

Center building fund to buy van for its residents

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

With the help of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center will kick off Project Van, hoping to raise \$10,000 to buy a new vehicle for the seniors.

Thrivent plans a fund-raising supper with chili and chicken-noodle soup from 5 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Decatur Community High School cafeteria.

Thrivent, said Pastor Rick Langness of St. John's Lutheran Church, will match up to \$1,000 on a two-to-one basis for money raised by the soup supper.

Jan Badsky, who is in resource development with the center, said they want to buy a minivan to replace a 1984 Ford Club Wagon. She said the old van runs, but it is uncomfortable and is an older vehicle.

The truck is used to take residents to activities, doctor's appointments and other places they need to go. A new van, said Mrs. Badsky, will help give the residents a little independence

She said she started Project Van after residents started to ask her about getting a nicer vehicle.

The residents, said Mrs. Badsky, can use the county transportation van, but it covers the entire community from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If a resident needs to go out of town, that leaves the county uncovered.

The residents, she said, need to be able to go across the state lines for

doctor's appointments or other things, she said, and the center needs a vehicle for that. A staff member will drive the van, she said.

The center hopes to buy a van by the end of the year. So far, said Mrs. Badsky, they've raised \$3,500, which includes \$500 from Midwest Energy. The rest has come from memorials, community donations and families of residents.

Thrivent, said Pastor Langness, is an insurance company, offering mainly life insurance, open to all people.

Typically, he said, members try to do two to four fund raisers a year in the county. The biggest project here was a fund raiser for Sunflower Cinema, which the group matched at \$1,400.

Organizations, said Pastor Langness, normally contact the group if they need help. The agency also does fund raisers for families with major health expenses and for disaster relief.

Contact Shirley and Gaylord Shields, Norma and Ralph Unger, Sarah Orr, Pastor Langness, Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler or Kem Bryan to ask about a fund raiser, he said.

The van project seemed to be something that would benefit the whole community, said Pastor Langness. The current van, he noted, is 23 years old. Would you feel comfortable putting your grandmother in it?

Food for year paid for now



AT RAYE'S GROCERY on Monday, Evelyn Meitl checked out a cart of food while Dianne Bremer talked about the products that area farmers produce during the Decatur County Farm Bureau's annual Food Check-Out Day. The day marks the point when the average family has

earned enough to pay for a year's supply of food, and also celebrates the affordability of food and the role farmers play in producing it. The food rang up at \$54.28. Sharon Schuetz guessed \$54.26 and won a \$15 gift certificate. The food was donated to the food pantry. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Want to learn about baking, flower skills?

Interested in learning how to arrange flowers or make homemade bread?

Upcoming classes offered by the Decatur Tomorrow action team on Maximizing Existing Facilities might be what your looking for.

Kem Bryan, co-convenor for the class, said the team will offer both "Just For Me" flower arranging and "The Lost Art of Bread Baking" this month.

The first flower-arranging class is scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 17, in the back of the Golden Age Center. Judy Davis, a retired florist, will teach the four consecutive classes, and the cost is \$25.

Anyone interested should enroll by Monday by calling Mrs. Davis at 475-2881.

Projects completed in the class will include glass-vase arrangements, table centerpieces, vertical arrangements and a permanent wreath. Mrs. Bryan said other subjects will include using ribbon to enhance flowers, bow making, equipment and supplies, choosing

products and an introduction to the principles and elements of design.

Class members will bring an old towel or absorbent rag and a clear bud vase. Scissors, tape, ribbon, extra vases and flowers will be provided.

The bread-baking class will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24. Mrs. Bryan said a minimal fee will be charged for supplies and the location will be announced.

Denise Abbey will teach the class. Anyone who wants to enroll can call her at 475-2698.

Upcoming classes include knitting, pine-needle basket weaving, cooking, massage, meditation, reflexology, gardening, wheat weaving, personal finance for women and wine tasting, said Mrs. Bryan.

The committee still needs someone to teach pottery, yoga, solar cooking, ham radio, leather tooling or any other class that might be of interest. Those who want to teach or who have an idea for another class can call Mrs. Bryan at 475-3395 or Kari Ketterl at 475-3636.

Council hears water plant may be costly

The Oberlin City Council found out that the water treatment plant the city hopes to build could cost the city \$4 million to \$6 million more than expected — as much as \$6 million to \$9 million — after a pilot study showed more equipment would be needed.

Chris Miller, with Miller and Associates, a McCook engineering firm which did the study, said engineers conducted a pilot study for uranium removal in December. The average of uranium removed with the process the city hoped to use, he said, was 35 percent. It needed to be higher than that, Mr. Miller said.

Originally, the water treatment plant was estimated to cost \$2 to \$3 million, he said, with the test results it could cost upwards of \$6 million for the equipment needed to get contaminants out of the water.

The test basically showed that the equipment size would need to be increased so that it would work in both hot and cold weather here, the engineer said.

A company called WRT out of Colorado has been calling the engineers about uranium removal, Mr. Miller said, offering a different technology to recover the metal. He said the company told him their design

would cost about \$386,000 a year to run, and this could lower the price.

If the plant is run the way the city had planned, he said, it could mean a lot more details for the plant operator.

The state and federal agencies that could give money, said Mr. Miller, are going to want to know a dollar amount on the plant.

The Colorado company basically will add another process, he said, and then come and get the leftover sludge and recover it.

