

## Most of crowd in favor of runway plan

The crowd cheered and clapped, with the exception of a few, at the proposal of building a longer, wider runway at the Oberlin Airport, which would mean more businesses and money for Decatur County.

Around 56 people met at The Gateway Thursday to discuss the proposal of lengthening the runway. Some were adamantly against the idea, asking how much taxpayers would have to pay and how much money Bus and Coach International, out of Jennings, is willing to put into the project. The majority of the people in the room

cheered and clapped, looking forward to the idea of new businesses in town and the benefits a longer runway could have for the county.

There is an ember in Jennings, said Councilman Jay Anderson, talking about the bus company; everyone needs to get together and fan that flame. That means needing a longer runway.

The main information, said City Administrator Gary Shike, that needs to come from the meeting, is that the Federal Aviation Administration has strict guidelines about

who can get money. Basically the city needs to have a master plan for the airport.

Mr. Shike said the city wanted to get a number of people to the meeting who are involved in the airport to discuss the plan and the airport.

Brad Weisenburger, with Bucher, Willis and Ratliff, airport consultants, said the master plan is more than a simple layout or update. The master plan is the city's document for what you think is going to happen in Oberlin. It is also the Federal Aviation Administration's document.

One thing the agency will tell the city, said Mr. Weisenburger, is that they will put the money where they can get the most aviation use. Their job isn't economic development, it is about aviation.

It is important in an airport master plan to get more people involved, rather than less. Another part of it is looking at the history of the airport and what kind of projects have been done.

Mr. Weisenburger went through the project approach and schedule which is estimated to take 10 1/2 months.

After the kick-off meeting, which was the first step, he said they will do a forecast of aviation demand, which is the realistic approach to the future for the airport and city. The question to look at is if a 7,000 foot runway is on the radar screen for Oberlin. Does the Federal Aviation Administration see that a 7,000 foot runway is needed here?

A planning advisory committee will be set up. It will be a group of individuals who give the city and consultants feedback so everything can be done right. (See AIRPORT on Page 5A)



AT THE COVER YOUR ACRES winter conference Adam Kadavy (above right) interviewed Brian Olson, multi-county extension agent for Kansas State University. Vaughn Sothman (below left) talked with Kevin Carman. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

## Event draws farmers

A little over 600 farmers from the region learned about farming practices during the annual Cover Your Acres winter conference at The Gateway last week.

Brian Olson, extension agent with Kansas State University, said they had 450 present last Tuesday and around 300 last Wednesday. About 130 in attendance were from the industry and also included farmers who attended both days of the conference.

Those numbers are up from previous years when around 400 people attended the conference.

The big change this year, said Mr. Olson, was that the conference was offered for two days instead of one. That helped more to get a chance to attend.

Mr. Olson said they are trying to offer a program that discusses crop production and techniques for the High Plains. There are other conferences offered in Kan-



sas, but nothing really in this part of the state. This way farmers can get the information they need and want from industry people and the different stations set up in the arena.

"It turned out to be a pretty good conference," he said.

Typically, he said, the event targets people in the 18 counties in western Kansas and about 60 to 70 miles past McCook. This year, though, there was one person from Rapid City, S.D.

The staff at The Gateway does an excellent job and each year, said

Mr. Olson, he gets comments about what a nice facility Oberlin has. The conference, said Mr. Olson, is a joint effort between Kansas State University and the Northwest Kansas Crop Residue Alliance with input from industry sponsors.

## Seeds of Hope set for Saturday at The Gateway

The 12th annual Seeds of Hope Telethon will kick off at 1 p.m. Saturday at The Gateway, with a goal of \$11,000 for nonprofit groups and charities in Decatur County.

Each year a committee of volunteers starts to plan for the event in the fall, making the reservation at The Gateway, sending out letters and requesting applications from organizations which want to receive money.

This year the committee of Jack Benton, Bill Duncan, Brenda Ulery, Regina Stanley, Kristi Smith, Peg Smith and Tim and Kimberly Davis picked 18 organizations to receive money. Each of the organizations wrote to the committee with an explanation for the use of the money.

Those chosen included the Decatur County Fair Foundation for the new livestock building, Kansans for Life, the Norcat Public Library, Norcat Museum, Teens for Christ, Oberlin Area Concert Band, Decatur County Relay for Life, Oberlin Lions Club, Creative Movements Gymnastics, Jennings Czech Museum, Decatur County Last Indian Raid Museum, Decatur

County Ministerial Association, Jennings City Library, the Tripple Creek Riders, FROGS Camp, Salvation Army, Girl Scouts and the United Explorers.

Each of the organizations is required to do an interview the day of the event, answer the phones for an hour and make a pie and batch of cookies or bar cookies for the concession stand.

Throughout the day the committee auctions off donated items from businesses and individuals in the area. This year, said Mrs. Davis, committee member, there are some really fun auction items. She said they include Kansas State University and University of Kansas stadium seats, a tool set, hair products, work by local artists, a woman's winter coat and a laundry basket full of merchandise from every store in downtown Oberlin. That is just a few of the items, she said. There are many more and interested people will need to either watch local access channel 7 or come to The Gateway to see them.

