

Oberlin schools start early Friday

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Ready or not, it's here! Classes start bright and early Friday morning for the Oberlin School District. With the air conditioning units put in last summer, there won't be any heat schedule this year.

That means school starts at Oberlin Elementary School at 8:20 a.m. and gets out at 3:35 p.m. At Decatur Community High, the day starts at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.

The high school staff includes several new faces this year, some are new to the district and others are in new jobs. Carol Brown will teach Spanish after teaching kindergarten at the grade school. Joe Dreher has taken over as the athletic director, but will also continue to coach and teach gym.

New to the school are Debbie Arp, guidance counselor and at-risk teacher; Robyn Wessel, who will teach junior high English; and Sarah Reif, who will teach band at both schools, said Principal Charles Haag.

The biggest change at the grade school is

the switch to all-day kindergarten with two classes running all day, said Principal Duane Dorshorst. The school board decided to make the switch last year, he said.

Although there aren't any new faces outside the band room, a lot of teachers have changed jobs and grades. Diana Steinmetz, who taught first grade, moved to kindergarten; Sherri Ruf, who taught fourth grade, will move down to first, as will Cindy Sattler, who taught second grade; Tim Thornton, who taught fifth grade, will move to the other kindergarten room; and Kim-

berly Witt, who had been a paraprofessional, will teach fifth grade.

Twenty-seven kindergartners enrolled, said Mr. Dorshorst. Based on enrollment so far, he said, there will be two first-grade classes this year, one second, two in third, one fourth, two fifth and two sixth.

High School Principal Charles Haag said one of the big differences is that when the school board approved the handbooks in June, they added a "success academy" for students in the seventh through ninth grades. This program is designed to help kids stay

current in their homework, he said. It allows teachers to have a consistent way of doing things so students have a smoother transition from grade school. They are supposed to make sure each one does his homework and that students are prepared for class. If a student doesn't do something, he said, they will be held accountable immediately instead of a week or days later.

This year, juniors will be the first to see the effect of weighted classes, he said. Grades in trigonometry, statistics, physics (See SCHOOL on Page 8A)



AT THE LIVESTOCK BUILDING last week, Alexis Hissong (above left) and Rebecca Helm, 4-H members, and Kayla Zodrow (right), an FFA member, helped serve barbecued pork and beef at a fund raiser for the project. Michael Wasson (below left) and Clay Anderson, who spearheaded fund raising for the building, watched the beef/dairy show that morning.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Building dedicated at the fair

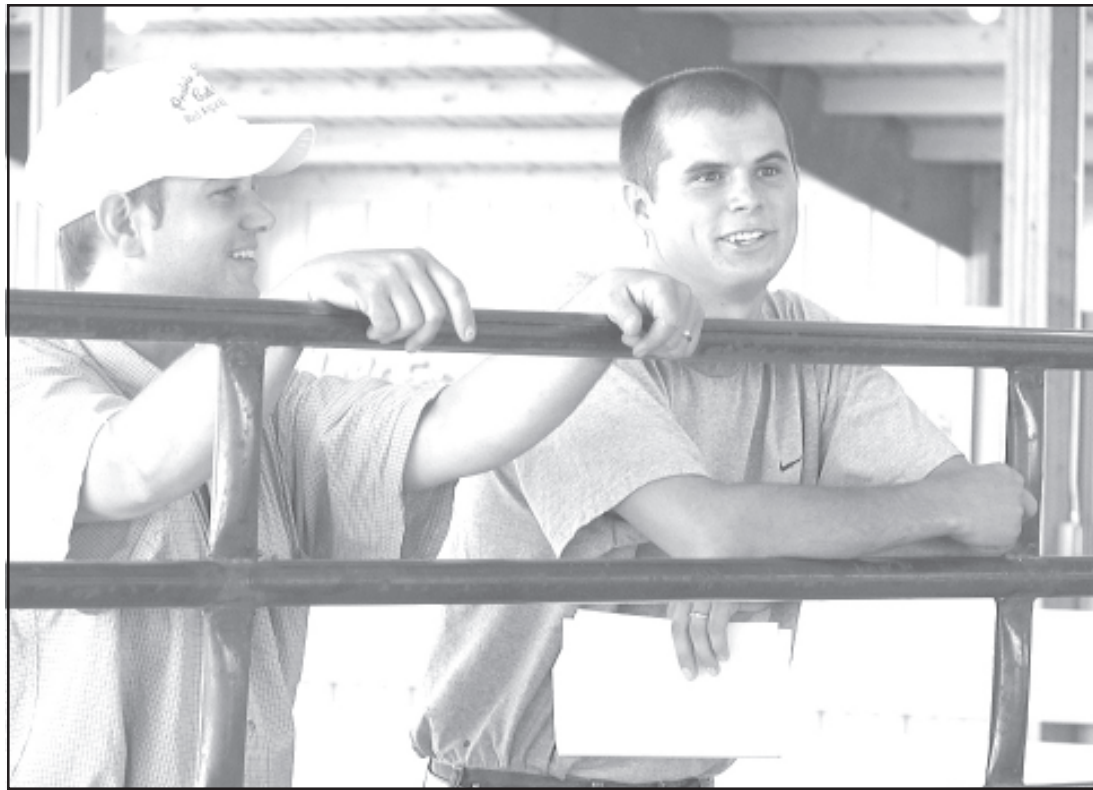
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The stands were packed last Wednesday night for the dedication of the new livestock building at the Decatur County Fairground.

