

Voters to decide outcome on animals

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Oberlin voters will decide Tuesday whether an ordinance banning chickens and other farm animals on smaller lots should be changed so it doesn't say that owners need an acre of land.

A proposed ordinance written by Melinda Enfield and friends will appear on the ballot after the group gathered 194 signatures on a petition forcing an election. Mrs. Enfield, a chicken owner and now a candi-

date for City Council, wanted to keep her hens inside city limits, but didn't have an acre of land.

She was unable to get a permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

After conversations with the City Council, which declined to accept the proposed ordinance, it will go to the people.

The voters will have the chance to make the final decision on the proposed ordinance, which eliminated the need for an acre

of land and a section banning miniature barnyard animals.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he's afraid people think that if they vote yes on the ordinance, Mrs. Enfield will get to keep her chickens in town.

That simply isn't true, he said. If the ordinance passes, people will still have to apply for a permit through the Board of Zoning Appeals, an appointed group of five city residents.

The only thing that is changing in the ordinance if it passes is the space requirement and the miniature barnyard animal restriction, he said.

People would still have to get a permit and neighbors could object. No matter what happens in the vote, people will still have to apply for a permit, regardless of how much property they have, he said.

Mr. Shike added that dogs and cats are covered under a separate ordinance and

don't require a permit, though dogs must have a city license. All pets are supposed to be restrained.

If the Board of Zoning Appeals says no to a permit, he said, the applicant can appeal to district court.

If the ordinance passes in a public vote, Mr. Shike added, it can't be changed for 10 years unless someone petitions to get another version on the ballot again. The City Council cannot touch it.



USING GOLDSHOVELS, Commissioner Ralph Unger, Hospital Board President Connie Grafel and Richard Kimble, who works in maintenance and serves on the Decatur Health System strategic planning team, (above)

broke ground at Decatur County Hospital to kick off an expansion project. Administrator Lynn Doeden (below) talked to the audience of about 40 people at the program Monday morning. — Photos by Othelia Vacura and Kimberly Davis

Hospital starts expansion project with golden shovels

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

With shovels in their hands, three people dug a small hole in the wet ground outside the Decatur County Hospital Monday morning, breaking ground for a \$650,000 addition to house the hospital's specialty clinics and home care unit.

The hospital plans to add 11 rooms for the specialty clinic just off the east side of the building, south of the emergency room entrance.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said she needed to thank several people for their help with the project, including the Decatur Health Systems strategic planning committee, which came up with the plan; the hospital board, and the county commissioners.

The project will be financed through a low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and gifts to the hospital.

Mrs. Doeden said the board had maybe gotten things a little out of order, but the commissioners jumped on board, quickly signing

papers for the loan, and they appreciated that.

Broadway Avenue on the east side of the hospital, she said, will be blocked off starting this week until the project is finished. Stakes have been placed in the yard and tools and equipment will move in this week, said Mrs. Doeden. Rhodes Construction of Goodland is the general contractor.

It won't be long until people will start to see the work being done, the administrator said.

Connie Grafel, hospital board president, thanked everyone who came together to get this far in the project, including those there that morning. About 40 people turned out for the event.

County Commissioner Ralph Unger said he can see the county health system moving forward, and that is good.

This, said Mr. Unger, is the third expansion of the hospital since he's been a commissioner.

Mr. Unger said the county owes a big thanks to many benefactors who have left all or part of their es-



tate for health care.

Part of moving forward or having progressive health care is being able to add on to the facilities in

Decatur County, said Mrs. Doeden. She added that they plan to be here providing health care for a long time.

Polling places open in all cities of county

Voters will go to the polls in their own towns Tuesday to decide who will serve on city councils and the Oberlin School Board.

The polling places will open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m., giving voters 12 hours to cast a ballot.

Each city in Decatur County will have a polling place, with registered voters in Jennings going to the Sunflower Senior Center, those in Norcatour to City Hall, in Dresden to the United Methodist Church and in Oberlin to The Gateway.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn, the county election officer, thanked both the drug stores in Oberlin for providing golf carts at The Gateway to help people get from the parking lot to the front door.

At each polling place, voters may use a computerized voting machine — designed to make voting easier for the handicapped — or a paper ballot.

In all of the cities, voters will choose who will serve on the council, whether that person's name appears on the ballot or as a write-in.

