

Child advocates needed

A representative with Court Appointed Special Advocates, which helps children dealing with the courts, asked Decatur County commissioners for \$1,000 for the next budget year, plus a few volunteers. Krystal Stanton of Osborne, office manager with the organization, and Sara Coiner of Jennings, who sits on the group's board, talked with the commissioners at the meeting Tuesday, April 16.

The county generally gives \$1,000 to the group, called CASA, each year. Ms. Stanton asked for the same amount for next year. Commissioner Ralph Unger said the commissioners would put the request with the others they have and look at them this summer when they work on the 2008 budget.

The organization, said Ms. Stanton, is getting stronger as it marks its 15th year of service. She said although Mrs. Coiner just joined the board, they have open positions if anyone wants to help.

Last year in Decatur County, said Ms. Stanton, the courts handled cases of 38 kids in need of care. Ms. Stanton said the average number in a year is 17 to 18 kids, so the number is up. That number could be attributed to large family groups or people being more aware of child abuse, she said.

Would the high number have anything to do with the old Sappa Valley Youth Ranch? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger. No, Ms. Stanton said, not unless the kids at the ranch were originally from here. The kids in need of care normally are counted in their home county, where the case is taken, she said.

Ms. Stanton said the organization needs to get more volunteers trained and certified so they are ready to help kids. She said they just recruited new volunteers in Norton and Phillipsburg.

How are kids recommended to the program? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown. They come through the court system, Ms. Stanton said. They come in at no fault of their own, these are abused or neglected kids.

So the organization, with the volunteers, tries to keep the kids out of the system? Mr. Brown asked.

Yes, said Ms. Stanton. Each volunteer does 30 hours of training, goes through a background check and has to be certified through the state.

Mrs. Coiner said she would be more than willing to be a volunteer if someone wants to take her place on the board.

Is there a program that helps attract new volunteers? asked Mr. Brown. A lot of it is talking to civic organizations and advertising, said Ms. Stanton, but the organization needs money to pay for the ads. The program for civic groups is 15 to 30 minutes long, she said.

The volunteers, said Ms. Stanton, are basically advocates for the kids they help. When a volunteer first is assigned to a case, she said, they basically do their own investigation.

The court system wants another viewpoint, she said, but at the same time, the volunteer gets to know the child. It's sad that in this county there were 38 children in the courts, said Mr. Brown, but it doesn't sound like there were enough volunteers to be advocates for all of them.

Ms. Stanton said anyone who wants to be a volunteer, or any group that would like to see the program, should call her at (785) 345-4120.



ELEPHANT ROCK, a mile south of Traer, lost the part that resembled the head and trunk sometime Friday night. A large rock (above) which use to be the body of the elephant (below) is all that is left.

— Herald staff photo by Dave Bergling

* Rock falls apart

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Over the last few years, said Mr. Wesch, the rock has deteriorated a lot. Nature made the rock, he said, and the story goes that nature would destroy it.

Indians, frontier scouts, explorers and cattle drovers used the formation as a landmark while traveling across the prairie. Buffalo Bill Cody claimed to have hidden in the hole which formed the elephant's legs, and even today, people who get directions to Traer use the rock to help them see which way to go.

The rock resembled an elephant mainly because of the hole through the outcrop forming the legs.

A 1979 article in *The Oberlin Herald* said the rock served as an important landmark for early-day military expeditions, surveyors and cattle drives from Texas to Nebraska. It was the site of at least one



skirmish in the Indian wars.

"During the Carr Expedition in 1869, troopers sighted a group of Indians five miles east of Elephant Rock and pursued them to the vicinity of rocks, where a fierce battle took place. Twenty-five Indians were killed, 50 wounded and three soldiers died," the article said.

The first Texas cattle trails to Ogallala, Neb., crossed the Beaver Creek 12 miles east of the rock. That often meant 5,000 cattle in a single drive.

The second Texas cattle trail from Texas passed between Herndon and the rock, through "Pony Draw" and

into Culbertson, Neb., ending in Ogallala. With the cattle going through that area, homesteaders were also able to pick up cow chips for fuel, historians said.