Inside the building, 4-H families served barbecued pork and beef sandwiches on the north side, while picnic tables were set up on the south side, asking for donations to help finish the electrical system and fencing. The tables were full, too.

County Commissioner Stan McEvoy welcomed everyone to the new building and to the Decatur County Fair. He was joined by Commissioner Ralph Unger; Kevin Brown of Sappa Valley Construction, who built the new barn; a regional representative of Wick Buildings, the manufacturer; and Clay Anderson and Michael Wasson, who spearheaded the fund-raising drive.

Commissioner Unger said the project isn't yet complete, with money needed for electrical, fencing and water work. Two fund raisers at the fair and other donations during the week raised \$8,200 for the building, but Mr. Unger said he thought they needed about \$20,000 to com-



plete the job. He thanked everyone who helped with the project.

Both Mr. Wasson and Mr. Anderson talked about the history of the project and how the building came to be.

About 10 years ago, said Mr. Anderson, some memorial money was left to the Decatur County Fair Foundation for a new livestock building. About five years ago Merlin Anderson, his grandfather, talked to his feed nutritionist, Russ Smith, about the project. Mr. Smith had the idea of getting area stockmen to donate weaning weight steers to fatten and sell, with the money going to the project.

Two years ago, said Mr. Ander-

son, his grandfather suggested that he and Mr. Wasson were good candidates to gather the steers.

During the 2005 livestock sale, the young men decided it was a good time to start promoting the steer fund raiser. KFNFRadio was at the auction, so they got on the air. In little time, they said, Farm Credit of Northwest Kansas purchased two hogs and donated them back for a fund-raising feed which kicked things off.

"We thought we could just raise the money and get a building put up," said Mr. Wasson. "Obviously, we hadn't ever done anything like this before."

The men didn't have building plans, bids, a committee or even

feed for the donated steers.

They talked with Warren Weibert and Kevin Unger at the Decatur County Feed Yard. The steers were put at the yard with the agreement that the feed yard would carry the bill.

Twenty-eight steers were donated, not counting some purchased with donated money. The Decatur Co-op set up a "grain bank" with free storage or handling charges so the men could accept grain donations to cover the bill at the feed yard.

When it was done, said Mr. Wasson, the project raised about \$30,000. The donated hogs were cooked and served, raising over (See LIVESTOCK on Page 8A)

Wind firm wants to serve power needs

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Sunflower Wind, a partnership led by business people from across Kansas, plans to put a wind farm in north and east of Oberlin, with some ground already leased.

The firm, with headquarters in Goodland, was formed this spring and doesn't have any production going yet. Dan Rasure of Goodland, the managing partner, said the partnership started up to develop renewable energy, and with support and continued development, is looking at a wind farm project.

Mr. Rasure said they want to buy wind turbines for a wind farm and found out they couldn't. Instead, Sunflower Wind purchased a license to build turbines from a company in Europe. He said he couldn't release the company's name.

