

Farmers poised to begin fall harvest

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

It is just about time for fall harvest to start, with the first load of corn already in at Norcat Grain, but no one knows for sure what the yields will be or how much of the crop will be cut for grain and how much for silage.

Last Thursday, the first load of the fall arrived at Norcat Grain with a moisture content of 15.5 and test weight of 55.8. It was brought in by Gene Gallentine.

At the Decatur Co-op in Oberlin, General Manager Karol Evans said they haven't received anything yet.

He said he thinks farmers are waiting to get their wheat drilled before picking the corn.

He said Co-op employees have been doing the normal housekeeping to get ready for harvest, like cleaning bins.

Mr. Evans said he isn't sure how much of the crop will be harvested and how much

will be cut for silage. Ty Gerlits, agronomist with the co-op, was unavailable.

Brian Olson, Kansas State University multi-county agronomist, said the rain in Decatur County this summer was spotty. No matter what practices a farmer used or what they did to help the crop, some of it will be chopped for silage because it didn't get the showers.

With the way the rain fell, said Mr. Olson, things are going to be spotty and there will

be a lot of variability in the corn. Some will produce 40 bushels per acre, some 80 and there might be a few exceptions of higher yields.

It just depends on when the rain fell, how much and the management systems the farmers are using, he said.

So far, he added, he hasn't heard any reports of cutting. In Colby, said Mr. Olson, they haven't been able to cut any of the corn at the research farm because it is too wet.

The moisture content on the corn should be 13 to 14 in order for it to be cut, he said. If it isn't that low it needs some time to dry down, said Mr. Olson.

Harvest results are going to be all over the board, he said. There are spots in Decatur County that will far better than the rest of northwest Kansas. In some areas, he said, the corn was dead before the rains even started to fall.



FIFTH GRADERS Kyle Breth, Chris Anderson and Ashley Witt (from left, above) sat on the grade school floor as they held a construction-paper flag above their heads at the Constitution Day program. Haley Schiessler (from left

below), Baron Green, Jamie Soderlund, Ashley Witt, Sierra Lohofener, Kyle Breth and Alexis Hissong sang the national anthem at the program.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Budget cuts may close U.S. office here in Oberlin

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

A budget-cutting plan could close the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Oberlin, meaning that Decatur County farmers might have to drive to Atwood to get help from the federal agency.

In northwest Kansas, said State Conservationist Harold Klaege, the agency will have to look at how to provide services as budgets are reduced. He said the agency has set up a steering committee to provide guidance on how to maintain service to landowners and farmers with less money.

Mr. Klaege said the government has allocated \$2.6 million less in funding for the conservation service by fiscal year 2008.

At this point, he said, the plan to close roughly half the offices in this area is just a proposal. By Dec. 15, though, the service has to have a plan done. That doesn't mean that the service is going to go around closing offices, he said; some of the cut-backs will be taken care of through attrition as workers retire, quit or move away.

A plan is supposed to be in place by fiscal year 2008, he said, nearly

two years from now.

The service is co-shared with the offices of the U.S. Farm Service Agency in most counties, and usually shares an office with the county conservation district.

"Our mission is helping people help the land," said Mr. Klaege. "We provided \$37 million (a year) in cost share to help farmers put conservation items on their land."

Both the conservation districts and service really have the mission, he said, which is part of the reason the two are housed in the same office.

There are 104 service offices in the state and 105 conservation district offices. The plan proposes to close 23 of those offices in the state.

This plan does propose to close the office in Oberlin, said Mr. Klaege, combining it with the one in Rawlins County.

The conservation service employs two people here, Ben Letroneau, the district conservationist since last spring, and Lee Don Scott, a long-time conservation technician.

The service, said Mr. Letroneau, (See PROPOSED on Page 10A)

Mother campaigns for insurance spot with her daughter

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

A mother-daughter team stopped in Oberlin last week to talk with two service organizations and hold an informal meet-the-candidate session as part of a statewide "grassroots" campaign for Kansas insurance commissioner.

Stephanie Urban, whose husband, Trevor is from Oberlin, plays the role of campaign manager, aide and traveling companion for her mother, state Rep.

Bonnie Sharp, the Democratic candidate for insurance commissioner. Mrs. Sharp said she has served in the House of Representatives since 1997, but this year decided to turn in that hat and try for another one. While in the House, she said, she served on the insurance committee for six years. Part of the committee's job is listening to the people of Kansas to find out how to help them. The insurance commissioner's job, said Rep. Sharp, was created in 1871 by state law as a regulator and consumer advocate for the people.