The rock hasn't only been a landmark, but a refuge. Buffalo Bill, acting as a scout, and Maj. Frank North reported being jumped by Indians west of the rock. The men reportedly waited in the hole until troops arrived.

To get to the rock, take U.S. 36, go five miles west of Oberlin to the Traer Road. Go north seven miles, then two west to the town of Traer. From Traer, take the only road south for about a mile. The rock sits on private property to the west.

Mr. Wesch said this week he plans to head up the hill to Elephant Rock to inspect the damage.

Bridge east of town to get deck overlay

Anyone traveling east of Oberlin on U.S. 36 can expect delays at the bridge over Sappa Creek while the Kansas Department of Transportation puts an overlay on the deck.

The work by Bridges Inc. of Newton will take about two months, starting as early as Monday, said Travis Scott, a construction engineer for the department.

The job includes repairs to abutments at both ends of the bridge and a polymer concrete overlay on the deck to repair cracks.

A traffic light, determined by traf-

fic and time, will control passage over the bridge, as only one lane of vehicles will be allowed through at a time.

"The wait will be very minimal," said Mr. Scott, "a couple of minutes."

The project cost is estimated at \$340,935 as part of the department's 10-year plan.

Internet Tonight!
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N-O-T-I-C-E

All flowers and decorations at the Oberlin Cemetery must be removed before Thursday, May 10. After that the city will remove them in preparation for mowing and weed eating.

Please allow 14 days for mowing and weed eating before placing flowers



UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

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Wichita River Festival
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Square Fair Crafts Festival
May 12. Annual Craft Festival. Over 100 exhibitors, food vendors, Quilt Show, entertainment. Something for the whole family! Street Dance 7-11 p.m. Garnett, KS.

Wild About Moms!
May 12-13. Celebrate Mother's Day - quilt show plus free shortcake and geranium! Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure in Salina. 785-827-9488, www.rollinghillswildlife.com.

Abdallah Shrine Rodeo
May 24-26. Wild West action with cowboys, broncs and bulls! Leavenworth County Fairgrounds in Tonganoxie, KS. 913-362-5300, www.shrineroдео.com.

Big Well-come Celebration
May 25-26. Rodeo, fashion show, crafters, reenactors, car show and dance in Greensburg, KS. 620-723-2400, www.bigwell.org.

Kurtis Arts Plaza Show
May 26. Master artwork on display. Mountain Oyster Cookoff. Acoustic Blues Festival. Sedan, KS. Jonesrealtyusa@yahoo.com.

Beef Empire Days
May 30-June 10. The original celebration of the beef and cattle feeding industries! Garden City, KS. 620-275-6807, beefempiredays@gcnet.com or www.beefempiredays.com.

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* Plan for county emergencies 'in the works'

(Continued from Page 1A)

McEvoy. Mr. Cool said they haven't had an exercise. The group talked about doing some mock drills so everyone knows what to do.

What about with a biohazard disaster? asked Mr. McEvoy.

Mr. Cool said with biohazard, all of the roads in a five-mile radius have to be blocked. The county doesn't have the manpower for that, he said.

The county better find out how those roads are going to get blocked, said Mr. McEvoy. Mr. Cool said possibly he could use the road and bridge crew.

The county has to have a plan in place and know that it works, said Mr. McEvoy. What's the chain of command? he asked.

Mr. Cool said Sheriff Ken Badsky would be the overall commander in an emergency. Fire Chief Bill Cathcart would be charge of fire stuff, Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin in charge of the medical field and Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman in charge of equipment.

Have you met with the hospital and school to go over their plans and the county's plan? asked Mr. McEvoy. Mr. Cool said as far as he is concerned, Ms. Gamblin is in charge of the health department and hospital. She is the go between. Is Deputy Skubal up to speed so if you aren't available she can run things? asked Mr. McEvoy. Mr. Cool noted that the plan is on her computer.

Mr. Cool said he received \$10,000 for homeland security. He said he had a request from the City of Norcatar for a generator and would like to accommodate them, but the one they want costs \$16,000.

