

## Post office in Dresden may get closed

The U.S. Postal Service might close the post office in Dresden at the end of the month, leaving residents to travel to either Oberlin or Jennings to do business.

The Dresden Post Office received a notice last Tuesday stating the office would close, with the last day of business scheduled for Friday, June 29.

Lillian Sulzman, Dresden city clerk, said the post office has been open just two hours a day recently. The Postal Service said the shortened hours were due to lack of trained personnel, she said, although the residents

of Dresden don't agree.

"The U.S. Postal Authority," said Mrs. Sulzman, "did not offer any other options and did not allow much time for any solutions or responses. The closing will create an inconvenience and a hardship for the mostly elderly who compose the population of Dresden."

Dean Gawith, who retired from the postmaster position 19 years ago, said Mrs. Sulzman got a letter from Herb Swan from Omaha about the closing. Mr. Gawith said he didn't know anything about the closing

of the office before that.

The letter states that the postal service hasn't been able to find anyone to run the rural office. Currently the Dresden post office is open from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. daily. Mr. Gawith said Jeanette Krizek is running the office now.

If the office in town closes, said Mr. Gawith, all customers will have to put a box at their house so they can get mail on a rural route. People in town and the country have made it part of their daily routine to stop at the post office and get their mail, said Mr.

Gawith. They also sometimes get gas or go up to the elevator for coffee or to pick up supplies.

Mr. Swan, district review coordinator for the postal department, said at this time the post office will be suspended not closed. Presently the postal service can't find anyone to operate the office, which is only open two hours a day. The worker in the office now is going back to the Selden office, her home office, and will be helping out in Gem as well.

The postal department, said Mr. Swan,

canvassed all the offices in a 30-mile radius of Dresden and didn't find anyone else willing to work at the post office for two hours a day.

Normally, he said, when it is a small post office like Dresden, the postal department transfers from within instead of hiring someone else.

There is a full-time post office in Jennings, he said, which people can go to. It is open about eight hours a day. People should be able to do most of the same service. (See OFFICE on Page 10A)

## Bus company recognized by state award

Bus and Coach International of Jennings won a Kansas Department of Commerce business excellence award last week.

The business, which purchased the old Jennings School and remodeled it as its headquarters, held an open house in January just days before the big motor coach expo in New Orleans.

BCI was nominated for the award by the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Economic Development Corp., said Connie Grafel, marketing director.

Lois Heilman and Christie Niblock with BCI traveled to WaKeeney on Thursday to accept the award on behalf of the company. Connie Grafel, marketing director, and Bob Strevey, an economic development board member, also attended the ceremony.

Ms. Grafel said the board always tries to nominate a business from Decatur County. This year, she said, they nominated BCI because of the number of jobs the firm brought to the county and its vision for the future of this region.

BCI won a business excellence award under the manufacturing/distribution category.

Information provided at the ceremony said that the company is one of five major manufacturers and distributors of new buses and motor coach vehicles in the nation.

"Once completed, its Jennings headquarters will house a centralized parts warehouse, a national sales and distribution center, a national call center and a training facility for coach operators and their maintenance personnel operating BCI vehicles," the citation said.

The information said that the company is establishing an internship program with area high schools, technical schools and community colleges. The firm has provided its building for community activities and events and has a backup generator that can be used in case of an emergency to provide power to Jennings and surrounding communities.

Larry Brennan, vice president, could not be reached for comment.

## Hail storm destroys buildings and more almost 50 years ago

By MARY LOU OLSON

A hail storm struck the Selden area June 3, 1959, almost 50 years ago, and blocked streets, closed stores and collapsed buildings. Authorities brought in the Kansas Highway Patrol, National Guard and police from nearby cities for protection.

"Phenomenal" was the way Thelma Fowler, a reporter for *The Selden Advocate*, described the "winter blizzard," which left hail piles two to three feet deep.

People had to dodge falling roofs,

nails and glass under the ice and be on guard against pilfering.

Steve Carman of Selden, a retired banker and insurance agent, said he was still in high school the year the hail came. He said Jim Stewart and Dick Friendly were knocked into the bank building by the hail, then called his father, Carol Carman, who worked there, to find out how to get out.

"I remember wearing an army helmet while shoveling the hail from around our house to keep the (See STORM on Page 5A)

## Former banker remembered

Ray August Lohofener, 85, a banker for 30 years at Decatur County National Bank, died Sunday, June 17, 2007, at his home in Oberlin.

A native of Decatur County, he was an active part of the business community for many years. During World War II, he served with the United States Air Force as a pilot and was stationed in Panama City. He flew fighter aircraft and instructed replacement pilots.

After the war, he returned to Oberlin and worked with Bob Fraker at the Oberlin Airport for

four years. After his marriage to Phyllis Betts on Jan. 21, 1950, he began working at Lohofener Grain.