The job is held by Republican Sandy Praeger of Lawrence, who is running for re-election. Rep. Sharp and her daughter arrived in Oberlin last Tuesday in time to speak at a Rotary Club meeting at noon. That evening, they had an informal coffee and dessert bar "meet-and-greet" at the LandMark Inn. Last Wednesday, they met with the

Decatur Professional Women over the noon hour before heading out to McPherson, Newton and Wichita.

Rep. Sharp and her husband Elmer live in the Turner district of Kansas City, south of the Kansas River. Rep. Sharp said her husband is retiring from a chiropractic practice. She used to help in the office before she began her life in politics.

The women said they have been traveling all over Kansas and plan to spend most of October on the campaign trail. This has been a real opportunity, said Rep. Sharp, to meet people and listen to their voices. If you really listen, she said, you will find that people across the state are more alike than different.

Rep. Sharp said she decided not to accept any money from the insurance industry in the election. The commissioner should not be financed by companies the office regulates, she said.

Since Mrs. Urban's husband is from Oberlin, the family has been here several times, said Rep. Sharp. She said her son-in-law always introduces her as a state representative, so she has actually received some calls from people in this area and worked with them and Rep. John Faber, who represents this area, in the past.

(See WOMAN on Page 10A)



Rep. Sharp

Program celebrates heritage

They marched in two by two and took their seats, awaiting their next cue. Some had white papers in their hands, while others held their heads up high.

The stands were full of students, teachers, parents and grandparents, all invited to take part in the fifth graders' celebration of Constitution Day at Oberlin Elementary School.

Under the direction of teacher Tim Thornton, the students have been learning about the Preamble, the Constitution and the Constitutional Convention since the beginning of school.

Part of the project was picking a person from that era and writing a report and making a poster on him or her. Another was taking the Preamble and rewriting it in the student's own words.

"The Preamble of the Constitution was written by Governor Morris, who was from Massachusetts," said Hannah May in her written and oral report. "It was the introductory paragraph for the Constitution. 'We the People' was written really big so everyone knew who the Constitution was written for. Writing something really big in a story is called presentation. Presentation is one of the six traits of writing that we study in Mr. Thornton's room. It was important that the preamble said We the People, because people were afraid of being ruled by a king again."



"The Preamble is really hard to understand; that's why we rewrote it. At first we had trouble rewriting it, but Mr. Thornton told us to dream big and work together, just like our forefathers did. After that, it wasn't so hard anymore."

Mr. Thornton said there are six traits of writing that students learn in school.

Monday morning, five students read their reports.

They worked hard that morning to practice for their presentation in front of the school, friends and family. Afterward, the students answered questions about their posters and presentations one on one.

Here are their papers:

George Washington
by Ashley Witt

George Washington was placed in charge of the army during the Revolutionary War. The army wasn't very strong at first, but Washington trained them well and they defeated Gen. Cornwallis at the Battle of (See PROGRAM on Page 10A)

Engines, tractors on display

It's time for the 26th annual Mini Sappa Antique Thresher and Engine Show at the Decatur County Fairground on Saturday, Oct. 7, and Sunday, Oct. 8.

The events start each day at 9 a.m. with a parade at 4 p.m. on Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Events will include church services at 8:30 a.m. and a kids pedal tractor pull at 2 p.m. on Sunday, a poker run at 11 a.m. Saturday and a

hog roast that night. The hog roast will cost \$6 per person, except for exhibitors, who don't have to pay for their meal.

Raffle tickets will be sold for a 1946 Farmall "H" tractor and an embroidered "Sunbonnet Sue" quilt for the adults at \$1 a ticket or \$5 for six.

For the kids, there is a 1/16-scale Farmall "H" or a doll quilt, with tickets going for 25 cents each or \$1 for

five. Antique engines, tractors, cars and trucks and hot rods and custom cars are welcome.

Breakfast and lunch will be sold at the fairground.

There will be vendors open throughout the day with wares for sale.

Admission is \$3 for adults and 50 cents for children. Camping hook-ups are \$3 per day or \$5 for two.

Museum celebration on Oct. 7

The Last Indian Raid Museum will hold its 48th annual Mini Sappa celebration on Saturday, Oct. 7.

Things will kick off at 7 a.m. with a two-hour pancake feed. The DCHS Singers will perform from 8-9 a.m. at the old Bohemian Hall.

Touring the museum that day will be free from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A craft fair with exhibitors and activities for the kids will run from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Lunch will be sold from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. by the museum board.

A musical recital by area students will begin at 2 p.m. at the hall.

Co-director Sharleen Wurm said the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, will have their computerized shooting simulator at the event for the first time this year.

The simulator features a video scene of deer, pheasant, other wildlife and "blue-rock" targets. People use a rifle or shotgun which emits a laser beam and records the hit. The shooting simulator will be free from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.