Mr. Cool said he didn't think they

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with the emergency preparedness director about the emergency plan for the county, required by state and federal law, of which they haven't seen a copy. Story on Page 1A.

- Talked with a member of the Tripple Creek Riders about getting electricity from near the train tracks at the fair grounds to the horse arena. Story to come.

- Canceled a road-closing hearing for a road between sections 3 and 4 in Sherman Township after all involved hadn't received notice. Story on Page 3A.

needed a generator that big.

How much was the one for Jennings? asked Commissioner McEvoy. Mr. Cool said it cost \$14,000. He said he would like to send another electrician to Norcatar to see what size generator they need.

The lights, deep freeze, stove and refrigerators don't all have to run at one time, said Mr. Cool.

Where is the shelter in Norcatar, at the high school? asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch. The last time the City of Norcatar sheltered anyone, he said, it was in the Methodist Church. Isn't that part of the county plan? asked Mr. Hirsch. Mr. Cool didn't say.

Homeland Security, noted Mr. Cool, won't buy blankets or pillows for shelters.

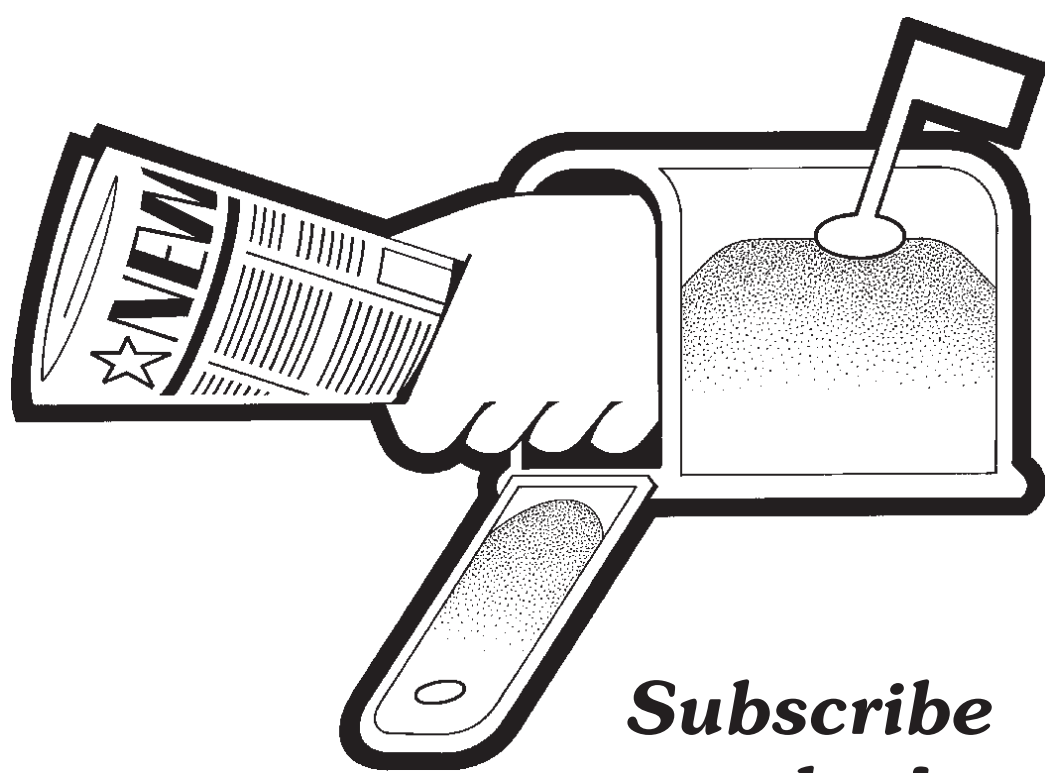
Birdhouses to help museum

Stanley Hardware is handing out birdhouses for people to put together and decorate for a fund-raising auction to benefit the county museum at the end of the month.

The birdhouse kits can be picked up during business hours at the store. Stanley purchased the 45 bird-

houses and is giving them out free of charge. Owner Joe Stanley said there are a few houses left. Anyone who has picked up a birdhouse should bring them back to the store by Tuesday, May 15. The auction is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 26, in front of the store.

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