

Board looks at all-day kindergarten

Oberlin Elementary School Principal Duane Dorshorst gave the school board information on all-day kindergarten at a meeting last Monday, but the board didn't make any decisions.

Mr. Dorshorst said with an all-day kindergarten, it isn't that a teacher gives the kids more information, but that the students have more time to learn.

From 1998-1999 to 2005-2006, he said, the number of students in all-day kindergarten in Kansas went from 25 percent to 51 percent. Most research, said Mr.

School Countdown

At the monthly meeting last Monday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Talked about all-day kindergarten for next year, but didn't make any decisions. Story at left.
- Gave the superintendent the go ahead to get prices and get started on seven summer projects at the schools. Story on Page 3A.

- Read and approved resolutions to not renew contracts of four teachers for next year and reduce another to half time. Story below.

- Received requests from three teachers for early retirement, but decided to wait to make any decisions. Story on Page 2A.

Dorshorst, shows that all-day kindergarten is much better for the kids. Many kids already have several

years of half-day preschool, he said. Then they go to half day kindergarten.

State law, said Mr. Dorshorst, says that a school district has to offer half day kindergarten. It also says if a parent only wants a child to go a half day and the school offers full day, then the child can go home at 11:30 a.m.

So far, he said, the district has 24 kids signed up for kindergarten screening for next year. Out of those, probably three or four won't go to kindergarten next year and the class will probably retain one from this year.

That means next year, said Mr. Dorshorst, one class of all-day kin-

dergarten would work. The thing is that if there are more kids the next year, the district would have to offer two classes.

If parents choose for their child to only go a half day, said Board Member Barb Olson, would the district have to bus them home.

Mr. Dorshorst said he didn't know for sure. Most parents, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, would probably do the all-day class. Brian Simonsson, district transportation director, looked into paying mileage to the few parents who would only want half day kindergarten, said Mr.

Glodt.

The increase in costs, said Mr. Dorshorst, would be about \$24,500 a year for two all-day classes. That includes another teacher and an increase in supplies. That's offset by the savings in transportation, about \$10,000, and what the state will pay, he said.

Board President Dewayne Jackson said it sounds like Mr. Dorshorst is recommending all-day kindergarten. Mr. Dorshorst said the board probably needs to make a decision by the April meeting so he can let the parents know for next year.



WITH A BOTTLE IN HAND, Brandon Bryan (above) fed his bucket calf outside Oberlin Elementary School Friday as part of the Farm Bureau sponsored Ag in the Classroom

day. Lois Carlson (below) showed the students how to weave with wheat.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Four contracts not renewed for teachers

The Oberlin School Board approved resolutions not to renew the contracts of four teachers and to reduce one to a half-time position effective at the end of the school year at its meeting last Monday.

Using the district reduction-in-force policy, said Superintendent Kelly Glodt, is never an enjoyable item.

The reason for these resolutions is the closing of Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, he said. All of these teachers worked at the ranch.

Since the facility closed, said Mr. Glodt, the teachers have worked in town.

Each teacher can ask for an appeal by writing a letter to the board clerk within 15 days of receiving the written notice, he said. All of the writ-

ten notices, said Mr. Glodt, need to be delivered by Tuesday, May 1.

Each of the resolutions has to be read individually and a vote taken, said Mr. Glodt.

The board approved resolutions to not renew the contracts for:

- Elaine Marcuson, hired in March 2000.
 - Aurelia Jackson, hired in August 1999.
 - Susan May, hired August 1998.
 - Kimberly Witt, hired August 1991.
 - Keith Grafel, hired in August 1990, reduced to a part-time job.
- Both Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Marcuson were hired to teach at the ranch while over the years the other three teachers were shifted to the ranch from the schools in town.

Pheasants Forever member discusses Sappa Park ideas

A member of the Sunflower Pheasants Forever Chapter talked with the Oberlin City Council about possibly changing the lease at Sappa Park in the future to take the ground out of production and a lower rate for the group to pay the city.

Dr. Richard May said the chapter had a meeting recently and discussed the contract with the city. The first contract with Pheasants Forever was signed February 2005 and is a three year contract. He said it isn't actually up until February, but they wanted to let the council know what they are thinking.

Besides, if the decision's made to take the lake bottom out of crop production the chapter will need to let the farmer know.

