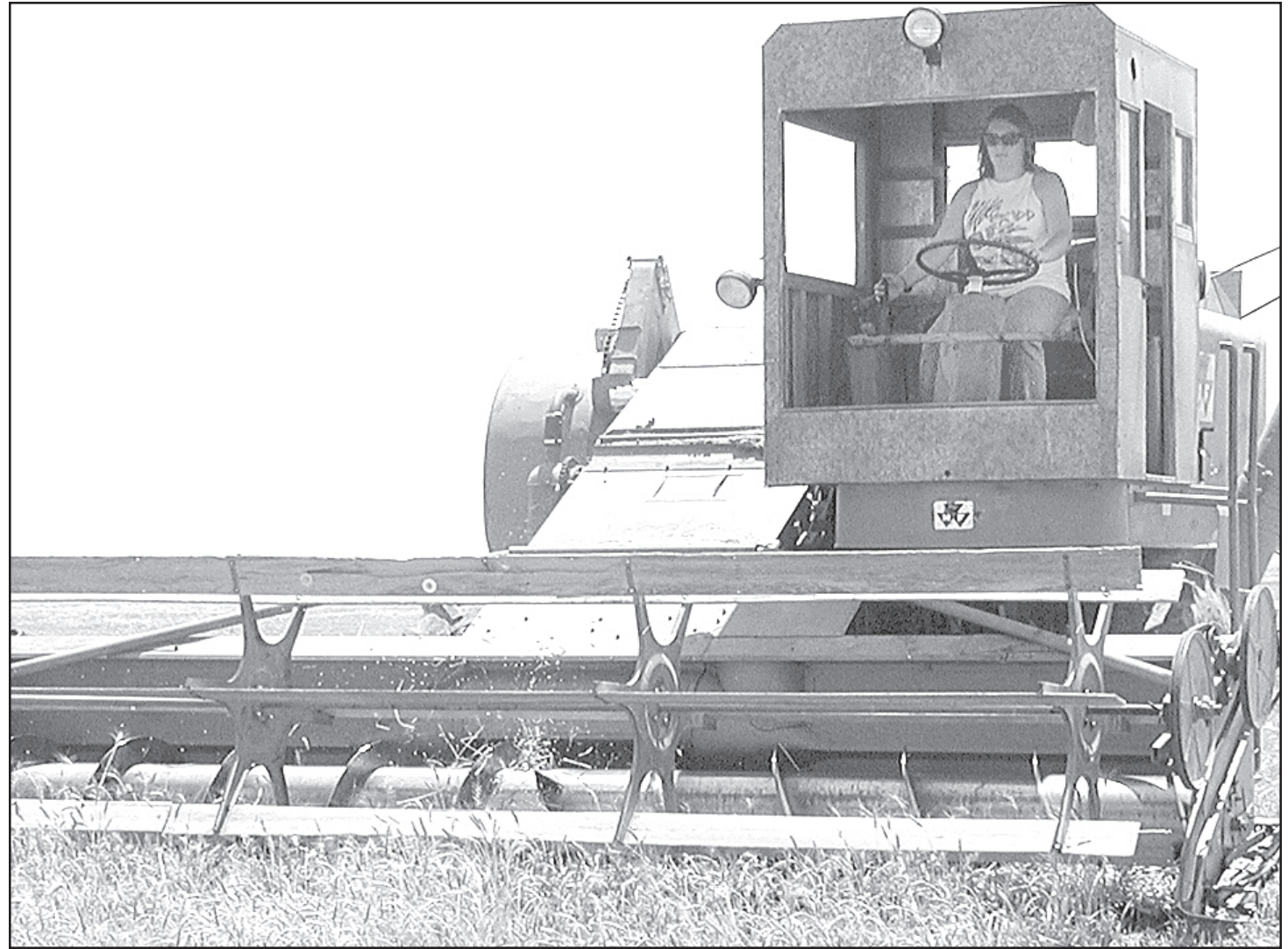
- 507,000 gallons last Wednesday.

- 559,000 gallons on Thursday.

- 554,000 gallons on Friday.

- 421,000 gallons on Saturday.

- 434,000 gallons on Sunday.



BEHIND THE WHEEL of a 1962 Massey-Ferguson combine, Angie Ayers (above) cut the last few acres of her family's wheat on Monday. Larry Ayers (below) hit a switch to help his daughter start the combine. The Ayers planned to finish cutting on Monday. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Family harvests together

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The 1962 Massey-Ferguson combine rounded the corner and headed out to the field.

It was the third day of harvest for the machine, and there was only a small patch of wheat left to cut.

Larry and Becky Ayers and daughter Angie started cutting the crop Friday evening, then took Saturday off because it was too wet. They cut on Sunday and planned to finish on Monday.

Mr. Ayers, a gas serviceman for Midwest Energy, said they only have about 70 acres of wheat on his dad's old place, about eight miles south of town and two miles east. He said he grew up on the farm and helped with harvest over the years.

He has been farming it with the help of his wife and daughter for the last 10 years. All of their farm ground is located around the farmstead, with all of the fields planted to wheat.

When his kids were growing up, Mr. Ayers said, they would help with harvest. Now Angie is the main combine driver.

So far, he said, they have just put in the three half days, which they hoped had been enough to allow them to finish cutting on Monday. They tried to cut on Saturday, he said, but with the rain



Friday the combine was getting stuck.

The crop this year, said Mr. Ayers, hasn't been very good. The best they've cut has been 20 to 25

bushels per acre on about 37 acres. On the other 30, said Mr. Ayers, they will probably be at about 5 bushels per acre.

The area has only received

about two inches of rain the entire summer, he said. If it had come a couple weeks ago, he said, harvest might have been a different story.

(See FARMER on Page 10A)

Custom crews await call to go to work

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Combines, trucks, grain carts and campers filled the Decatur County Fairground last week as custom cutters from all over waited to harvest wheat in the area.

One of the groups, made up of 19 young men with a company called Olsen Custom Farms out of Minnesota, camped out for about a week as they harvested crops in the area before moving on to Nebraska and

South Dakota.

Although the company is based in Minnesota, most of the guys were from South Africa, including Jaco Gouws. He said the group has been pretty busy this season so far.

He and the other team members started in Oklahoma cutting wheat and will work their way to Canada.

Mr. Gouws said this is his third year on a harvest crew. He said he keeps coming back because of the

experience and the money.

After the winter wheat harvest, he said, the crew will cut summer wheat in Minnesota and help with fall harvest before heading back to South Africa in December.

So far this year, said Mr. Gouws, they have cut 20,000 acres with three combines. By the end of the year, they expect to cut a total of 80,000 plus acres.

Each person on the crew has their

own job, he said. They don't really switch around, but stay on the same machine throughout harvest.

On Thursday, they were heading out of town. Some were moving on to Wallace, Neb., while the others were on their way to South Dakota.

Luke Nibbe, the foreman, said the harvest crew splits up a lot. That way they can do more work.

He said they were here to cut (See CREWS on Page 10A)