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Treasurer fears long drive for licenses

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Decatur County treasurer is asking people to sign a petition to help keep driver's license renewals available in the county.

Treasurer Jean Hale said the problem began when Congress passed the Real ID Act to help tighten homeland security and prevent another terrorist attack.

Basically, the law will create new federal standards identification cards which will be

issued to all U.S. citizens, said Mrs. Hale. These will replace current state driver's licenses.

Part of the plan could mean that instead of counties having places where people can get their license renewals, everyone would have to go to a regional office.

Now, the state Department of Revenue has a license office in Colby. Everyone has to go there to get their first license, and that

would not change, said Mrs. Hale, but today, people can get a renewal from their county treasurer.

The treasurer said she feels if the county loses the license renewal office, it would be a hardship on senior citizens, disabled drivers and people who work.

"All of which would have to take time off and travel out of county to a regional center miles away," said Mrs. Hale, "to apply for

their federal identification card."

Currently, anyone who needs to renew their license can take the test, get their new picture taken and have the new license sent to them by mail. Mrs. Hale said her office has offered the driver's license renewals since December 1992.

Mrs. Hale said they are asking people to sign petitions to be sent to her state treasurers' association. She said people are being

asked to sign the petition also if they are asked going to a regional center.

She said they have copies of the petition in the treasurer's office on the second floor of the courthouse.

"Hopefully," said Mrs. Hale, "a large number of signatures will convince state and federal officials to continue service as is and not move this service to a regional center."

Harvest on hold in mud

Rain leaves field too wet to pick

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Fall harvest was put on hold last week as the county got .91 of an inch of rain, leaving fields too wet for combines and trucks.

General Manager Cody Richards at Norcat Grain said the elevator had taken in some grain the week before it started to rain, mainly soybeans. The area, he said, got more than two plus inches of rain.

On Friday, things were dried out enough for some to get back in the fields and pick some corn and milo. Mr. Richards said they were busy enough at the elevator to stay open over the weekend.

Harvest, he said, is looking OK. Farmers aren't reporting great yields, but overall it will be fair. Mr. Richards said he doesn't think anyone will see 100 bushels an acre from dryland corn, but there will be some good yields for the year.

As some of the farmers are picking, others were finishing up wheat planting for next year's crop. Mr. Richards said the wheat that was drilled before the rains is up and looking good so far.

In Jennings at the Decatur Co-op, it was much the same story. The area got 2.20 inches of rain last week, said Hope Brown. About two weeks ago, she said, they took in their first loads of grain and then things slowed down with the showers.

On Friday, said Ms. Brown, some of the guys started picking again and they worked on Saturday, too. She said there was enough activity to keep the elevator open for the weekend.

With the showers, she added, it's too early to tell what yields will be.

At the Decatur Co-op in Oberlin, General Manager Karol Evans said they had a few people cutting before the rain because they had their wheat drilled, but the mud kept most farm-



Getting the lowdown on fire

ALL DRESSED UP and ready for a call, Erin May (right) tried on Fire Chief Bill Cathcart's hat during a visit by Becky Ayers' Kids First Preschool to the Decatur County Fire Department on Friday. The youngsters got a ride in a fire truck driven by Mrs. Ayers' husband, Larry, the assis-

tant chief. Chief Cathcart (above) showed Sage Lohofener and her classmates the breathing gear that firemen use. The trip is an annual event for the preschoolers, who learn about fire safety and what to do in case of a blaze during Fire Prevention Month.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Fair board ready to order building

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Decatur County Fair Board discussed plans for a new livestock building at the fairgrounds with the owner of Sappa Valley Construction when it met last Wednesday.

Contractor Kevin Brown said he wanted everyone to be on the same page with the project so that there isn't any confusion.

He showed the board a few pictures of the proposed building, which he said it would be 60 by 120 feet with a 14-foot ceiling.

Mr. Brown said he thinks there is enough volunteer labor lined up to take out the old building, including the arena. The plan would be to save what they can from the old building to use for repairs or for the new one.

In the price, he said, he didn't figure the cost for any concrete that would be needed around the columns and in the hog shed.

The most common mistake when doing a project like this, he said, is starting with a building that is too small.

How much will it cost for con-

Young farmers shouldered the load

For nearly two years, two young farmers worked to raise money for a new livestock facility at the Decatur County Fairground.

