

## Alumni push state listing for school

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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Members of the alumni association met with the Oberlin School Board last Monday to talk about placing the high school on the state historical registry.

The board had already directed the alumni to look into the process. By the end of the meeting, the board asked the group to continue to work on the process, but asked them to find out from the state Historical Society what the district can and can't do to

the front steps, which are deteriorating.

Rhonda May, a member of the association, showed a short presentation about the idea. She said the process takes about a year, which includes the preliminary site information questionnaire, research, having the information reviewed by the Historical Society, filling out the nomination form and finishing the process.

Other buildings in the area that might qualify, she said, from the same time era include the Oberlin Elementary School,

Decatur County Courthouse, the City Park band shell and the Sappa Park shelter house.

The Decatur Community High School Alumni Association would like to start with the high school, she said. The grade school is a great old building, but it isn't as significant as the high school, she said.

"It isn't as architecturally neat," said Ms. May, adding that the group had asked Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, to help. He already has the LandMark on the historical registry, she said.

The first step is to find out if the school board wants to proceed, she said, as the process takes about a year or longer.

Board Member Barb Olson said she worries about the safety of the front entrance. The board hoped to put a ramp from the door to the street to not only make the stairs safer, but allow wheel-chair access. That project has been put on hold with the registry idea, she said, but if the process takes a year or more, the front entrance can't be left the way (See ALUMNI on Page 5A)



## State working on road

### U.S. 83 getting plenty of repairs

By **STEVE HAYNES**  
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The Kansas Department of Transportation plans a lot of work this summer on U.S. 36 across northern Kansas, quite a bit of that around Oberlin.

By far the biggest project, engineers told members at the annual meeting of the U.S. 36 Highway Association last month in Mankato, is the new road now being finished between Norcatour and the K-383 junction west of Norton.

That project, classified as a "major modification" by the department, includes an all-new roadway for nine miles at a cost estimated at \$18.5 million, or just over \$2 million a mile.

The roadway features wide shoulders, gentle slopes and long sight distances for drivers. In fact, except for the railroad crossing at Reager, there's not a no-passing zone along the entire section. Fills, bridges and cuts with vertical walls smooth the way.

The new road replaces one built in the 1930s that had no shoulders, plenty of hills and lots of no-passing lines. It was, in fact, the last stretch of U.S. 36 in Kansas that lacked shoulders.

District Engineer Chriss McDiffett of Norton said the project should be done by fall, but the road has been open for several weeks. Crews are finishing grading and seeding and ripping out the old pavement and bridges.

Elsewhere along the road, crews are finishing an in-place recycle and overlay on the first 12.3 miles from Colorado to the Republican River bridge at St. Francis. The \$1 million job should be done by the end of the month, Mr. McDiffett said.

From Wheeler, east of St. Francis, to the Rawlins County line, the state plans to seal 16 miles of road later this summer. From the county line east to Beardsley, just west of the North Beaver Creek bridge, the road will be resurfaced next summer, probably with an asphalt overlay.

Earlier this year, contractors finished a recycle-and-overlay project from Beardsley to Atwood, using a new "ultrathin bonded asphalt overlay" known as Novachip. Ten miles cost nearly \$800,000.

In Atwood, the state and city plan to replace the broken concrete paving next summer. A contract for the .7-of-a-mile project will be let this fall.

East of Atwood to the county line, the pavement was rebuilt over the last five years, then sealed. From the (See ROAD on Page 5A)

## Crew hunting line leak

**AFTER USING** a backhoe to remove a five-foot mound of earth, three Oberlin city workers, (from left) Willard Perrin, Royal Fisher and Dave Sporn, grabbed shovels to find a water leak at Hall Street and Waldo Avenue at the southwest end of Chautauqua Park. The leak has been a continuing problem, City Administrator Gary Shike said. Two other holes, one in the street on Waldo, another on the parking along Hall, attest to the workers' continuing search for the source.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



## Crash north of town kills young businessman



**BRADY KOCH WORKED** at his computer earlier this year after starting his new business in Oberlin.

An accident around 2:20 p.m. last Wednesday claimed the life of a 24-year-old Oberlin businessman as he was returning home from McCook.

Sheriff Ken Badsy said Brady Koch was taken to the Decatur County Hospital by ambulance and later flown by helicopter to Kearney, Neb.. Mr. Koch, who had operated KochSystems, a computer graphics firm, in Oberlin since early this January, died at the Nebraska hospital, the sheriff said.

