

# City Election

## Mother hopes to make difference

With the idea that one person can make a difference, Melinda Enfield decided to run for a seat on the Oberlin City council.

The mother of five said she's lived in Oberlin since August 2005, but lived here for four years before that and graduated from Decatur Community High School.

Mrs. Enfield said she hasn't served in a political office, but did serve three years on the parent board of Head Start, and on the boards of the After Five Club and the Christian Women's Club.

After her battles over the last few months to keep chickens at her home, she said, she would like to see the proposed animal ordinance allowing barnyard animals in the city without the owner having an acre of land pass in the coming election. Mrs. Enfield helped write the proposed ordinance and gathered signatures to get it on the ballot.

Governing bodies need to have a reason to have an ordinance, she said, and if the council members decide they don't want farm-like animals in town, they should just say that. She said she thought the rule requiring an acre of land was a smokescreen for keeping animals out.

Mrs. Enfield said she wants to see Oberlin move forward while at the same time remembering its roots. This is a farming community, she said, with rural roots, but the city also needs to be progressive with issues surrounding things like the airport and a proposed water treatment plant.

Who was watching, she said, when the waste water treatment plant was planned. The plan needs to be so far away from private land and it isn't, she said.

Mrs. Enfield said she's concerned about where the city's going and what will be left out of coming projects.



M. Enfield

The council, she said, should approach the pool project with caution. Mrs. Enfield said she's all for an updated facility, but not for bringing in people who cost a lot of money to do the job.

Look at the people in Selden, she said; they wanted a community center and made it happen.

Mrs. Enfield said she has some experience with pools, as she worked a lifeguard when the new pool in Oakley opened. She said she learned about scheduling for pools and safety issues.

She said, she and her family spend a lot of time at the pool. It's important to make the pool safe and enjoyable for everyone, she said.

Mrs. Enfield said she supports the airport expansion project. The city needs to support industry, she said. If elected, she said, she wants to know up front how much the project will cost, when it will happen, how it will be accomplished and all of the other questions that go along with it.

Mrs. Enfield said if she's elected, she will make informed decisions. The voters have experience with the current council. Before voting, she said, ask yourself if the council is doing the job and what the people want, then make a decision on how to vote.

"Not a lot of people know me," said Mrs. Enfield, "but I pay attention to details. Just like with the chicken issue, it may seem ridiculous to some, but that doesn't mean it's not worth fighting for. It just takes more courage."

She is a member of the Assembly of God Church, Decatur County Stand Against Violence, the Christian Women's Club and a home school group.

She and her husband Will have five children. Taylor, 15; Chloe, 13; Teigan, 10; William, 7; and Nathaniel, 4.

## Woman wants to help city to grow

Saying she wanted to be involved in the growth the town could be getting ready for, Rhonda May is running for re-election to Oberlin City Council.

Ms. May was appointed to the council about a year ago to replace Councilman Patrick Pomeroy, who quit after three years to take a job in southeast Kansas.

The candidate said she sees more people moving to Oberlin in the next few years, like she and her husband Dan Nedland. Families see the quality of life here.

Ms. May said she was born in Decatur County, left for 30 years and then moved back. Because of her absence, she said, she's able to see things in Oberlin that some might take for granted, things people should enjoy.

People move here because of the good schools.

People who want to retire are moving here, she said, because of the low cost of houses. Businesses want to move here because they look at costs and can do it.

City government, said Ms. May, at the most basic level is providing utilities, including water, sewage, electricity and streets. The second part is maintaining the things that make life better.

One of those is a swimming pool. The city pool, said Ms. May, needs to be replaced.

She said she applauds the citizen involvement with things like the animal ordinance. The one-acre rule was done because most barnyard animals were housed on the edge of town, where lots were bigger.

Water and waste water treatment are basic utilities, she said. The city should do them well and she doesn't think the city has spent enough time discussing either.

The expansion at the airport, said Ms. May, is one of the most important economic tools the city could get in the next 10 years.



Rhonda May

Lengthening the runway to accommodate business jets is a great idea, she said.

One of the first steps in that project is a cost-benefit analysis which will document the need and benefit to the area, she said.

Ms. May said she believes the runway extension will be good for Oberlin, but if it won't be, the study will show that, and she wants to know that beforehand.

Ms. May said people should vote for her because she is interested and committed to community service.

"I am at the stage in my life that I can do community service and have a unique background that's beneficial," she said.

She is retired but has a degree in petroleum engineering. She said her degree helps her understand the water project a little more.

Another strength, she said, is economic analysis.

She and her family lives here because of the quality of life, good schools and her family is here. Her parents are Walter and Betty May.

She and her husband have three children, Cameron, a senior in high school; Hunter, a freshman; and Elizabeth, a sixth grader.