Candidates include:

- Joe Stanley for mayor of Oberlin.
- Melinda Enfield, Ray Ward and Rhonda May for two open spots on the Oberlin Council. Both Mr. Ward and Ms. May are incumbents. One will be eliminated. See stories on these candidates on Page 3A.
- Jerry Hill, Wava Reames, Jim Plotts and Mark Bailey for three spots open on the Norcatour Council. All of these candidates are write-ins.
- Bill Gawith and Rick Foster for the three spots open on the Jennings Council on the ballot.
- Scott Taylor and write-in Krystal Hollars for the mayor of Dresden.
- Erma Jean Spreser and Marga-

Candidate forum set for Monday

Want to ask a candidate for the Oberlin School Board or Oberlin City Council a question, but haven't had the time? Then attend the candidate forum scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday at the high school cafeteria.

The Decatur County Farm Bureau will host the forum for voters. The Bureau has invited Dan Grafel, Brad Long, Dan Nedland and incumbents Monte Moore and Barb Olson, all running for the four open seats on the school board, and Melinda Enfield and incumbents Ray Ward and Rhonda May, all running for two positions on the council.

The forum is just in time for the general election on Tuesday, April 3.

ret Rhodes for two Dresden council spots.

All registered voters who live in the Oberlin School District will get to vote for four members of the board. In the November election, voters decided to have all of the positions be elected at-large seats instead of from districts.

The candidates for the four seats include incumbents Monte Moore and Barbara Olson and newcomers Brad Long, Daniel Nedland and Dan Grafel. One will be eliminated. See stories on the candidates on Page 6A.

Oberlin student in Denver hospital after snow accident

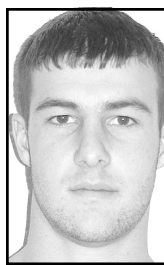
A Colorado snowboarding accident has left a Decatur Community High School senior in a Denver hos-

second on Saturday to reinforce the first surgery.

Kyle, said Mr. Haag, is at St. Anthony's Central Hospital in Denver recovering from the surgery and should be transferred to Craig Hospital, a rehabilitation center, sometime this week.

Mr. Haag said Kyle has feeling and movement in his arms and legs, but will have a few months of rehabilitation before he is able to come home. He said the rehab will help Kyle regain more

able to come home. He said the rehab will help Kyle regain more (See SENIOR on Page 10A)



Kyle Glodt

Wheat crop benefits from winter storms

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Moisture over the winter and a light rain last week has left the area's wheat crop green and growing.

Brian Olson, regional agronomist with Kansas State University Research and Extension, said at the end of the winter, there was some concern that the wheat might suffer from lack of oxygen under the ice. As it turns out, he said, the wheat looks wonderful. A few fields have

had some problems because of the ice, he said, but generally the wheat looks great.

The wheat, he said, is starting to come along and there's a good yield potential. Mr. Olson said it's too early to tell what the yields might be; it will depend on the weather in the next couple of months.

The ground has a great moisture profile this year, he said, six feet deep in most fields. That's really

great, he said.

In the next two to three weeks, he said, the wheat will start jointing, which means the growing point will get above the ground. Farmers who have cattle grazing on their fields need to pull them off.

The little wheat head in that joint will move through the stem and up, he said. Although the head won't fill out for a while, some of the berries will already be in place.

It seems like right now, he said, the area will have good-looking stands of wheat. The determining factor, said Mr. Olson, will be the temperature in May. If it stays in the 70-to-80 degree range, that will mean an extended grain period, when the head fills out. If it gets hot quickly, the heads won't fill out.

Generally, said Mr. Olson, farmers are happy with what they see and like the moisture the area has so far.

School board starts work to hire leader

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin School Board started the preliminary work to hire a new superintendent at a meeting Monday night, setting up a public meeting for 7 p.m. Thursday, April 5, at the high school auditorium.

Charles Mansfield with Mc-

Pherson and Jacobson, a search firm hired to help the board, said the community meeting is an important part of the process so the board can see what the public wants in a superintendent. The same day, Mr. Mansfield said, he will talk with a group of students, teachers, admin-

istrators and school staff.

During the public meeting, he said, the firm will ask people what they think the district's positives are, the characteristics they want in a new superintendent and the things a superintendent needs to know to hit the road running, including any

"potholes" in the way.

Everyone, he said, is invited to the public meeting. The information from all the meetings will then go to the board to help them in hiring a new leader for the district.

The board plans to close the ap- (See BOARD on Page 10A)

Sirens tested Mondays

Storm sirens sounded Monday morning and will continue to go off at 10 a.m. each Monday until fall for testing.

If you hear the up-and-down warbling tone from the sirens — except during the weekly test — that means take cover. A steady

tone means things are all clear.

The county has seven sirens, including one each in Jennings, Dresden and Norcatour. There are four storm sirens in Oberlin, by The Gateway, by the hospital, at the ball field and downtown.