

# Board says 'yes' to patching steps at high school

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
kldavis@nwksas.com

The Oberlin School Board gave the superintendent permission last Monday to have the front steps at the high school patched and a new railing put in while he calls around to architects so see what a new design will cost.

The board has talked about repairing or replacing the front steps for some time, but held off because of a request to have the building listed on the state historical register. Despite suggestions that the it was time to get going, the board decided to get a more detailed plan.

The board got bids to remove the concrete and steps at the front entrance and replace them with a ramp, but Monday decided to contact an architect before any work is done so if they want to put in lights or new doors or a fancier railing, they can see what it will look like.

Superintendent Pat Cullen said he talked with John Nelson, owner of Nelson Concrete Construction Inc., about the work. The plan is to take out the entire platform and the railing in front of the school. A ramp would go from the top of the current steps to the curb. The bid came in at \$19,856.

The alumni association is still working on getting the building on the historical registry, but Dr. Cullen said the step work won't change that.

Dr. Cullen said the board talked about putting a heating system in the concrete for the winter. The board received a ball park idea of \$8,500, although they didn't receive an official bid.

The superintendent said his recommendation was to go ahead and replace the porch.

"Without a doubt," he said, "we need to walk out of here with a plan."

As it is now, said Principal Charles Haag people in a wheelchair have to come in the back door and be wheeled up the hall.

It is worse when there is ice, said Board Member Barb Olson, adding

that the railing on the steps is a little shaky.

If the district is going to replace the porch and steps, said Mr. Haag, it needs to be done right. Mrs. Olson said they want it to be attractive.

If the district does the entrance, said Mr. Haag, and leaves the old rusty doors, it isn't going to look good. The high school almost needs a whole new entrance.

Does the current plan meet the American With Disabilities Act requirements? asked board member Dan Nedland. Probably, said board member Monte Moore; Mr. Nelson checked into that on the amount of the slope for the ramp.

Mrs. Olson said the board needs a designer to draw up the project. It would be nice to see some of those old street lights put in, said Board President Dewayne Jackson.

If the district does the whole project with concrete, lights, doors and a new railing, it could cost \$40,000 to \$50,000, said Board Member Monte Moore and then you'd have to add the cost of an architect onto that.

Maybe there is an alumni who would want to help pay for the project through the school foundation, he said.

Maybe an architect could design the entrance and everything but the concrete work could be put in later, said President Dewayne Jackson.

Will it be a problem to redo the entrance with the kids in school? asked Mr. Moore. That is less of a problem than it being a liability issue, said Dr. Cullen, since someone could get hurt on the steps.

Mrs. Olson said she would call her brother-in-law, who is an architect in Colorado and an alumnus, to see if possibly he has any ideas of who the board can call or what the cost might be.

In the meantime, the board gave Dr. Cullen the go-ahead to patch the porch and steps and have Jason Ketterl, vocational agriculture teacher at the high school, make some new railings. They also asked him to call some architects.

# Boarding school discussed for ranch

The Oberlin School Board heard a suggestion to start a boarding school at the former Sappa Valley Youth Ranch at its meeting last Monday and agree to split expenses for a \$500 evaluation of the idea with the city.

Superintendent Pat Cullen said he had talked with Rhoney DuQusen, a consultant in Longmont, Colo., about the idea. He said she will come look at the ranch and see if the plan will work. The evaluation will cost about \$500, he said, plus expenses.

He said they are trying to look at some different alternatives for the facility, which formerly was a juvenile detention center. If the school board and city, which owns the ranch, can find a healthy opportunity for both and bring in some more students for the schools, he said, that would be great.

This is just in the planning stages, he said, and no one has made any commitments. The only way for anything like this to happen is if it works for both the city and the school district, he added.

He said students could live at the ranch and come to school in town, but that is just one alternative that might work.

Dr. Cullen said he talked with City Administrator Gary Shike about the idea and asked if the city would pay half of the expenses.

Mr. Shike said he would bring up the idea at a City Council meeting Thursday night to see if the council wants to get involved.

The school board approved Dr. Cullen bringing in the consultant, with a firm called Consultants to Small and Developing Independent Schools.

## Raising money for hospital



**HOLDING A KU BASKETBALL** signed by the entire Jayhawk team, Rick Doeden helped auctioneer Lynn Johnson sell the collectible for \$275 during at the Decatur Health Systems benefit Saturday. — Photo by Cynthia Haynes

# Emergency director working on plan

## County Roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Sat in on a meeting of the Decatur County Fair Foundation where two bills for the new livestock building were paid. Story to come.

- Decided to continue with the cost-share program for the noxious weed spraying as long as the county has the money to buy the chemical. Story

to come.

- Talked with the emergency preparedness director, who said she is working on the county emergency plan as well as other areas of her job. Story at left.

- Gave the chief dispatcher permission to apply for a grant to help with maintenance costs for a new computer system. Story to come.