What kind of contract does the company want? asked Councilman Jay Anderson. They will contract for

as many years as they and the city agree on, said Mr. Miller.

Are there other communities that use this company? Dr. Anderson asked. Yes, Mr. Miller said, but none in this area.

The company will come and do a pilot test, he said, but the city would have to pay for it, which will cost from \$7,000 to \$8,000. That could be included in later funding of the project, he added.

Dr. Anderson said he thought the city should be interested in hearing more about the company. Mr. Miller said he will call the Colorado company and get the details.

City gets approval to delay work on sewer plant

The Oberlin City Council approved a consent order from the state Thursday changing the completion date for the waste-water treatment plant to the end of May.

The council had asked the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for the change a couple of months ago when winter weather made work on the lagoon liners difficult. The state agency approved the order a month ago, but the city hadn't received anything in writing.

Councilwoman Rhonda May voted against the change, asking if the three or four feet of snow in the

bottom of the lagoons would affect laying the liner this spring.

Yes, replied Chris Miller, engineer with Miller and Associates, which planned the plant and is supervising construction. The ground will be mush. He said he has called the contractors and told them to scrape out the snow, but they haven't made it here yet.

When it comes down to it, said Ms. May, it will be more expensive for the contractors to move the snow because it is more work for them without any more money?

Mayor Ken Shobe said he thought

it would be a good idea to send the contractors a letter about scraping out the bottom of the lagoons. He asked Mr. Miller to send the city a copy.

Later, the council approved an agreement with Bucher, Willis and Ratliff to do a new master plan for the airport. City Administrator Gary Shike said the Federal Aviation Administration will pay for 95 percent of the plan, but that doesn't mean the agency will pay for 95 percent of a proposed runway expansion. The plan for a longer runway will be covered in the master plan,

he said.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that Heath Bechler with King's Alcohol and Treatment is still interested in the former youth ranch facility, but won't be able to make any decisions until July.

- Heard the bid letting for the U.S. 36 project from Fairway Avenue to Penn Avenue has been moved to the middle of April by the state Department of Transportation.

- Found out that damage to the city's electrical lines last month isn't covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

County can't tell yet if 'chemical mowing' has saved money

Decatur County commissioners received the annual report for last year for the noxious weed department last Tuesday, but said it was too early to get the whole picture about the benefits of chemical mowing versus machine mowing.

Weed director Gaylen Huntley said the "chemical mowing" along rural roads is less expensive, but it hasn't been done for enough years to get everything figured out. The drought between 2002 and 2004 meant less mowing, he said.

Mr. Huntley said the county transporta-

tion bus is having problems getting around in the snow. The manual wheelchair ramp is also not holding up, he said, adding that he might start storing the van in the warm weed department's building overnight because one of the doors was frozen shut one morning.

Ambulance Director Linda Manning said she talked with Kevin Brown of Sappa Valley Construction about the new garage door the county ordered for the ambulance barn. She said he will contact her when it comes in.

Commissioner Doyle Brown brought in a sheet showing the plans for the airport expansion discussed at a meeting at The Gateway. Mr. Brown said he thought there were about 80 people at the meeting and it had gone well. A representative from Bus and Coach International was there, he said, as well as representatives from the state Department of Transportation.

Mr. Brown said the agenda included a note about a township road to be closed, but the topic wasn't brought up.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Held a 15-minute closed session for non-elected personnel at the request of Ms. Manning. There was no action taken.

- Signed the Firemen's Relief Form which is filed every year for insurance for the volunteer fire fighters.

- Approved a resolution to transfer \$999 for the postage meter.

- Held a 15-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege requested by County Attorney Steve Hirsch. There was no action taken.

- Held a 10-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege requested by Commissioner Ralph Unger with Mr. Hirsch and County Clerk Marilyn Horn. There was no action taken.

- Approved four tax abatements for minerals, include two for Elden Long for \$29 and \$74, one for Harry Wiles for \$7.95 and one for Vera and June Harold for \$25.

- Agreed they wouldn't meet on Tuesday next week because some of the commissioners will be out of town.

Elementary kids collecting coins for 'Pennies for Patients'

Students at Oberlin Elementary School are gathering pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters for the 2007 Pennies for Patients campaign for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Principal Duane Dorshorst said last year, a parent suggested that the students join the campaign, but it didn't work out then. An Oberlin kindergarten, Isabel Grafel, is a survivor of childhood cancer, he said, so the students decided to do the fund raiser in her honor.

For three weeks, starting Monday, students will collect coins and bring them to school, said Mr. Dorshorst, adding that the school will send letters with the students so their parents know what's going on.

Part of the program is raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the other part is talking with students to raise awareness about the diseases, he said.

"In 2006, \$13 million was raised by schools throughout the country which participated in school and

youth programs like Pennies for Patients," the society said.

The group is using singer and actress Mandy Moore as its honorary chair for the campaign, and she will visit the top fund-raising school in the country at the end of the year.

In Kansas, 160 schools have signed up for the fund raiser.

The money will go to help find a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, cancers that affect the blood and lymph systems, and to improve the

quality of life of patients and their families.

Last year, 165 schools raised over \$95,000, the society says. This year, the goal is \$200,000.

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Mr. Dorshorst said Oberlin Elementary won't keep any of the money. The school's goal is to raise \$1,000, he said, roughly \$4 per student.

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