

Water and electric rates will increase

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Oberlin residents will find their city bills going up in September as new, higher water and electric rates go into effect. Tax bills will go up, too, as the city's property tax levy goes up about 9 percent on payments due in December.

The Oberlin City Council agreed to raise rates for both utilities and to hike taxes after finishing budget workshops for next year on Thursday.

The minimum water bill should go up at

See Budget story on Page 3A

least \$6.50 per month, officials said, while power bills will increase about 8.5 percent.

City taxes will also go up next year, as the city budget increased the levy by 4.845 mills, which is expected to bring in almost \$24,000 next year.

The water rates will be going up to pay for a water treatment plant required by new federal standards. In order to get federal

money to build the plant, the city must raise rates an average of \$10.20 per customer per month.

The water plant will cost around \$4.3 million and 45 percent of that should be paid with a loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration. However, Oberlin has to raise rates and get state money to pay for the project.

"You'll need about \$245,000 additional revenue (per year) when all is said and done," said Chris Miller of Miller and Associates, the city's engineering firm.

Water bills are paid through meter charges and usage charges, he said, and he offered the council several possible rate increase scenarios — some with large increases in meter charges and some with big hikes in use fees.

Councilman Rob McFee said he felt hiking the usage charge would be more fair.

That way, he said, the person who uses more water pays more.

"You're gouging someone where they have no control — on the meter charge," he said.

Mayor Joe Stanley agreed. Mr. Miller said they were right, but noted that the meter charge is guaranteed. People pay a meter charge no matter how much water they use, he said, but when new rates go into effect, usage usually drops. (See RATES on Page 10A)



Airport plan turning heads in the capital

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

The chances of Oberlin getting a longer runway so jets can land at its airport get better every day, leaders say, as state and federal officials become more aware of the project.

The city has been looking to replace its runway with one that can grow to up to 7,000 feet so that corporate jets and larger aircraft could land in Oberlin instead of going to McCook.

The project was requested by Bus and Coach International, also called BCI, which purchased the Jennings school last year. The company has its own planes and wants to be able to bring customers and personnel into Oberlin and to ship parts out.

City Council members met with a state Department of Transportation official, a representative from Congressman Jerry Moran's office, its engineers, a Decatur County commissioner and several citizens Thursday morning at The Gateway to talk about the project.

Brad Weisenburger of Bucher,

Willis and Ratliff of Kansas City, Mo., the city's airport engineering firm, showed the group several options for rebuilding the old runway or building a new one.

The best option, he said, would avoid ravines and allow for easy buildout of a proposed 5,000-foot runway to 7,000 foot some day. The plans would not call for moving any buildings but would require the purchase of land to the northwest and closing a short road.

Larry Brennan, BCI vice president and manager in Jennings, asked about the alignment of the proposed runway, suggesting that it might be moved a little to avoid landing and taking off over the city. This would decrease noise problems, he said.

Mr. Weisenburger asked how difficult it would be to close a short stretch of road near the airport. Greg Lohofener of DFC Professional Financial Services, said that he is about the only one who uses that road and he wouldn't mind if it was

(See RUNWAY on Page 10A)

Water restrictions start as use soars above set trigger

With highs past the century mark, Oberlin is back on water restrictions.

Residents need to figure out what day it is before they water their lawns, wash their cars or fill their swimming pools.

Mayor Joe Stanley declared a Stage 2 water warning last Tuesday after the city had pumped more than 700,000 gallons in the previous 24 hours.

With more hot, dry weather in the forecast, the City Council agreed at a meeting last Thursday to pass a resolution backing up the mayor's declaration.

Rules for watering are the same as the city has had in previous years.

Residents living at odd-numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and those with even-numbered addresses can water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. No outside water use is allowed on Mondays.

Watering is restricted to the evening hours, from 8 p.m. to 9 a.m., since much of the water put out by a sprinkler on a hot day just evaporates.

Residents are asked to watch for water leaks and to try to keep from watering the streets and other areas

Council Roundup

At its meeting on Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Increased water and electric rates to help pay for a new water treatment plant and for upkeep of the city's electrical system and streets. Story above.

- Approved a 2008 city budget of \$4,826,800, up about \$738,000 from this year. Story on Page 3A.

- Learned that neighbors want to get rid of dilapidated and uninhabitable houses in town. Story to come.

- Held a public hearing on an almost \$2 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration to finance the water treatment plant. Story to come.

- Approved the mayor's decree for a Stage 2 water warning, putting the town back on an odd/even system of outside watering. Story at left.

where it will run off and be wasted. (See WATER on Page 10A)



Kids play at airport

FROGS DAY CAMP

participants sited the Oberlin Airport last Wednesday to learn about its history and future. At the same time, the kids enjoyed a lot of flight-themed activities. Jenna Long (above) held onto a kite which her group was flying. Nicky McDonald (below) worked on a paper airplane and Samaria Vilar (left) prepared a pop-bottle rocket.

— Herald staff photos

by Cynthia Haynes



Economic section inside

Inside today's edition of *The Oberlin Herald* is a section devoted to Economic Development in North-west Kansas.

The section, which tells of different ventures going on in the counties of this part of the state, also includes information about all of the economic development groups in the region. This is the first section on economic development of its kind. Reporters and editors for of NorWest Newspapers put together one joint news section a year.

Economic Development

Building a future on the Plains

For a Freshener Cleaner Home

THE OBERLIN HERALD

By: Bob Jones

Local Staff News

July 2007

TELEGRAM

July 2007

July 2007

Volunteers needed for carnival games

With only a week and a half left until the Decatur County Fair, it is time to sign up to work a game or ride for the homeowned carnival.

Starting Tuesday, Aug. 7, the carnival will open each night from 7 to 11 p.m. with rides, games and food. The carnival is run by the Decatur County Amusement Authority and numerous volunteers.

Vicky Ray, who serves on the authority, signs people up to work the majority of the events and rides. Some games and rides, she said, like the Kiddie Cars, basketball game,

the adult swings, Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, Twist-Over and a few are run each year by the same civic groups. Those groups take charge of finding people to work each night of the carnival, she said, and she doesn't have to worry about them.

Anyone who wants to volunteer for a game can call Ms. Ray at Ray Jewelry at 475-3351 or stop in and see her on Main Street.

The games being offered this year include:

- Baseball toss, where a person

- has three tries to knock three stacked bottles over.

- Birthday wheel, try to spin the wheel to land on the right month.

- Break a plate, try to break a plate with a ball.

- Bulls eye, try to throw a dart and hit the bulls eye.

- Duck pond, pick a duck and get the prize corresponding to the number on the bottom.

- High striker, use a mallet to test your strength.

- Lollipop tree, buy a lollipop, and if it has a colored stick win a prize.

- Ric-o-chet, a nickel game.

- Sinko, like bingo but with ping-pong balls.

- Soda can toss, toss bean bags at soda cans to knock them over.

- Tic-tac-toe, try to get three waffle balls in a row.

- Plinko, drop a disc down a board to win a prize.

- Basketball, try to make a basket, run by Norcatour Community.

- Miniature golf.

- Outhouse Alley, try to throw the ball in the toilet. (See WORKERS on Page 10A)