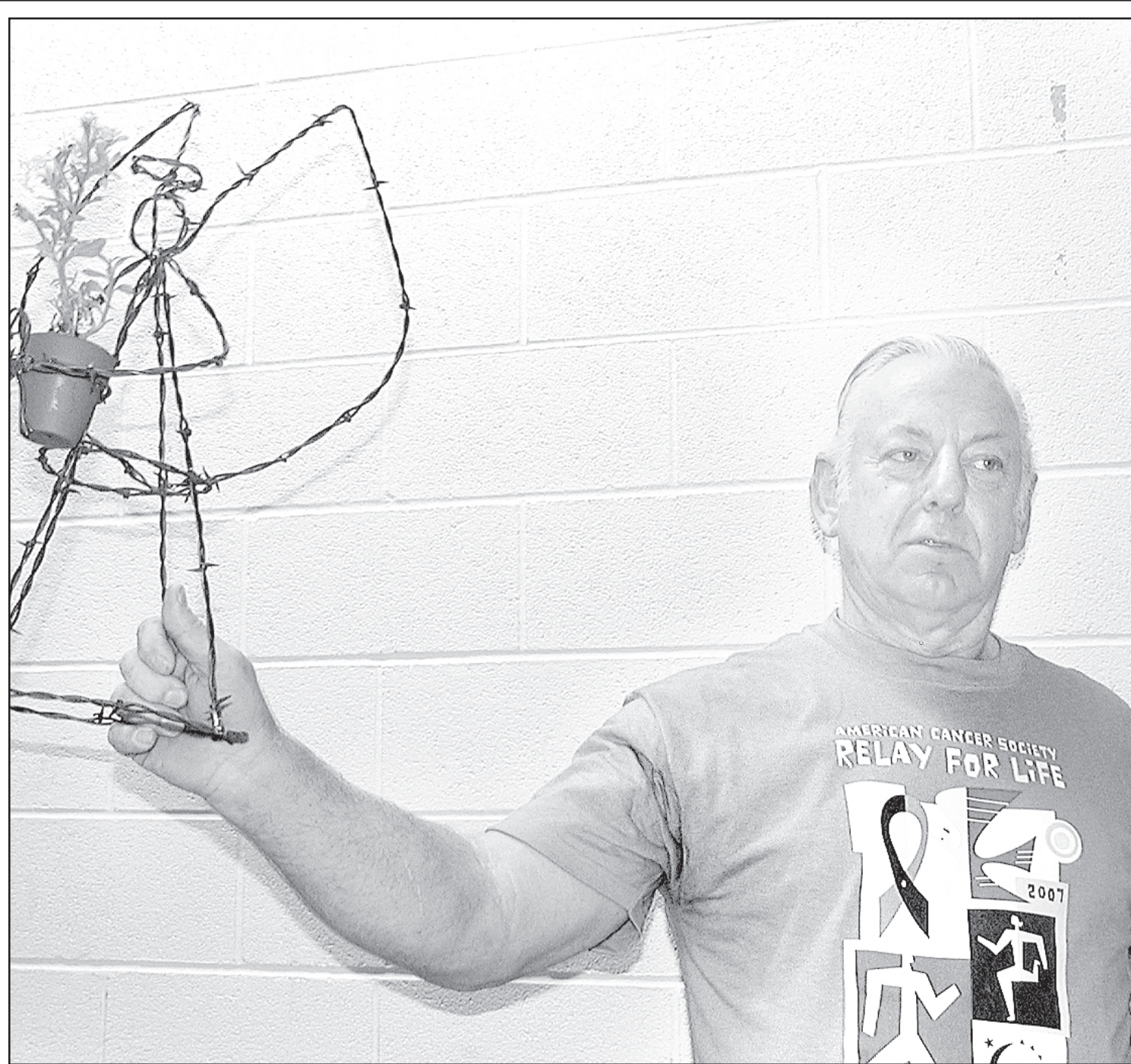
He later joined the Decatur County National Bank.

He served on the Oberlin City Council and Housing Authority and was a member of the Oberlin American Legion Post, Masons Lodge, Order of Eastern Star and Lions Club. He also ran for state representative twice.

He and his twin brother, Rex, were born Feb. 18, 1922, at the farm (See MAN on Page 10A)



Lohofener



## Cancer survivors celebrate

**AT THE RELAY FOR LIFE** Ralph Unger (above) held up a donated craft item that was auctioned off. Deb Helm and Gary Fredrickson (right) talked outside before survivors released balloons. The Relay, held Friday night at The Gateway, raised \$19,000 before expenses for the American Cancer Society. That is the largest amount the community has raised during the event.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



## Red thread connects Oberlin woman to her daughters and son

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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The Chinese have a saying that a red thread connects a child to their parents through eternity.

Jeanne Isbell says that red thread connected her to her two daughters and son long before she knew their names or saw their faces.

She said when she was 25, she asked her mother where all of the nice men were. Her mother told her the midwest, so she moved from southern California to Denver. She flew to Denver on a one-way ticket, she said, but was disappointed to see the skyscrapers of a growing city, although smaller than her previous

home.

She was hired by the Denver Police Department, worked as a civilian for three years and then joined the force. Ms. Isbell said she stayed on the job for 24 years, retiring in 2006 as a patrol officer. She had worked for 12 years as a training officer.

About eight years ago, she said, she saw an ad in the *Rocky Mountain News* for crime-free living in Oberlin, and called real estate agent Roberta Johnson. She bought a home just outside of town, although she didn't actually move here until July 2006.

In that time, never having found

that perfect man, she realized that she still wanted to have a family and started the process of international adoption through Chinese Children Adoption International.

"Since adoption is quite expensive, I worked as much as six jobs at one time, 100 hours a week," said Ms. Isbell. "I didn't sleep much."

In 2001, she said, she started the process of getting a little girl from China.

In the middle of the paperwork and long hours, her agency told her that China had begun a quota system for single parent adoptions and she wasn't far enough along in the process. (See WOMAN on Page 10A)