



Children look for goodies

GETTING CANDY out of the high grass in City Park was serious business Saturday for Cheyanna Hale (above), daughter of Byron and Jean Hale. Morgan Jones (right) got some help from her mom, Leslie Jones, to find the elusive sweets. The girls were part of the first wave of candy seekers, children 2 and under. Then, after the ground was resown with goodies, the youngsters 3-4 years old, 4-6 and 7-8 got their chance in turn.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



Firm seeks school head for Oberlin

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

A handful of people met Thursday night to discuss characteristics they'd like to see in the next superintendent of the Oberlin School District and what this area has to offer that person.

Charles Mansfield with McPherson and Jacobson, a Nebraska consulting firm hired to help with the search, said this information helps his firm when they look at the job applications and do the background checks to find a good match for the district.

He said part of the interview process, scheduled for May, will be for the candidates to sit down with a group from the community and just get to know each other. Basically, said Mr. Mansfield, the candidates are selling themselves and the community members are selling the area.

He said at the end of the interviews, people will be asked to answer two questions on a form and those forms will go to Oberlin School Board members. The board will look at the forms after they interview the candidates.

This isn't to rate the candidates, said Mr. Mansfield, but it just gives the school board a little feedback.

He told the group of about 10 people at the meeting if they were free on the interview days to let him know and they could serve on the community committee.

Mr. Mansfield said he had three questions he wanted to ask the group and then open up the floor after each one. The answers were jotted down to be used during the process. He said he met with the teachers and staffs earlier that day.

The first part of the evening, said Mr. Mansfield, is to brag a little about the district and the community. What can they tell the candidates and the board? he asked. Answers included:

- Students get a great education here and end up with jobs anywhere in the world they want to go, said Dr. Mark Olson.
- There's a wide breadth of activities here for students, which gives them the confidence to do anything they want to do, said Dan Nedland.
- We have a good health care system, said Ralph Unger.
- It's inexpensive to relocate here, said Mr. Nedland.

Jobs might be joined

About 10 people talked with the consulting firm helping the Oberlin School Board look for a new superintendent last Thursday about possibly consolidating the position with a principal's job.

Dan Nedland, who was elected last week as a new board member, said he wanted to know about consolidating the superintendent's position and a principal's job like districts had done in Atwood and Hoxie. It would be interesting for the community to know how many schools have consolidated the two spots and how successful those schools have been with that, he said.

With the district reducing the teaching force, said Colleen Rittmann, the superintendent might need to know how to do dual jobs.

Consultant Charles Mansfield said his firm, McPherson and Jacobson, is aware that some school districts have a superintendent who is also a principal. Other districts share a superintendent, he said. He said he didn't have any numbers, but he might be able to get some.

Although the information would be interesting, said Mr. Nedland, the Oberlin district may be too big to share a superintendent.

Mr. Mansfield agreed, saying it's mostly smaller Class I A schools that are sharing superintendents. That's not normal for a district this size, he said, noting that Oberlin is a Class 3A district with a total of 422 students this year.

• The schools have a strong fine arts program, including music and (See CONSULTANT on Page 5A)

Business group agrees to seek student essays

The Oberlin Business Alliance agreed last Wednesday to ask students at the Oberlin Elementary School to write essays nominating their parents for mother or father of the year again this year.

The alliance started the contest last year for Mother's Day and Father's Day. A committee picked the winning essay for each day, and that student's family won dinner and a night's stay at the LandMark Inn.

Laurie Wasson, owner of Prairie Petals, said she likes the idea, but thought maybe they could have options for prizes. Last year, she said, one of the winners didn't ever use the gift certificate.

The alliance decided to give a gift certificate for dinner for two at the LandMark Inn or a \$50 certificate good for any alliance business.

All essays need to be turned in by

Friday, April 27. If a student wants to write an essay about their mother and one about their father, they need to be on separate pieces of paper, said Glenva Nichols, Chamber of Commerce manager.