Those who aren't at The Gateway (See TELETHON on Page 5A)

## Decatur Tomorrow action committees set goals for future

About 60 people learned about what the Decatur Tomorrow action teams have been up to and got the chance to sign up to help make the county a better place at a Community Conversation last Tuesday.

Terry Woodbury, with Kansas Communities LLC, hired to help with the process, said the people at the meeting were the action teams, people interested in what the groups have been doing and five guests from Rawlins County, who are interested in starting the process.

Mr. Woodbury said beside the snapshots from each of the five groups they would show a segment of the film, "Heritage Lost?" which the Kansas Farm Bureau taped during the vision retreat last year.

Members of the steering committee, Brenda Breth, Dr. Elizabeth Sliter, Dr. Mark Olson, Paul Shields, Jesse Carter, Connie Grafel and Gary Anderson, were recognized. The group meets monthly and has helped gather information for the project, raise money and get things started, said Mr. Woodbury.

The five action teams include Sappa Park, Volunteer Network, Marketing and Economic Development, Maximize Existing Facilities and Leadership Development.

Each of the action groups took a few minutes to talk about what they have accomplished and what they want to work on. Those included:

**Maximize Existing Facilities**  
Dan Nedland, co-convenor, said the action team is organizing community generated classes on the nearly lost arts. He said they have a schedule of classes and are ready to go, but still have to decide where to hold them and publicize them. A lot of the classes will most likely be in the Decatur Community High School home economics room.

Some of the class ideas include bread making, preparing appetizers, floral arrangements, making homemade cinnamon rolls, cooking Mexican food, knitting,

## Electric company honored

The Decatur Tomorrow committee recognized Prairie Land Electric Cooperative as one of the donors who helped raise the seed money for the program at the meeting last Tuesday.

Dr. Mark Olson, who serves on the steering committee, said members from the electric cooperative were not able to make it to the meeting because they have been busy getting power back on after the storm. This company, he said, has put in a tremendous amount of work during the snow and ice storms in the last few months.

Prairie Land Electric Cooperative believes in investing in the future, said Dr. Olson, which is why they gave \$2,500 for Decatur Tomorrow.

Dr. Olson said he planned to go to the company office in Norton to present them with a plaque from Decatur Tomorrow.

wheat weaving and more.

Mr. Nedland said the group would love the input of anyone who can do crocheting, canning or any other nearly lost arts they would like to teach.

The long-term plan is to create a hang-out place for the teenagers and possibly find a use for the facility that formerly housed the Sappa Valley Youth Ranch.

**Leadership Development**  
Mary Jo Lohofener, co-convenor, said their group is (See TEAMS on Page 5A)

## Election books close with holes in ballots

The books closed with six people filing to run for the Oberlin School Board and four for the Oberlin City Council.

Incumbents Monte Moore and Barbara Olson both filed for the at-large seats on the Oberlin School Board. Newcomers Dan Grafel, Brad Long, Daniel Nedland and Mike Helm also threw their hats into the ring. However, County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who serves as the county election officer, said Mr.

Helm came in last Wednesday, the day after the filing deadline, to pull his name out as a candidate. Mrs. Horn said a candidate has three days to do that.

Both incumbents Kurt Vollertsen and Jeannie Martin decided not to run for re-election. There are four at-large seats open on the school board.

Incumbent city council member Joe Stanley decided to file for the mayor's seat in Oberlin after Mayor Ken Shobe decided not to run again.

Incumbents Ray Ward and Rhonda May waited until the last day to file and announce that they would seek the office again. Newcomer Melinda Enfield, who filed a petition to keep chickens in town, also is seeking one of the seats on the council.

There are only two spots open, those presently held by Mr. Ward and Ms. May.

In Norcat, the city council has three openings, but no one has filed

yet.

In Jennings, Bill Gawith and Rick Foster filed for the City Council. There is still one position open.

In Dresden, Scott Taylor filed for mayor and Erma Spesser and Margaret Rhodes have filed for the two open council seats.

There won't be a primary for this election.

The general election will be Tuesday, April 3, with all of the polling places in the county open.

## Area agencies to get federal disaster help

Employees from Decatur, Norton and Rawlins County, including some elected officials, found out about how to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency money at a meeting last Wednesday. Around 30 people from the three

counties met in the courtroom at the Decatur County Courthouse.

The main reason, said Lloyd Arnold, public assistance program project manager, was to hand out the packets which include the public assistance forms.

Declarations are made based on a dollar amount of the damage. The state, said Mr. Arnold, has to have over \$3.2 million of damage to be declared a disaster area. The area has been declared a disaster area and people in these counties were in that

damage area.

That makes the counties, cities and townships eligible to get agency money to help repair those damages.

Each place will have a kick-off meeting, said Mr. Arnold. At that (See AGENCY on Page 5A)