Decatur County commissioners talked with the new emergency preparedness director, who said she is working on a revised county emergency plan as well as other areas of the job, during their meeting last Tuesday.

Patti Skubal, who was recently hired as the director, said she is working on the county's plan on the computer. The plan was last revised in 1991, she said, so she is comparing the old and the new. Obviously, said Mrs. Skubal, some things have changed.

Mrs. Skubal asked about the sirens that normally go off Monday mornings. Since the former director, Bert Cool, has been out of the office, she said, the sirens haven't been tested. Mrs. Skubal asked how long the sirens should be sounded for the test, but none of the commissioners knew.

The siren in Jennings, she said, has been replaced. It is just south of the fire station.

Mrs. Skubal had a bill for \$1,164 from DTN for the weather computer. The computer, in the dispatch office on the fourth floor of the courthouse, gives weather updates. Mrs. Skubal said the contract had to be signed by Wednesday, although

it had been sent July 20.

Do any other departments help pay for this, asked Mrs. Skubal, like dispatch.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said she should check with Colleen Geishler, deputy clerk, to see who had paid the bill in the past.

Mrs. Skubal said the National Weather Service offers a system, too. She doesn't know what the cost would be. Commissioner Doyle Brown said he thought she should check into it.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said the budget is tight, and she needs to be careful and hold down expenditures until the end of the year. He told her she needs to ask before she

goes to any meetings or do anything which would cost money.

Mrs. Skubal said she has one meeting coming up, but the commissioners have already approved it.

She said she went to Norcat to work on a generator project for the town. She said an auto start generator would require an extra charge of \$50 a month to get a company to come out and check it.

Mrs. Skubal said she would like to get some more bids for the generator.

She said she is working on a list of duties for the emergency management director and will bring it to the commissioners.

# City crew takes down most no U-turn signs

The "no u-turn" signs at the two major downtown intersections came down recently, with no plans to replace them.

The signs, which hung on the same poles as the traffic lights at Penn Avenue and Commercial, and Penn Avenue and Hall, were taken down by city Foreman Dan Castle a couple weeks ago. Mr. Castle said the signs were getting caught by the wind and breaking the traffic lights.

The no u-turn signs were faded and needed to be replaced anyway,

he said, so he took them down and doesn't plan to replace them.

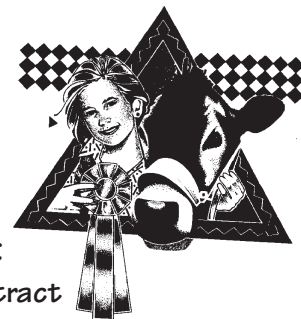
Under city ordinances, however, it is legal to make a u-turn unless there is a sign posted to ban it.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said whether it is legal or not, people shouldn't make u-turns at the signaled intersections because it's not safe.

He said he would like to see the signs go back up, since the ordinance gives him the power to ban turns at specific intersections.

## The Decatur County 4-H Council wishes to thank the 2007 Livestock Buyers

- Tri-State Livestock Commission Co.
- Fredrickson Insurance Agency
- Farmers Bank & Trust, FDIC
- High Plains Veterinary Service, P.A.
- Farm Credit Service
- Pauls Funeral Home
- The Oberlin Herald
- Ron's Applicating Service
- Farm and Ranch Realty
- Raye's Grocery, Inc.
- Johnson Realty, Inc.
- Home Range Realty
- Mary Anderson, CPA
- Countryside Veterinary Clinic of Oberlin, P.A.
- McCook National Bank, FDIC
- Prairie Dog Creek Cattle Co.
- Wasson Farms, Inc.
- Andy May
- Larue Trucking
- Willcoxon & Brown
- Decatur County Feed Yard, LLC
- Decatur County Title and Abstract
- Market Data, Inc.
- Frenchman Valley Co-op
- Anderson Land and Cattle
- Stockman's Feed and Supply



## The Decatur County 4-H Council wishes to thank the Food Sale Buyers of 2007.

- Farmers Bank & Trust, FDIC
- Rodney and Fonda Farr
- Pauls Funeral Home, Inc.
- Duane and Patricia Dorshorst
- Decatur County Feed Yard, LLC
- R.J. Metcalf Real Estate
- Jack and Donna Fortin
- Rocking R
- Countryside Veterinary Clinic of Oberlin, P.A.
- Fredrickson Insurance Agency
- Evan and Sheryl Unger
- Raye's Grocery, Inc.
- Harmony Farms
- Decatur County Title and Abstract Co.
- Mary E. Anderson, CPA
- LandMark Inn and Oberlin Mercantile Co.
- Connie Grafel
- Lee and Lora Arnold
- Sappa Valley Construction LLC
- Rocket Sales
- Jerry Schuetz
- John and Henrietta Juenemann
- Custom Trophy and Engraving
- Gail and Kay Marcuson
- Marcuson Farms
- Ken and Julie Carter

