

# \* Moran talks with crowd about farm bill

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yield figures to figure payments. The numbers, said Mr. Shirley, are older than he is.

Rep. Moran said he worries that, with more emphasis on environmental programs, the government will encourage farmers to take too much land out of production. He said he doesn't think the local economy should be undermined by making it more beneficial for farmers to grow grass instead of crops under the Conservation Reserve Program.

One trend is to pay farmers to take land out of production to conserve water, he noted, but it would be better for the farmers to go from irrigation to dry land crops than from irrigated crops to grass.

The bill will include crop insurance provisions, Mr. Moran said, but the major problem is that with crop insurance it doesn't help farmers with multiple years of crop failure.

The No. 1 priority, for 2007, he said, is getting a disaster relief bill passed for agriculture.

Farmers need to be encouraged, not discouraged, in purchasing crop

insurance, Rep. Moran said.

Historically, said Mr. Shirley, he has hired foreign workers for the farm every year, but the law makes it hard for them to come here legally. The government says that after three years of visas, with two months at home in between, that the workers need to stay home for six months. The visas are only good for 10 months at a time, he said.

The congressman said he didn't know that story. Is this the way the law has always been, he asked, or is it something that they are just enforcing now?

Basically the workers can come here and work for 10 months, then go home for two months and then come back for 10 months for three years, Mr. Shirley said.

Then they have to go home for six months and not make any money or....

"Come illegally?" asked Rep. Moran.

"That's right," said Mr. Shirley.

Rep. Moran said he would check into the problem. There is going to be an immigration debate this year, he said.

# \* Enhanced system will trace cellars

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phone lines and mobile phones.

Once a company makes a bid, Mr. Hirsch said, that is the price until the bid expires. The company usually can't change the amount, he said.

If the county is going to do almost \$200,000 worth of work, he added, then there should be a bidding process with specifications set and sent out.

The commissioners agreed that they needed to see the bids.

That doesn't mean that the commissioners can't sign the grant assurances, said Mr. Hirsch, but the county shouldn't spend any of the money until after the bids are in hand.

What isn't included in the grant? asked Commissioner Stan McEvoy, a former part-time dispatcher. Maintenance and upgrades, said Ms. Pachner. She said there is money in the 911 fund for that.

Is the county going to be able to install Global Positioning System units in emergency vehicles to direct them to an emergency, and will the grant pay for that? Mr. Hirsch asked. Yes and no, Ms. Pachner said; the grant doesn't pay for it, but the equipment could be installed.

Does the grant include the cost of road signs at intersections? Mr. Hirsch asked. Ms. Pachner said she didn't know. He said the county needs to be prepared to post signs because \$200,000 isn't enough to do that.

So who's supposed to do that? asked Ms. Pachner. It will probably end up being the road department, said Mr. Hirsch. Is the county re-naming the roads, he asked, or just putting up more signs? No one knew.

One of the grant assurances, said Ms. Pachner, is that the county will start work on the mapping system in the next 30 days.

Has a contract been signed? asked Mr. Hirsch. No, she said.

Mr. Hirsch said, according to the contracts, the maps apparently can only be used for the emergency system. If the appraiser's office or another entity needs a map, he said, they can't use the ones in dispatch because the money is for 911 purposes only.

"I know I have been accused of being against this," said Mr. Hirsch, "but the thing is, these three (commissioners) are in charge of any overruns, and the county ended up with \$2,000 in the general budget last year."

It seems like the county is going to have to do this, said Mr. McEvoy. If it gets done now, then there is grant money. That might not be offered later.

The government has thrown boatloads of money at people, said Mr. Hale, with the stipulations on how to use it being the gray area. Whether or not the system can be used for things other than emergency use is a difference of opinion, he said. Hopefully, the county can take advantage of the mapping to build a new layer of data for the appraiser's office, too.

Mr. Hirsch pointed out that no one is requiring the county to upgrade

the system or even to put up road signs.

"There aren't any mandates in legislation on this as yet," he said.

"But there will be," Ms. Pachner predicted.

Mr. Hirsch said no one knows. The money may not be available then, said Mr. McEvoy.

Mr. Hirsch said he didn't see a problem with the commissioners signing the assurances, but then there should be no money spent and no contracts signed until there is a plan.

