

Weed manager asked to check other counties

The Decatur County commissioners asked the noxious weed director last week to call other counties to see if they still do cost-sharing on weed spraying and what price the counties charge.

Director Gaylen Huntley said at a meeting last Tuesday that he has heard the county may have as many as 2,000 acres of fall musk thistle that needs to be sprayed. With the cost of the chemical and an early-pay discount the commissioners approved over a month ago, he said, the cost-share will cut into the noxious weed budget.

A new order of chemical will cost around \$11,600 for two pallets with 180 gallons on each. One pallet will do around 2,800 acres, he said.

Someone asked about limiting how many gallons each landowner could buy through the cost-share program with the county. In the program, the county covers about a quarter of the cost of a gallon with the landowner paying the other three-quarters, said Mr. Huntley.

Are there a lot of people who use the cost-share program? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown. There are more and more each year, said Mr. Huntley. The county doesn't have to cost-share, he said, but it is an incentive for people to spray their weeds.

Maybe the county should back off on the price to the county, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, saying that would allow the county to help with more acres. The other idea is to only do the program up to a certain dollar amount, he said.

That's a problem for the larger farms that have more acres to spray, said Mr. Huntley. Also, if someone isn't able to get in until later, they wouldn't be able to take part in the program if the dollar amount had been met.

Mr. Huntley said the commissioners didn't have to make a decision right away because they don't start spraying for the weed until

County roundup

At the meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with a representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield about getting a price quote together for the county on employee medical insurance. Story below left.
- Talked about asking the Amusement Authority to shut down the train for an hour during the fair and writing the group a letter about insurance on the rides. Story below left.
- Asked the noxious weed director to call other counties to see how they handle cost-sharing for weed spraying and what they charge. Story at left.



AT THE OBERLIN CEMETERY last Monday, Sexton Nan Stanley talked to Councilwoman Rhonda May about

some bushes that need to be replaced. She said spider mites have damaged some trees. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

City council takes tour of city properties

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin City Council went out on a tour of city properties last Monday night, discussing plans for each and checking on work that has already been done.

The meeting was an extension of the regular meeting on Thursday, Aug. 2, when the council voted to recess until last Monday night.

The members started out at the Oberlin Cemetery, where they met with Sexton Nan Stanley. Miss Stanley said several of the trees had spider mites, which can kill them. They have had to take out several trees because of the bugs, she said.

The two small trees on either side of the Last Indian Raid Memorial will most likely be moved, she said, leaving the stone and flag pole as the centerpiece for that area.

She said she plans to relocate those two trees to spots where others had to be removed.

Someone wants to buy a nice stone bench for the memorial area, she said. It could be put on the north side of the memorial as long as it has a flat cement base that doesn't stick

Council countdown

At a meeting last Monday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Took a tour of the Oberlin Cemetery, former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, Sappa Park Shelter House and the city's new shop building on Hall Street. Story at left.
- Decided to wait to accept the audit until the Thursday, Aug. 23, meeting to give council members time to look it over. Story on Page 2A.
- Approved the pay rate for a new police officer at \$10 an hour. Story below.

up so she can mow.

The trees in the older section of the cemetery, said Councilman Jay Anderson, are reaching their maturity. He said he is amazed more of them weren't damaged in the storms this winter.

The cemetery directory, said Miss Stanley, needs to be updated. Maybe the wall which Dr. Anderson has talked about could be incorporated into the directory, said City Foreman Dan Castle.

The council members walked around several headstones that had lots of decorations. Miss Stanley said she has to be careful with those. If a weed trimmer or mower catches the corner of an item, it becomes a

projectile.

She said she got hit by a piece of glass that went through the weed trimmer. Luckily, she said, a rounded side of the glass caught her face, not a sharp side.

The little figurines people put on graves are a problem, she said, because they can get knocked off the headstone and go through the mower. Glass vases or jars filled with pennies or glass marbles are a danger for the same reason.

Families who want to set military markers right away have found that the markers sink, Miss Stanley said. They need to wait for the ground to settle because the family has to pay to reset the markers.

The council talked about not setting regulations, but asking that families plant only peonies on the sides of the headstones and not other flowers or bushes.

Miss Stanley said they have buffalo grass seed if people want to plant grass. It is easier to take care of than some of the other varieties, she said.

The council then headed out to the former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, where members looked at the dining hall, kitchen, a houses and garage.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the city had replaced the flooring in the dining hall when Kelley Youth Services was running the ranch.

The council members looked at water damage in the one house and mentioned that all of the buildings need exterior paint.

