

* Teachers' jobs moved to town

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biggest fear then, said Mr. Glodt, was that the state would not reimburse the school district for teacher salaries. The ranch reopened under management of King's Camp, however, and the state paid the salaries. The same question arose last Wednesday, Mr. Glodt said, when he got a call from Mrs. Jackson that she thought the ranch was going to close. Mr. Glodt said they are working in teacher negotiations for a legal way to protect the district from a closing, but right now, most of the teachers are on annual contracts. After some calls, he said, he did get an agreement from the state that all of the supplies purchased up to now will be paid for and that the teacher salaries will be paid through

state aid this year. On count day, Sept. 20, said Mr. Glodt, the ranch had 35 boys, one short of full. Most of the teachers will be helping individual students in the special education program for the rest of the year, he said. If the ranch doesn't reopen, which Mr. Glodt said he hasn't heard anything about, the district won't be able to afford to keep all of the staff for the next school year. That means at the end of the year, the district will have to put its reduction in force policy into action. The district will have to wait and see what happens, he said. Until something changes, he said, the equipment, including laptop computers, will be moved out of the two school buildings at the ranch.

* State closes doors to youth ranch

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implement it. With a temporary license, said Mr. Kelsey, they were in a different situation, but he has never heard of something like this. Some of the write-ups were for things that took place back in May, he said, and the agency is supposed to send them in a few days, not months later. In the business of helping kids, he said, sometimes they break things. The ranch was cited for those incidents, although Mr. Kelsey didn't give particulars. Mr. Kelsey said no one from the agency was here to witness things that the ranch received citations about. Some weren't true, he said, and some came from a videotape that Decatur County law enforcement sent the health department. He claimed officers made a tape of a recent incident when one of the boys broke something. Instead of stopping the incident, he said, officers filmed the incident. The sheriff's office did send in the tape, said Sheriff Ken Badsky.

The second reason Mr. Kelsey gave for the closing of the ranch was that the state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services had changed the way it classifies youths, merging the "Level V" class housed at the ranch with Level VI, youths who committed more serious acts. The ranch was designed to handle nonviolent kids who need help and education, he said, but now the agency doesn't want that kind of service. The state is trying to set up psychiatric residential treatment facilities which will make all level V's into level VI's, he said. The requirements for that facility can't be met in this area of the state, he claimed. Mr. Kelsey said all jobs at the ranch would end when the boys are gone. The ranch employed around 36 to 37 people, he said, plus five teaching jobs with the Oberlin School District. Mr. Kelsey, a state representative, said he has talked with his partner about possibly putting in an alcohol and drug treatment center at the ranch.

City to foot bill for buildings now

Unless something else opens up at the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch east of town, the City of Oberlin will have to start making payments on bonds used to remodel the buildings out of its general fund, meaning taxpayers will get stuck with the bill. City Administrator Gary Shike said since April, when the ranch reopened, the operator has been paying \$2,000 a month, which made the payments improvements the city made to the facilities in 1999. The city just received a check to pay for October, he said, and then the monthly amount was going to go up to \$2,500. Unless the city gets something else at the ranch, he said, it will have to start paying for the bond and interest out of the general fund. There is some reserve from when Clarence M. Kelley Youth Services operated the ranch, he said. Kelley paid the city per boy per day, he said, which was a little more lucrative for everyone involved.

The bonds were paid and the carryover was left in the account, he said. Mr. Shike said he thought there was some money left in the account which will help pay for the bonds now, but he said he thought the account was almost at a break even point. Mr. Shike said he found out about the closing of the ranch through a fax last week. He said he actually received two letters. The second one said that the operator, King's Camp, planned on fixing any damage in the buildings, including repairing the sprinkler system the boys set off. He said the letter claimed that all of the repair work would be done by Saturday, Oct. 14. City Council members were notified of the closing by Mayor Ken Shobe, said Mr. Shike. The council will discuss the ranch when it meets at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday at The Gateway. The meeting is open to the public.

Man found guilty of stealing wire

A McCook man lost his case and this money after a pair of trials on Friday and Monday before Judge Bill Elliott in the Decatur County District Court. Friday, Danny Kofler, 30, lost \$58,000 he had been carrying when he was arrested by Oberlin Police Officer Scott Zeigler. The money, which was bundled in paper and plastic and secured with duct tape, was found in the truck Kofler was driving along with a baggie containing methamphetamine residue. The money, which Judge Elliott determined came from the sale of drugs, will mostly go to the Oberlin Police Department, said Assistant County Attorney Preston Pratt. The police will need to share some of the cash with other city and county departments which helped in the sei-

zure, Mr. Pratt said. On Monday, Mr. Kofler lost again, this in a jury trial on a charge of felony theft. On Dec. 24, Officer Zeigler said, he stopped a semitrailer truck Mr. Kofler was driving to investigate why he had barbed wire hanging out the back. The truck contained 27 rolls of barbed wire, worth more than \$1,500, stolen from the Decatur Co-op. Officer Zeigler had stopped Mr. Kofler just west of Rodehaver on Hall Street and the driver said that he was picking up the truck from the co-op. A call to a co-op employee determined that the wire had been stored outside and had not been sold. Although Mr. Kofler was found guilty on the theft charge, he won't be sentenced until Tuesday, Nov. 14.