Construction on the first wind farm will start in the spring if the company can work out something with the cities involved, he said. Mr. Rasure said the firm has approached Oberlin, St. Francis and Sharon Springs city councils about buying power from the first wind farms.

All of the sites will not only produce wind but provide a platform for research and development, he said. All will use hydrogen and methane storage technologies to produce power when the wind is not blowing, said Mr. Rasure, adding that this is something the company feels strongly about.

The three cities were chosen because of their distribution networks and the proximity to each other, Mr. Rasure said. The three are close enough that Sunflower can have a core research and development

Choice needed in weeks

With three weeks to make a decision about whether to cancel its current electric contracts to take a 20-year deal with Sunflower Wind, the Oberlin City Council has a lot of questions.

At a meeting last Monday night, City Administrator Gary Shike said he had asked an independent engineer to analyze the wind proposal for the city. He said he has a lot of questions and so do the council members.

Basically, said Mayor Joe Stanley, the council has three weeks to make a 20-year decision.

"That's not long enough," said Councilwoman Rhonda May.

Councilman Jay Anderson said he talked with the mayor of St. Francis, which is one of the three towns where the firm might build wind farms. (The other is Sharon Springs.) Dr. Anderson said the mayor told (See CITY on Page 8A)

group working with all the areas. Although the public just found out about the wind proposal at an (See COMPANY on Page 8A)

Traffic detoured off of highway, around Gateway

The construction project on U.S. 36 through Oberlin moved to the next phase on Friday, as contractors detoured traffic on U.S. 83 around The Gateway so they could tear out the pavement on the south half of U.S. 36.

Kristen Brands, district spokesman for the Kansas Department of Transportation in Norton, said with work on the north lanes of U.S. 36 done, the south lanes would be closed so crews could pave that side.

Traffic on U.S. 83 from the north will go west on U.S. 36 and then south on Fairway Drive to Elm Street and back to U.S. 83. Mrs. Brands said the detour will run in the opposite direction from the south.

Basically, she said, a full stretch of U.S. 83, about three blocks, will be closed so that the workers can pour concrete on the south side through the intersection. Local traffic will be allowed to get to The Gateway and to east-west streets.

People won't be able to get on or off of U.S. 36 from Neill Avenue, so about a block of Neill will be closed, too.

This phase of the project should take about a month, depending on weather, said Mrs. Brands.

She said she wasn't sure if there was any agreement between the department and the City of Oberlin

about doing repairs on Elm or Fairway after the detour is done. City Administrator Gary Shike said at the beginning of the project state officials told him they would look at the pavement at the end.

After finishing the concrete on the south half of U.S. 36, crews will replace the curb and gutter east to Penn Ave., then overlay the asphalt lanes between Neill and Penn. That part of the project was changed from concrete to asphalt to save money after bids came in high this spring.

Mr. Shike said the city plans to put the street lights back up on the north side of U.S. 36 after the work is done.

Senator to visit

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts plans a "town hall" meeting in Oberlin on Tuesday.

Sen. Roberts will meet with the public from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. at the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center at 104 S. Penn Ave.

Everyone is welcome.

Lucky person to win 1,000 in scrip money

Time's up!

The registration boxes have been pulled and all of the entries placed in a large bin just in time for the Oberlin merchant's annual \$1,000 Shopping Spree drawing tonight.

The drawing will take place at the Back-to-School picnic, which starts at 6:30 p.m. in City Park. If the weather is bad, the picnic and drawing will

be moved into the high school cafeteria.

Shoppers have had six weeks to sign up for the drawing, with this being the third year for the shopping spree.

The winner gets \$1,000 in scrip money and has until Friday, Aug. 24, to spend it at sponsoring businesses. The winner has to be 18 or older and agree to being interviewed and photographed by *The Oberlin Herald* while shopping.

For the first time this year, the sponsors have donated 12 consolation prizes which will be drawn for before the \$1,000 is given away.

Sponsors include Prairie Petals, the LandMark Inn, Flowers by Lee, Stanley Hardware, Raye's Grocery, Ward Drug Store, Culligan Water Conditioning Co., Addleman Drug Store, Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, Countryside Veterinary Clinic, R&M Service Center and *The Oberlin Herald*.