"The commissioners have to be in charge of this," he said.

The commissioners did get the bids later in the meeting and did sign the assurances.



**CUTTING THE CAKE** on their wedding day, Dec. 24, 1949, were John and Muriel (Conard) Ready. They have lived in Oberlin since 1956.

# \* Couple celebrates 57 years

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co-owners of the Corcoran-Ready Funeral Home, where Mr. Ready worked until he retired in 1977.

They moved to Oberlin in February 1956 and have owned the same home since. She started teaching fourth grade in Oberlin in 1957. In 1960, they decided the region could use a coin-operated laundry, so they opened Giant Wash at 121 S. Rodehaver, which they operated for eight years. Later they owned Ready's Skogmos, a general merchandise and clothing store in downtown Oberlin, from 1962 through 1975. Mrs. Ready quit teaching in 1965 to work in the store and they spent every day together from that day on.

Mrs. Ready was born on her parents' farm in Pawnee County, the fifth of six children of Eva and Ross Conard. She attended a one-room school through eighth grade and graduated from high school in Larned, taking the normal, or teacher, training. She started teaching in a one-room school a couple of miles west of her farm home. She taught in Larned, served as a principal of the junior high and later became the Pawnee County superintendent of schools, the position she held when the couple met.

Her husband was born on the farm homesteaded by his grandparents in Wilkin County, Minn., the second of four children of Esther and Raymond Ready. He said he often rode a horse to school, except when the snow was too deep; then his dad took

the children to school in a bobsled with a team of horses. He graduated from high school in Fairmont, N.D. He said he was always on the small side, but was very athletic.

"I was called 'fleet-footed Ready' when I played basketball and football," he said, "and was also nicknamed 'Speedy Ready.'"

Their daughter Esther graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1969. She married David Chomowicz in 1991 and they presented the Readys with a grandson, Nick, in 1992. One of Nick's greatest joys has always been to come to Oberlin for the Decatur County Fair every year, the couple said.

Mrs. Ready often tells friends how as a small boy, Nick would tell his classmates in New York, "I went to Oberlin for the World's Fair!"

Their daughter said Nick has given her parents lots of pleasure and they have taken full advantage of long-awaited bragging rights.

"My parents were always very active in the church and community," she said, "and were a real partnership, complimenting each other in family, life and business."

Mrs. Ready moved to the Good Samaritan Center in 2004 and John spends every day with her. They can often be seen holding hands, their daughter said.

"Mother's face lights up when Dad walks into the room," she said, "and she still puckers up for her daily good morning and good night kisses."

# \* Grant gets denied

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ligation to have a senior center or a meal site, asked Mrs. Moore. No, said Mr. Hirsch.

There is no law that says the county has to have either, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, but the county doesn't want to see the senior center shut down. The general feeling was remodeling the center would be fruitless. It would be better to put money into a new building instead, said Mr. Unger.

The roof on the center is shared in part with the Sunflower Cinema, said Mr. Brown, and there are several different kinds of roofs on the center.

If they tore the roof off the center and replaced it, said Mr. Unger, it would leave the theater without a roof on part of the building.

Does the meal site have to have a kitchen? asked Mr. McEvoy.

Not right now, said Mrs. Gee, but eventually they'd like to start cooking the meals so she doesn't have to drive to Atwood every day. She said the health department requires three sinks for cleanup.

Can the county apply for a grant again next year? asked Mrs. Moore.

Mr. Hirsch said the group could look into a KanStep grant, which would pay for the materials, but they would have to come up with the labor.

Would it help if the seniors did some fund raising? asked Mrs. Moore. The commissioners said it would, because there would be more matching funds for a grant.

Is there a senior tax levy? asked Mr. Stapp. Yes, and Oberlin gets most of it, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, although Norcatur, Dresden, Jennings and the transportation van also get some.

What do you guys want? asked Mr. Hirsch.

Mrs. Gee said she doesn't really want to see the old building fixed because it doesn't seem feasible, but no one has the money for a new building. She said they might need to relocate until they can get a grant.

The group did talk with the officers at the American Legion, but they were told that it wouldn't work because the Legion would then have to have someone at the building during the day.

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