At the pole



AT "SEE YOU AT THE POLE," Julie Cunningham, Principal Charlie Haag, librarian Linda Glaze and Lois Bryant held hands as they all prayed last Wednesday in front of the school with a group of students. — Photo by Doug Mason

* Council studies museum power use

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What about water and trash? asked Mr. Stanley. The water meter isn't read, said Mr. Shike, so the museum is getting free water. If the city isn't going to send them a bill, why read the meter? asked Councilman Rob McFee. It costs money for someone to read the meter. One reason to read the meter, said City Clerk Deanna Castle, is to see if there might be a leak. Ms. May said she would be in favor of having the meter read just to know what is being used. The minimum sewer and trash fee is around \$300 a year, said Dr. Anderson, so the city could give the museum \$3,500 a year. By doing that, said Mr. McFee, the city is basically saying that they don't like the way the museum is doing business. This is the way it has been done forever, and changing things could hurt the feelings of many volunteers. If this is about cost, he said, why

doesn't the city meter the power it takes to run the street lights and how much it costs to mow and pick weeds from islands on the streets? How much does it cost to do things at the cemetery that aren't necessary? Mr. McFee asked. So you are saying that the city is run by the museum board, Dr. Anderson asked, and the threat is that they might resign? "No," said Mr. McFee, "I'm asking if you want to run it." Does the city keep track of the electric use at The Gateway, library and theater? Ms. May asked. Yes, said Mrs. Castle. What is the underlying push behind this change for the museum? Mayor Shobe asked, noting that it

has been done this way with the city donating utilities for 48 years. Dr. Anderson said people should know what is happening. Dr. Anderson said he didn't think they were going to cut the museum off, but thought it would be good to know how much is being given. Why not invite them to the next meeting? he said. Unless something changes, Mr. Stanley said, it needs to be kept the same. If the city is going to put a cap on its donation, then the city needs to talk with the museum board. Mayor Shobe said he could go talk to the board. "Why not give them \$20,000 a year?" Dr. Anderson asked. The city isn't going to give them

a blank check, Mayor Shobe said. Dr. Anderson made a motion to donate to the museum \$3,500 yearly for utilities. Mr. Ward seconded it, but the action was rescinded. Kimberly Davis, managing editor of *The Oberlin Herald*, asked if the museum board had been invited to the meeting or if they even knew this topic was on the agenda. Mayor Shobe said he thinks the city needs to talk with the board. He said he will go talk with one of the board members. The council members rescinded their motion. Mayor Shobe said as far as he knew, the museum board was not invited to the meeting or told that their utility use was going to be on the agenda.





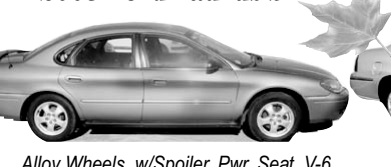
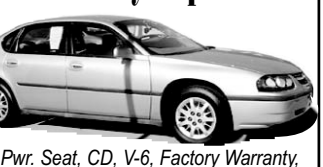


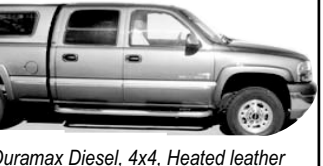





* Man asks for help

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Kevin Brown, an Oberlin builder, he said. It will be an excellent building. The board or foundation can pick the color so it goes with everything else at the fairground, he said. He said the two young men who have spearheaded the fund-raising effort are ready to throw in the towel. Someone needs to step in. "We are so close," he said. Other than that, said Mr. Wasson, the group might need some help with the cost of moving an electric pole at the fairgrounds. Commissioner Ralph Unger said he agreed with Mr. Wasson that the parties need to be pulled together. Mr. Unger said the project is at the point where decisions need to be made and then they need to stick to it. Technically, said Mr. Unger, the fairground is county property and the commissioners are responsible. He said the current climate needs to change. "It is sad," said Mr. Wasson. Maybe we can give it a few weeks and let the people get their wheat planted and then have a meeting, said Mr. Unger.

Fair this month

A group of women who have home-based businesses plans to hold a holiday fair in mid-October. The evening, open to the public, will be from 5 to 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 16. Businesses that will be represented include Home Interiors, Tupperware, Premier Jewelry, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Osborne Books, Chloe's Charms, Home and Garden Party, Watkins, Beauty Control, Creative Memories, Stampin Up, Silpado Jewelry and Pampered Chef.

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