Dr. May said they want to do more durable long standing habitat like trees and better food plots. The problem with those items is that they are more expensive and a long-term investment. The group needs to know they will have the area for a long time. Dr. May added that agriculture spraying of crops is killing the food plots.

Although the group originally talked about getting the land put into the conservation reserve program for grass, that, he said, is proving almost impossible.

Another idea for use of some of the land, said Dr. May, is dog training and field trials. He said there's someone in town involved in dog training and field trials and thought the park would be perfect for that. It would bring people to town.

Dr. May said one idea is to change the lease contract to \$1 a year, \$25

Council Roundup

At the meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Talked with a member of the Sunflower Pheasants Forever Chapter about possibly changing the contract at Sappa Park to take ground out of crop production and include a lower rate the group pays the city. Story at left.
- Heard the city probably shouldn't sell any land at the Oberlin Airport because a long term lease actually looks better to the Federal Aviation Administration. Story on Page 2A.
- Looked at a contract from a private grant writer to work on a grant to make repairs to the band shell at City Park, but didn't make any decisions. Story on Page 5A.
- Denied a request to vacate the north end of Marks Avenue after deciding the owner really needs to get a building permit for the proposed storage building. Story on Page 3A.

per acre in production and \$1 an acre per year for land not in production, with the understanding that most of it won't be in production.

So it's the idea of Pheasants Forever to take the land out of production? asked City Administrator (See GROUP on Page 8A)

Students learn about ag

Fifth and sixth graders at Oberlin Elementary School learned more about agriculture on Friday with five presentations by professionals in the field.

Dianne Bremer, with the farm bureau, said the agriculture in the classroom event was sponsored by Decatur County Farm Bureau with some of the monetary assistance coming from the Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

The kids got the chance to learn about Soil Science, with Steve Noren, Enviroscap/Conservation with Crista Mulder, Wheat Weaving with Lois Carlson, Leadership in Agriculture with Kayla Zodrow, Livestock Operations with Brandon Bryan, and Beef By-products with Mrs. Bremer.

Each of the presenters talked with the kids in their areas, using props to explain their subject.

For Mrs. Bremer, those props were items that have beef by-products in them. She told the students that they use beef every day without even knowing about it. Beef by-products are in crayons, plastic, make-up and glue, just to name a few.

Farmers, said Mrs. Bremer, don't just raise beef. They also grow crops, including wheat, corn and milo and those crops are used for food that people buy in the grocery store.

She told the students the next time they eat something, they (See KIDS on Page 8A)



Woman weaves with wheat

A Decatur County woman taught fifth and sixth graders how to clean wheat and weave with it last week during the Agriculture in the Classroom program.

Lois Carlson said she learned to wheat weave when she was about 65 years-old. She said she's lived in Decatur County all of her life.

This is a hobby, said Mrs. Carlson, who sat on the seat on her walker at one end of the cafeteria table at the grade school.

Along two other tables sat a row of boys and a row of girls listening

to her every word.

What do you think you can weave with wheat? asked Mrs. Carlson. She held up the necklace around her neck, saying jewelry, Christmas decorations and things to sell, she said.

Sometimes, said Mrs. Carlson, she gets phone calls from people who want to take something home from Kansas and they ask her to weave something for them out of wheat.

In order to get the wheat to weave, she said, the field has to be prepared

and the wheat planted. What could happen to that crop before someone can harvest it? asked Mrs. Carlson. The kids said the wheat could freeze, get bugs or dry out. That's right, she said.

Mrs. Carlson said she likes the wheat to be honey colored with its heads attached. She said the wheat needs to be real tall, because in weaving you only use from the first joint to the head.

It used to be, she said, that the wheat would grow and she and (See WOMAN on Page 8A)

Limb pick-up starts

The Oberlin City crew started picking up limbs on the east side of town Monday.

The limbs, which have littered yards since the end of 2006, were covered in snow for months, but recently revealed, are now getting taken care of.

The city asks that people cut up the limbs and stack them in their

yards and the crew will come get them.

The crew plans to pick up limbs on the curb from Penn Avenue to the east side of the city this week and from Penn Avenue west next week.

Anyone who needs help moving or cutting limbs should call the city office at 475-2217.