

Annual tax sale includes house

Decatur County commissioners sold two items at the annual tax sale during their meeting last Tuesday, including a house in Oberlin and a mineral right.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch headed up the tax sale, which included a blue house on West Hall which formerly belonged to Ricky and Linda Chambers. The house sold for \$1 to ASC Towing and Repair, said Mr. Hirsch.

The county also sold a mineral right that had belonged to Henry Beardsley and Alice Taylor for \$5 to Maurice Schaller. That's in Sherman Township.

After looking in some government journals, the commissioners decided to write an ad for a full-time emergency management director. Currently the position is held by Bert Cool, a retired sheriff's deputy and former undersheriff, who works part-time as the director, part-time as a dispatcher and part-time as the county jailer. Deputy Patti Skubal serves part time as his assistant.

The application process will close on Monday, July 30.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said it is the county's practice to advertise for all openings in the county. An ad for the job is on Page 4B of today's paper.

The commissioners talked with Connie Grafel, city marketing and economic development director, about different ideas. She said the Economic Development Corp. is still working on the airport project, and she thought the meeting in Kansas City with the Federal Aviation

County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Congratulated the first couple to pay off a business micro loan through the county. Story at right.
- Sold two items in an annual tax sale at the courthouse. Story at left.
- Approved two bridge replacement proposals from Husker Steel. Story below.

Administration went well.

Mr. McEvoy asked what the consensus was on the cellulosic ethanol meeting. Still lots of questions to get answered, said Ms. Grafel, including the price a plant would pay for crop residue. At the meeting, she added, representatives said \$10 a ton. Ms. Grafel said farmers told her it's worth more than that on the ground.

A pilot project is getting started in York, Neb., she said, so it will be interesting to see what happens.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Presented Colleen Geishler, deputy clerk, with a certificate for 15 years of service.
- Sent a thank-you letter to the Book Binding Co. in Texas for finding more Decatur County history books and sending them here.

Highway group plans treasure hunt

By TOM PARKER

Washington County News

"It was like a dump truck full of cash come to town." That's how Carolyn Applegate, coordinator of the Great U.S. 36 Treasure Hunt, described last year's inaugural of the statewide yard sale.

Stretching from Colorado to the Missouri River, she said, it was a 399-mile shopping spree with bargains in every city, every town, even at lonesome intersections in the middle of nowhere and at isolated farms and houses.

"It was just mind boggling," said Paul Kallman of Scandia, a member of the U.S. Highway 36 Association. "We had people coming from all over the United States for this. "For being the first time, it was a huge success. Did we learn from it? Yes we did. Now we're hoping for bigger and better."

For this year, he said, sponsors are trying to get one coordinator in each county to help promote and grow the event. Republic County even has coordinators in each town along the route, Kallman said, which is more efficient. All 13 counties along the route are involved.

"We're working toward a common goal," he said.

The idea stemmed from a brainstorming session over ways to promote travel on Highway 36, he said. Someone suggested a garage sale like the World's Longest Yard Sale in Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky and others in the eastern and southern states. The idea caught on, but the concept of a yard sale sounded too mundane, so they chose to call it a treasure hunt.

This year's Treasure Hunt will be Friday through Sunday, Sept. 14-16. Coordinators are encouraging as many people as possible to either set up and sell along the route or enjoy a weekend of bargain hunting along U.S. 36. For more information, call the U.S. 36 office at (785) 282-3548 or visit the Web site at www.us hwy36.com.

To help with promotion of the event, the Washington County News is putting together the first "treasure map," the official guide sanctioned by the U.S. Highway 36 Association. The guide will have maps of every town along the route, bringing attention to local businesses and services for the thousands of shoppers the treasure hunt will entice.

Ads and maps for individual garage sales will be included in the treasure map. Sales people have been out selling ads for the treasure map, which will be printed after a July 15 ad deadline and distributed after Aug. 1 by mail nationally and along the route to help people plan their weekend. Part of the proceeds will go to the U.S. Highway 36 Association to help promote the event in future years.

Call (785) 325-2219 and talk to Carol or Susan to be included in this new product.

"I think the travel guide will go over very well," Kallman said.



AT BUS AND COACH INTERNATIONAL, Congressman Jerry Moran talked with Lois Heilman after a tour of the headquarters in Jennings. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

* Rep. Moran tours plant

(Continued from Page 1A) eteria doesn't have a cook, and Congressman Moran asked if it would be open to the public. Mrs. Heilman said she wasn't sure.

What is the firm's biggest challenge? he asked. Probably finding workers, general laborers, said Mrs. Heilman.

The two talked about communications technology serving the town, including fiber-optic lines. It seems in rural America, in order to have a future, said Congressman Moran, it has to do with technology.

What does the community think about all this? he asked. Mrs. Heilman said she thought people were happy that the building isn't deteriorating.

As they walked up the stairs to see the offices and conference room, he said, there are lots of unique things happening in Kansas, but the bus

firm is one of the most unique.

Downstairs, Rep. Moran met Joe Barron in the technology department who said he moved to Jennings from California three years ago. He said he and his family love the rural setting.

It means a lot of hear that this is a desirable place to live, said Congressman Moran. That is something that people sometimes forget.

Mr. Barron said he has four children and his wife just started working in Oberlin.

"Thanks for increasing the school's enrollment," Mr. Moran said with a smile.