Michael Wasson and Clay Anderson announced during the livestock sale at the 2004 fair that they were asking for steers for a fund raiser for a new barn.

Mr. Wasson said they hoped people would donate steers, which they would fatten at the Decatur County Feed Yard and then sell to raise money for the building. With the help of area people and businesses, they were able to raise \$23,115 from the sale of the cattle. That didn't include money raised selling off feed that was left from the project.

Mr. Wasson said he and Mr. Anderson were approached by some people who had started to work on the project years ago. They asked if the two would push for the new building and try to raise the money.

The first gift for the building was deposited in the Decatur County Fair Foundation account in 1993.

Over the years, people have donated money in memory of relatives and friends, through fund raisers and for other reasons. The account had \$56,224 in it as of Monday.

That includes money from the steer project and the first hog roast held last year. On Friday, Mr. Wasson, Mr. Anderson and others had a second hog roast before the Decatur Community High football game. Mr. Wasson said they raised \$1,200.

During the fair this year, the Oberlin Jaycees held a prime-rib sandwich feed during the day with all of the money going to the new building fund. The 4-H had a barbecue that night for the building.

Since the 2004 fair, Mr. Wasson and Mr. Anderson have helped raise \$41,793 for the building, expected to cost \$52,979 without electrical work or fence panels. That doesn't include the recent roast.

Mr. Wasson said he got involved in the project because the old facility needs to be retired.

crete? asked board President Sonya Gillespie. Mr. Brown said he has talked with Wayne Hackney from Oberlin Concrete, but he didn't have figures at the meeting. He said he

thought he could get volunteers to do that part of the work.

The electrical work, said Mr. Brown, will cost \$3,500 to \$4,500 installed. Everything that can be

saved from the old building, he said, and reused will be done.

What about fencing? asked board member Greg Long. One idea, said Mr. Brown, is that farmers would

provide fencing during the fair. Mrs. Gillespie said she didn't like that idea.

They can use the panels in the building now, said board member Ken Badsky.

Mr. Brown said the price of the building is \$68,429 but with the fall discount program and other discounts including one from Wick, the cost will be \$52,979. He said that is the total with freight, labor and delivery.

"That will get you inside the building," he said.

After it is built, he added, they can raise money for bleachers. Mr. Badsky said they have two at the fairgrounds now.

Mr. Brown said the building hasn't actually been ordered, but a slot has been saved at the factory. He said the colors will have to be confirmed and a check for the 20 percent down payment will have to be sent in by the end of the month.

All of that, said Mrs. Gillespie, will have to go through the Decatur (See BUILDING on Page 8A)

Hunt guide inside today

Nor'West Newspapers' annual fall hunting section is included in today's copy of *The Oberlin Herald*.

The section includes articles on the number of pheasants, deer and waterfowl in this area. It also has information and maps on where hunters can go for walk-in access in northwest Kansas.

County seeking grants for senior center, bridges

Decatur County commissioners held hearings on two grant applications, for new bridges and a new senior center, at their meeting last Tuesday, with no contest on either.

Amy Griffey, with the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission, said all of the paperwork for the grants is due by the end of the month. The hearings were just one step in the process, she said.

There was no one at the hearing for the bridges. Mrs. Griffey said changes the state

has made could mean the county will owe more money to the Kansas Department of Transportation, which will supervise the project and seek bids. She said the county will pay for the bridge work and then the state will reimburse the county.

The estimated cost for a new senior center is \$435,000, with a grant request of \$400,000. The estimate includes a new building and land. The county would like to buy the lot south of the present center and put the new

building there.

An architect worked with the seniors at the center, said Mrs. Griffey, and it seems that all parties are happy with that plan.

The application for the grant is fairly simple, she said. For the center, said Mrs. Griffey, they don't have to prove low to moderate income, but do have to look at the census and see how many people in the county are over 62.

The grant application has to be postmarked by Nov. 1.

Dorothy Moore told commissioners the seniors want to add a sink because they might want to start cooking the senior lunches. That would require three sinks. Meals now come from Atwood.

The first plan, she said, didn't make the building big enough for the meal site.

Five seniors at the hearing thanked the commissioners. The seniors were Mrs. Moore, Max Carman, Mary Horney, Wilma May and Barb Solko.