

# Ethanol meeting to explain process using plant waste

Anyone interested in learning about cellulosic ethanol, a process that makes alcohol for fuel from plant waste, not grain, is invited to a public meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at The Gateway.

Connie Grafel, marketing director with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said many people are familiar with ethanol made from corn, but the high price of corn could cause problems.

Ms. Grafel said she wrote the Kansas Wheat Commission about cellulosic ethanol, which is made from existing agricultural residue like wheat, rice, barley straw, corn stover, sugarcane bagasse and switchgrass. She said Sam Willcoxon, a Decatur Community High School graduate, is interested in ethanol and farming.

An ethanol plant in the area isn't something that can just happen right away, said Ms. Grafel, but the long process has to start now. First, said Ms. Grafel, the development group needs to find out if people in the county are interested in cellulosic ethanol.

Ms. Grafel said she received a response from the wheat commission, which said they would send a rep-

resentative here to answer questions. The commission also sent out information, she said, including some talking points.

One notes that the U.S. Department of Energy is providing grants to build the nation's first three commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol plants. Ms. Grafel said Junction City already has some companies and the legislature has given both the University of Kansas and Kansas State University money for research and development.

Maybe if people in Decatur County show a little interest, she said, the existing companies will take notice, then they will do some field trials here. She said she has read that you can't haul the feed stock more than 50 miles and still make a profit.

With ecofallow practices, said Ms. Grafel, farmers are asking if they should consider ethanol, since usually they leave crop residue like straw on the fields and with this process, they are being asked to take it off.

Ms. Grafel said she would like many farmers and other people interested in the process to show up for the public meeting, get information and ask questions.



**JUST OFF OF U.S. 36** five miles west of Oberlin, Diana Steinmetz's first grade class (above) played around the silhouette of a cowboy driving longhorn cattle the week before

school was out. Kyleana Blau (below) peeked through a hole in the silhouette.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

# Oberlin schools lose councilor, only band teacher

The Oberlin School District has two more spots to fill in the teaching staff for next year if the board accepts resignations from the district's only band teacher and a high school counselor-junior high English teacher next week.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said the last day to turn in letters of resignation was Tuesday, May 15, the day after the May board meeting. The district received two, from Christie Morris, band teacher at the grade and high school, and from Nita Lavielle, high school counse-

lor and English teacher.

The board, said Dr. Glodt, will look at the resignations at the June meeting. He said he talked to both teachers to get permission to advertise to fill the positions, which the district is doing, but the resignations haven't been accepted yet.

Normally, said Dr. Glodt, they look first inside the district to see if anyone is interested in the positions, then start to look elsewhere. He said the principals and board can look at district applicants with any out-of-district applicants at the same time.

# City approves pay for summer help

The Oberlin City Council approved pay rates for several temporary seasonal workers and other employees at a meeting Thursday, May 17.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he has the authority to hire the people, but the council has to approve the pay rates.

The council approved all of Mr. Shike's suggestions, which included:

- Rusty Grafel, pool manager, at \$8.50 an hour.
- Audra Garst, city crew, \$7 hour.
- Melvin Martin, street department, \$8.50 an hour.

- Delbert Bruning, to mow Sappa Park seasonally, at \$9.50 an hour.
- Dave Orr, kitchen staff, at \$6.50 an hour.

For all other first-time workers for the pool or summer employees, \$5.15 an hour, and an additional \$.25 an hour for each year worked.

Councilwoman Rhonda May asked who Mr. Grafel reports to. Mr. Shike said to him. She asked if he could talk to him about running a tighter ship this year. For example, she said, if a lifeguard is on the chair, they shouldn't be talking to their friends on the deck, but watching the pool.



# Commissioners buy new furnace, air conditioning unit from local firm

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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After some discussion and several phone calls, Decatur County commissioners accepted the low bid on a new furnace and air conditioner for the health department office and clinic.

At the meeting Tuesday, May 15 Health Administrator Marilyn

Gamblin said she contacted Hansen's Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning, Fidele Electric and Woodcrafting and R&M Service Center for bids on the project. Only the first two returned bids.

From Hansen, the commissioners received four bids. The first was for a three-phase air conditioning system for \$2,866, the second for a

three-phase furnace and air conditioner for \$4,693, the third for a single-phase air conditioner only for \$2,976 and the last for a single-phase furnace and air conditioner for \$4,803.

From Fidele, the commissioners received two bids for an air conditioner only for \$2,171 or a furnace and air conditioner for \$3,506. The

bids were good for either single or three-phase power. All of the unit bids were from Lennox.

Marvin Hansen, owner of Hansen's, was at the meeting to answer questions. He said the county might want to go with a single-phase unit which could be run off a standby generator. Commissioner Ralph Unger said they needed to call Greg

Fidele and see if the electrical work was included in his bids. Reached by phone, Mr. Fidele said the electrical work wasn't included in his bids. That would cost an additional \$125, he said, bringing his two bids to \$2,296 and \$3,631.

The commissioners approved the low bid from Fidele. In other business, the commis-

sioners:

• Heard that the storm siren by the hospital isn't working. Fire Chief Bill Cathcart looked at it. She called Bert Cool, emergency preparedness director, who said he will have someone work on it.

• Heard that Ms. Gamblin has her department's bioterrorism trailer back with shelving in it.

## Shelli's Hair Design

is proud to announce that as of June 6, Shelby Brown will be joining our staff.

Please stop by and visit with her.

### Shelli's Hair Design

Shelli Fortin, Chris Dempewolf, Jane Carlisle, Shelby Brown  
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