Down the hall, in the old gym, said Mrs. Heilman, is a project they are working on now. She said they pulled up the old floor and now are pouring concrete for a shop. Pieces of the old floor went to the Czech Museum in Jennings.

"This is just a great story," said Congressman Moran.

Did the firm have a plan when they moved into Jennings? he asked. Yes, said Mrs. Heilman, but the original plan was to use the gym as a showroom. Then, she said, they found that they couldn't build a shop as fast they could replace the floor.

Does the company just sell new buses? he asked. They sell new buses, built in China, she said, and have plans to refurbish trade-ins.

Is there lots of competition? asked Congressman Moran. There are four other bus makers, she said, and BCI made the fifth.

This seems to be an example of something good coming out of something bad for a community, the closing of the school, said Congressman Moran.

"I wish BCI the best of luck," he said.

Fire crew gets training grant

By JAN KATZ ACKERMAN
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

The Sheridan County Fire Department has received a grant to provide online training for the next year from Target Safety, a San Diego business that since 1999 has provided training, services and applications for fire fighters.

"This is another tool to train our fire fighters to make them both proficient and safe," Fire Chief Ross

Carder said. "We appreciate Target Safety's most generous grant."

The department won a one-year online training program which will allow the 40 volunteer fire fighters in Hoxie, Menlo and Seldento study at no cost. Target Safety will track all training records for its 180 online courses, which include terrorism, emergency medical service, driving safety, human resources, safety and health, homeland security, fires,

hazardous materials and officer training.

The award is part of Target Safety's work with the volunteer chiefs' section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Steve Hirsch of Oberlin, Sheridan County Fire Department's training officer, filed the grant application and will help Carder oversee the program.

Herndon man hit by semi crossing highway

An 82-year-old Herndon man riding a four-wheeler a mile and a half south of Herndon on K-117 Thursday morning was injured when it was struck by a semi trailer rig.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that Donald Grafel was on a 1991 Honda four-wheeler when he went to cross the highway in front of a 1998 Freightliner driven by

William Longshore, 68, of Balko, Okla.

Mr. Longshore was driving north on the highway, the patrol said. Both the four wheeler and the truck came to a stop in the east ditch.

Mr. Longshore was unhurt. Mr. Grafel was taken to the Decatur County Hospital by the Rawlins County ambulance, then later flown to Good Samaritan Hospital in

Kearney, Neb.

His family reported that he suffered shoulder injuries, as well as broken ribs, abrasions and bruises.

According to the accident report, Mr. Grafel was wearing eye protection.



County contracts for bridges

Decatur County Commissioners approved two bridge replacement proposals from Husker Steel at their meeting last Tuesday, one about 13 miles south and two miles east of Oberlin for \$61,730 and the second about 10 miles north and two west of town for \$67,730.

Tim Stallman, road and bridge director, said both of the bridges will be 40 feet long.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy asked if the bridges were on township roads. Both are, said Mr. Stallman, but the county does the work on bridges over 25 feet under the state plan. Culverts six feet and longer also fall under that plan, he said.

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested the commissioners go out and look at one of the bridges sometime.

The county crew, said Mr. Stallman, will get the sites ready, tearing out the old structures, and then Husker will send a crew to put the new bridges in.

So far, he said, the county has replaced nine bridges with the firm. These are the only two scheduled for this year on the county plan.

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County replacing sprinkler

Decatur County commissioners approved a contract with Total Turf of McCook to install new lines and heads for the sprinkler system on the courthouse lawn.

Custodian Bob Berls said at the meeting Tuesday, June 26, that he called the firm to get information about a sprinkler system.

He said the company representative said they won't get water on the courthouse as happens now unless there is a strong wind. The new lines will get water on the grass that isn't being watered now, he said.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said the county received a letter from the City of Oberlin requesting \$2,000 for pool maintenance again this year. After some research, she said the county did give \$2,000 in 2005. The commissioners said they thought that was a one-time donation for a new pool and asked Mrs. Horn to call the city to let them know that.

In other business, the commissioners:

• Heard the annual tax sale was set for 10 a.m. Tuesday at the courthouse.

• Heard that Edgerton Auto had made the final payment on a Community Development Block Grant micro loan.

• Talked to Ambulance Director Linda Manning, who praised the fire department for a successful rescue at the Hansen-Mueller elevator recently.

• Presented certificates to Gaylen Huntley, county weed director, and Peggy Gassman, in the appraiser's office, for 20 years of service and Jackie Lafferty, with the treasurer's office for five years.

Couple first to pay county loan

The Decatur County Commissioners, marketing director and the president of The Bank congratulated the first couple to pay off a county business microloan last Tuesday.

Don and Lisa Edgerton, who own Edgerton Auto Repair east of town on U.S. 36, received a microloan in August 2002 through the county. The loan fund provides up to \$15,000 to people in the county starting or expanding a business. They then repay the money so it can be loaned back out.

The Edgertons were the first ones to complete the program, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, and the county appreciates that.

Mr. Unger asked if they were keeping busy. Mr. Edgerton said he has kept extremely busy fixing vehicles.

The commissioners gave the Edgertons a plaque of appreciation and served cake for the occasion.

The couple also received flowers. Mr. Edgerton said he probably works on 1,000 vehicles or more in a year.

He and his wife thanked the commissioners for the plaque.

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