The sheriff said Mr. Koch was southbound in his 1999 Pontiac two-door north on U.S. 83 about nine miles north of Oberlin when he apparently crossed the centerline and sideswiped a 1998 Mack truck driven by Christopher Miller, 30, of

Lexington, Neb.

Sheriff Badsy said the Nebraska Byproducts truck ran over the top of the Pontiac and sent it airborne onto the west shoulder.

Mr. Koch had a dog in the vehicle with him, the sheriff said, and it apparently was ejected in the crash. The dog, which survived, was found that night near the crash site by family friends who had been out hunting for it.

Mr. Miller was not injured. His truck, the steering disabled by the crash, wound up in the west ditch about a mile north of the impact, scattering some of its contents in the ditch.

"He just kept coming farther and (See CRASH on Page 10A)

## Extension asks county about district

Members of the Decatur County Extension Council talked with county commissioners last Tuesday about setting up an extension district with another county or two.

The council members, including Ron Jansonius, Mike Coleman and Maurice Zadow plus Extension Agent Byron Hale and Chris Onstade, area director for K-State Research and Extension, were at the meeting to ask for money in the 2008 county budget. The county gave \$70,000 in 2007 to the extension office, although the group asked for \$74,600. This year the group asked for \$77,400.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said the commissioners normally take all of the money requests under advisement and look at them again during the budget process. He said they would do the same with this one.

It seems it is getting harder and harder to find money to make everything work, said Mr. Hale. The council has talked about forming an extension district and working with other counties, he said.

Mr. Onstade said a district combines two or more counties to make

things more efficient and also forms a taxing authority. For example, he said, Decatur and Norton counties could join. Each county could keep its own agents, but the district would have its own taxing authority.

In a district, he said, money would be provided for two agents. Currently, the extension office here gets money from Kansas State University for one agent, said Mr. Onstade.

The district would give the extension program extra money to work with in the budget, he said.

When a district is formed, Mr. Onstade said, four people are appointed by the commissioners from each county to sit on the board. Mr. Hale said the people from each county would elect representatives to sit on the board the same time as school board election. No one said how long the terms would be.

Currently, he said, there are four districts in northwest Kansas and seven in all of the state.

The board wanted to bring this idea up, said Mr. Hale, to see if the commissioners want them to check into forming a district. This is a long (See DISTRICT on Page 10A)

## Thief grabs purses from cars in town

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**  
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Someone stole credit cards and merchandise from at least four vehicles parked in Oberlin on Friday, but a good samaritan found and returned a billfold with \$120 to a visitor from California.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said all were on the west side of town. None of the vehicles was locked, he said, and the thief or thieves seemed to be after women's purses or similar bags.

Two credit cards were taken from a purse belonging to Amy Carman

sometime between 4:30 a.m. and 10:54 a.m. on Friday. The purse was in a Chevy van parked at the Carman home at 304 West Ash, near the grade school. A Toyota pickup belonging to Amy and her husband Kendal also had been entered, but nothing was taken, Chief Lockhart said.

Former Mayor Ken Shobe found a woman's billfold in the alley between his house and Sappa Valley Manor Apartments on Friday and turned it over to the police. It belonged to Heather Wessel and had (See THIEF on Page 10A)

## Garage sales on tap

People are busy cleaning out their closets, kitchens, basements and garages preparing for Oberlin's annual Community Wide Garage Sale, starting Friday.

The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce reports that 24 people have signed up for sales in Oberlin as of Monday. People can

pick up a map to find out where the sales are at the Chamber office between 9 a.m. and noon and 1 to 4 p.m. through Friday.

The sales start after 3 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. Saturday.



Inside today's edition of *The Oberlin Herald* is the Fair Days 2007 edition, which includes the schedule for the upcoming Decatur County Fair.

The fair starts Tuesday, Aug. 7, and goes to Saturday, Aug. 11. The section also includes stories about the swings at the home-owned carnival, about some of the activities at the fair and pictures from past fairs and carnivals.

## Sen. Roberts here Aug. 21

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, Aug. 21, to talk with U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts.

Sen. Roberts will meet with people here from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. that day in the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center on Main Street. The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce will provide refreshments.