She is co-chair of the Decatur County Relay for Life, treasurer of the Oberlin Rotary Club, and a member of the Decatur Professional Women, Garden Lovers Lunch Club and the Recipe Club, choir director at St. John's Lutheran Church, co-convenor for the Decatur Tomorrow Economic Development and Marketing group, instructor for the senior aerobics class, vice-president for the Decatur Community High School Alumni Association, plays flute in the Oberlin Area Community Band and is a member and former chair of the University of Kansas Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Advisory Board.

## Candidate aims to continue serving

Ray Ward said he'd like to continue serving the community, so he decided to run for another term on the Oberlin City Council.

Mr. Ward has served for more than four years on the council since he was first appointed to finish Marvin Matchett's term, then ran for another four years. He said he wants to see some of the projects that the council has started get finished. Some of those will have an economic impact on the city, he said.

One of the biggest is the possible airport expansion, lengthening the runway to accommodate business jets. Mr. Ward said the project could be a real boost to the economy and open all kinds of doors for businesses already here and those interested in moving to Oberlin. A longer runway could also help attract more tourists, he said.

The city has hired a consultant and the firm is doing a new plan for the airport. The plan has to go to the Federal Aviation Administration for approval before the city can get financial help for the runway, he said.

Mr. Ward said he would like to see the waste water treatment plant completed and have it meet state regulations. The majority of the project is supposed to be done by the end of May, he said, then it has to meet all water-quality standards.

The city needs to build a water



Ray Ward

treatment plant in the near future, he said. None of the city's wells is getting any better. For the city to get any more water, the plant has to be built. Otherwise the city will continue to have water rationing.

Mr. Ward said he doesn't support a proposed animal ordinance on the ballot because the average person doesn't realize that if it is passed, it will set a precedent. Someone could try to bring pigs to town, he said, and then what comes next?

It's great to see people get involved, he said; more people need to play a role in local government, he just isn't in favor of the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Ward said if elected, he will continue to represent the majority of the people. They need honest representation, he said, and he will give that. He said he doesn't just go out for things that he wants to see get done, but instead what he thinks the public wants.

Mr. Ward said he and his wife Joan have three sons, Alan, who lives in Denver; Phillip, who attends Kansas State University; and Chris, who lives in Oberlin.

He has lived in Oberlin for 14 years and serves on the Decatur County Amusement Authority and the Sappa Park trail committee.

## Store owner, city councilman stands alone on ballot for mayor

With over two years on the Oberlin City Council, Joe Stanley decided to run for mayor with the retirement of Ken Shobe.

Mr. Stanley said he was appointed to his seat on the council. In the 2005 election, he won a seat, and is now two years into his term.

No one else was interested in running for the mayor's spot, said Mr. Stanley; he is the only candidate on the ballot. Currently, he serves as the council president, which means when Mayor Shobe isn't at a meeting, Mr. Stanley runs things.

The mayor, he said, needs to show leadership and set the tone for the meetings. If Mr. Stanley gets elected, he said, he will have to appoint someone to finish out his term



Joe Stanley

on the council. He said the next term could be full of changes, important decisions and things that he would like to see completed.

Hopefully, said Mr. Stanley, the airport runway expansion will be a big issue. That project could mean some major growth for Oberlin and the area, he said.

As the owner of Stanley Hardware on Main Street, he said, he goes to store meetings. When he talks to store owners from some other towns, they talk about how they have more customers. He said he has to tell them he has fewer customers each year.

If the store here is going to grow, said Mr. Stanley, they have to sell more items to fewer people. In three

to five years, though, he said, the store might have more customers because the population might grow or stop declining. That would benefit everyone.

In the next term, he said, he would like to see the new waste water treatment plant finished and a water treatment plant started.

Another issue the council has worked on is the swimming pool. The city can't afford to build a new pool alone, said Mr. Stanley. The city's money is tied up with other projects, but the pool could possibly be a city-county project.

Anna Shaw and the city's pool committee did a lot of work and need to be commended, said Mr. Stanley, but the city just can't afford to build a pool right now.

The city will need to do a lot of repairs to the old pool or build a new one, he said. The pool committee,

said Mr. Stanley, went to the county commissioners, and he didn't think they were opposed to the project.

Another item the council has worked on is an ordinance up for election to allow farm animals such as chickens in town without the owner having an acre of land. Mr. Stanley said the council can't stop people from trying to get the ordinance done, but people need to understand that if the ordinance passes that doesn't mean they get to have chickens. Prospective owners still would have to get a permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

If the ordinance doesn't pass in the election, he added, it's dead. He doesn't see anything changing.

Mr. Stanley was born in Oberlin and has lived here all but six years of his life, when the family moved to Wisconsin.

He and his wife Regina Stanley,

a vice president at The Bank, bought Stanley Hardware in 1989. The couple has two daughters, Sarah, who lives in Alexandria, La., where she is getting her second college degree in health information management (she also has a teaching degree), and Jessica, a receptionist

at a medical clinic in Colby. Mr. Stanley said people should vote for him because he will make the best decisions with the information he has. He said he's always going to try to do what's best for Oberlin.

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