At the Sappa Park Shelter House, the council members saw areas the city crew has mowed. Since it was getting dark, they headed back to town, where they saw the building on Hall Street which was bought for the city shop and had a hamburger, cooked by Councilman Rob McFee.

Commissioners request insurance bid

The Decatur County commissioners talked with a representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield last Tuesday about getting information together for a bid on employee medical insurance.

The county currently has Corporate Plan insurance. Charlie Krull of Blue Cross said the January renew-

als will be here soon. To get a bid from the Blues, he said, each employee will need to fill out a health profile and then he can get some rates for the county.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said it probably wouldn't hurt to get a comparison quote. Mr. Krull said he would like to start on the health pro-

files in October, because the quotes are only good for 90 days.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said she would let other insurance companies know about the bidding process.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said the crew had been working at the fairground getting some work done before the fair. Mr. Stallman said the fair board needs some machinery in the evenings for the demolition derby and tractor pull.

The crew also is busy mowing township roads, he said.

Mr. Stallman and the commissioners looked over the letters to landowners on the Nebraska-Kansas border about road repairs and minimum maintenance along the state line. A hearing was scheduled for Monday at the Red Willow

County Courthouse, he said, and another is scheduled here at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 21.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Received a letter from City Administrator Gary Shike about the wiring for the horse arena, which cost just over \$6,500 with the city doing the work. Rocky Diederich, with the city, talked to Mrs. Horn about doing a concrete retaining wall and fencing around the ball fields that the county Summer Recreation Program uses. He said he would get back to the county about the costs. The city is asking for the county to pay for both of these projects.
- No decisions were made.
- Gave Joan Ward, motor vehicle clerk in the treasurer's office, a certificate for 10 years of service.

City Council approves hiring of police officer

The Oberlin City Council approved hiring a new police officer at a meeting last week, setting his pay at \$10 an hour.

Mayor Joe Stanley said at a meeting last Monday that Police Chief Wade Lockhart has hired Brad Burmaster of Oberlin as the fourth officer, replacing Cody John.

Both Chief Lockhart and City Administrator Gary Shike recommended paying the new officer \$10 an hour with a 50-cent raise after he completes the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center course in Hutchinson.

Mayor Stanley said Chief Lock-

hart was quite impressed with Mr. Burmaster, 38, who has worked at the state prison in Norton for 10 to 11 years. He hasn't had any problems at the prison, where he is a lieutenant, the manager said, but doesn't want to keep driving to Norton every day.

The council approved the pay rate. Mr. Shike said Mr. Burmaster will put in his two weeks' notice at the prison and start with the police department after that.

Chief Lockhart said there are no openings at the training center until winter, but something may open up before then.

Firemen's Fun Day Aug. 25 at Jennings

Jennings is busy preparing for its annual Firemen's Fun Day next week on Saturday, Aug. 25.

Yearly events include a health fair, cake walk, wobble trap shoot, bingo, a barbecue, an auction, the firemen's competition and a parade. New additions to this year's event will include a community wide garage sale, pony rides and demonstrations by a professional herpetologist.

"As usual, kolaches (a traditional Czech pastry) will be for sale until they're gone," said Marge Hartzog, one of the women baking the treats.

"They sell out quickly, so latecomers are often disappointed."

The Jennings Czech Museum will

be open to show off its new spaces, which hold memorabilia from the old Jennings School.

Peggy and Jim Westmoreland of the Painted Pony Carousel Co. of Oakley will offer miniature pony rides throughout the day. David Nieves, author and professional herpetologist from Bellevue, Neb., will have 200 pounds of reptiles to show and share.

Five unusual living reptiles from around the world will be displayed, including a large rare lizard, a strange white snake with blue eyes and a python. Spectators will learn how humans are different from reptiles, what they have in common with reptiles and why we need them.

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Early rain keeps water use down

Rain early in the week helped keep Oberlin water use down, even though the temperature soared to about 100 degrees several days.

The city received .8 of an inch of rain at the beginning of the week, keeping water use below 700,000 gallons a day, the trigger for water restrictions.

The city is still on water restrictions which means that people with odd-numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, while those with even-numbered addresses can on Wednesday,

Friday and Sunday. Hours are midnight to 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight on the proper days.

No outdoor water use is allowed on Mondays.

Last week, the city pumped:

- 515,000 gallons on Monday, Aug. 6.
- 462,000 gallons on Tuesday, Aug. 7.
- 364,000 gallons last Wednesday.
- 646,000 gallons on Thursday.
- 550,000 gallons on Friday.
- 692,000 gallons on Saturday.

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