The alliance decided to donate the Christmas decorations, including the wreaths on the highways, the garland downtown and other items that decorate Oberlin each year, to the city. Although the city will own the decorations, the alliance will continue to take care of them.

City Administrator Gary Shike said it would be a good idea for the city to own the decorations in case of damage from bad weather. The wreaths were damaged in a bad storm over a year ago and although the city applied for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (See CITY on Page 5A)

Highway program, project near ends

The Kansas Department of Transportation's 10-year maintenance and construction plan will come to a close soon, but not before a major highway project in Norton County and several maintenance projects in the area are done.

Kristen Brands, district public affairs manager in Norton, said a two-year rebuilding of U.S. 36 in Norton County is in its second year. The \$17 million project will be finished by fiscal year 2009, when the 10-year program is up, she said.

Mrs. Brands said once the current program is up they aren't sure what will happen with road work, as it will depend on the money that comes out

of the state Legislature.

She said the department has started a long-range transportation planning effort. Last fall, said Mrs. Brands, they went to the citizens and their elected leaders and asked them what they thought road priorities were in their counties. She said they went to the 18 counties in the district and met with city councils, county commissioners and others.

Before the new plan can begin, the department will finish what's in this 10-year program, she said, including road maintenance.

Mrs. Brands said U.S. 83 will get a one-inch asphalt overlay starting at the south city limits and going

eight miles south. That work will be done this summer by Venture Corp. of Great Bend, although a start date hasn't been set.

While the work is getting done, people will probably follow a pilot car through the work area, since there will be one-lane traffic at most places.

Mrs. Brands said the department hopes people will drive safely through the road work.

The bridge just east of Oberlin, by the turn-off to the Country Club, will be resurfaced this spring, she said. The anticipated start day is May 1, said Mrs. Brands, but that's tentative. The bridge will have a traffic

signal and there may be some wait time. She said the bridge will stay open to traffic.

On U.S. 36 in Rawlins County, 13 miles of the highway west of Atwood to the county line will get an overlay by Venture Corp., she said.

Mrs. Brands said the department has also scheduled a 1 1/2-inch overlay from the U.S. 24 junction on U.S. 83 south toward Oakley for eight miles.

On K-383, she said, three sections from the Thomas County line through Selden to Jennings will receive an overlay sometime this summer from Venture Corp.

Commissioners canvass election ballots

The Decatur County commissioners canvassed the vote from Tuesday's school and city elections Friday morning, finding nothing to correct before the vote is certified to the state.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who serves as the county election officer, told the commissioners how the general election last Tuesday went for the county.

She said they had four polling places, one in each city, with all voters able to use either a voting ma-

chine or paper ballots.

The ballots, prepared by Lockwood printers, could be run through the voting machines or be filled in with blue pen.

They were hand counted by counting boards made up of election workers.

All of the results, she said, were in by 8:30 p.m., and the workers able to go home an hour later.

Mrs. Horn said the voter turnout was good, with 47 out of the 66 voters in Norcatour turning out, 32 out

of 54 in Jennings, and 36 out of 41 in Dresden. In Oberlin, the turnout was 33 percent, making the turnout for the county 38 percent.

The county had three provisional ballots in Norcatour, for Norton County voters.

The Norton County Clerk called and said those ballots couldn't be counted for the Oberlin School District and they were deleted from the totals.

Mrs. Horn said there were a few people who had not re-registered and

came to The Gateway to vote, but weren't able to.

Mrs. Horn said she delivered the machines to each of the three small-town polling places and did some training.

Election workers brought the machines back to the courthouse with the ballots.

She said they had six workers call in sick the day of the election and had to make some last-minute phone calls. She said they've never had that many people call in sick on one day.

Spring sports section in this week's edition

The annual Spring Sports section is inside today's issue of *The Oberlin Herald*.

The section includes pictures and information about track and golf team members at Decatur Community High School and also team photos from the junior high school here and Golden Plains High School.

Spring Sports '07
Senior Community High School - Golden Plains High School

